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WHY EAST TIMOR MATTERS
TOM DONNELLY


# Pat Jumps Ship

Buchanan and his Friends
TUCKER CARLSON

Wrong from the Beginning
ROBERT G. KAUFMAN

Pat the Bunny
WILLIAM KRISTOL

Cover: Thomas Fluharty

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the weekly Standard

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

# Hurricane Hysteria

There was a time in America when the weather was merely the topic of idle conversation. Now, it's big news, the subject of all-hands-on-deck media coverage, and the results are appalling. A pattern has set in: The press hypes the peril supposedly posed by a hurricane or heat wave or blizzard, politicians overreact, and the public suffers.

All this was played out as Hurricane Floyd approached the East Coast last week. The networks and cable news went wild. Dan Rather deployed himself in the storm's path. The Weather Channel set records for viewership. President Clinton rushed back early from a trip to New Zealand, then preemptively declared a disaster area in Florida and Georgia before the hurricane had even arrived.

Mandatory evacuations were then ordered, and three million people hit the road. Did the fact that almost all of this turned out to be unnecessary cause any chagrin? Hardly. In fact, Vice President Gore boasted that it was the biggest peacetime evacuation in history. Meanwhile, the House of Representatives shut down, and the New York Stock Exchange closed early. Schools took a holiday. Government workers were instructed to stay home.

Yes, Floyd brought heavy rain and high winds along the coast, which caused flooding and power outages. But it was not the storm of the century. So maybe we should all calm down, starting with the media. Before 1996, storms never made the top ten list of stories on the network evening news shows. In 1996, bad weather rose to number eight, then to five in 1997. And though the weather wasn't twice as bad in 1998, the number of stories more than doubled. This year, the weather—not impeachment or Kosovo or Littleton—may well end up as the most heavily covered news topic of the year. Small wonder that officials, who follow the cameras, step forward with emergency measures that more often than not are premature, ill-advised, and draconian. ♦

## White Men Can't Write Headlines

Turnout was heavy last Tuesday in Baltimore's mayoral primary election. And when the counting was done, 36-year-old city councilman Martin O'Malley emerged as the big winner. Baltimore being Baltimore, Mr. O'Malley will almost certainly win November's general election, too. He is, you see, a Democrat.

But he is also something else, as the next day's *New York Times* and *Washington Post* were quick to point out. "Baltimore Democrats Pick White Councilman in Mayoral Primary," the *Times* announced. The *Post* was even more succinct and obvious, right there on the front page: "White Man Gets Mayoral Nomination in Baltimore."

All of which is rather odd. It was not as if some woman had given birth to a zebra or France had won a war. Baltimore has had white mayors before. In fact, until outgoing Mayor Kurt Schmoke was elected a few years ago, Baltimore had never had any other kind. So a "startle" factor can't explain these headlines.

Nor can the actual campaign O'Malley and his competitors had run. True, distant third-place finisher Lawrence A. Bell 3rd had urged black voters to support him because "I look like you." But Bell's naked racial appeal, by universal agreement, had badly backfired. Ditto for second-place finisher Carl Stokes's complaints about the likely effects of O'Malley's crime proposals on minority residents. Those residents themselves were not impressed. Baltimore is a majority black jurisdiction. O'Malley beat Stokes by nearly two-to-one, with considerable support from black voters and a good number of prominent black elected officials throughout the state of Maryland.

O'Malley, in other words, made no appeal based on skin color; race did not in fact play much of a role in this campaign. The implicit assumption of the *Post* and *Times* headlines was that it should have: that voters in a majority-black city should be expected to choose a black mayor, and that it is automatically "news" when they do not. Ugly. Shame on both papers.

No, make that simply shame on the *Times*. Within 24 hours, the *Washington Post* repudiated its "White Man" headline. That headline, read a clarification in the next day's editions, "distorted the role of race in the election and violated *Washington Post* policy about reporting racial identifications only in proper context." The *New York Times*, by stark and smelly contrast, has so far chosen not to apologize for or even acknowledge its own bad judgment. ♦

## Land O'Loons

In 1990, the Minnesota legislature passed a law requiring something called "cultural dynamics training" for anyone licensed to provide child care around the state. An organization called the Cultural Dynamics Education Project then spent nine years designing and pilot-testing a curriculum for the effort. And now, after $700,000 in public expenditures, "Building Cultural Connections" is finally ready to go. Ninety "cultural dynamics trainers" bearing its wisdom are poised to fan out


across the entire state. Yikes.

According to Katherine Kersten of the Center of the American Experiment, the excellent Minneapolis think tank, here are just few of the cultural connections these trainers will be building should the curriculum be approved by the state Department of Children, Families, and Learning:

Day-care providers are urged to beware the "assumption that English is the most important language." It is not. It is an artifact of "non-disabled European American" hegemonism, and the earlier children in day care are exposed to such acid, "the more likely they are to reject their home culture" and its sustaining "group identity."

Day-care providers should watch what they say, even in European American. They shouldn't say someone is a "quadriplegic," for example. No, no, no—a person "has quadriplegia," an altogether more sensitive formulation. Babysitters shouldn't any longer say "people of color," either. That phrase "minimizes the unique history and culture of each cultural group."

Above all, day-care providers should be alert to the torture of modern childhood in all its forms. Biracial or disabled kids "being raised by non-disabled European American parents" have been "separated" from their true identities and must live "without mentors or positive role models." Minority and disabled kids being raised by their own kind are no better off: They inevitably "internalize" European America's "unjust and cruel oppression," come to "believe its lies," and grow up shackled in "shame, hopelessness," and "chronic depression." And non-disabled white kids? Don't even ask. They have "identities built on confusion" and must struggle to overcome "psychological problems of moral hypocrisy."

And here you thought all Minnesota children were above average. Garrison Keillor, call your office. ♦

## New Slogans from the New China

The General Office of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist party has coined 50 new slogans for the 50th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, which takes place October 1. Here are a few of THE SCRAPBOOK's favorites.

•Rely on the working class wholeheartedly!
•Be confident and bold in exploring and experimenting to create a new situation for State-owned enterprises' reform and development!
•Improve socialist culture and ethics!
•Adhere to the goal of serving the people and socialism, to the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend, and promote socialist science, literature and art!

THE SCRAPBOOK hereby invites readers to submit four slogans in honor of the fourth anniversary of the founding of THE SCRAPBOOK. Be confident and bold! Let a hundred songbirds take flight and soar overhead! And be sure to wear a hat when they do! ♦

# Casual

## A Taxonomy of Bores

Melancholy has its Robert Burton (author of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*), Snobbery has its Thackeray (author of *The Book of Snobs*), but Boredom, a much more capacious field than either, has no one similar. Boredom needs help. It awaits its Linnaeus, the great taxonomist, someone to classify the bores now walking the earth in such plenitude.

Many are the kinds of bores, even though in the end their dark and dampening effect is everywhere the same. Some days, it seems, they all call me. I am a magnet for bores. I have large ears that stick out, and quite possibly bores sense they make excellent receptacles into which to pour their soporific verbal potions. I have been told that I am a good listener. I am not sure that this is true, but at least in conversation I tend not to break in, which is perhaps a weakness. Whatever the case, bores find me, and go about their charmless work, leaving me, some days, feeling quite as assailed by bores as Henry James was said to be assailed by perceptions.

As to how they bore me, let me count only a few of the ways. I have among my acquaintanceship a number of what I call Solipsistic Bores. These are bores who, whatever the subject up for discussion, turn it to themselves. "I have to be tested for liver cancer," you announce. "I think I may have dandruff," the Solipsistic Bore replies, a worried look upon his face. Solipsistic Bores suffer—or, more likely, they enjoy—the Copernican Complex: They believe that the solar system rotates around them. Lucky fellows, self-love in them never goes unrequited.

I do a fairly brisk commerce with what I think of as Good-Parent Bores. The Good-Parent Bore makes plain how much time he is investing in his children. He can be counted on, before long, to point out how splendidly it's paying off by bragging about these children. One of my Good-Parent Bores bragged for years about his first-born son's athletic prowess. He had a great arm, he could hit anything that was thrown at him, he was headed for the Show for sure. When this didn't pan out—didn't really come close to panning out—my Good-Parent Bore switched attention to his second son, a boy who is an astonishment of intellectual precocity, it seems. Took calculus in pre-school, broke the bank on the SATs, read Proust at 14. My heart goes out to these children—and also to myself for having to listen to these too proud parents.

Darren Gygi

I run into more than my share of Professor's-Disease Bores. In what other job but teaching, it has been said, can a man talk for 50 minutes straight without being interrupted by his wife? The Professor's-Disease Bores do not so much converse as deliver lectures. They have had a captive audience for too long. They mistake their small power over students for charm. They think everyone must want to know the five reasons for the Renaissance. Village explainers all, may they acquire white-lung disease from being around so much chalk.

Failed-Wit Bores are among the most difficult with whom I have to deal. These are fellows—they are always men, never women—who seem to believe that I go in for their turgid irony. A Failed-Wit Bore I run into on the street likes to fill me in on his latest aphorisms. I would provide an example, but I have blocked them all out. What I cannot block out is the look of deep self-approval that accompanies his delivery of these inept verbal contraptions. As I hear him out, I fear the franchise-donut-like glaze that must be in my eyes.

My-Brilliant-Career Bores like to tell me how very well they are doing. Onward and upward, that's how it always goes for them, bought the right stock, sold the house just as the market peaked, yo, the Viagra is doing its job, amazing stuff. They don't so much talk as make progress reports. Often, at the end of these reports, they might query, "Everything okay with you?" I sometimes want to reply, "Not bad, if only I can just get this boa constrictor off my neck," since they aren't really listening anyway.

Of Single-Subject Bores, I encounter Obsessed-with-Clinton Bores, But-Is-It-Good-for-the-Jews? Bores, Diet-and-Fitness Bores, the Past-Was-Infinitely-Better-than-the-Present Bores—Johnny One Notes all, who somehow can't even manage to play that one note on key. You don't know what a sinking feeling is—but then perhaps you do—when, just as you're about to sit down to dinner, the phone rings, you pick it up, and, through the static of his car phone, you hear your Obsessed-with-Clinton Bore begin the next installment of his unending tirade on our Saintly Billy.

I could go on—my happy bores do—to mention the Grievance-Collector Bores, the Let-Me-Tell-You-My-Dreams Bores, the Freudian Bores, and Slipping-Standards or Decline-and-Fall Bores, ah so many fine bores, and so little—damn these bores—so very little time.

**Joseph Epstein**

# Correspondence

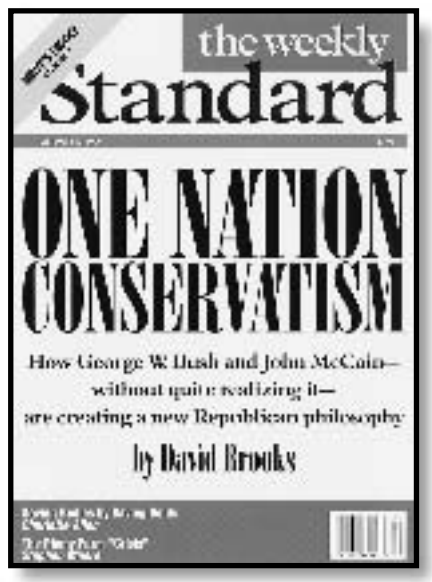
## New GOP Philosophy?

David Brooks praises George W. Bush and John McCain for "creating a new Republican philosophy" ("One Nation Conservatism," Sept. 13). In it, one candidate represents domestic intervention, while the other stands for foreign intervention. Both "believe in conservative governance" extending the power of government. Yet, even if we concede that their values and objectives are correct, we cannot fail to note that their methods are interventionist. This illustrates the fundamental flaw shared by conservatives and religionists alike—a desire to impose virtue. Rather than confining government to the protection of individual liberties, they wish to employ force to make the world a better place. The "new philosophy" that Brooks has discovered is a mere exaggeration of the perennially flawed reliance on force to further virtue.

Republicans once believed in the inalienable rights of the individual, and that the function of government was strictly to protect those rights. Have we become so savvy and politicized that we no longer even remember the principle of non-intervention? Social engineering has wreaked havoc for many decades. Attempts at cultural engineering have been similarly disastrous. Employing force, rather than suasion, to handle issues like drugs and abortion has been divisive rather than inspiring. In foreign affairs, employing force to be an influential power, rather than for defense, has similarly backfired, and undermined our antipathy toward tyranny.

Yet the litany of losses due to coercion are but its material consequences. More devastating is the theory that underlies them, for morality cannot be coerced, but can only be spread by example and suasion. Conservatives should return to (or conserve) the vision of the Founders that would minimize coercion and foreign entanglements. The theory of employing force solely as a defense provides clear bounds as to what to do and, more important, what not to do, whereas the belief in coercion as a method of development has no natural bounds.

The practical difficulty is that it is popular to employ force. People love the sanctimony, self-righteousness, and pretense associated with telling others what to do and how to do it. To adopt a purist view, that we lack the virtue and the understanding to tell one another how to live, remains an uphill battle. The conceptual difficulty is raised by Brooks when he writes, "No party is worth supporting if its goals are wholly negative." After all, how is the world going to improve, unless we do something positive? But the seeds of growth are omnipresent. Without tying a baby in a straightjacket, it grows; without regulating an economy, it expands; without a National Academy of the Arts, an inspired poem is written. Conservatives and religionists seem to have forgotten the blessings of liberty, where man's




God-given free will is the source of the greatest growth.

Allen Weingarten
*Morristown, NJ*

In "One Nation Conservatism," David Brooks writes that "liberalism is no longer dominant." Since this is the case, is that why Bill Clinton vetoed the ban on partial-birth abortion? Why he's vetoing the $800 billion tax cut passed by the Republican Congress? Why he granted clemency to hard-core terrorists to win votes for his favorite carpetbagger?

I shudder to think what life would be like if liberalism was still dominant.

Patrick M. Leonard
*New York, NY*

## Nevada's State of Mind

As a longtime subscriber, I was surprised and disappointed when you chose Wyoming writer Bill Croke to review David Thomson's new book on Nevada ("Jackpot," Sept. 13). Croke reveals his anti-Nevada bias right away when he declares, "It's Nevada and may God have mercy on our souls." And he goes on from there to repeat all of the old clichés about legal gambling and the Las Vegas Strip.

Of course, Croke rehashes the well-known stories of mobster Bugsy Siegel and mob "wannabe" Frank Sinatra, without mentioning that the Nevada Gaming Commission revoked Sinatra's gambling licenses in 1963 for catering to Chicago godfather Sam Giancana. While writers like Croke are still worrying about Nevada gambling, a far more serious threat to the American public—unregulated Indian gambling—is proliferating in neighboring California, and elsewhere.

