the weekly Standard

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DEMOCRACY IN BELGRADE
THE EDITORS

Ozzie and Harriet Were Right!

The Facts of Married Life…
by Fred Barnes

…Why They're So Hard to Teach in School
by Claudia Winkler

Contents

October 16, 2000 • Volume 6, Number 5

Articles

Features

Cover: The Everett Collection

Books & Arts

the weekly Standard

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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More Gore Baloney

The big campaign news of the week turned out to be not the debates, but the fact that the *New York Times*'s Rick Berke finally noticed Al Gore's exaggeration problem. Of course, it was hard not to notice after Gore's false and gratuitous boast that, like Bush, he had toured Texas disaster areas with the director of FEMA in June 1998. Still, Berke deserves credit. It's not his fault the editors didn't run his Gore piece on the front page, as they did Berke's infamous "Rats" story about supposed subliminal messages in a Bush campaign ad. Though running on page 24, Berke's dispatch last Friday, "Tendency to Embellish Fact Snags Gore," marks the first concession by the *Times* that Gore's baloney is newsworthy in itself, and not simply an example of something nasty Republican operatives want to harangue the press corps about.

Indeed, Berke found that Democrats are troubled by Gore's serial boasting. And he quoted one Chris Wetzel, a professor of psychology at Rhodes College in Memphis, offering this backhanded defense of the vice president: "'Why would someone say something like this when it can be so blatantly discovered?' asked Mr. Wetzel, who has taught a research course called Detecting Impostors and Con Artists. 'I think it's like the false memory syndrome when people end up believing that they were abducted by aliens.'"

Berke noted that Gore himself in an interview several weeks ago blamed the press for his problem, complaining that reporters used to not have "a hair trigger on." That's for sure. Maybe he would have broken the habit sooner, if reporters hadn't given him such an easy ride. Their willingness to pooh-pooh his exaggerations is as longstanding as his tendency to boast, as can be gleaned from the following memo, one of two warnings to Gore from his staff in the late 1980s which Matt Drudge posted on his website last Friday.

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TO: Al

FROM: Mike [Mike Kopp, the campaign's deputy press secretary]

RE: Attacks on your credibility

9/9/87

We've been hearing an increasing number of remarks from members of the press corps (national, and regional) about your tendency to go out on a limb with remarks about your campaign. It is clear that at least one of the other campaigns, Gephardt's, has picked up on this and is helping to fan the flames.

In the past few reporters cared if you stretched the truth to make a point or as an applause line. But gone are those days. Because of your steady climb in the polls and Nunn's departure, we are becoming increasingly scrutinized, particularly by the national press.

Your remark on *Face the Nation* is a good example of how one comment can generate a behind-the-scenes attack by one of our opponents, in this case Gephardt. Granted that our relationship with *Post* reporters is not great, but Maralee Schwartz was on the kill armed with your comment from *Face the Nation* that you had campaigned more extensively than all the other candidates put together in the South. That comment is not easy to defend. Fortunately it came out in the press in August, and was dismissed by several reporters I spoke to (Kevin Sack; Mike Pigott; Howard Fineman; Strobe Talbott) as inside the Beltway news. But Maralee told me, during the course of our numerous lengthy conversations that day, that you have a growing reputation as a politician who "stretches the truth to suit a political moment."

Your remark in Texas which was widely circulated by AP outside of the state that you intend to campaign more days than all the other candidates combined in that state did not go unnoticed. Kevin Sack brought it to my attention (though he did not write anything about it) and I'm certain he's filed it away.

This impression that you stretch the truth (or say something one place and something different elsewhere) reared its ugly head in Portland with your remarks about women staffers in your campaign, and in your Administration. You know the problems that created for you at the news conference that followed your remarks to the group, but you should be aware that press clips I am still getting from contacts on the West Coast indicate it was widely reported. [Gore had bragged to the National Women's Political Caucus that women made up half his campaign staff, but was unable to name any of them at a press conference after the speech.] As you know Gephardt's staff told Howard Fineman to ask you about it when he interviewed you for the mini-profile last week.

On a related note, Jim O'Hara and Bruce Dobie (*Nashville Banner* and *Tennessean* reporters), asked me why you felt compelled to switch ribbons on the cattle for a photo opportunity at the Iowa State Fair. I mention that only to make a point that even the smallest action on your part is not going unnoticed. They may not write about it at length, but they are talking among themselves, and your credibility suffered as a result of it.

The point of all this is to caution you about your press image, and how it may continue to suffer if you continue to go out on a limb with remarks that may be impossible to back up. And to point out to you that the other campaigns are also watching this closely, and will continue to seize on opportunities to zing you as you continue to rise in popularity.

The burden is not all on your shoulders. We have got to be more aggressive with the media on all levels. Arlie's help should help make the difference.

***

Clearly, Gore's bragging problem is deep-seated. Too bad for him an enabling, codependent press corps has been so willing to write it off as "inside the Beltway news." Now, about that Iowa State Fair photo: Does this mean Al was determined to be photographed in front of the grand prize bull? Even if it meant a switcheroo of the ribbons? Stay tuned. ♦

Milosevic Family Values

This page has previously noted the tendency of politicians, when driven from office, to maunder on about how happy they are to be closing a rewarding chapter in their careers, embarking on new adventures, and—most hypocritically of all—spending more time with their long-suffering families.

Until now, we thought this a specifically American cliché. But no. We are not making this up. Mr. Slobodan Milosevic as he took his leave last Friday, and here we quote the account from the Associated Press, congratulated Mr. Kostunica and said in a television address, "I intend to rest a bit and spend some more time with my family and especially with my grandson Marko." The Milosevic family has our best wishes. ♦

Missile Defense, Anyone?

Noticeably absent from last week's presidential and vice-presidential debates was any reference to what one might have thought would be one of the most compelling differences between the two tickets: their disagreement on the deployment of a national missile defense. The silence is all the more striking given President Clinton's hasty, Friday-before-Labor-Day-weekend announcement that he had decided to not decide about deployment, thus passing the issue to his successor.

The Bush campaign has called for making national missile defense a top security priority, recognizing the threat posed by states such as Iraq and North Korea. Gore-Lieberman, by contrast, would almost surely continue in the Clinton administration's footsteps of reluctant deployments of limited defenses. One might think Bush and Cheney would elaborate on this contrast.

Before the next debate, the Bush campaign may want to brief their man. They could turn to an important new report by a Senate subcommittee on international security and proliferation, chaired by Thad Cochran of Mississippi. The lion's share of the report is simply a catalogue of missile-defense-related developments from 1991 to the present. What's made painfully clear is that while the threat has escalated dramatically the Clinton administration has just as dramatically scaled back the funding requested for developing both national and ballistic missile defense.

The report is titled "Stubborn Things: A Decade of Facts About Ballistic Missile Defense." Given the administration's head-in-the-sand response to real missile threats, it could just as easily have been titled "While America Slept." With any luck, the two campaigns at least will wake up and address the issue. ♦

Extra! Extra!

Tune in Wednesday evening, Oct. 11, to *www.weeklystandard.com* for more instant debate analysis from the staff of THE WEEKLY STANDARD. ♦

Casual

The Game of the Name

I fancy myself a connoisseur of the naming of Americans, and as such have discovered that we gringos do a few things in this line that no one else does. George W. Bush—whose middle initial has all but become his last name—may be mildly amused to learn that only Americans go in for middle initials. Henry James does a nice bit on the comedy of American middle initials in *Daisy Miller*, where Daisy's brat brother Randolph cites each member of his family with his or her middle initial included. Thank goodness that Europeans don't go in for middle initials, or we might have had to refer to Dante R. Alighieri, William C. Shakespeare, or Marcel G. Proust.

Apart from monarchs and popes, Americans are also alone, I believe, in using the ennobling suffix, in which one adds roman numerals to one's name, as in J. Bryan III, or George Frazier IV. A tough thing to stick a kid with, an ennobling suffix. I went through basic training with an entirely unpretentious guy named Daniel Thomas III, whose suffix was a fat pitch right in the kitchen of every sergeant he encountered: "You, Third, get you ass down there and give me twenty of your best or there ain't going to be no Fourth."

Much of the pretension in naming today seems to be invested in first names: all those Whitneys, Kellys, Camerons, Brittanys, and Tiffanys; those Tylers, Travises, Zacharys, Lucs, and more Scotts than you can shake a Fitzgerald at. One sighs over the yearning for elegance on the part of parents who pinned those names on their children. How long this has been going on is not clear. The philandering husband in Nora Ephron's novel *Heartburn* (1983) claims to have gone out with the first Jewish Kimberly, though he doesn't, if I remember correctly, give an exact date.

The first names of my co-religionists have undergone a number of alterations over the years. The Jewish men of my father's generation were given rather stately names: Sidney, Bernard, Louis, Saul, Maurice, Irving. ("If you're named Irving," I once heard a man say upon introduction to someone so named, "you must have been born in 1920. All Irvings were born in 1920.") Occasionally, things would go awry, and the stately became comically grandiloquent. The poet Delmore Schwartz claimed that his parents, in naming him, must have had a Pullman car in mind.

The mothers of my own generation of Jewish boys tended to give their sons first names that were Anglo-Saxon last names: Arnold, Norman, Sheldon, Marvin, Barry. Put a definite article in front of any of these names and it sounds like a hotel. The slightly comic oddity of many American Jewish last names makes it a bit tricky to lash up a fit first name to them. How many first names go easily with, say, Blumenthal or Birnbaum I am not prepared to say, but Lance and Schuyler aren't two of them.

For the same reason, Jews cannot, as certain old-family Wasps could, supply a family last name as a first name. Townsend Hoopes and McGeorge Bundy seem to work well enough; Goldstein Ginsburg and Pinsky Epstein do not. We are now emerging from a period of giving Jewish boys soft names. In my class lists at Northwestern, lots of Jonathans, Jeremys, Joshs, and Jaimies still turn up. The reversion to older names had a brief fling, and for a while many a newly minted Max or Sam or Ben felt the mohel's blade. Some old Jewish names—Melvin, Isaac, Myron—appear to have become African-American first names. Others—Maurice, Seymour, Barney—do not seem destined for immediate recycling.

English professors from olden days used to have triple-barreled names, like George Barrow Woodbury, names that all but put a wing-collar under their possessors' chins. Jewish men and women, I note, are now three-naming themselves. They are probably attempting not so much to add distinction to their names as to make themselves distinguishable from other Jews.

This might be the motive for Suzanne Jill Levine, the biographer of Manuel Puig, for there are innumerable Sue, Susan, and Suzanne Levines. Steven Lee Meyers, a reporter, must have wanted to be more than just another Steve Meyers. John Burnham Schwartz, author of *Bicycle Days*, perhaps wished to establish that he is the child of a mixed marriage. Barry Alan Shain, a political scientist, and Louis Daniel Brodsky, a poet, and Stanley Myron Handelman, a comedian, must have liked the rhythm that adding on their middle names gives, though Mr. Handelman, surely, plays his Stanley Myron for a small laugh.

None of these names can lay a glove on my own favorite of all public names, that of the writer who calls herself Pepper Schwartz, Ph.D. I've never read any of her books—they are chiefly on marriage and sex—but I shall always revere her for her unconscious comic genius in placing Pepper and then Ph.D. around the name Schwartz. Others, doubtless, have made fun of her name. Poor Dr. Pepper, so misunderstood.

Joseph Epstein

You're No Bill Buckley

Having read David Brooks's editorial advocating conservatives abandon the concept of small government ("The Era of Small Government Is Over," Oct. 2), I encourage The Weekly Standard's editors to read Nock's *Our Enemy the State*, Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*, Friedman's *Capitalism and Freedom*, and Anderson's *Revolution*.

While there are polling data that show Americans are averse to big government (a recent poll in liberal New York showed overwhelming opposition to the nationalization of health care), I would expect a journal of ideas to support principles whether they are popular or not.

If Bill Buckley had adopted your reasoning in the 1950s, he would have supported the mushy Republicanism of Eisenhower and the modern intellectual/political conservative movement would never have materialized. Is it fair to conclude if Reagan challenged Ford today you would support Ford?

Allen Roth
New York, NY

Reading David Brooks's editorial, I wondered what reason there could be for his ease of mind and lack of anxiety over conservatives' loss of principle and courage? I don't know the history of Brooks's political ideas, but for a conservative, hasn't he "turned around and adopted [Clinton's] priorities"? He certainly relies on polling data as much as Clinton does. But Brooks should know better than that. Such data should be read not as a sign that conservatives should yield to public opinion, but rather as an indication that they are failing to educate the public about their positions.

For instance, in the debate over the inheritance tax, we heard Democrats dismiss the bill as catering only to a tiny percentage of wealthy individuals, and the public nodded its head in agreement. We did not hear Republicans in Congress or many in the conservative press point out that the oft-quoted percentage is actually a gross under-representation because of the number of people who shelter their inheritance. Republicans should have proclaimed the actual number of people affected and seized on the opportunity to make the public aware of the distortions created by the current tax code, which benefit tax attorneys and accountants.

We don't need a complacent attitude about our "downhill path" to serfdom. We need conservative politicians, community leaders, and political commentators to educate the public about the intellectual case for conservatism.

Garrett Brown
San Diego, CA

Easy on the Compassion

Once a new slogan like "compassionate conservatism" gets into the mainstream, it becomes fair game for

everybody. But there is no need for a "compassionate foreign policy" as such, if it implies anything more than protecting America's security and vital interests (Peter Feaver and Edmund Malesky, "A Compassionate Foreign Policy?" Sept. 25).

It's true enough that in a world of dwindling size, we may wish to participate in programs of assistance in concert with the United Nations or regional organizations. But we should insist on their help, and not bear the burden alone. Furthermore, we should let the business community take care of its own trade and investments with the traditional support of local embassies.

Let's avoid an attitude of, if not the word, "compassion" in our foreign policy. That idea has already gotten us involved in too many foreign goodwill missions under the current administration and crippled our ability to cope with major threats to our security.

W.H. Riddell
Tampa, FL

Feaver and Malesky present an intriguing argument. They call into question the fundamental distinction between foreign and domestic policy. While this may be courageous, it introduces a framework too easily perverted towards something quite the opposite of what Feaver and Malesky intend. A bit more detail would be necessary to prevent this unintended consequence.

Peter Korman
Jenkintown, PA

Cruel to be Kind

Fred Barnes's "A Kinder, Gentler Bush Offensive" prompts a couple of responses (Oct. 2). First, the Larry David story about Jesus was a joke. David worked on *Seinfeld*, and the "pop-in" comment is a direct reference to the show. Second, Bush may state his faith on the stump, but when it comes to his record, his Christianity is harder to find. Governor Bush vetoed legislation that would have provided quicker sentencing and better legal representation to indigent Texans. Many Texans on death row are victims of sub-par representation. Where was the governor's faith when he vetoed this bill?

Jeff Daniels
Austin, TX

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Europe Whole and Free

The triumph of democracy in Serbia last week may well rank as the most important international event of the post-Cold War era. As a practical matter, it almost certainly means the end of a decade of extraordinary brutality and misery in southeastern Europe, a decade that witnessed four wars and the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of innocents. Until last week, there was still a very real possibility that Slobodan Milosevic might launch a fifth war, against Montenegro. Now there is a very real chance of lasting peace, economic growth, and the integration of the Balkans into Europe and the West. No, ethnic tensions will not disappear from the Balkans, but the passing of Milosevic from the scene removes an evil catalyst who skillfully and repeatedly turned ethnic tensions into ethnic cleansing.

