the weekly Standard

OPEC RIDES AGAIN
IRWIN M. STELZER

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Just the Two of Us

Fred Barnes, Christopher Caldwell, Noemie Emery, and Matthew Rees on the Bush-Gore shootout for the

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

The Singer Publicity Machine

An article in the March 10 *Chronicle of Higher Education* takes THE WEEKLY STANDARD to task for our Nov. 1 editorial that suggested Princeton University professor Peter Singer was suffering from "megalomania" for holding "a vision of himself in which the gigantic figure of Peter Singer sits across from the pope at the chessboard of humankind, locked in a grim battle for the future of all us little folk."

You remember Singer, of course. He's the Australian animal-rights activist who proclaims that a baby is of less value than a pig and who advocates a 28-day trial period before accepting newborns into the human race. He holds a chair at Princeton's curiously named "Center for Human Values," from which he pronounces that utilitarian ethical theory gives you the necessity to legalize euthanasia—which gives you, in turn, the requirement to practice infanticide, which gives you the moral correctness of vegetarianism, which gives you, well, an ideal world of hungry utilitarians who'd kill their elderly mothers and baby daughters at the drop of a hat.

But it turns out, the *Chronicle* assures its readers in a glowing sketch of Singer, that everybody has the man wrong. All that "the world's most reviled philosopher" really wants is "more happiness for everyone." He has his opponents, of course, but they're just "conservatives"—killjoys who want more *un*happiness for everyone. Some of them belong to "a group of disabled-rights activists called Not Dead Yet," and some to "a group called the Roman Catholic Church." And anyway, all Singer is doing is applying in a rigorous way Jeremy Bentham's unexceptionable principle of utilitarianism: "Each to count for one and none for more than one"—except if you happen to be one of the ones who don't count: the weak, the lame, the young, the old, and so on.

It even turns out that Singer can't be a megalomaniac, because he doesn't see himself as locked in a titanic battle with the pope. He sees himself instead as locked in a titanic battle with Jesus Christ. His latest book, *A Darwinian Left*, he reports, "amounts to nothing less than an experimental refutation of Jesus' celebrated teaching about turning the other cheek." The *Chronicle*'s reporter adds, "The idea excites him. In fact, it seems almost too good to be true." Well, no, in fact it seems almost too bad to be true. "I reject the view that says let justice be done though the heavens fall," Singer explains. "I think if the heavens fall, then the result is likely to be unjust for everyone." Except, of course, that if we reject the ideal of justice, then we become like Peter Singer—unable to understand what a word like "justice" or a word like "mercy" means. ♦

A Touch o' Hillary

THE SCRAPBOOK can think of several reasons why a person might want to march in New York's St. Patrick's Day parade. But bringing peace to Northern Ireland isn't one of them. Not unless you're Hillary Clinton, running a tin-eared campaign for Senate in New York. "I have worked very hard over the last six years or so in every way I could to further the peace process in Northern Ireland," Mrs. Clinton explained to angry gay activists last week. "I want to continue to lend my support to it, and I think [that] marching in the parade here is one way of demonstrating that." Yeah, right.

Gay activists are miffed because ever since the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization failed to force its way into the parade a decade ago, Democratic pols, with a handful of exceptions, have boycotted the event. Seemingly unaware of this history, Mrs. Clinton happily announced in December that she would be marching. Now she's looking for a high-minded sounding reason to explain the insult to one of her constituencies without insulting another. So she apparently decided the only way out was to insult everyone's intelligence. ♦

He's Shocked and Appalled

Jonathan Yegge spent months preparing his performance project for a class in the New Genres Department at the San Francisco Art Institute. Then, Jan. 25, the big day arrived. And everything went just as Yegge had planned. He asked another student to volunteer as his assistant. He secured that volunteer's written consent to participate in acts "including and up to a sexual or violent nature." At which point Yegge and his partner moved to an open-air stage, where about 20 other students, two professors, and random passersby watched as *Art Piece No. 1* dramatized "Heidegger, Derrida—[and] all this stuff" about Hegel's master-slave dialectic and Kant's theories of freedom. Or so the artist explains.

"[The volunteer] was tied up," Yegge has since elaborated. "He had a blindfold and gag, but he could see and talk through it. He had freedom of movement of his pelvis. I engaged in oral sex with him and he engaged in oral sex with me. I had given him an enema, and I had taken a . . ." THE SCRAPBOOK will paraphrase what Yegge had taken: He had taken a page from Heidegger's previously unknown manuscript on the artistic uses of solid human waste and

. . . um . . . analyzed it.

All of which "was videoed," Yegge now remembers. "And the piece was over."

Only it wasn't. Yegge's volunteer soon developed misgivings about what he'd done and complained to Art Institute administrators, who, fearing a lawsuit, decided they needed to make clear how horrified they were. Gadzooks, *Yegge hadn't worn a condom!* "It is considered a serious violation for you or any individual to participate in any activity, sexual or not, which involves exposing yourself or others to any bodily fluids or excretions including but not limited to feces, urine, semen, saliva and blood," academic affairs dean Larry Thomas informed Yegge in a letter. Yegge was placed on probation, kicked out of his performance art class, advised to seek counseling and an AIDS test, and ordered not to have sex on campus.

It was too much for a 24-year-old artist to bear. Yegge quit the Art Institute, on principle, March 1. "I'm just shocked and appalled that you can't do certain things in art school," he announced.

THE SCRAPBOOK is shocked, too. Not so long ago, this same San Francisco Art Institute awarded controversial performance artist Karen Finley an honorary doctorate for her own audience-participation experiments with candied yams and bowel movements. Finley's art is similarly "unprotected." So what's the difference? Quality is the difference, says Yegge's former instructor, Tony Labat, who witnessed the Jan. 25 incident (and did nothing to stop it). *Art Piece No. 1*, Labat offers, was "bad art, absolutely." THE SCRAPBOOK wonders how he could tell. ♦

Stalled Exports

The effort to gut U.S. export controls that was detailed on this page three weeks ago has been put on hold, thanks to senators Fred Thompson, Jesse Helms, John Warner, Richard Shelby, Jon Kyl, and Pat Roberts—chairmen of key national security committees and subcommittees. As currently drafted, S. 1712, a rewrite of the lapsed "Export Administration Act," ends effective controls over the export of potentially dangerous technologies. Nonetheless it had sailed through Phil Gramm's Banking Committee. Efforts by the chairmen to work with Gramm to craft a bill that would have addressed their concerns went nowhere, and on Wednesday of last week, Gramm brought the measure to the floor. At that point, Thompson and the other senators made clear that they would fight the bill. Senate majority leader Trent Lott, worried that the Senate would be tied up by the debate, pulled the bill . . . and, at least for one day in this Senate, trade didn't trump national security. ♦

Correction

Fred Barnes reported last week that Bob Dole had declined to meet with Cardinal O'Connor of New York during the 1996 presidential campaign ("George W. Bush's Catholic Problem"). Mr. Dole informs us that he did in fact meet with O'Connor. ♦

Casual

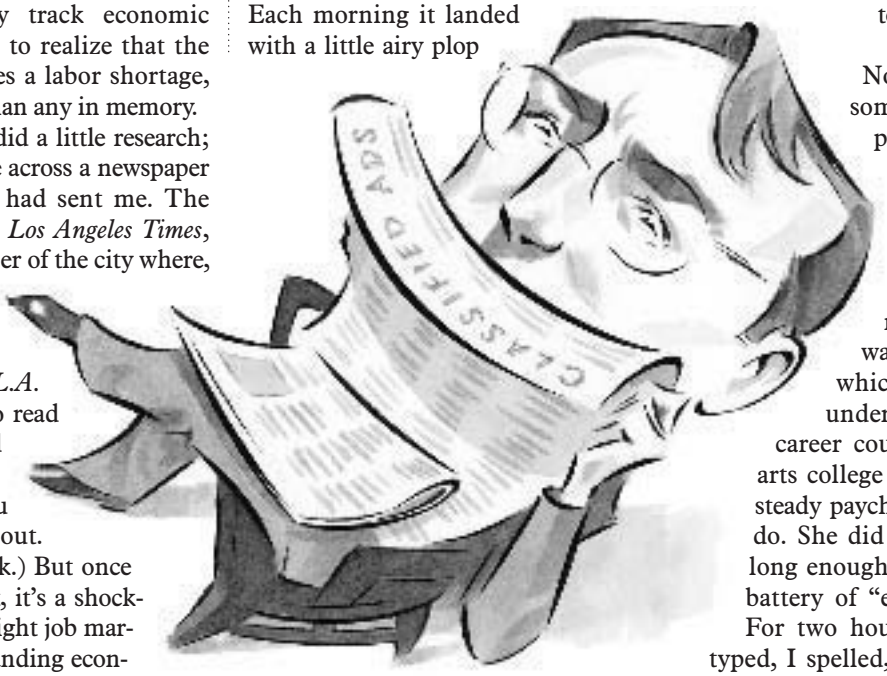
HARD *TIMES*

There was an uptick in the unemployment rate last week, which sent stock prices tumbling. Well, maybe I don't have that exactly right. I may have it backward—there might have been a down-tick in the unemployment rate last week, which sent stock prices soaring. In any case, it was one or the other; an uptick led to a tumble, or a down-tick led to soaring. I can check the details later. The point is, those of us in the journalism business who closely track economic trends have come to realize that the United States faces a labor shortage, one more severe than any in memory.

How severe? I did a little research; specifically, I came across a newspaper clipping a friend had sent me. The clip was from the *Los Angeles Times*, the hometown paper of the city where, many years ago, I attended college. As often happens with the *L.A. Times*, you have to read several hundred words into the story before you know what it's about. (Like I should talk.) But once you get to the gist, it's a shocker: "In the super-tight job market of today's expanding economy, even firms on the cutting edges of technology cannot sign up enough computer science or electrical engineering or business majors to meet their needs." So desperate has the situation become, says the story, that *employers have begun to contemplate the possibility of hiring liberal arts majors.*

The paper even quotes the career counselor from my own liberal arts college. "Our kids are trainable," she says. "They have the soft skills, the transferable skills."

Perhaps you have to be of a certain age to understand the stunning force of this news. Perhaps, to be precise, you have to have been a liberal arts major in the 1970s, emerging from college into a labor market limp from exhaustion, cobwebby from disuse, stupefied from the accumulated incompetence of Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter. The *L.A. Times*, in physical size, had always been a big newspaper, plump with advertising, but by the late seventies even it had slimmed down from the lack of "Help Wanted" ads. Each morning it landed with a little airy plop on the doorstep of our student housing, from which one of my roommates or I would retrieve it. We would carry it to the breakfast table, sweep aside the crumpled cans of Falstaff, and turn with mounting dread to the classifieds.



This was in the spring. We were seniors about to be loosed upon the world, and none of us had the prospect of a job. Our dread was two-pronged as we scanned the job listings—first, that we might never find a way to earn a living; and second, that we might find a job. As it turned out, only the first worry was realistic. We were majors in the most liberal of the liberal arts: one in music, another in art history, a third in the visual arts (a fancy word for "movies"), and one in something called "the philosophy of religion." And morning after morning the *Times* classifieds failed to yield up even one suitable advertisement. A minimally acceptable listing would have read:

PHILOSOPHY SPECIALIST—pref. w/expertise in epistemological implications of Anselm's ontological proofs. Hours 1-5 pm. Generous sal./benefits. No refs. nec. No exp. nec. Pool privileges. Employer assumes payment of all student loans. BYO bong. Applicant does not have to wear shoes.

Not finding this, we sometimes grew desperate. We would get all dressed up in T-shirts and shorts and visit our college's job placement officer. As I remember her, she was a cheerful woman, which was perfectly understandable: As a career counselor at a liberal arts college in 1978, she had a steady paycheck and nothing to do. She did once rouse herself long enough to subject me to a battery of "employment tests." For two hours, in a cubicle, I typed, I spelled, I placed words in alphabetical order, I analyzed charts and graphs, upticks and down-ticks. When I was done she called me into her office. Nowadays, under similar circumstances, a career counselor would tell the student how "trainable" he was, and how marvelously "transferable" his skills were.

But the 1970s were a sterner time. "You must understand," my career counselor said, glancing through the papers, "you have no marketable skills whatsoever." Journalism beckoned.

ANDREW FERGUSON

Correspondence

Creative Destruction?

I find the piece by William Kristol and David Brooks so disturbing that I must respond ("The Politics of Creative Destruction," March 13).

The authors applaud John McCain for proposing "campaign finance reform, education reform, Social Security reform, [and] a campaign against lobbyist-driven pork-barrel spending." His campaign finance reform bill is flagrantly unconstitutional, as your magazine has argued. In a recent debate McCain was barely able to articulate an education plan, in stark contrast to George W. Bush's detailed education proposal. McCain's Social Security "reform" is simply the dangerous idea of using general revenue funds to hide the structural problems in the program. Finally, as long as congressmen need to get elected there will be pork-barrel spending.

Kristol and Brooks also claim that "McCain would redirect a religiously based moral conservatism into a patriotically grounded moral appeal." We all are for a civil religion, but one that makes no appeals to a higher power? One that is simply a love of country and nothing else? Is McCain's practice of vilifying all who hold office as mere tools of special interests inspirational patriotism? How about this for moral appeal: "Prosperity without purpose is simple materialism." "I want to rally the armies of compassion." "You can't change people's lives until you change their hearts." All these from the mouth of George W. Bush.

Next, Kristol and Brooks argue, "But that is the nature of creative destruction. It is sometimes reckless. Destruction induces anxiety before creation can inspire confidence." You have to break a few eggs to make an omelet? Cheap demagoguery is acceptable if it is for a good cause? It was one of McCain's "acceptable" Christian conservatives, Chuck Colson, who admonished McCain for exploiting the traditional divide between Catholics and evangelicals. Governor Bush's blunder in going to Bob Jones University is nothing compared with McCain's exploitation of religious differences and then lying to the media about doing it.

