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THAT WASCALLY WEFORM PARTY
MATT LABASH

OCTOBER 18, 1999 $3.95

The Man of Our Age

William Kristol on George Weigel's biography of John Paul II

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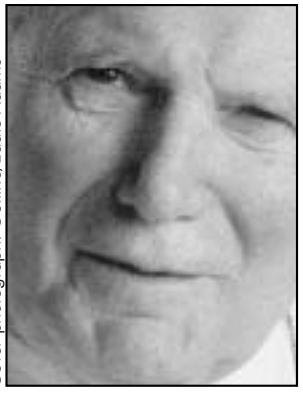

Cover photograph: Outline/Eddie Adams

the weekly Standard

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, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (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

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An A-Pauling Lapse of Judgment

The U.S. military has certainly been through some wrenching transformations since the end of the Cold War, but it's still shocking to see it hosting a hagiographical tribute to the life and work of the anti-nuclear fellow-traveler Linus Pauling. Yes, opening on Oct. 20 at the National Museum of Health and Medicine, a division of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, will be an exhibit ("Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century") devoted to honoring "the first pacifist to organize truly effective international peace campaigns," to quote the propagandistic promotional brochure.

Well, that's one way of describing Pauling's career. THE SCRAPBOOK prefers to think of Pauling's genius as more specific: He was the first man to figure out that winning the Nobel prize means no one will ever take your microphone away. Once anointed by the sages of Stockholm, you can make noxious contributions to the public debate, spout claptrap about the supposed anti-cancer benefits of Vitamin C megadoses and forever be called "Nobel laureate" by polite society. Only the 1954 Nobel for his indisputable brilliance in chemistry gained Pauling a hearing for his Vitamin C views, which would rightly have been called quackery emanating from anyone else. And Pauling's political career, to be charitable, consisted of one misjudgment after another.

Conceivably, now that the Clinton administration is pushing a nuclear test-ban treaty, someone at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where the Pauling festival will be celebrated for the next five months, may think the scientist was just a little bit ahead of his time. But timing in international affairs is everything. Agitating against a nuclear NATO in 1961, as Pauling did and for which he was rewarded the following year with his second Nobel, was rightly denounced as a travesty at the time. This was a contribution to peace, only as Moscow defined the term. But that's all ancient history, right?

On second thought, perhaps the Institute of Pathology *is* the perfect sponsor for this exhibit. On third thought, shouldn't Congress take a closer look at the Institute's budget? ♦

How Many Angels Can Dance on the Backs of the Poor?

As Fred Barnes points out elsewhere in this issue, when George W. Bush accused his fellow Republicans in Congress of "balancing their budget on the backs of the poor," what stung wasn't the jab but the rhetoric: "These are *liberal* buzz words." And how.

The backs-of-the-poor coinage no doubt predates the Lexis-Nexis era—which contains cites as far back as a *New York Times* editorial denouncing that state's Republican lawmakers on May 27, 1971. It seems to have been over the years a favorite not just of liberals attacking conservatives, but of left-wing Democrats attacking other members of their party for being insufficiently pure.

For example, at a confab celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Americans for Democratic Action on May 7, 1977, Sen. George McGovern (ADA, McGovern . . . how's that for an intellectual pedigree!) excoriated the newly elected President Jimmy Carter for trying, yes, to "balance the budget on the backs of the poor, the hungry and the jobless."

It gets better. A Nov. 7, 1977, *Newsweek* article with the prescient title "Is America Turning Right?" recounts how an ex-aide to Massachusetts governor Michael Dukakis (who embodied a movement called the New Pragmatism, according to *Newsweek*) had assailed Dukakis for "balancing the budget on the backs of the poor." The ex-aide's name? Barney Frank. Dukakis must have taken the future congressman's criticism to heart; in 1988, he claimed that voters should choose him and not George Bush for president, because a Dukakis administration would never "balance the budget on the backs of the poor."

But THE SCRAPBOOK shouldn't be too hard on George W. Bush. Way back on Feb. 21, 1980, during the second set of debates before the Republican primary in New Hampshire (the ones sponsored by the League of Women Voters, not the famous "I paid for this microphone" evening in Nashua dominated by Ronald Reagan) the unforgettable congressman from Rockford, Ill., John Anderson, thoughtfully intoned: "I certainly will not balance the budget on the backs of the poor."

So say what you will about George W. Bush. He may have been rhetorically tone deaf on this occasion, but it's not like he's the only Republican who's ever uttered the words. ♦

Al Gore and His Saintly Bloodline

No one has yet mentioned the horrifying downside of Al Gore's having transferred his campaign headquarters from Washington to Nashville: Being "back home" in Tennessee only gives him that many more excuses to ponder his increasingly mythopoeic roots. True to form, while cutting the ribbon on his new Nashville headquarters on Oct. 6, the vice president waxed nostalgic. According to Ceci Connolly's account in the *Washington Post*, Gore

told the audience that his "mother Pauline, celebrating her 87th birthday today, was raised at a time when 'poor girls were not supposed to dream.'" And when, exactly was that?

Reader Herbert J. Boothroyd of Weston, Mass., alerted THE SCRAPBOOK to an even more poignant version of this uplifting parable. According to the *Weston Town Crier*, when Gore was in Massachusetts in September, he related "the story of his mother's journey from a poor rural town in Tennessee to Nashville, where Mrs. Gore—now 86 years old—earned a law degree while waiting tables for 25 cent tips. It was during a time when women didn't even have the right to vote."

And when exactly was that? Gore's own state of Tennessee approved women's suffrage in August 1920, 79 years ago. So not only was Gore's mother an uppity dreamer, she must have been an exceptionally precocious law student, too. About eight years old. ♦

Fifth Columnist?

Here's one of the toughest critiques of Patrick Buchanan THE SCRAPBOOK has read of late, and get this: It comes not from George W. Bush or any of the Republican candidates, but from inside the Buchanan campaign, from a "senior policy adviser." Here are some excerpts of what this adviser has written:

"There have been Buchanan references to 'group fantasies of martyrdom and heroics' among Holocaust survivors, and columns about how diesel fumes could not have killed hundreds of thousands of Jews at Treblinka. Needless to say, such assertions are offensive to Jews, to friends of Jews, and all others who believe that respect for historical truth is an important feature of civilized society. . . .

"I find it unlikely that Buchanan doesn't understand what he's doing with such musings. No matter how sporadically he writes such things, they confer upon Buchanan a strangeness that makes it utterly impossible to take him seriously as a presidential candidate.

"The conservative *National Review* treats Buchanan's campaign with deference and respect. [It] expresses the hope that he will become more Reagan-like. . . . For me, it's far too late. Buchanan has spent too much energy denouncing neo-conservatives as 'ideological vagrants'; his Holocaust stuff is far too weird. Pat for President? It's not even worth discussing."

Hmmm. A plant in the Buchanan camp? No. These criticisms are actually from a February 1992 column by Scott McConnell. The same Mr. McConnell who announced in his *New York Press* column last week that he was departing journalism for the Buchanan campaign. It has offered him a job as senior policy adviser and he has "jumped at the chance." After all, he writes, "the chance to be part of such an enterprise, which could have a huge and lasting impact on the American political system, is one of the greatest privileges I can imagine."

To paraphrase the eminent political analyst Ricky Ricardo, somebody's got some 'splaining to do. ♦

Casual

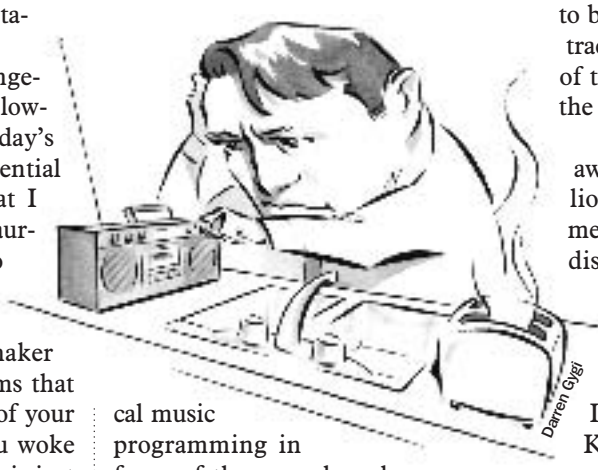
Morning Perdition

Until fairly recently, my morning movements had a kind of ritualistic purity—the quick, business-like ablutions while the household slept, then the quiet descent to the dark kitchen to switch on the coffee maker, the brief detour to gather the newspapers from the front lawn, and then a quick bowl of cereal as I scanned the front pages, and finally the delicate task of rousing the dreamy children from their beds—all of these performed to the soft and subtle hum of classical music, courtesy of our local public radio station.

It struck me as a fine arrangement, perfectly attuned to the slowly accelerating rhythms of a day's beginning. The music was essential in setting the scene. Not that I really listened to it; it was just aural wallpaper. But it served to calm the air at those inevitable moments when the toast burns or the coffee maker floods or the 6-year-old screams that she will hate you for the rest of your dumb, boring life because you woke her up. Right then, a Bach trio is just the ticket.

And of course the radio offered more than music. Periodically NPR butted in with a brief news summary and the local announcer would take a stab, more often than not inaccurate, at the weather forecast. Over the years, I grew not to despise this announcer. He had one of those weightless public-radio voices—listening to his high tenor you could almost see his well-combed beard, his heavy woolen sweater, the Ben Shahn prints in his apartment. But he had the virtue of knowing when to shut up. He would have his say, then go back to playing Mozart or Brahms, and I could go back to asking my wife why she didn't just drop a few lousy bucks on a new toaster that had at least one setting between "warm" and "charred," and she could go back to pointing out how I was the one who was always complaining that we spent money like drunken sailors, so maybe I could just take my toaster and stick . . . Really, with the Haydn horn concerto in the background, it was like Matins.

But now Haydn is gone from our mornings—Brahms and Bach and Mozart, too. A few months ago, our local NPR affiliate announced that it was dropping its breakfast-time classical music programming in favor of the news broadcast *Morning Edition*. *Morning Edition* shares all the virtues and shortcomings of its sister show, *All Things Considered*, which runs for about 18 hours every afternoon on NPR stations. In both shows the coverage of world events is exhaustive, which is a nice way of saying "indiscriminate." It's as if someone has opened up the dullest section of the *New York Times* (take your pick) hell-bent on reading you every word of every story *and there's nothing you can do about it*.


Darren Gygi

These days I perform my ablutions, make the trip downstairs, and fix the coffee and gather the papers and wake the children to a different soundtrack—a 12-minute report on, say, the collapse of the Bolivian mining industry due to a default on non-recourse bonds issued by the central bank that threatens to upset world tin markets well into the next century, like you cared. If I've heard that story once I've heard it a dozen times.

NPR affiliates are meant to be instruments of community service, and so the theory behind the switch in programming seems to be that Washingtonians are starved for information. Never mind that Washington is a city where the Sunday edition of the local paper weighs 12 pounds, where half the subway riders can be seen reading the *Economist* on their morning commute, and where the getting, storing, repackaging, and disseminating of information is the professional labor that preoccupies three of every four members of the local workforce. (I'm making these statistics up, by the way.) The theory seems to be that the broadcast of music distracts from the far more essential task of taking on board further details of the Bolivian tin crisis.

I disagree with the theory and for awhile toyed with acts of open rebellion, like changing stations or even mediums. This led to the unpleasant discovery that there's nowhere else to go. Classical CDs don't come with weather and traffic reports. On radio the alternatives are Howard Stern and Don Imus, and on TV there's (shiver) Katie and Matt and the endless parade of pundits, movie stars, and prostate-cancer survivors who pass before their thrones each morning. No, it is *Morning Edition* or silence.

This week I've been trying silence. I will let you know how long I can stand it. My kids look on it as a kind of adventure—a throwback to mornings as our forebears must have lived them, before electronic media arrived to roil the air of dawn.

The quiet is eerie to them and to me, and we wonder at the strange noises that emerge: the trill of birds outside the window, the rustle of leaves in the morning breeze, the crackle of the bread as it blackens in the toaster.

Andrew Ferguson

Correspondence

Wrestling with History

I got quite a kick out of seeing a stuffy magazine like The Weekly Standard take on pro wrestling ("Pro Wrestling and the End of History," Oct. 4). And I thought Paul Cantor did a pretty good job addressing the changes in the wrestling business. I do, however, have a few quibbles.

First, Col. DeBeers was a creation of Verne Gagne's AWA, not the WWF. Second, Eric Bischoff was always a TV announcer and executive, never a pro wrestler. Third, it just isn't true that in the old days a wrestler would go his entire career as either a good guy or a bad guy. If you gave me enough time, I might think of one or two who did. But generally, the top guys turned every three or four years, just to keep the story lines from falling into a rut.

I think Cantor makes too much over the Koloff family's various turns and the end of the Cold War. The simple fact is that Jim Crockett's lead good guy was injured in a real-life car accident that ended his career. They needed a quick replacement, and turned Nikita Koloff into a good guy. I don't believe much thought went into it.

On the biggest issue, I'm still undecided. Does the current state of pro wrestling tell us much about the moral state of America? Certainly, it speaks volumes when one sees small children in the stands holding up foam fists with the middle finger extended. One wonders what sort of parent buys those for them. But it just isn't true that wrestling no longer offers good guys and bad guys. Rather, it's only that a particular type of good guy has gone, killed by fans who no longer want to see him. That type is the Verne Gagne, Bob Backlund, milk-drinking, clean-cut wrestler.

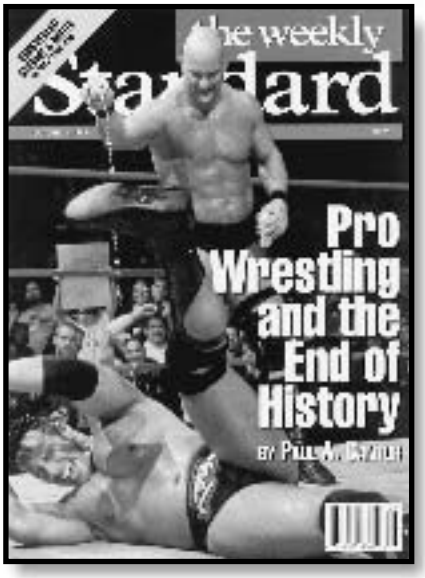
To be a good guy in wrestling today, one has to have an edge, to be willing to play as dirty as the bad guys. The best example is the most popular character in wrestling right now, "Stone Cold" Steve Austin. But Austin is different from the bad guys. He has a moral code, albeit a primitive and barbaric one. He doesn't pretend to be anyone other than who he is. He fights his own fights. He can't be bought by "the man." And he never quits, no matter how much the odds are stacked against him.

I can't defend everything about modern pro wrestling, especially as presented by the WWF. But I don't think it's quite as bleak as some critics charge.

Charles Oliver
Los Angeles, CA

Please tell me that Paul Cantor's article on pro wrestling was a parody of the excesses of "Cultural Studies." Otherwise, this is one of the most embarrassing articles I've ever read in an otherwise excellent magazine.

Brian Hipp
Chicago, IL



Not Standing Pat

I'm a charter subscriber to The Weekly Standard, but I am disgusted with William Kristol's take on Pat Buchanan ("Pat the Bunny," Sept. 27). Enough is enough.

Your magazine beat him senseless in 1996 after his win in the New Hampshire primary, shouting many of the same epithets then as now. I find it odd that you say Buchanan prefers to hang around with people like Lenora Fulani and Fred Newman. Perhaps it is not that he feels comfortable with them, but rather that he has been driven into their arms by the likes of your staff and other "new" moderate Republicans.

Kristol says Pat is no longer a conservative. I didn't know there was a litmus test of beliefs for which you had to score 85 percent or higher to be a real conservative. The Republican party used to be a party that tolerated dissent and differing viewpoints. Rather than having a bigger tent, Kristol seems to be pushing Pat and his supporters out the door. Come November 2000, the Republicans may wish they hadn't picked this fight.

Richard Read
Huntsville, AL

Poor William Kristol. For a guy who is failing to convince conservatives that their new mission in life should be a crusade for "national greatness," the allegiance of so many street-corner conservatives to Pat Buchanan must be tough to understand. "The differences between Pat Buchanan and Republican principles are not minor issues that can be smoothed over behind closed doors," Kristol sniffs. "They are fundamental."

So, let me see if I understand. If someone believes—as Buchanan does—that life begins at conception and that abortion—like slavery—is the most important moral issue of its day; that the federal departments of education, commerce, and energy should be eliminated; that government-mandated minimum wages are abhorrent; and that private property rights deserve greater protection, he can and should be run out of the party if he also happens to believe—mistakenly, in my view—in the benefits of tariffs.