Contrary to the cultural determinists and historical "realists" who managed to convince so many policymakers that tribal violence in the Balkans was inescapable, the Balkan peoples are not fated to kill one another. Last week's democratic triumph in Serbia may well inaugurate an era in which democratic leaders in Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro, and perhaps even Kosovo can re-learn the habits of peaceful coexistence and accept the principles of natural rights and the consent of the governed. The mandarins of the American foreign policy establishment will no doubt smirk at such optimism. But, then, they smirked at the prospect of democratic change in Serbia, too.

Which brings us to the larger significance of last week's revolution. The Serbian people and their neighbors in the rest of the former Yugoslavia are the most immediate beneficiaries of the change in Belgrade. But make no mistake: For the United States and its democratic allies, this is a strategic triumph of the first order. Milosevic's rampage in Europe this past decade was a constant refutation of any claim that, with the Cold War ended, the United States and the West had finally determined to safeguard freedom and security across Europe. As a few farsighted statesmen saw at the beginning of the decade—notably Margaret Thatcher and George Shultz—Milosevic's early and repeated successes raised doubts about Europe's will and ability to overcome its bloody past, and about America's commitment to lead the Atlantic Alliance and the world.

The electoral defeat of Milosevic reconfirms some fundamental truths. For example, it lays to rest the notion, so popular nowadays among foreign policy sophisticates and their corporate sponsors, that economic sanctions never work.

The electoral defeat of Milosevic reconfirms some fundamental truths too often neglected in recent years. It lays to rest the notion, so popular nowadays among foreign policy sophisticates and their corporate sponsors, that economic sanctions never work. Clearly, they worked in Serbia, where a majority of voters knew their only hope of ending international sanctions and beginning economic renewal lay in the removal of Milosevic. It is also likely that Milosevic's indictment as a war criminal helped prepare the way for his ouster. Again, the Serbian people knew that their country could never be embraced by the West so long as Milosevic was head of government. Perhaps even more important, the indictment put an end to the American policy of treating an ethnic cleanser as someone with whom we could do business. That was supposed to be the smart, "realistic"

approach. The more moral course of treating Milosevic as an international pariah actually proved the practical means of settling the Balkan conflict. Funny how often that turns out to be the case.

Perhaps the most important truth confirmed by events in Serbia is that the United States serves its own interests best when it wields its great power on behalf of its principles. We often hear that we should not be in the business of "nation-building," and that we should limit our overseas involvements to the defense of so-called vital national interests. Many congressional Republicans opposed the American intervention in Kosovo last year, on the grounds that there was nothing at stake that justified the deployment of American troops. And just a few weeks ago, Dick Cheney suggested withdrawing our forces from the Balkans. But it is now irrefutable that American intervention in Kosovo, as well as our earlier intervention in Bosnia, and the continued presence of U.S. peacekeeping forces were essential factors in the defeat of Milosevic.

Although we have frequently been critical of President Clinton for his handling of this and many other foreign and defense issues, the Clinton administration deserves credit for the triumph in Serbia. And so do a handful of Republicans, led by Bob Dole and John McCain. In last week's vice presidential debate, Joseph Lieberman said he was "very proud of the leadership role the United States played" in stopping Milosevic's aggression in Kosovo and Bosnia. We wish that spirit were also conspicuous among conservatives and Republicans, including the GOP standard bearers.

What to do now? The same people who told us we should withdraw from the Balkans before on the grounds that we could do no good may well argue for withdrawal now on the grounds that nothing more needs to be done. They are wrong. It is more possible than it was two weeks ago to envision an eventual drawdown of American forces in the Balkans. But a hasty exit could be a disaster. The U.S. presence was necessary to win the war. It remains necessary to build a stable peace and secure what just over a decade ago seemed a far-fetched hope: a Europe whole and free. It looks like we've won the war. Now let's win the peace.

—Robert Kagan and William Kristol

Michael Rameriz

Babe Ruth

Republican governor hopeful Ruth Dwyer tries to take back Vermont. **BY ANDREW FERGUSON**

Burlington, Vermont

RUTH DWYER, the Republican candidate for governor of Vermont, spent the last Saturday of September on an antique train, barnstorming the western length of the state, from Burlington down to Vergennes and Middlebury and then on to Rutland. From a crystal blue sky the sun poured down onto hollows and uplands showing hints of gold and crimson, and as Dwyer emerged from the rear of the train to speak briefly at each whistlestop, a small but enthusiastic crowd would shout her name and wave little flags. It was a good day. She liked it okay. "It's better than castrating bull calves," she said later.

Ruth Dwyer is a beef farmer by trade. She is also unflappable, which will come in handy over the next month in a state where a large segment of the population is intent on flapping her, if that's the phrase. "Ruth Dwyer is one scary woman," says one of the websites devoted to alerting Vermonters to the dangers of Ruth. "She . . . spreads hate wherever she goes." The editors of the *Rutland Herald*, the state's second largest newspaper, concur: "Bigotry trails Dwyer like a dust cloud," they editorialized not long ago. And that's not all. "Vermont Republicans have been infected with a desire to win," the paper cautioned, with a revealing choice of verbs. "They have tied their hopes to a flag-bearer who has demonstrated ignorance, insensitivity and intolerance." At a recent televised debate, hecklers interrupted her opening statement with shouts of "Nazi!" As a rule, the progressives who man Vermont's press and political establishments tolerate and sometimes even compliment Republicans, on the important condition that the Republicans agree to lose. The overheated rhetoric now routinely deployed against Dwyer suggests that she's a Republican who might win.

Illustration by Earl Keleny

This would be news. For a century Vermont was arguably the most conservative, or at least the most libertarian, state in the country. From 1856 to 1962 every governor was a Republican. In the meantime the state entered a genteel decline. The economy lagged. Population dropped below 400,000, as young people sought opportunity elsewhere. But beginning in the mid-sixties an in-migration of "flatlanders"—an alarming number of whom wore pony tails, drove VW minibuses, and listened to Quicksilver Messenger Service—began to repopulate the state. "One man, one vote" reforms shifted legislative power from the small towns to urban centers like Burlington, home of the state university and many of the flatlanders who had arrived via the newly opened Interstates. The political culture was remade. The state's deep-seated traditions of libertarian cussedness were beclouded with heavy infusions of social uplift and goo-goo reform, exemplified in the person of Rep. Bernie Sanders—known throughout the state simply as "Bernie"—the only (avowed) socialist in the U.S. Congress.

To this day many Vermonters of a libertarian bent, the conservative remnant, suspect the transformation of their state was the result of a loosely plotted conspiracy. To anyone who inquires they will happily fax a 1972 article from *Playboy* called "Taking Over Vermont." The eerily prescient subhead reads: "Get 225,000 counterculturalists to settle in the Green

Andrew Ferguson is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Mountain State and exercise their franchise—and you've begun a unique social experiment." There wasn't a conspiracy, of course, but there's no doubt that some kind of social experiment is well underway at the hands of the state's political class. "Mostly these are well-meaning people," says John Hall, a St. Johnsbury businessman who's the Republican candidate for state auditor. "But in the legislature they do see Vermont as a kind of laboratory for social engineering. This spring they tried to pass a law to control the prices of prescription drugs. It would have had no practical effect whatsoever, but they were just *thrilled*. 'Ooooh! We're going to be the first state to control drug prices!' You could see the gooseflesh rise on their arms."

In this unforgiving political environment, Mrs. Dwyer's campaign might seem hopeless. The governor nowadays is Howard Dean, a Democrat who assumed office at the death of his Republican predecessor in 1991 and has been overwhelmingly reelected every two years since. Under him the experimentation has accelerated. An admirer of the Canadian "single-payer" health care system, Dean has tried inch by inch to transform the state's system in its image, piling regulations and mandates upon hospitals and insurers, encouraging ever larger numbers of Vermonters (20 percent, about twice the national average) to enter the state-run Medicaid program, and shifting costs onto the private market. Insurers have responded as you'd expect, by leaving the state. Ten years ago there were at least twenty entities writing health insurance policies in Vermont. Today there are three, and a couple of those may soon leave. Meanwhile small businesses are seeing their premium costs rise by as much as 40 percent annually, and the number of uninsured is rising, too.

The urge to reform has also invaded Vermont's classrooms—more here perhaps than in other states. Goaded by an imperious state supreme court, the legislature in 1997 enacted Act 60, a property tax initiative that took money from "rich" communities and sent it to poorer "receiving" communities. Act 60 effectively ended local control of schools and concentrated education policy in the capital of Montpelier. It is also a tortuous, highly intrusive means of wealth redistribution—Karl Marx meets Rube Goldberg. Originally only a handful of towns were designated as "rich" and thus lost tax revenue. Not surprisingly, as the reform settles in, the list of rich (money-losing) communities continues to grow and the number of "receiving" towns shrinks. And test scores decline.

Contributing to the populist unrest is a vast, rococo edifice of environmental regulation built up over many years, likewise centralized in Montpelier. But it's a funny thing about people who subscribe to a social ethic of "live and let live," as Vermonters like to say they do: It takes a lot to get them riled up. They're reluctant to object even to people who won't leave them alone. The reformers and uplifters finally overplayed their hand this spring, however. Again under mandate from the busy-busy-busy state supreme court, the legislature took a hurried eight weeks to write and pass a law legalizing, in all but name, same-sex marriage. It was, in the phrase you hear from one Vermonter after another, the straw that broke the camel's back. Overnight, stark black-and-white signs—TAKE BACK VERMONT—popped up across the countryside. Polls show a solid majority of Vermonters disapprove of the "civil unions" law, disapprove of the way it was rushed through the legislature, and disapprove of the legislature that rushed it through. Before last month's primary there was an unexpected surge first in voter registration, then in turnout on primary day. Nine Republicans had voted for the civil-unions bill. Five of them lost in the primary. The survivors face stiff challenges in November.

She favors school choice, regulatory reform, tax cuts, free-market health care reform. (For this you get called a Nazi in Vermont.)

Ruth Dwyer, of course, objects to the civil-unions bill, too, but as de facto head of the Take Back Vermont "movement," she doesn't stress the issue. Of course, she doesn't need to. There's not much percentage in it for her as a candidate, and besides, she says, "you get so sick of being called hatemonger, homophobe, all that." She's probably not a homophobe, by the way. In the early nineties the legislature legalized adoption for gay couples, and the state government itself provides benefits to same-sex couples—reforms she sees no reason to undo. (There goes the homophobe vote.) Like most of the Take Back Vermont counter-reformers, she's a populist and a libertarian. She prefers to frame the civil-unions issue as the latest in a long line of indignities that overweening, centralized government has inflicted on a state whose citizens prize local control above all else. Her campaign slogan is "Listen to the People," which in present-day Vermont doesn't sound at all like boilerplate.

"That's really all they're asking," Mrs. Dwyer said the other day. "They just want a government that will pay attention to them." The barnstorming tour was over and she was relaxing in the club car as the train rolled back toward Burlington. She propped her feet on an end table and took long pulls from a bottle of Budweiser. Her accent is part Vermont, where she has lived for twenty-five years, and part Long Island, where she grew up. She's 42. And she is—if there were another way to mention this, I'd find it—strikingly pretty. But her hands are a farmer's hands; her right index finger was bandaged from where she'd sliced it the day before, hauling firewood. On her farm, in the town of Thetford, on the New Hampshire border, she raises beef cattle and sheep, and gives horse riding lessons to supplement her income. She lives there with her

mother. Her marriage—to a local veterinarian—recently ended in divorce.

In the small towns of Vermont these days, Ruth Dwyer is a bona fide hero. "You've got to see her out campaigning in the towns to get a real taste of it," said Brian Dubie, who's running with her as the Republican candidate for lieutenant governor. "She walks in a parade, she goes to the Rotary—she's treated like a rock star." She's been a public figure in Vermont for much of the last decade, having served several years in the state legislature. There she developed a solid grounding in the conservative credo: school choice, regulatory reform, tax cuts, free-market health care reform. (For this you get called a Nazi in Vermont.) But it was the education crisis that brought her into politics, in the early '90s.

"I'm living in Thetford, and I'm watching my tax bills going up by double digits every year," she said, "but it's to pay for these great schools we have, so I figure okay, we'll suffer. Then this little 7-year-old girl, Kelly, who I'd been teaching to ride for three years—all of a sudden she can't ride. She's a basket case, she's tense, she's insecure. I asked her mother what's going on. And her mother says, 'She just finished first grade and they're holding her back because she can't read. She thinks she's stupid.'

"Now, I know she's not stupid. So I did some research. It turns out, 30 percent of these kids were being held back, year after year, because they were not, quote-unquote, developmentally ready to read. Thirty percent! So I'm thinking, jeez, what's wrong with these kids? Is it something in the water? No, it's something in the schools. They're teaching whole language, creative spelling, all this developmental psychology bullshit—" She looked at my tape recorder. "Sorry. Don't say I said that."

Too late.

She shrugged. "It's just I get so pissed at what they're doing to these children. Anyway, I'm thinking: I've got a real problem with this. So I ran for the school board. I went through hell on that school board. The principal, the teachers, the superintendent—they're all pro-NEA, they're saying, 'We're doing great, just give us more money.'" She smiled. "They all hated me."

After two terms in the legislature she ran against Dean for governor in 1998, gathering an unexpectedly strong 41 percent. This year she stands to do much better. One-hundred-proof left-wingers in Vermont tend to regard Dean as a crypto-Republican because of his reluctance to raise income taxes, his less than hysterical support for the civil-unions bill (he signed the bill in private, declining to hold a public ceremony), and other deviationist traits. They have coalesced in the newly formed Progressive party, whose gubernatorial candidate, Anthony Pollina, polls at about 5 percent or more in statewide surveys. For the first time in his career, Dean is drawing less than 50 percent in the polls, the most recent showing him at 44 percent and Mrs. Dwyer at 40 percent. If no candidate reaches 50 percent in November, the election will be decided in the state legislature at the beginning of the year, at which time Mrs. Dwyer's allies there may hold a majority. (A gain of eight seats—easily achievable—would put the House in Republican control.)

And then? The establishment forces trying now to unnerve Mrs. Dwyer will shift into overdrive. The websites will bristle, the hecklers will foam and froth, the editorial board of the *Rutland Herald* may very well have a collective aneurysm. But Mrs. Dwyer for the moment looks serene. "Can I govern?" she asked last week, repeating a question that often comes up. "Yeah, I can govern. You know, they call me divisive. Hey, I wasn't the one who signed Act 60. I wasn't the one who tried to shove civil unions down everybody's throat. You want divisive—*that's* divisive.

"Look, it's pretty simple. They say, How do you find common ground, when the state's so divided? Well, we all do really want the same things, we Vermonters. We want lower taxes, good schools, affordable health insurance. It's not so complicated. If people see that's what you're trying to do, then you've found the common ground."

She smiled again, sounding (and looking) less like the leader of a populist revolt than a governor. ♦

Marriage 101

The pitfalls of teaching matrimony in the schools.