Finally, the authors state, "If [Bush] is the nominee, Al Gore will be sure to hang [conservatism's] most inflammatory symbols around his neck. Bush has shown no inclination to rip out any part of the mansion he has inherited, and without that there can be no renovation." Any ammunition Gore has was given him by John McCain pushing Bush right. And no inclination to rip out any part of the mansion? Remember "balancing the budget on the backs of the poor"? The "slouching toward Gomorrah" speech? What short memories!

One cannot deny the attractiveness of a war hero carrying the conservative message to the public. But just as surely as one does not go down to continual defeat simply to hold on to principle, one does not jettison all principle simply to gain electoral victory. This, I fear, is what McCain has done, and the demagoguery of his campaign is disturbing. The exploitation of religion, the vilification of any who disagree, and the generally crude populism of McCain are not ways to inspire people to long-term dedication to a party or a nation. I fear that many at The Weekly Standard are so taken with John McCain's biography that they are blind to the dangers of his politics, and to the virtues of George W. Bush.

Jon David Schaff
Chicago, IL

I have been a subscriber to The Weekly Standard from its inception in 1995, and a longtime admirer of William Kristol's writing. I must take exception, however, to the article he coauthored with David Brooks. Although I do not disagree with their premise that "creative destruction" is necessary for conservatism to thrive, it is not at all clear that Sen. McCain is the appropriate agent to bring such "creative destruction" about.

At the core of the McCain candidacy is the cynical calculation that if a conservative Republican can neutralize the chattering classes, he can win. This largely explains the favorable treatment McCain receives from such unlikely sources as Al Hunt of the *Wall Street Journal*. It also explains why much of the Republican rank and file—who by and large detest the Washington press corps—has taken such a strong dislike to McCain.

Above all, I fail to see what the purpose of McCain's "creative destruction" is, save the narrow one of getting McCain elected. Kristol and Brooks may well be correct when they suggest that McCain has better-developed ideas on foreign policy than does Bush, but on other matters of interest to conservatives—economic freedom, "traditional values," and limited, democratic government—McCain seems to be either agnostic or has taken a rhetorical position vaguely siding with those who disagree with us. The manifest shortcomings of the Republican party in the Dewey-Eisenhower era made the need for the Goldwater-Reagan insurgency obvious, but I fail to see any comparable development in the Republican party of today. The failures of 1992 and 1996 happened because the Republicans waged two of the most inept presidential campaigns of recent history. The failure of 1998 was largely a failure of nerve, compounded by indecision. I do not see Republican reversals of recent years as ideological failures, though I would agree with Kristol and Brooks that conservative views are not held by a majority of the electorate. But I cannot see an egotistical senator with a mediocre record and a manifest willingness to savage those in his own party as the cure for what ails the conservative cause.

Edward N. Finglas
Marblehead, MA

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Why the Rush to Favor China?

President Clinton was right when he said last Wednesday that the decision to grant China permanent most-favored-nation trading status will have a historic significance equal to Richard Nixon's opening to China and Jimmy Carter's normalization of relations. But if that's true, why is the president rushing Congress to make a hasty decision, with almost no time to consider the merits and consequences of this momentous step?

There are a whole host of good reasons to slow things down. Many members don't even know what's in the trade deal the United States struck with China last November. Meanwhile, the Europeans are negotiating their own agreement with China and probably won't complete negotiations for several months. The administration argues that there's no reason to wait and see if the Europeans get a better deal than our own negotiators, since American businesses will benefit anyway. What the administration doesn't point out is that rapid passage of permanent trade status by Congress will strengthen the Chinese hand and weaken the European negotiating position. It would be better for Congress to wait and give the Europeans maximum leverage to extract concessions from Beijing.

President Clinton seems to believe that our first official response to a Chinese threat of war should be to give Beijing a large economic gift.

Then there is the problem of implementation. In any trade deal, the devil is in the details. This is especially true in China's case, because Beijing has a miserable record of implementing the deals it strikes. (The United States is still trying to get China to abide by the agreement it signed on intellectual property rights almost a decade ago.) We won't know the terms of implementation until China reaches an agreement with the WTO much later this year.

By far the most important reason to delay any vote, however, concerns China's recent threats to attack Taiwan if that government does not move more rapidly toward reunification. President Clinton seems to believe that America's very first official response to a Chinese threat of war should be to give Beijing the largest economic gift we have to offer: permanent, low-tariff access to our markets. What kind of signal could that possibly send to Jiang Zemin and his military chiefs? Threaten war against an American ally and a democracy, and the first thing Washington does is lavish gifts upon you. Extreme belligerence, they would have to conclude, is good for business. (Incidentally, guess what two words never appear in last Friday's *Wall Street Journal* editorial supporting President Clinton's rush to favor China: Taiwan and democracy.)

Some responsible Democrats see what a disaster it would be to approve China's trade status so soon after Chinese threats against Taiwan. Congressman Jack Murtha, an influential centrist Democrat, has informed his colleagues that, in light of Beijing's recent behavior, he will not support permanent MFN for China this year, even though he consistently supported annual renewal of MFN in the past. "It is not in our national security interest," Murtha declared, "to condone and reward grossly irresponsible conduct." Meanwhile, some Republican senators are considering linking any vote on permanent MFN to passage of the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act. The House approved the Taiwan measure overwhelmingly. At the very least, the Senate should pass the Taiwan legislation before it even considers voting on permanent MFN for China. If we want to avoid tempting Beijing into future aggressive actions against Taiwan, the United States must convince the Beijing government now that belligerence carries a real price.

And what are the good reasons to rush through a vote? There aren't any. The president's demand for a hasty decision is purely about politics. Clinton held off making his pitch for permanent MFN until Al Gore had sewn up the

Democratic party's nomination, thereby minimizing the pressure that could be brought to bear on the vice president by his big labor allies. With the primaries out of the way, Clinton now wants Congress to rush approval through before the general election campaign goes into full swing, calculating that election-year politics will dim chances of passage.

To put it another way, the White House and the Republican leadership in both houses want to get this thing done before the American electorate gets a chance to look at it. The big corporations want to use their big money to frighten members of Congress into supporting permanent MFN before those members have a chance to hear from their constituents. Polls show that a large majority of Americans oppose China's entry into the World Trade Organization and oppose granting China permanent trade relations. In fact, they don't much like China, period. The White House wants to make sure that this overwhelming public opinion does not influence congressional deliberations. That's one reason the administration has kept secret the terms of the WTO deal it reached with China last November. Keeping the public in the dark was also the hallmark of Henry Kissinger's and Jimmy Carter's China diplomacy in the 1970s.

Of course, there's another reason to rush through a vote in Congress: Bill Clinton's "legacy." The truth is, Congress can just as easily vote on China's permanent trade status next year. After all, China can't even become a WTO member until it cuts its deals with the Europeans and completes negotiations with the WTO authorities on the terms of implementation. In short, it is almost inconceivable that China could join the WTO much before the end of the year. American businesses will not lose out if the vote is delayed. Therefore, it makes no practical difference whether Congress votes this year or next. Except to Bill Clinton, who wants to leave a trade deal with China as one of his presidential legacies. We can understand why some Democratic leaders in Congress would find this a compelling reason to vote quickly. Why do Republicans?

—Robert Kagan, for the Editors

The Nominee and the McCain Vote

How Bush can beat Gore in the general election.

BY FRED BARNES

THE MAN TO WATCH NOW is George W. Bush, not John McCain. He starts the eight-month presidential campaign against Al Gore on a note of uncertainty: McCain may or may not become a full-throated Bush supporter. So Gore is a slight favorite at the outset. But Bush has it within his power to seize control of the campaign and defeat Gore. He starts with one important advantage. Even in his worst appearances—the gig on the David Letterman show, for instance—people like him. With Gore, even on his best days, folks have trouble warming to him.

To put his campaign on the road to victory, Bush has three tasks to accomplish, and they aren't all that daunting. First, he's got to reconcile with McCain. The easiest way is to ask McCain to be his running mate. Absent that, Bush still has many other ways to make his candidacy attractive to McCain. Second, he's got to retool his basic message for the general election. This means more talk of reform, less of compassionate conservatism. And third, he's got to prepare himself and his allies for the expected assault by Gore. Indignation worked for Bush when McCain likened him to President Clinton on trustworthiness. But this won't be sufficient in warding off Gore's slings and arrows.

Accommodating McCain may be the least of Bush's problems. McCain loathes Gore and doesn't want him to win the presidency. And Bush needs his active help in winning over McCain voters to make sure Gore is defeated. Exit polls on Super Tuesday showed that Bush has nearly a 3-2 advantage over Gore in attracting the McCain bloc. To beat Gore, however, Bush must capture McCain voters by a 2-1 or even a 3-1 margin. Karl Rove, Bush's chief strategist, says Bush "may have most of that already." Not all, though. McCain's help could put Bush over the top.

It's ironic that former president Gerald Ford has offered to mediate between Bush and McCain, because the tentative plan of the Bush campaign is to do exactly the opposite of what Ford did in 1976. Ford instantly accepted word from Reagan's camp that Reagan, whom he had just defeated for the nomination, didn't want the vice presidency. Then Ford declined to adopt any of Reagan's campaign themes or pick a Reagan ally as his running mate. The result: Reagan endorsed Ford, but mostly sat on his hands during the fall campaign.

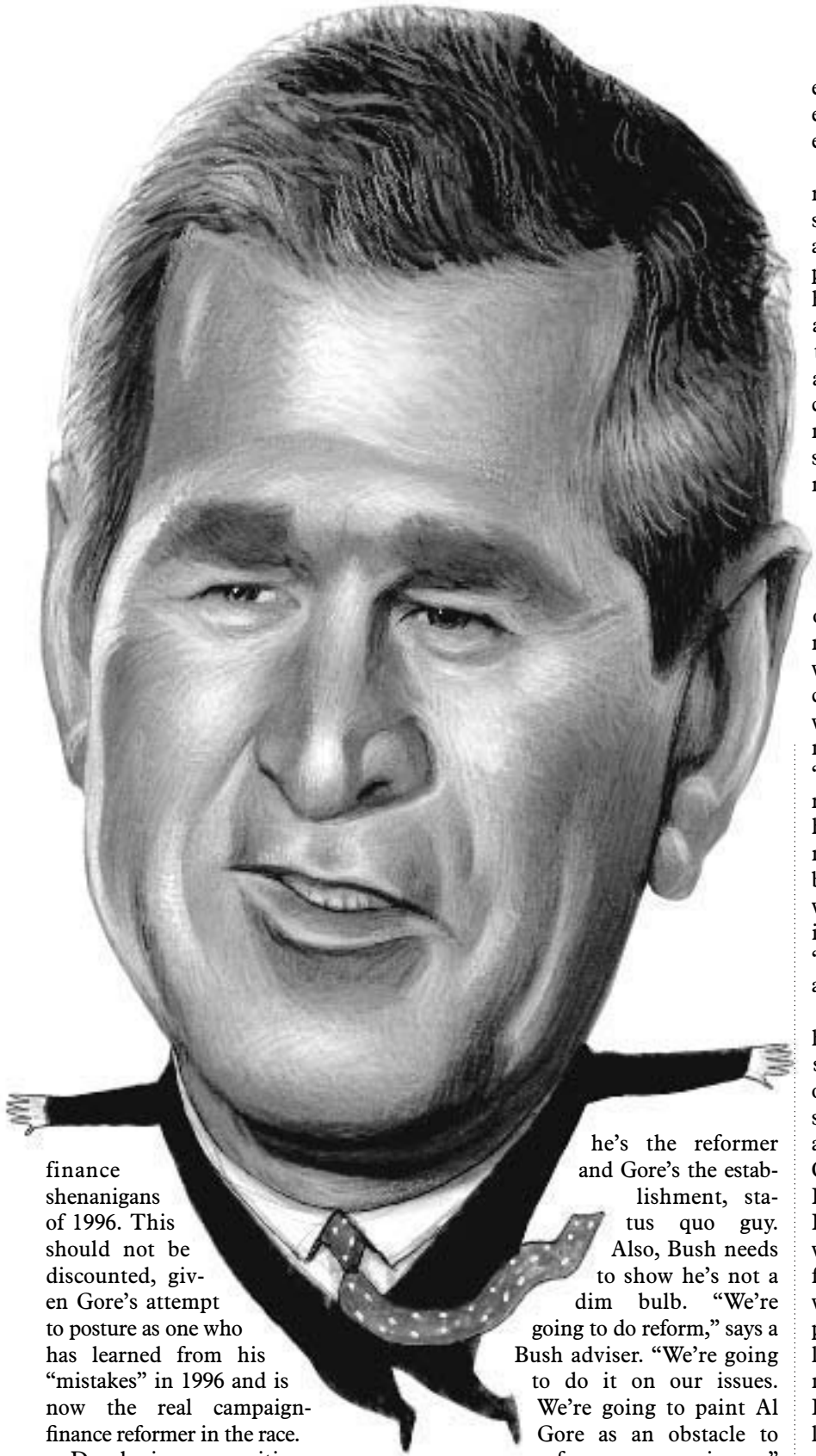
Bush needs an active McCain. Offering McCain the vice presidency, even in the face of indications McCain isn't interested, is the surest way. Bush is bound to remember the salutary impact the selection of his father as Reagan's running mate had on the GOP campaign in 1980. It made moderates, independents, and conservative Democrats feel better—and less scared by Reagan. It showed Reagan wasn't in the pocket of the hard right. Picking McCain would defy the media's caricature of George W. as wholly owned by the religious right. And while some Christian conservatives would squawk, they wouldn't consider abandoning Bush. Besides, McCain would add foreign policy heft, which Bush lacks.

What if McCain says no? Then it's time for Bush to do again what Ford didn't—embrace one of his opponent's policies. The truth is, Bush's view on campaign finance reform is far from McCain-Feingold, but *not* that far from a compromise position that McCain has often said he'd accept. Sen. Chuck Hagel of Nebraska, a buddy of McCain, has packaged such a compromise in a bill that would put a cap on soft money, raise the ceiling on hard money to $3,000 per donor while indexing it for inflation, and put stringent disclosure requirements on independent expenditures (like those anti-McCain ads run by rich Texans in the primaries). McCain's advisers have informed the Bush camp that McCain requires no quid pro quo for endorsing Bush. But agreement on a few principles of campaign finance would tell McCain his reform spiel is being taken seriously, while not amounting to capitulation by Bush.