Finally, Croke writes, "what we're really waiting for is not a writer who can show us how the pieces of Nevada don't fit together, but a writer who can show us how they do." Hasn't he ever heard of Robert Laxalt, the son of a Basque sheepherder and brother of former senator Paul Laxalt, who has spent a distinguished 40-year writing career describing the fascinating and disparate people and lifestyles of "our peculiar state"? Apparently not, and that tells me a lot about Croke's knowledge of Nevada and Nevadans.

Guy W. Farmer
*Carson City, NV*

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the weekly Standard

# Pat the Bunny

A successful demagogue needs the ferocity of a lion and the cunning of a fox. Thankfully, Pat Buchanan doesn't quite measure up. He's just Pat the Bunny, hopping around on the fringes of American politics, wiggling his nose in the air and nibbling away at whatever carrots our political system offers up for his purposes.

The biggest carrot in Pat's sight right now is the $13 million of public funds available to the Reform party in 2000. And so all of a sudden he is looking to make a new home for himself in Ross Perot's rabbit hutch. Pat indignantly rejects the notion that he's interested in the Reform nomination because of the federal matching funds: "I don't think anybody that knows Pat Buchanan believes he ever got into politics because of money." That isn't the accusation, exactly. Buchanan got into electoral politics because of vanity, not money.

Fred Harper

And yet, does anyone seriously believe he would be jumping to Reform if it didn't have that $13 million? After all, there is another third party Pat could have signed up with, Howie Phillips's Constitution party. Unlike Reform, it is pro-life and agrees with Buchanan on pretty much everything else. With the attention and support Buchanan would bring, the Constitution party could have made it onto all 50 state ballots. But Pat wouldn't have had the money or the credibility (if one can call it that) of Reform, which did after all attract a substantial number of voters in the last two presidential elections. So Pat's signing up with Ross instead of his old friend Howie.

According to Buchanan, he has no choice but to jump ship: In the Republican race the "fix" is in, the process is "almost closed and rigged." Really? The GOP has debates, and primaries, and rules. Pat's jumping to a party where the fix really is in, and the rules truly are rigged. Or at least so he hopes.

Buchanan's real problem is that in the Republican party, he has increasingly found himself a demagogue without a demos. In his first primary in New Hampshire in 1992, he reached 37 percent of the vote. It's been downhill from there. He never did as well again in 1992, and after his victory in New Hampshire in 1996, his campaign fell apart. This year, he won 7 percent in the Iowa straw poll, down from 18 percent four years ago, and he is running at about 3 percent in national surveys of GOP voters. Apparently, the more Republicans see of Pat, the less inclined they are to support him.

This is not to say Buchanan has been without influence in the GOP. For example, he and his supporters helped block attempts to water down the language of the pro-life plank in the Republican platform in 1996. Next year, too, the question of how firmly and uncompromisingly the GOP is to be pro-life will be on the table. One might think Buchanan would want to play a role in that struggle. After all, in 1996, Pat assured his supporters that he was "not going to walk away from the unborn. It is a commitment I made to my people in the campaign. I told them I would go out there, and would do my best to keep our party pro-life." But now Pat is walking away from the fight to keep one of the two major political parties in America seriously pro-life. And he is walking toward a party whose platform takes no position on the issue of abortion.

The Reform party is sympathetic to the motley collection of foreign policy and trade doctrines summed up by Pat as "America First." He is undoubtedly sincere about these views. But part of Pat's attraction to America First is that it puts Pat first. Consider the dedication of his new book: "To the loyal men and women of the Buchanan Brigades of '92 and '96, I will never forget you." Isn't it a little unusual to dedicate a book to your (eponymous) followers? And what about the melodramatic "I will never forget you," rather than an expression of thanks or gratitude?

How are Republican leaders reacting to the departure from their ranks of a not particularly powerful demagogue whose views range from the foolish to the dangerous? For the most part, stupidly and cravenly. They're pleading with him to stay in a party he has come to despise, and which, by all rights, ought to disdain him. Thus John

Kasich: "I don't want to see him leave the party. I think we need a guy like him. He and I are very similar with kind of populist, blue-collar messages, and we don't want him to leave the party. I have to tell you that I never heard George Bush even talk negatively about Pat Buchanan. Pat's a hard guy not to like. He's got a good personality, a lot of ideas, a lot of enthusiasm." And so on.

Dan Quayle said last week that the Republican establishment should regard Buchanan's defection as a "wake-up call" from frustrated conservatives. There are, in fact, legitimate grounds for conservative frustration with the GOP. But the last thing one ought to do is to identify real conservative concerns with Buchanan's self-serving defection. Indeed, Buchanan's departure from the GOP offers Republicans an opportunity to set forth a strong conservative agenda *and* to distinguish it from Buchananism. This would be healthy for conservatism both substantively and politically.

There have been several third-party candidates in recent decades, but to find a useful analogy to Buchanan one needs to go back a half century to Henry Wallace. Wallace, vice president only four years before, was in 1948 a more substantial and prominent figure than Buchanan today. His defection seemed to threaten Truman far more seriously than Buchanan's does Bush. Yet Wallace, who started out like Buchanan amid widespread expectations that he would win a serious and disruptive share of the vote, ended up with 2 percent. The Democrats held the presidency and won back Congress. Why? They helped themselves by defining themselves *against* Wallace.

Harry Truman, in particular, didn't plead for Wallace to stay. He didn't say Wallace was a nice guy or praise his past contributions to the party. He did insist on his party's support for those legitimate causes that Wallace and his fellow travelers tried to hijack, especially civil rights. But above all, Truman denounced Wallace. In March 1948, at a time when he trailed Dewey in the polls and was even at some risk of being denied renomination by his own party, Truman said: "I do not want and I will not accept the political support of Henry Wallace and his Communists. If joining them or permitting them to join me is the price of victory, I recommend defeat. These are days of high prices for everything, but any price for Wallace and his Communists is too much for me to pay. I am not buying." Are Republicans capable of being as courageous and astute as Harry Truman was half a century ago? Or will they continue to cower before Pat the Bunny?

*—William Kristol*

# Buchanan and His Friends

## Is Pat serious about the Reform Party? Enough to lunch with Lenora Fulani. BY TUCKER CARLSON


Thomas Fluharty

LENORA FULANI has never been ashamed of being called a radical. As a leader of the hard-left (and now defunct) New Alliance party, Fulani ran for president twice on a platform so extreme she was dismissed by the *Nation* as a fringe case. Long a slogan-shouting fixture at leftist demonstrations in New York, Fulani has over the years formed political alliances with Al Sharpton, Leonard Jeffries, and Louis Farrakhan. She knows Tawana Brawley personally. She spent years in analysis with a lesbian Gestalt therapist. She is, in short, not the sort of person you'd expect to see having lunch with Pat Buchanan.

Yet there she was last Monday dining and talking politics with Buchanan in the restaurant of the Essex House Hotel in Manhattan. By the end of the meal, Fulani had made it clear she would support Buchanan's run for president on the Reform party ticket.

The most unlikely political coupling since Elvis met Nixon? Undoubtedly, especially since Buchanan and Fulani still share very few of the same beliefs. "There was a fair amount of levity and self-conscious humor about how we were all at the table together," says Jacqueline Salit, a longtime New Alliance party activist who was also at the lunch. As his wife Shelley and sister Bay looked on, Salit says, Buchanan chatted with Fulani about the presidential race, the Reform party's latest convention, the difficulties of mounting a third-party campaign—virtually everything, in other words, except the innumerable subjects on which they violently disagree.

Which makes sense, says Salit, who like Fulani and New Alliance guru Fred Newman joined the Reform party in 1996. "This party is about being a non-ideological force for political change." Non-ideological? Isn't Buchanan the original caricature of a foam-specked ideologue? Exactly, says Salit. "That's one of the things Pat brings to the table, that he is so ideological. It's a way to make a point about the non-ideological nature of the party."

There's a certain Zen quality to Salit's logic, but it doesn't seem to have deterred Buchanan, who every day comes closer to leaving the Republican party. Will Buchanan take the Reform plunge? Almost certainly. For one thing, it's clear that Buchanan has decided he wants the Reform nomination—wants it badly enough to seek the blessing of Lenora Fulani (which, non-ideological political change notwithstanding, must have required steely self-discipline and an enormous amount of pride swallowing). For another, there may be no one in the Reform party who can stop him.

Until recently there has been quite a bit of confusion over what it takes to win the Reform party nomi-

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nation—which is not surprising for a movement formed in the wake of a single appearance on *Larry King Live*. Many of the party's guiding documents are grammatically suspect and, in general, difficult to understand. Decipher the dangling modifiers and it turns out that anyone who wants the party's nomination in 2000 will have to get his name on the ballot in more than 20 states (states in which the Reform party does not have a permanent line), and then win the majority of votes in an election open to anyone who requests a Reform party ballot.

In theory, the nomination is a wide-open contest. In practice, Buchanan is one of the few people who could win. It might cost a neophyte $25 million to qualify in the necessary states. Buchanan, with his extensive mailing lists and nationwide organization, could probably do it for $2 million. Moreover, many of Buchanan's current supporters are Buchananites rather than Republicans, and therefore likely to stay with him regardless of his party affiliation.

After winning the nomination, Buchanan would be eligible for the nearly $13 million in federal matching funds the Reform party will receive this year. (Bay Buchanan was on the phone with FEC lawyers last week making certain that her brother, as a refugee from the GOP, would not be barred from receiving the money.) With federal dollars and a decent fund-raising effort—including the soft money a few wealthy Buchanan backers could pour into the Reform party—Buchanan might do fairly well in the general election. A 20 percent showing (and it's not impossible) would make the Reform party eligible for tens of millions in federal money for the 2004 election. At which point, Buchanan could run again, better-funded than ever. It could go on forever.

Which is exactly what worries Jesse Ventura, governor of Minnesota and the highest (virtually the only) elected member of the Reform party. Ventura plans to run for president in 2004 himself. He is reportedly infuriated by the idea of competition from an interloper like Buchanan. "Jesse wants a place-sitter," says Pat Choate, who in 1996 ran for vice president on the Perot ticket. "He wants someone to hold the seat. But he doesn't trust Pat not to run again."

Even more irritating to Ventura, Buchanan appears to have the tacit support of Ross Perot. Ventura asked Perot for financial support during his 1998 gubernatorial race, was denied, and has loathed the tiny Texan ever since. "Jesse's attitude is, 'If Perot is for it, I'm against it,'" says a Reform party political operative.

*There is little doubt that a Buchanan candidacy would harm Bush in the general election. Trump, on the other hand, may draw from an entirely different constituency.*

So far, Ventura hasn't been able to tweak the party rules in such a way as to keep Buchanan from getting the nomination. Instead, he has tried to find an alternative candidate. An early, secret overture to Warren Beatty backfired when one of Ventura's consultants blabbed about the meeting on television. Offended, Beatty hasn't communicated with Ventura since. In the past few weeks, rumors about whom Ventura will anoint—Ralph Nader perhaps, or former Natural Law candidate John Hagelin—have circulated throughout the party. (Reform party people spend a lot of time circulating rumors.) His almost-certain choice is Donald Trump.

Ventura and Trump first met some years ago, when Ventura, in his previous incarnation, performed at WrestleMania IV at the Trump Plaza in Atlantic City. Shortly before Labor Day this year, Ventura called Trump and suggested that he run for the Reform party nomination. It's not as implausible as it sounds. Trump has recovered from his early-90s financial crisis and is now reputed to be worth about $5 billion. Thanks to his casino and apartment complex businesses, he has a customer database of more than six million names, each of them a potential political supporter. And of course he *is* Donald Trump. Which means that he might be arrogant enough to run for president with no prior political experience.

Finally, there is the Bush factor. There is little doubt that a Buchanan candidacy would harm George W. Bush in the general election. Trump, on the other hand, may draw from an entirely different constituency. According to a political consultant who has studied the matter, Trump supporters would be disproportionately Democratic—black and Hispanic voters, and working-class white Catholics earning less than $25,000 a year. To this demographic, the consultant says, Trump is a hero. "The cars, the airplanes, the beautiful women. It's a lifestyle thing. They respect him." If this is true—and Trump, for one, is said to believe it is—then there is no reason the Bush campaign wouldn't do all it could to promote a Trump candidacy.

Meanwhile, Republicans in Washington are still trying to figure out what to make of the latest Buchanan candidacy. On Friday morning last week, Bob Adams, Buchanan's communications director, resigned from the campaign. Adams is a gentleman and, in his carefully worded statement, he refrained from saying anything unpleasant about his former boss. His contempt and bewilderment came through anyway. "I plan to do whatever it takes to support the Republican candidate for president," Adams said, emphasizing the word "Republican." Even if that candidate decides to have lunch with Lenora Fulani? Adams almost answered, then stopped himself. "I'll have to reserve comment on that," he said. ♦

# Who Now Loathes the Military?

## Congressional Republicans claim to be pro-defense. Do they mean it? BY LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

HOW MUCH should America spend on its military? Listening to Republicans, you would think the answer was clear: much more than whatever we are currently spending. The charge that President Clinton has "hollowed out" the armed forces has become a favorite among Republican members of Congress. The allegation has also been a staple in the race for the GOP presidential nomination, with all the major candidates scoring the administration for its meager defense expenditures.

The armed services, of course, have been plagued by budgetary shortfalls, rapidly thinning ranks, and aging stocks of equipment. Nonetheless, the Republican indictment is actually an indictment against itself. If the United States today fields a hollow military, the blame lies as much with Congress as it does with the White House. The difference between the two is merely this: Where President Clinton has compelled the military to do "more with less," Republicans are proposing that it do less with less. And they are promoting this line not only for reasons of frugality but also, oddly enough, on ideological grounds.

To begin with, there is the issue of military spending. Consider the latest Republican proposals. The budget resolution Congress passed in March actually provides for lower levels of defense expenditures over the next decade—to the tune of $100 billion—than the Clinton administration proposed. True, House Republicans claim to have added $8 billion to the president's defense request for the coming fiscal year. But when it comes to spending outlays—that is, the actual amount the Pentagon may spend in a given year, as opposed to theoretical future expenditures—they have provided the military with seven billion fewer dollars than the White House.

To be fair, House GOP leaders in May pledged an additional $3 billion in defense funds to rebuild what they termed our "hollowed out" military. Alas, not a month later, those same leaders quietly announced a change of heart: The funds would be allocated instead to the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and other agencies. For not only had we been spending more than is necessary on defense, argued junior Republicans (reviving a canard from the 1970s), but we had been doing so at the expense of vital domestic programs that were being bled dry. "Thirteen billion [dollars] is more than Social Security pays in an entire year for seniors' insurance, for benefits for kids," protested Rep. Mark Sanford, a South Carolina Republican, during subsequent debate on an emergency defense bill. "Thirteen billion would pay Social Security benefits for every African American retiree." Or as fellow Republican Lee Terry put it when voting against the same bill, "The United States has domestic priorities that must be protected."