BY CLAUDIA WINKLER

"MARRIAGE EDUCATION" in the schools? Before you object that any self-respecting school ought to have its hands full teaching history and algebra, consider that most public school systems are already teaching kids about sex, family, and relationships in courses like sex ed, health, and that successor to home economics, consumer science. Then ask yourself: Should those subjects be treated in the classroom *without* reference to marriage? Should marriage be addressed, as it is at some schools, mainly through the budgeting exercise of planning a wedding and honeymoon for $20,000?

A growing number of schools are trying to offer meatier fare. In 1998, Florida became the first state to require "marriage and relationship skills" instruction in all high schools, public and private, as part of an existing required course in life management skills; and scattered schools and districts are doing more or less the same in all 50 states. To find out what such schools are teaching and to advance a discussion of what they should teach, the Institute for American Values convened some 120 social scientists, teachers, religious scholars, social workers, and miscellaneous others in New York last month to respond to an Institute report entitled "Hungry Hearts: Evaluating the New Curricula for Teens on Marriage and Relationships." Sparks flew.

Institute affiliate-scholar Dana Mack, principal author of the report, examined ten curricula, whose content ranges from the sociological facts about marriage, cohabitation, and divorce, to the habits that nourish lasting relationships, to the moral and psychological issues raised by portrayals of romance and family in literature. Mack's report assesses each program by five criteria, but the conversation in New York never got past the first: whether the curriculum has a "marriage focus."

Does it, in other words, use the M-word, or does it speak neutrally of relationships, partners, couples, unions? Does it relate dating to the selection of a life mate and present the stable, marital family as the bedrock social unit? Or is self-fulfillment or psychological health presented as the chief justification for taking care over relationships?

Well! "Marriage focus" turned out to be fighting words. They quickly exposed a divergence of approach between two camps, which might be crudely labeled philosophers and pragmatists. Mack and other theoreticians of the "marriage movement" (the signers of its recent "Statement of Principles" include such thinkers as Robert Bellah, Midge Decter, Amitai Etzioni, Francis Fukuyama, William Galston, Mary Ann Glendon, Leon Kass, Richard John Neuhaus, and James Q. Wilson) write eloquently about the ravages of divorce and the long-term goal of rebuilding a "marriage culture." They argue that marriage must be understood not just as an affair of the heart affecting two people but also as a communal institution that performs functions crucial to society. Marriage, they say, is our means of securing the benefits of two-parent child-rearing, along with all the other kinds of mutual love, aid, and support throughout the course of life that stable married couples voluntarily provide.

Many of the pragmatists say they share this long-term vision. But their immediate objective, at least in the context of curricula for schools, is different. They tend to be practitioners, teachers and therapists who have worked with teenagers, and they stress the urgency of training young people who are floundering. Too strong a focus on marriage, they insist, is counterproductive. If you want to get into the schools and teach kids relationship skills that many of them utterly lack—elementary know-how like listening, tact, courtesy, empathy, and conflict resolution—don't confuse the issue by prematurely introducing marriage.

Diane Sollee, a passionate believer that people can be taught the behavior that sustains relationships (and herself a signer of the "Statement of Principles"), spoke of young people's cynicism. "We tell kids that marriage is important and marriage is for life, but also that half of marriages fail. We need to convince them: Marriage is *not* a game of chance. *You can learn* how to do it differently from all the divorced people you know." Sollee's Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education (*smartmarriages.com*) steers troubled couples to appropriate courses. As for this first generation of curricula for schools, she called them primitive "contraptions," like the Wright brothers' plane, soon to be superseded by new improved models that will "show young people what love and commitment look like."

Some of the pragmatists were emphatic: To get these curricula past school boards, principals, and parents, many of whom are divorced, and to enlist the efforts of teachers who don't want to look judgmental, you simply must soft-pedal marriage. Others stressed that students themselves may not be ready to hear a pro-marriage message. Kids in their mid-teens to whom marriage seems remote, kids from single-parent homes, kids largely unsupervised, need to learn far more basic lessons first.

Wendy Wise, a veteran teacher with graduate degrees in psychology and education and the author of one

Claudia Winkler is a managing editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

The Everett Collection

of the programs Mack evaluated, said schools are already so burdened with requirements that courses in "marriage per se" are unlikely to be adopted. She designed her *Wise Self-Esteem Project* (*WISEP For Teens*) to meet California's health curriculum guidelines; it is being used in some 40 California districts and has been sold in 34 states. (*WISEP* earned a "C" for "marriage focus.")

Contacted later, Wise explained the priority she gives to relationship skills. A stint working as a family therapist convinced her of the need to reach more people and to reach them younger, with preventive education, before their relationships break down. Her program for high school students aims to ground teens "in problem solving, communication skills, time management, goal setting, and how to deal with the problem emotions like anger, jealousy, and guilt." When she introduces marriage, near the end of senior year, she says, she likes to invite "a panel of clergy of different denominations to talk about why they feel pre-marital counseling is so important. The clergy love it, and the kids really respond. By that stage, kids are thinking about the future."

To the philosophers, it all seemed, in the words of Mack's report, "intellectually thin." "The purpose of liberal education," says David Blankenhorn, president of the Institute for American Values, "is to expose children to their cultural heritage and stimulate them to be reflective about the big issues of life. Studying marriage is a richer experience than memorizing communications scripts." Those participants strongly committed to a religious view of marriage seemed most doubtful of all about the wisdom of muting the central message in favor of interpersonal skills. After listening to the animated exchange between the theorists and the therapists, Wade Horn, president of the National Fatherhood Initiative, wondered aloud: "If we can't mention marriage, should we compromise?"

Horn had shown his hand earlier in the day. His work with divorced men has convinced him, he said, that neither statistics proving the benefits of marriage nor courses honing relationship skills will ever add up to a compelling argument for the self-sacrifice required by family life. "If a man is asking, Why should I be a good father?" said Horn, "the answer that will satisfy him is: To give your child a glimpse of God's love for His children."

If Horn is right, of course, the public schools can play at best a limited role in the recovery of the marital ideal. Instead, the job of reeducating a generation inured to divorce, cohabitation, and extra-marital childbearing belongs properly to another class of institutions: the churches. ♦

The Retro Campaign

Haven't we seen this contest before?

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

GONE WAS THE AL GORE whose high-energy, big-necked huffing and puffing about policy led one to the sure conclusion that if presidential debating were an Olympic event, the veep would have been disqualified for steroid use. Gone, too, was the George W. Bush who looked like a diffident, 5-foot-2 cowhand (nickname: Stretch), quailing before the raging bull. The country's pundit class claimed that last Thursday's vice-presidential debates created a nationwide bipartisan yearning that the presidential tickets be flipped—that Dick Cheney and Joe Lieberman become their parties' presidential nominees—for the reason that Cheney and Lieberman were talking about "the issues" more than George Bush and Al Gore had. Sorry: If people liked the debates, it wasn't because Cheney and Lieberman were substantive or civil. It was because they engaged in happy talk.

This debate was described as being about substance because pundits wanted it to be about substance, and both candidates played to that wish. But from the most substantive issue of the campaign—what to do with the gargantuan budget "surplus"—the two candidates fled as if it had sharp teeth. Let's get one thing straight about the budget surplus: There isn't one. It's a demographic artifact, the result of the Baby Boom generation (now aged 36-55) entering its most productive years, in which it's paying huge taxes and collecting no benefits. George Bush talks about giving $1.3 trillion back to American taxpayers, which is only 5 percent of government revenues. Al Gore plans to pay current benefit levels to retirees, based on the assumption that the economy will grow at the rate of—oh, say, 7 percent a year for the next three decades. But once the Boomers retire and are totally *non*-productive, we're going to have only two workers for every retiree, and it's going to take about $10 trillion to set them up in the lifestyle to which they've become accustomed. So what do these "substantive" veep would-bes have to say about this?

Joe Lieberman set the tone when, in his opening statement, he said of the budget surplus, "We're not spending anything more than is projected by the experts. In fact, unlike our opponents, we're setting aside $300 billion in a reserve fund just in case those projections the nonpartisan experts make are not quite right." You'd think Cheney would have battled back, but no. He, too, refused to entertain the possibility that the "surplus" would be less than munificent. "With respect to the surplus, Bernie, we've got to make some kind of forecast. We can't make 12-month decisions in this business." So forget about it!

Illustrations by Drew Friedman

Then the pair got into education, a weird issue in this election, because George W. Bush's insistence on nationally required standards and Al Gore's on voluntary ones makes the Democratic party the champion of

Christopher Caldwell is senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

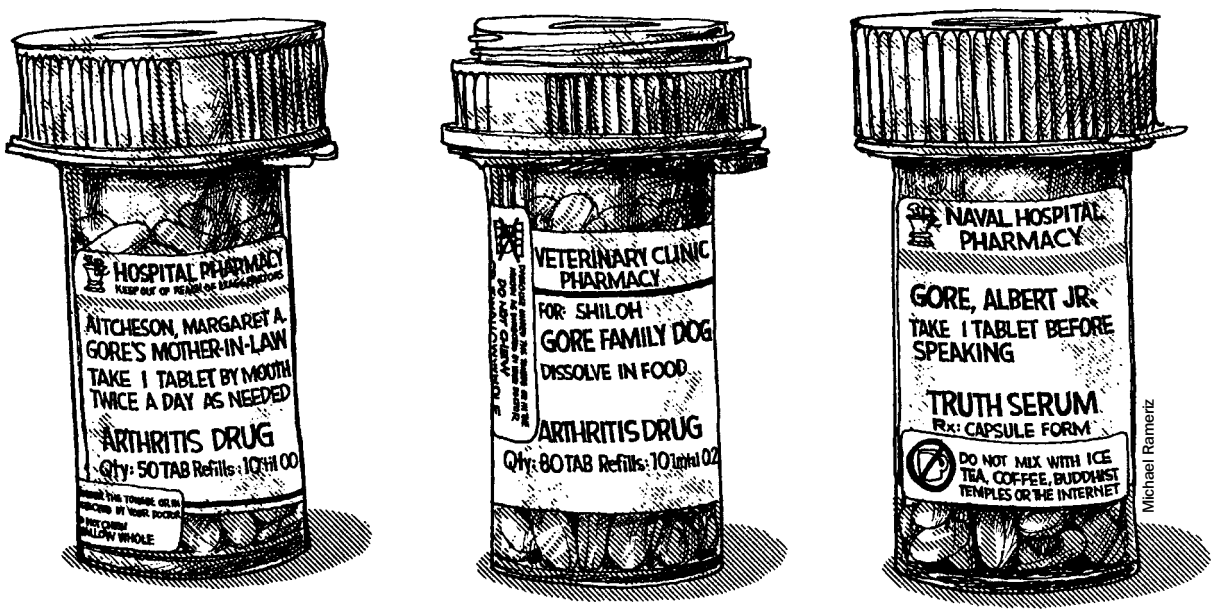
states' rights for the first time on any issue since Jim Crow. This federal supervision Cheney described as "accountability." He added that "the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students is as big as it's ever been." It leaves one wondering exactly what educational issue Gore would use to get to the left of Bush.

Finally, there was abortion. Cheney laid out the Republican position: that the party was pro-life, but only so long as there was never, ever, any chance whatsoever that opposition to abortion would be codified in law. "Bernie, the abortion issue is a very tough one . . . " he began. No it isn't! Not for a pro-lifer. And then he proceeded to nudge the GOP's position into line with President Clinton's. "Governor Bush and I have emphasized that while we clearly are both pro-life, that's what we believe"—sort of—"that we want to look for ways to try to reduce the incidence of abortion in our society. Many on the pro-choice side have said exactly the same thing. Even Bill Clinton, who's been a supporter of abortion rights, has advocated reducing abortion to make it as rare as possible." So the ultimate aims of being pro-life and being pro-choice are a matter of degree, and the difference between the two positions is merely tactical. In other words, there's no difference between them at all.

There's a dismal aspect to this election. Dick Cheney described its stakes as being inordinately high. "We're really going to choose between what I consider to be an old way of governing ourselves, of high levels of spending, high taxes, an ever more intrusive bureaucracy, or a new course, a new era if you will, and Governor Bush and I want to offer that new course of action." New how? Lieberman sounds like the Ivy League liberal he was in the 1960s and 1970s. Cheney sounds like the chief of staff in the Ford administration that he once was, seeking nothing more than to move closer to his interlocutor, the better to confuse himself with him. Kennedy and Nixon in their own debates in 1960 talked about the crisis in education, the amount the rich benefited from tax cuts, the fraying social safety net. So did Eisenhower and Stevenson in 1956. And in 1952. And if you were to look at Dewey and Truman in 1948 . . .

In fact, the vice-presidential debates leave one with the depressing realization that the end of the Cold War brought not a new politics to America but an old one. It looks as if the fall of the Iron Curtain introduced no new issues. Instead, it just gave us back the politics of the 1950s minus one issue. ♦

RAMIREZ Los Angeles Times Syndicate



PRESCRIPTIONS

Saddam Hussein's French Kiss

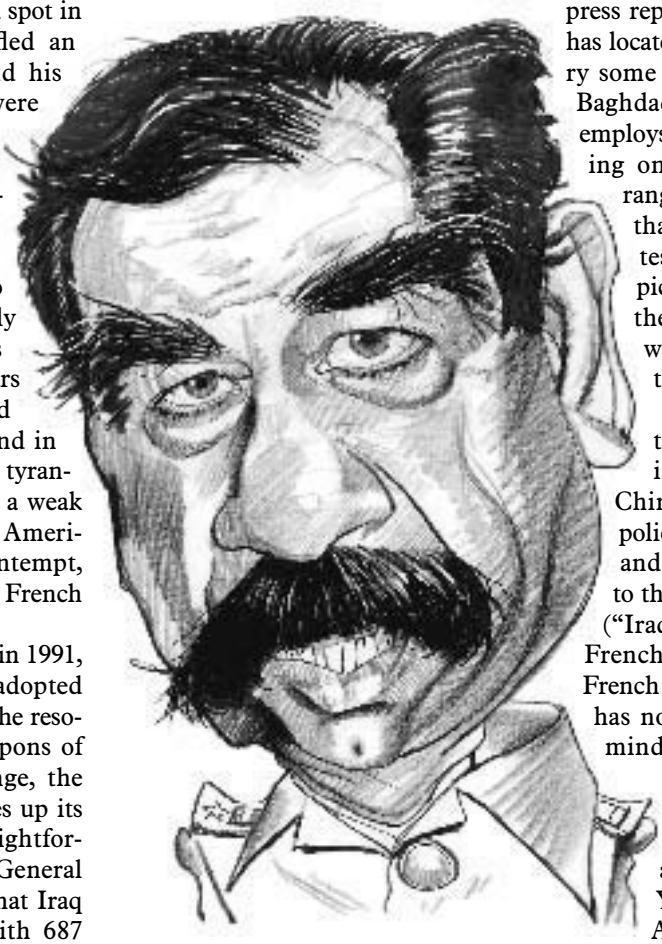
A desire to stick it to the U.S. has led Paris to embrace the Iraqi dictator. **BY JEFFREY GEDMIN**

WHEN RICHARD BUTLER once shared with the United Nations Security Council a series of high-altitude photographs of some 130 heavy Republican Guard trucks gathering at an isolated spot in the desert—they had just fled an inspection site as Butler and his arms inspection team were approaching—French U.N. ambassador Alain Dejammet mocked the evidence. Dejammet speculated that perhaps it was just "a truckers' picnic."