Another policy area where Bush could reach out to McCain is the Pentagon. Asking McCain to head up the Bush administration's effort to reform the military establishment makes enormous sense. McCain could perform this as veep, defense secretary, or outsider. And it wouldn't look as if Bush had knuckled under to McCain. He'd merely be picking the best guy for the job. In short, Bush doesn't really have to do anything out of character to woo McCain. He needs to be solicitous, not triumphal, but that's Bush's nature anyway. "I've reached out to people who may not agree with me all the time," he told Jay Leno last week.

The other part of Operation McCain is for Bush to name a McCain associate as running mate. Hagel comes to mind. As Bush knows, he's been urging McCain to cool his rhetoric and come to terms with Bush. So has Sen. Fred Thompson of Tennessee, also a McCain backer. Thompson has the added advantage of comprehensive and detailed knowledge of the Clinton-Gore campaign

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.



Earl Keleny

finance shenanigans of 1996. This should not be discounted, given Gore's attempt to posture as one who has learned from his "mistakes" in 1996 and is now the real campaign-finance reformer in the race.

Developing an exciting message for the general election is Bush's trickiest task. He doesn't want to veer sharply from his primary message, but he does need to demonstrate that he's the reformer and Gore's the establishment, status quo guy. Also, Bush needs to show he's not a dim bulb. "We're going to do reform," says a Bush adviser. "We're going to do it on our issues. We're going to paint Al Gore as an obstacle to reform on our issues." These issues include education, Social Security, Medicare, taxes, and the military. "By the time of the conventions, George Bush will be seen as a different kind of Republican, not as an establishment Republican," the adviser insists.

Bush copied McCain's reform rhetoric after losing the New Hampshire primary. It generally worked, and Bush didn't have to change any policy positions. He simply packaged his programs differently. Once part of a compassionate conservative agenda, they became elements of a reform agenda. There's more repackaging to come and some fresh proposals. As much as anything else, Bush wants to surprise people with his ideas. "He's not going to be typical," says a Bush aide. We'll see.

The conventional wisdom about the Bush campaign is that it will wither in the face of Gore's fusillade of accusations. My guess is probably not. Rove says the fight with Gore will come down to "hand-to-hand combat." And the Bush team is ready with some volleys of its own. The mild stuff will be criticism of Gore for "failed opportunities" to carry out reforms, especially ones that would have helped the middle and lower-middle class. The heavy artillery will be aimed at Gore's ethical lapses and what a Bush aide calls his "difficulty in telling the truth." The aide says, "There are ten different ways to attack Gore. We have to decide."

Bush's greatest gift is that when he's tough, or even bumbling, he's still likable. The day after Bush went on Letterman, pollster Frank Luntz showed a tape of it to a focus group of a dozen people in Orange County, California. Though the press trashed Bush's performance, "every time Bush laughed at himself the reaction was positive," says Luntz. Chatting a few days later with Jay Leno, Bush was asked if he'd ever thought about putting down a beer during his college years because he might be running for president some day. "No," Bush deadpanned, and the audience loved it. "Likability cannot be overestimated," Luntz says. "Gore has a fundamental problem. He's just not likable and Bush is." Which is one reason Bush may win the White House after all. ♦

Al Gore's Game Plan

The vice president thinks he'll make short work of George W. Bush. **BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL**

SEEMS TIME FOR A BREATHER. By sewing up their respective nominations in the first days of March, vice president Al Gore and Texas governor George W. Bush have booked themselves the longest general election campaign in American history. It's eight months until November, and the candidates have already spent most of their money. Gore is down to $4 million, awaiting $7 million more in matching funds. Only $6 million remains of Bush's once-Croesian war chest. Aside from that, they're stuck with what they raise until each gets a federal infusion of $67 million after the parties' summer conventions.

Much as Republicans might like it, there will be no breather. The Gore campaign is working on the assumption that this election combines elements of both 1988 and 1996. It's 1988 in that it pits a two-term vice president from a successful administration against a governor who's earned his stripes in a state easily cast as outside the American mainstream. It's 1996 in that Democrats can run on peace and (mind-boggling) prosperity against a party undergoing an identity crisis.

The present political configuration leaves the Gore camp cocky. Bush has yoked himself to the most distrusted group in American politics, the southern Christian right. That could undo him in the swing states stretching from Illinois across Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania to New Jersey. It may harm him even in the southern border states of Missouri and Kentucky. Bush is being driven hard to the center by a revolt against his own party's fealty to special interests monied and moral, and hard to the right by fear of a Pat Buchanan Reform candidacy that could chip away at the pro-life voters who have for decades been the most solid part of the Republican base.

Gore's advisers see Bush as particularly vulnerable to issue-based attack ads (à la 1988); some even think an early barrage can *wrap up* the race by convention time (à la 1996). Out of these considerations is emerging a clear Gore strategy for making short work of Bush. Here are its elements:

1. *Start the general election immediately.* Bush complained that he let himself "get defined" during the primaries; now's the best time for Gore to define him for the general electorate. Issues are more propitious for Gore than they're likely to be again. The coming weeks could see a crisis in Taiwan, a market crash, a new Clinton money scandal—who knows? But today, the election is about Bush's embrace of racially atavistic Bob Jones University, and the misleading ads bankrolled by political crony Sam Wyly—who, thanks to Bush, enjoys usufruct of Texas's pension investments. Bob Jones taints Bush as a "Pat Robertson Republican." Wyly taints him as a southern back-scratching pol of a decidedly Clintonesque variety. Wyly has also helped drive out of the papers the recent campaign finance conviction of Gore's China-linked fund-raiser Maria Hsia.

2. *Cast Bush as the anti-McCain.* McCain's uprising may promise an eventual new majority (as Reagan's candidacy did in 1976). It may be the route to a new marginality (as Eugene McCarthy's and Robert Kennedy's candidacies were for Democrats in 1968). Either way, a huge bloc of voters has come unmoored, and must be wooed in new ways. Gore realizes this more than Bush does. Exit polls showed that the entire increment in this winter's record Republican primary turnout was due to the McCain candidacy, and 35 percent of "McCainiacs" (41 percent in Virginia) say they plan to vote for Gore in the fall. Not without reason. Gore spent the first hours after his Super Tuesday victories noting that he favored the McCain-Feingold campaign finance bill (as did Senate Democrats, 45-0), and that Bush opposed it (as did Senate Republicans, 7-45).

If Gore can hold on to a third of those McCain voters, this race is already over. That's why Gore's campaign will stage events as often as possible to highlight the candidate's similarity to (and Bush's difference from) McCain. Gore's offer to debate Bush twice weekly and forgo soft money may be a "stunt," but so were the Lindbergh flight and the moon landing. Nor does it matter that such a moratorium is constitutionally unenforceable. Until Bush finds a way to respond, he loses. Gore expects Bush to persist in the almost universal Republican delusion that a bad Democratic campaign-finance-reform plan can be defeated by a non-existent Republican one.

3. *Heighten personal comparisons.* Given the clout of liberal trial lawyers, there is little advantage for Democrats in giving up soft money. For Gore, the real payoff of the debates-and-money-bans deal lies elsewhere. It would allow him to appear again and again in close proximity to his considerably less verbal rival. Gore is an overrated debater. He ran circles around Ross Perot in 1993 and Jack Kemp in 1996, but was bested by Dan Quayle in 1992. Nonetheless, his advisers are right to see the gravitas gap between the two candidates as wide enough to make Bush an even harder sell than he already is. Outside of the South, wherever voters have gotten to know

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Earl Keleny

Bush, his majorities have eroded.

Even Gore's very worst liabilities, the thinking goes, can be defused if the candidates are kept in close proximity. The one blunder of the primary season that truly haunts Gore's advisers—his suggestion that top Pentagon officials be vetted for their attitudes towards gays in the military—will hurt him if Bush raises it in ads. In debates, Gore can swiftly shift the focus to his own military experience and Bush's lack thereof.

4. *Mess with Texas*. Bush's Texas is as exotic and unsettling to most Americans as Dukakis's Massachusetts was in 1988. Ask Gore's backers whether Texas is an issue, and they'll reply, "*Boy*, is Texas an issue. In half the black section of Houston, the streets aren't even paved! It's like an advanced Mexico City! The barefoot and brain-damaged kids of the Rio Grande, the encephalitis kids, smog floating over the state . . ." Since education is the only domestic issue Bush feels genuinely comfortable talking about, one can expect the Gore campaign to promise New Jerseyites and Missourians that a vote for Bush will allow their children to be taught creationism like a real Texan, etc.

What makes Texas an even bigger liability than Massachusetts is oil. Not only Texas's culture but also its economic interests are at odds with most other states'. Gore's people plan to pressure Bush to back a release of oil reserves that would drive down prices and help the country at the expense of Texas.

That is the game plan, but at root, Gore's team doesn't think it has to do much. They are not worried that Bush will try to parry their "Pat Robertson Republican" message with symmetrical attacks on Al Sharpton, assuming, perhaps correctly, that a southern Republican treads on racial turf at his political peril. At any rate, Gore has been considerably more circumspect than either Bill Bradley or Hillary Clinton about appearing in public with Sharpton, and went to great pains to keep from being photographed when the two met privately weeks ago.

Nor is there much worry that Bush will "wrap Bill Clinton around" Gore. The Lewinsky baggage is easily enough shed. If Gore responded to a mild criticism by deploring adultery in general and Clinton's in particular, what part of the Clinton years would Bush's team then be able to "wrap around him"? The precipitous drop in crime rates? The economic boom that Gore helped preside over and George Bush proposes to tinker with? Gore has belittled every Republican tax-cut proposal of the last five years as a "risky tax scheme"; he clearly doesn't think that rhetoric is failing.

There's a glimmer of hope for George W. Bush. There *is* a recent presidential race in which the party that held the White House went into a general election campaign with the same hubristic overconfidence Gore now exhibits, the same unwarranted smugness, the same electorate-repelling cockiness—and wound up absolutely stunned when the voters repudiated it on Election Day. If Bush is lucky, this election will resemble not 1988 or 1996, but 1992. ♦

The Veep's Veep

Al Gore looks to choose a successor.

BY MATTHEW REES

"THE ONLY THING vice presidents can do is hurt you." So says Democratic senator Joe Biden when asked whom Al Gore should select to be his running mate. Biden is right, with one big exception: Gore, who was a major asset to Bill Clinton in 1992.

Thus the dilemma facing Gore between now and August: Should he pick someone who will spice up the ticket, as Clinton did in 1992, even if he (or she) is untested? Or should he name someone who simply will do no harm?

Today, Clinton's choice of Gore looks like a masterstroke, but it was seen as risky at the time, as it brought to the ticket a carbon copy of Clinton: an Ivy League-educated, moderate, baby boomer Baptist from the South.

The advantage was that Gore reinforced the impression that the Democratic ticket was a voice for a new generation in politics. More important, he helped squelch doubts about whether Clinton was really a centrist Democrat, particularly given his vote to authorize the use of force in the Gulf War. The choice of Gore was also smart, says Paul Begala, a top aide to Clinton during the 1992 campaign, because Gore had already been vetted by the national press corps during his 1988 presidential campaign, minimizing the likelihood he'd get a media hazing like those dished out to first-time national candidates Dan Quayle and Geraldine Ferraro.

The early line on Gore's thinking is that, like Clinton, he won't bother trying to balance the ticket with his ideological opposite from a different part of the country. Instead, his choice will be designed to send a message about what kind of president Gore would be. It might signal clean government/moral rectitude, or uninterrupted economic stewardship, or political leadership for the next generation. (Democrats say if George W. Bush, who will pick first, names Colin Powell, all bets are off.) A variety of individuals have already become the subject of heavy speculation in Democratic circles. Here's a look at four of the early front-runners:

¶ *John Kerry*: Mention Kerry as a potential running mate, and most Democrats reply that if Gore needs to pick someone from Massachusetts he's in big trouble. That's true, but geography would be the last reason for picking Kerry.

While a few clicks to the left of Gore, Kerry would bring considerable foreign-policy experience. More important, he's a decorated Vietnam veteran (Gore also served in Vietnam, for five months, but never saw combat). John McCain's personality-driven campaign highlighted the potency of Vietnam as a campaign issue, and Kerry's presence would undo some of the damage done to the party's image by having a draft dodger as commander in chief for eight years. In 1998, Gray Davis, the Democratic governor of California, used his Vietnam service to great effect against his Republican opponent, Dan Lungren, who didn't serve. A Gore-Kerry ticket would pose the same contrast with George W. Bush, who served in the National Guard but never went to Vietnam.

Gore and Kerry were both elected to the Senate in 1984, but they were never particularly close. Indeed, Kerry gave serious thought last year to challenging Gore for the nomination. Instead, he became one of Gore's most ardent campaigners. He's appeared on more than 50 talk radio programs on Gore's behalf, he organized a bus trip for 10 Massachusetts mayors to campaign for Gore in New Hampshire, and he even spent four days in Iowa before the state's caucuses. Gore appreciated it: Kerry was the only senator Gore asked to join him on election night in Iowa and New Hampshire.

If that's not enough, Kerry is also well connected in the Gore campaign. Two of his top advisers on past campaigns—Bob Shrum and Michael Whouley—are members of Gore's inner circle.

¶ *Joseph Lieberman*: Picking Lieberman would signal Gore's desire to distance himself from the personal and political hijinks of the Clinton White House. Lieberman, from Connecticut, was the first Democrat to spell out forcefully his objection to Clinton's behavior with Monica Lewinsky, calling it "not just inappropriate," but also "immoral" and "harmful." He was also the only Democrat during the 1997 Senate hearings on campaign finance abuses to genuinely criticize the White House's recklessness.