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A few weeks after that, despite predictions of a trillion dollar surplus, congressional Republicans announced that none of that windfall would be employed to strengthen the very institution whose weakness they had been deploring. It would be used instead for an $800 billion tax cut, which could lower defense spending a further $200 billion over the next decade. Clinton, by contrast, had pledged to increase the level of military spending by $127 billion over the same time period. Thus, the unveiling of the GOP tax plan led to an unusual bit of political theater—with the president attacking Republicans, with some credibility, for their "reckless" and "dramatic" proposed cuts in the defense budget. Then, too, there was the curious spectacle of senior military leaders pleading with the White House to protect the armed services from a Republican Congress, urging Clinton aides "not to sell out the Pentagon."

Darren Gygi

If the sheer scale of this year's Republican cuts alarmed the Pentagon, the criteria by which weapons programs were scaled back to produce those cuts proved equally unsettling. The most notable item to lose its funding was the F-22 jet fighter—now set for manufacture after years of research and development and $18 billion in sunk costs. The plane, superior in every respect to the Joint Strike Fighter, was the first such project to be canceled by Congress. (It would have been the second, had defense hawks—many of whom were Democrats—not barely succeeded in deflecting an earlier attempt by John Kasich and 80 like-minded Republicans to kill the B-2 stealth bomber.)

But a further cut, one that went generally unremarked upon in the uproar surrounding the F-22's demise, most plainly revealed the emptiness of congressional rhetoric. For a decade and a half, the United States has expended billions of dollars on the development of a missile defense program. And, for a decade and a half, Republicans have clamored for the deployment of such a system. So when President Clinton finally conceded the need for a missile shield—and only days after the Army's Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system was tested successfully—how did House Republicans react? By deleting the funds the administration requested for THAAD's engineering and manufacture. Which missile defense program Congress ought to promote is, to be sure, a question with ample room for disagreement. But the cause of rational discussion was hardly furthered when congressional Republicans chose to expend those funds on items like unrequested helicopters for the National Guard and bases the Pentagon had implored them to shut.

So what animates this new generation of Republicans? At the simplest level, the explanation is fairly straightforward: In their telling, they were elected with a mandate to curtail the budget deficit, federal expenditures, and, more broadly, the government itself. "I'm a hawk," Newt Gingrich explained in 1995, "but I'm a cheap hawk." As for the former speaker's disciples, junior Republicans have indeed been revealed as cheap, though they could hardly be described as hawks.

Another reason for the Republican reversal on defense is politics. Today, with the exception of a few Southern states that host a disproportionately large number of military bases, the defense budget claims virtually no political constituency. And the same political currents that have siphoned funds out of the defense budget have equally distorted its substance. Responding to electoral rather than strategic imperatives, congressional Republicans routinely expend scarce defense dollars on schemes of dubious strategic worth, including civilian projects, obsolete production lines, and unneeded bases. And when they do attend to military requirements, they habitually do so as if the armed services comprised simply another GOP voting bloc—attaching more importance to the crisis in military day care than to matters of weapons acquisition and modernization.

But the demise of the Republican commitment to the aim of an adequately funded military involves more than dollars and cents. It is also a matter of ideology and, specifically, a manifestation of two creeds that have lately distinguished the Republican style of governance; namely, anti-statism and non-interventionism.

As to the first of these, though denigration of the federal government has long been a staple in many Republican quarters, it was until recently a selective denigration, with institutions like the military and federal law-enforcement exempted as legitimate agencies of authority. But if the GOP means to excoriate federal spending and heavy-handed federal agencies, Republicans of a libertarian bent now argue, why exempt the most expensive and authoritarian of them all? "I don't think it's fair for Republicans to sit and criticize Commerce, the Department of Education and other agencies and, at the same time, give defense what they need because 'I want to go home to the veterans and give my Memorial Day Speech,'" Rep. Mark Foley admonished his colleagues. Or as freshman congressman Doug Ose put it (echoing Jack Kemp's charge that Kosovo was an "international Waco"): "Those are my colleagues' and my tax dollars being used [by the armed forces] . . . to destroy day care centers, schools, churches and the like."

To provide a platform for such voices, in 1996 Foley and former Rep. Mark Neumann formed the Republican Defense Working Group, an alliance whose objective is a lasting reduction in the level of defense expenditures, and whose members have repeatedly challenged military operations and new weapons systems, and demanded an immediate freeze in defense spending. Supporters of those ends have so far succeeded only in derailing proposals to boost the military budget. Demography, however, is on their side: As Republicans elected during the Cold War retire and their junior ranks—few of whose members have had extensive contact with the armed forces—move into leadership positions, conservative thrift may well supplant liberal anti-militarism as the chief obstacle to an adequate level of defense expenditure.

Yet if the new anti-governmentalism runs counter to the end of higher defense appropriations, so too do the minimalist foreign-policy aims embraced by the new Republicans. "An issue or crisis comes up and [their] reaction is almost Pavlovian," observes senator John McCain of the new generation of congressmen. "Don't send troops." And just as Republicans during the 1930s and following the Second World War quite consistently aligned their defense budget requests with their reluctance to intervene abroad, a new generation has likewise established that it makes little sense to champion larger defense expenditures while at the same time condemning the uses for which those expenditures are intended.

As representative Ron Paul explained during debate over an emergency defense bill last May: "The more we get into quagmires around the world and the more we accept the policy of policing the

world, all we seem to do is come back and say, well, if we just put more money in [the military budget]. . . . Funding encourages a policy that is in error." Or, as congressman John Duncan has complained, "All we are doing is wasting billions of dollars and making enemies all over the world . . . billions and billions of dollars taken from low and middle-income Americans." Republicans in Congress, it seems, have finally discovered that the military is an instrument of foreign policy.

That the congressional wings of both parties tend toward the unserious has long been a truism of American politics—and nowhere more than in matters of national security policy, which is in any case devised mainly by the executive branch. Still, it is Congress, and not the White House, that funds the Department of Defense. On the crucial question of military budgets, then, those who trivialize legislative opinion do so at the cost of discounting developments likely to have serious and lasting consequences for the nation's ability to defend itself.

And if a Republican president were to be elected in 2000? Even if that newly sworn-in president wished to shower the Pentagon with budgetary largesse (an admittedly remote prospect), how likely is it that a Republican Congress would appropriate those funds? Representative Joe Scarborough, who has lately been making headlines with his crusade to close down the Army's School of the Americas, explained: "Any Republican president who expects the House members and probably the newer members of the Senate to merrily go along and rubber-stamp" his national security aims "will be very disappointed." All the more so, as isolationism, poll-taking, and libertarian zeal erode the once vital role Republicans played in advancing the aim of a strong defense. Now if only Democrats with their newly expansive foreign policy aims could be so consistent, our debates over defense spending might begin to make a little sense. ♦

# The Moonlighting Candidate

## Cybill Shepherd for President? Despite her Elvis problem, it might happen. BY MATT LABASH

PATTY SHEPHERD MICCI is a liar. But don't hold that against her. Hers was a commonplace prevarication, the kind of breakfast-nook embellishment most loving parents feed their children between spoonfuls of Apple Jacks. "When my daughter was young," admits Patty, "I told her she could become anything she wanted—including president of the United States."

Her daughter, the actress Cybill Shepherd, seemed to take this exhortation to heart. A Memphis belle out of charm school, Shepherd won a Model of the Year contest, became a star of the big and small screens, and is perhaps the only ardent feminist who testifies to having had congress with Elvis Presley. But having fulfilled her potential, she now seems ready to test her mother's idle exaggeration. Two weeks ago, Gloria Allred, the feminist attorney and Shepherd's friend, let it be known that the star of *Moonlighting*, *Cybill*, and *The Last Picture Show* was seriously considering running for president.

This, of course, has been the silliest political season, with a second-tier Republican ideologue threatening to hijack a non-ideological party, a former professional wrestler trying to stunt him in favor of a supermodel-dating real estate developer, and an underemployed megalomaniacal actor contemplating the role of spoiler (Warren Beatty, not Cybill Shepherd, though she, too, has a robust self-regard and too much time in between shoots).

Still, many media outlets delayed reporting Shepherd's possible candidacy, thinking it a joke. It's not, assures Allred (Shepherd declined to be interviewed, as she seeks quiet for deliberation). Allred admits the whole thing was her idea, one she sprang on Shepherd over Labor Day. Their first conversation led to another. Their second turned into a third. And now Allred and Shepherd are "continuing a dialogue," as all good progressives do when poised to effect serious change.

Allred, who hosts a Los Angeles radio show, is a publicity tapeworm. She once waged a campaign against Madonna for her song "Papa Don't Preach," the saga of an expectant teenage mother who elects to keep her baby. This offended Allred's pro-abortion sensibility since "it makes having a baby seem very heroic and romantic." So Allred demanded that Madonna "produce another record supporting a woman's right to choose abortion."

It's a rare bird that can make one root for Madonna. And Allred's involvement has some Shepherd intimates questioning whether this exploratory phase is just a media ploy by Allred. But Allred insists this is about something more important than publicity. It is about "the issues." And the primary issue is that "there was no pro-choice candidate" in this race, give or take a Bill Bradley or Al Gore. If you're choosy about choice, Shepherd is about as pro-choice as they come. She was the traveling ambassador for Voters For Choice. She cut campaign ads attacking Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, a pro-choice Republican who wasn't pro-choice

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**Cybill Shepherd**

John Kascht

enough. And in 1989, while surveying the crowd at one of the many abortion marches she's attended, Shepherd told *People*, "this is the happiest day of my life, except for the days my children were born."

While Allred freely admits that if Shepherd were to run, abortion "would be her number one issue," Shepherd is far from being a one-issue candidate. When I ask what other issues are dear to Shepherd, Allred says she'd be extremely vigilant in appointing Supreme Court justices who would protect *Roe* v. *Wade*. "Then, of course," Allred continues, "there's the issue of terrorism against the clinics." Shepherd would also ensure there were enough abortion providers. "So she has many, many issues," promises Allred.

When asked about issues that don't involve extracting a fetus, Allred brings up women's health. "Women's issues don't get the same kind of funding that male health issues do," she says, and she's right. Though prostate cancer and breast cancer kill the same number of people each year, breast cancer research receives six times the funding of prostate cancer research.

Skeptics might suggest that Shepherd is a tad shy of political experience to become the leader of the free world. It may, however, be worth highlighting, as does her older sister Gladys, that "Cybill did run for the student council in high school." Shepherd lost. But as her mother Patty points out with no small amount of pride, "she was president of her sorority—Delta Alpha Delta." Born to lead, Shepherd has a presidential contender's most essential attribute: the ability to withstand a tremendous amount of abuse.

Not even Dan Quayle has taken as many media beatings as Shepherd over her three-decade career. Leaving Memphis with a body for sin and a head for Germaine Greer, she became a successful model. Then director Peter Bogdanovich spotted her on a magazine cover in a grocery checkout line. He cast her in *The Last Picture Show*, based on Larry McMurtry's novel, which won the Oscar for Best Picture in 1971. Bogdanovich wasted no time shucking his collaborator/wife in order to bed Shepherd, who scored one for homewreckers by telling the press, "Oh, it's sexier not to be married."

For a feminist, Shepherd possessed something of a slutty streak. (Sister Gladys says when Cybill was a teenager, her dad nailed the bedroom window shut. Cybill said, "Daddy, what if there's a fire?" recalls Gladys. "He said, 'I'm more worried about the fire in you.'") Still, Shepherd stayed with Bogdanovich for all of eight years. One of the smarmier characters in Hollywood's reptile house, Bogdanovich was so infatuated with Shepherd he took every opportunity to inflict her on the public in third-rate vehicles. They embraced on the cover of *People* magazine with the tagline "Living Together is Sexy." Bogdanovich put her in *At Long Last Love*, a musical with Burt Reynolds that *Esquire* magazine said "may be the worst movie musical of this—or any—decade."

Bogdanovich also helped launch her singing career with an album appropriately titled *Cybill Does It—To Cole Porter!* One failed album of cabaret, jazz, and rhythm 'n' blues standards after another followed. Once she had exhausted the public's tolerance, Shepherd went into a decade-long exile that saw her doing dinner theater and terminating a brief marriage to an auto-parts salesman. She was finally rescued in 1985, when she starred with newcomer Bruce Willis in the television series *Moonlighting.* Both did some of the best work of their careers, despite their battling egos. But around the time Shepherd became impregnated by her chiropractor, giving birth to twins (she married and quickly divorced him), the show started suffering and lost its creator, who found Shepherd nearly impossible to work with.

While Willis went on to eight-figure paydays, Shepherd was scrapping for distressed-mommy roles in movie-of-the-week dross—a sort of Lindsay Wagner for the '90s. But Shepherd resuscitated herself again by executive producing and acting in the loosely autobiographical sitcom *Cybill*, about a struggling, twice-divorced actress growing long of tooth who favored yenta repartee and dowdy sponge-soled footwear (Cybill almost never wears heels). Despite initial critical

acclaim, *Cybill*, like *Moonlighting*, managed to self-destruct. Shepherd, typically, took credit for creating Christine Baranski, her much funnier, Emmy-winning sidekick. Before the show was canceled in 1998, Shepherd's Genghis Khan-management style was blamed for the departure of five producers and three writers in a two-month period.

With no series left to tie her down, now would be a good year for Shepherd to run for president. Her long-overdue autobiography, *Cybill Disobedience*, which could serve as her campaign manifesto, should appear next spring. (Comparing her book to John McCain's new memoir, HarperCollins executive editor David Hirshey says Cybill's book is "short on policy statements, but the sex scenes are a lot better." In one, she relates for the first time how a drugged-up Elvis passed out on top of her, *in medias res*.)

And Shepherd really does have an issue besides abortion—menopause. Always game to prattle on about her own hot flashes and sex after 40, Shepherd was ideally suited to become the spokeswoman for the "Say Yes to Midlife!" campaign. Who better than Shepherd, a drama queen by vocation and temperament, to elevate the prosaic to the mythic ("We're dealing with the last frontier: We're reinventing menopause and blowing all the myths to bits.").

As for the yucky mechanics of campaigning—the glad-handing, the fund-raising, the coalition-building—Gloria Allred cautions, "This is all very preliminary." Allred doesn't even know whose banner her friend would run under. But if Shepherd, a Democrat, doesn't feel ready to take on the vice president for her party's nomination, there's always a home away from home: the Reform party, where they don't check your references and no experience is required. "We would welcome her if she adheres to Reform party principles," says newly elected Reform party chair Jack Gargan, in what is becoming this season's most common refrain. "Throw her in the mix," he adds lustily. "She's gotta be prettier than Lowell Weicker." ♦

# How Steve Forbes Can Win Big

## First he needs to lower his sights and run for the open Senate seat in New Jersey. BY DAVID FRUM

IF HE'S NOMINATED next summer, George W. Bush will be the first Republican presidential candidate since Jerry Ford in 1976 to owe nothing to the conservative wing of the Republican party. If he goes on to win, he'll be the first elected Republican president since Eisenhower not obligated to the right. That does not mean that Bush will necessarily govern in an unconservative manner or that he'll be an unsuccessful president. It does, however, mean that his conservatism will be fitful and calculated—least to be counted on when it is most needed. Which in turn means that if Bush should win the presidency, conservatives will need a champion of their own: somebody who can support the White House when it does the right thing (as Senator Robert Taft staunchly supported President Eisenhower's Korean peacemaking) and effectively oppose it when it does wrong (as Newt Gingrich opposed Bush the Elder's tax-hiking budget deal in 1990).

