CHRISTMAS BOOKS
ANDREW FERGUSON ON
P.G. WODEHOUSE, AND MORE!

the Weekly Standard

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Our Aaron Burr

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Al Gore's "Nonpartisan" Intellectuals

Two weeks ago, THE SCRAPBOOK noted that an "Emergency Committee" of intellectuals and showbizzers, aflame about Florida's ballot mess, had published a pro-Gore ad in the *New York Times*. "Vice President Gore has been elected President by a clear constitutional majority of the popular vote and Electoral College," this ad proclaimed. It went on to endorse a do-over election in Palm Beach as something folks should "explore."

There were distinguished legal scholars among the signatories. Which got us wondering about that "constitutional majority of the popular vote" business—there being no such thing, after all. We also wondered about the extremely questionable Palm Beach re-vote proposal.

In response to which quibbles, last week we got a letter from Emergency Committee eminence Cass Sunstein, professor of law at the University of Chicago. He wrote:

THE WEEKLY STANDARD is wrong to attack, as unacceptably partisan, those of us who signed the November 9th advertisement in the *New York Times*. Though some of its wording was indeed ill-chosen, the principal goal of that advertisement was to help ensure that the election was not settled prematurely and that serious consideration was given to the various issues in Florida. Our commitment was to the process and the law, not to any candidate. True, some of the signatories believed (and continue to believe) that the impeachment of President Clinton was patently unconstitutional; but we would have reached the same conclusion if the impeachment effort had been directed against President Reagan or Bush. Indeed, many of us also supported (and continue to support), on constitutional grounds, some of President Reagan's most controversial initiatives. Many of us also attacked, both privately and publicly, the unconscionable Democratic scandal-mongering under Presidents Reagan and Bush. We would be entirely pleased to defend the legal prerogatives of Republican presidents in the future.

THE SCRAPBOOK isn't holding its breath. We are trying hard not to burst out laughing, though. Observe that Sunstein declines to mention Palm Beach. And therein lies a tale, first reported by Timothy Noah in *Slate*.

Turns out Sunstein was never too keen on the notion of a single-county, election-turning re-ballot. Turns out, when that proposal became a fullscale Emergency Committee demand in a version of the ad printed in the *Times*, Sunstein and two other notables (Ronald Dworkin of NYU and Bruce Ackerman of Yale) repudiated the thing in a so-far unpublished letter to the editor. They hadn't been consulted about the shift in tone. They wouldn't have signed it if they had been.

Noah has further reported that the entire Emergency Committee adventure was the brainchild of anti-impeachment zealot Sean Wilentz of Princeton. Who, after writing the first draft, solicited signatures by e-mail as follows: "Conservative names good if you can, but not essential." Wilentz, we suppose that means, will be pleased to defend future Republican presidents all by himself if necessary.

Perhaps next time, if Cass Sunstein wants to maintain a nonpartisan air, he should take a closer look at his would-be confederates. Men like Emergency Committee signatory Paul Berman, for example. Berman is totally unrepentant about the Committee's ad. It was a "smashing triumph," he wrote to *Slate* in response to Noah's disclosures. Similarly triumphant, no doubt, were the ads Berman helped buy in college newspapers earlier this fall. *Aux armes!*, Berman then urged the sophomores. Oppose Ralph Nader's "wrecking ball campaign."

The better, of course, to carry Al Gore's water. Not that there's anything "unacceptably partisan" about that. ♦

The Chad War: An Eyewitness Account

Republican attorney Mark K. Seifert has e-mailed THE SCRAPBOOK a diary of his experience as a Florida recount monitor, parts of which we reprint here:

"The hand recounts in Broward, Dade, Palm Beach, and Volusia counties are a grotesque sham. I have personally reviewed around 2,000 ballots in two of these counties and can report that this process is utterly illegitimate. There are virtually NO uncounted 'votes' for Gore; just non-votes that Gore supporters on these canvassing boards are reinterpreting into Gore votes by flimflam, trickery, and deceit.