It's stunning, the degree to which a misguided and deeply cynical policy run by Paris has managed over the last four years to rally much of the world against the United States—and in support of Saddam Hussein's tyrannical regime. Of course, give a weak American president his due. American fecklessness breeds contempt, even among our allies. But the French deserve special credit.

At the end of the Gulf War in 1991, the U.N. Security Council adopted resolution 687. According to the resolution, Iraq gives up its weapons of mass destruction. In exchange, the international community gives up its sanctions against Iraq. Straightforward. Iraq's oil minister, General Amer Rashid, claims today that Iraq has been "in compliance with 687 since the end of 1991." Equally straightforward. The Iraqis practice the Big Lie.

UNSCOM—the U.N. commission charged with removing Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction—has not been permitted by Baghdad to operate in Iraq since late 1998. Even "son-of-UNSCOM," the softer, more politicized version known as UNMOVIC (the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission), run by former Swedish foreign minister Hans Blix, has not been allowed in. "We are happy without the inspections," says Iraqi deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz. No doubt.



While still operating in Iraq, UNSCOM found a consistent pattern of flagrant cheating and concealment by the Iraqis. In one instance, one of UNSCOM's senior biological inspectors seized a briefcase from two Iraqi officers running out the back door of a laboratory. The briefcase contained materials for testing biological warfare agents such as anthrax and botulinim toxin. In another, Tariq Aziz, brazen and defiant, told UNSCOM's chairman Butler that the regime needed to retain its weapons of mass destruction for the Persians (Iranians) and the Jews (Israelis)!

Saddam's weapons programs continue. According to recent German press reports, Germany's intelligence has located a new secret missile factory some 40 kilometers southwest of Baghdad. The factory reportedly employs 250 engineers and is working on plans for missiles with a range of 3,000 miles, far longer that the missiles Iraq recently tested. How many truckers' picnics would we find today if the international community were able to conduct inspections inside Iraq?

So what's the French posture? Since coming to office in 1995, President Jacques Chirac has pursued doggedly a policy aimed at ending sanctions and returning Saddam's regime to the family of respected nations ("Iraq is *not* a defeated nation!" French diplomats declare). The French approach to helping Saddam has not been a very creative one, mind you. Paris simply follows Baghdad.

At first, this meant discrediting Richard Butler as an agent of the Americans. Yes, Butler, the center-left Australian diplomat who has spent his career in arms control and disarmament issues—often on the opposite side from the United States. Go figure. Still, when Butler told the *New York Times* in 1998 that Iraq possessed enough anthrax to "blow away Tel Aviv," Iraq beat the drum about U.S.-Zionist conspiracies—and the French kept pace. Foreign minister

Illustration by Thomas Fluharty

Jeffrey Gedmin is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and executive director of the New Atlantic Initiative.

Hubert Védrine suggested that Butler was "over-stepping his prerogatives." France's interior minister, Jean-Pierre Chevenement, called Butler's comments "ridiculous" (Chevenement had resigned as defense minister over the Gulf War).

Paris also followed Saddam's line by discrediting the work of UNSCOM more generally, suggesting that the enterprise itself was a tool of the Americans. After all, it conducted "endless checks," complained *Le Monde*, led by a "preponderance" of Americans. But this, too, flew in the face of all evidence. UNSCOM's work was led by scientific experts. What's more, the highest percentage of Americans that ever served among UNSCOM's team of technical experts was 17 percent. The head of the missile team was a Russian, as was the deputy head of the chemical weapons unit. A Frenchman served as the photo interpreter for U-2 imagery—until his government recalled him in 1997 because, according to one former UNSCOM official, his work led him to stray from Paris's overtly political line.

Finally, and most successfully, the French have followed Baghdad's propaganda that the U.S.-led sanctions, and not Saddam's regime, have become the primary problem. On this, France has won allies. In August, Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez became the first foreign head of state to visit Iraq since the Gulf War. Chavez belittled those who would demonize Saddam ("We're all sons of God," he crowed). More recently, the Russians, a strong competitor to France in representing Saddam's interest at the Security Council, have joined the French in testing the U.N. embargo by sending planes into Baghdad. India and China have applauded the move. The Swiss and Italians are considering following suit. The purpose? To bring to an end American "genocide," says Jean-Marie Benjamin, a priest who helped organize one of the recent anti-sanctions flights, backed by the French government. "The U.S. approach is to inflict punishment," says Védrine, "whereas our approach is to look for a solution."

What's the solution? Removing sanctions from Saddam will not change the plight of the Iraqi people. Nor will France's tender embrace civilize the Iraqi dictator. For five years he refused to participate in the U.N.'s "oil-for-food" program, through which Baghdad is able to sell oil for food and medicine. Since 1996, his loyalists have hoarded food and allowed medical supplies to rot in warehouses. He smuggles in Mercedes and Volvos, "absolutely obscene amounts of Scotch," according to Western intelligence sources, and various other luxury goods for personal consumption. He smuggles out what he can't use. Last month, the British pharmaceutical company Glaxo Wellcome discovered its Ventolin—a children's asthma medicine, which had been shipped to Iraq under a U.N. program—circulating on the black market in Lebanon.

Sure, the French, like the Russians, are eager to snap up lucrative oil contracts. Baghdad has openly promised preference to those who help end the embargo. The French also are interested in building coalitions against American power and influence ("the entire policy of France is dedicated to this" goal, says its foreign minister). But "the enemy of my enemy" sort of logic was supposed to have died with the end of the Cold War.

Ali Hassan al-Majid, a cousin of Saddam's, had the assignment in the late 1980s of providing a "final solution" to Iraq's Kurdish problem. Al-Majid boasted in a May 1987 meeting—a transcript of which was in the archive that fell into the hands of Human Rights Watch in 1991—that he would "kill them all [the Kurds] with chemical weapons. Who is going to say anything? The international community? F— them!" Al-Majid gassed civilians and ordered films to be made of his massacres and deportations. He was promoted to governor of Kuwait and subsequently minister of defense. If they get this Iraqi regime out of jail, what reward do the French really expect to receive? ♦

Traficant, Can He?

Will the crazy congressman from Youngstown kneecap the Democrats?

By Matt Labash

Of all the shots aimed at Rep. James Traficant (that he is a profane, ethically shaky, showboating vulgarian, for starters), there are none so cheap as those directed at his appearance. "It's tough being a fashion leader," the Youngstown Democrat admits. Knight-Ridder said Traficant's hair bespeaks "terminal bedhead," while the *Los Angeles Times* settled on a "Planet of the Apes sort of hair helmet." *Washingtonian* said he resembled "a creature from Lake Erie before it was cleaned up," while *George* speculated that his wardrobe was his way of "subtly campaigning for a pay raise."

It hardly seems fair. So when I'm permitted by Traficant's chief of staff Paul Marcone to shadow the Ohio pol for a day ("Unless he gets sick of you—then he'll throw you out," Marcone warns), I resolve to look beyond cosmetics: to get past Traficant's kelly-green Dacron bell-bottoms, past the double-knit jacket that has held up so valiantly since its purchase during the Ford administration, past the coif that Traficant's hairdresser wife can't tame, as it makes a brisk ascent from his serrated bangs up his conical crown, stopping to rest in a Peppermint Patty-style nest of hair, which looks to be his own.

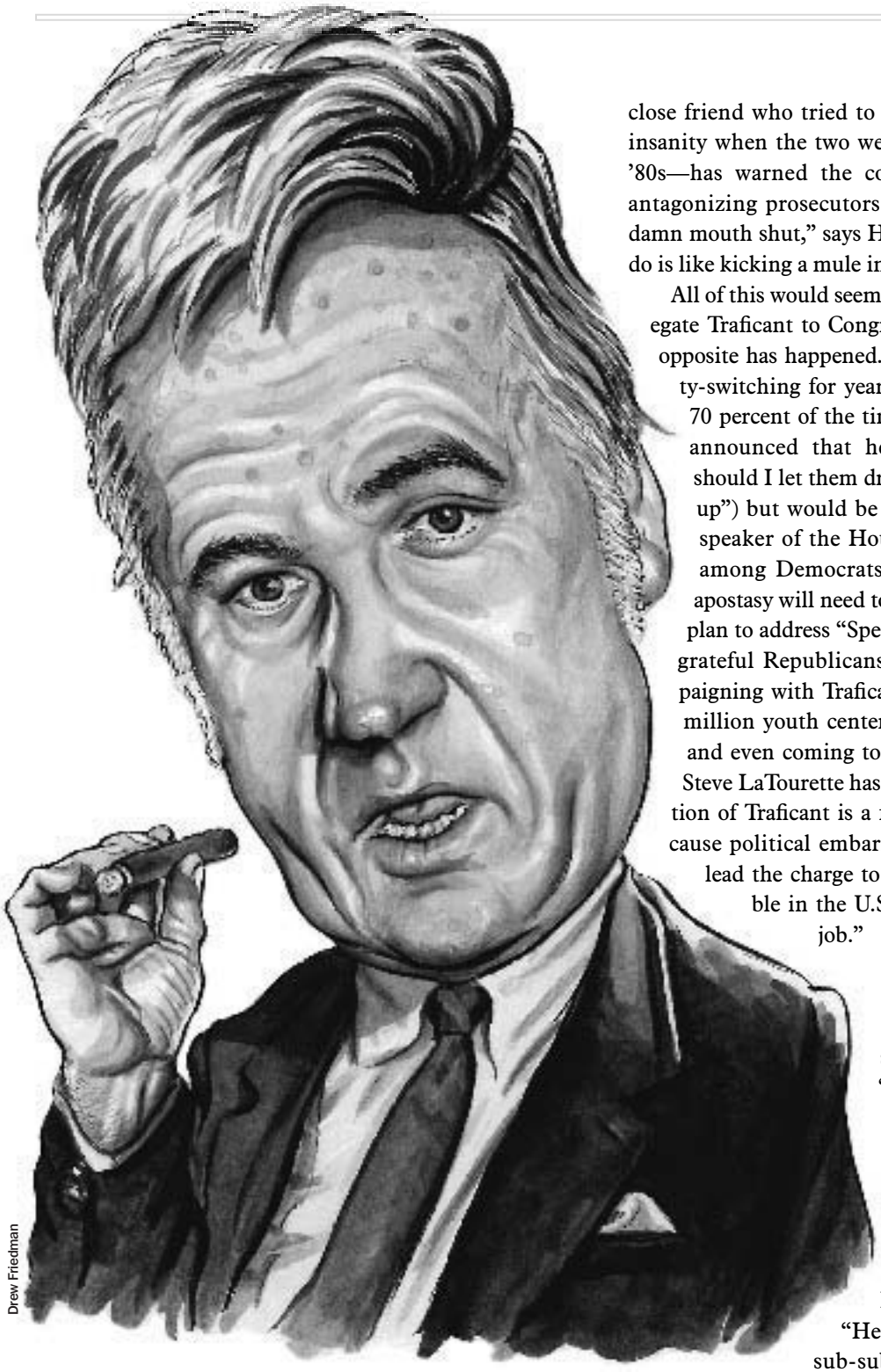
But it proves difficult extricating the man from the caricature, because, it seems, the man *is* the caricature. As I catch up with Traficant at the conclusion of his testimony before a Senate subcommittee, he shouts me down for being late, calls me "Kibosh" instead of "Labash," bellows to congressional passers-by that I'm there to do a "castration job," and gives me a molar-rattling goombah-style smack in the face as he inquires, "Why would you want to do a piece on a jackass like me? Though I am at the zenith of my jackasshood, I want you to know."

Many would concur with that last sentiment, which is why Traficant, despite his high spirits, warns that "the buzzards are circling." With control of the House up for grabs this fall, it's not out of the question that Traficant—an unreliable Democrat who frequently sides with Republicans—could hold the balance of power. But the eight-term congressman, who rarely wins his general elections with less than 75 percent of the vote, had to slug his way out of a contentious multi-candidate primary earlier this year. He suspects national Democrats plotted to vanquish him. And as if that weren't insult enough, he is now facing even more Democrats masquerading as independents in the general, who are trying to finish the job by, among other things, suggesting Traficant is crooked.

They have plenty of material to work with. In 1983, when Traficant was sheriff of Ohio's Mahoning County, he was tried for receiving mob bribes. He represented himself at trial and was acquitted after convincing a jury that he was conducting a one-man sting operation. (The IRS, unimpressed with his criminal exoneration, later dinged him civilly for not paying taxes on his take.) Instead of running campaign ads or sending direct mail to his constituents, Traficant has spent the better part of the year "preparing my electorate" by warning them he expects the U.S. attorney's office to indict him any day. What for, neither he nor prosecutors are saying. But the local press has speculated it will be an everything-and-the-kitchen-sinker—from sweetheart land deals to accepting illegal gifts, like free automobiles. Traficant insists he is innocent on all counts—whatever they may be. "They've got such a hard-on for me," he explains, "they" being the Justice Department, which he has long held is Satan's trainbearer.

Consequently, Traficant leveled a preemptive broadside in August against attorney general Janet Reno. He has always been a sucker for a good conspiracy theory. But on Fox's *Hannity & Colmes*, Traficant out-Oliver Stoned himself, saying he had come across information that Reno was a lesbian drunk who'd been discovered in compromising positions with call girls, making her an ideal mob puppet when she became Dade County state's attorney. Her "blackmailibility," he added, later manifest-

Matt Labash is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard.



Drew Friedman

ed itself in her failure to appoint an independent counsel to investigate the influence of Chinese money in our elections. The charges, which Reno denied ("Consider the source," she said) baffled even some of Traficant's friends. "What's that got to do with the price of watermelon?" asks Don Hanni Jr., Youngstown's legendary Democratic political boss and a renowned criminal defense attorney. Hanni—a close friend who tried to have Traficant committed for insanity when the two were political rivals in the early '80s—has warned the congressman against foolishly antagonizing prosecutors. "I tell him to keep his goddamn mouth shut," says Hanni, "but telling him what to do is like kicking a mule in the ass."

All of this would seem to be more than enough to relegate Traficant to Congress's fringes, but recently the opposite has happened. Traficant has flirted with party-switching for years—he votes with Republicans 70 percent of the time. This summer, however, he announced that he'd stay a Democrat ("Why should I let them drive me out? I think they're f— up") but would be voting for Denny Hastert for speaker of the House. This set off a mild panic among Democrats—who because of Traficant's apostasy will need to pick up two extra seats if they plan to address "Speaker" Gephardt. Not only that, grateful Republicans have actually taken to campaigning with Traficant, rewarding him with a $25 million youth center in his impoverished district, and even coming to his defense. Ohio Republican Steve LaTourette has said that if the latest investigation of Traficant is a fishing expedition intended to cause political embarrassment, "I will be happy to lead the charge to make sure everyone responsible in the U.S. Attorney's Office loses their job."

Besides telegraphing his choice for speaker, Traficant does nothing to endear himself to his party's leadership. "I'm gonna do what's best for America," he sniffs, "I wasn't elected to turn over a f— voting card to Dick Gephardt." One Democratic consultant says that if Traficant makes it through the election and Democrats regain the majority, "He'll be made chairman of the sub-subcommittee on public restrooms." For now, though, they are praying he's bluffing, and no one wants to risk further alienating him.