With a reputation as one of the most conservative Democrats in the Senate, Lieberman would reinforce Gore's centrist credentials. This could also cause problems, though, particularly on education, where Lieberman has been much more open-minded about experimenting with vouchers and school choice than Gore, who's in hock to the anti-reform teachers' lobby. Yet no one thinks this would be a deal-breaker, and Lieberman is reliably liberal on many other sacred Democratic issues, like abortion. His admiration for Gore is such that he was one of the first elected officials to endorse him, in 1998.

Lieberman is thought of as a *mensch*, so Gore would have to find somebody else to act as hatchetman. Another concern is that, as an Orthodox Jew, Lieberman is prevented from using anything automated—cars, telephones, electricity—from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. That would provoke questions about his ability to govern in the event he became president, though

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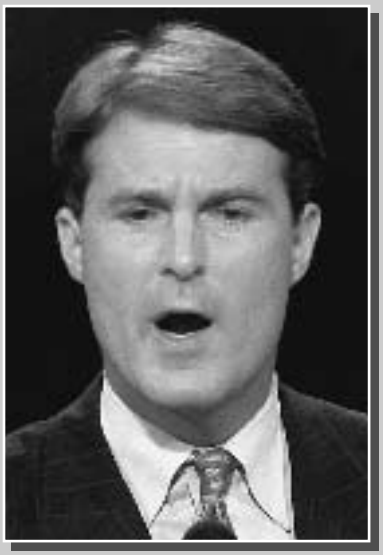

Evan Bayh

John Kerry

Joseph Lieberman

Gary Locke

All photos: AP/Wide World Photos

the restriction could also be a blessing for him personally. It would give him an excuse for skipping a few of the state party conventions, fund-raising dinners, and funerals for foreign dignitaries that vice presidents are endlessly called on to attend.

Lieberman is up for reelection this year, so he'd have to give up his seat to run with Gore, but people who know him say it would be an easy choice: He'd like nothing more than to be vice president.

¶ *Evan Bayh*: If Gore is supremely confident of victory when it comes time to choose his vice president, Bayh will be a logical choice. Elected to the Senate from Indiana in 1998, he's young (44), handsome, experienced (two terms as governor of Indiana), moderate (he never raised taxes while governor), and has good political genes (his father, Birch, was a liberal icon during his 18 years in the Senate). Indiana would still be unlikely to vote Democratic in the general election—it's voted Republican in the last eight elections—but Bayh has proven himself able to win in hostile territory. He is, in other words, the spitting image of Gore.

Bayh endorsed Gore in July and campaigned for him in Iowa and New Hampshire, where some residents still remembered his father's 1976 bid for the White House. The argument against him is that he's spent less than two years in the Senate and has no foreign policy experience. He also gave a poorly received keynote address to the Democratic convention in 1996. But Bill Clinton proved that a bad speech need not retard the political career of a rising star.

¶ *Gary Locke*: In order to appease Democratic bean counters, Gore's campaign will need to signal that its veep possibilities include a Hispanic (energy secretary Bill Richardson), a woman (senator Dianne Feinstein), and a black (former Clinton budget director Franklin Raines). Off the record, Democratic strategists say none of these people has any hope of being tapped. The minority candidate who could be picked, though, is Gary Locke, the Asian American governor of Washington.

Locke, like Gore, fancies himself a policy wonk and is particularly interested in two of the vice president's issues: technology and the environment. He first met Gore in 1996, when the Clinton-Gore campaign bus was rolling through Washington. Locke's wife, Mona, was very pregnant with their first child, and Gore and his wife, Tipper, bonded with the couple through lighthearted talks about parenting. Today, says Blair Butterworth, Locke's campaign consultant, "there's a genuine warmth between the vice president and the governor."

Gore has been back to Washington frequently—he joined Locke in campaigning against a 1998 initiative to ban state-based racial and gender preferences—and he won the governor's endorsement early last year. Every time the vice president has visited Washington, Locke has accompanied him; and Locke campaigned for Gore against Bill Bradley in the state's caucuses. He also brings considerable political experience, having spent 11 years as a state legislator and

3 as chief executive of King County, which includes Seattle.

There is one big obstacle to Locke's being picked: He's signaled he doesn't want the job. He told a television interviewer last year that with two young children, he doesn't envision living in Washington, D.C., and he has said as much privately. Still, if Gore were in a pinch and leaned on Locke, spurning the offer would be unthinkable.

Many other Democrats are being mentioned as potential Gore running mates—governors like Gray Davis of California, Jim Hunt of North Carolina, and former governor Zell Miller of Georgia, senators like Bob Graham of Florida, Richard Durbin of Illinois, and John Edwards of North Carolina—but all are long shots. There's also some mischief being cooked up by veterans of past Democratic presidential campaigns. James Carville has been pushing ex-treasury secretary Robert Rubin as a way for Gore to signal his economic bona fides, while Bob Beckel, who managed Walter Mondale's campaign in 1984, says the best thing Gore could do is persuade John McCain to switch parties and run with him.

As for Democratic senators, nearly all of whom see themselves as future presidents, they're predictably reluctant to reveal much of anything. Bob Graham says, "I like the job I have now." Chuck Robb of Virginia professes ignorance of the whole process, asking me what I know. West Virginia's Jay Rockefeller politely declines to play the speculation game.

And then there's Bob Torricelli of New Jersey, no stranger to political intrigue. In an interview just off the Senate floor, he declares that Gore's veep must be able to energize the Democratic base and raise money. He also predicts that Gore's choice will be Catholic. As Torricelli seems to be describing himself, I ask whether he's interested in the job. He coyly responds, "It's not foremost in my mind." Stumped, I ask him to elaborate, and he does: "Let's just say I regret that my parents converted from Catholicism." ♦

The Lessons of Insurgency

One candidate understood that, to win, he had to let go of his party's baggage. **BY NOEMIE EMERY**

IN THIS HIGH SEASON of political battles, three different wars have gone on. There was the faux contest on the Democrats' side, where Al Gore mopped up Bill Bradley. There was the battle royal on the Republicans' side, where John McCain and George W. Bush locked antlers. And there has been, under those two, a third major struggle: the de facto war for the radical center, the insurgent movement, the disaffected, floating, and less-aligned voter, the turbulent moderate core. In this, Bill Bradley was thoroughly whipped by McCain.

Both McCain and Bradley had problems within their own parties (McCain's at least partly of his own making), and each had a message—reform and integrity—that should have had appeal across party lines. But over and over, it was McCain who crossed them, while Bradley was trapped. McCain drew independents, new voters, and conservative Democrats, while Bradley didn't. McCain was able to tap into Bradley's pool of potential voters. Few seem to have gone in the other direction. What caused this procession of one-way traffic? The answer may lie in a cluster of issues, the *approach* to which creates a tone or a temper that in and of itself can attract or repel many voters. Let us see what they are:

1. Abortion. As Bradley made clear, when it came to abortion, he was the purest of the liberal pure. There was no form of the procedure he did not approve of and would not sanction, no matter how late-term or how grisly. There was not one that he would decline to fund with taxpayers' money; no moment when he entertained a doubt. He attacked Gore for having voted pro-life as a Tennessee congressman, for having once voted against federal funding, for having once written that abortion is "arguably the taking of a human life." The problem for Bradley is that most voters—most *pro-choice* voters—favor restrictions, oppose federal funding, and think that abortion *is* the taking of life.

McCain calls himself "proudly pro-life" and has a pro-life voting record in Congress, but he has also had dust-ups with the base of his party. He has said that overturning *Roe* v. *Wade* (which he has called bad law and worse ethics) is less important than making a pro-life case to the public, and has accused both pro-life and pro-choice extremists of polarizing a complex and difficult issue. "This is the kind of issue you can't straddle," Bradley said in one of his campaign advertisements. Actually, it is one you *can* straddle, and one that most people do. Polls show consistently that absolute views (like Bradley's) appeal to small numbers at opposite ends of the spectrum, while most of the public remains ambivalent; either pro-life with exceptions, or pro-choice with restraints. Attacks from his right helped boost McCain's standing inside this centermost sector: Contrary to the theories and wishes of activists, most voters are perfectly happy with a less rigid candidate, and might even prefer one. McCain was the less rigid, more accessible, figure. Advantage McCain.

2. Gender. As with abortion, Bradley trends to the left of the left on the gender agenda, courting the fervent endorsement of gays. He is for gay marriage; for having open gays serve in the armed forces, no matter what

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experts say about unit cohesion. He has said that a talk show hostess, Dr. Laura Schlessinger, who has annoyed some gay activists should be forced off the air.

McCain, needless to say, opposes these measures. But he managed, ever so slightly, to distance himself from his party's hard right. He is the one Republican candidate to have met with the Log Cabin Republicans. He said he would not *rule out* hiring gays if made president. He has said he can see a day when a homosexual could become president of the United States. This may sound Clintonesque, but is really quite different: Clinton ostentatiously appoints noisy gay activists, to pay off an interest group. McCain is saying that gayness is not a reason for denying a qualified person his due. This is close to the center of public opinion, which wants to be fair to individuals who are homosexual, without recognizing a new class of victims, or endorsing gayness per se. He is for fairness; against gender-identity preference. Advantage McCain.

3. Race. Bradley has said that race is *his* issue, but on this his record is strange. He was quick to condemn John Rocker, the young relief pitcher for the Atlanta Braves who made intemperate remarks to *Sports Illustrated*, and urge he be thrown out of baseball. On the other hand, he has stood proudly next to Al Sharpton, a vicious race-baiter, whose words have not only offended many, but slandered and nearly destroyed four innocent people, and are widely believed to have incited riots that cost seven others their lives. Bradley's excuse is that Sharpton is a "civil rights leader," who must be permitted to "grow." (Into what?) The logic of this passes all understanding. But the lesson is also quite obvious: Bradley is tolerant of intolerance when it comes from the friends of his party.

McCain is not. He is the one who in late 1999 invited Pat Buchanan to exit the GOP. He was quick to butt heads with his own party's idols over issues of prejudice. Attacks from the far right actually helped him—before he took it too far. He can be accused of excess, but not hypocrisy. Advantage McCain.

Since the culture wars erupted in the late 1960s, each party has walked with its own shadow image, an exaggerated version of its worst proclivities that some suspect is the real thing. Republicans seem like the party that wants a 13-year-old girl who has been raped by her idiot uncle to continue a pregnancy. Democrats, on the other hand, seem like people willing to dismember what is in fact a live baby, to define the value of life in terms of its interest to others, and to reduce matters of life and death to the level of choosing a movie to go to. Republicans seem like people eager to hound gays, or even to see harm befall them. Democrats seem eager to excuse or promote dangerous, deviant conduct; and to subordinate issues of national defense policy to the preferences of gay and feminist lobbies.

Since the southern strategy was conceived by Richard Nixon in his first term in office, Republicans have been tainted by the secessionist past, the segregationist past, even by the anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic, and anti-Semitic themes of the Klan and of the Know-Nothing party. Democrats are open to charges of racism reversed, of being ready to excuse or condone hate speech when uttered by, violence when induced by, or crime when committed by non-whites and race hustlers. Some Republicans cannot believe that the Civil War ended; many Democrats think that the only reason people were disturbed by the odd furlough program Michael Dukakis defended was that Willie Horton was black.

Together, these aggregate themes make two poison packs that tend to make voters uneasy. They are a reason why voter turnout is falling; why many resist party alignment; why the Democrats have stopped being a majority party; and why the Republicans have not yet become one. They are the reason why the Confederate flag, Willie Horton, Bob Jones, and Al

Sharpton are such powerful symbols. In general elections, candidates succeed to the extent they can soften the shadow behind them, and blacken the one behind their opponent. Bill Clinton did this in the 1992 election, with his Sister Souljah moment, his support for the death penalty, and his insistence—later belied by his actions—that abortion should be "safe, legal, and *rare*" (italics mine). John McCain was able to step out of his shadow and attract a broad range of backers. Bradley embraced his, and failed.

In recent weeks, some members of the conservative establishment accused McCain of caving to liberals, of changing his views to court their approval. This is inaccurate: On balance, he is no more to the left than George W. Bush, and most of his backers were fully aware of his more conservative attitudes. But what he did do was something less obvious: He created an atmosphere in which some of his backers could differ with him and still not feel threatened; a different, and more subtle, thing. He made himself accessible to a wide range of voters, who were then willing to subsume their differences to pursue common objectives.

On the other hand, Bradley's views were so extreme and so rigid that they served as a roadblock of daunting dimensions to anyone who did not exactly share his point of view. Anyone to the right of the far-left-of-center would have been distinctly uncomfortable voting for Bradley. Centrists would find him extreme and unbending. Reagan Democrats would never have backed him—he is why they left home in the first place. His adherence to his party's strict dogma also impeded his claims to be independent and "different." How much of a reformer can you really be when you grovel so shamelessly to every interest group in your party? And how can you hope to move beyond your own base?

A candidate cannot diss his own base—as McCain did—and be viable, but he would be wise to acknowledge the baggage his party bears and quietly work to neutralize its more negative aspects. How do you become a majority party? The shadow knows. ♦

Oregon Historical Society (58662)

Rock of Ages

Curators and Indians fight over a meteorite at the Museum of Natural History. BY NAOMI SCHAEFER

New York

ABOUT 18,000 VISITORS filed through the American Museum of Natural History on the Upper West Side a couple of weeks ago. They came to marvel at the museum's new $210 million Rose Center for Earth and Space, and also to get a peek at something very old—a piece of metal and rock about the size of a small car that fell to earth in the Pacific Northwest some 10,000 years ago. The Willamette Meteorite, the largest ever found in the United States, is the centerpiece of the museum's new wing, as it was for decades of the Hayden Planetarium. But the giant rock may not be there much longer.

Under a far-reaching 1990 federal law known as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde have claimed the meteorite was sacred to their ancestors and should be returned to Oregon. A few days after the February 19 opening, the museum went to a federal judge in Manhattan to ask that the claim be denied. The museum's counterclaim is straightforward: It owns the rock fair and square, and the meteorite's significance to the museum is hard to overestimate.