And who does Kristol implore to play guardians of the faith? Hill Republicans. That's more than a little curious, considering the fact that there are at least 25 Republicans in Congress—enough to keep the GOP in the majority, mind you—who believe that killing unborn children is a constitutional right; that the federal government should play a greater role in local education policy; that the government should determine minimum wages; and that unproven environmental threats justify abridgment of private property rights. These, I suppose, are "minor issues that can be smoothed over behind closed doors" in Kristol's view.

Alas, as long as Republicans remain free traders (and believe peace in Bosnia

and Kosovo are vital national interests), they can close the flaps of the Big Tent behind them. What a preposterous litmus test—but one, unfortunately, that many admitted rubbernecks of The Weekly Status Quo are learning to expect from Kristol.

KEVIN RING
Washington, DC

WILLIAM KRISTOL ASKS if the Republican party slogan is going to be, "It's Politics." Denouncing Buchanan is the right thing to do, and more Republicans should step up to the plate if they wish to be heard above the fray. But it is not enough. In the day-to-day trenches of budgetary politics it appears Senator Trent "King of the pork barrel" Lott and Congressman Dennis "Balanced budgets are all smoke and mirrors" Hastert have already accepted the "It's Politics" slogan. Their actions speak volumes about "politicians who seek office, and who will swallow anything in their efforts to accumulate support for the next election." In the long run their actions will define the Republican party far more than Pat "Have you ever heard of Harold E. Stassen?" Buchanan.

Whoever in the GOP is in charge of denouncing ought to look at Republican leaders in Congress too.

TOM REITMEYER
Virginia Beach, VA

I WANT TO APPLAUD William Kristol's denunciation of Pat Buchanan in this magazine and on television. It seems as if Buchanan's fellow television commentators all refuse to say, despite so much evidence to the contrary, that Buchanan is a bigot and an anti-Semite. I'm sure that this is because they know and like Buchanan, but their refusal to make a direct statement about his views is indefensible. Kristol's candor is a refreshing change.

The one simple question I would ask Buchanan is: What are you so angry about? Every time he is on television he promotes the idea that there is a conscious, continuous, and concerted effort by evil forces to, for lack of a better phrase, screw him and people like him. He seems to feed on hatred and divisiveness, which no party should attempt to foster. I hope that Buchanan runs as a third-party candidate, not because it will tilt the election toward the Democrats, but because he will be marginalized, suffer a humiliating defeat, and, hopefully, not be heard from again.

ANDREW M. WONG
New York, NY

BILLION DOLLAR BILL

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL'S article on Bill Gates devoting a billion dollars to minority-only college scholarships is a story of opportunity lost ("Bill Gates, Minority Leader," Oct. 4).

Imagine how much more effective this money would be if it was instead used for school vouchers in elementary and high schools. With the solid basic education they would provide, black and Hispanic students could compete on their own in college, even in the rigorous disciplines of science and engineering.

PETE SKURKISS
Chester, NJ

TOUCHED BY BURNING MAN

I AM SORRY David Skinner and I did not meet during the weekend of Burning Man ("What I Saw at Burning Man," Sept. 27). Last year I moved to the San Francisco area and was excited to have the opportunity to experience the notorious event firsthand. Burning Man was said by my friends to be an artistic playground for all, and, as with all art, I was moved by some pieces, amused by others, and driven to ennui by still others.

During the course of the weekend there were brief moments of tongue-in-cheek lewdness, but I did not feel the least bit unsafe in the makeshift community. I felt free to walk about the desert in the middle of the night and witness the beautiful sky above me—undisturbed by pollution.

I am 26 years of age and I have never used a drug, or been drunk, in my entire life. The Burning Man experience was amazing, and I left touched by the refreshing sense of how persons can interact with one another in a positive light. If it was an option for Skinner to come to this year's Burning Man, it is certainly an option for him to not attend next year.

ERIKA PADILLA-MORALES
Alameda, CA

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THE WEEKLY STANDARD
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Letters will be edited for length and clarity and must include the writer's name, address, and phone number.
All letters should be addressed:
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THE WEEKLY STANDARD
1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505
Washington, DC 20036.

You may also fax letters: (202) 293-4901
or e-mail: Editor@Weeklystandard.com

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION
(Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

Publication Title: The Weekly Standard
Publication No.: 0001-3911
Filing Date: 10/1/99
Issue Frequency: 48 issues/year
Number of Issues Published Annually: 48
Annual Subscription Price: $78.00
Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: The Weekly Standard, 1211 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10036
Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: The Weekly Standard, 1211 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10036
Full Name and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: Publisher: William Kristol, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617
Managing Editors: Richard Starr, Claudia Winkler, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, DC, 20036-4617
Owner: News America Inc., 1211 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10036
Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: News America Inc., 1211 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10036

Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
TOTAL NO. COPIES	78,559	70,295
PAID AND/OR REQUESTED CIRCULATION		
Paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions stated on form 3541	47,847	41,335
Sales through dealers and carriers,street vendors, counter sales and other non-USPS paid distribution	9,043	8,467
TOTAL PAID AND/OR REQUESTED CIRCULATION	56,890	49,802
FREE DISTRIBUTION BY MAIL *(Samples, complimentary, and other free)*		
Outside-county as stated on form 3541	1,260	1,280
FREE DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE THE MAIL *(Carriers or Other Means)*	1,031	901
TOTAL FREE DISTRIBUTION	2,291	2,181
TOTAL DISTRIBUTION	59,181	51,983
COPIES NOT DISTRIBUTED	19,378	18,309
TOTAL	78,559	70,292
PERCENT PAID AND/OR REQUESTED CIRCULATION	96.0	96.0

I certify that all information furnished above is true and complete.
William Kristol, Publisher

the weekly Standard

The Beijing Love-In

What must have been the largest fleet of Lear jets ever assembled began touching down at Shanghai's brand-new international airport on Monday, September 27. It was like a Renaissance Weekend for the U.S. corporate power elite. Henry Kissinger was there, of course. So were Carla Hills and Mickey Kantor and Robert Rubin. And those were just the small fry. Also making the hajj were the chairmen, CEOs, and presidents of . . . well, practically the entire American business universe. Coca-Cola and PepsiCo. General Motors and Ford. Procter & Gamble, AT&T, Honeywell, Rockwell, ENRON, Boeing, and Cargill. Hundreds of them, from dozens of leading companies.

American businessmen went bowing and scraping to China in September—and got bluntly lectured about Taiwan.

They were gathered in Shanghai for a "global forum" celebrating the October 1 fiftieth anniversary of Mao's Communist party takeover of mainland China. And they were going to have a real fine time there—better even than at the Hamptons—because their hosts, Mao's heirs, had anticipated every potential inconvenience. And extinguished it.

The dog problem, for example. It's illegal to keep an unlicensed housepet in China, and the licenses cost more than most folks earn in a year. But still some Chinese remain devoted to their dogs, ignoring the relevant regulations and thereby abetting unpatriotic social disorder. So in the weeks before October 1, the government's Bureau of Environment and Health embarked on one of its periodic, nationwide anti-canine sweeps. Any dog found in a public place—whose owner could not instantly produce the requisite documents—was clubbed to death in broad daylight by a uniformed animal-control officer.

Would the great Henry Kissinger have to fly home from Shanghai with his shoes soiled by the droppings of some black-market bowser? Not a chance.

Nor would visiting American celebrities be confronted by any black-market human beings. The state security service's months-long "operation strike hard" had mopped up almost 70,000 of China's most-wanted "criminals." Criminals like Gao Hongming, Zha Jianguo, She Wanbao, and Liu Xianbin. All four are members of the "subversive" China Democracy party. In August, each was sentenced to prison, for 8 to 13 years, for the crime of advocating a multi-party political system.

Needless to say, human rights was not on the agenda of the Shanghai business pow-wow, nominally about China's "next 50 years." And *Time* magazine's latest issue was not then on the local newsstands; retail copies were abruptly confiscated by Communist party officials—because that week's feature package contained essays by exiled dissidents about Chinese human rights violations.

Note well: This fresh example of bald-faced censorship deterred not a single invited U.S. media executive from remaining through the conference's full schedule of craven Sinophilia—including the suppressed *Time*'s own editors. And the editors of *Fortune*, which magazine had organized and principally sponsored the "global forum." As the festivities opened, the chairman and CEO of Time-Warner, which owns both *Time* and *Fortune*, presented "my good friend Jiang Zemin," China's president and censor-in-chief, with a statue of Abraham Lincoln.

The chairman and CEO of Viacom, which owns MTV Mandarin, Asia's most widely watched music channel, spent his time in Shanghai proudly advertising the company's plans to expand its media presence in China still further. What editorial policies would these future subsidiaries adopt toward their intended market, asked one reporter on the scene? "You can rest assured," Viacom's chief replied, that "we are not going to take any action with respect to our content that is displeasing to the Chinese government." How's that again? "We do not view it as our role to tell the government of China how to run China," he elaborated. "Our job is not to impose on a country like China our culture, but if we do business in China to be aware of the specific sensitivities."

More American businessmen than one cares to think about have gone bowing and scraping to Communist China like this for more than a quarter century, of course. They have rarely received anything but vague assurances of "friendship" and "cooperation" in return. Nevertheless, the U.S. business and political establishment has persisted in the kowtow—so mesmerizing is the prospect of corporate profits tomorrow from sycophantic "engagement" today. And Washington and Wall Street have always angrily denied that such engagement might inevitably entail some major betrayal of America's principles and international security interests. Quite the contrary, the pro-China mythology has it: Contact with our free economy will slowly inspire the Chinese to emulate our free polity, as well. America cannot lose.

But it isn't true. The United States is as much affected by engagement as China is, and not for the better. For proof we need look no further than *Fortune*'s "global forum" itself.

Representatives of the World Trade Organization will meet in Seattle at the end of November. Before that meeting, the Clinton administration would like to strike a deal—long sought by American export and service industries—for China's accession to WTO membership. But bilateral negotiations have been going badly, and China has lately withdrawn even those necessary trade concessions it initially offered in April. So all those American CEOs went to Shanghai in late September looking, more than anything, for some sign from the Chinese of a renewed willingness to bargain. They did not get it.

Instead, they got bluntly lectured about Taiwan. In a public speech on September 27, Jiang Zemin reminded his American visitors that "we will not undertake to renounce the use of force" to absorb now-democratic Taiwan into the still-Communist mainland. Nor will China "allow" any foreign country to "support" a continued mainland-Taiwan "split." Three days later, at a private interview in Beijing with these same U.S. executives, prime minister Zhu Rongji made explicit Jiang's barely veiled threat. America, he said, must "quit emphasizing" that the question of Taiwanese retrocession should be settled only by peaceful means—and Washington must similarly stop "implying that it would help defend Taiwan" in the event of war. "Otherwise," Zhu warned, "sooner or later it will lead to an armed resolution."

As Zhu was delivering these ultimatums inside the Great Hall of the People, party cadres were busy outside in the streets of Beijing. Hunting down *that* city's illegal housepets. Expelling all the migrant workers to the countryside. Dumping untold thousands of other undesirables into temporary detention camps. And otherwise imposing the martial-law restrictions that would shut down central Beijing throughout the next morning's October 1 "National Day" commemoration. Once it began, that meticulously planned parade would be an awesome spectacle: next-generation Russian-manufactured fighter jets screaming overhead while nuclear missiles capable of reaching California rumbled through Tiananmen Square—led by 10,000 People's Liberation Army troops marching under a banner that read "The issue of Taiwan cannot be delayed indefinitely."

And how did American "engagement" respond to this provocation? By immediately capitulating. Less than 24 hours after the last soldier goose-stepped out of Tiananmen, the Clinton White House was leaking word to the *Washington Post* that it had "mobilized the business community" in an emergency effort to defeat a previously almost invisible piece of legislation called the "Taiwan Security Enhancement Act" (TSEA), now pending in both houses of Congress.

And what is TSEA? Mostly, it is a restatement of the traditional rationale for American support of a free and secure Taiwan. It certainly poses no practical threat to mainland China, nor on its face does it threaten U.S. business activity in China. The legislation authorizes or requires the president to do little on behalf of democratic Taiwan that he is not already authorized or required to do under current law. TSEA is thus an honorable gesture of support for Taiwan, but nothing more.

The only reason the American business community has to weigh in against such a gesture is to please the government of Communist China. So what started as an effort to build a trade relationship with the mainland has become American eagerness merely to placate Beijing. And U.S. relations with a democratic ally have been corrupted.

Behold, the essential nature of engagement with China is revealed. Call it appeasement. There is one institution that can salvage some honor from this disgraceful farce. That is the U.S. Congress, which should pass the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act without delay and dare the president to veto it.

—David Tell, for the Editors

The Man Who Knew Too Much

Edward C. Banfield, 1916-1999 BY JAMES Q. WILSON

IN THE INCREASINGLY DULL, narrow, methodologically obscure world of the social sciences, it is hard to find a mind that speaks not only to its students but to its nation. Most scholars can't write, many can't think. Ed Banfield could write and think.

When he died a few days ago, his life gave new meaning to the old saw about being a prophet without honor in your own country. Almost everything he wrote was criticized at the time it appeared for being wrongheaded. In 1955 he and Martin Meyerson published an account of how Chicago built public housing projects in which they explained how mischievous these projects were likely to be: tall, institutional buildings filled with tiny apartments built in areas that guaranteed racial segregation. All this was to be done on the basis of the federal Housing Act of 1949, which said little about what goals housing was to achieve or why other ways of financing it—housing vouchers, for example—should not be available. This was heresy to the authors of the law and to most right-thinking planners.

Within two decades, high-rise public housing was widely viewed as a huge mistake and efforts were made to create vouchers so that poor families could afford to rent housing in the existing market. Local authorities in St. Louis had dynamited a big housing project there after describing it as a hopeless failure. It is not likely that Ed and Martin's book received much credit for having pointed the way.

In 1958, Ed, with the assistance of his wife, Laura, explained why a backward area in southern Italy was poor. The reason was not government neglect or poor education but culture. In this area of Italy, the Banfields said in *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society*, people would not cooperate outside the boundaries of their immediate families. These "amoral familists" were the product of a high death rate, a defective system for owning land, and the absence of any extended families. By contrast, in a town of about the same size located in an equally forbidding part of southern Utah, the residents published a local newspaper and had a remarkable variety of associations, each busily involved in improving the life of the community. In southern Italy, people would not cooperate; in southern Utah, they scarcely did anything else.

Foreign aid programs ignored this finding and went about persuading other nations to accept large grants to build new projects. Few of these projects created sustained economic growth. Where growth did occur, as in Singapore, Hong Kong, and South Korea, there was little foreign aid and what existed made little difference.

Today, David S. Landes, in his magisterial book that explains why some nations become wealthy while others remain poor, offers a one-word explanation: culture. He is right, but the Banfield book written forty years earlier is not mentioned.

In 1970, Ed published his best-known and most controversial work, *The Unheavenly City*. In it he argued that the "urban crisis" was misunderstood. Many aspects of the so-called crisis, such as congestion or the business flight to the suburbs, are not really problems at all; some that are modest problems, such as transportation, could be managed rather well by putting high peak-hour tolls on key roads and staggering working hours; and many of the greatest problems, such as crime, poverty, and racial injustice, are things that we shall find it exceptionally difficult to manage.

Consider racial injustice. Racism is quite real, though much diminished in recent years, and it has a powerful effect. But the central problem for black Americans is not racism but poverty. And poverty is in part the result of where blacks live and what opportunities confront them. When they live in areas with many unskilled workers and few jobs for unskilled people, they will suffer. When they grow up in families that do not own small businesses, they will find it harder to move into jobs available to them or to meet people who can tell them about jobs elsewhere. That whites treat blacks differently than they treat other whites is obviously true, but "much of what appears . . . as race prejudice is really *class* prejudice."

In 1987 William Julius Wilson, a black scholar, published his widely acclaimed book, *The Truly Disadvantaged*. In it he says that, while racism remains a powerful force, it cannot explain the plight of inner-city blacks. The problem is poverty—social class—and that poverty flows from the material conditions of black neighborhoods. Banfield's book is mentioned in Wilson's bibliography, but his argument is mentioned only in passing.

Both Wilson and Banfield explain the core urban problems as ones that flow from social class. To Wilson, an "underclass" has emerged, made up of people who lack skills, experience long-term unemployment, engage in street crime, and are part of families with prolonged welfare dependency. Banfield would have agreed. But to Wilson, the underclass suffers from a shortage of jobs and available fathers, while for Banfield it suffers from a defective culture.