It's not the first time Traficant has found himself center stage. Born in Youngstown, the 59-year-old was a star quarterback at the University of Pittsburgh. After

getting waived by the Pittsburgh Steelers and Oakland Raiders, he ran a drug-counseling program that saw him named the Mahoning Valley's 1980 Citizen of the Year. His model citizen credentials, however, would shortly be called into question.

As Youngstown has long served as a shuttlecock between the Cleveland and Pittsburgh mafias, corruption infested the entire Mahoning Valley. In the '60s, the *Saturday Evening Post* stuck Youngstown with the unenviable laurel "Crimetown, U.S.A." And the title was borne out in the years that followed. It became nearly impossible for a civic-minded individual to avoid doing business with people bearing middle-name monikers like "Jeep" and "Beef." Enough car-bombings occurred that they became known in FBI circles as "Youngstown tune-ups." Locals joked that so many public officials were on the take, they didn't fear imprisonment, but rather, being annexed by Louisiana.

In this climate, Traficant was elected sheriff in 1980, and in his own inimitable style, quickly made his mark. He set new records for drug busts, and once ran his cruiser through the front-yard fence of a motorcycle gang's home. Constantly accusing other public officials of corruption, he enjoyed such a contentious relationship with the local FBI that they reportedly considered shutting down their branch office, as they feared a shoot-out with the sheriff. At the same time, he endeared himself to the citizenry, doing a brief jail stint himself after refusing to sign off on home foreclosures during a time when the steel bust saw the region's unemployment rate rocket to over 20 percent.

But in 1983, after getting caught on audio tape admitting to having accepted more than $100,000 from the mob (as David Grann reported in the *New Republic*, he told Charlie "the Crab" Carabbia, "I am a loyal f—"), Traficant was forced to stand trial. It may have been the most entertaining public-corruption spectacle in the history of the valley, which has seen its share. Discounting as fraudulent the confession that the feds said he signed, Traficant, who was not a laywer, elected to represent himself. During the course of the seven-week trial, which lawyer Don Hanni says was "some of the most brilliant defense work I've ever seen," Traficant cursed his way across the courtroom in short sleeves while munching cough drops, referred to himself as "my client," and asked the horrified judge for assistance in helping him muddle through procedural complexities, such as getting her removed from the bench.

After convincing the jury that he had pulled off "the most unorthodox sting in the history of Ohio politics," getting acquitted, and then demoting four of his deputies who had testified against him, Traficant, by now a local folk hero, won election to Congress in 1984, was elected president of his freshman class, and quickly solidified his image as the madman of the House when the IRS came after him for not paying taxes on his bribe. Conferring with his client, Traficant again decided to represent himself. As the IRS set about crushing him in court, Traficant conceded, "This stumbling jackass [the feds] may pull it off." They did. To this day, Traficant's $136,700 congressional salary is garnisheed, making his take-home pay, he says, about the same as a public-school teacher's.

While remaining a good Rust Belt Democrat who attaches "Buy America" amendments to nearly every appropriations bill, Traficant harbors a deep and abiding mistrust of the IRS, the Justice Department, and nearly every other federal entity that has made him a conservative darling. (Rush Limbaugh, whose visage adorns Traficant's congressional office lobby, calls him "my favorite Democrat.") During his profanity-strewn one-minute speeches to the empty House chamber—a regular C-SPAN highlight; he is apt to pop off on anything from the topless "foxy ladies" of the Ohio State rugby team to Boris Yeltsin's alcoholism—Traficant regularly lays waste his own party.

From the floor of the House, he says the "White House needs a lobotomy performed by a proctologist," and calls the Lincoln Bedroom the "Red Roof Inn." "If a dog urinates in a parking lot," he cries, "the EPA deems it a wetland." And OSHA should be shipped to Japan and China, so they can "screw those countries up." When a partial-birth abortion bill came up on the same day as a wildlife restoration bill, he fumed, "Unbelievable. Kill the babies, but save the trout and titmouse. Beam me up."

Review Traficant's one-minutes (which are available on his website, behind a glaring picture of him swinging a two-by-four with the inscription "Bangin' away in D.C."), and it's understandable why some Republicans find Traficant so appealing. He talks like they do, or the way they used to, before civility scolds and political expedience relegated such rhetoric to Dark Ages Weekends and Rotary luncheons. This helps explain why House Republicans named Traficant the "one-minute MVP," why they fast-tracked his taxpayer bill of rights, why they scatter puppy treats around his district when no other Democrats received projects in a $200 million emergency spending bill. It is why partisan Democrats like Barney Frank grouse, "I know we all want to show we like Traficant, but turning the House into eBay is a bad idea."

After spinning around the Capitol with Traficant, I

can see why he is well liked. He is gregarious and courteous to a fault. In a permutation of Huey Long's credo, every security guard is "chairman," every elevator operator "chairwoman." But after several minutes of uneventfulness, he cannot help but play provocateur. As we ride a crowded elevator in the Rayburn Building, the married congressman declares straight-faced and loudly, as if answering a question that was never asked, "A lot of women hit on me. I take them on. I feel I have a responsibility to the American woman."

Back in his office, Traficant walks past the macramé plants and 10-pound dumbbell on his desk, and sinks into a blue leather chair that sits close to a tie-rack teetering under a load of garish, skinny neckwear donated by his loyal C-SPAN following. The place feels kind of homey, and should, since he sleeps in his office to save money (he is, after all, on a subsistence salary). Traficant's lids look heavy through his auto-tint glasses, and one suspects the prosecutorial pressure is wearing on him, as over the last several months, numerous aides have been subpoenaed to testify before a grand jury. All this coming after Charles O'Nesti, his longtime (and now deceased) district director admitted that when he wasn't working for the congressman, he was moonlighting as a bagman for convicted racketeer Lenny Strollo.

Like all good law-flouting demagogues, Traficant has a special knack for eliciting sympathy from his constituents, turning their distrust of government into trust in Jim Traficant.

When discussing his corruption trial, Traficant grows agitated. "I destroyed the f— mob, and I'm very proud of that." (He seems to have missed a few, as the latest corruption sweep in the Mahoning Valley has netted 78 indictments.) As for his pending indictment, which Traficant is certain will come, he says, "My attorney will discuss the case no further." "Your attorney being you?" I ask. "Well, yeah," he says. "The man that will represent me will be a man I completely trust, and he'll be a f— bulldog."

Traficant rails against federal corruption, from the debacles at Waco and Ruby Ridge all the way back to J. Edgar Hoover. "The Chicago [mafia] had pictures of that transvestite in drag," he informs me. Inevitably, he gets around to his current obsession, Janet Reno. He has no evidence she's driving the investigation against him, though he claims an FBI informant nicknamed "Cheez1" told him there's a course offered at the FBI's Quantico training center on "how to get Traficant."

He says he has secret affidavits to prove his charges against Reno, though he's only in the preliminary stages of his investigation. I ask to see the affidavits, suggesting he blot out the names, but he demurs. "When you play poker, do you show your whole hand, Kibosh?" he asks. "Well, I don't either. Janet Reno is a f— traitor." If he's mistaken, he says, "All she has to do is sue me. I would sue her if she called me a f— traitor."

Like all good law-flouting demagogues, from Huey Long to Marion Barry to Edwin Edwards, Traficant has a special knack for eliciting sympathy from his constituents, turning his weakness into strength, and their distrust of government into trust in Jim Traficant. Though many of his allegations are daffy, he has likely headed off any pre-election indictment. Sources familiar with the investigation say the U.S. attorney's office is not anxious to get blowtorched by Traficant for affecting the outcome of his race. Not that it could. When I ask the Ohio state Democratic chairman, who can barely recall the names of Traficant's opponents, to handicap the election, he says confidently, "Traficant will win that district." And if he's indicted? "He'll probably win by a larger margin."

As Traficant works himself into a healthy froth, he abruptly stands up, commanding, "Now get out. You ain't gonna catch up with me no more. Don't call me again." He is not mad. I've been with the congressman for three hours, and his chief of staff says that if he dislikes someone, "He'll maybe give you five minutes before he throws you out." Traficant hands me a souvenir American flag as a parting gift, pointing an intent finger in summation. "I am a dangerous man. You know why? Because I've seen the other side of this f— one-eyed jack. And I know that we have a Justice Department, an IRS, a Treasury Department—they're wagging the dog, man. No American should fear their government."

Perhaps Traficant should fear only half his government. After all, he still has his friends in the GOP. And when I ask a Republican leadership aide if he is at all concerned about Traficant's rants or legal woes, he laughs the satisfied laugh of one who does not have to claim ownership. "Of course not," he says. "He's a Democrat! We get all of the benefits and none of the downside." Besides, he adds, "Traficant's a good guy. We'll go out of our way to help him—so long as he doesn't end up in jail." ♦

Public School Confidential!

Behind these "nice" walls . . .
a parent's nightmare . . . a grade-school jungle!

By Catherine Seipp

Los Angeles

As everyone here with young children knows, Los Angeles has a few public elementary schools considered so desirable that people lie about their addresses to get into them. These schools are safe and have relatively high test scores, in large part because their small size limits enrollment to the mostly middle-class residents who live in the neighborhood and keep close watch on their kids' education. The shorthand for this situation is "involved parents."

Thanks to the recession, I was able to buy a house in such an area in time for my daughter to begin first grade in 1994. This was shortly after the last voucher initiative on the California ballot was voted down. I had been one of the naysayers, for all the usual reasons. But today, after five years' experience with one of the better public schools, I've changed my mind about vouchers. I'm voting for Prop. 38 this November—a ballot measure that would provide a $4,000 voucher for every California student. Not only that, I have switched from more than two decades of basically voting the straight Democratic ticket and re-registered as a Republican. I just can't stand to be associated any longer with a party that wants to continue the educational status quo.

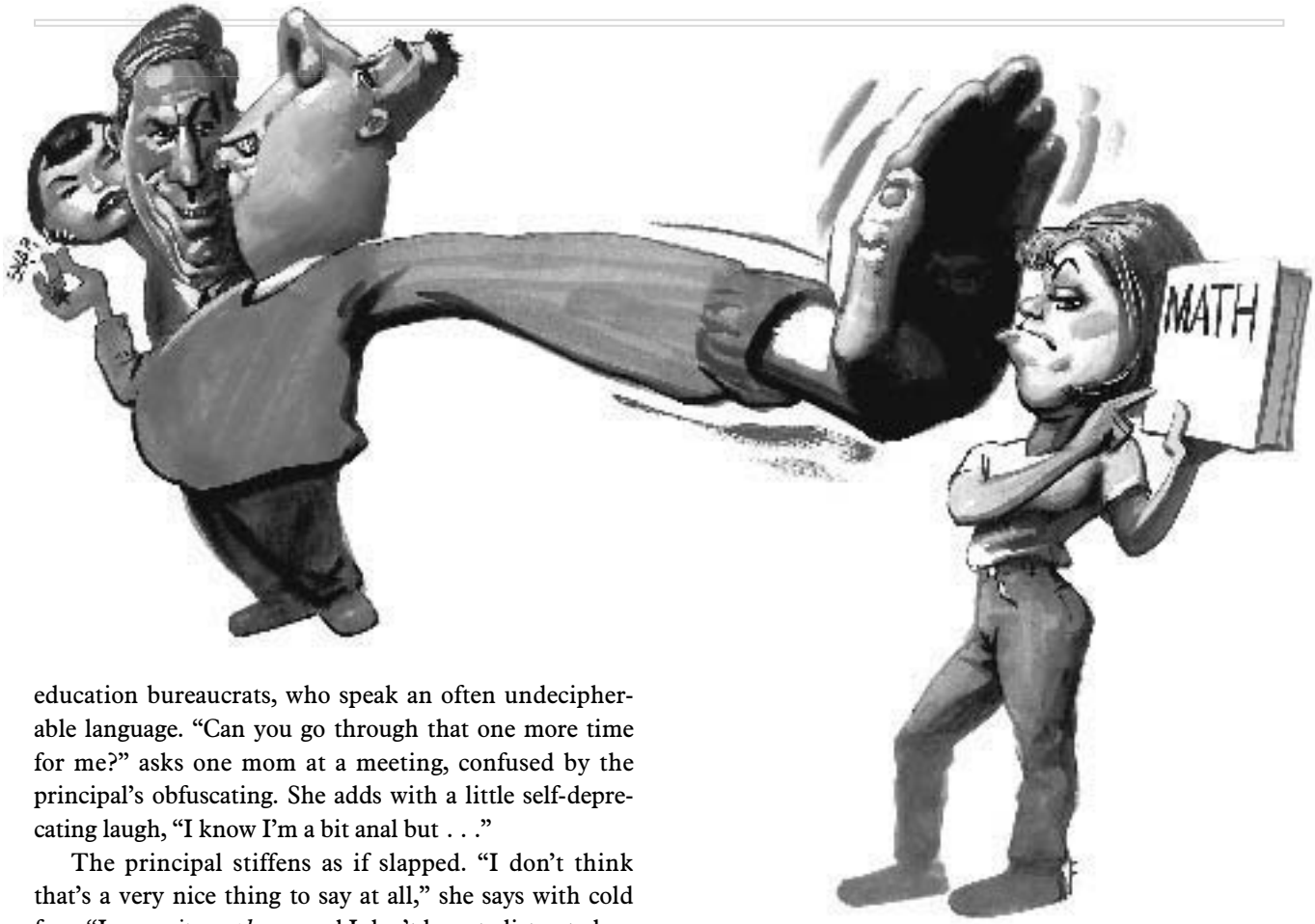
The argument that poor children should at least have the opportunity to escape bad public schools is one that I find quite convincing. Even a good public school, however, isn't always so attractive once you've looked at it closely. Its coveted, brass-ring status can breed complacency when there's no real competition. As the various principals at my daughter's public school used to remind us whenever parents questioned anything too persistently, "There's a waiting list *this* long of families who'd love to have a spot here . . ."

Here is the log of my journey to the other side.

Illustrations by Fred Harper

1ST GRADE, MAY. The school is a cozy and eclectic community with many earnest, well-educated parents, but by the end of the year I notice this can mean conflict with the

Catherine Seipp is a Los Angeles freelance writer and columnist for Mediaweek Online.



education bureaucrats, who speak an often undecipherable language. "Can you go through that one more time for me?" asks one mom at a meeting, confused by the principal's obfuscating. She adds with a little self-deprecating laugh, "I know I'm a bit anal but . . ."

The principal stiffens as if slapped. "I don't think that's a very nice thing to say at all," she says with cold fury. "I am a *city employee*, and I don't have to listen to language like that!" The room fills with an embarrassed silence. Apparently the principal, unfamiliar with this well-worn psychoanalytical shorthand, thinks she is being called an anus.

2ND GRADE, OCTOBER. I wonder why my daughter, who learned basic addition and subtraction in first grade, now spends math time wrapping elastic bands around plastic sticks. I ask at a curriculum meeting why we can't move on to more arithmetic. Another mom scolds me, her voice trailing off in reproach: "If we as parents are going to support progressive education . . ." The two teachers in attendance look hurt; they've waited years for these textbooks, which are built around the dreaded new "fuzzy math."

Later, my daughter's teacher, who's about to retire and so is willing to say anything, sighs and tells me it's all part of a dumbed-down lesson plan designed to build up student self-esteem. "That's where we are in the cycle right now," she says. "I've been doing this so long I can see the same wheel just keep turning round and round."