"In one Dade County precinct, there were 48 presidential undervotes out of 1,200 ballots. The vast majority of these undervotes were clean as a whistle in the presidential column. There were a few ballots with dimpled or 'pregnant' chads. Very little pressure is required to dislodge the chads and I NEVER saw a ballot with more than one dimple, i.e., the votes in the other races on the ballot were clearly indicated and the chads removed. This means that the voter casting these ballots clearly knew how to vote and was capable of doing so. My own interpretation is that the voter

changed his mind, deciding not to vote. It appears likely that these ambivalent voters will now be dragooned into the Gore camp.

"In Broward, my Democratic counterpart challenged an undervote where there was a dimpled chad for Gore. Later, I challenged a clear vote for Gore where the voter had also dimpled Bush. If a dimple for Gore on one ballot is to be considered a 'vote,' shouldn't the dimple for Bush on another ballot also be counted a vote, and cause the clear vote for Gore to be removed? After all, that dimple would mean an 'overvote,' the term of art for a ballot that contains votes for two candidates in the same race. The answer is . . . maybe! The canvassing board will make that judgment. Since the standards appear to change as needed, the board could decide to count the dimple for Gore and ignore the dimple for Bush. I had this outrageous concept put to me as legitimate by a Democrat observer.

"In Broward, I overheard a gentleman leading the Democrat contingent complaining to a younger colleague, 'We just can't keep sending all these blank ballots back there to the canvas board. We're going to lose credibility.' She responded, 'Listen: Every one of those blank ballots we send back there is a potential vote for Al Gore.'

"After last week's review of around 6,000 votes from precincts in Dade County, the canvassing board claimed to have found 6 supposedly uncounted 'votes' for Gore. During the evening's examination of dozens of questionable ballots, the board members disagreed 16 times over whether a particular ballot constituted a 'vote' for Gore. Since each ballot must objectively either contain a vote for Gore or not, at least one member of the canvassing board was wrong on each of those occasions. Their error rate is more than twice that of the machines they are supposedly checking! Every time these hand recounts are expanded and extended, these errors are multiplied.

"There are virtually NO Republicans on the canvassing boards deciding what constitutes a Gore vote in Broward, Dade, Palm Beach, and Volusia counties. There are NO Republican judges involved in any of the associated state court cases at any level. In short, there appears to be nothing to stop the Democrats from stealing this election, and they surely intend to do just that.

"The Clinton-Gore Democrats appear incapable of embarrassment. This is official vote fraud being committed in the open by Democrat officeholders. It's pitiful." ♦

Our Sun Tzu

John J. Pitney Jr., Weekly Standard contributor and professor of government at Claremont McKenna College, is just out with a new book, *The Art of Political Warfare* (University of Oklahoma Press). As his title suggests, Pitney has catalogued—brilliantly—the various ways in which public life in modern America has come to resemble armed combat. Which seems an especially timely project given the Gore blitzkrieg now underway in Florida. The Scrapbook urges you to buy a copy of Pitney's book immediately. ♦

Casual

Upsizing

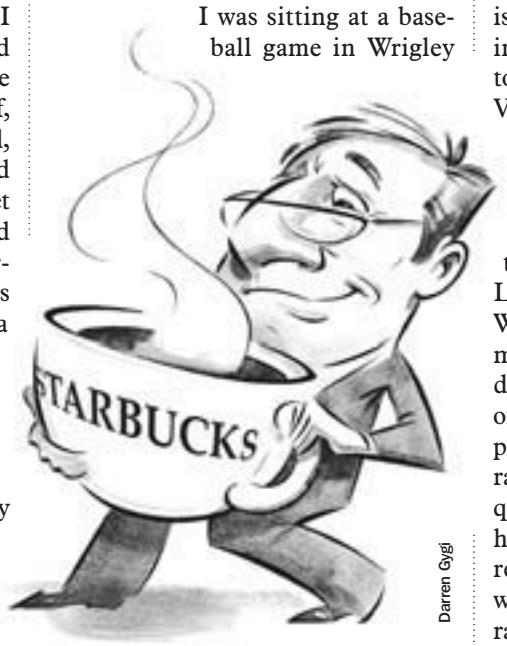
The word downsizing, both an excuse and not a very happy euphemism for firing people, needs, I have decided, a mate: upsizing. The country seems to be in a serious upsizing phase. When and where and how it began, I don't pretend to know, but I have a lurking—as opposed to a somersaulting—suspicion that it may have begun with the naming of the size of cups at Starbucks.