Drew Friedman

In 1999, for the first time since the half-decade from the death of Taft to the emergence of Barry Goldwater, no such champion exists. There is no shortage of conservative writers and commentators. But an ideological conservative who has submitted himself or herself to the test of the ballot box—and won? Amazingly enough, there is no such person.

Pat Buchanan aspired to the job in 1992, and his impressive performance in that year's New Hampshire primary temporarily qualified him for it. But Buchanan is drifting ever further away from anything that might be called "conservatism" and toward an alliance with black Marxist Lenora Fulani and other fringe elements concerned about the undue influence of cosmopolitan international bankers upon American political life. Jack Kemp once expected the job to plop into his lap, but even he seems now to recognize that his spectacular self-immolation in 1996 put an end to his political career. Phil Gramm, staunch on the issues as he is, never won a

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national constituency. So who does that leave? Dan Quayle? Gary Bauer?

There's one man, however, who could fill the position, if he makes the right choice now. That man is Steve Forbes.

Over the past three years, Forbes has done an impressive job of winning the trust of economic and social conservatives alike. He holds principled views and expresses them in a principled way. He'd make an admirable national spokesman for conservatism except for one crucial detail: He has never proven he can win an election. Election-winning is not always a prerequisite for gaining the presidency. The Republican party has nominated political virgins four times this century—William Howard Taft in 1908, Herbert Hoover in 1928, Wendell Willkie in 1940, and Dwight Eisenhower in 1952—and won three times. But by now it should be clear that 2000 is no 1940, and that Forbes is extremely unlikely to scoop the nomination from George W. Bush.

Two weeks ago, however, the *New York Post* proposed a better outcome to Forbes's career dilemma. With New Jersey governor Christine Whitman's decision not to run for the Senate seat vacated by Democrat Frank Lautenberg, there is no strong Republican candidate for the very winnable senatorship in Forbes's home state. What if Forbes were to declare for it? With New Jersey Democrats facing a potentially bloody primary between Jon Corzine, a liberal zillionaire financier, and Jim Florio, a defeated former governor, Forbes's chances would be excellent.

As a senator, Forbes would command more attention and respect than he would as a twice-defeated candidate for president. He'd have the clout to keep the Bush administration on course, and his office would quickly become the national headquarters for disaffected Republicans should the administration drift off. He'd retain the option of mounting a more-credible-than-ever run for president in 2004, if Bush loses or his administration flops, or as a reelected senator in 2008, when he'd still be only 61.

Since World War II, there have been only four national conservative leaders: Taft, Goldwater, Reagan, and Gingrich. All four were practicing politicians and owed their leadership in some significant part to their political success. Steve Forbes has gone as far as he can go as a self-financed citizen-candidate. If he wants to claim the leader's chair, he's going to have to do the leader's work. That means avoiding a presidential race he is sure to lose, and entering a race that he can win and that will make him a national force in the event that he does win.

**POSITION AVAILABLE**: Conservative wing of major political party seeks leader. Must be able to articulate Reaganite philosophy on issues of economic freedom, national security, and social morality. Note: This position is available only to candidates who have previously won election to a major political office.

There's no disgrace in testing the water and drawing back if it's too cold. Reagan weighed and rejected a presidential run in 1968, and it didn't seem to do his career any harm. On the contrary, it's an unwillingness to run for anything other than the big prize that kills a would-be president's prospects. When Mario Cuomo sought a third term in 1990, New York Republicans begged Jack Kemp to oppose him. Kemp hesitated, and the nomination was instead scooped up by the eccentric economist Pierre Rinfret. Even so, Cuomo took only 53 percent of the vote. Where would Kemp be today if he had accomplished a stunning upset of liberalism's paladin nine years ago?

Of course, to make such a decision requires a rare set of qualities: astuteness, realism, boldness, self-discipline, and wisdom. Those, as it happens, are also the virtues Americans are entitled to expect from a president. Has Forbes got them? ♦

# Prime Time Affirmative Action

Al Gore signs on to the silliest cause of the season, racial diversity on TV. **BY LEE BOCKHORN**

RACIAL BEAN COUNTERS, always seeking grist for their ever grinding mills, have found their most spurious cause yet—the lack of "diversity" on network TV shows. The NAACP led the way, with Kweisi Mfume calling last month for boycotts and even legal action against the networks. Now Hispanics, despite being every marketer's "hot" ethnic group—courted by presidential candidates, ubiquitous on magazine covers and MTV—are following suit. The National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts last week called for a "brownout" of network programming, to protest both the lack of Hispanics on prime time and their often stereotypical depiction. Al Gore turned out to cheer them on.

Formed in 1997 as the brainchild of actor Jimmy Smits, the Foundation held its third annual *"Noche de Gala"* fund-raiser in Washington's plush Mayflower Hotel last Monday. Vice President Gore was the featured speaker. He played to perfection his role as one of the nation's leading self-appointed racial tutors, urging the networks to emulate the Clinton administration's achievement of "looking like America" and showing off his familiar Spanish soundbites—*familia*, *amor de país*, *educación*.

But Gore's performance aside, what was striking was the surreal politics of the cause. If there are impediments to the progress of America's Hispanic population, insufficient callbacks for the likes of Jimmy Smits are not among them. Poor schools and dysfunctional bilingual education might be worth talking about, but here in the genteel ballroom of the Mayflower at a $1,000-a-plate dinner, successful entertainers tinkled wine glasses with bureaucrats like Education Department quota queen Norma Cantu and racial ideologues like Mfume and Jesse Jackson—all apparently more concerned about haranguing network executives to make work for Erik Estrada, so that Hispanic kids will have "role models."

Far from looking to the boob tube for inspiration, ambitious young Hispanics, like other Americans, would rise faster in the world by watching less TV. But that's not the only absurdity of the TV-diversity cause. Consider this statement Smits made in 1998: "When positive images of Hispanics are nearly vacant in the national consciousness [i.e., on TV], our presence becomes minimized and undervalued in the workforce." Such underrepresentation, he continued, makes it difficult for Hispanics to "see themselves in a positive way or feel as if they are part of the American fabric." What Smits is promoting is therapeutic television—the notion that TV exists to burnish the self-esteem of viewers and to confer recognition on the contributions to American society of different ethnic groups.

*Which of the Friends could have been cast as a Hispanic without the potential for protest? Dim-witted Joey? Ditzy airhead Phoebe?*

If mere proportional representation on sitcoms were the issue, the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts might have a point. While Hispanics make up 11 percent of our population, they account for about 3 percent of television roles. In response to this disparity, the publisher of *Latina* magazine recently wrote in *Newsweek* that NBC's *Friends* should "find some *amigos*." But this highlights a possible reason for the monochromatic nature of prime time: stereotyped characters are the stock in trade of TV entertainment. Which of the *Friends* could have been cast as a Hispanic without the potential for the sort of protest that spooks TV executives? Womanizing, dim-witted Joey? Ditzy airhead Phoebe? Perhaps the self-absorbed and promiscuous Rachel?

As one network executive recently vented to *Entertainment Weekly*, "It's become a no-win proposition. Unless you're putting on an hour-long show about a black brain surgeon helping Third World children, you're insulting the race." Activists decry the lack of non-white faces on TV, yet simultaneously denounce almost all television portrayals of minorities. Last year, when Kramer accidentally burned a Puerto Rican flag on an episode of *Seinfeld*, NHFA president Félix Sánchez demanded an FCC investigation and said that Jerry Seinfeld and NBC "must realize that they cannot continue to make profits off ethnic mudslinging." With reactions like this ever possible, it's no surprise risk-averse networks air programs aimed at "hip white urban singles" with gobs of advertiser-friendly disposable income.

To be fair, NHFA also awards scholarships to Hispanic college students who plan to pursue careers in the entertainment industry. This will result in a deeper pool of talent, which will do more to change the racial makeup of prime time than protests like the "brownout." Meantime, how about a show where Al Gore speaks Spanish? It's more amusing than most of what passes for TV comedy. ♦

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# What I Saw at Burning Man

*The new counterculture is a lot like the old: not much culture but plenty of sex and drugs and self-obsession.*

**By David Skinner**

*Black Rock Desert, Nevada*

Meet the new counterculture. Andrew Heintz, 25, and his girlfriend Amy Joe Alstead, 26, have, as the police might put it, no fixed address. But for a homeless couple, they're very middle class. After a couple of years of hard work and saving, Andrew closed a lucrative carpentry business and Amy quit her job as a preschool teacher. They have sold their house in Minneapolis, Minn., paid all their bills and their credit cards, and bought a year's worth of health insurance. Now, towing a pickup truck and canoe behind their RV, they've hit the road. Their first stop is the annual spectacle known as the Burning Man project, held in Nevada's Black Rock desert in the week leading up to Labor Day.

AP/Wide World Photos

*The eponymous effigy*

In Andrew's words, Burning Man is "an art festival for pyromaniacs." That's because the week culminates in the ritualistic torching of the large wooden dummy that gives the event its name. But Burning Man is both more and less than that. It has a reputation for being popular among Silicon Valley types, but attendees represent a somewhat wider swath of young urban professionals, most of them from the San Francisco Bay area. They pay $100 apiece for the privilege of camping on a playa 120 miles north of Reno. This year's Burning Man attracted some 24,000 people, most of them from the San Francisco Bay area.

There is a lot of conceptual talk at the event—of Burning Man as an analogue to the Internet, with lots of ad hoc "communities" springing up; of the joys of non-commercialism (no money is supposed to change hands after arrival). It is a slice of the sort of Americana beloved of NPR's *All Things Considered*—well-educated people with a penchant for self-dramatization doing strange things in an out of the way place. There are night clubs, musical performances, theme villages, fashion shows, and talent contests. One fight-like spectacle, named Thunderdome after the Mad Max movie, uses elastic pulleys to swing people holding foam-wrapped weapons into each other to do battle. Most sites are less ambitious, like Wimminbago camp, which as far as I could tell consisted of a Winnebago, a sign that read "Got ovaries?" and a half-dozen or so topless, overweight, and rather butch lesbians. Walking around Burning Man, you might wonder if you've stumbled into a mass audition for NEA grants. Artists erect various postmodern structures all over the four-square-mile area of the camp; flame-throwers belch forth; people paint their nude bodies and dance. Despite the festival's oft-repeated slogan—"No Spectators"—a sort of equilibrium has been achieved: About half the people are either naked or costumed, and the other half are watching them.

But for all the highfalutin talk, it's hard to avoid the obvious: The counterculture remains, as it has always been, a sort of shell game. It's considered bad manners to

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say so, but the art is often just decoration for a lot of sex and drugs. In an informal survey taken by Burning Man's "Ministry of Statistics," 60 percent of female respondents and 20 percent of male respondents said they had taken drugs in the last 24 hours. Sculptor Ray Cirino, whose "water woman" was on display, is in this sense emblematic of Burning Man, since he is perhaps more famous for multi-colored feather sex toys, which grace a 13-page spread in the October issue of *Penthouse* magazine.

Burning Man was started in 1986 on Baker Beach in San Francisco by Larry Harvey, at the time a depressed 37-year-old landscape gardener. He and some friends were burning stuff, including an 8-foot-tall wooden figurine, with, it seems, no particular mission in mind. According to the lore that has grown moss-like around this moment, people on the beach came running over to watch, leaving Harvey convinced that there was a need out there for some kind of ceremony like this. It became a "project." The organizers refer to it as an "experiment" and describe its aim as "radical self-expression."

The more fanatical participants call it a temporary utopia. They write down wishes on pieces of paper and burn them with the man. They talk about discovering themselves. It's radicalism circa high school: They want to "break down the barriers" that separate people in the "normal" world; they express themselves and celebrate what the "normal" world would prefer they repress; they want to show each other kindness and generosity, bringing to life an ideal community. They want, in short, to do a lot of drugs, preferably someone else's. The utopia is what pop psychology calls a "positive environment," promoting and affirming the members' bad habits.

Still, there is something charming about a guy like Andrew Heintz, who is neither a social misfit graduating from the identity-warping games of the Internet nor a completely respectable professional atoning for an otherwise conventional and bourgeois existence. His light, bluish eyes give him the look of a wild man as they peer out from his sunburned face. Balding prematurely around a widow's peak, he has yellow blond hair that hangs long in the back and, except for the rounds of firecrackers he has taped along the brim of his brown leather hat, he looks like he could have just stepped out of a daguerreotype of cattle ranchers.

Before dropping out, Andrew bought an RV. A few years back, he says, he wasn't sure if he could live on the road, in a world without mortgages, income tax returns, and two-bedroom homes. Burning Man, however, convinced him he "didn't need a permanent address." Bravo, David Mayers would say. Mayers, a radio host on the NPR

*The Thunderdome fights*

Pete High

affiliate in the Silicon Valley area, is hanging out at a camp called the Laughing Sex Institute, pet project of his friend, 48-year-old Steve Penny, who works as a hiring consultant to high-tech firms in Silicon Valley. According to Mayers, forgetting where you live is exactly what you should do. Mayers is upset that there is so much techno music at Burning Man. There should be "African music," he says, "that makes everyone forget their name and address." And where, he wants to know, is the Islamic music? The people at Burning Man are "desert nomads. . . . Why don't we hear the chanting of the Koran? . . . Where are the ouds?" Ouds, he explains, are the "lutes of the Islamic world."

Mayers would have been happy to learn that, even without African music, Robert Cardinelli, a 32-year-old bartender from Dallas, Texas, found a way to get lost immediately upon arrival. He "made a beeline for the port-o-potties, forgot to make any markers" to help him identify where he had parked, "and got lost, 24-hour lost," without food or water. He started out drunk, and then came across a hit of acid. It was, however, a sad trip: All the while, his "favorite teddy bear was locked in the car." This is Cardinelli's second trip to Burning Man. The first was "somewhat interesting, somewhat spiritual," he says. "I put to rest my ex-wife." She's dead? "No, put her memory to rest." This year, he came in order to overcome a drinking problem. It was only his second day there, but already he was speaking of it as a failure. "Did I accom-

plish that?" he asks. "Not really." At this point, a friend hands him binoculars, saying "Look out on the playa, there's a girl out there. She looks about 16, but she's hot." The next afternoon, with the desert heat bearing down, I see Robert stumble by, drinking a fifth of scotch straight from the bottle.