Neil deGrasse Tyson, an astrophysicist and director of the Hayden Planetarium, estimates that 50 million people have seen the Willamette meteorite at the museum since it went on display in 1935, among them the late celebrity scientist Carl Sagan who later wrote about how moved he was seeing it as a kid. "It was part of the core of a shattered planet that once orbited the sun" billions of years ago, says Tyson. "It is two things: a record of the early solar system and a record of things that have happened from the time it became a shattered world until the time it landed on earth. . . . If it were not [at the planetarium] there would be a gaping hole in the message we are trying to share with visitors." There would also be a gaping hole in the museum, since the meteorite is too big to move without tearing down walls. But such arguments will not necessarily trump the tribes' claim under NAGPRA.

Representatives from the Grand Ronde tribes visited the museum last September, looking for objects of reli-

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gious and cultural significance to reclaim. According to Ryan Heavy Head, cultural consultant for the tribes, "the meteorite is very significant to their religion." He explains: "Every time a new crop was to be brought in, whether it be salmon or acorns, the participants would have to bathe in the waters [which had collected in the crevices] of the meteorite."

The meteorite is only one of many objects that the Grand Ronde tribes are trying to reclaim this year. The delegation has also visited the Peabody Museum at Harvard, the Field Museum in Chicago, and the Phoebe Hearst Museum in Berkeley on its "documentation" tour, with each yielding a number of objects. Indeed, Heavy Head says that with the exception of the Museum of Natural History, he found all of the institutions "very cooperative." And he has a basis for comparison: He has been a full-time repatriation consultant since 1995.

Impoverished tribes needn't sacrifice to retain Heavy Head's services. He and the other repatriation consultants work under grants from the National Park Service. Rich artifact-fanciers once underwrote expeditions to stock their collections and museums; today, the federal government underwrites expeditions by Native American consultants to remove items from museums. Every year the federal government gives out almost $2.5 million to representatives of Native American tribes as well as to museum officials to identify items that should be removed from museums and returned to the tribes.

Authorized by Congress when it passed the law in 1990, the grants till now have mainly been used to reclaim man-made relics, like arrowheads and pots, as well as human remains (accusations of grave robbery were central to the debate that led to the legislation in the first place). Laura Mahoney, a grants management specialist at the National Park Service, confirms that "nothing like the meteorite has been reclaimed before." The law nonetheless does not specify that the objects repatriated must be crafted by Native Americans. Heavy Head notes that other natural objects are being investigated for possible repatriation—a copper boulder from Colorado currently housed at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., may soon be involved in a similar dispute. Under NAGPRA guidelines, a lot will turn on whether objects are or are not sacred. Judges could have their hands full.

How did Native Americans of thousands of years ago know that the meteorite came from space? Especially after it was moved by a glacier.

As important as the Willamette meteorite is for the museum, which constructed an entire wing around it, Heavy Head claims it is even more vital to Grand Ronde Native American culture: "The meteorite was from space. It was considered such a holy place because it embodied all three realms of creation: earth, water, and sky." But how, one may wonder, did Native Americans of thousands of years ago know that the meteorite came from space? In fact, though it did originally fall from space, it actually came to Oregon from Canada, moved by a glacier about 10,000 years ago. Thus, there wouldn't even have been a crater to tip anyone off to the rock's origins. It seems more likely that Heavy Head and his colleagues are drawing on the findings of modern science to retroactively attach cosmic significance to the Willamette meteorite.

It wouldn't be the first time that representatives of Native American tribes have relied on the findings of modern scientists to attribute cultural significance to an object to which they then laid claim. A similar conflict has arisen between tribes and scientists over the remains of "Kennewick Man," a prehistoric skeleton found in a riverbed in Washington state. Because of the skeleton's caucasoid features, the local coroner initially assumed it must have belonged to a colonial settler. But carbon dating showed that the skeleton was actually 10,000 years old. As soon as this was revealed, the skeleton was assumed to be Native American and the government confiscated it from the scientists.

AP/Wide World Photos

The Willamette Meteorite at the turn of the century (opposite) and today

For the last couple of years the area's Native American tribes have waged a legal battle over the ownership of the almost perfectly preserved specimen.

Ironically, Kennewick Man is of particular interest to archaeologists because its caucasoid features make it unlikely the skeleton belonged to an ancestor of the tribes who now claim it. When confronted with this scientific evidence, however, Suzan Harjo, president of the Morning Star Institute, told a reporter, "What the archaeologists call evidence is usually based on what one person thinks might have happened. It's such a Eurocentric point of view."

One editorialist in the Pacific Northwest, no doubt from a Eurocentric point of view, has speculated that the Willamette meteorite, if repatriated, might become the centerpiece of the Grand Ronde's Spirit Mountain casino. That, too, would be in keeping with its long, strange trajectory, since before a museum benefactor bought it from the Oregon Iron and Steel Company in 1906, it was displayed by a local farmer who charged tourists a quarter to view it. (The farmer lost it to the steel company, from whose property he had dragged it, in a lawsuit that went all the way to the Supreme Court in 1905.)

But Heavy Head denies the casino insinuation. "There hasn't been any talk of that at all," he says. "Grand Ronde does have a casino, and they do make a lot of money, . . . but this is a religious claim. And it's not going anywhere near a casino. It will be put in a place that is fairly isolated and will be used by religious people."

In any event, the museum directors are likely to have a long battle ahead of them. Heavy Head says that the tribes won't be satisfied with a merely monetary settlement if they win. And he promises a civil suit if the museum prevails, adding, "I have been 100 percent successful in all my repatriation efforts." Having a federal law on your side does lead to those kinds of percentages and may, unless the courts step in, prove able to effect the transfer of what New Yorkers had assumed to be an immovable object. ♦

Let's Rate Their Economic Skill

Here's a crucial factor the historians always leave out of the presidential rankings. BY RICHARD W. RAHN

C-SPAN HAS JUST RELEASED its rankings of American presidents. Several dozen notable historians and professional observers of the presidency were surveyed and asked to rank the presidents in 10 different categories. Most of the categories are somewhat subjective, such as "moral authority" and "pursued equal justice for all." One category, however, "economic management," can be analyzed empirically. Numbers are available—and the numbers reveal that the historians were sometimes dead wrong, leaving the rest of us to wonder whether their errors were the result of economic ignorance or political bias.

Good national economic management is generally thought of as reflected in low inflation, declining unemployment, and a growing economy. To test the opinions of the historians, I created a formula for scoring the presidents' economic management. My formula draws on both a "misery index"—the rate of inflation plus the rate of unemployment—beloved of political liberals, and indices of economic growth, preferred by conservatives. The proper relative weight to be assigned to each of these measures is somewhat subjective, but reasonable adjustments to my formula would have little effect on the rankings.

For each president, I added the change in a simple misery index (consumer price index plus unemployment) to the change in the average annual rate of growth of the economy during the president's years in office. Since relatively reliable data on unemployment and economic growth go back less than a century, to the passage of the Federal Reserve Act in 1913, I ranked only the last 15 presidents, beginning with Wilson in 1913.

Until early in this century (except during the period of the Civil War), the federal government accounted for such a small portion of the economy that presidential actions had little to do with the progress of the economy. Just one major decision affecting the economy—whether or not to be on the gold standard—was up to the president and Congress. Even today, we tend to overemphasize the impact of the president on the economy. The actions of the Federal Reserve have done far more to cause recessions and recoveries than the actions of any president. On the other hand, if a president begins a fundamentally new policy, as Reagan did, the economic outcome may be greatly affected.

In evaluating a president's economic management, the operative question is: Were most Americans better off at the end of his term than at the beginning, and by how much? For presidents Roosevelt, Reagan, and Coolidge, the answer was clearly yes. For presidents Wilson and Hoover, the answer was a clear no.

Every president starts with the legacy of his predecessor. Roosevelt and Reagan deserve more credit than Johnson and Clinton, since each inherited an economic mess when he came into office and had to make critical changes to improve the situation. Johnson and Clinton, by contrast, each inherited a growing economy

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and therefore needed mainly to avoid making major mistakes. All four of these presidents succeeded. Truman's performance is perhaps the most debatable. He was saddled with the wind-down from World War II, for which there was no precedent, then the buildup for the Korean War. The economy performed in a highly erratic way during his tenure, beginning weak but, after a very difficult time, managing to end on a high note.

The C-SPAN historians greatly underrated Reagan, Harding, Ford, and Coolidge. They greatly overrated Wilson, Nixon, and Eisenhower. The two biggest surprises in the historians' ratings were Harding and Wilson. The economy was in shambles under Wilson, with no growth and a huge rise in unemployment. He had the severe disadvantage of the First World War, but the results of his economic stewardship, both before and after the war, were terrible. Harding served for only two years before he died, and is generally considered a very poor president. He may have been a lousy president on most counts, but the economy performed very well both during his term—with double-digit growth, negligible inflation, and a steep drop in unemployment—and after it.

Given that the four most underrated presidents were all Republicans and the most overrated was a Democrat, Wilson, it would appear that the historians' rankings are affected by political bias. But this does not explain why both Nixon and Eisenhower were overrated. One possible explanation for the underrating of Reagan might be the rise in the deficit during his term. However, by far the biggest relative rise in the deficit occurred under Roosevelt, without diminishing the historians' rating of him. Roosevelt increased the deficit to win World War II, and Reagan increased the deficit to win the Cold War. Clearly, in retrospect, these were wise economic decisions, and the prosperity we now enjoy would not be occurring without them.

In addition to the notable historians, C-SPAN asked its viewers to rank the presidents. What is striking is that, in general, the viewers were less wrong than the experts. Since the historians are well-educated people, the most reasonable conclusion is that their errors were those not of economic ignorance but of political bias.

C-SPAN is the least biased of all our television and radio sources. It strives to educate its viewers about the nature and operation of our political system in a balanced and objective way. Unfortunately, what its Survey of Presidential Leadership reveals is that even C-SPAN has a difficult time finding well-known, knowledgeable, and unbiased experts to present opinions and information to the public. ♦

Who Were Our Greatest Leaders?

The 15 most recent presidents, ranked for their success at "economic management"

	The Numbers	C-SPAN Historians	C-SPAN Viewers
Franklin D. Roosevelt	1	1	1
Ronald Reagan	2	9	3
Warren G. Harding	3	14	13
Harry S. Truman	4	4	2
William Jefferson Clinton	5	2	8
Gerald R. Ford	6	11	12
Calvin Coolidge	7	12	9
John F. Kennedy	8	6	6
Lyndon Baines Johnson	9	7	11
George Bush	10	10	10
Dwight D. Eisenhower	11	5	4
James Earl Carter	12	13	15
Richard M. Nixon	13	8	7
Woodrow Wilson	14	3	5
Herbert Hoover	15	15	14

OPEC Rides Again

High oil prices may not doom the thriving U.S. economy, but they are about to become a serious political problem.

By Irwin M. Stelzer

With the price of gasoline in some parts of the country headed towards $2 a gallon this summer, the hotel industry worried that such prices will deter Americans from piling into their SUVs for a family vacation, the airline industry hiking fares to cover the rising cost of jet fuel, and truckers parading their 18-wheelers through Washington in protest, oil prices are back atop the political agenda.

It is not only the current run-up in prices, however, that accounts for this interest. There is something about the oil industry that has always attracted the attention of policymakers, both in consuming and in producing nations. On the consumer side of the pump, there is concern with security of supply and price spikes; on the producing side, oil is often the principal source of a nation's revenues and assumes mystical significance. In Arab countries, oil is "the blood of the earth"; in Mexico, it is seen as part of a nation's *patrimonio*, to be treated differently from other goods offered on world markets, and deserving of special consideration when public policy is made. Which is why the worldwide trend toward privatization of state-owned industries has more or less bypassed the oil producing countries.

These countries have lately gotten their act together. OPEC, the cartel formed by most of the oil exporting countries, is once again seen to be in control of world oil prices, its musings about production levels the stuff of headlines and of memoranda at the Fed. For two reasons.

First, the trebling of oil prices that has been engineered by OPEC comes at a time when the Fed is nervous about inflationary pressures from other sources. The labor market, a Greenspan-watched sector of the economy, is tight. Just about everyone who wants to work has work, and the pool of couch potatoes who might be lured into the labor market has been drained. Were it not for immigrants, many of them illegals—Mexico being more willing to ship labor to us than it is to ship oil—wage pressures would undoubtedly already have surfaced.

In this economic context, high oil prices become more of a threat than they would be were the economy growing more slowly and the labor supply more ample. It is certainly true that we are less dependent than ever on oil to keep our economy growing: The energy that drives the American economy is now more IQ and entrepreneurship than fossil fuels. But soaring oil prices nevertheless are unwelcome, especially to politicians in an election year. Voters will become increasingly unhappy as they realize that their troubles have been created by two countries that depend on America for their survival, and a third that depends on us for its economic viability.

As recently as late 1998, crude oil was selling for about $10 per barrel, one-third of its current level. Even that price was sustained by monopoly elements: Knowledgeable insiders tell me that in the Middle East new oil can be discovered, produced, and sold profitably at under $5 per barrel. No matter: The oil producers, desperate for revenues to support the lifestyles of their royal families and the welfare states that keep their masses from mutiny, want more.

Their problem was the classic cartel weakness that economics textbooks teach us: An agreement to curtail production so as to drive up prices might prove ineffective, as non-members of the cartel fill any supply gap. Most notable was the American market, easily accessible to non-member Mexico, which might try to increase its market share if the Venezuelans, Saudis, and Kuwaitis

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held back production. Enter Luis Tellez, the M.I.T.-trained economist who serves as secretary of energy in Mexico's government, and who specializes in delivering moving speeches about the virtues of free markets.

By promising to go along with any output cuts that OPEC might agree upon, Tellez emboldened Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait to initiate sharp cutbacks in production—sharp enough to draw the world's inventories of oil down to record low levels, to triple the price of crude oil, and to send our secretary of energy, Bill Richardson, scurrying to the Middle East to beg for mercy.

The indignity should be obvious. Were it not for American military might, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait would both now be southern provinces of Saddam Hussein's Iraq, with the lucky members of the royal families in exile, and the unlucky ones dangling from some gallows in Baghdad. And were it not for America's willingness to give Mexico free access to our markets pursuant to NAFTA, and to allow a virtually unimpeded flow of immigrants from Mexico to find work here and send remittances home, the Mexican economy would be a shambles.