3RD GRADE, JANUARY. I ask to transfer my daughter to a different room. One of her classmates is a boy who has focused his attentions on her since second grade—hitting her, knocking her down, and asking to be invited over to "have sex." Also, the teacher is reluctant to teach cursive writing "until everyone is ready," and in a homework assignment instructing students to correct sentences for proper grammar, she spells the word "proper" with three "p"s.

The new principal isn't happy about my transfer request. He warns that next year there will be only two fourth-grade classes, instead of the three third-grade rooms we have this year. "So you're going to have a problem then if you want to avoid this boy," he explains in kindly, Miss Mary Ann of *Romper Room* tones. I can't figure out why two children can't be separated in two different classrooms. Maybe it has something to do with fuzzy math.

3RD GRADE, FEBRUARY. As I pick my daughter up one afternoon, the principal stops us in the hall, manila folder held officiously in hand. "Your mom says you want to learn cursive writing," he says to my daughter in his singsongy way. "But as I look at your scribble-scrabble drawings, I wonder how you think you're ready. Do you think this kind of work would impress people at the Art Institute of Chicago?" I guess he is trying to pay me back for the transfer request by humiliating my daughter. But the point goes over her head. She's just amazed that the prin-

cipal, far away in his office, has managed to get hold of her third-grade classroom work.

3RD GRADE, JUNE. Another mom and I can't find the end-of-year school picnic in the park and call to ask for directions, but no one at the school office knows where the picnic is. I ask the principal if he doesn't think he ought to have an idea of the whereabouts of his entire third and fourth-grade classes, other than somewhere in a 4,000-acre urban park. "No, I don't think I need to know," he says primly. "Because when you signed the permission slip for the field trip, the district isn't liable."

4TH GRADE, SEPTEMBER. The school starts a special "dual language program," in which all kindergartners will be taught in both English and Spanish. This will be beneficial, the program's proponents explain, because Spanish-speaking children find it easier to learn to read in their own language. Bilingual education has been banned in California at this point, but apparently special dual-language programs are a loophole. The notes from a meeting are posted on the hall bulletin board. Someone has asked why, if it's better for Spanish-speaking children to learn to read in Spanish, it isn't also better for English-speaking children to learn to read in English. The answer: "This is unknown."

4TH GRADE, NOVEMBER. I become fascinated with these bulletin board notes about school meetings. One recounts how a parent complained that two children shared one seatbelt on a field trip. The principal's response: When parents sign permission slips for field trips, "the district isn't liable."

4TH GRADE, FEBRUARY. My daughter worriedly tells me that she needs to bring in two pencils the next day or she'll be in trouble, because the teacher's aide needs them to give to students who forget their pencils. I don't mind donating classroom supplies, but I find it hard to wrap my mind around this redistribution program.

"But if *everyone* has to bring in two pencils," I say, "then everyone will have enough pencils." Can't children just bring in extra pencils and keep them at their desks instead of being forced to get involved in this rather Stalinist system of pencil handling? "No, no, you just don't get it," wails my daughter. "She'll be mad and I'll be benched."

I have a sudden insight into the core philosophy of the anti-vouchers camp: Don't provide for yourself, provide for *us*, so we can provide for everyone in the way that we see fit. This kind of thinking is pervasive and makes for a miserable lunch period, among other things. Children aren't made to throw away their own lunch trash; instead, everyone has to pick up at least 10 pieces of trash, and to allow time for that, they get only 15 minutes to eat. Still, the lunch area always looks dirty.

4TH GRADE, APRIL. A six-week-long "civil rights project" concludes. Students team up to act out skits based on incidents like school desegregation and the Million Man March. But they are never taught the foundation or theory of civil rights, only a confused, simplistic message of Don't Be Racist. "Mom, Mom!" one of my daughter's classmates cries, after seeing Aretha Franklin in trouble with her creditors on the news. "They're being mean to this African-American lady on TV! They're violating her civil rights!"

5TH GRADE, DECEMBER. While the school emphasizes teamwork, ethnicity, and special projects, not much attention is paid to sentence structure, American history, or laying broad foundations in basic areas of knowledge—which would at least have put the civil rights project in context. Over the years, my daughter has made two dioramas (the Indian project), been misinformed that a jellyfish is a mollusk (the marine life project), and told by a visiting lecturer that everyone is a different shiny color, just like the iridescent scales on a fish (the self-esteem project, presumably). But she's never heard anyone at school even mention Paul Revere's ride. Her history textbook is rather engaging, but the class rarely reads it, being constantly waylaid by projects.

My daughter is both bored and confused (not a winning combination) by the lesson plan and unhappy in the classroom. One day the teacher screams at her for trying to use her asthma inhaler in class. The principal tells me that asthma inhalers must be kept in the office.

"So now what we need to do is schedule a series of meetings to help you understand how you've been breaking the law by keeping the inhaler in her backpack," the principal says, in high Miss Mary Ann dudgeon. What if a student has an asthma attack in class while the inhaler is locked up in the office? "When you signed the medical forms during enrollment," he explains, the very model of a modern petty bureaucrat, "the district isn't liable."

The principal backs down quickly and completely after I contact his higher-ups and find out asthma inhalers can indeed be kept by students in their backpacks with a doctor's note. Still, the incident makes me realize I don't trust him or my daughter's teacher to behave with com-

mon sense or even decency during any run-of-the-mill mishap.

5TH GRADE, JANUARY. I pull my daughter out of this coveted public elementary school mid-year and enroll her in a nearby private school—an expense I hadn't counted on until sixth grade. But improvement is immediate. The teachers know their subjects, and everyone gets at least half an hour to eat lunch in a clean room, where students throw away their own trash. When I go into the office, I don't feel like a welfare applicant being processed by a bored social worker. The tacit message is: We know you and your tuition money can go elsewhere. I've often heard the difference in how parents are treated at public schools and how they're treated at private ones described as the difference between going to the D.M.V. and to the Auto Club. To me, it seems more like the difference between going to the D.M.V. and going to Bloomingdale's.

The conventional wisdom is that my story is a story of white flight. But it happens that my daughter's new private school looks less white than the public one she attended. Although I feel the pinch every time I write a tuition check, the annual cost (about $7,300) is half that of schools on the more expensive West Side of town, where anti-voucher sentiment is solid. Evidently a lot of parents where I live, which is heavily minority, don't have the option of "good" local public schools and are willing to scrape together the tuition.

Last month I went to a vouchers debate at the University of Southern California and heard Erwin Chemerinsky, the constitutional law professor, argue against them. "Trust me, I have two children in private school at $16,000 each," he said, making the point that the $4,000 tax credit Prop. 38 would provide towards private school tuition is pointless. "The reality is, to provide a quality education costs this much money."

But I don't trust him, because it doesn't cost that much money at my daughter's school, and with a $4,000 tax credit a lot more families could afford to enroll. Whether Prop. 38 passes or not makes no difference to me personally. I can afford the tuition, even if I don't move in a milieu where people find non-parochial private schools costing less than $16,000 unimaginable.

I often hear people from the more moneyed sections of town, whose children have always been in private school, argue against Prop. 38. They say it would cause the middle class to abandon public schools. And I wonder: Do they mean that only the rich should be allowed to abandon public schools? ♦

The Facts of Married Life

Ozzie and Harriet were right

By Fred Barnes

Detail from Michael Pacher's *The Marriage of the Virgin*, c. 1490. CORBIS.

Judith Wallerstein causes heartburn among marriage counselors, social workers, lawyers, journalists, feminists, academic experts on divorce—and some men and women who've been divorced.

Valerie H. Colb, co-author of the tellingly entitled *The Smart Divorce*, for instance, sneers at Wallerstein's latest book, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: A 25 Year Landmark Study*, as "purportedly definitive." Divorce lawyer Raoul Felder calls her a "pseudo-scientist." Columnist Katha Pollitt darkly suggests that the children of divorce whom Wallerstein has interviewed over the past quarter-century are lying to her about their anxiety and pain. Howard Markman, a psychologist and marriage researcher at the University of Denver, insists she ignores evidence that contradicts her view about the suffering divorce inflicts on children. Even *New Republic* senior editor Margaret Talbot, an admirer of Wallerstein, delicately skips over her newest and boldest finding—that staying together in a loveless marriage really is good for the kids—while lauding her new study of the destructive impact of divorce on children in the *New York Times Book Review*.

Why is Wallerstein such an enormous threat? Because she and a handful of other researchers, including Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher, are beginning to change the way America sees divorce. For now, Wallerstein's influence has been on elite opinion, but mass opinion may follow. Her findings were a cover story in *Time* last month, and she's been treated respectfully—and sometimes reverently—in recent television appearances. An excerpt from *The Case for Marriage*, in which Waite and Gallagher strongly endorse Wallerstein's qualms about divorce, appeared in *Talk*.

The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce
A 25 Year Landmark Study
by Judith S. Wallerstein, Julia M. Lewis, and Sandra Blakeslee
Hyperion, 347 pp., $24.95

The Case for Marriage
Why Married People Are Happier, Healthier and Better Off Financially
by Linda J. Waite and Maggie Gallagher
Doubleday, 256 pp., $24.95

Wallerstein challenges the view, dominant since the 1960s, that if parents divorce amicably, the worst their children will suffer is temporary disruption in their lives: The long-term adverse impact will be nil. Since lawyers and counselors and academics created this benign take on divorce in the first place, they have a vested interest in preserving it—which makes Wallerstein their worst nightmare. She is destroying their baby.

In her first book on the children of divorce, *Second Chances: Men, Women, and Children a Decade After Divorce*, published in 1989, she deconstructed the myth of the happy divorce. Parents who separate may thrive, but their kids face

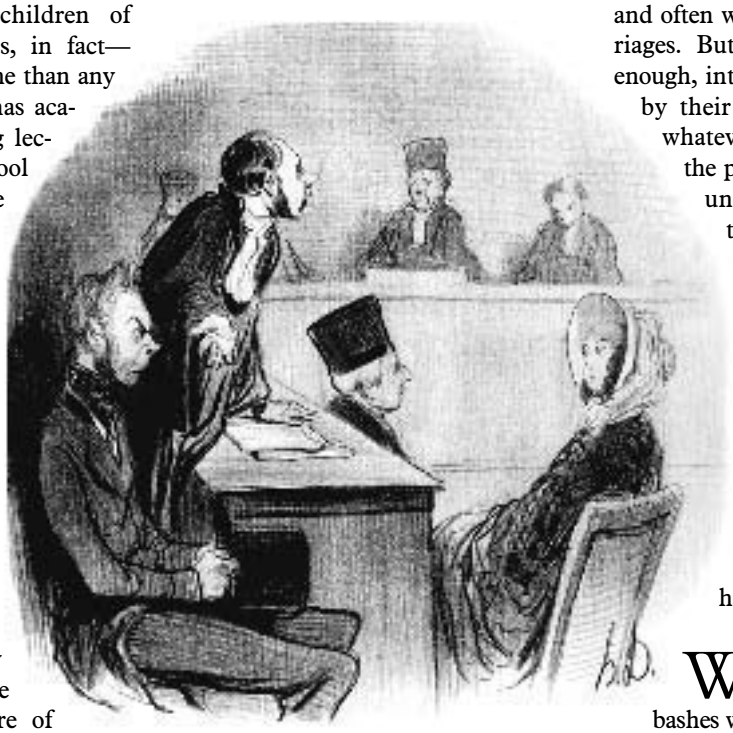
Fred Barnes is executive editor of The Weekly Standard.

painful consequences that last well into middle age. Now, in *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce*, she makes a compelling case for keeping a marriage intact for the sake of the children (absent violent conflict, of course). A bad marriage, it turns out, is better than a good divorce as far as the health and welfare of kids are concerned.

Wallerstein is a difficult target to attack for several reasons. She's not a fly-by-night writer, but a researcher with reams of empirical evidence to back up her conclusions. She has interviewed more children of divorce—many thousands, in fact—over a longer period of time than any of her critics have. She has academic credentials, having lectured for years at the School of Social Welfare at the University of California at Berkeley. And she's neither a conservative nor a religious foe of divorce. Wallerstein, now seventy-eight years old, is a social scientist with a heart, caring deeply about the children she's come to know and keeping in regular contact with many of them. Most important of all, she courageously and honestly reports what she finds, though it hardly makes her a heroine in the liberal, permissive culture of Marin County (across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco), where she lives and has conducted her studies. She's discovered that the effect of divorce on children is far worse than anyone suspected, and she hasn't flinched from saying so.

Married for fifty-three years and the mother of three, Wallerstein began studying kids from recently separated or divorced parents in 1971. She started with 131 children from sixty families, intensively interviewing each child, fifty-nine mothers, and forty-seven fathers weeks after the breakup, then following up after eighteen months, five years, and ten years. At fifteen years, she interviewed many in the original group and contacted them again after twenty-five years. Each time, she heard tales of the unmitigated agony of divorce for kids. But she wasn't able to confirm the folk wisdom that kids fare better if their parents stick with an unhappy marriage. For that task, she needed a comparison group, and for *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce* she organized and interviewed such a group: twenty-eight adult women and sixteen men.

Exploding the myth that a bad marriage automatically harms children, Wallerstein offers unequivocal advice to parents thinking about divorce: "I think you should seriously consider staying together for the sake of your children." The couples in her study who stayed married "struggled with all the problems that beset modern marriage—infidelity, depression, sexual boredom, loneliness, rejection." But so long as they maintained "their loving, shared parenting without feeling martyred," as many did, their children didn't suffer, Wallerstein says. It's not true that the hallmark of most unhappy marriages is open conflict, she points out. "That children are aware of their parents' unhappiness and are themselves unhappy because of it is also not true." For kids, divorce is not the solution to a troubled marriage. Rather, it is the "root cause of the trouble" that follows in their lives and shapes their destinies, Wallerstein says.



To her surprise, Wallerstein found scads of striking differences between children reared by unhappily married parents and those whose parents divorced. Getting married was a problem for the children of divorce. Many in her study (40 percent, to be exact) have never married. Others acted rashly and made bad choices, picking spouses in a "forlorn, haphazard way," frequently choosing lovers with serious problems, and often winding up with failed marriages. But "people raised in good-enough, intact families, who feel loved by their parents" didn't settle for whatever fell in their path. With the picture of a working (even if unhappy) marriage, they had the confidence to wait for a suitable mate. They felt part of a larger family, and they were comfortable having children. For grownup children of divorce, "the lack of observations and memories of a working marriage is a serious handicap," Wallerstein says. "It's like becoming a dancer without having seen a dance."

With data and riveting case histories, Wallerstein bashes what she calls "the beguiling myth of divorce" in America. The idea that divorce may be beneficial for children is but a small part of this myth. All along, children have known better, she says. If they could vote, "almost all would vote to maintain their parents' marriage." Long after the divorce—and even long after their parents have remarried other partners—they pine for their parents to reunite.

Among the myths that Wallerstein refutes is that divorce merely leaves children in a truncated version of a two-parent family: "It is a different kind of family, in which children feel less protected and less certain about their future than children in reasonably good intact families." Their parents are less atten-

All photos: CORBIS.