Wilson argued that changing the economic condition of underclass blacks would change their underclass culture; Banfield argued that unless the underclass culture was first changed (and he doubted much could be done in that regard), the economic condition of poor blacks would not

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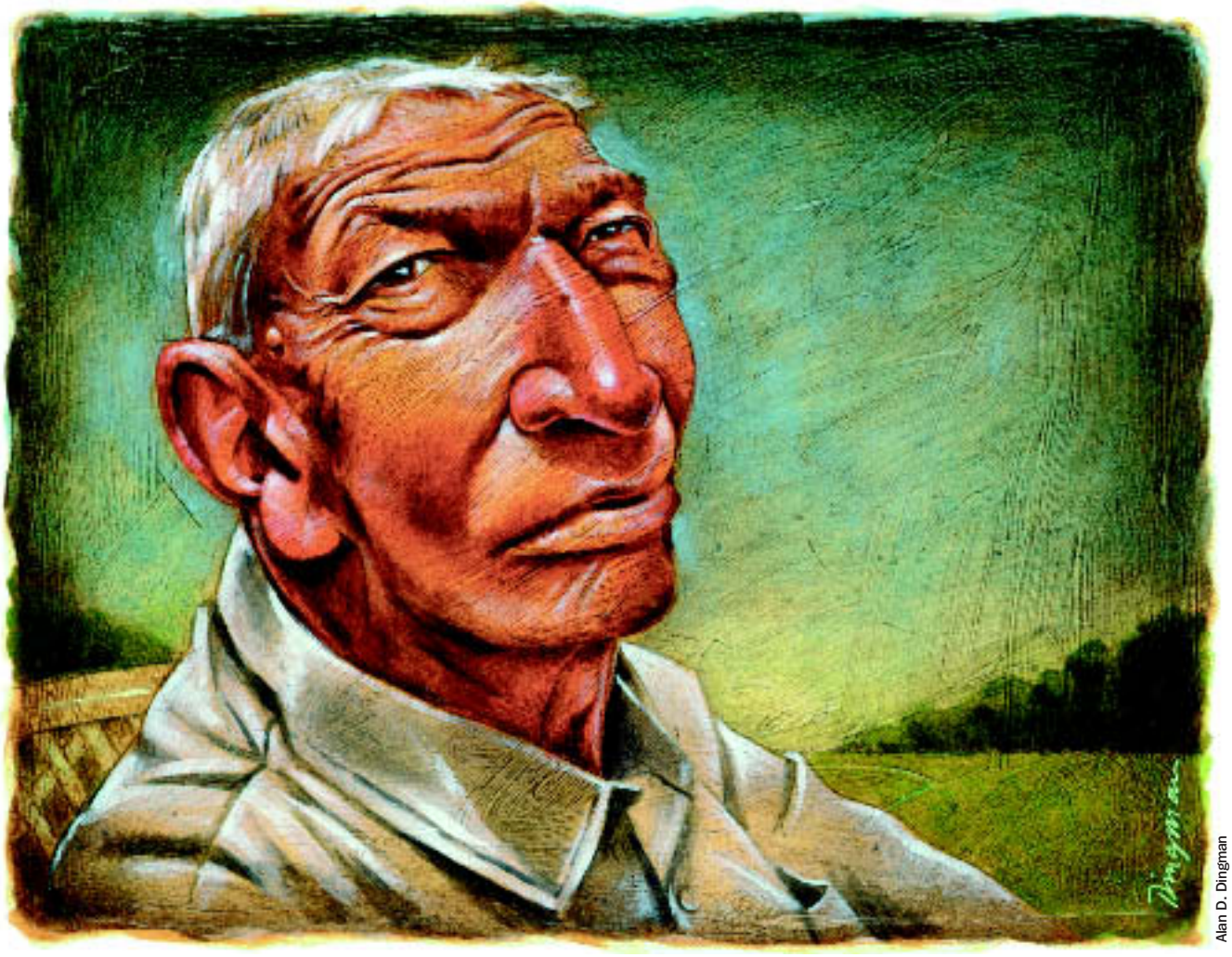

Alan D. Dingman

improve. The central urban problem of modern America is to discover which theory is correct.

Banfield had some ideas to help address the culture (though he thought no government would adopt them): Keep the unemployment rate low, repeal minimum-wage laws, lower the school-leaving age, provide a negative income tax (that is, a cash benefit) to the "competent poor," supply intensive birth-control guidance to the "incompetent poor," and pay problem families to send their children to decent day-care programs.

The Unheavenly City sold well but was bitterly attacked by academics and book reviewers; Wilson's book was widely praised by the same critics. But on the central facts, both books say the same thing, and on the unknown facts—What will work?—neither book can (of necessity) offer much evidence.

Ed Banfield's work would probably have benefited from a quality he was incapable of supplying. If it had been written in the dreary style of modern sociology or, worse, if he had produced articles filled with game-theoretic models and endless regression equations, he might have been taken more seriously. But Ed was a journalist before he was a scholar, and his commitment to clear, forceful writing was unshakable.

He was more than a clear writer with a Ph.D.; everything he wrote was embedded in a powerful theoretical overview of the subject. "Theory," to him, meant clarifying how people can think about a difficulty, and the theories he produced—on social planning, political influence, economic backwardness, and urban problems—are short masterpieces of incisive prose.

His remarkable mind was deeply rooted in Western philosophy as well as social science. To read his books is to be carried along by extraordinary prose in which you learn about David Hume and John Stuart Mill as well as about pressing human issues. To him, the central human problem was cooperation: How can society induce people to work together in informal groups—Edmund Burke's "little platoons"—to manage their common problems? No one has ever thought through this issue more lucidly, and hence no one I can think of has done more to illuminate the human condition of the modern world.

A few months ago, a group of Ed's former students and colleagues met for two days to discuss his work. Our fondness for this amusing and gregarious man was manifest, as were our memories of the tortures through which he put us as he taught us to think and write. Rereading his work as a whole reminded us that we had been privileged to know one of the best minds we had ever encountered, a person whose rigorous intellect and extraordinary knowledge created a standard to which all of us aspired but which none of us attained. ♦

Too Clever By Half?

In politics, triangulation is a skill best practiced sparingly. **BY FRED BARNES**

HOW CLEVER is George W. Bush? Before his October 1 speech to the Christian Coalition in Washington, Bush and his advisers debated how far he should go in tailoring his remarks to the specific interests of religious conservatives. Some aides felt Bush should talk up his Christian beliefs and pro-life position on abortion. But chief strategist Karl Rove and consultant Ralph Reed, the former Christian Coalition executive director, urged Bush to give his standard stump speech to prevent the press from saying he pandered to a right-wing audience. Bush agreed with Rove and Reed, but still wanted his Christian, pro-life views aired. The solution: Give the task of stressing that side of Bush to church-state lawyer Jay Sekulow, who was introducing the candidate. Bush is not only "standing up for the life of the unborn child," Sekulow said, his life "is a story of the hope and healing that comes from Jesus Christ."

Pretty clever, huh? And it worked. The Christian Coalition crowd responded enthusiastically to Bush, and the press didn't accuse him of pandering. Moreover, the underlying strategy of the Bush campaign for the Republican presidential nomination was vindicated, again. Bush wants to create a broad center-right coalition behind his candidacy. His goal, in Rove's high-flown description, is "melding a conservative mind with a compassionate heart." In practical terms, it means Bush is wary of embracing conservatives too closely, especially the Christian Right and congressional Republicans.

Getting away with this is not easy. Bush's tack is to agree with conservatives while not appearing to be one of them. He's at least nominally in favor of a constitutional amendment banning abortion, but he rarely mentions that. He endorsed the $792 billion GOP tax cut, opposes the comprehensive test-ban treaty, wants Social Security partially privatized, relishes serious tort reform, backs both school vouchers and charter schools, and is eager to increase defense spending dramatically and deploy the Strategic Defense Initiative. In other words, he backs the agenda of congressional Republicans. At the same time, he takes potshots at them.

AP/Wide World Photos

Bush, at the Manhattan Institute

The Bush team believes the image of conservatives has badly deteriorated since the GOP takeover of Congress. "We're fighting an image of the Republican party forged in '94," says a Bushie. "It's worth fighting." Another Bush adviser notes that Republican governors, on average, have a favorable rating of 62 percent and that Bush consistently leads Vice President Al Gore by 15 to 20 points in polls. But congressional Republicans "have become defined as mean-spirited, nasty, and kind of foaming." Thus, according to this adviser, Bush is justified in differentiating himself from them.

Few Republicans on Capitol Hill are indignant about this. For one thing, Bush's occasional zingers are mild compared with the attacks on them by Steve Forbes, Gary Bauer, Alan Keyes, and Patrick Buchanan. And unlike Sen. John McCain, Bush hasn't actually embraced any liberal proposals and isn't a hero of liberal reporters and columnists. Also, many congressional Republicans regard him as the most attractive candidate at the top of the GOP ticket. Representative David McIntosh of Indiana, who recently endorsed Bush, believes his own race for governor is strengthened by running on a ticket led by Bush.

There is a downside, however, to Bush's cleverness. His worst problem is that he appears to be copying a tactic made famous by President Clinton. It's not helpful to a Republican presidential candidate to be accused of "triangulation" and called Clintonesque. But that's what occurred after Bush zinged House Republicans for proposing to spread out Earned Income Tax Credit payments to avoid dipping into the Social Security surplus. Bush was merely seizing an opportunity to win some points for himself, but it produced a major embarrassment for Republicans and prompted Clinton to praise Bush. The president was particularly delighted by Bush's charge that Republicans were "balancing the budget on the backs of the poor." These are *liberal* buzz words, anathema to most Republicans.

If he's not careful, Bush may jeopardize what allies call his "governing strategy." The idea here, as Rep. Roy

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Blunt of Missouri puts it, "is to help produce a Congress you're generally in agreement with and which allows you to get things done." Blunt, the House liaison to the Bush campaign, doesn't think Bush has damaged this strategy. Bush barbs "will happen occasionally, but there will not be a pattern of it," Blunt says. Maybe not, but Bush has alienated House GOP whip Tom DeLay, for now at least. Moments before a key appropriations vote, Democrat David Obey of Wisconsin, a sour and self-righteous liberal, jumped on Bush's statement and insisted Republicans choose between Bush, the Texas governor, and DeLay, a Texas congressman. DeLay won that vote, but the Earned Income Tax Credit proposal soon died. Yes, DeLay will probably get over it. One of his colleagues says: "Bush may be trying to push himself away from us, but we're not trying to push ourselves away from him."

Another risk of Bush's GOP-bashing is that it may drown out Bush's message. This happened on October 5 when the candidate delivered an education speech in New York City. The speech included a serious plan to expand charter schools, but that drew minimal media attention. Instead, the press focused on three sentences, which had been drafted weeks before. All too often the GOP has, he said, claimed American culture is "slouching toward Gomorrah," used the "sterile language of rates and numbers, of CBO this and GNP that," and "confused the need for limited government with a disdain for government itself."

These were clever lines, painful to some Republicans, but all the more distressing to Democrats. Their greatest fear is that Bush is successfully softening his conservatism and making it palatable to a broad spectrum of voters. To battle against this, on October 7, Democrats brought out their biggest gun: Clinton. He immediately fell into Bush's trap, reminding reporters how conservative Bush is on guns, taxes, and Social Security. This is exactly what Bush wants others to say, sparing him the task. ♦

Attack of the Tomato Killers

The Clinton administration seeks diversity in an unlikely place. **BY STEPHEN HAYES**

THE WEATHER WAS GOOD, the setting was beautiful, but all was not well in the land of the tomato growers. The government was not happy. On September 8, the 24th annual Joint Tomato Conference opened at the Naples, Fla., Ritz-Carlton Hotel. Peter Harllee Jr., chairman of the Florida Tomato Committee, had just received a letter from an administrator with the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service scolding the committee for its lack of diversity. The committee advises the Department of Agriculture on tomato policy and federal regulations in Florida, and makes recommendations on tomato marketing and packing.

"I am concerned about the committee's lack of significant effort and commitment to increase participation of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities in the nomination process," wrote Kathleen Merrigan, a USDA diversity enforcer. "I will ask the committee to conduct new nominations for my consideration. Current committee members will continue to serve until I appoint the new committee," her letter decreed.

According to industry representatives, the problem—if there is one—is akin to getting blood from a turnip (or a tomato). The committee isn't "diverse" because the tomato-growing industry isn't diverse.

"I just don't know of any women or minorities in the business," says Wayne Hawkins, manager of the committee and executive vice president of the Florida Tomato Growers Exchange. "If there is a minority tomato grower in Florida, I don't know of any. They don't exist and she won't accept that."

Nevertheless, the committee launched a comprehensive campaign to publicize the nominations. Hawkins was shocked by Merrigan's charge that they didn't put forth a "significant effort" to attract minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. He says that the Florida Tomato Committee conducted extensive outreach in order to diversify the nominees.

"We did everything we possibly could to meet [the USDA's] require-

Stephen Hayes is a writer in Washington, D.C.

ments," argues Hawkins. "We contacted every known tomato grower, every packing house, every county extension director, and many newspapers. Several newspapers even wrote articles about our search. This is government harassment." If it is harassment, Hawkins can take some solace in the fact that the Florida Tomato Committee hasn't been singled out by the USDA or the Clinton administration.

"Let's just say it's an across-the-board effort," says Merrigan. "This is the last opportunity in this administration to make appointments. We're just following through on this administration's pledge on diversity."

Several USDA committees have already received rejection letters from Merrigan and, she declares, many more letters are going out. "From soybeans to beef, to onions in south Texas. The winter pear control commission in Yakima, Washington, is going to get one. We're ratcheting it up everywhere."

Even California, the state with the most racially and ethnically diverse population in the United States, has a small minority tomato-growing contingent. "About 12 percent of fresh tomato growers in California are Hispanic, and about 4 percent are Asian," according to Don Dressler of the Western Growers Association, a trade association representing the fresh produce industry in California and Arizona. "We have a very small black grower population in California agriculture and the tomato industry."

Meanwhile, Merrigan has demanded a detailed outreach plan from the Florida Tomato Committee before she will approve the new nominees. "If this is our last opportunity to make appointments, when do you stop saying 'please' and start saying, 'you must'?" Merrigan says she is not necessarily opposed to taking another look at the Florida data. "If Florida can document that there is absolutely no way to achieve diversity . . . we'll scrutinize it very carefully to see if it matches our data."

Wonderful. Your government at work. ♦

The Problem with Compassionate Conservatism

There's a better virtue for conservatives to appeal to. It's called justice. **BY HILLEL FRADKIN**

"AFTER YOU HIT A DOG, you pet it." This is how an unnamed adviser to George W. Bush explained (to the *New York Times*) the governor's revised and softened appraisal of the vices of his party, after howls of protest from conservatives greeted Bush's recent speech to the Manhattan Institute. The dog metaphor suggests a new working definition of compassionate conservatism: compassion for downtrodden conservatives. Bush heard his (fellow?) conservatives whimper, and felt and shared their pain. Bush also sympathizes, of course, with Americans who have been wounded by "the sterile numbers and economic news we [Republicans] talk about . . . and our gloom and doom scenario," our "slouching toward Gomorrah." "We must make sure people understand that we care a lot about people," he says. Otherwise, Republicans will not win the support of the public.

Bush is surely correct that a Republican party seen as narrow, censorious, and mean-spirited is headed for failure—and that the party should be able to avoid that image. Yet the events of recent weeks make one wonder whether Bush and his campaign know how to accomplish this. As matters stand now, Patrick Buchanan, a candidate for most mean-spirited person in America, is welcome in their Republican party; Judge Robert Bork, a courageous and generous man (and the author of *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*), who was the victim of one of the meanest political campaigns of the last 30 years, is not. This surely isn't compassionate. But is it even good politics for a campaign that has made mean-spiritedness its enemy? The contradiction may not yet be clear to the public. But a few more mean-spirited outbursts will call into question the sincerity of Bush's compassion. Without sincerity, compassionate politics looks like politics as usual.

Perhaps, the problem lies with having taken compassion as one's political slogan in the first place. Ostensibly this has been proven a winner by Bill Clinton's electoral success. The president wedded a reputation for compassion with many more-or-less conservative policies.

It is true that Bush, like Clinton, needed to remedy a certain bad odor of his party. In Clinton's case, the Democrats had become identified with liberalism, and liberalism had fallen into disrepute; Clinton was obliged to suggest a more conservative orientation. He did this by calling himself a New Democrat, with "new" meaning more conservative. His "compassion" was conveyed by his persona and the fact that he was, after all, a Democrat.