But gratitude in these matters is in as short supply as oil. So Richardson, who sees his chances for a vice-presidential selection by his buddy Al Gore sinking as the price of gasoline rises, has been reduced to trying to persuade the producing countries that if they continue on their present course our economy might lapse into recession, threatening the value of their massive investments here. That argument is not very persuasive. Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, Saudi Arabia's former oil minister and now chairman of the Center for Global Energy Studies, estimates that $30 a barrel cuts the U.S. growth rate by 0.8 percent, hardly a disaster for our fast-growing economy.

The OPEC countries meet later this month, and as best one can tell from the rumor mill, the Saudis will argue for a slight increase in production, with the Libyans, Iranians, and Algerians fighting to keep output at its current restricted level. Iran's oil minister, Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, has told the press that "market fundamentals and reality do not point to supply shortages; . . . there is no crude shortfall." No matter. Even if the Saudis prevail, the contemplated boost in production will not be sufficient to bring prices down, and may not even prevent further price increases. The Saudis are likely to propose a 1.2 million barrel per day increase in the cartel's output, far short of the 2 million barrels that traders say would be necessary to make a dent in current prices.

So what is America to do? In the short run we could make it clear to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait that the American umbrella might be furled if they continue to restrict output. It is true, of course, that were either of those countries to fall under the direct or indirect control of Saddam, we would have a problem. But nothing like the problem that the Saudi and Kuwaiti royal families would have. We would have to pay more for oil; they would be out of power or dead.

We could also explain to Mexico that our continued willingness to keep our borders open to their goods and their unemployed is contingent on their willingness to ship oil to us in sufficient amounts to bring oil prices down. No oil, no Mexican-assembled cars or T-shirts. Sure, we would be giving up the benefits of cheap imports and an important source of labor. But again, our great big prosperous economy can afford that hit more than Mexico can afford to get along without our markets.

In the longer term, we have to reduce our vulnerability to extortion. Which brings us to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Jim Schlesinger, at various times secretary of energy and secretary of defense, recently pointed out in the *Washington Post* that because we now import much more oil than we did 15 years ago, the oil in the reserve has dropped from the equivalent of 100 days supply to only 55 days, not enough in his view to shave much off current prices, were it sold. Besides, we are unable to come up with a coherent policy for the use of the reserve. Schlesinger argues that it is there to cope with "a supply cutoff," not price swings. And Bill Richardson, in a display of economic illiteracy astonishing even for an energy policymaker, says, "We are not going to use it. We can only release from the SPR when there are real supply emergencies. This is a price problem." The notion that the supply of a good is a separate issue from its price will be news to writers of elementary economics texts.

So much for the strategic reserve. We have assured the OPEC cartel that we will not use it to dampen price spikes; indeed, we will not use it until all of our oil supplies are exhausted—which means we will never use it. Which leaves us with two alternatives.

We could use our vulnerability to price extortion as an excuse to adopt the uneconomic conservation and fuel-subsidy programs advocated by various environmental and special interest groups. With Al Gore in the White House, pondering how to eliminate the internal combustion engine and to cool the globe, such schemes will have a receptive audience.

So our first chore will be to separate the wheat from the chaff, or the sensible plans from the ethanol. Our sec-

ond chore will be to reexamine the case for a tariff on oil imports. Not a protective tariff in the ordinary sense of that term, but an economic tariff that is designed to make certain that the price paid by consumers of oil products includes all of the external costs associated with the use of imported oil. Most notable among those external costs are the risks associated with relying on imports from countries that vary between the unstable and the overtly hostile.

Some of those risks are known to individual consumers when, for example, they install oil heating, and should be borne by them. But there are other costs that may not be fully reflected in the price paid for oil by consumers, most notably the macroeconomic risks necessarily associated with price spikes and supply cut-offs that seem to accompany reliance on imported oil. If users of oil are subjecting the American economy to periodic bouts of inflation and recession, they should bear the cost of those fluctuations. An oil tariff would force them to do so.

It would also have two salutary effects. By raising the cost and price of imports, it would reduce the use of imported oil, with no negative effect on economic growth if the proceeds are recycled to taxpayers through parallel reductions in other taxes. And a tariff would provide funds to allow us to diversify our sources of supply by drawing on oil from countries that eschew OPEC discipline, and would for that reason be exempt from the tariff.

Is this a perfect solution? No. But it is the best that comes to mind. Our strategic petroleum reserve is too small and the policy for its use too incoherent for it to be of much use. Begging producers for mercy is useless and demeaning. Adopting the more crackpot schemes beloved by Al Gore would be phenomenally expensive. So reducing our vulnerability to OPEC rapacity by asking consumers to bear all of the costs they impose on society by using imported oil seems the best available alternative. ♦

The Principle Problem

Stanley Fish Rises to Debate

By Peter Berkowitz

Eugenio Lucas y Padilla (1824-1870), *Whimsical Allegory*. UPI/Corbis-Bettmann.

Why does the front cover of Stanley Fish's latest book feature a big photograph of Stanley Fish? After all, the man is not a movie star or a politician. He is a leading literary critic and legal theorist, and *The Trouble with Principle*—his new collection of essays, many previously published in academic journals—is addressed in large measure to professors and students.

But if you think that evidence, arguments, and ideas are therefore what matter in a scholarly book, think again, for we live in the age of the celebrity scholar. Look at recent books by University of Michigan legal theorist Catherine MacKinnon, Stanford philosopher Richard Rorty, Princeton ethicist Peter Singer, and Harvard social critic Cornel West. There, on the front covers, they pose in carefully arranged casualness, staring out with Mona Lisa smiles.

Fish's insouciant response to how scholars pursue celebrity—and why they are right to—would come as no surprise to those who have followed his sardonic assaults on his profession in his 1989 *Doing What Comes Naturally*, 1994 *There's No Such Thing as Free Speech. . . and It's a Good Thing Too*, and 1995 *Professional Correctness*, or who have chuckled at Professor Morris Zapp (a cheerfully self-aggrandizing character, widely supposed to have been inspired by Fish, in David Lodge's comic novels about academic life). Of course academics desire fame and glamour and wealth and power, Fish would say. One would have to be a fool to fail to take advantage of the increase in media access for professors, the tremendous growth of the conference circuit, and the big fees universities are prepared to offer for a public lecture and a private dinner.

The Trouble with Principle
by Stanley Fish
Harvard University Press, 288 pp., $24.95

A gifted scholar who relishes his celebrity and has employed his considerable powers of salesmanship and showmanship to promote it, Stanley Fish established his academic credentials in 1967 with his first book, a reading of Milton called *Surprised by Sin*. In it, he sought an interpretation of *Paradise Lost* that would combine the insights of those who saw the poem as a vindication of God's glory with the insights of those who imagined the poem derived from the "Devil's party" (as William Blake put it). With ingenuity and flair, Fish argued that Milton's intention is to arouse in readers the very experience of falling from innocence into sin that the poem chronicles. Reissued in 1998 with a new preface, *Surprised by Sin* remains must reading for serious students of Milton.

A rising star in the 1970s, Fish helped attract to Johns Hopkins University the hottest scholars in the hip field of cultural studies. In the mid-1980s, even as he was pursuing a second career as a critic of moral and legal theory, Fish moved to Duke University to become chairman of the English department. There, generously bank-

Peter Berkowitz, author of Virtue and the Making of Modern Liberalism, *teaches at George Mason University Law School.*

rolled by the university—which also appointed him to the law school faculty and made him executive director of the school's press—he made several high-profile appointments, transforming the English department into the home of cutting-edge literary theory.

Many at Duke regarded Fish as a benevolent despot. Others (particularly members of the National Association of Scholars, with whom he had a nasty fight) saw only the despotism. Stepping down as chairman in 1992, Fish stayed at Duke long enough to witness, amidst bickering and bruised egos, the well-publicized unraveling of his expensive handiwork, before heading off in 1998 to the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he is now among the highest-paid deans in America.

In the latest of his cocky and clever books, Fish claims that contemporary intellectuals, particularly the academic liberals who are his favorite target, have made a hash of the issues they have devoted their lives to expounding. Concentrating on debates about multiculturalism, the First Amendment, and religion, Fish brilliantly exposes the self-serving and self-deluding games that professors often play to maintain the pretense that impartial reason requires the political outcomes they desire. Whether the players are partisans of "public reason," or "deliberative democracy," or "discourse ethics," Fish masterfully detects the rhetorical ruses by which they exclude opinions and close down debate in the name of diversity and dialogue.

Illumination intermingles promiscuously with obfuscation in Fish's writing. Indeed, *The Trouble with Principle* is a book in which dazzling criticism stands cheek by jowl with flagrant fallacies; a book that deftly vivisects other scholars' foolish arguments and false views, only to put in their place foolish arguments and false views of its own; a book in which a playful, urbane, and witty spirit more than once gives way to a glib, even vicious message.

Fish's declared purpose is to demolish the appeal to principle in morals and politics: "The trouble with principle is, first, that it does not exist, and, second, that nowadays many bad things are done in its name." Now, the second part of this is old, old news: The fact that the appeal to principle can serve corrupt purposes is a venerable truth—almost a principle, one might say. But as for the first part, how exactly does it follow from the games professors play that political and legal theory are merely games? For this would require a comprehensive account of the human condition that shows why the mind is unable to transcend the local, contingent, and historical—and it is part of Fish's intellectual gamesmanship to imply that such comprehensive accounts are impossible (while insinuating at the same time that he actually *knows* that beyond the conventional, there is no place for the mind to go).

Fish's scholarly attack on principle provides a case study in the consequences of the abandonment of scholarly principle.

So, for example, in the course of explaining why there is no common ground on which Christians can meet secular liberals, Fish casually delivers himself of the remarkable statement that "Adhering to the convention that two plus two equals four is like adhering to the convention that we drive on the right side of the road." At the deepest philosophical level, the question of whether mathematics is a human artifact is worth asking. But so tightly is he caught in the grip of a theory of the radical contingency of knowledge that Fish—the master exposer of the theory-induced blindness of others—does not see how his comparison betrays his own claim. The fact that we can visit a country where people drive on the left but not where two plus two equals anything other than four: Doesn't that suggest something like an objective order to human knowledge, something beyond convention?

Fish's own examples and arguments suggest, contrary to his official position, that principle often does exist and that it is important. But this is not the only surprising form of instruction his book yields. Notwithstanding the numerous laughs he wins at the expense of academic liberals, Fish's book itself provides a case study in the consequences of the abandonment of principle for scholarly inquiry.

At the beginning of *The Trouble with Principle*, Fish claims that a scene from Sam Peckinpah's 1969 film *The Wild Bunch* captures the heart of his argument:

> The wild bunch is an outlaw gang led by two grizzled veterans played to a career-performance turn by William Holden and Ernest Borgnine. One evening the two are sitting around discussing an old comrade who has gone over to the other side and now rides at the head of the band of railroad detectives pursuing them. The Borgnine character [Dutch] is incensed and can't understand why their old friend doesn't abandon the pursuit and come home to where he really belongs. You have to remember, the Holden character [Pike] says, he gave his word to the railroad. So what? is the response; it's not giving your word that's important, it's who you give your word to. . . .
>
> On the one side is the man of principle for whom a formal contract must be kept irrespective of the moral status of the other party; when you give your word, you give your word, and that's it. On the other side is the man who varies his obligations according to the moral worth of the persons he encounters; some people have a call on your integrity, others don't, and the important thing is to determine at every moment which is which.

Fish is quick to proclaim his preference for the moral vision of Borgnine's Dutch. Too quick. Holden's Pike does not reject practical judgment; the "man of principle" must discern which promises are valid, in accord with proper forms and based on reliable assessments of character. In fact, Pike

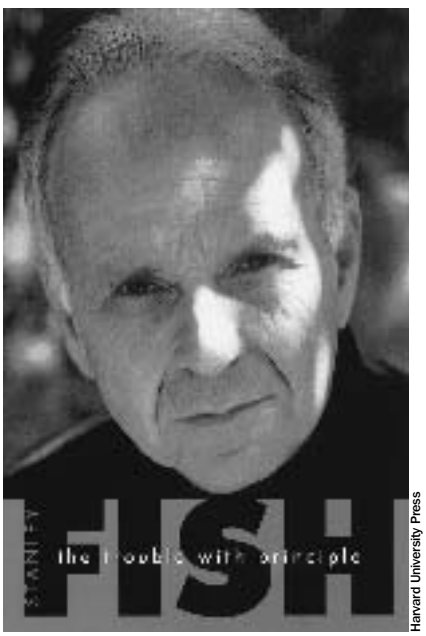
is the opposite of a man indifferent to "the moral status of the other party," for he thinks that moral status derives from being a man, and he judges that Thornton, their pursuing friend, will be a keeper of his word to the railroad precisely because Thornton is a man of moral character.

Similarly, Dutch does not repudiate principle in favor of practical judgment; rather he uses a different principle. Fish's "man who varies his obligations according to the moral worth of persons he encounters" must use principle both to direct his judgment and to realize it in action. For one thing, "moral worth" is often defined in terms of principle: Is the person whose worth is in question one of the gang? An old friend? A creature endowed with certain natural and inalienable rights? Indeed, the morality Fish attributes to Dutch presupposes an abstract principle: Aid the person—a young gang member, say, who has run afoul of corrupt business associates—you deem morally worthy, whether it is in your immediate self-interest to do so or not.

By presenting the clash of principles in *The Wild Bunch*—and, by analogy, in the world of legal, moral, and political theory—as though it were a contest between principle and freedom from principle, Fish makes two errors: He equates principle with a neutral and abstract algorithm for resolving conflicts, and he supposes that if practical judgment is involved, then principle cannot really be present.