Opposite: Honoré Daumier's drawing The Adulterer's Complaint. *Above, an eighteenth-century engraving,* A Caution to Old Batchellors.

tive and more unstable and volatile. Wallerstein debunks the notion that divorce spares children years of parental conflict. "Divorce does not rescue children from chaotic families when the adults are unable and unwilling to change their lifestyles," she says. And often, those parents are not willing to change. If they were, they probably would not have divorced.

Then there's the myth of "parallel parenting." This is the euphemism used by divorce mediators to pretend that two parents raising a child separately are the equivalent of two parents together. It's a "great slogan," like "quality time," Wallerstein says, "but it can't replicate the cooperative parenting that children and parents need." Another myth is that a good remarriage will help children recover from divorce. The children she's studied, however, were not aided in overcoming the trauma of divorce by their parents' happy remarriages to new spouses. "I finally realized," she confesses, "that, for most of these children, stepparents remained secondary figures compared to their attachment to their biological parents."

Finally, Wallerstein rebuts the idea that children whose dissatisfied parents often argue and criticize each other would do better if they divorced. Here, she makes an important distinction about the value of intact families. Disagreements are normal in an intact family, "but the structure of the marriage itself contains them and makes them safe," she says. Arguments end, and children learn how disputes "can be resolved without threatening the integrity of the family." In cases of divorce, though, fighting "has a fundamentally different quality." It's both normal and inevitable, and squabbles are often unbridled and enduring.

What lifts Wallerstein's book above dry sociology are the wrenching life stories she recounts of children of divorce. Many lead lives of despair. But even those who ultimately find some happiness and success pass through years of difficulty and dysfunction. Wallerstein was the first to discover the "sleeper effect" under which kids who seem to be doing well through their adolescence falter as adults. "Contrary to what we have long thought," she writes, "the major impact of divorce" rises in adulthood along with the prospects for romance and marriage. "When it becomes time to choose a life mate and build a new family, the effects of divorce crescendo." Wallerstein cites a woman named Lisa as "my best case." Lisa has a successful career, but she's spent years "entangled with losers," as she put it, and feels numb while having sex. She now lives with a man she doesn't love and doesn't intend to marry.

Critics of Wallerstein offer two major complaints—and they're both specious. The first is that participants in her study are unrepresentative because they come from an affluent, upper-middle-class enclave. And the second is that her participants have typically sought counseling while going through divorce. But what follows from these complaints is that Wallerstein's sample consists of children who have *advantages* in facing divorce. They have far fewer economic problems, which often exacerbate the deprivation and uprootedness associated with divorce, and their parents are concerned enough to have sought outside help in coping with divorce. The kids in Wallerstein's studies have probably been treated as kindly by divorce as any can be—and for most other children, it is far worse.

Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher, in their new *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People Are Happier, Healthier and*

Better Off Financially, have attracted still stronger criticism, perhaps because they argue even more strenuously than Wallerstein in favor of getting married and staying married. Waite, a sociology professor at the University of Chicago, and Gallagher, who runs the Marriage Project at the Institute for American Values and writes a syndicated column, make their case in politically incorrect terms bound to infuriate feminists. But they make it effectively—and readably. And while they lack the vivid personal case studies that Wallerstein has accumulated, they have plenty of large-scale studies from all over the world—the work of professional demographers, not pro-marriage activists—to rely on in documenting the benefits of marriage.

What has riled critics the most is not their impressive array of evidence that marriage is good for one's health, longevity, pocketbook, career success, and sex life. It's their withering attack on cohabitation that draws the most fire. Roughly four million couples now live together outside wedlock, and Waite and Gallagher contend they suffer from cramped horizons and weak commitment to their partners. By insisting on freedom, they pay a price that many of them and their defenders don't want to hear about. They don't "reap the advantages of a deeper partnership," including the "profound physical-health benefits married couples get," according to *The Case For Marriage*. And because of minimal commitment, they can't plan for the long haul or guarantee to stick together in illness or unemployment. Worse, they have less chance of a successful marriage later.

So why the furor by the pro-divorce crowd? I think they see dangerous intellectual inroads being made—mostly by the toughest people for them to combat: liberal women. There was *The Divorce Culture* by Barbara Dafoe Whitehead two years ago, and now these two books. In *Slate*, Katha Pollitt includes Whitehead among conservative "family values ideologues," where Whitehead doesn't belong, and she fulminates that Wallerstein, Waite, and Gallagher are guilty of "propaganda, publicity, pop-psychology, and politics." Such rage could only be prompted by fear of losing. ♦

The train entrance to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Bettman / CORBIS.

The Allies and Auschwitz

Should we have bombed the German death camps?

BY MATTHEW BERKE

Of the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, nearly a million perished at Auschwitz, an extermination camp located near the Polish town of Oswiecim. Most of Auschwitz's victims were dispatched in mass-production style—herded into large "shower rooms," then sprayed with deadly Zyklon-B gas, and, finally, transferred to crematoria for incineration. At peak operation the Nazis disposed of perhaps ten or twelve thousand people a day in this manner. After 1942, Auschwitz itself functioned mainly as a transitional camp; new prisoners were brought there until they could be reassigned to nearby satellites—to Auschwitz II at Birkenau to be gassed, or to Auschwitz III at Monowitz to work as slave laborers at an I.G. Farben factory.

In recent decades, historians of the Holocaust have debated whether the Allies could have done more to rescue Europe's Jews from the Nazi death machine—with special attention to their refusal to bomb the extermination complex at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Historian David Wyman, author of "Why Auschwitz Was Never Bombed" (in the May 1978 issue of *Commentary*) and *The Abandonment of the Jews* (1984), has argued that such an operation was well within Allied capabilities—and that the failure to bomb constituted passive complicity with genocide.

The Bombing of Auschwitz
Should the Allies Have Attempted It?
edited by Michael J. Neufeld and Michael Berenbaum
St. Martin's Press, 350 pp., $29.95

The Bombing of Auschwitz, a new anthology, is in effect a series of responses to the Wyman thesis. The essays in the book set the decision *not* to bomb within its military and political contexts, and consider three issues: the technical feasibility of an attack on Auschwitz; the possibility that even a successful raid would fail to save lives; and the likely costs of an attempted mission.

The essays here are all excellent. Though Wyman himself (for unexplained reasons) declined to contribute, the volume includes over a dozen eminent scholars, including Martin Gilbert, Gerhard L. Weinberg, Walter Laquer, and Deborah E. Lipstadt.

Almost immediately after the onset of Hitler's Final Solution in 1941, Jew-

Matthew Berke is managing editor of First Things.

ish leaders and organizations began proposing schemes (most of them unrealistic) for the Allied governments to rescue Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe. The idea of bombing Auschwitz—or, as was initially suggested, bombing the rail lines leading to it—did not actually arise until fairly late in the war, the spring of 1944, by which time 95 percent of Holocaust victims were already dead. Before that, Nazi targets in Eastern Europe had been beyond the reach of Allied bombers based in England.

The logistical problem was overcome in 1944, however, when the Allied air forces established bases in Italy. And so Jewish leaders and organizations, feeling a special urgency because of imminent deportations from Hungary (the last surviving Jewish community in occupied Europe), made their proposal.

On both sides of the Atlantic, officials rejected the idea in nearly identical language: "impracticable," "of very doubtful feasibility," "costly and dangerous," "unacceptable from a military standpoint," and so on. Attacking the rail lines was immediately ruled out, since tracks could be quickly repaired and trains rerouted. As for bombing Auschwitz itself, heavy bombers flying at high altitude were regarded as unfit for the task because they couldn't provide the accuracy required and would be more likely to slaughter prisoners than to destroy the gas chambers and crematoria. Light and medium bombers, it was said, could not carry both sufficient fuel *and* an adequate bomb load over such distance; moreover, to achieve accuracy they would have to fly low in broad daylight, dramatically increasing their exposure to antiaircraft.

In a now-famous memorandum of July 4, 1944, John J. McCloy, U.S. assistant secretary of war, insisted that an air operation "could be executed only by the diversion of considerable air support essential to the success of our forces now engaged in decisive operations and would in any case be of . . . doubtful efficacy." In a November memo, McCloy summarized the consensus in both America and Britain: "The positive solution to this problem [i.e., the Holocaust] is the earliest possible victory over Germany, to which end we should exert our entire means," employing "strategic air forces . . . in the destruction of industrial target systems vital to the dwindling potential of the enemy."

Reading the various Allied responses more than thirty years later, Wyman saw bureaucratic disingenuousness and indifference, sometimes tinged with anti-Semitism. Marshalling considerable data on World War II aircraft, he sketched a number of raid scenarios.

The Bombing of Auschwitz contains criticisms of Wyman's analysis by James H. Kitchens and Richard H. Levy, as well as essays in support of bombing by Stuart G. Erdheim, Rondall R. Rice, and Richard G. Davis. On both sides, the arguments—over capabilities of aircraft, meteorological factors, accuracy of maps and reconnaissance photos, German defenses, and so on—are interesting, if arcane. Most readers will come away with a sense that bombing Auschwitz, if not impossible, would have been difficult. Richard Davis provides a bridge position when he concludes that, yes, Auschwitz could have been put out of commission, but only through repeated attacks—a kind of mini-campaign rather than a single raid.

In either case, would a successful bombing actually have saved Jewish lives? Wyman and the bombing advocates emphasize the burden that losing an efficient killing factory would have imposed on Nazi genocide. By contrast, those opposed to the bombing stress the point (made by Allied officials at the time) that the Nazis were fanatically determined to kill as many Jews as possible, by any means and at virtually any cost—whether by mass shootings (the primary method of extermination in the early days of the Final Solution) or by long death marches (which they employed toward the end of the war).

Then there is the issue of opportunity cost: Bombing Auschwitz would have meant not bombing other targets. While Wyman and other advocates see the diversion of Allied airpower as minuscule, opponents stress the need for every last plane during the late spring and summer of 1944: for D-Day operations and the subsequent Allied struggle to break out of Normandy.

Airpower was further stretched by the constant attacks on enemy oil supplies in Romania—attacks the Luftwaffe was forced to answer by diverting German fighters from France. Over the longer term, the anti-oil campaign did in fact shorten the war by bleeding Germany of fuel. Gerhard Weinberg argues that this policy probably saved more Jewish lives than bombing Auschwitz would have:

> There were, as is well known, thousands of deaths every day into the final days of the war; and many of the surviving camp inmates had been so weakened by hunger and disease that thousands more died even after liberation. In this connection, it might be worthwhile to consider how many more Jews would have survived had the war ended even a week or ten days earlier—and conversely, how many more would have died had the war lasted an additional week or ten days.

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

Overall, the opponents of bombing seem to make the stronger case. Attacking Auschwitz was always a high-risk, low-probability idea. Perhaps the strongest case *for* it hinges not on technical analysis or counterfactual history so much as symbolism. One might argue that Auschwitz, the ultimate symbol of Nazi evil and perhaps the ultimate icon of collective evil, needed to be attacked directly. As coeditor Michael Berenbaum writes, even if those opposed to the bombing were right, "they impoverish our collective future. The final moral judgment must be: *it should have been unbearable*." Indeed, in every war, there are some actions that defy simple calculation, because the thought of not taking them is unbearable.

In August 1944, for example, Allied air forces dropped supplies into Warsaw to aid the Polish underground rise against the Nazis. The operation was a disaster: Many planes were lost and 90 percent of the supplies fell into German hands. The logistics of this case were different from the proposed bombing of Auschwitz, but what is similar is that military officials opposed the operation as unfeasible and were overridden by a political decision at the highest level.

Why, then, didn't Jewish leaders try to circumvent the bureaucratic process and appeal directly to Roosevelt and Churchill to make Auschwitz a priority? The president, by that time, was trying to ease the Jewish plight (or at least appear to), while the prime minister was eager to execute a feasible rescue plan.

Timidity and moral cowardice among Jewish leaders was not the problem. Nor was it a matter of access. In the end, as Richard H. Levy writes, there was "no shortage of people who could have placed the bombing question before Roosevelt, but not one, Jew or non-Jew, civilian or military, believed in the proposed operation with sufficient conviction to see that it was in fact considered by the president."

Jewish leaders were divided among themselves—and even within themselves. Many could not accept the idea of killing Jewish prisoners, even if most were already doomed, based on mere conjecture that it might save others later on. Even the proponents of bombing hedged their proposals with such expressions as, "might appreciably slow down the slaughter, at least temporarily" and "not clear that it would really help the victims."

If they were wrong, they were wrong. But a fair review of the facts does not support the accusatory tone exhibited by Wyman and others. As Gerhard Weinberg notes, "The shadow of doubt that enough was not done will always remain, even if there were really not many things that could have been done. Any examination of the failure to do more must, however, carefully avoid a most dangerous shift in the apportioning of responsibility. It is the killers, whether in an office, a murder squad, or a killing center, who bear the central responsibility for their deeds. Any general distribution of blame, the 'we are all guilty' syndrome, only serves to exculpate the truly guilty. And those were not to be found among the Allies." ♦

Designing Change

The National Gallery exhibits the rise of art nouveau for a class nouveau. **BY MARGARET BOERNER**

How could anything so preposterous have ever been thought beautiful? You can see the low end in the cheap commercial imitations that still stock the flea markets and junk stores of America. Ceramic snakes entwining puce-colored vases. Oak chairs with undulating arms and legs. Electric lamps formed of naked bronze maidens in a swirl of bronze scarves. Tobacco jars in the shape of misshapen barn owls. Anthropomorphized beds, bureaus, and chairs. Handles on teapots and drawers that make grasping them an act of daring. Clocks designed more to accost you than to give you the time.

But even at its most original, the style represented what early critics called "chaos in design." It comprised—to quote the superb catalogue of the exhibition that has just opened at the National Gallery's East Wing in Washington, D.C.—scenes in which "snakes twisted into ingenious knots for stair balusters threaten you as you ascend; the door knocker becomes a grinning satyr; and even the carpet casts a malevolent eye at you as you traverse it."

Nonetheless, from 1890 until its fading as a distinct school during World War I, this style of design swept across Europe and America—taking its title from an avant-garde shop in Paris that its owner, Siegfried Bing, named *L'Art Nouveau*: The New Art. When *Art Nouveau, 1890-1914* opened at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London earlier this year, the British reviewers tended to see in the exhibition only the hackneyed, *fin-de-siècle* themes attributed to its late Victorian and Edwardian age: "degeneracy, progress, nature, eroticism, mysticism, and consumerism." But there is, in fact, more to this rich and satisfying exhibition than a slurry of such generalities.