Bush faced a different problem. Ronald Reagan had made conservatism respectable and even popular. Conservatism itself was identified most directly with the principle of individual liberty; but Reagan's optimistic rhetoric, his embrace of all Americans, and his pursuit of that great common objective, victory in the Cold War, spared it the taint of selfish-

Hillel Fradkin, a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, is working on a book about freedom and morality.

ness and meanness. Reagan's successors, regrettably, have failed to present conservatism in the same spirit. They have frittered away this advantage in various ways. They have had either too narrow a vision or no vision. Above all, they have, as Bush complains, "confused the need for limited government with disdain for government itself." As often as not, they have conveyed the impression that they think the purpose of political action is to wreck or dismantle the government, then go back to the only important thing, private life. Since that, of course, proves impossible, they wind up pursuing a very narrow politics.

Bush is right to see this as the great problem of his party and his candidacy. He is right, too, that the remedy is a politics somehow conveying a sense that the American people do form a public, and that the concerns of that public as a whole deserve respect, attention, and service. But is Bush right that "compassionate conservatism" is a sustainable definition of this undertaking?

Now compassion, or a reputation for it, may be a useful attribute in democratic politics. It suggests fellow feeling between politicians and their constituents. Compassion is not, however, a political or public category. It is a private one. Accordingly, many of the policies the Bush campaign has embraced are designed to encourage or support private expressions of charity by individuals or small groups. This is all well and good as far as it goes. But politics, as a public activity, cannot simply provide for the free exercise of compassion. Compassion asks either too little or too much of politics. It is either too high or too low a goal for public action.

In light of this, one wonders whether there isn't some other principle to join with the principle of liberty to express public concern. And indeed there is. Every American invokes it when he pledges allegiance to the flag and the American republic, whose blessings are said to be "liberty and justice for all."

Justice would do just fine. Justice is a public as well as a private virtue; it is *the* public virtue. It is the virtue or principle that is concerned with the whole public and every citizen. Moreover, it describes and justifies Bush's policy recommendations far better than compassion. Take his proposals in education, which are important. Is the promise to provide parents and children with better and more accountable schools, and even allow choice among them, an act of compassion? Not at all. It is the just response to the just claims of our citizens. If it is true that the Republican party has been too much the "liberty party" and has conveyed a sense of indifference to our duties and concern for others, let it be the "liberty *and* justice party."

Justice like compassion can be passionate and has its own generosity of spirit. But unlike compassion it does not require that one never be harsh, especially in politics. And there, perhaps, is the rub. Compassion allows the pretense that being warm and fuzzy is all that life requires. Perhaps that is what the American public now wants. Such is the lesson some are inclined to draw from eight years of Clintonism. But the same eight years show how empty and self-serving "compassion" may be.

Some months ago, Bush expressed the view that the real question for him and other members of the baby boom generation is whether they have learned from their youthful mistakes and are prepared to contribute something worthy to their country. Exactly so. Bill Clinton, the first representative of that generation to occupy the White House, failed the test. As in his youth, President Clinton adhered to the self-serving boomer creed that the expression of good intentions was goodness itself. The legacy he leaves is political and moral confusion. Governor Bush owes it to his generation, his country, and himself not to make the same mistake. ♦

Shanghai on the Hudson

Just where did Hillary Clinton get her strangest health care statistic ever? BY BRIAN A. BROWN

HEALTH CARE REFORM is in the air again. Just released census data reveals an increase in the number of uninsured women and children. Bill Bradley outlines a health care package to cover the uninsured just as the House passes the Patients' Bill of Rights. Old hands from the first-term Clinton White House—Mandy Grunwald, Harold Ickes, and Maggie Williams—are finding gainful political employment in, unsurprisingly, Hillary's Senate campaign.

Americans shouldn't have long to wait for another lecture series from Hillary the Health Care Expert. One talking point the advertisers, image experts, and political consultants working for Hillary 2000 might advise her never to use again comes from her 1998 speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland: "A child in Shanghai has a better chance of living to the age of five than a child born in New York City."

Who knew babies in Shanghai were so well off? Apparently, Larry Summers did. The day before Hillary mentioned that depressing finding, then deputy secretary of the Treasury Summers—who at the time regularly lectured foreigners on America's shortcomings—made the exact same point. Summers's office said the source for the factoid was a *New York Times* piece from the early '90s by the paper's Beijing bureau chief, Nicholas Kristof.

Hillary Clinton

Thomas Fluharty

In April 1991, Kristof indeed wrote about China's remarkable health care revolution: "In Shanghai, 10.9 infants out of 1,000 die before their first birthday, while in New York City infant mortality rate is 13.3 per 1,000 live births." Kristof quoted one Gail Henderson of the University of North Carolina School of Medicine saying, the Chinese "health care system really is a shining light of the Maoist era that continues to shine to this day." Yet, Kristof cautioned the reader: "Third World health statistics are uncertain."

Kristof's piece, however, did not cite any source for the data. The World Bank was mentioned later in the article, but only in connection with infant mortality rates nationwide in China—which were much higher than in the United States. Calls to the World Bank revealed that they rely on the United Nations for such data. But the U.N.'s Economic and Social Affairs department reported they do not break down infant mortality on a city-by-city basis. They did admit, however, that all such data are based on "national surveys." That is to say the Chinese Communist party.

So where did the glowing Shanghai report come from? Kristof's 1994 book, *China Wakes*, again repeats the finding—only this time infant mortality rates for New York and Shanghai are almost exactly the same. A footnote reveals the source: telephone interviews "with the Shanghai Foreign Affairs Office." One would think that mortality numbers would be the province of Chinese health authorities, not any foreign affairs office. Clearly the source is, again, the Chinese Communist party. Curiously, another footnote in Kristof's book cites a 1993 article by none other than Lawrence Summers for this variation: "A Shanghai baby is more likely to become literate than a New York City baby"—a comparison Kristof admits is "risky."

Anyway, it turns out that Hillary Clinton was probably relying not just on the Chinese Communist party for data, but on Kristof who relies on Summers who relies on Kristof who relies on the Chinese Communist par-

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ty. Even if we give senatorial candidate Clinton the benefit of the doubt—let's assume the resource-strapped Communist party could make an accurate survey of Shanghai's infant mortality and that it had no desire to distort information—the latest data from 1998 (the year Hillary made the comment) show that New York City's infant mortality rate was only 6.8 per thousand, almost half of what it was when Kristof described the situation in 1991.

Then again, perhaps Hillary learned about the incredible well-being of Shanghai babies from her husband. He used a very similar factoid in stump speeches during his 1992 presidential campaign. A child born in Washington, D.C., then governor Clinton pointed out, "has less chance to be a year old than a child in Shanghai." The District's infant mortality rate was at the time outrageously high, earning it titles like "Infant Mortality Capital of America." Still, judging from these instances, one might conclude that a baby is better off being born in Shanghai than "in many of our cities," as Clinton told a crowd in Birmingham, Alabama. No doubt Clinton, too, was using Kristof's data and, indirectly, relying on the Communist party for information about the health of American babies.

Any politician can make a mistake, but Hillary's latest health care doom-saying isn't a run-of-the-mill numbers mix-up. She heard an outrageous proposition—that a country with a per capita income of a few hundred dollars could trump New York City's health care—but did not pause to scrutinize the proposition before giving it new life in her own speech. One can see how the factoid had the ring of truth for her. American health care, she has told us many times, is bad; collectivist tendencies—villages, universal health care systems—are good.

One, of course, hopes New Yorkers will be skeptical about a candidate who relies on information from Beijing to propose how their tax dollars should be spent. ♦

Jack Gargan, Reform Party Man

He once vowed to "throw the hypocritical rascals out." Now, about to take the helm of a "sinking ship," he's surrounded by rascals.

By Matt Labash

Cedar Key, Florida

Descending into the Reform party's nerve center can be a bit unnerving. But it's a scenic ride. Pushing down a two-lane highway that dead ends an hour-and-a-half west of Gainesville, one passes thick-ribbed oaks laced in Spanish moss, smoked mullet stands, and "lawn critter" kiosks. Across channel bridges that span osprey-populated marshes, one enters the sun-kissed isle of Cedar Key, home of the new head of the Reform party, chairman-elect Jack Gargan.

The Reform party has long been knocked for being little more than a P.O. box in Dallas. Since 1995 its chairman, Russ Verney, has been on Ross Perot's payroll working out of Perot's Dallas office building. Verney regularly insists it's not Perot's party, though he usually does so on a phone paid for by Perot, as the anemic party coffers (estimates range from $10,000 to $80,000) don't cover luxuries such as long-distance bills.

But all this is changing now that Gargan is taking over from Verney. When Gargan takes the party's helm on January 1, headquarters will be transferred to his wood-paneled study on the edge of the Gulf of Mexico. And while the ride into the new nerve center is picturesque, its terminus is fraught with peril. "Whatever you do," Gargan warns, giving directions, "don't cross the runway." He is speaking of the public airstrip that sits 50 feet from his front yard. If a visitor makes a left onto the runway instead of Jack's driveway, he could become ground meat in the propeller of an incoming Cessna.

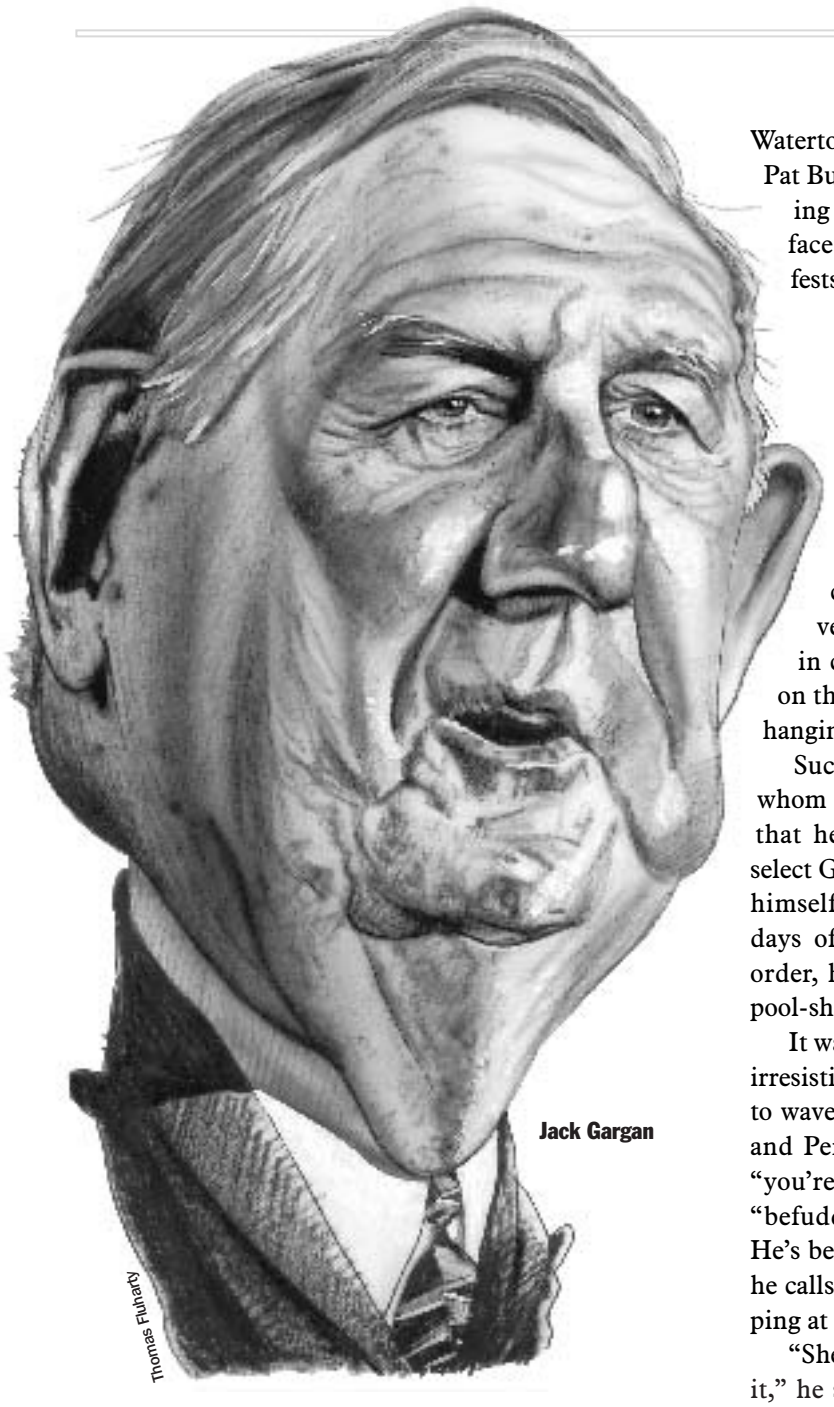
Matt Labash is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard.

Gargan was initially resistant to a visit in his natural habitat. "I'm up to my balls in work," he protested. But after I wheel into his driveway, he gladly carries my bag to his guest room. It is hard to imagine most party chairmen insisting a reporter stay in their guest room (or for that matter being "up to their balls in work"), but Gargan is not most party chairmen and Reform is no ordinary party. After depositing the bag, he conducts a tour of the premises, showcasing his homemade seawall, his mounted sailfish with windchimes hanging from its spearlike jaw, and his collection of laminated nametags worn at Reform party conventions (Reformers, more than most, love to convene).

There's a forbidding side to the island. Pine beetles eat Gargan's once majestic trees. Hurricanes have carried away his picnic table, washed his compressor into the front yard, and flooded his bottom floor, which explains the peeling wallpaper. Then there are the plane crashes. Four weeks ago, a single-engine Catana crashed once while taxiing and a second time after winging a palm tree during takeoff. But its pilot was lucky. When Gargan says "we've had about ten deaths since I've been here," he's not counting his neighbor two doors down who turned up dead in the Gulf a few weeks ago. (She hit her head while falling off her dock.) He speaks, rather, of the air mishaps, which sporadically turn up surprise cadavers, like the one he discovered bobbing in the water not far from his house. Still, "it's my little piece of heaven," Jack says of his spread.

A man who shrugs in death's wake may be ideally suited to head a party that has come to resemble a shipwreck. "I didn't want this job because [the Reform party] was, and maybe still is, a sinking ship," says Gargan. "But it's better to save a sinking ship than it is to build a new one."

Your average party chairman would not so readily



Jack Gargan

Thomas Fluharty

compare himself to the skipper of a doomed vessel. But in this, too, the 68-year-old former insurance salesman may be the ideal face of the Reform party, where the prevailing orthodoxy is to be unorthodox. Gargan's is not the mug of a fresh-scrubbed idealist. With his Irish eyes, jug-handle ears and slack wattle, he looks like he escaped from a group photo of James Michael Curley's ward heelers. But the Reform party is starved for faces: Perot is inaccessible. Verney is stepping down. And the next highest elected official after Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura (who has just lent a noble air to the party by denouncing religion and expressing his wish to be reincarnated as a 38-Double-D bra) is the mayor of Watertown, New York. Consequently, as outsiders like Pat Buchanan and Donald Trump circle the party, eyeing Reform's presidential nomination, Gargan's is a face that will proliferate on Sunday morning gasfests for months to come.

I first saw Gargan at last July's Reform party convention in Dearborn, Michigan. With Ventura-like candor, he huddled with a delegate describing in colorful terms—Gargan tends to curse like a clap-ridden sailor—how they needed to seize the party from the clutches of the Perotbots. It was the kind of conversation rival political insiders usually have only in cloistered war rooms. But Gargan was having it on the convention floor, with a television boom-mike hanging inches above his head.

Such gaffes didn't cost Gargan, however. Ventura, whom Gargan's only spoken to twice, let it be known that he'd likely leave the party if Reformers didn't select Gargan over the Perot faction's candidate. Gargan himself created a rush of good will when, after three days of somnolent speeches and pedantic points of order, he announced himself as a motorcycle-riding, pool-shooting poker player with "an eye for the ladies."

It was the kind of substantive speech Reformers find irresistible. And right before Gargan mounted his chair to wave Nixonian V-signs, Reform party spokeswoman and Perotista Donna Donovan says Gargan told her "you're through." Donovan's snipes—she calls Jack "befuddled" and worse—are no surprise to Gargan. He's been enduring these sorts of calumnies from what he calls "the same yappy little people who've been nipping at my heels," and he says this one "is a total lie."