The version of principle that Fish attacks is neither the only one nor the best one, and, ironically, by insisting that the essence of principle is to be purely neutral, abstract, and transparently applicable, he embraces the dubious definition of principle held by the professors whose procedural liberalism he fancies himself to be overcoming. Generally speaking, principles—do unto others as you would have others do unto you, all human beings are by nature free and equal, the unexamined life is not worth living—do not entail an exhaustive body of rules and regulations. Nevertheless they set a tone, they draw some considerations into the foreground and push others into the background, they function as landmarks and signposts, not as fixed itineraries and packaged tours.

But that does not mean that principles do not exist or that we would be better off without them. The golden rule does not yield the precise sum you ought to donate to charity, but it requires you to imagine the condition of others. The principle that all human beings are by nature free and equal does not decide whether you ought to support affirmative action, but it will



Harvard University Press

compel you to consider the issue in terms of common humanity. The principle that the unexamined life is not worth living cannot tell you to study literature, but it demands you seek opportunities to hone your mind.

Fish might have used his enviable rhetorical skills to defend principle against its clumsy handling by his academic colleagues. Instead, he exploits their clumsiness to discredit the idea of principle. So he flamboyantly argues that multiculturalism is trivial or incoherent: Either you are a "boutique multiculturalist" who is only prepared to tolerate superficial forms of diversity and whose real loyalty is to universal principles of freedom and equality, or you are a "strong multiculturalist" who fervently embraces other cultures—including their monoculturalism and repudiation of universal principles. Free speech, he claims, does not exist because it inevitably requires the suppression of those opinions that undermine its preconditions. And liberalism is impossible, since while it claims to be neutral toward all perspectives, it is of necessity biased, not only against Nazis and white supremacists but, notwithstanding the free-exercise clause of the First Amendment, also against religious persons and communities.

Fish has a point—the reach of principle is limited and the weight of hard cases may cause principles to bend and buckle—but his incendiary formulations distort the issues. In fact, the game that Fish plays is easily recognizable and intellectually disreputable. It consists in finding the extreme case and then treating it as the representative case—as though an airplane that can't reach altitudes of fifty-thousand feet is therefore unable to fly.

As it happens, Fish identifies a test case for his own claim that principled liberalism is both undesirable and impossible. According to Fish, at the heart of debates about multiculturalism, First Amendment doctrine, and religion is the liberal understanding of the relation between church and state. But "the discussion of this vexed issue," Fish proclaims, "has not advanced one millimeter beyond the terms established by John Locke in his *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689)." Needless to say, Fish's purpose is not to vindicate Locke's wisdom, but to show that today's liberals are not original, informed, or terribly clever. And if Fish is wrong about Locke—which he is—then not withstanding his criticisms of contemporary liberals, he will have failed to demonstrate the failure of a principled liberalism.

Fish asserts that Locke's argument for toleration is riven by a fatal contradiction. On the one hand, Locke argues that "every Church is orthodox to itself," which Fish takes to mean that all moral and political opinions are relative. On the other hand, Locke holds that "the judgment of all

mankind" is properly in agreement that some moral and political ideas are universally binding. But the simple-minded blunder that Fish exposes with such glee—the assertion that morals are simultaneously relative and absolute—is not in Locke. By the proposition that "every Church is orthodox to itself," Locke did not declare the incommensurability of moral and political opinions; he much more narrowly maintained that opinions about salvation differ from church to church, and reason is not capable of settling which is true. But that doesn't make reason impotent. Indeed, by the phrase "the judgment of all mankind," Locke indicates not that all humanity has actually reached agreement but that the reason shared by all humanity is capable of grasping basic principles of morals and politics.

The difficulties created by *A Letter Concerning Toleration* are serious: Does Locke presuppose a Protestant understanding of salvation? Are his arguments for believing that reason can identify natural rights and public morality persuasive? Does he correctly infer from his principles the necessity to deny toleration to Catholics and atheists? But none of these questions subverts the idea of principled toleration. There are no fatal contradictions in holding that human reason can establish basic principles of moral and political life but cannot demonstrate the truth about salvation. Or in maintaining that in such circumstances respect for the individual requires toleration of a wide but not infinite range of opinions. Indeed, these simple ideas, compatible with many Christian and Jewish self-understandings, constitute pillars of classical liberalism.

To press his case, Fish argues that religion ought to be as intolerant of liberalism as he tries to persuade his reader liberalism in practice is of religion. "The religious person," Fish counsels (as if he were speaking from *the* religious point of view), "should not seek an accommodation with liberalism; he should seek to rout it from the field." Appealing almost exclusively to fragments from Milton's writings and the case of Vicki Frost (a plaintiff in 1988's *Mozert* v. *Hawkins*, who sought to have her child exempted from studying evolution in public school), Fish contends that a true believer must seek to realize God's will on earth, in its entirety and without qualification, and this means replacing the secular political authority with a religious politics.

Can Fish be serious? Even if it did not occur to him as a theoretical possibility that God might command the faithful not to coerce those who do not recognize Him, what excuses the failure of a professor writing on religion to observe that a belief in tolerance, which derives much support from Scripture and the work of seminal theologians of many faiths, informs the religious understanding of large numbers of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews?

Isn't there a connection between Fish's repudiation of principle and the casual contradictions woven into his book?

The crude practical message of Fish's book is that liberalism should overthrow religion and that religion should stamp out liberalism. Somehow, what began as an effort to show that "principle does not exist" ends in the admonition to secular liberals and religious believers to grasp the unambiguous practical implications of their true principles. One does not know whether to be more amazed by the massive contradiction in which Fish's book culminates, or the vulgarization of liberalism and the brazen abuse of religion on which it is based.

It can be fun to watch Stanley Fish run argumentative rings around academic liberalism, even if it is a wicked exaggeration for him to declare that the doctrine of neutral principles always in the end "turns out to be a device for elevating the decorum of academic dinner parties to the status of discourse universals while consigning alternate decorums to the dustbin of the hopelessly vulgar."

But the pleasure, it must be conceded, is suspect, and the illumination shed by the exaggeration may not compensate for the wickedness. For in the end Fish's arguments are not to be trusted. He tells you so himself. In an interview several years ago, to illustrate what he meant by saying that "there is no such thing as literal meaning," Fish related an amusing family story:

> When my daughter was six years old, . . . [she] was doing something with the dachshunds under the table, and it was experienced at least by me as disruptive. So I said to her, "Susan, stop playing with the dachshunds." She held up her hands in a kind of "Look, Dad, no hands" gesture and said, "I'm not playing with the dachshunds." So I said, "Susan, stop kicking the dachshunds." Pointing to the soft motions of her feet, she replied, "I'm not kicking the dachshunds." So I said, forgetting every lesson I had learned as a so-called philosopher of language, "Susan don't do anything with the dachshunds!" She replied, "You mean I don't have to feed them anymore?" At that moment I knew several things. First, I knew I was in a drama called "the philosopher and the dupe" and that she was the philosopher and I was the dupe. I also knew that this was a game that she could continue to play indefinitely because she could always recontextualize what she understood to be the context of my question in such a way as to destabilize the literalness on which I had been depending, which she too—within the situation of the dinner table, our relationship, our house—recognized in as literal a way as I did.

Of course, the instability in words that Fish's story highlights does not show that "there is no such thing as literal meaning." The story would not make sense unless Fish's daughter (and readers) understood her father's request with crystal clarity. In fact, the game that Fish's daughter plays so precociously is better called sophistry.

Which is also the name of the game that Fish plays in calling his daughter's game philosophy.

The sophist argues out of desire for wealth or reputation or victory. The philosopher inquires because of a love for wisdom. The difference is based on distinctions between persuasion and knowledge, and opinion and truth. These distinctions arise out of the world Fish and his daughter (and all of us) share, a world that constantly encourages us to distinguish between what was said and what was intended, what we saw and what was there, what we wish were so and what we have good reason to believe is actually so.

The daughter's clever warding off of her father's clear-cut order is cute, not threatening, in part because we know that she knows precisely what her father wants. But her father's casual insinuation that philosophy is nothing more than clever game-playing is far from cute. Fish has declared himself pleased to be thought a sophist. Fair enough. By using his enormous rhetorical powers to persuade others that sophistry is all there is, by seeking to convince his readers that sophistry provides the only genuine satisfactions available to the self-aware mind, in trying to make himself the measure of all things, he confirms Plato's suggestion that sophistry has a root in tyranny.

In response to rival academics, Fish delights in arguing that there is no connection between academic positions and moral and political life. No doubt many professors suffer a doomed ambition for political influence. Yet Fish himself provides evidence that the strict separation he asserts cannot be maintained. The sensibilities and ideas of celebrated scholars are taught across the country to undergraduates, graduate students, and law students, many of whom will go on to occupy positions of privilege and power. Fish himself attests to this influence by repeatedly pointing out in leading law journals and Supreme Court decisions the academic liberalism he aggressively criticizes.

But beyond that, does Fish seriously expect us to believe that there is no connection between his philosophical repudiation of principle and the easy-going misrepresentations and casual contradictions seamlessly woven into the fabric of his book? Does he really think that it is a matter of indifference whether university students are taught to practice reasoned argument or taught to mock it? Apparently, Stanley Fish counts on a good portion of his readers to endorse his whoppers, or, driven to distraction by his risqué declarations and choice provocations, to overlook them entirely, or, seduced by his wit and taste in targets, to condone them implicitly. And give credit where credit is due: Fish's success—his status, salary, and celebrity—suggest that his calculations have not been unreasonable. ♦

BCA

Decline and Fall

Chalmers Johnson resurrects an old theory of America's impending collapse. **BY MAX BOOT**

There are only two professions in which being disastrously wrong is no bar to advancement. Luckily for me, I'm in one of them: journalism. Luckily for Chalmers Johnson, he's in the other: academia.

In the 1980s, Johnson, a political science professor retired from the University of California, San Diego, established himself as one of America's most famous Japanologists. Along with James Fallows and Karel van Wolferen, he was a leader of the "revisionist" school, which argued that Japan had discovered a third way between capitalism and communism: state-directed growth, guided by the all-wise Ministry of International Trade and Industry. Unless we imitated Japan's industrial policy, Johnson counseled, America was doomed to become an economic serf to the Land of the Rising Sun.

In the 1990s, of course, the Japanese "miracle" turned to dust, while America, with no industrial policy to speak of, has racked up the longest expansion in its history. But Johnson appears completely unabashed by the body blows his worldview has taken. And he has now emerged with another book boldly championing another controversial theory. What cause has he chosen to embrace this time? Astrology? Alchemy? No, he has signed on to an even more discredited ideology: declinism.

Blowback
The Costs and Consequences of American Empire
by Chalmers Johnson
Metropolitan Books, 268 pp., $26

This is the theory, made famous by Paul Kennedy in his 1987 *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, that America is headed for a big fall. The years since have not been kind to the worrywarts, but Johnson struggles gamely to resurrect the declinist myth in *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*. "There are parallels between what happened in the former USSR after the end of the Cold War and the state of the American polity at the end of the century," he ventures hopefully. By this he apparently means that, like the Soviet Union, the United States today is burdened by excessive defense spending. Nowhere does the author acknowledge that since the end of the Cold War, U.S. defense spending has declined from 6 percent to 3 percent of GDP—hardly an unsustainable level for such a dynamic economy.

Perhaps realizing that forecasting decline at some unspecified point in the future is insufficiently scary, John-

Max Boot, the op-ed editor of the Wall Street Journal*, is writing a history of America's small wars.*

son tries to conjure up all sorts of problems the American "empire" has already caused. He calls this "blowback," borrowing a term beloved by spy novelists (who use it for the counterproductive consequences of covert actions). Among the examples of blowback he cites is "the epidemic of cocaine and heroin use that has afflicted American cities during the past two decades"—which "was probably fueled in part by Central and South American military officers or corrupt politicians whom the CIA or the Pentagon once trained or supported and then installed in key government positions." The hedging—"probably" and "in part"—serves to give the suggestion, without quite saying it outright, that the CIA has been doping America's youngsters. (The accusation, incidentally, Johnson credits to a series of stories in the *San Jose Mercury News* that were so thoroughly discredited that the newspaper itself repudiated them.)

Such rabid anti-Americanism pervades *Blowback*. Johnson's favorite word is "genocidal," which he constantly applies to the actions of American allies such as Guatemala and Turkey. No mention is made of the murderous tactics of the Marxist Kurdish and Guatemalan guerrillas trying to bring down their elected governments. Like many leftists, Johnson blames the CIA and the Pentagon for the human rights abuses of allied militaries—as if banana republic armies need American instruction in how to torture or kill. What foreign military officers learn from U.S. instructors are precisely those qualities—professionalism, civilian control, restraint—that are in short supply among the Third World's armed forces.

Johnson loves to blame America for propping up tyrants, but nearly all the examples he cites—Chiang Kai-shek, Ferdinand Marcos, Syngman Rhee, Augusto Pinochet—have since been replaced by liberal democracies. Can this be mere coincidence? Yet while giving the United States full blame for propping up these dictators, Johnson gives us no credit for nudging them (or their successors) out the door.

Johnson really pulls out all the stops by suggesting that the American "empire" is no better than the Soviet one: "There was, I believe, far more symmetry between the postwar policies of the Soviet Union and the United States than most Americans are willing to recognize." They used military force in Hungary and Czechoslovakia; we used it in Korea and Vietnam, where we "killed a great many more people in losing than the USSR did in its two successful interventions."

Johnson is seemingly oblivious to the documents coming out of East Bloc archives since the end of the Cold War, which have confirmed (as if it needed any confirming) that both the Vietnam and Korean wars were the result of deliberate Communist aggression.

Even on his own terms Johnson's argument is incoherent. He harshly criticizes the United States and the International Monetary Fund for trying to reform "Asian-style capitalism" and creating the Asian economic crisis of 1997. Yet just a few pages earlier, he bemoans the failure of the United States to do more to reform Japan's crony capitalism.

I suspect this confusion is due to Johnson's tendency—and he is hardly alone in this—to take a pacifist approach to defense policy and a militarist approach to trade. He wants to bring U.S. troops home because he thinks they cause resentment among our allies. But what our allies really resent is what Johnson advocates: Washington demanding that they import a fixed amount of U.S. goods, whether their consumers want them or not.