The idea that you can reinvent yourself at will is a modern notion; in its postmodernism, Burning Man proceeds from the idea that you were invented to begin with. Any personal characteristic—sexual bent, character trait, religious belief—is only a choice away from being something totally different. Many attendees assume "playa names" for the duration, like "Evil Pippie" and "Maid Marion," to name just two. Of course, the pressure to find a new self in just days can take a serious psychic toll. At one theme camp, where the point was to tell jokes, a young man walked up and fell apart when the crowd asked him to tell one, too. "Wait!" he screamed. The two girls he was with giggled as if this was the joke. "It's got to stop." Staring at his companions with a look of violent disbelief, he continued, "No, stop—you must stop!" His voice full of self-pity and, it seemed, real anguish, he went on, "People tell me who I am and . . . I can't take it. It's got to stop. I have no ego. I have no id . . ." Two volunteer rangers came over and, smiling sweetly the whole time, asked him to come with them.

The identity problem of the counterculture is not exactly a small one, nor is it even a problem according to some. Last year, in *Time* magazine, R.U. Sirius, a writer who has made a career as a high-tech impresario, drew a straight line from the false identities of the old multi-user-dungeon games on the Internet and the identity-changing experience at Burning Man. The new counterculture, he argued, is made up of "bright young pagans," "the computer-programming, anthropologically aware polymaths who have popularized the imaginative role-playing bulletin boards of cyberspace." The new counterculture's philosophy, Sirius explained, opens up "temporary autonomous zones" in which completely original identities are formed.

But only a bright young pagan could mistake a group of people running away from themselves for seekers of self-knowledge. The identity problem of these young rebels is the narcissism of small cosmetic differences. What the oh-so-hip Sirius calls "postpolitical tribalization" is actually the superficial vanity of tiny social cliques who fear that, without visible markers, strangers might mistake them for another equally self-absorbed clique.

The culture of Burning Man is rather a direct descendant of the '70s awareness movements that sought a "new consciousness." In *The Culture of Narcissism*, his study of the post-liberation left, Christopher Lasch attacked awareness movements for projecting patients' insecurities and shortcomings onto society at large. Lasch would have found the scene at Burning Man familiar, despite the fact that it is the product of a more opulent time. "I didn't go through adolescence until my twenties," I overheard one young woman say. The awareness movement, according to Lasch, reflected a common failure among otherwise educated and self-sufficient adults to overcome the adolescent's inclination to see the outside world as a reflection of his own needs and wants.

> The narcissist . . . cannot live without an admiring audience. His apparent freedom from family ties and institutional constraints does not free him to stand alone or to glory in his individuality. On the contrary, it contributes to his insecurity, which he can overcome only by seeing his "grandiose self" reflected in the attentions of others.

Thus the deep problem when a culture of narcissism endures. Eventually, everyone becomes an attention hog and nobody pays attention to anybody but himself.

This attitude, of course, bespeaks childishness of a high order. So it's perhaps unsurprising to read in the promotional material on the official Web site that the appeal of Burning Man is, "You're not the weirdest kid in the classroom." And it's unsurprising that the politics of Burning Man, such as they are, are also a bit adolescent. Burning Man founder Larry Harvey has a commercialization rant that could sit nicely beside any beatnik or hippie screed against culture for the masses. "You remember breakdancing?" Harvey asked (with accidental hilarity) in an interview with an online publication. "It was immediately appropriated and turned into a fad and an article of consumption so that within the span of a mere three or four years the younger brothers and sisters of the breakdancers who would've been emulating them and adding to that tradition now perceived it to be a consumer item that was no longer available to them: it had been exploited, commodified and turned into a source of entertainment." Yes, at Burning Man commercialization is much inveighed against; in fact, monetary exchange, with only a couple of exceptions, is a violation of community. Barter is the main form of commerce on the playa, a rather sacred principle it seems, except that I heard more than a couple of people use the phrase "cash barter."

And the self-expression is a bit reminiscent of high-school literary magazines: "I can be free, I can be naked [which she was], I can be fat, I can be gay," says a young lady who asked not to be identified since she was there with a man not her husband. "You can just be whatever it is you need to be, today." The urge to try on new identities

isn't as strong, however, among those who come to watch. "Shelter for lost girls"—one sign hanging off the side of an RV reads—"massages for the ladies." Another camp hoists a banner advertising a free drink to female attendees who would show their "panties," and two free drinks if they aren't wearing any. Such old-fashioned lechery seems like a pinnacle of self-knowledge compared with the new-age expressive nudity that Burning Man ostensibly celebrates.

A couple of guys describe for me two entrants in a "talent contest." The performers went on stage and, well, did the nasty. I asked John Dailey, a 29-year-old environment expert working for a mining company in Nevada and a first-time attendee, what he thought about that. He responded with a huge smile, "What do you think I thought of that? It was great." Still, for a guy who knows cheap thrills when he sees them, John is completely taken in by Burning Man. It is, he says, "an evolutionary miracle that we've progressed enough intellectually to put together a society like this, for even just a week, that's made of pure good karma." Everything else, he says, is "f— up." Not that John isn't trying to help: He is organizing, he told me in the vaguest terms, a "meeting next month in Reno" for influential and open-minded citizens to talk about "what society should look like 200 years from now."

*Some call it art*

Pete High

Except for people like John, a true believer but also a happy spectator, the people at Burning Man seem divided into two groups: exhibitionists and voyeurs, those looking to express themselves and those looking to watch. Among newcomers, those who came to watch easily outnumber those who came to be cleansed and purified by the flames of the Burning Man. Which makes one wonder if the 60 percent increase in attendance over last year (when only some 15,000 people showed up) isn't, in large part, attributable to increased publicity about the cheap thrills to be had for a mere $100.

The organizers seem to be onto this aspect of Burning Man. A release form I was asked to sign when I arrived said, "Producer agrees not to broadcast any footage featuring individuals engaged in sex acts or drug use," both of which, clearly more than the art, have made Burning Man "a legend," as one first-timer describes it. Such is the counterculture: one excuse-making factory run into the ground only to be replaced by another. Now it's Burning Man's turn to deny that decadence is the reason for the season, when it is plain as day to the guys who took photographs for their private collections. Purely dirty minds always get the better of pretentious dirty minds.

Having spent the better part of a week in the desert among naked people, I have come to several conclusions. One, perhaps the ugliest thing in the world is a naked man riding a bicycle. Two, any nudist who claims not to be an exhibitionist is just a lying exhibitionist. Three, and most important, public nudity strips loveliness of any love. As Othello says of Desdemona, "She has eyes, and chose me." Laying one's beauty down in the public square makes impossible such a choice; it is to prefer the eyes of many and to offer one's beauty to all in common. Thus does the beloved rob the lover of his treasure; once it is theirs, it is his no more.

On the last night of the festival, Andrew Heintz and his girlfriend Amy Joe Alstead are starting a bonfire. Using a design he traced from a children's model, Andrew has built a wooden dinosaur that stands over 15 feet tall. Someone shows up with a video camera to capture the moment on tape. Andrew, a natural stage personality, has an easy awareness of where the camera is.

Using six sheets of plywood, one pound of grade B fireworks, and a quart of kerosene, he explains, "we are going to sacrifice this dinosaur to the gods of wind and dust." By the time the structure is moved into a safe area of the playa, Andrew has amassed an audience of about 90 people. While stuffing the gut of the dinosaur with cardboard strips, he works the crowd, saying things like, "If you have marijuana or any hallucinogenic drugs, you should come find me in ten minutes." When the fire starts, there are about 150 people standing around, some of them writing down wishes and dropping them into the flames.

I got out a notepad and wrote down my wish: to be returned to the "normal world." ♦

# Why East Timor Matters

*The current crisis is part of a larger problem of Indonesian stability and democracy, and U.S. interests are at stake.*

## By Tom Donnelly

It's déjà vu all over again, only this time the tiny proto-nation we little understand is in East Asia, not Eastern Europe. As was true in the Balkans, the crisis in East Timor would benefit from American leadership, if only Washington could see its way through the present post-Cold War confusion. Meanwhile, Australia is leading a 7,500-man peacekeeping force into East Timor, as the United States shrugs its shoulders, laments the humanitarian catastrophe, and willfully ignores larger, strategic concerns.

Explaining to reporters why East Timor did not warrant U.S. involvement, national security adviser Sandy Berger quipped, "You know, my daughter has a very messy apartment up in college. Maybe I shouldn't intervene to have that cleaned up. I don't think anybody ever calculated a doctrine which said we ought to intervene wherever there's a humanitarian problem." It seemed as though Berger and President Clinton had said something that approximated just such a doctrine in the wake of their victory in Kosovo, but nevermind.

More important, the crisis in East Timor is not simply a humanitarian crisis, but one aspect of a political crisis present throughout Indonesia. The process of democratization in Indonesia is only in its infancy, but already it suffers from the debilitating effects of the Asian economic disaster, a government in turmoil, and several violent separatist movements. Hence, the deployment of peacekeepers in East Timor should not be seen as a simple humanitarian mission. It would be wiser to think of the peacekeepers as a down payment on a long-term investment in creating a stable, democratic Indonesia. How could East Timor, such an insignificant, poor province, the detritus of the Portuguese Pacific empire, undermine the democratization of Indonesia? It is a convoluted story, but the light of recent history helps to clarify the matter.

The 1965 coup which eventually drove out Sukarno and brought Suharto to power also led to a consistent, if sometimes muted, pro-Western stance in Indonesian policy. And although our relationship with Indonesia has been troubled for decades, throughout the Cold War Jakarta generally acted as a reliable ally. At the very least, Indonesia cannot be ignored. It has 200 million people, 13,000 islands—stretching from Southeast Asia to Australia and commanding the region's most vital waterways—as well as energy resources and with all this, political influence. All of which make Indonesia a pivotal regional power.

Yet since the end of the Cold War, the issues of East Timor and human rights have come to dominate Indonesia's relations with the United States, Australia, and the West. Despite the almost impenetrable politics of East Timor, human rights activists, journalists, and congressmen have managed to focus the spotlight of Western public opinion on its struggle for independence. Indonesia, for its part, has never been particularly friendly to Western sensibilities on East Timor: Its invasion in December 1975, and its subsequent "pacification" campaign were uncompromisingly brutal.

Complicating matters further, the Indonesian army, which plays a large role in its country's politics, considers the campaign in East Timor to have special significance. This has become only more true as the years have passed and the savagery of the fighting has increased. Meanwhile, the United States has, in this decade, shown less and less interest in Indonesia: In 1992, the U.S. Congress terminated funds for Indonesia's participation in the International Military Education and Training program. This move was read by the Indonesian military and government as a gratuitous insult.

Yet, the problem of East Timor could have remained a minor irritant in an otherwise stable, if not warm, U.S.-

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AP/Wide World Photos

*East Timorese refugee tents erected around a church in Darwin, northern Australia*

Indonesia relationship. But, with the 1997 Asian economic crisis and the fall of Suharto the following year, Indonesia's prospects sharply declined. The World Bank concluded that "no country in recent history, let alone one the size of Indonesia, has ever suffered such a dramatic reversal of fortune." By any measure—unemployment, inflation, overall poverty—Indonesia entered a depression and still faces a decade or more of economic reconstruction.

The collapse of the Indonesian economy and the devaluation of the rupiah precipitated an equally profound political crisis. Large-scale riots accompanied by a loss of confidence among Indonesia's new middle class paved the way to the end of the long-tottering Suharto regime and to Suharto's replacement by his vice president, B.J. Habibie. To eliminate the costs of military occupation, restore Indonesia's international standing, and perhaps for a variety of other, internal reasons, Habibie moved to allow for East Timor's independence. The idea of a referendum on independence was first floated in the Indonesian legislature in January, 1999. A month later, in a symbolic gesture, imprisoned East Timorese leader Xanana Gusmao was released from jail, though kept under house arrest. On April 21, East Timor's own warring factions signed a "peace pact," and the following month Indonesia and Portugal agreed on the principles for an independence vote, which the United Nations quickly approved and set for August.

Habibie's already shaky political standing, however, was further weakened in the general elections in June. The opposition party, led by Sukarno's daughter Megawati Sukarnoputri, trounced Habibie's Golkar party. Megawati, like the overwhelming majority of Indonesians, opposes independence for East Timor. Presidential elections are set for November, and whatever the result, prospects for stability in Indonesia are not good. Protracted negotiations will delay the formation of a coalition government, and observers of Indonesian politics suggest even that General Wiranto, the minister of defense who has played a controversial role in the East Timor crisis, may emerge as Indonesia's next president. Such uncertainty suggests the results of the independence referendum in East Timor may not be ratified by Indonesia's highest legislature.

But it was clear even before the referendum that the United States' failure to help Indonesia solve its dilemma in East Timor was leading to disaster. Habibie's reckless decision to schedule the referendum so abruptly brought forth numerous predictions of violence from informed parties. After Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa returned from a

pre-referendum trip to East Timor, he reported that Indonesian police and security forces were associating with the local anti-independence militias. "My worst fears are coming true," he said. In anticipation of violence, Australia put a substantial portion of its small army on a high state of alert in preparation for an intervention and asked the United States for political and military help to deploy a peacekeeping force. The U.S. position remained that U.N. civilian monitors and military observers would be sufficient. Thus did the last opportunity to avert disaster pass.

Now the problem of East Timor has become a regional crisis. Democratization in Indonesia stands at a dangerous crossroads. As the country takes its first halting steps toward political reform, violence in East Timor divides Indonesia internally and undermines the country's ties to the West. Absent a resolution to the situation in East Timor, the chances for a stable Indonesia and the maintenance of constructive diplomacy are slim. Such a precarious moment is hardly the time for the United States to turn its back on Indonesia and East Timor, yet that appears to be what the Clinton administration, to the relief of isolationist Republicans in Congress, plans to do.

*Democratization in Indonesia stands at a dangerous crossroads. Absent a resolution in East Timor, the chances for stability are slim.*

While the deployment of the U.N. peacekeeping force, led by Australia, is a necessary first step, resolving the situation in East Timor is certain to take several years at a minimum. Even East Timorese activists do not believe their nation-to-be is ready for independence without any transition period. But, ready or not, independence is now on the table unless the Indonesian army can remove it through violence. Since the Indonesians cannot safeguard East Timor's transition to independence, the responsibility falls to outside parties.

The Australians will provide up to 4,500 of the planned 7,500-man peacekeeping force, with the United States offering only strategic lift, intelligence, communications, and logistics help. While the final size and composition of the force is still at issue, other contributing nations may include Canada, France, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, Thailand, and Great Britain. This coalition will have authority from the United Nations to use sufficient military means to restore order in East Timor, but not every nation will send combat forces. Though the Australians have manfully assumed the lead role, their army consists of just three brigades, hardly enough to maintain a rotational presence in East Timor. The Australians are highly professional but do not, as President Clinton claimed, "have enormous military capacity." As we are now discovering of our European allies in the Balkans, the ability of the Australians to maintain their commitment for long is questionable. Moreover, they have other regional responsibilities, notably in Papua New Guinea.