"She *is* through, so I would not have minded saying it," he says, "but I did not say it." Who said what to whom is a constant source of party tension. And tension is the axis on which Reform turns. The party itself, says Gargan, breaks into four main factions: Perotistas, Venturans, the unaligned, and the Fulaniites, followers of the radical Lenora Fulani, one of Reform's strongest party-builders. Gargan calls Fulani "a Communist," her followers he calls "disciples," and her bloc of voters he says "is for sale to the highest bidder" (as she proved when lunching recently with her ideological antonym, Pat Buchanan).

While debate rages over what Reform stands for, or whether it stands for anything, all Reformers seem to agree that they are the antidote to politics-as-usual,

which couldn't be further from the truth. There, is, in fact, no group that more regularly engages in intraparty squabbles, cheap hammer shots, and venal power grabs than the non-career politicians who run the Reform party.

Consider what has transpired just since Gargan's July selection: Verney has called for Ventura's resignation over a *Playboy* interview that didn't represent the "values" of the party, though "values" are supposed to be the unmentionable third rail of Reform politics. The Venturans in turn called for Verney's resignation, though Verney is already set to resign at the end of the year. The Perotistas, who fancy themselves the open, democratic wing of the party—their dictatorial leader excepted—ensured that the site of the 2000 convention wasn't voted on at the last convention (delegates would likely have chosen Minnesota). Instead, the Perot-controlled executive committee voted to hold the convention in Long Beach, far away from Ventura's turf. The Venturans, who claim to be democracy's best hope against heavy-handed Perotbots, tried to boot a Minnesota executive committee member who voted for the California site.

Gargan complains about the Reform party e-mails: "Saying 'I'm going to bury a hatchet in your head'—that's got to stop."

Then there was the late September state party convention in Connecticut. Gargan showed up with the "dissident" group (Reformers are up to their gills in dissident groups) to play peacemaker with that state's "establishment" group, now chaired by Donna Donovan. A fight commenced when Gargan discovered that the establishment would not allow entry unless attendees kicked in $25 to hear speeches and enjoy the buffet. "I went down to the bar and got a kielbasa and a root beer for $4.15," says Gargan. When his feathers unruffled, he came back to find the place crawling with recently Reformed Buchananites, who voted as Donovan instructed. (Buchanan, who squawks endlessly that George W. Bush has rigged the Republican nomination, is looking to infiltrate state parties so he can rig the Reform nomination.)

It was bad enough that the dissidents lost. But then, Donovan admits, one of her side taunted the dissidents with an e-mail that began "Hey loosers [sic]!!" Many nice things can be said about Reformers. They are passionate, engaged, and will fight to the finish. But they are not strong spellers, as I learn when Jack lets me watch him reply to his scores of daily e-mails, and we fall into virulent disagreement over how to spell "speech." (He insists on "speach," I stick by Webster's.)

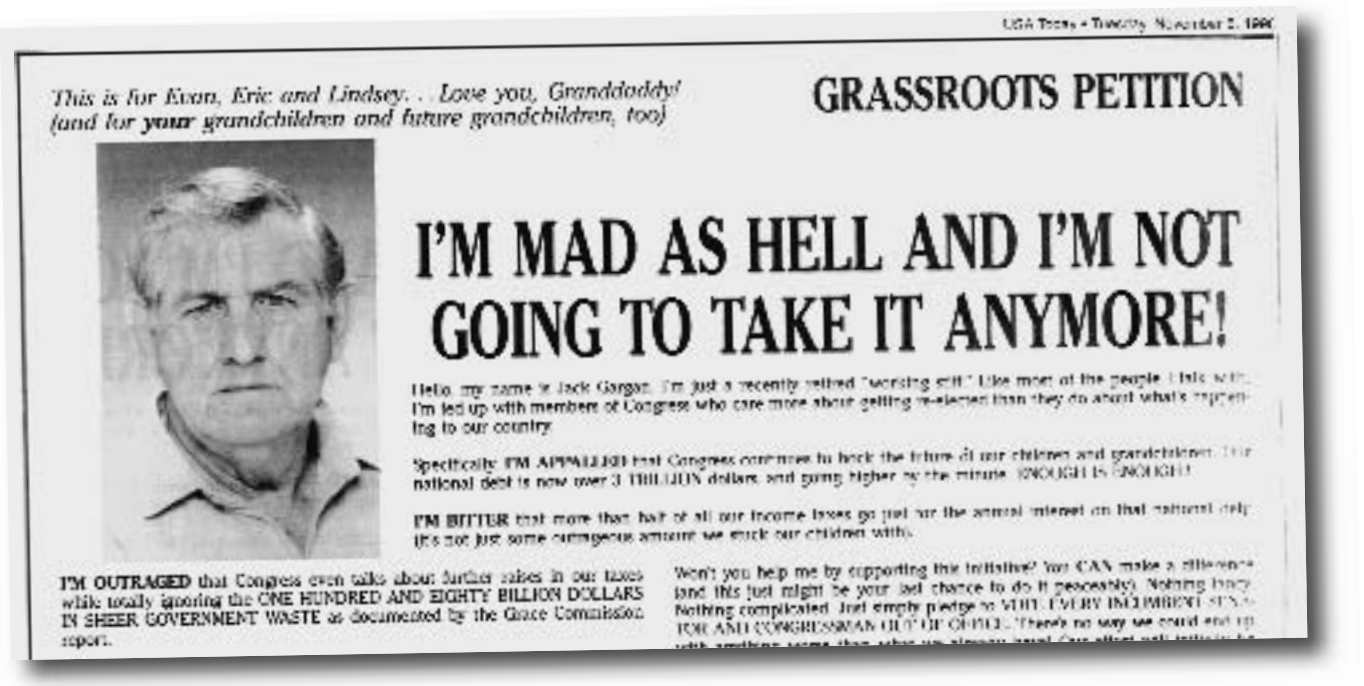
E-mail is the glue that holds the party together, or—if Gargan is correct in his assessment—tears the party apart. Most party activists probably don't need to heat their homes owing to the sheer amount of flame in their e-mail accounts, as they accuse each other of everything from subterfuge to murder. Gargan, who has long advocated raucous bottom-up democracy, plans to start censoring the messages as soon as possible. "Saying 'I'm going to bury a hatchet in your head'—that's got to stop," complains Gargan, who has lately been getting singed by e-mails from his own vice-chair.

As I sit in Gargan's study eyeing a thick stack of e-mail printouts that he has marked "Potshots and Questionable Situations," he picks up the ringing phone before his gluttonous fax machine has a chance to gobble the incoming call. It's a *Meet the Press* producer, who takes several minutes to deliver the good news.

"Hot damn!" Gargan exclaims while hanging up the phone. He explains that the producer secured Gargan a solo segment on the show, even though Russ Verney had called up and tried to butt his way on the air. "I'll take him on in a debate any time, anywhere," says Gargan, "but don't call up and get on *my show*. I don't do that to him."

Gargan's sinking-ship metaphor is beginning to sink in. Sure, the Reform party could inflict real damage on the major-party candidates in next year's elections, but Reformers are a lot easier to take seriously when one is not in their midst. It is a testament to Gargan's sense of duty that he endures such tumult. And I have no trouble believing him when he says "I didn't even want the damn job," as we adjourn to a shorefront restaurant. I order a bottle of wine in an attempt to loosen Jack's tongue—a bit of overkill, as he is game to discuss anything from why he prefers using the f-word over profanity ("It's wrong to use the Lord's name in vain") to the virtues of an Oprah Winfrey candidacy ("Now don't call her ridiculous; that's a lady with a lot of class").

Gargan has had plenty of other jobs, from bowling alley pin-setter to horse-racing announcer to chicken farmer—a job his alcoholic stepfather made him perform as a teenager. His steepest challenge while over-



This is for Evan, Eric and Lindsey. . . Love you, Granddaddy!
(and for ***your*** *grandchildren and future grandchildren, too)*

GRASSROOTS PETITION

I'M MAD AS HELL AND I'M NOT GOING TO TAKE IT ANYMORE!

I'M OUTRAGED that Congress even talks about further raises in our taxes while totally ignoring the ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY BILLION DOLLARS IN SHEER GOVERNMENT WASTE as documented by the Grace Commission report.

seeing 500 chickens in a converted garage on the outskirts of Philadelphia was warding off rats. "We heard that if you roasted a rat but didn't kill him, it'd drive the other rats away," says Gargan. "So we'd hold them over a fire, singe all the fur off of them, and let them go. I don't know that it worked—we still had to shoot the bastards."

After a mid-career incarnation as an insurance salesman, Gargan finally settled in Tampa, began writing the first of five books on money management, and started one of the country's premier professional associations for financial planners. Though the profession attracted a slippery breed, Gargan's bedrock sense of integrity manifested itself in his nickname: "Jack The Ripper." He was so deemed because if a lapsed member failed to meet the association's annual requirements and didn't return the association's certificate after three warnings by mail, Gargan would drive hundreds of miles out of his way to visit their office and retrieve the parchment. "If they gave me any crap," Gargan says, "I'd rip the damn thing off the wall. Our membership is for people of integrity. We had a class operation."

Gargan's political awakening came in 1990, when he started a group called Throw the Hypocritical Rascals Out (THRO). He traveled across the country in a Dodge van, encouraging angry citizens to dispose of their elected officials. Gargan raised $2.5 million for his term-limits effort by taking out hundreds of full-page newspaper ads that featured his surly mug shot next to the headline: "I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it anymore!"

Brief celebrity followed, even landing Gargan on *Larry King Live* (King was absent for a Jewish holiday; the guest host was Pat Buchanan). Though Gargan's alignment with Ventura puts him at odds with Perot, Gargan has been credited with first imploring Ross to run. In the early days, Gargan was patched right through to Perot whenever he called. But like many of the volunteers who became concerned with Perot's increasingly paranoid behavior, Gargan grew disillusioned. After a series of candid admonishments ("I'm nobody's yes man," Gargan says), his access dried up, and he hasn't spoken to Perot since 1992.

In 1994, though he claimed not to "give a damn about being governor of Florida," Gargan ran anyway—as a Democrat and a "ticked-off granddad" who lost in a landslide in the primary to Lawton Chiles. While Gargan had a habit of weeping in front of reporters when contemplating the debt that was being piled on his grandchildren—a practice he continues to this day—he was no softie. He advocated Singapore-style caning "of the young punks who are running amok" and the export of Florida felons to Mexican prisons, and he promised that he'd kill all 342 of Florida's death-row inmates on his first day in office.

Last year, though Gargan didn't "need the job" or the "hassle," he ran as a Reform party candidate for Congress in Florida's fifth district (Gargan spends lots of time running for jobs he doesn't want). He lost to incumbent Democrat Karen Thurman by 32 points,

despite innovative campaign tactics like promising to raffle off $50,000 of his congressional salary to supporters.

But I learn while emptying Jack's wine as he prattles on that there was once a job Gargan relished, one he was pretty good at, too. In the 1980s, he became an accomplished handwriting analyst, doing $500-an-hour gigs on cruise ships and at "class hotels," deciphering the personalities of conventioneers from their scribblings. When I implore Gargan to do mine, he brushes the crab claws off my paper placemat and tells me to write out a paragraph. Snatching the placemat from me, he ooohs and aaahs: "This is not easy y'know, it's like a giant computer in my head." Finally, after careful study, he embarks on a deadly serious ten-minute prognosis of Who I Am. According to Gargan, I love bright colors, arrange all the tens together in my billfold, love the song "Old Time Rock'n'Roll," and am orderly, opinionated, and stubborn. He is mostly wrong. And when I tell him so, he tells me that he's had cataract surgery and is rusty, though "even on a bad day, I'm 90 percent accurate."

In the 1980s, Gargan became an accomplished handwriting analyst, doing $500-an-hour gigs on cruise ships and at "class hotels."

Since he seems eager for another chance, I later ask him to examine the signatures of Jesse Ventura and Ross Perot, and he tells me they "have an amazing similarity of character traits. They are both ruled by emotions rather than logic. They're both opinionated. In Jesse, there is an obsession to succeed, more so than in Ross. Both bring tremendous enthusiasm. Both are extremely opinionated. Both have a huge ego."

With stunts like this, it's small wonder detractors in his party imply Gargan is batty. But hitting the media trail, as he's done for the last two months, Gargan has proved a capable spokesman who may turn out to be the most lucid of all Reformers (which is probably like saying Squeaky Fromme was the most level-headed Manson-family member). Like a tent-revivalist warning of hellfire, Gargan rings the alarm about his party's presidential-selection process.

Not only can the party be hijacked by its wide-open nomination process, which allows anyone, even Republicans and Democrats, to request a ballot in the Reform party primary. But if there is an outpouring of genuine voter interest, or more cynical ballot drives by mischief-making non-Reformers, the party's paltry state organizations may well collapse trying to get the ballots sent out. It is an arduous, labor-intensive process checking each voter against voter-registration lists (which many of the state Reform parties can't even afford to buy). And Gargan further contends that a flood of requests could break the party. Though there are $2.5 million in federal funds allotted for the Reform convention, it's not clear these can be spent on primary costs. If the FEC doesn't give its approval, the party might not even be able to mail its ballots. "We could be the laughingstock of the nation," Gargan warns.

Gargan also worries that a mercenary candidate could do an end-run around the Reformers, grabbing the nomination not by focusing on the primary, but by stacking delegates. Though it is intended only for emergencies (such as a primary winner committing a felony before the nominating convention), a loophole in the Reform constitution allows convention delegates to overturn the primary results with a two-thirds vote. Since the Reform party has an anemic membership, and many congressional districts don't even have delegates, a well-funded, well-organized candidate could take over the state parties and control two-thirds or more of the delegates at the convention.

Gargan doesn't necessarily think this will happen. "But why take a chance?" he says, comparing the Reformers' situation to a Y2K Armageddon. Gargan is not one to take a chance on that either, and though he has drawn some fire for alarmist Y2K talk, I assure him there is nothing shameful about Y2K preparedness. So he shows me the extra ammo stash in his nightstand and his cabinets filled with canned goods (Libby's corned beef, Kash and Karry chunk pineapple, and Bush's Bavarian style sauerkraut).

Sure, people may laugh. Let them. Gargan is something better than Y2K-OK. He is honest and unvarnished, completely open and genetically incapable of political obfuscation. Though he could be "out there, doing my handwriting gig for $500 an hour," he works for free. And he does so because he is a man with a mission at once simple and Sisyphean. "I just want everybody to know," he says, "that the Reform party is not made up of nuts." ♦

Al Gore's Great Abortion Flip-Flop

Once upon a time he was pro-life. Then he got ambitious, reversed his position, and denied that he'd ever changed.

By Matthew Rees

Guess which presidential candidate wrote the following: "I have consistently opposed federal funding of abortions. In my opinion, it is wrong to spend federal funds for what is arguably the taking of a human life. It is my deep personal conviction that abortion is wrong. I hope that some day we will see a drop in the outrageously large numbers of abortions which currently take place. . . . I share your belief that innocent human life must be protected, and I am committed to furthering this goal."

This might sound like Gary Bauer, but it's not. Nor is it George W. Bush, Steve Forbes, or any other Republican. Al Gore wrote those words in July 1987, on the eve of his first bid for the White House. Given that Gore has been zinging Bill Bradley recently for reversing himself on a few minor issues, Gore's own reversal and public equivocations on abortion issues are all the more notable. The record shows that he began his political career in the 1970s as a consistent pro-lifer; his conversion to pro-choice began with his 1984 Senate bid, and his enthusiasm for abortion rights has only intensified. The simplest explanation for the switch: Ambition trumped principle.

When Gore entered the House in 1977, abortion loomed large as a policy issue. *Roe* v. *Wade* had been decided four years earlier, and pro-lifers were intent on chipping away at liberal abortion laws. Most House votes on the subject at the time involved whether federal funds could be spent on abortions, and Gore consistently voted against doing so (even in cases where continuation of the pregnancy could result in death or "serious health damage" to the mother or the unborn child). By the end of Gore's first House term, he'd voted on 17 abortion measures and taken the pro-life position 13 times.

Opposing abortion was popular in Gore's culturally conservative central Tennessee district. But even after he'd established himself there, his voting record remained pretty consistently pro-life. In 1979, for example, he voted against a Henry Waxman amendment authorizing federal funding for abortions in cases of rape and incest. And in 1980, 1983, and 1984, he opposed including coverage for abortions in the health plans available to federal employees.

The most revealing of Gore's abortion votes came in July 1984. That's when he supported an amendment offered by representative Mark Siljander, a Republican, defining "unborn children from the moment of conception" as "persons" who were entitled to the full protection of federal civil rights laws. The amendment was sufficiently controversial that even some of the House's staunchest pro-lifers, such as Harold Volkmer of Missouri, opposed it.