A loose school of architectural and interior design extending from the façades of houses to the shapes of dessert forks, art nouveau was a movement that satisfied the taste of a newly prosperous and cosmopolitan middle class for elegant domestic stuff. Earlier in the nineteenth century, arts-and-crafts designers such as William Morris and the pre-Raphaelite painters in England—indeed, designers all over the western world—had turned to folk themes, nature, and hand crafting. What they were typically aiming at was the creation of a style that would, in some sense, skip over the commercialized products of the middle class by uniting (or rather, reuniting, as they

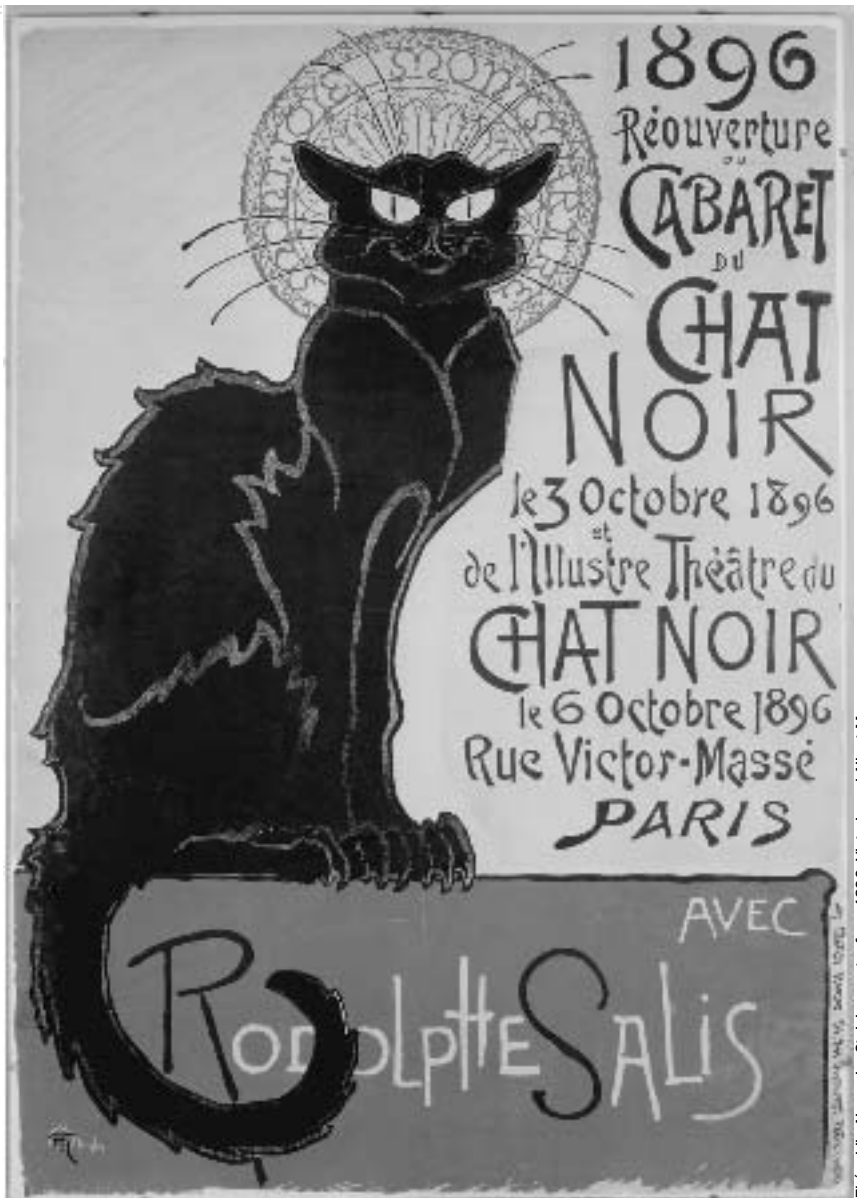
Margaret Boerner teaches English at Villanova University.

would insist) arts with crafts: the highest aesthetic seriousness of modern artists with the craftsmanship of the old-fashioned, lower-class artisans.

So, too, the exponents of art nouveau at the end of the century often claimed "that there are no castes among the artisans of art, that there are no mean and plebeian arts." But the movement was, in its way, a curiously middle-class (and commercialized) revolt against the commercialized middle class—and in it, the enlightened middle class found at last its own style of design with which to oppose the aristocratic styles it had inherited from the upper classes. By 1900, art nouveau was recognized as the style that had made attacking stuffy hierarchies in the arts its main motivation, taking its inspiration from nature rather than from the buildings of men, whether classical or gothic.

From this perspective, art nouveau does not represent so much *fin-de-siècle*, Oscar-Wildean decadence as a crucial—perhaps the decisive—step in a decades-long attempt to rid western culture of the public grandiose and monumental. This is one of the things that makes it difficult to pin down the specific designs and period that constitute art nouveau. There is, in the United States, for example, a continuous aim in modern design that fuses the arts-and-crafts movement (Gustav Stickley), the art nouveau of the Chicago school (Louis Sullivan), the prairie style (Frank Lloyd Wright), the New York school (Tiffany & Co.), art deco (the Chrysler building), and the International Style of many New York skyscrapers—though each of these saw itself as a reaction against its predecessors.

Recognizing this fusion, the organizers of *Art Nouveau, 1890-1914* have wisely confined themselves to artifacts constructed during the quarter century before World War I. Showing in Washington from October 8 to January 28, the exhibition also wisely imitates the movement's dictum that there are "no castes among the artisans of art." Presented side by side, without segregation, are paintings and posters, sculptures and ceramics, glass and textiles, furniture and jewelry, and architecture.



Théophile Alexandre Steinlen poster from 1896. Victoria and Albert Museum.

This was the era in which the "new art" of the movie, the electric light, and the telephone had just arrived, and the exhibition even includes a short cinematic clip of the American dancer Loïe Fuller, who took France by storm at the Paris World's Fair in 1900. On celluloid, she performs a scarf dance so sappy but evidently so impressive to her contemporaries that she seems to have single-handedly inspired the modern treasure trove of bronze lamps of naked women swirling scarves as the defining artifact of the middle-brow "antique" store.

For such an ambitious undertaking, *Art Nouveau, 1890-1914* seems small. Unfortunately, the anteroom of the exhibition, open to passers-by and attempting to set the tone for the exhibition, contains such creations as an overwrought Italian chimney piece, heavily carved with poppies, sunflowers, and two kneeling naked women who pop out in high relief to smell the posies. Framing the anteroom are three of the bronze winged-vampire female frames on which René Lalique used to hang his jewelry in his Paris shop—flanked by vitrines showing off an awful table setting of fifteen white Sèvres figurines of women doing a scarf dance. (Loïe Fuller has a lot to answer for.)

Averting one's eyes from this kitsch, alas, only results in the final kiss of kitsch at the dead center of the anteroom's back wall: an icky-pooh leaded-glass screen of grapes and gourds (they might be attenuated pears) by Louis Comfort Tiffany.

Fortunately, the following rooms are charming (although the boxy exhibition space of the East Wing is ill designed to show this kind of material). Patterns, furniture, utensils, jewelry, and painting are related to native traditions. An upper-level exhibit shows art nouveau in its urban centers: Paris, Brussels, Glasgow, Vienna, Munich, Turin, New York, and Chicago. Only the New York room is disappointing, being devoted largely to Tiffany's work (the examples of his jewelry and lamps here are beautiful, but slight).

Jewelry is scattered throughout the exhibition. The anteroom holds a corsage ornament (to be placed on the bodice of a dress) some nine inches wide and ten inches long from René Lalique, so insidiously beguiling that it has been much reproduced in advertisements for the show. Made of gold, enamel, chrysoprase, moonstones, and diamonds, this "dragonfly woman" has wings as long as her body, a blue-green enameled face and breasts, and a thorax so long—almost a foot—and so highly decorated that it can only be called phallic.

In such works lies, perhaps, grounds for the charge of decadence frequently leveled against art nouveau. There is a dislocation—a sort of bohemian-bourgeois quality—projected from such jewelry as a Tiffany hair ornament in platinum, enamel, opals, and garnets of a pair of blown dandelion heads hovered over by dragonflies. A corsage ornament in which gold, silver, and tourmaline decorate enameled molds of two head-bashing blister beetles seems not "organic" so much as sybaritic. And an exquisite Lalique gold, enamel, and ivory pendant of an anemone "in which the uprooted flower has drooped right over, and only one petal, drained of color, remains clinging to the flower head" is a poignant *memento mori*, to be sure, but disturbing when rendered in such expensive materials.

Arresting in the first few rooms is a suite of furniture from Siegfried Bing, made of gilded beechwood and sitting on a silk carpet against a silk-on-satin wall covering (it would be *infra dig* to call it wallpaper), all rendered in pale grays, golds, and greens. After a room of

The Mitchell Wolfson Jr. Collection

A parlor from Sordevolo designed by Agostino Lauro in 1900

Celtic and Viking revival (which inspired Georg Jensen and Louis Sullivan), the next few rooms show sources for art nouveau, beginning with eighteenth-century French rococo, where we see the first of the exhibit's running leitmotif of enchanting, weird clocks—this one a wall clock by Antonio Gaudi. The room devoted to Japanese and Chinese influences is especially riveting, so well organized that one can directly compare the folk or East Asian originals with the artifacts they inspired.

Of all influences, Japanese art was particularly powerful, because its flattened planes and distorted perspectives gave to the new art just the look of the "other" that it especially valued, struggling as it was to escape the conventional art of the academy and the public building based on a (highly corrupted) classical model. Japanese design influenced not only art nouveau but almost all (anti-establishment) painters of the late nineteenth century. Whistler and Toulouse-Lautrec are particularly well represented in the exhibition. In the Paris room is Toulouse-Lautrec's *Divan Japonais* where, although fully in naturalist "real space," the silhouette, "flat-patterning," and elongated figures all show the influence of Japanese woodblocks.

Islamic influences and their art nouveau consequences give us the flasks that one would have thought absolutely unique to Tiffany's individual style. But Islamic influence seems otherwise to have made for preposterously bad art nouveau. This may be because art nouveau was devoted to working with the organic forms in nature—while Islam eschews depiction of "any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." Islam's influence on art nou-

Danish Museum of Art

An 1897 German tapestry

veau thus produced furniture that looked as if a book in Arabic had been cut up and made into furniture, seen particularly in the unpleasantly weird furniture by Carlo Bugatti in the Turin room.

In the room devoted to English arts-and-crafts and aesthetic movements are some enchanting knickknacks made for Liberty & Co.—the London shop on Regent Street, which advocated the new art—especially another charmingly weird clock, in silver and lapis, by Archibald Knox. Most familiar are William Morris's patterns, Whistler's *Variations in Violet and Green*, and Aubrey Beardsley's delicately suggestive illustrations. But Whistler, let alone Beardsley and Wilde, was too much for English arbiters of taste. It was left to France and Belgium to bring art nouveau to its apotheosis.

A little room claiming symbolism as a precursor to art nouveau is unconvincing, but the rooms on the cult of nature swell with examples—mostly by the French. The dragonfly was a favorite motif of art nouveau designers, and here the viewer will see not only a table supported by dragonflies but also a matching chair. Here also is an "orchidized desk" made of carved and inlaid mahogany, gilt bronze, and glass—the last in the form of orchid-shaped glass lamps that grow out of the back of the desk. The legs of the desk end in little gilt booties about to dance across the room, like the dish that ran away with the spoon.

The Paris room is predictably various and lush, dominated by an entrance to the Paris subway, wonderful posters, jewelry, and magnificent furniture. There are also a couple of creepy pieces by Rupert Carabin in which a woman's bottom forms the sadistic seat of a chair and two women submissively struggle to hold up a table, "suggesting," we are unfortunately assured by the catalogue, "that the boundaries between the arts had been reduced."

Late nineteenth-century Brussels saw great art nouveau buildings erected and furnished by Victor Horta and Josef Hoffmann (recreated by magnificent photographs). Such cutting-edge design may seem implausible for a city known today for beer and bureaucracy, but at the end of the nineteenth century, Brussels was at the heart of the Belgian empire, basking in wealth unknown since the Spanish rule of the Low Countries had collapsed in the seventeenth century. The city enjoyed an unparalleled era of consumerism for the middle classes, who were rich but restless under an oppressive and decaying empire. Notable is Henry van de Velde's handsome bronze-plated candelabrum, the arms of which twist and then turn firmly into sconces for candles.

Where the French used art nouveau to frame subway entrances and to design furniture, the Scots turned a more restrained version into a signature architecture for Glasgow (the reconstruction of Charles Rennie Mackintosh's ladies' tea room is not to be missed), and the Viennese used it to produce flamboyant decoration—especially by the painter Gustav Klimt. If, arriving at the Vienna room, one is not at all surprised to find Klimt an icon of art nouveau, that is because of the brilliant planning that went into this exhibit. In the course of inspecting the rooms, one has received an intense course in the style.

The exhibit ends with an American glow. The New York display contains another weird clock, made of black-stained oak with green-glass inserts and a clock face that leers at the viewer while a disk behind the hands declares it belongs to the automobile club of Clarence, New York. At the center of the Chicago room is installed a huge dining table, chairs, and lamps in prairie style made for the Robie house by Frank Lloyd Wright. Arrayed on the walls are artifacts from Louis Sullivan's work for the Chicago Stock Exchange, transforming Celtic interlacing into the expansive spirit of Chicago and the Midwest—just as George Elmslie does with a teller's wicket, the interlacing of which sprouts luxurious verdure, transforming the bank employee into a spirit of the woods.

The catalogue for *Art Nouveau, 1890-1914* is a model of what such a book should be. Edited by Paul Greenhalgh and produced by the Victoria and Albert Museum, it runs to 464 pages, with twenty-nine wide-ranging articles and hundreds of illustrations, most of them in color. Going far beyond the exhibit itself, the catalogue is beautifully written, beautifully illustrated, and beautifully indexed.

After seeing this exhibition and reading the catalogue, one realizes that art nouveau, too often dismissed as decadent, lightweight, and self-indulgent, was the launching pad for modernism in art, architecture, and decoration. By embracing the whole of visual culture—from subway entrances, to table settings, to advertising posters, to public buildings—it leveled the hierarchies of art and expanded its range: Art nouveau made both Mickey Mouse and the Chrysler Building imaginable. Of course, to get there, we had to suffer through innumerable bronze nudes doing the scarf dance and consult a large number of strange clocks. ♦

Resume

Albert Gore
Man of the People
Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC

Career Goal
To make my father posthumously proud of me by becoming President of the United States

Experience
*Grew up dirt poor on a farm in Tennessee (which never grew tobacco)
*Milked cows, cleared land, laid rail, and performed other manly tasks
*Taught self Latin, Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew, and Arabic, in order to read Holy Scriptures in original languages
*Registered African-American voters in Mississippi; arrested with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma; co-author, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"

Education
*Attended both public and private schools
*St. Albans (valedictorian, homecoming king, captain of football team)
*Harvard (Heisman Trophy, 1967, model for the novel "Love Story")
*Read Stendhal and other French writers (really)

Military Service
*Enlisted so another boy wouldn't have to go in my place
*Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps (model for films, "Apocalypse Now," "Saving Private Ryan")
*Prisoner of War, six years, Hanoi Hilton; emerged with unquenchable thirst for campaign-finance reform

Public Service
*Journalist: uncovered bribery scandal; sent entire Tennessee legislature to jail
*Landlord: offer Habitat-for-Humanity style homes for underprivileged Tennessee residents
*Member of Congress: invented Internet; created Strategic Petroleum Reserve, pumping it full with my own hands; cleaned up Love Canal with a sponge; served as inspiration to Nelson Mandela during long years of captivity; worked with Ronald Reagan to end Cold War with proposal for Midgetman missile
*Vice President: reinvented government; hugged fire victims in Texas; never had fundraiser in Buddhist temple
*Presidential candidate: revealed to country that Bill Bradley is a racist; licked wife's tonsils on national television; emerged as savior to Hebrews with VP selection; lifted up poor and unfortunate Real People—can collectors, deskless students, etc.; served as model for Funeral Oration by Pericles

Motto
Honesty Is the Best Policy