As was true in the Balkans, our ability and willingness to help resolve the crisis in East Timor and support Indonesia's democratization will be read in the region as an indicator of our reliability and staying power. America's closest regional allies already have doubts about our resolve with regard to China and North Korea, which we now compound by our reluctance to assume a natural leadership role in East Timor. Even Australian opinion is showing an anti-American strain. Columnist Geoffrey Barker captured regional opinion, writing in the *Australian Financial Review* that "Washington's reluctance to make a commitment to an East Timor force raises doubts about what the [U.S.-Australian] alliance is worth and what its future might be in the post-Cold War world."

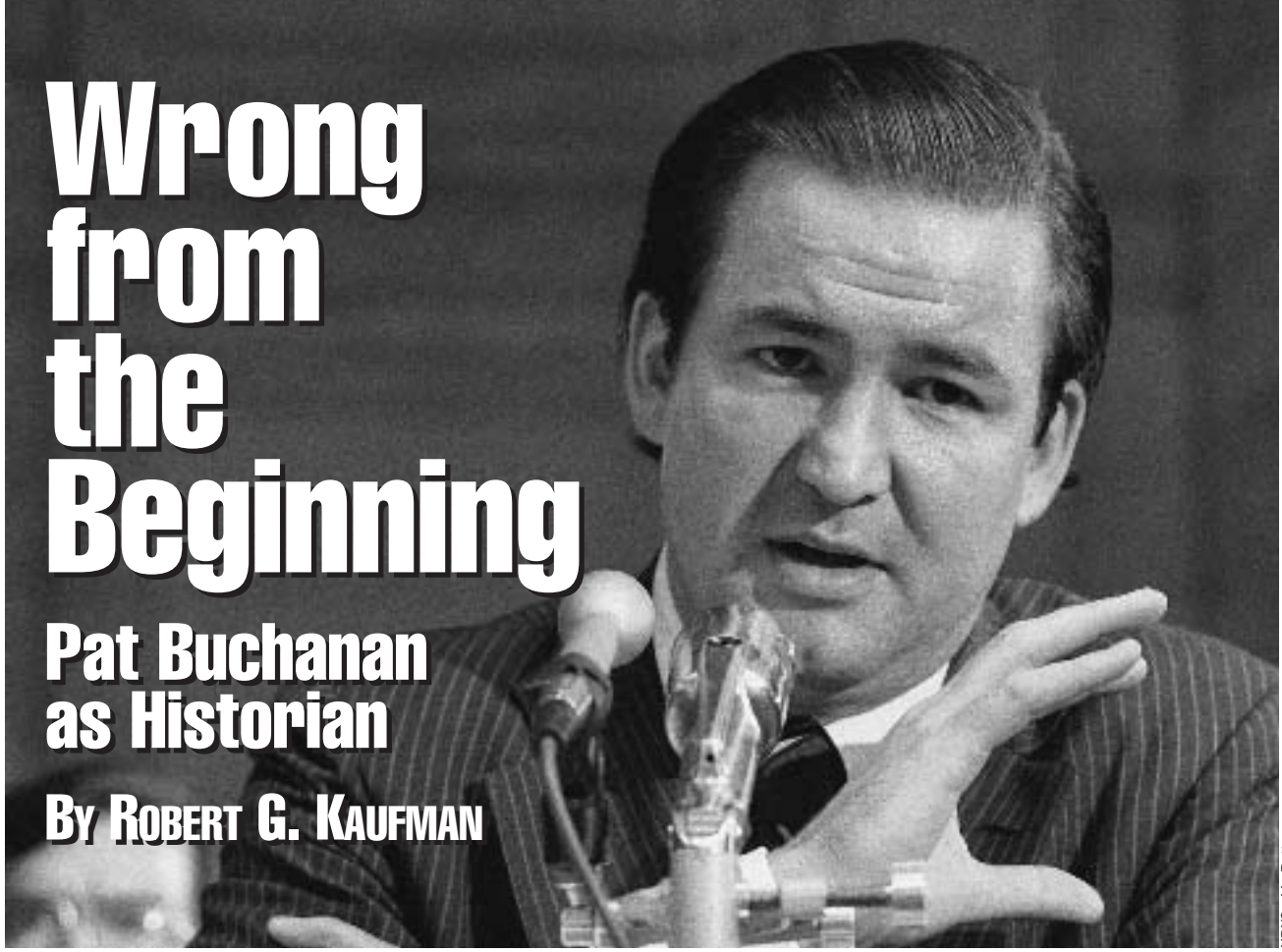
Apparently, that's just fine with Congress. Speaking about East Timor, majority leader Trent Lott says he is "shocked and appalled," but the senator has endorsed the same limited U.S. role envisaged by the administration. And, he says, if the East Timor situation "involved [U.S.] troops on the ground," then "a lot more questions are going to be asked." Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison believes it is a matter of "strategic sense" for the United States to stay away from the crisis, even though she recognizes that "U.S. interests are potentially at stake in East Timor." To uphold this contradiction, she further declared, in a *Washington Post* op-ed, "The truth is that a superpower is more credible and effective when it maintains a measured distance from all regional conflicts."

One wonders whether Hutchison felt that way about the Persian Gulf War. Unfortunately, the realities of the current *Pax Americana* will not disappear through denial. Nor will responding to serious regional problems merely as humanitarian catastrophes prove to be good strategy. It is true that stationing a thousand or so American soldiers in East Timor for an extended period would place an additional burden on an already stretched U.S. military. So would reestablishing military ties with Indonesia. But these are reasons to have a larger military, not a smaller strategy. If the United States is to maintain its position as the guarantor of East Asian security, it must work to secure a stable, democratic Indonesia and solve the current crisis in East Timor. ♦

# Wrong from the Beginning

## Pat Buchanan as Historian

By Robert G. Kaufman



UPI/Corbis-Bettmann

It's easy to underestimate Patrick Buchanan. He seems at times to take more pleasure in causing outrage and being entertaining than in winning votes. He failed in both 1992 and 1996 to capture the Republican presidential nomination, and after finishing fifth in this year's Iowa straw poll, he now looks likely to leave the GOP entirely, making a bid for the nomination (and the $13 million in federal campaign funds) of Ross Perot's Reform party.

But Buchanan deserves to be taken seriously by Republicans—not just as a political problem, but as a representative of one of the perpetual temptations of conservative thought. Buchanan is the most articulate current expositor of a Republican right that previously peaked before World War II.

Buchanan's new *A Republic, Not an Empire: Reclaiming America's Destiny* is a systematic rehabilitation and defense of an "America First" foreign policy that demands the withdrawal of American power and protection from most of the world. The book is compelling reading—for, from his earliest days as a newspaper columnist, Buchanan has always been a first-rate political writer. But, ironically, the verve and lucidity of Buchanan's prose expose all the more baldly the flaws in his logic, his evidence, and his policy prescriptions.

**A Republic, Not an Empire**
*Reclaiming America's Destiny*
by Patrick J. Buchanan
Regnery, 300 pp., $29.95

His main line of argument runs as follows. By piling up open-ended, extravagant, and provocative commitments unrelated to the true interests of the nation, American leaders have "reenacted every folly that brought previous great powers to ruin." Buchanan cites NATO expansion as a prime example of the "folly of our reigning foreign policy elites." Borrowing heavily from the arguments in Paul Kennedy's 1987 *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, Buchanan assails as reckless and unsustainable a foreign policy "that commits America to go to war for scores of nations where we have never fought." He warns that the day of reckoning is approaching, when "American global hegemony is going to be challenged, and our leaders will discover that they lack the resources to make good on all the war guarantees they have handed out so frivolously; and the American people, awakened to what it is their statesmen have committed them to do, will declare themselves unwilling to pay the price of empire."

We must, Buchanan declares, jettison our outdated Cold War commitments that risk American involvement in major conflicts in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. Instead, he advocates a return to isolationism—or, in his preferred designation, the "America First Tradition"—that, he claims, governed American foreign policy from 1776 until 1917.

Buchanan's claims about twentieth-century history are a deliberate rejec-

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tion of Republican foreign policy notions—both of the idealism of Ronald Reagan's cold warriors and the ostensible realism of Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. Ignoring the recent work of Niall Ferguson and others who attempt a more respectable version of the case against World War I, Buchanan revives Charles Tansill's old canard that an insidious combination of pro-British sentiment, the interests of Wall Street bankers fearful of Britain's defaulting on its huge loans, Theodore Roosevelt's militarism, and Woodrow Wilson's zealous idealism dragged America into a costly war in defiance of our previous tradition and our national interest.

Buchanan's historical assumption—that a German victory in World War I would not have been dangerous to the United States—is dubious. Fritz Fischer, Donald Kagan, and other scholars have shown that Germany aspired to use a conquered Europe as a base for world empire.

But Buchanan's geopolitical assumption is worse than dubious. American security has always depended on a European balance of power, which a German victory would have obliterated. It made strategic sense for America to stay out of European conflicts while Britain operated as the effective balance, ensuring that no continental power achieved a decisive aggregation of power. By 1917, however, Britain could no longer contain German power without the active participation of the United States. As Theodore Roosevelt, whom Buchanan vilifies, recognized more clearly than any statesman of his day, the United States went to war not just to maintain freedom of the seas and make the world safe for democracy, but to prevent the German victory that would topple a balance of power that was in the American national interest.

There is, to be sure, much to criticize about Woodrow Wilson's obsession with the League of Nations, his inability to compromise, and the peace imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. Nevertheless, Wilson was right about one thing: The United States has a compelling interest in sustaining liberal democracy where possible, because stable democracies clash less frequently and fundamentally with each other than do other regimes. The Treaty of Versailles was flawed, but it was not the punitive peace that Buchanan, echoing John Maynard Keynes, portrays. It was certainly less harsh than what the Germans imposed on the defeated Russians with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918. And its main problem was in the failure of the First World War's victors to enforce the treaty's disarmament provisions when they had the power to do so. Had the United States remained engaged in Europe after 1919 the way it did after 1945, we would not have had to fight the Second World War, the destructive conflict whose cost in American blood Buchanan so deplores. Nor would Britain and the United States in desperation have had to rely on Stalin's help to defeat Hitler, which left East Central Europe prey to Soviet totalitarianism for nearly fifty years. By any rational standard of measure, the "America First" policy that Buchanan champions exponentially increased the cost of World War II.

*Buchanan has fundamentally repudiated the legacy of Ronald Reagan by his isolationism and his protectionism.*

Yet Buchanan defiantly insists that Franklin Roosevelt foolishly and deceitfully maneuvered the United States into that war. By Buchanan's analysis (a rehash of the historian A.J.P. Taylor's revisionist account that Taylor later had the good sense to disavow), "Hitler had not wanted war in the West. But when the West declared war, he overran France to secure his rear before setting out to conquer the East. . . . Hitler saw the World divided into four spheres: Great Britain holding its Empire; Japan, dominant in East Asia; Germany, master of Europe; and America, mistress of the Western Hemisphere." Buchanan adds:

> If there had been a maximum point of peril for America in the war in Europe, it was the summer of 1940, after France had been overrun and England seemed about to be invaded, with the possible scuttling or loss of the British fleet. But after the Royal Air Force won the Battle of Britain, the German invasion threat was history. If Goering's Luftwaffe could not achieve air supremacy over the Channel, how was it going to achieve it over the Atlantic? If Hitler could not put a soldier in England in the fall of 1940, the notion that he could invade the Western Hemisphere—with no surface ships to engage the United States and British fleets and the U.S. airpower dominant in the west Atlantic—was preposterous.

Buchanan does not believe that "hundreds of thousands of American boys should have been killed in Europe and Asia fighting Hitler and Tojo," because he does not believe America was threatened by Japan's bid for Empire in Asia or Nazi Germany's domination of all of Europe. Thus the United States should have stayed out of the war "that made Europe safe for Stalinism and Asia safe for Maoism."

Buchanan's defense of the morally and strategically indefensible is remarkable. The fact is well documented that Hitler not only strove to dominate the entire European continent, but the entire world. He expected that he would eventually fight the United States, when he had the enormous resources of Eurasia at his disposal and when the United States would have no allies to help resist a Nazi onslaught. Wouldn't a conquered Europe have provided Hitler the strength he needed, at least to intimidate America into not challenging his hegemony everywhere else? And would the United States really have reduced the cost and risk of confrontation by waiting even longer?

Franklin Roosevelt made mistakes, no doubt, particularly in his dealings

with Stalin's Soviet Union. Yet he recognized the truth that others missed at the time—that the United States must enter the war—and he prepared a reluctant American people to do exactly that.

Buchanan is wildly off the mark, too, in his assault on Winston Churchill. The British prime minister envisaged collaboration with the Soviet Union as a tactical arrangement, to last only while the war lasted and for the limited objective of defeating Hitler. Once the entry of the United States into the war made victory over the Nazis certain, Churchill attempted to gear Anglo-American strategy not just to the short-term objective of defeating Hitler, but to the long-term objective of minimizing Soviet influence in the postwar world. Churchill, in certain respects, failed; Buchanan treats him with contempt.

Buchanan's historical and geopolitical willfulness leads him not just to an indictment of Roosevelt and Churchill, but to a perverse defense of Charles Lindbergh and the long discredited "America First" movement. No one denies that there were intelligent defenders of isolationism before World War II. Henry "Scoop" Jackson, one of the great heroes of the Cold War, came to Congress in January 1941 as an opponent of American intervention, a position he did not abandon until September of 1941. Arthur Vandenberg, Gerald Ford, and many others who were stalwart internationalists after World War II were also isolationists until the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. What distinguishes Buchanan from this group is that they all eventually conceded the mistake he still embraces.

Buchanan displays his darkest side by trumpeting as the hero of his cause the aviator Charles Lindbergh rather than the honorable if mistaken Senator Robert A. Taft—for Lindbergh not only opposed American entry into the war, but seemed to admire Hitler, whom he met during a visit to Nazi Germany in 1936. "While I still have many reservations," Lindbergh observed, "Hitler is undoubtedly a great man, and I believe he has done much for the German people." He left Germany with "the impression that Hitler must have far more character and vision than I thought existed in the German leader."

On September 3, 1941, Lindbergh delivered his notorious speech charging Jews with using their influence in Hollywood and the press to precipitate


Regnery

American intervention in World War II. "The leaders of both the British and the Jewish races, for reasons that are understandable from their viewpoint as they are inadvisable from ours, for reasons that are not American, wish to involve us in the war," he said. "We cannot blame them for looking out for what they believe to be their own best interests, but we must also look to ours. We cannot allow the natural passions and prejudices of other peoples to lead our country to destruction."

Strikingly, Buchanan devotes only two pages and a handful of references to the foreign policies of Ronald Reagan. The Reagan in whose White House Buchanan served may "have been no Wilsonian." But he was no Buchananite either. Reagan not only proved indefatigable and successful in opposing Soviet totalitarianism, but he also considered the spread of stable constitutional democracy as consistent with American ideals and self-interest. Despite endorsing Jeane Kirkpatrick's thesis that alliances with right-wing dictators are sometimes necessary for resisting Soviet totalitarianism, Reagan's administration also pressured America's authoritarian allies to democratize.