Gore voted against abortion 84 percent of the time during his eight years in the House, according to Douglas Johnson of the National Right to Life Committee, a strong pro-life record for a Democrat. There were other Democrats, like Richard Gephardt, who were more consistent and adopted a higher profile on the issue (Gephardt too is now reliably pro-choice). But Gore was still viewed as an ally by anti-abortion leaders like representative Chris Smith, a New Jersey Republican. "We counted him as a staunch pro-lifer," recalls Smith, "particularly on funding issues."

After his election to the Senate in 1984, Gore began being touted as one of the Democratic party's rising stars. But he and his supporters knew he wouldn't stand a chance as a national Democratic candidate if he maintained a pro-life voting record in a pro-choice party, so

Matthew Rees is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard.

he did what any ambitious politician does: He changed his position. During his eight years in the Senate, Gore voted on 32 abortion-related measures, and on 30 he voted pro-choice.

The most striking manifestation of Gore's flip-flop came on a series of Senate votes concerning the funding of abortions by the government of the District of Columbia. As a House member, Gore had voted to bar the District government from using any of its federal funds for abortions. But as a senator he voted five times the other way—and he did so as early as November 1985, even while continuing to espouse his old view in public. In 1986, for example, he told the *Washington Monthly* that even though the denial of federal funding for abortions resulted in unequal access for poor women, he nonetheless favored withholding such funds. Said Gore, "I feel the principle of the government not participating in the taking of what is arguably human life is more important."

When Gore launched his presidential campaign in 1987, he posed as a moderate Democrat. On abortion, that meant opposing federal funding, but otherwise staking out a pro-choice stance. He even had the nerve to paste Gephardt for liberalizing his position on abortion, saying, "The next president has to be someone who the people believe will stay with his convictions." Yet he himself hedged on the issue in a way that would have done Bill Clinton proud. "My personal view is that the federal government should not be involved [in funding abortions]," he told reporters in March 1988. "But if the overwhelming majority changed their view and wished to see that measure enacted, I would not veto it."

Queasiness over Gore's record was nicely captured by one of his advisers, who told Michael Kramer, then a columnist for *U.S. News and World Report*, how the campaign was going to respond to Democratic criticism of the "yes" vote on the Siljander amendment. "Since there's a record of that vote," said the adviser, "we have only one choice . . . deny, deny, deny." Indeed, when Gore was asked about the Siljander amendment on *Meet the Press* in February 1988, he said, "I have never supported restrictions on the ability of the woman to make a choice in having an abortion."

Queasiness over Gore's record was exemplified by the adviser who told Michael Kramer, "we have only one choice . . . deny, deny, deny."

And he's been denying ever since. After he was selected to be Bill Clinton's running mate, Gore's history as an abortion foe provoked questions from the media, since Clinton favored federal funding and opposed just about any federal restriction. That left Gore with two options. One was to say he'd changed his mind, as George Bush did upon being selected as Ronald Reagan's running mate in 1980. The other was to adopt something approximating the Mario Cuomo position: I'm personally opposed to abortion, but I'm not going to impose my views on others.

Gore chose a third way that nicely dovetailed with his running mate's penchant for fibbing. If asked about his past, he denied he'd ever voted against abortion and then quickly changed the subject. Here's what happened in July 1992 when Paula Zahn, then of CBS News, asked him about his earlier opposition to federal funding for abortion: "Well, first of all my position has never changed, I've always held the same position, and hold the same position now. Secondly, there should be no doubt, in anyone's mind, as to which ticket is the pro-choice ticket in this campaign."

When Zahn pressed him on the apparent contradiction between his past and present positions—he'd just endorsed a national health insurance proposal that would provide coverage for abortions—Gore replied, "But again, the issue is which ticket is pro-choice . . . and there ought to be no doubt whatsoever about this. Ask the people who follow this whole debate most closely which is the pro-choice ticket—they will tell you very quickly. I believe very strongly that a woman must have the right to choose, and I believe that that right is very much at risk during this whole campaign." Zahn tried one final time: "In all deference to what you're saying, though, you have changed your position." Gore: "No, not at all. I've had the same position from the very first days in Congress."

One of the only other times Gore was grilled about abortion came on *Meet the Press* in September 1992. Responding to questions from Tim Russert about his reversal, Gore gave a series of evasive, highly technical responses in which he refused to concede he'd changed his position. Russert was followed by Lisa Myers, who asked him how he squared his past abortion votes with his support for the Freedom of Choice Act, which proposed prohibiting states from placing any restrictions

on abortion and would have opened the door to federal funding. Gore once again gave an extremely convoluted response in which he never answered the question, but did advertise that he was pro-choice. "I believe that the woman ought to have the right to choose, and I believe that where the mother's life or health is endangered, I believe that alters the circumstances. Now, in saying that there are arguably aspects of life is consistent with the response I gave earlier. I believe, however, there is a qualitative difference in the early stages of pregnancy. And I believe that a woman ought to have the right to choose."

Gore hasn't had to concoct such evasive answers as vice president, since he's rarely, if ever, asked about his record. Indeed, he's dropped any pretense of supporting even the most modest restriction on abortion rights, and has emerged as one of the administration's leading spokesmen on the issue.

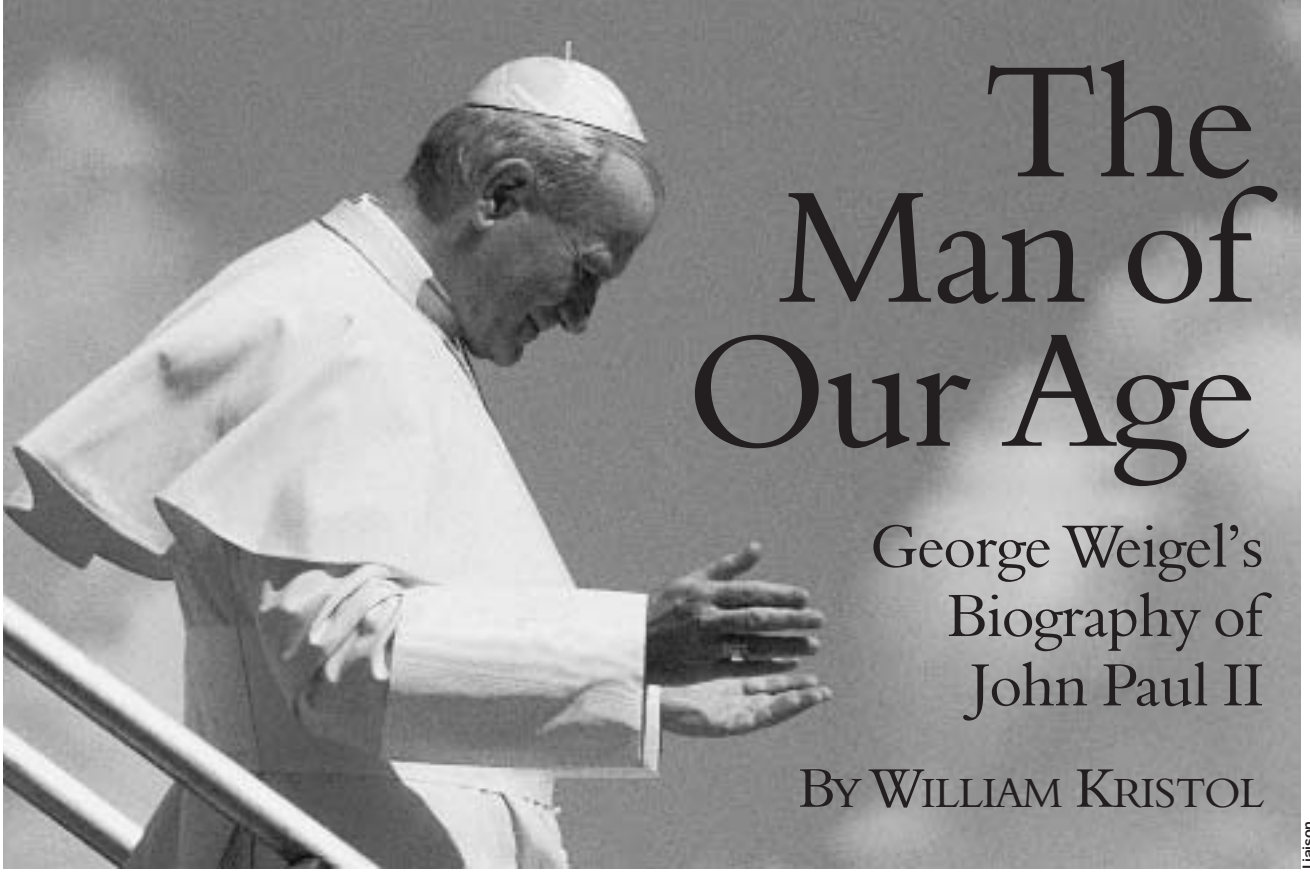
On January 22, 1997, just two days after Clinton's second inauguration, Gore gave one of his most animated speeches before the annual conference of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League. He began by applauding the group's president, Kate Michelman, for her "extraordinary leadership," but saved his real passion for a ringing defense of abortion rights. "America's women have the right to choose," he roared, "and no one will ever steal that right away! The right to choose is fundamental, lodged in our Constitution, affirmed by the Supreme Court. And on behalf of President Clinton, I vow to you here . . . that we will never ever let anyone take that right away!"

Later in the speech Gore described his unsuccessful attempt to join forces with pro-life leaders on reducing the number of unintended pregnancies. It turned out the pro-lifers wouldn't get involved. Why? "Here's my interpretation," said Gore. "I know I'm on thin ice here. There is no way to discuss these issues without venturing out onto thin ice. The truth is that a minority within the minority also believes that family planning in the form of birth control, and even the giving of information about birth control, is morally wrong. I of course don't agree with that. I disagree strongly, as I assume everyone here does." The crowd burst into laughter at this point, undeterred by the fact that the vice president had just mocked a teaching of the Catholic Church. (The archbishop of Los Angeles, Cardinal Roger Mahony, subsequently wrote Gore to say he was "offended" and "appalled" by this "shocking" speech.)

Gore hasn't stopped pandering to pro-choice activists. When he spoke to an abortion rights group in January 1998, for example, he modified Bill Clinton's catch phrase of keeping abortion "safe, legal, and rare," saying instead that it should be "safe, legal, and accessible." A few months earlier, at a White House environmental conference, he suggested that one way of curbing global warming would be "women's empowerment . . . to participate in decisions about childbearing." By this logic, more abortions mean fewer people, which means less consumption, which means less global warming. Even Jay Leno ridiculed this thinking on the *Tonight Show*.

Since launching his presidential campaign, Gore has had his aides cling to the fiction that he never changed his position on abortion. In a May interview with Danielle Decker of *WomenConnect Politics Daily*, deputy campaign manager Marla Romash replied to a question about whether Gore's stand on abortion had changed by saying, "No, he has always supported a woman's right to choose." And while Bill Bradley has said little about Gore's past votes, he did pounce in August when the Gore campaign told the *Des Moines Register* that the vice president opposed federal funding of abortions. Once confronted, Gore spokesman Roger Salazar quickly recanted: "I gave the wrong answer. I didn't do my research. . . . The vice president opposes any attempt to restrict Medicaid funding for abortions." (Even this clarification was slippery, leaving the impression that Gore is defending unlimited Medicaid funding against those who would end it. In fact, Medicaid now spends federal dollars only on abortions after rape or incest or to save the mother's life, despite the best efforts of Gore and others.)

With both contenders for the Democratic presidential nomination now espousing identical positions—the maximum availability and taxpayer funding of abortion—Gore's strategy is to talk about the issue as little as possible. He rarely mentions it in speeches, and there's almost nothing about it on his Web site. Gore has acknowledged privately that his position has evolved, and I called the campaign office, as well as the vice president's office, seeking enlightenment. The Gore operation is legendary for returning calls, even to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, and aides assured me someone would get back to me with a comment. No one ever did. Given the falsehoods about Gore's record that campaign workers are being ordered to peddle, it's hard to blame them. ♦



Liaison

The Man of Our Age

George Weigel's Biography of John Paul II

BY WILLIAM KRISTOL

George Weigel has written a very good book about a very great man.

He has also written, in his new biography of Pope John Paul II, a very weighty book—992 pages long—dealing with weighty matters: society and politics in Poland, the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, the foreign policy of the Holy See, the metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas and the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, and much more.

But, as Karol Wojtyla declared in his first address after his election as John Paul II in 1978: Be not afraid. George Weigel's *Witness to Hope* is a remarkably good read. It's not merely that the author is a gifted expositor of political, religious, and philosophical issues; any reader of Weigel's previous work would expect that sort of clear and intelligent analysis.

What makes this new book a thorough success—proof that an old-fashioned, vivid, and complete biography of a public figure is still possible—is Weigel's ability to tell a story well. That, and the fact that with John Paul II, an extraordinary man living in extraordinary times, he has a terrific story to tell.

The first third of the book, covering the years before Wojtyla became pope, is a tale of a remarkable man doing important work under dramatic circumstances. One learns about Poland between the World Wars, about life under the Nazis and the Communists, about Wojtyla's religious and intellectual struggles, and about the men and women with whom he worked, almost all of them unknown in the West. One meets, for instance, the "uncrowned King of Poland" during World War II, Archbishop Adam Stefan Sapieha, who has remained Wojtyla's model of religious and moral leadership for more than half a century. Weigel tells the story of how the Nazi governor of Poland, Hans Frank, looking for some sliver of legitimacy, forced Sapieha to invite him to the archbishop's palace. Sapieha duly issued the invitation, and the two men sat alone at his formal table—to be served black bread made from acorns, jam made from beets, and ersatz coffee. While Frank glared down the table, the archbishop explained that this was the ration available on the food coupons distributed by the Nazis, and he couldn't risk dealing on the black market. Living through the most unfortunate decades in Polish history, the future pope was astonishingly fortunate in his mentors and associates. And if he had not become, at age fifty-eight, the 264th bishop of Rome—if George Weigel had written merely a biography of a man named Karol Wojtyla—it would still be very much worth reading.

Witness to Hope
The Biography of Pope John Paul II
by George Weigel
HarperCollins, 992 pp., $35

But of course Wojtyla did become pope on October 16, 1978, the first non-Italian pontiff in 455 years, the first from eastern Europe ever. Weigel devotes two-thirds of his study to the most recent twenty years of his life. This part of the narrative is, perforce, somewhat less dramatic. Weigel properly sets himself to cover the pope's public life in a comprehensive way; as a result, the endless procession of papal visits and encyclicals occasionally becomes an obstacle to the book's narrative power and thematic clarity. But only occasionally. The hundreds of pages devoted to John Paul's papacy

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The pope's parents at their wedding in 1904.

are mostly gripping and compelling, thanks (as Weigel would be the first to say) to the narrative power and thematic clarity of the papacy they cover.

One thing that emerges from Weigel's account is just how impressive a man the pope is—a remarkable combination of deep piety and intellectual curiosity, of moral courage and human kindness. But what makes John Paul II an extraordinary historical figure is his central role in three often distinct realms: in politics, religion, and ideas; in the life of the world, the life of the Church, and the life of the mind.

To be a figure in any one of these is an accomplishment reserved to few. To be central in all three is unique. No political leader did more than John Paul II to bring an end to the Cold War. No religious figure has had more impact in this century than John Paul II has had on the Roman Catholic Church. And few thinkers have confronted the crisis of modern humanism more directly than the pope.

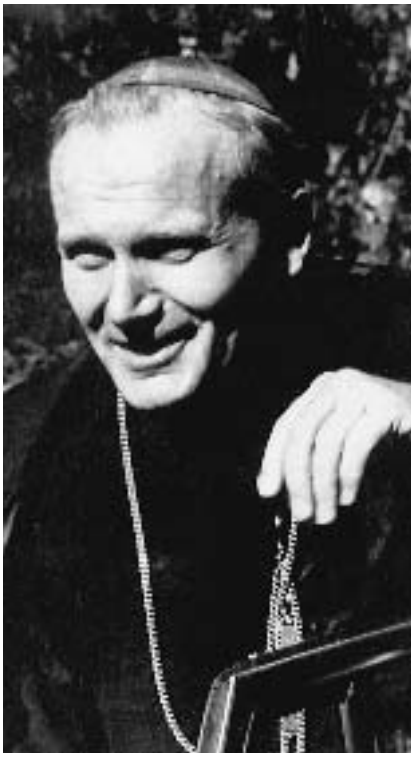
Among the most moving and dramatic parts of *Witness to Hope* is Weigel's account of John Paul II's first visit to Poland, in June 1979. Weigel convincingly argues that this marked a decisive moment, the beginning of the end of Communist rule in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The pope helped bring down the evil empire not because of some grand strategic insight (though he was certainly capable of canny political strategy), but because he launched an authentic and deep challenge to the lies that made Communist rule possible.