Bad as *Blowback* is, it does serve at least one purpose: It reminds us that isolationism and protectionism are hardly confined to the Buchananite right. Although a large portion of the Democratic party has reverted to Wilsonian internationalism, there is still a hardy band of zealots who cling to the old-time religion. If Dick Gephardt or David Bonior were to read *Blowback*, he would probably nod along in agreement. Their wing of the Democratic party has already slowed down Bill Clinton's efforts to expand free-trade treaties.

One suspects that if a Republican wins the White House, the isolationist, protectionist left will be in full cry once again. And they might be in control of the House of Representatives. Maybe Chalmers Johnson is onto something after all, in predicting the decline of America. ♦

Right on Green

Toward a conservative theory of environmentalism.

BY ROBERT ROYAL

Environmental questions are hard—but most environmentalists respond with an easy answer: Nature is sacred and, if the earth's needs conflict with human aims, so much the worse for us. The fact that nature has been evolving since the Big Bang does not give the typical ecologist much pause. Nor does the fact that nature and nature's God seem to have intended us to be here. With a self-righteousness that would make a televangelist blush, the majority of environmentalists claim not only unshakeable scientific certitude, but moral superiority as well.

Peter Huber is well situated to expose this sectarianism. A senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, he has

Robert Royal is author of The Virgin and the Dynamo: Use and Abuse of Religion in Environmental Debates *and president of the Faith & Reason Institute.*

studied science as well as law. In a better intellectual climate, Huber's approach in *Hard Green* might put to rest the claim that human development—through industrialization, markets, science, free political systems, and civilization in general—is simply a threat to nature. As he clearly demonstrates, development not only has made it possible for billions more people to live, and live better, but promises to make their impact on nature lighter. As things stand, however, Huber is a voice crying in the wilderness.

The patron saint of *Hard Green* was another wilderness voice. Theodore Roosevelt was the first to institute large-scale environmental programs, and he could wax lyrical about the outdoors: "There are no words that can tell the hidden spirit of the wilderness, that can reveal its mystery, its melancholy, and its charm." At the same time, he had no qualms about hunting big game. Huber sees in this robust enjoyment of nature the central principle for hard greens. The human race could probably survive, hunkered down in an artificial environment. But we won't make that choice: Part of what makes us human is a desire for a beautiful environment.

Roosevelt and his chief of the Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot, advocated "conservation" and "wise-use." This pitted them against John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club and precursor of today's soft greens, for whom pristine "preservation" took precedence. How human beings are to live if preservation becomes a universal rule, Muir's descendants are hard pressed to say. Many advocate returning to some earlier way of life—native American, sometimes even neolithic. But given current numbers, going back to the land would be the most disastrous, anti-green policy. Traditional agriculture places large stresses on the earth. New mechanization, plant strains, fertilizers, pesticides, and methods to lessen spoilage mean that farmers grow more food on far less land. An area the size of India could be allowed to return to its natural state if the best agricultural methods were adopted around the world.

Similarly, modern electricity generation spares land. Huber sets it down as a principle that hard greens like himself want to "dig deep and fly high" to minimize impact. Traditional sources of energy—burning wood and animal dung—not only pollute more but lead to the stripping of resources. Coal mines and oil wells may not be lovely, but in the larger environmental bookkeeping, they spare the part of nature we most value, the thin layer of life at the earth's surface.

Roosevelt and Muir

UPI / Corbis-Bettmann

Hard Green
Saving the Environment from the Environmentalists: A Conservative Manifesto
by Peter Huber
Basic Books, 288 pp., $25

Soft greens gasp at these claims. The only technology they seem to approve of are those computer models that say the only way to avoid catastrophe is by our adopting "small is beautiful" alternatives to industry. These alternatives may appeal to our sense of nature's passivity and current human power. But nature is not at all fragile in the aggregate, and Huber is right to point to its powers of recuperation. The area around Mount Saint Helens began to recover in a remarkably short time. And in cases like the Exxon *Valdez* spill, even *Scientific American* has admitted that it might have been better to let nature take care of the fine details once the rough cleanup was done. Overzealous efforts did more harm than good.

Prominent environmentalists such as Al Gore preach that "avalanches" of changes will result from our environmental sins. Gore would do well to look to his own metaphor: Avalanches already occur in nature without causing the end of the world. Gore is more schizophrenic than most environmentalists, putting a lot of faith in nature but purporting to be a technology junkie. But even he advocates less "brittle" technologies, smaller and simpler, to avoid the breakdown of complex systems. We do not, however, see breakdowns all around us. Airplanes are safer because of their increased sophistication, newer power plants pollute less. Huber argues that complexity—natural and man-made—is a response to nature's instability, not its cause.

If there is a weakness in Huber's analysis it is that his approach can be, at times, a touch too hard. Softs go too far in fretting over every minor human impact on nature. But Huber leans too hard on big, observable effects, downplaying subtler human influences on nature. This bumps up against his own claim that the more money you have, the less you care what environmental precautions cost. That is why environmentalism is usually an enthusiasm of the rich, not the poor—and those wealthy soft greens, however often mistaken, may occasionally turn up something that we may decide is worth paying for, even if it is only a small improvement. Huber admits as much, but it is not easy to see how this concession fits within *Hard Green*.

Huber does not have all the answers, but he has many of them. And he has the basic vision right: "To believe in Hard Green, we merely have to love the outdoors, the unspoiled wilderness, forest, river, and shore. . . . Life is a fascinatingly complex good that requires no further justification. We conserve because it is there and we find it magnificent—today." ♦

Look Homeward, Angel

Cheryl Mendelson brings Mrs. Beeton's Household Management up to date. **BY MELINDA LEDDEN SIDAK**

It is a paradox of our time that even as the average size of American houses has risen, our ability to care for our homes has declined. Housekeeping is a forgotten craft, its secrets lost and its routines denounced as drudgery. What, then, explains the popularity of Cheryl Mendelson's *Home Comforts: The Art & Science of Keeping House*? How does a nearly nine hundred-page guide to everything you could want to know about maintaining a home—from the type of fabric best for dish cloths to the chemistry of cleaning solutions—wind up on the bestseller list?

Home Comforts
The Art & Science of Keeping House
by Cheryl Mendelson
Scribner, 884 pp., $35

Cheryl Mendelson is a prototypical high-achieving baby boomer, with a doctorate in philosophy and a Harvard law degree. Having worked for prestigious New York law firms and taught philosophy at distinguished universities, she in every external aspect embodied the feminist dream of intellectual and professional success. No one observing her from the outside ever could have guessed the shocking truth. For all along, it seems, Cheryl Mendelson had a shameful secret: She enjoyed housework. As she explains,

> I belong to the first generation of women who worked more than they stayed home. We knew that no judge would credit the legal briefs of a housewife, no university would give tenure to one, no corporation would promote one, and no one who mattered would talk to one at a party. Being perceived as excessively domestic can get you socially ostracized.

Focusing on her education and career, Mendelson for many years suppressed her true nature. When she decided she no longer wanted to live in an untidy home that felt like a hotel, she knew what to do. Luckily, she had grown up on a farm and received a thorough education in housekeeping from her two grandmothers.

Even with that background, however, she had many questions on such matters as the care of modern fabrics and floors, and she found no reference works to help her. The comprehensive housekeeping manuals popular in the nineteenth century had been transformed into either random collections of housekeeping "hints" or arts-and-crafts projects. It was this gap that Mendelson set out to remedy. Her model was neither the hinting Heloise nor the project-obsessed Martha Stewart. Rather, *Home Comforts* is the modern successor to the venerable 1861 classic *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management*, a thousand-page encyclopedia of cooking and housekeeping.

By virtue of the low esteem into which housekeeping has fallen, Mendelson shoulders a task that would never have occurred to Isabella Beeton. In the brilliant introductory essay, "My Secret Life," and throughout the various chapters on laundry, bathrooms, and dust mites, she mounts nothing less than a philosophical defense of housekeeping, restoring it as a meaningful, dignified, and fulfilling pursuit.

> Housekeeping actually offers more opportunities for savoring achievement than almost any other work I can think of. Each of its regular routines brings satisfaction when it is completed. These routines echo the rhythm of life, and the housekeeping rhythm is the rhythm of the body. You get satisfaction not only from the sense of order, cleanliness, freshness, peace and plenty restored, but from the knowledge that you yourself and those you care about are going to enjoy these benefits.

Far from being mindless, repetitive drudgery unfit for anyone with a college degree, housekeeping—as Mendelson's manifesto reminds us—provides a wealth of cognitive challenges. "You have to be able to decipher insurance policies, contracts, and warranties, manage a budget, and master the technical language of instruction manuals for appliances and computers," she notes. "You need to exercise creative intelligence to solve problems and devise solutions. . . . Housekeeping comprises the ability to find, evaluate and use information about nutrition, cooking, chemistry and biology, health, comfort, laundry, cleaning and safety." (And, as she correctly states, of all professionals, "it is actually lawyers who are most familiar with the experiences of unintelligent drudgery.")

"My Secret Life" sets the tone for the rest of the book, all of which is characterized by wonderful, entertaining writing. Mendelson doesn't simply tell you how to dust furniture and vacuum the carpet. She tells you exactly why these things are important, why it is important to do them in the way she suggests, and the rewards one can expect as a result. She brings the mindset of a public policy wonk and applies it to running a house. Hers is not simply a how-to manual of the deep comforts and pleasures of housekeeping, it is also an intense sociological examination of a small society and how that society should be ordered.

The example of this approach that delighted me the most is her "broken window theory" of neatening. Applied to crime, the theory holds that a single broken window that goes unrepaired signals that no one cares and encourages further vandalism. According to Mendelson, the same holds true for housekeeping. "The domestic equivalent of an unrepaired broken window can result in a chain reaction that eventually sees the home in complete

Melinda Ledden Sidak is a housewife and writer in suburban Washington, D.C.

From the 1907 edition of *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management*. Courtesy of Katherine Rybak Torres.

chaos." Leave an empty cup and a pair of shoes next to a chair and then "anyone who walks in will feel entitled to add more disorder because the room is already slightly, even if pleasantly, disorderly."

The net effect of Mendelson's approach to housecleaning is not only to inform, but to energize and imbue her readers with a sense of mission and virtue in a way Martha Stewart's twig picture frames and sconces made out of vintage aluminum baking pans simply can't.

This uplifting quality of *Home Comforts* is what drives the book's unexpected success. *Home Comforts*, more than the presidential race, is what everyone is talking about. The book has already gone into its seventh printing and sold more than 160,000 copies. (The typical how-to manual does well if it sells 20,000 copies.) Mendelson has been interviewed three times on National Public Radio and she is being hailed everywhere as a "revolutionary" and "at the forefront of a new trend." Celebrity and noncelebrity women are coming out of the closet about their passion for domesticity. Bette Midler confided to Oprah, "I don't see why people put down housekeeping. It's a craft and I think all crafts deserve respect."

Mendelson is the recipient of a stream of confessions from the previously closeted. "I get phone calls from people, famous people. There is one woman, a very well-known public figure, feminist, intellectual, you know. She says: 'Cheryl, I've never had a cleaner in my life. I do it all myself.'" Even more striking, Mendelson's venerable predecessor, *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management*, is being reissued in Britain this month and in this country later this year.

Why *Home Comforts* has struck such a responsive chord is almost as interesting as the book itself. Part of the reason is that women now have the self-confidence and professional credibility to admit that home and family are important to them. Mendelson herself has observed that "women feel secure enough about their rights and abilities to go to work that they'd like more from their homes. I think all of us have tasted life with the home part reduced, and we don't like it." Another reason is the growing number of both men and women who telecommute from home and thus are more concerned with its maintenance and comfort. Still another reason is America's incredible affluence: More people nowadays need detailed advice on things like how to clean their fancy granite kitchen counters, hand-wash their silk and cashmere sweaters, and iron their linen sheets.

What it also reflects, however, is a sort of revival and restoration of traditional verities. It's now okay to acknowledge that children do best with a mother and father married to each other. Most people today can admit that a mother and a day-care center are not interchangeable. There's even a religious revival, as more and more people discover that material acquisition can't satisfy our deepest longings. And now the success of Cheryl Mendelson's book reminds us once again that there's no place like home. ♦

After lifting its ban on interracial dating, Bob Jones University said it would prefer that such dating take place only with parental consent. ***—News item***

Bob Jones University

Separate But Equal Since 1964

Babel Prevention Officer
Department of Moral Affairs

Dear Parents,

We're thrilled to bits about Spring Bash Week, our annual blowout, when we really let the kids kick loose from their studies and let it all hang back. Unfortunately, our annual Politics Day has been canceled; our guest speakers discovered some last minute scheduling conflicts. But we've got a great bunch of events planned, which should offer plenty of fun in a racially secure environment:

Pik Botha Sing-along

Track Meet (long-distance events only)

Saturday Night Bonfire,
including a wet sheet contest with some of our prettiest ladies

Naturally, with all the fraternization that will be going on, some of our students, fired by the rising sap of youth, will want to go on dates. As you may have read in the mainstream press, our president, Bob Jones MCVI, has recently altered our ban on interracial dating. From now on, students will be able to date outside their genetic stock. I'm therefore asking you to take a few minutes to designate the genetic groups your son/daughter may date. Please circle no more than four.

Sons of Ham (dark complexion)
Sons of Ham (light complexion)
Sons of Ham (supporters of Alan Keyes)
Rootless Cosmopolitans (Jewy Jews)
Rootless Cosmopolitans (Jewy, but funny, like Jackie Mason)
Rootless Cosmopolitans (but you'd never know it)
Recovering Homosexuals
John McCain Supporters

Papists (less than 5 siblings)
Papists (5 to 10 siblings)
Papists (over 10 siblings)
Indeterminate Foreigners (Paks, Greeks, etc.)
Chinese (from China, Korea, or Japan)
Babylonians
Others (Tiger Woods, Michael Jackson, etc.)

As you know, we're not against our kids having fun, so long as they do it without too much pigmentation discordance. With your help, we can make this just as super an event as it's always been.

Sincerely,

Bodacious Klismer