Buchanan's claim that Reagan's "foreign policy was crafted to prevail in a long struggle by putting ideological, not military, pressure on Moscow" is preposterous. What about the Reagan military buildup, or the Strategic Defense Initiative, which Margaret Thatcher recently identified as a "vital factor in ending the Cold War"?

Buchanan's prescriptions for contemporary American foreign policy are every bit as wrong and dangerous as the rendition of twentieth-century history underlying them. Nevertheless, he has done Republicans a service by making his case clearly enough that the party he seems about to abandon can have no illusion about where he stands.

The Republicans, of course, can live happily without Buchanan. They should do so with good conscience. Buchanan has fundamentally repudiated the Republican legacy of Ronald Reagan by his isolationism and his protectionism—to say nothing, for example, of his advocacy of affirmative action and quotas to restrict the number of Asians and Jews at elite universities. If Buchanan does run as a third-party candidate, why shouldn't Republicans welcome his departure from their ranks? ♦

# Not an Epic Battle

*How the CIA and the Supreme Court left Frank Snepp out in the cold.* **BY MARK MILLER**

The First Amendment's free speech clause is more than dry constitutional doctrine. It's also a gauge on American society: In any given decade, the most significant free speech cases reflect our deepest cultural concerns. During World War I, the major cases involved criticism of the war. Through the 1920s and 1930s, they concerned the threat of communism. In the 1960s, the cases involved civil rights, obscenity, and resistance to the draft. And in the 1980s, the cases were about flag burning and abortion protests.

**Irreparable Harm**
*A Firsthand Account of How One Agent Took on the CIA in an Epic Battle Over Free Speech*
by Frank Snepp
Random House, 464 pp., $26.95

But the 1990s are a celebrity-saturated decade, and our current encounters with free speech law have become a kind of *meta*-phenomenon, an opportunity for the media-hungry to engage in a new form of moral grandstanding: the First Amendment hero narrative. The star-packed 1996 film *The People vs. Larry Flynt* is the most conspicuous recent example. And now, with the publication of *Irreparable Harm*, a former CIA agent named Frank Snepp claims the mantle for himself.

Snepp was an agent during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and he triggered a Supreme Court case by publishing a book on his experiences. Snepp served two tours of duty in Vietnam, and he came to believe that the CIA's abandonment of thousands of Vietnamese collaborators after 1975 was a colossal breach of faith. He initially urged the agency to produce an in-house report but, unsuccessful, he resigned and told the story in a book of his own, *Decent Interval*, published in 1977.

The late 1970s were a boom time for CIA malcontents and their publishers. The likes of Philip Agee, Victor Marchetti, and John Stockwell were blowing secrets and naming names. Congressional investigations turned up evidence of botched assassination attempts and other embarrassments. It was in this atmosphere that the CIA decided to move against Snepp, on the hybrid theory that he had breached his signed agreement not to publish "any information or material relating to the Agency, its activities or intelligence activities generally, either during or after the term of [his] employment . . . without specific prior approval by the Agency."

The CIA prevailed at every level—at trial, on appeal, and in the Supreme Court. Indeed, the justices considered the case so easy to decide that they ruled against Snepp without granting his lawyers an opportunity to argue before them. "Snepp's failure to submit his manuscript for prepublication review," the Court noted, "had inflicted 'irreparable harm' on intelligence activities vital to our national security."

In *Irreparable Harm*, Snepp describes the turmoil that led him to write the Vietnam book and the sacrifices he made to complete it, and he recounts the secret arrangements he made to publish the book without the CIA's knowledge (made possible by his knowledge of spy tradecraft). Snepp also dwells on the government's case, his encounter with the federal courts, and the shambles it made of his life. With its important public events, espionage, and courtroom drama, the book has the makings of a great story—given the right sort of author.

Unfortunately, Snepp isn't that sort of author. He's a crusader, and he writes with a heavy hand and the unrepentant solipsism of the incurably arrogant. Indeed, *Irreparable Harm* seems a self-conscious bid for a place in the free speech heroes' pantheon. Snepp is the maverick, the man who sacrificed his career rather than allow the Establishment to get away with its crimes. Snepp wants his readers to know that he is a man of powerful emotions: "I stood listening to the man and wondering at the precise definition of justifiable homicide," he explains. "The tension was thick enough to cut, and I quickly ordered a stiff drink."

And he wants his readers to understand that even a man of international intrigue and high principle takes his pleasures where he can: "I fastened onto [a CIA confidante] with the same singular intensity, extorting so many favors—from fact checking to proofreading to occasional if passionate sex—that her Agency chums soon came to suspect her loyalties." And if any doubts remained about the character Frank Snepp would like you to think he is, the book's dustjacket shows him in a trench coat.

A free speech hero, however, needs an adversary, and Snepp's is the federal government—as imagined in a Hollywood conspiracy scenario. Nor, in his portrayal of the machinery of government, does Snepp ever miss a chance at self-dramatization. "I was effectively reduced to nonperson status," he tells us. "The Kremlin couldn't have done

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any better." The "sheriff's deputy showed up on my doorstep. . . . He couldn't have been more terrifying if he'd had swastikas on his epaulets." Where Snepp once fearlessly interrogated Viet Cong turncoats, he now cringes when Barney Fife rings the doorbell.

Finally, there is Snepp's narrative of his courtroom drama. His understanding of legal procedure and law is hardly that of an expert, and his version is unabashedly one-sided. Nevertheless, his retelling does accomplish one thing: Snepp actually manages to become more sympathetic as the case against him heats up.

As the CIA admitted, *Decent Interval* contained no classified information. Next to the disclosures of Philip Agee, Snepp's book was anodyne, and *Decent Interval* arguably made a poor test case for secrecy regulations. But the CIA seemed to want to control the flow of *all* information to the public, classified or not, and the precedent it obtained from the case against Snepp was made all the broader by the fact that his book contained no classified material.

The Supreme Court ultimately deprived Snepp not only of his profits from *Decent Interval*, but also of true free speech hero status. In its terse, unsigned opinion, the court never seriously considered that Snepp's case should be decided on First Amendment grounds. Like the rulings in the lower courts, the justices' opinion relied on a simple argument about contracts: Snepp had agreed to submit any manuscript for review, and didn't. The Larry Flynts of the world may have made it into the First Amendment pantheon, but the Supreme Court left the spy Frank Snepp out in the cold. ♦

BCA

# A Flood of Evidence

## *The Science of Noah's Ark.*

**BY ERIC CHEVLEN**

If you were going to look for hidden evidence of a flood, where would you start? The answer—at least for the greatest of floods, that time in Noah's day when "all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened" —turns out to be under water.

**Noah's Flood**
*The New Scientific Discoveries About the Event That Changed History*
by William Ryan and Walter Pitman
Simon & Schuster, 352 pp., $25

William Ryan and Walter Pitman are career marine geologists whose work normally involves technical, academic accounts of what happens beneath the briny surface. But in their new volume, *Noah's Flood*, they've managed an exciting and surprisingly fun blend of geology, history, archaeology, and anthropology to argue that about 5400 B.C. a huge and relatively heavily populated area around the Black Sea was suddenly and permanently inundated with a flood of Biblical proportions.

At the end of the last ice age, the area now occupied by the Black Sea was a small fresh water lake called the New Euxine Lake by geologists. At first, the melting European glaciers filled the lake with cold torrents. But as those European glaciers retreated further, local quirks of geography led their runoff to drain to the north and west instead. This raised the level of the world oceans and the Mediterranean, as did the melting of the North American glaciers, and Ryan and Pitman demonstrate the change in sea level with geological evidence from as far away as the coral reefs of Barbados. So rapid was the oceans' rising that it would have been visible in even a single lifetime of the coast-dwelling Europeans who were then hunting and gathering in proper Paleolithic fashion. Eventually, the Mediterranean rose to the sill of the Bosporus land barrier.

Meanwhile, cut off from its former source of water, the New Euxine Lake declined, its level falling to 150 meters below that of the Mediterranean, from which it was separated by a narrow land barrier at the Bosporus. And in the fertile lowlands around its shores, Ryan and Pitman suggest, early experiments in agriculture and herding were underway. Perhaps those ancient farmers were praying to their carved stone goddesses, asking for rain. If so, their prayers were more than answered.

Ryan and Pitman do not speculate as to where the drop of water fell that displaced the pebble that opened the trickle that started the flood that changed the world. Probably there was a heavier than usual rain storm in the eastern Mediterranean, even if it did not last for forty days and forty nights. The downpour washed away the apex of the Bosporus dam separating the two enormous basins, and the cascading Mediterranean waters eroded the edge further and further.

In most dam ruptures, the force of the flood gradually drops as the water level of the source declines. But in this case, there would have been an *increase* in force. The whole world's supply of ocean water provided the pressure behind the flood. As the waters poured across the Bosporus dam, there would be no measurable drop in the level of the source. And as the cleft rapidly eroded, deeper water (under greater pressure) joined the cascade.

Ryan and Pitman suggest that the inrush lasted for about a year. Its volume was enormous, perhaps fifty cubic kilometers a day. That is the equivalent of two hundred Niagara Falls, its roar

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Alinari / Art Resource

*Noah directs the building of the ark, in Raphael's rendition.*

audible for five hundred kilometers. Eventually, the flood covered an area the size of Florida.

For the people then living along the New Euxine Lake, all the world they had ever seen would soon be covered by water. For that full year, the terrified population had to run over a kilometer a day to escape the water. The northern shores of the New Euxine Lake would have been especially hazardous, for there the slope of the land is gentler, and the flood would have spread faster than the people could flee. The sight must have been horrific. The bloated carcasses of wildlife and domestic animals joined those of the fish killed by the rapid conversion of the lake from fresh water to salt.

Ryan and Pitman develop their Great Flood theory and support it in proper scientific fashion. If the level of the New Euxine Lake had risen slowly, then the sharp contours of tributary river erosion would not have survived. But sonar mapping shows the seabed to be carved by ancient rivers and even reveals the eroded gorge at the junction of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, just as the rapid-flood theory would predict. Similarly, the layers of mollusk and diatom shells show an abrupt change from fresh water to salt water species, and that change occurs at the same time throughout the lakebed. Finally, direct measurement of pore-water—microscopic aggregates of water trapped between particles in the packed muck of the sea bottom—confirms a rapid change from fresh to saline conditions.

Of course, the most persuasive proof of a cataclysmic flood would be archaeological evidence of Neolithic habitation found at the bottom of the Black Sea: While one might argue highly technical findings and their interpretations, there really could be no other explanation for a 7,500-year-old village in the middle of the Black Sea. We have no such evidence yet, but it may appear in the near future. In January 1999, Robert Ballard, discoverer of the *Titanic* wreck, announced that he was lending his talents to a major expedition to search for these ancient settlements.

What became of the displaced and scattered survivors of the flood? Ryan and Pitman argue that they fled up the river valleys into Europe, and south of the Caucasus mountains to the Fertile Crescent, the Levant, and Egypt. Their flight, the authors contend, was responsible for the rapid spread of agriculture into these areas that occurred around the time, and they must have carried their story with them.

The relation to the Great Flood of the Bible is, of course, what provokes our interest in Ryan and Pitman's book. It's hard to imagine that growing knowledge of the Black Sea flood will not have some impact on the way that people look at the Noah story.

This is not the first time that scientific discoveries have influenced how we read the Bible. In recent years, fundamental discoveries in cosmology—indeed, the establishment of cosmology as a science rather than a branch of philosophy—have shone a new and not unfriendly light on the biblical story of creation. Back in 1929, the American astronomer Edwin Hubble published data supporting the then-novel conclusion that the universe is expanding. The cosmological and theological implications of an expanding universe were obvious: If the universe is expanding, then its size in the past must have been smaller, and its past must be finite.

When evidence for an expanding universe was still shaky, this implication could be ignored or dismissed. But

as time went on, and evidence of expansion accumulated, it became more nettlesome. In 1948, a competing theory, allowing for expansion of the universe without an act of creation, relieved some of the theological pressure. But by the mid-1960s, data began to emerge against this "steady-state" model: The steady-state theory predicted, for instance, no cosmic background radiation, while the Big Bang theory predicted it precisely as it was later found. The Big Bang theory, most recently corroborated by the Cosmic Background Explorer satellite findings, is now *the* theory of the universe's origin.

The Flood story is different from the Big Bang, however. In it, there is no direct challenge to theology, but rather to biblical interpretation. A secularist will argue that Ryan and Pitman have proved the Bible story is only folktale. A biblical literalist will argue that the Black Sea flood has nothing to do with Noah's Flood.

Those who take the Bible seriously but not literally, however, have other options. Some may argue that the account in Genesis is the cataclysmic story of a history-changing flood passed down orally for millennia and finally written with a God-of-judgment interpretation by the ancient Hebrews, just as the Babylonians recorded the event in the Gilgamesh epic. Others may claim that the divine author of the Bible revealed this bit of history to us as He did others—with the proper interpretations implicit in the narrative and in the way in which we recipients of revelation could best understand it.

Of course, another scenario is also possible. It may happen that the Black Sea flood, unlike the Big Bang, will remain an event known only to a few scientists but not absorbed into common knowledge. It may remain as obvious and unknown as a flood hidden beneath the sea. ♦

BCA

# Postmodern Paradox

## *What the New Critics Knew.*

**BY ERIC S. COHEN**

For all their sophistication about paradox, postmodern literary theorists seem not to understand one of the most basic of literary paradoxes: While each age exists as a unique moment in history, its particularity is defined by its non-particularity—by the particular answers it gives to those "perennial and universal concerns of humanity." The great writers and artists are, as Ben Jonson said of William Shakespeare, both the "soul of the age" and "for all time."

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In his new *At War with the Word: Literary Theory and Liberal Education*, the scholar R.V. Young has written a fine critique of contemporary literary theory, explaining both the causes and the consequences when theory fails at exactly this theoretical level. Treating jargon-filled authors with great clarity and wit, he moves from a philosophic reproof of postmodernism to a discussion of its effect on education and law. But Young is also a teacher, and he devotes many pages to close readings of various poems—reminding the reader that great literature offers us our best "insight into the human experience."

**At War with the Word**
*Literary Theory and Liberal Education*
by R.V. Young
ISI, 198 pp., $24.95

For Young, the "postmodern project" stands out most clearly when contrasted with the "old New Criticism" that preceded it. The school of the New Critics—Cleanth Brooks and John Crowe Ransom, in particular, but stretched to include others from Allen Tate to T.S. Eliot—affirmed the ideal of artistic excellence. They believed in style and substance, and the responsibility of the critic to distinguish the profound from the shallow, the permanent from the banal.

When the postmodernists, by contrast, define literature as "a body of rhetorical strategies waiting to be seized," they deny the idea of wisdom—and thereby lose any importance for the literature they wish to study. The archetypal postmodernist Jacques Derrida, for instance, Young describes as "a Moses who has broken the Tablets and will not reascend the mountain, who offers only more wandering—more erring—in the wilderness, with the Promised Land endlessly deferred."