Weigel reports the reaction of one twenty-five-year-old Polish physics student, for whom the pope's visit seemed to make the whole "artificial world" of the Communists collapse: "We might have to live and die under communism. But now what I want to do is to live without being a liar." Even the liberal intellectual Adam Michnik was struck by the pope's ability, in June 1979, to appeal to the consciences of both believers and non-believers. The creation of Solidarity followed a year and a half later, and the Polish regime never recovered. After just a decade more, the Iron Curtain collapsed. Since Karol Wojtyla became John Paul II, no one has repeated Stalin's mocking question about how many army divisions the pope has.

Weigel makes the case that John Paul II's political impact came about precisely because he did not primarily seek to be political, or to think or speak politically. He merely insisted on calling "good and evil by name." Western liberalism, with its technological might and its ability to spread a kind of skepticism that helps undermine totalitarianism, played an important part in winning the Cold War. But Weigel argues convincingly that the liberal assault on communism could not have succeeded without the accompanying Christian assault. The insistence on the truth was needed to strengthen and deepen the natural desire for liberty; the categories of good and evil were needed to ground the contrast between freedom and oppression. The message "Be not afraid!" with which he began his papal ministry was the message he transmitted to his countrymen and millions of others throughout the world.

Faith is, of course, at the center of John Paul II's being, and the revitalization of Christian faith has been at the heart of his efforts, first as a priest, then bishop, then pope. Weigel argues that John Paul II's papacy is the most consequential in centuries. One of the more revelatory aspects of *Witness to Hope*, to those of us who are not Catholic, is the demonstration of how bold and radical John Paul II has been in his efforts to reshape the Church to be a more effective teacher and evangelizer. Here he has been a true radical, "for whom change means returning to the Church's roots which he believes are expressions of Christ's will." He has done this by seeking above all to secure and build on the legacy of Vatican II, "the council at which the Catholic Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, came to grips with modernity."

As a Polish bishop, Karol Wojtyla played a major part in that council, and as pope, John Paul II has continued to view Vatican II as fundamental. Throughout his pontificate, the pope



Archbishop Wojtyla in 1967.

has sternly rejected "progressive" attempts to use Vatican II to water down the Church's distinctive teachings. But he has at the same time vehemently rejected "reactionary" attempts to undo Vatican II and return the Church to its nineteenth-century disdain for modernity.

The result is a man whose vision and actions have confounded journalistic attempts to label him liberal or conservative. An early American magazine story, relating John Paul II's extensive, televised travels and the huge crowds gathering in locations around the world for his visits, dubbed him the first "postmodern pope." But he is in fact the first *modern* pope, and he stands as an astonishing figure: the man of our age—a radical thinker who has used the throne of one of the oldest institutions on earth to try to anchor modernity in truth, liberty, and respect for human dignity.

A particularly striking example is John Paul II's teaching on men and women, sex and marriage. As Weigel points out, Wojtyla's first book was on the ethics of married life, and it raised "more than one clerical eyebrow by its celebration of human sexuality as a gift of God for the sanctification of husband and wife."

Decades later, John Paul proposed "one of the boldest reconfigurations of Catholic theology in centuries," as he addressed the challenges of the sexual revolution and feminism. He argued that the distinct roles of men and women are consistent with their equal dignity, and that marriage, with "the self-giving love of sexual communion," can be the experience "that begins to make God comprehensible to human beings." The pope's argument cuts through the stale debate between liberationists and traditionalists, and makes a distinctive contribution not merely to Catholic thought, but to thought simply.

And that is a sign of the third aspect of John Paul II's achievement: his intellectual significance. Early on, Wojtyla came to the view that the crisis of the modern world was first of all a crisis of ideas. Never believing it was enough simply to lament a falling away of faith or to assume that the formulations of the past were unproblematically adequate, Wojtyla sought from the beginning to discover a metaphysical foundation for modern humanism and democracy. His early philosophical work, *Person and Act*, was an attempt to put an Aristotelian-Thomistic "philosophy of being" together with a "psychology of consciousness" derived from such thinkers as Max Scheler—to work out, in other words, the relation "between the objective truth of things-as-they-are and the subjective and personal experience of that truth."

All photos: HarperCollins

John Paul II greets Mother Teresa in Albania, 1993.

Wojtyla's effort to tie together freedom and truth, and indeed to argue the identity of the truth and the good, is a deep and difficult project. But the fact that his most recent encyclical, the 1998 *Fides et Ratio*, concerns the relation of faith and reason is proof that he has sustained the project through his entire life. He has clearly intended that project to be, as Weigel says, "accessible to everyone no matter what his or her religious disposition." You have to stop for a moment to recognize just how significant this is. A major player on the world stage and the administrative leader of the world's largest organized religion has set himself the profound philosophical task of defending, for believers and nonbelievers alike, the intelligibility of the world against the radical skepticism and moral relativism of the age.

In the end, however, one returns to what is most simple and most evident about John Paul II: his courage—physical, moral, and intellectual. Aristotle claims that courage is the first of the virtues, because it makes possible all the others. John Paul II demands that we "learn not to be afraid," that we "rediscover a spirit of hope and a spirit of trust." He grounds that hope and trust on his faith that man "is not alone" but lives with the abiding presence of God. *Witness to Hope* invites us to admire human excellence—and to reflect on the question of whether or not such excellence depends on a faith, like John Paul II's, that man is not, in the fundamental sense, alone. ♦

Kids 'R' Us

Kay Hymowitz reports on America's failure to treat children as children. **BY CLAUDIA WINKLER**

Don't be put off by the book's opaque title: Kay S. Hymowitz's *Ready or Not: Why Treating Children as Small Adults Endangers Their Future—and Ours* is a fresh and grimly convincing look at what we're doing wrong in the way we socialize the young.

Hymowitz's subject is the strange abdication that has left adults unwilling to perform the task of passing on a cultural inheritance. Americans, she says, no longer believe—as virtually all previous cultures have—that "children must be inducted by their elders into a preexisting society, into a web of meaning." Instead, we have come to embrace, or at least are consenting to live under, a new set of assumptions that she sums up as "anticulturalism."

Ready or Not
Why Treating Children as Small Adults Endangers Their Future—and Ours
by Kay S. Hymowitz
Free Press, 292 pp., $25

This is "the belief that the child should develop independently of the prevailing culture and even in opposition to it." It begins with a "whitewashed" view of children's nature, which blithely discounts the egotism and casual cruelty that are part of childhood and instead exalts what Robert Coles, in a 1997 bestseller, called "the moral intelligence of children." Children are conceived of as "capable, rational, and autonomous, as beings endowed with all the qualities necessary for their entrance into the adult world."

It's an illusion Hymowitz shows at work in contemporary American views of every stage of youthful development, from infancy through "postmodern postadolescence," the prolonged period of rootlessness exhibited by our increasingly numerous twenty- and thirtysomething singles. It is perhaps most familiar in the field of education, where actual knowledge is out and children are invited to be creative without a solid grounding in traditional disciplines. (A tenth-grader I know has a teacher who says she "doesn't believe in grammar"—which is a bit like saying, in an elevator, that one doesn't believe in engineering. We're confusing our kids about the nature of reality.)

Or consider the theory of "sexuality education" that informs instruction in many schools. This view holds that adults' role is *never* to guide young people in their choices, but *only* to equip them with the information and skills to make their own choices about how to "express their sexuality."

Hymowitz illuminates the operation of the anticultural fallacy in other aspects of child-rearing, as well. There is the transformation of children into consumers. By 1957, American kids were already watching an hour and a half of TV a day. As households acquired second TVs, specialized programming proliferated, and advertisers saw their chance. Mattel Toys led the way with its "burp gun" and then, in 1959, its Barbie doll. As the market for toys exploded, advertisers bypassed parents and dangled directly before child viewers products that instilled the cult of the teenager and a taste for the hip.

Market research, Hymowitz says, reveals that mothers universally hated Barbie, which they saw as too grown-up and vulgar for its target audience of four- to twelve-year-olds. But the mothers lost. It is through this direct relationship between vendors and young potential buyers—not only through the depraved content of TV programming, with its contempt for geeky adults and glamorization of prematurely knowing, independent, and sexy kids—that television has helped subvert the proper roles of parent and child.

In each area she discusses, Hymowitz shows how liberationist notions espoused in the name of respect for children have actually worked to shortchange them, depriving them of the shaping influence of their elders. The more children are allowed to shed the constraints of good manners, for example, the less they are able to navigate comfortably and confidently among people, especially those outside their peer groups. Adults' failure of nerve thus reinforces the age segregation that isolates and impoverishes American youths. Or again, the more that children are invited to "express their sexuality," the less they seem capable of deep and committed love.

Perhaps most pathetically of all, the transformation of school discipline—matters like whether a student may wear Nazi insignia to school or may present in class a story about murdering the principal—into questions of free speech to be settled in court "ultimately has the effect of bestowing high moral purpose on adolescent obsessions and making the already difficult tasks of training teenagers' judgment and refining their sensibilities seem quaintly irrelevant."

The foil for this disquieting view of contemporary customs is what Hymowitz sees as the best tradition of

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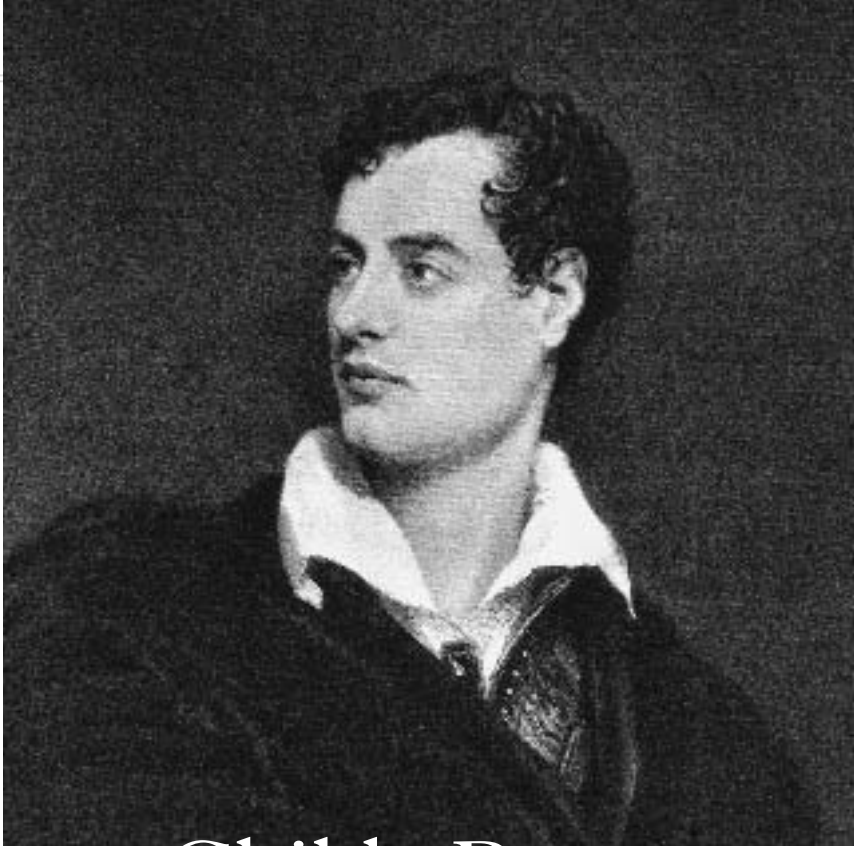
"republican childhood." In the early years of American independence, she says, the clergy and secular intellectuals debated the education necessary to prepare the young for freedom.

Unlike older theories of child-rearing, theirs frowned on corporal punishment and the use of humiliation as a teaching device and embraced, instead, the appeal to reason and to an educated heart as befitting young people destined for self-government. Republican childhood affirmed the duty of parents—indeed of all adults—to show children how to cultivate a balance between personal ambition and the public good, self-reliance and respect for law.

Can America rediscover this revolutionary wisdom? Hymowitz detects a scrap of hope in the worry parents express about their own and their neighbors' children and in young people's tenacious longing to marry and form stable families. "Human nature," she says—echoing writers like James Q. Wilson and Francis Fukuyama—"can be stretched only so far."

But Hymowitz may be wrong. There is nothing automatic about cultural recovery. The Romans left Europe strewn with their roads and amphitheaters, baths and soaring aqueducts, but the Romans' successors for centuries forgot how to build out of stone. It is not obvious where our children, reared on the gospel of self-fulfillment, will go to learn self-sacrifice or how the next generation of teachers—well intentioned, no doubt, but themselves the products of anticultural education—will acquire respect for the architecture of reason.

Kay Hymowitz's book is a fine addition to the bulging shelves of volumes analyzing what troubles our kids. In recent years, we've heard from writers who locate the cause of our children's current dismal situation in working mothers, day care, and fatherlessness, in gender stereotyping, Hollywood, and guns, in promiscuity, poor schools, and consumerism. What we really need now is equal ingenuity applied to the challenge of getting ourselves out of this fix. ♦



Childe Byron

The satirical Romantic and the poet as poseur: mad, bad, and dangerous to know. BY MARGARET BOERNER

George Gordon, Lord Byron, is such a heroic figure and exciting storyteller, one can forget what a very good poet he is. The notorious judgment of his lover Lady Caroline Lamb was that he was "mad, bad, and dangerous to know." Her judgment has resounded ever since, even prompting the movie clunker *Lady Caroline Lamb* in 1972 (with the TV mini-series star Richard Chamberlain as Byron). But Lamb herself never forgot him after their few months together.

Until recently, readers could turn only to the scholarly biography of Byron by the late Leslie Marchand, published in three volumes over forty years ago in 1957. Suddenly, two new biographies have appeared, first Phyllis Grosskurth's somewhat turgid and not convincing psychological account, *Byron: The Flawed Angel*, and now Benita Eisler's densely informative account of Byron's life, *Byron: Child of Passion, Fool of Fame*. Neither biographer knows how to read Byron's poetry, but Eisler's is rewarding on its own terms.

Byron
Child of Passion, Fool of Fame
by Benita Eisler
Knopf, 813 pp., $35

Eisler's subtitle is a useful reminder of Byron's twin genius for writing and for libertinism. Indeed, at the beginning of Byron's writing life, one is hard put to distinguish them, for his sexual and travel adventures became the subject—or at least the underlying matter—of his poetry. He had so many romantic liaisons that the public may have loved *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* as much for its author's exploits as for its protagonist. Its first printing sold out in three days in March, 1812, establishing Byron in the public eye as a passionate youth grown world-weary and disillusioned—a figure that would, after Byron's success, dominate romantic lit-

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erature. But Byron himself would several years later turn the voice that had started out pretty much as self advertisement into the sharp-eyed and sharp-tongued narrator of his masterpiece, *Don Juan*.

In his short life, Byron became both more famous and more notorious as his libertinism became more known, and he was finally driven out of England. He lived abroad for the rest of his life, where he wrote *Don Juan* and joined the underground Carbonari in Italy's revolt against the occupying Austrians. At the end, because he again longed for excitement and because his own writing had helped to kindle European enthusiasm for the Greek cause, Byron organized an expedition to assist in Greece's war for independence from the Turks. He showed great practicality and leadership in funding and training his regiment. But he succumbed to a series of feverish attacks in the malarial swamps of Missolonghi and died—it is said from the doctors' determination to bleed him heavily—just after he had reached his thirty-sixth birthday. To this day Byron is revered by the Greeks as a national hero.

The nearest one can come to a modern equivalent to Byron is someone like John Lennon—both wonderfully talented, wildly popular, and notoriously moody and skeptical about the society he lived in—except that Byron was from the oldest British nobility, was outstandingly handsome (he dieted off his baby fat by eating only crackers and soda water), and had even more sexual energy than most pop stars. Because he was a peer, when he made a success (and some money) from *Childe Harold*, he was taken up by the highest reaches of London's sexually promiscuous Whig society. For his lovers, Byron tended to choose married women. During his long liaison with his great love, his half-sister Augusta, she was pregnant or nursing the entire time, at least once with Byron's child, about which her husband was complaisant. (It would be interesting to know if Byron knew that his own father, while marrying two heiresses and running through their money, had had a sexual liaison with his own—full—sister, to whom he wrote passionate letters and with whom he once set up house.)