Many of the paradoxes supposedly revealed by postmodernism—about the incompleteness of being in time, the limitations of human reason, the partiality of language—have long been known. Socrates, after all, said his wisdom was knowing that he knew nothing, and St. Augustine, Young writes, "radically deconstructed the human condition" sixteen centuries ago. But what was new when the postmodernists came along in the 1970s was the enthusiastic affirmation of these paradoxes as proof that there are no transcendent or objective truths. As Derrida says, "The present alone is and ever will be." And the present is always fading into nothingness. All that remains is the uncommitted subject, who lives in the "prisonhouse of language."

The curious consequence is that, by denying the eternal, the postmodern literary critics lose the ability to describe the present in any meaningful sense. "The very incompleteness of being as it unfolds in time and space entails absolute Being as its ground," writes Young. "The very realization of

the inadequacy of our words provides a greater weight and credibility to the Word." The postmodernists long, in the critic Stanley Fish's words, for "a greatly enhanced sense of the importance of our activities." But they end up with exactly the opposite: Taken to its "logical conclusion of illogicality—of nihilistic chaos—deconstruction will only succeed in canceling itself out along with everything else," Young points out. Once good and evil are obliterated and meaningful choice denied, men are reduced to slaves of circumstance. Liberation turns out to be a fraud; we are free only because we are nothing.

Professors are particularly bad in this respect, reinforcing their pupils's already ironic view that life is but a game:

> Only a man completely caught up in the euphoria of professional prestige and affluence could be so utterly oblivious to the recurrent spiritual crisis of modern times—the sense of alienation growing out of the loss of meaning and purpose in life. It is, after all, a principal purpose of a liberal education to provide students with a breadth of learning and the critical habits of mind for reflection upon the significance of their existence. Scholars who have abandoned meaning and truth have effectively renounced the heart of their educational mission.

The irony is, of course, that the New Critics already knew the importance of literary paradox. In what is often taken as one of the founding essays in literary critics' turn to deconstruction and postmodernism, Paul de Man twisted and twisted the ending of W.B. Yeats's poem "Among School Children" to reveal an ambiguity in its famous concluding question, "How can we know the dancer from the dance?" But insofar as he was successful, all de Man did was a bad version of what the New Critics had already done in the 1940s and 1950s. The endless pages that, say, Cleanth Brooks devoted to literary paradox in such works as *The Well Wrought Urn* were an effort to reveal the extent to which good literature has always relied on ambiguity, difficulty, and dilemma.

But the deepest reason the New Critics were concerned with paradox in literature is exactly the reason that literature is so important—for it keeps us in tension between unchanging truths and changing particularities. For all their highlighting of our paradoxical condition, the postmodernists really wanted to end paradox; they couldn't seem to live with the tension between the universal and the historical, and they resolved it by denying the universal. The service R.V. Young has done is to remind us of what literature is supposed to do: teach us about our humble greatness, our foolish genius, and our eternal transience—about the human paradox of having to live according to unchanging truths in a world of change. ♦

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# Fanfare for Copland

*An American composer and his times.*

**BY MICHAEL LINTON**

In 1986 Ronald Reagan awarded him the Presidential Medal of the Arts and the House of Representatives presented him with the congressional Gold Medal, yet in the 1930s he had openly campaigned for Communist candidates and in 1953 was called before a Senate subcommittee and asked by Senator Joseph McCarthy about his Communist ties (he lied).

**Aaron Copland**
*The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man*
by Howard Pollack
Henry Holt, 690 pp., $37.50

He demanded government support for the arts, yet built a fortune on a career financed by private patrons. A champion of American music, he regularly advised young composers to study in France and knew little about his own country (the folk songs he used in his music he got from books).

He was a tireless promoter of his own music and had a reputation for deviousness, but his generosity to other composers was legendary. Though the moralism of his music led him to be dubbed by Virgil Thomson an "Old Testament prophet," he was long rumored to be the center of a homosexual ring of artists that tightly controlled American art music, and his lovers were often half his age and frequently his students.

He was shy and soft spoken. Yet his music was boisterous, passionate, expansive, and sometimes violent. Leonard Bernstein, his student, lover, interpreter, and promoter, characterized him as "simply the best we've got." And that was basically right. Of American composers of his generation, only Duke Ellington has a legacy that can challenge Aaron Copland's. But it's a legacy that Howard Pollack rightly characterizes as paradoxical in his finely crafted recent biography, *Aaron Copland: The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man.*

Pollack's subtitle is a play on the *Fanfare for the Common Man* Copland wrote in 1942 for the Cincinnati Symphony. Except for the ballet *Appalachian Spring* that he wrote two years later for Martha Graham, it remains the only piece by an American art composer many Americans recognize. By the time he was born in 1900, the youngest of five children, Copland's parents were well on their way to becoming prosperous shopkeepers in Brooklyn's emigrant Jewish community. Aaron quickly showed a propensity

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All photos: Henry Holt

*Above: Copland directs Benny Goodman in 1976. Opposite: Posing with Leonard Bernstein.*

for music. He began piano lessons under an older sister but soon graduated to more demanding instructors. He eventually told his father that he wanted to be a musician, and though the elder Copland was disappointed in his decision, he nonetheless supported him. After high school, he lived at home while studying privately with the composer Rubin Goldmark.

In 1920, Copland went to France. He intended to stay only a few months, but lived there almost four years, one of the first of a long line of Americans to study with the legendary teacher Nadia Boulanger.

Copland flourished under Boulanger's strict regimen, and in turn the teacher rewarded him with significant professional introductions and asked him to write an organ symphony for her to premiere with the New York Philharmonic (in later years she remembered him as the best student of her career).

Copland's training in Paris wasn't only musical. He attended lectures on drama at the Sorbonne, and he became part of the artistic circle that included Sergey Prokofiev, Darius Milhaud, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and Ernest Hemingway. At Boulanger's suggestion (and using her introductions), Copland spent his summers traveling, visiting England, Italy, Germany, and Austria, and introducing himself to musicians everywhere.

When he returned to New York in 1924, Copland intended to support himself as a composer and teacher. That proved difficult, but rather quickly he came to the attention of a group of philanthropic New Yorkers who provided him with gifts and helped him receive grants. When he lectured at the New School for Social Research, his broad experience with contemporary European music and his self-effacing style made his talks immensely popular (these lectures were later published as *What to Listen for in Music*). In 1925, Sergey Koussevitzky premiered his "Music for the Theatre" with the Boston Symphony, and the next year premiered his "Piano Concerto," both works strongly influenced by jazz.

With the publication of his *Piano Variations* in 1931, his reputation was firmly established. At the invitation of the Mexican composer Carlos Chávez, Copland made his first visit to Mexico City in 1932. He took with him a new symphony (called the "short symphony") and a new lover: the sixteen-year-old violinist Victor Kraft. Their sometimes rocky relationship would last until 1944, and was Copland's longest romantic attachment.

Besides composing, lecturing, and writing, Copland also became increasingly active in leftist politics. Since Paris, he had gravitated to fashionable Communist circles, and had become something of a Soviet enthusiast. He won a prize for his hymn, "Into the Streets, May First" and in 1934 made stump speeches for a Communist candidate. In the late 1940s, Copland justified the Kremlin's attacks on Prokofiev, Dmitry Shostakovich, and Aram Khachaturian, and in a speech delivered at the 1949 Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace, the composer blamed the Cold War on the United States.

At the same time he was taking chic swipes at capitalism, Copland was getting rich. Although he was able to work out sweetheart deals with his publishers regarding royalties, it was Hollywood which most helped his bank account. Between 1939 and 1949, Copland wrote seven film scores. Not only were these enormously lucrative (around $5,000 each, while for later scores he received $15,000), but Copland gave good value. Unlike John Williams, whose scores are basically variations on Gustav Holst, Igor Stravinsky, and Ralph Vaughn Williams, Copland never lost his original voice, and his scores remain some of the best film music ever composed.

Making a music that was as recognizably "American" as Modest Mussorgsky's was "Russian" had been a goal of Copland's since his time with Boulanger. But beginning with the ballet *Billy the Kid* in 1938 and continuing through *Lincoln Portrait*, *Rodeo*, and *Appalachian Spring* in 1944, Copland produced a kind of American symphonic language based upon modal scales, syncopated rhythms, and folk songs (his use of the Shaker hymn "'Tis a Gift To Be Simple" in *Appalachian Spring* is probably the most familiar). With choreography by Martha Graham, a set by Isamu Noguchi, and music by Copland, *Appalachian Spring* is probably the only American ballet comparable to the great works associated with the *Ballet Russe*.

Through the 1950s and 1960s, Copland continued to compose, but his music began to seem dated when compared to Anton Webern and the younger composers Olivier Messaien, Pierre Boulez, and Krysztof Penderecki. His 1954 opera *The Tender Land* was a failure at its premiere in New York, and his 1962 orchestral "Connotations," first performed by Leonard Bernstein, failed to make an impression. But he continued to exert a strong influence upon the music scene through his many appearances as a guest conductor, his summer teaching at Tanglewood, his writings, and the enduring quality of his music. He died in North Tarrytown in 1990, having suffered several years with increasingly severe dementia.

In his new biography, Howard Pollack covers this terrain expertly. Although a musicologist at the University of Houston, there is none of the professorial lugubriousness that typically burdens musicologists' work. This is a graceful, witty, and admirable account of one of the century's most important and interesting musicians.

But the book is not without its failings. Pollack interrupts his chronology with long asides: The chapters devoted to Copland's politics, sex life, and support of younger composers give him the opportunity to discuss these topics directly, but they confuse a reader unfamiliar with the general contour of Copland's life. (Leonard Bernstein, for instance, is introduced far before we're told how he and Copland met and what they meant to each other.) Pollack also overplays the composer's early poverty, citing with shock his 1934 fee of "only" $250 for the ballet *Hear Ye! Hear He!* though in many parts of the country a beginning schoolteacher's wage was $400 a year (and that included janitorial duties). The chapter on Copland's examination by Senator McCarthy might have been spared its predictable whine if Pollack had reviewed recent literature on the real nature of the Communist threat.

Pollack does a better job describing the Paris of Copland's days with Boulanger and the culture of the New York Left to which he belonged in the 1930s. But it would have been interesting to place Copland's Americanisms in a larger context. There was always something of the tourist in Copland's Americana scores (giving, for example, the word "rodeo" its typical Eastern pronunciation of "ro-DAY-o"). And while his music might call to New Yorkers' minds the vast expanses of the West, Copland displaces the real West with prettified impersonations.

So too, the homosexuality deserves investigation. Unlike Ned Rorem (who

openly wrote about his homosexuality) and Leonard Bernstein (who announced his in a press conference), Copland's homosexuality was acknowledged but not widely known outside musical and gay circles. Pollack is forthright about Copland's habit of taking young men as lovers and then discarding them—something he was doing into his seventies. On at least one occasion, he apparently made it possible for a college student to summer at Tanglewood so that he might seduce him.

The meaning of such behavior is ignored by Pollack. Besides being possibly illegal and certainly unethical, and raising the question of why Tanglewood would allow it, Copland's antics force us to consider questions about his character. In an era when sex is a rich field for biography, Pollack's reluctance to investigate this apparently malevolent aspect of Copland's life seems odd. His comment that "Copland's amorous friendships enriched and gladdened the lives of all involved" seems extremely Pollyannish: Certainly somebody—and there were in fact many—felt used and jilted.

Pollack is quite right to dismiss as nonsense the rumors of a homosexual cabal with Copland at the center. But homosexuals did dominate American music in Copland's era. Samuel Barber, Leonard Bernstein, Virgil Thomson, Henry Cowell, Paul Bowles, John Cage, Ned Rorem: The line-up is so significant and influential that it may not be inappropriate to speak of the homosexualization of American art culture in the 1940s and 1950s. And even if that kind of a label might be overstating things, it does help understand the alienation and even disgust such outspoken heterosexuals as the composer Charles Ives and the painter Thomas Hart Benton felt toward the centers of culture during the period.

But our interest in Copland isn't in his sex life or his politics. It's in his music. And here is where Pollack's account most disappoints. Apparently thinking that a reader interested enough in a classical composer to buy a nearly seven-hundred-page book would be musically illiterate, Pollack includes no musical examples and keeps the vocabulary entirely nontechnical. The result is the disappearance of any significant discussion. The real meat of Copland's artistry—his harmonic inventiveness, his melodic audacity, and his rhythmic vitality—are ignored. It's Copland's *music* that attracts our interest, and that's just what disappears in Pollack's biography.

Even with these faults, however, Pollack's *Aaron Copland* is a readable portrait of one of this century's most important musicians. And what remains of Aaron Copland after all this biography is just what we might expect: the paradoxes of the man and the greatness of the music. ♦

"Everybody wants me to run for president."
*–Donald Trump, September 14, 1999*

Parody

# Donald Trump Inaugurated

## *Unveils Plans for New Presidential Mansion*

ATLANTIC CITY, Jan. 20—Donald Trump was sworn in as president today and immediately unveiled plans to tear down the White House and replace it with something "classier." Mr. Trump, who had campaigned for the presidency under the misapprehension that the chief executive lives in the U.S. Capitol building, was visibly shaken after his tour of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue last week. "He's going through leopard-skin wallpaper withdrawal," a worried Trump aide revealed at the time.

The new presidential home, which will be known as the Trump Presidential Palace & Casino, will be 89 stories high, but in the shape of the Roman Coliseum and covered all the way around with gold and silver mirrors. The crown of the building will feature what President Trump has called the Arcade of the Fabulous, a series of 40-foot statues celebrating individuals who have contributed to American life, including Siegfried and Roy, Evander Holyfield, and Charo, the spunky Latin nightclub singer.

"No offense, but who ever heard of running a hotel where you have only one bedroom to rent out a night?" Mr. Trump declared in his inaugural address, referring to the Clintons' Lincoln Bedroom Bed & Breakfast operation. "There wasn't even a phone in the bathroom!" His Donaldness continued.

As part of his effort to create a "kinder, more hospitable nation, with frequent guest bonus packages," the Trump Presidential Palace will have 897 donor suites, each with a 16-foot bathtub placed strategically under a proscenium arch and flattering track lighting. The king-size beds—round, heart-shaped, or in the form of a dollar sign—will rotate, so that no matter which way the guest sleeps, he will never be out of easy visual contact with a Leroy Neeman painting.

Mr. Clinton will stay on in the new facility as greeter and floorshow manager. As a sign of respect for the former chief executive, President Trump will not force his predecessor to wear the new presidential mansion uniforms, which were inspired by President Nixon's designs for his White House Guards, except with a rhinestone-studded bustier in place of the tunic.

President Trump did interrupt his speech to threaten a nuclear strike on anyone who opposed his scheme, but he quickly shifted to a more conciliatory mode, offering all Americans free vanity license

See DONALDMOBILE, A6, Col. 1

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