Eisler has trawled through unpublished accounts of public-school life of the time in order to make her convincing case of Byron's other, homosexual liaisons while he was at Harrow (and throughout his life). But even today we would not call Byron homosexual, and it is clear he loved women, passionately and sexually, whenever he was with them. Being persuaded he must marry

Annabella Milbanke

(for money), in January, 1815, Byron married Annabella Milbanke, the niece of Caroline Lamb's hated mother-in-law, Lady Melbourne. After protracted hesitation on both sides—Annabella was a bluestocking gifted in mathematics and a devout Christian—she could not resist the idolized author of *Childe Harold*. After their marriage, she was sexually and emotionally enthralled by Byron.

But Byron seems to have had some sort of nervous breakdown after marrying Annabella, related to his liaison with Augusta. When Annabella gave birth to their daughter Ada, Byron drove mother and child out of his house and back to Annabella's parents. There, Annabella finally realized that Byron was involved with Augusta and sued for separation, threatening to reveal "secrets" about Byron's life if he did not comply. It has never been discovered if there were secrets beyond what we already know, but Byron left England, never to return. Eisler believes that Byron's deformity, a malformed right foot that made him limp, caused him to believe that "he had a special dispensation from the moral sanctions imposed upon others and a lifelong entitlement to the forbidden." But this is false psychologizing. "Byron's deformity" doesn't begin to explain his clear-eyed vision of his society.

Byron settled down in Geneva for a time. Having had to leave England themselves for similar reasons, Percy Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, and her half-sister Claire Clairmont (who had pursued Byron and had evidently arranged that the Shelleys meet him) had settled nearby. Here took place the famous scene in which Byron suggested they all write a ghost story to be read aloud, and eighteen-year-old Mary Shelley produced *Frankenstein*. The two poets didn't take the assignment seriously. But they did discuss their craft and the state of England. Shelley was not of nearly so grand a lineage as Byron, being the son not of a peer but of a mere baronet, but Shelley had Byron's great intelligence—and a great deal more money—and he steadfastly supported Byron's writing.

Eisler regards the two as politically incompatible, claiming that Shelly found Byron "an eighteenth-century libertine who wanted to break laws, not change them," but this judgment utterly fails to understand Byron, who all his life hated tyranny.

Byron and Shelley agreed on much that was wrong with the state of England, with its demented King George III, debauched Prince Regent, censorship, and curtailment of liberties. Unlike Wordsworth and Coleridge, however, who surrendered their first enthusiasm for the French Revolution to caution and skepticism, Byron in *Don Juan* found the great Duke of Wellington merely the "best of cut-

All photos: UPI / Corbis-Bettmann

Romantic imagining of Byron contemplating the ruins of Rome.

throats," and the Holy Alliance (by which Russia, Austria, and Prussia in 1815 agreed to rule Europe in concert "to protect Religion, Peace and Justice" against the Turk) just another device to shackle mankind:

Shut up the bald-coot bully Alexander!
Ship off the Holy Three to Senegal;
Teach them that "sauce for goose is sauce for gander,"
And ask them how they like to be in thrall?

The poem damns England as the "once adored,"

False friend, who held out Freedom to Mankind,
But now would chain them—to the very mind.

What Byron did not share was Shelley's belief in an ideal future; he was too skeptical of man's nature for that.

In the fall of 1817, he established himself in Venice, where he finished his tragedy *Manfred*, wrote the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*, and *Beppo*—a short preview of the narrative style and stanza of *Don Juan*. At the same time, after frenzied debauchery that, he claimed, involved more than two hundred women, he settled down with Teresa Guiccioli, the young wife of the elderly Count Allesandro Guiccioli, for whom he served as *cavaliere servente*, the lover taken in recompense for an arranged marriage. Here he began *Don Juan* and completed his transformation from Romantic lyricist to English satirist.

At the beginning of his literary life, Byron, born in 1788, provided his English and European contemporaries with what the Frenchman Hippolyte Taine in 1850 called the Romantic Age's "ruling personage": "the model that contemporaries invest with their admiration and sympathy"—the "Byronic hero," moody, passionate, erotic, and oblivious to mundane life. This personage is an original creation of the Romantic Age and of Byron in particular. From him descend Heathcliff, Captain Ahab, Eugene Onegin, and the vulgarized figure of Nietzsche's superman. Indeed, the Romantic Age rewrote earlier protagonists to make them types of the Byronic hero. Thus Marlowe's Faustus and Milton's Satan became Romantic heroes after the fact.

But this hero is essentially a poseur, and what Byron wrote early in his career—no matter that the whole of Europe was thrilled by the Byronic hero—was "poetry of pose," as Maurice Bowra pointed out in *The Romantic Imagination*: "Byron's continental admirers did not distinguish the false from the true in his work or his personality. They were so fascinated by his early poems that they continued to prize them even when he had begun to compose in a different and more truly creative spirit."

Most "men of feeling" could not follow Byron into *Don Juan*. Wordsworth regarded Byron as "a monster" and "a Man of Genius whose heart is perverted." Coleridge thought his poetry "Satanic," and even Keats called *Don Juan* "Lord Byron's last flash poem." Byron returned their opinions: Wordsworth was a bore, Coleridge was "a shabby fellow," and Keats had the weakness to let bad reviews destroy him: "*'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle, / Should let itself be snuffed out by an article*."

Shelley alone was an exception. He liked Byron personally and had an excellent understanding of what was good in his poetry. Indeed, for a poet whose work is not nearly so good as Byron's, Shelley was a wonderful friend. He said frankly what the faults were in such works as *The Deformed Transformed*, but he gave *Don Juan* unqualified praise for its "power and beauty and wit" and the true portrait of human nature "laid on with the eternal colors of the feelings of humanity."

Beyond his Romantic pose and genuinely brave and sometimes heroic adventures, Byron is a writer fully in the great tradition of English satire—which was brought to a cutting edge by Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope, the eighteenth-century poets whose verse Byron's fellow Romantics felt themselves to be rebelling against. Byron particularly admired Swift's four-beat line and acerbic wit. In the character of the narrator of *Don Juan* Byron created a great, complex, comic invention who takes us through what

Byron called his "*satire* on *abuses* of the present state of society." He wrote to his publisher, "I maintain that it is the most moral of poems; but if people won't discover the moral, that is their fault, not mine." In his "hero," Don Juan, Byron stated that he meant to depict "a vicious and unprincipled character, and lead him through those ranks of society, whose high external accomplishments cover and cloak internal and secret vices." And if English society saw itself portrayed therein, so much the better.

Eisler's judgments on *Don Juan* are often wide of the mark; she seems not to understand how satire works. She claims, for example, that "snuffling over the fate of Don José [Don Juan's martyred father, cuckolded by his mother], Byron's satirical edge sagged to self-pity." That's her false verdict on the following lines:

It was a trying moment that which found him
Standing alone beside his desolate hearth,
Where all his household gods lay shivered round him;
No choice was left his feelings or his pride
Save death or Doctors' Commons—so he died.

Anyone who rhymes *pride* with *died* has hardly succumbed to self-pity.

The poem begins by setting itself in the epic tradition, which over the centuries after Homer was used by poets to characterize society. But this narrator is still undecided at the beginning of his epic:

I want a hero: an uncommon want,
When every year and month sends forth a new one,
Till, after cloying the gazettes with cant,
The age discovers he is not the true one;
Of such as these I should not care to vaunt,
I'll therefore take our ancient friend Don Juan,
We all have seen him in the pantomime
Sent to the devil, somewhat ere his time.

Here the chief fault of ottava rima is made its virtue, the couplet collapsing the sublime into the ridiculous. *Don Juan* (pronounced "Joo-on" by Byron) is one of the longest poems in English, but it is a masterpiece. Shelley immediately recognized it as "something wholly new and relative to the age" and "every word of it . . . pregnant with immortality." Early in our century, Virginia Woolf declared it

> the most readable poem of its length ever written. . . . It's what one has looked for in vain—an elastic shape which will hold whatever you choose to put into it. . . . He wasn't committed to be poetical; and thus escaped his evil genius of the false romantic and imaginative.

In relating the travels and emotional episodes in Byron's life to the poems he wrote, Eisler is excellent and accomplished. She summarizes plots well, even giving an extended summary of *Don Juan* (which really has no plot). But in *Byron: Child of Passion, Fool of Fame*, Eisler hardly seems to know that beyond the best-known of his lyric poetry—*She walks in beauty like the night*, or *The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold*, or *The mountains look on Marathon, and Marathon looks on the sea*—Byron is one of the supreme satirists in the English language.

A satirist's job is to hold a mirror up to fallen human nature wherein we may recognize ourselves. Byron's pity and scorn encompass us all, as well as himself. Surprisingly devoid of prurient interest, *Don Juan* reveals that Byron's libertinism may have been a precondition for writing the poem, but it is not a precondition for reading it. Rarely is great poetry so immediately available. In an age when Wordsworth and Coleridge had determined to write poetry in "the real language of men," Byron alone succeeded in actually speaking that language. ♦

Dow Infinity

You may think the market's gone about as far as it can go, but you ain't seen nothing yet. **BY BRIT HUME**

In April 1998, Lawrence Lindsey, the economist and former Federal Reserve governor who is now a principal adviser to Governor George W. Bush, pulled his savings out of the stock market. He's been out ever since. At the time, the Dow Jones Industrial Average had climbed above 9,000, more than tripling in the previous eight years. Wall Street had never seen a run like it, and Lindsey was far from alone in believing it could not continue. Sixteen months earlier, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan had issued his famous warning against the "irrational exuberance" of a market then hovering around the 6,500 mark.

Given Greenspan's influence, you almost have to give Lindsey credit for staying in the market as long as he did. And by getting out when he did, he missed the nasty downturn that sent the Dow down nearly 20 percent last summer and early fall. But he also missed the dramatic rally in the final months of 1998 and well into 1999, which saw the average rise 25 percent above the level where Lindsey had bailed out.

Dow 36,000
The New Strategy for Profiting from the Coming Rise in the Stock Market
by James K. Glassman and Kevin Hassett
Times Books, 288 pp., $25

Many market sages have attempted to explain the extraordinary strength and duration of this bull market, but it has defied explanation by the traditional yardsticks used in the traditional ways. The most widely used of these measures is a comparison of a stock's price to its current earnings, the P/E ratio. Since ownership of a share of company's stock is defined as a claim on the company's future earnings, this is a handy number. Historically stocks have traded at an average P/E of about 14. Today they are trading at more than twice that.

Brit Hume is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Now come the veteran journalist James Glassman and economist Kevin Hassett with *Dow 36,000*. You would never know it from the indignant reaction the book generated well before its September publication date, but *Dow 36,000* advances a reasonable argument based on data that are widely known and not seriously disputed. Indeed, what is most striking about the book, despite its radical-sounding title, is how radical it isn't.

Glassman and Hassett draw upon data assembled by Jeremy Siegel, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, which formed the basis of Siegel's much-praised 1994 book *Stocks for the Long Run*. Siegel concluded, as do Glassman and Hassett, that a diversified portfolio of common stocks held for the long term (at least five years, preferably longer) is no more risky than a comparable investment in bonds.

The reason is that common stocks have averaged a yearly return (dividends plus the increase in the price of stocks) of 11 percent since 1926, about 7 percent, they estimate, better than the average return on bonds. Of course, some years the return has been much higher than 11 percent, and some years it has been much lower or even negative—which is why stocks must be held for a long-enough period to ensure obtaining stocks' superior returns.

When the effect of compound interest is included, the difference between the return on stocks and the return on bonds (as both are currently priced) becomes truly staggering. So why have stock prices not been much, much higher relative to the prices of bonds? The answer lies in the perception, persistent through much of this century, that stocks are much more risky than bonds. The effect of this perception is a discount called the "risk premium," and Glassman and Hassett believe it has resulted in the severe and continuing undervaluation of stocks.

After all, if stocks, held for the long term, produce higher returns with no greater risk, there shouldn't be a risk premium at all. Glassman and Hassett argue that most investors have come to reject the notion of a risk premium—which they express by buying stocks and mutual funds and holding on through thick and thin, propelling the bull market that has mystified so many in Wall Street.

These ordinary investors witnessed the frightening downturn of 1987, when the Dow Jones plunged 25 percent in a single day, and a series of other stalls and hiccups that have prompted gloom-and-doom forecasts from one end of Wall Street to the other. Each time the market has recovered smartly and soared to new highs. There has not been such a protracted bull market for a quarter century.


Kevin Hassett & James Glassman

Times Books

Glassman and Hassett believe a fortuitous set of events has created our current investment atmosphere. They cite the proliferation of 401(K) and other company-sponsored investment programs, which helped give more Americans a stake in the stock market. Estimates now are that half the nation's adult population owns stock. The Cold War is over, and market economies practicing free trade are spreading. The budget deficit, once regarded as a mortal threat to the U.S. economy, is gone. Inflation, the scourge of stocks and bonds alike, has slowed dramatically amid a wave of growth in productivity occasioned by the revolution in information technology—a revolution whose benefits are only now beginning to be felt. Even Alan Greenspan seems now to believe that this technology-driven, technology-assisted economy is something new and lasting.

By the calculations of Glassman and Hassett, stock prices will reach parity with bond prices only after tripling beyond current levels, which would lift the Dow Jones Average to 36,000. At that level, stocks would achieve what the authors call their "PRP," their "perfectly reasonable price." Once this occurs, they predict, the growth of stock prices will level off, and stocks and bonds with comparable returns will remain comparably priced. Glassman and Hassett believe this will happen relatively soon, but they don't pretend to know exactly how long it will take.

Siegel, on whose data the book is based, has been quoted as disagreeing with Glassman and Hassett, and that may seem a damning indictment. But it's not.

In the end, stocks, like everything else traded in a true market, are worth what people are willing to pay for them. All the supposedly hard data used for market projections rest on soft assumptions about human attitudes.

The average P/E ratio, for example, is regarded by many as a solid benchmark of value, but it is nothing more than a measure of what people have been willing to pay for stocks in the past. Glassman and Hassett think people are learning through experience that stocks are worth much more than that. Could they be wrong? Of course. But their explanation of the current bull market is certainly more compelling than the arguments of those whose predictions have been consistently wrong and whose current market analysis amounts to little more than repetition of the word "bubble." ♦

"Last July, Gore and his teenage son Albert made an arduous three-day hike up Mount Rainier in Washington State. Initially, aides said the vice president would not discuss the trek because he did not want to 'exploit' the private experience with his son. But now it has become a central metaphor in his stump speech."

—*Washington Post*, October 7, 1999

Gore 2000

He's a Human Being, Really!

MEMO

TO: Speechwriters
FROM: Bob Shrum
RE: Al's Profoundly Shattering Experiences

Folks,

While in the van coming back from the airport, we had a chance to map out some of the profoundly shattering experiences (PSEs) that have shaped Al Gore's life. I was reminded once again that we've got a great candidate here. When Al started talking about his sister's death, and how his convention speech about it gave him a 5-point bump in the polls, I felt tears coming to my eyes.

Our job is to get this personal side of Al out where American voters can see it. We've put together a list of PSEs for you to draw on. We're going to focus-group them, of course, but in the meantime I'd like to see you work these moving personal stories into the stump speech:

1. Al's Favorite Concierge Dies. When Al was a young boy growing up at the Fairfax Hotel, his favorite concierge, Frank, used to carry his book bag to the limo. But one day, Al put too many math textbooks in the bag, and when Frank tried to pick it up he had a heart attack and croaked. As a result, Al's homeroom teacher marked Al down as tardy, thus marring Al's perfect attendance record. Al learned none of us is perfect.

2. Laryngitis before Glee Club Performance. Al was proud to be a member of the St. Alban's Glee Club. But on the night before the spring concert in which Al was scheduled to perform "Ol' Man River," he came down with laryngitis and an understudy had to take over. This gave Al profound insights into the injustices suffered by African Americans throughout our nation's history.

3. Carbon Paper Problems. John McCain isn't the only war hero in the race. As you know, Al has called Vietnam a "long dark tunnel." What many young voters don't know is that as a journalist in Vietnam, Al had to duplicate his stories with carbon paper and mimeograph pages. The ink used to threaten to smudge on his uniform, which Al always liked to keep clean out of love for his country.

4. Need for a Mouse Trap in Residence. Last winter, you may recall, a mouse got into the vice president's residence. Al loves all of his fellow creatures. But the mouse kept eating his bran flakes, and Al came to the cruel understanding that it was kill or be killed. After convening a special commission and much anguished debate over its recommendations, Al agreed to place a pain-free Kevorkian mouse trap under the sink. Al learned the valuable lesson that he should redouble his fund-raising efforts so he can move into the White House, where there are no mice.