A Dunkin' Donuts man, I don't often go into Starbucks. But when I used to frequent the joint I found myself charmed by the comedy of the language of ordering, all that decaf, double espresso, steamed, skimmed, mocha, capu-frappo-Americano, and the rest of it. But what I couldn't get my (admittedly) literal mind around was the naming of the sizes of Starbucks cups. A small cup there is known as a tall, a middle-size cup is a grande, and a large cup is a venti, the Italian word for twenty, which must stand for twenty ounces. Let's go through this again: A small is a tall, a medium is a grande, a large is a venti. Got it? If so, perhaps someday you will explain it to me.

America now being the world's lone superpower, perhaps the word small is no longer permitted to us. At 5'7"—if I stand up straight—and 135 pounds, I have a personal stake in this matter of the disappearance of the word small. I'm not sure which gets lost first, the word or the thing it describes, but I do know once a word is lost soon the thing itself departs. Now that the word disinterested is gone, for example, so are the men and women who once possessed the fine impartiality the word connoted.

In the upsizing revolution, even I rarely any longer wear size small, but have been promoted to a medium in polo shirts and a large in T-shirts and sweat shirts. It is mildly amusing, if too late to be confidence-building, to think of myself as a large. Lots of casual clothes are now unisex, so sizes have everywhere jumped up, and the fact that much fashion calls for a baggy fit increases this propensity. Clothing catalogues often mention that an item is "oversized." So an average-size man often wears not merely large but extra large, while a large man can wear clothes with as many as three Xs before the large.

I was sitting at a baseball game in Wrigley Field in Chicago this summer with a friend from Los Angeles. Two rows in front of us sat two beefy guys, pure Chicago characters, each of them well over 250. Such bodies, I said to my friend, were likely to be deported from California, where everyone, I assumed, worked very hard to stay in starved-to-perfection shape. Not so, he replied. A new physical type was in the land, large, wide, slightly menacing, the human equivalent of the Sports Utility Vehicle.



Darren Gygi

In football, the 300-plus-pound lineman is commonplace, the 250-pound running back not much less so. Lots of high-school basketball players are showing up at 6'8". What is discouraging to a small fellow is that these huge guys, in football and in basketball, can be whippet quick and nearly Astaire-ish in their coordination. When I was a boy athlete, really large players had the common decency to be ill-coordinated and generally hopeless. That this is no longer so is hell on the sports fantasies of a man like me—slender but slow, small but without any notable moves.

The national average height of Americans is increasing along with the national figures for longevity. So many tall men nowadays walk the streets that the term "six-footer" seems to have gone the way of the word "millionaire"—neither, that is, is a term that any longer commands interest. Lots of taller women about, too. In tennis, two of the great pros, Venus Williams and Lindsay Davenport, are, respectively, 6'1" and 6'2".

The old ideal in feminine beauty was the shortish—5'1" to 5'4"—bosomy woman, on the model of the young Elizabeth Taylor or Julie London. Gone without the wind. Woman-watching in airports I note many more women pass by whom I'd describe as tallish than shortish, lots of them wearing platform shoes that, putting them on their own pedestals, raise them even higher. Tallish, even quite tallish, no longer seems odd but has come to seem attractive. In the recent Olympics, players on the women's volleyball teams appeared rather elegant, most of the chunky little women gymnasts a bit grotesque.

A clothing store designed for small men, the reverse of the Big and Tall men's shops, has begun to advertise on the classical music station I listen to in Chicago. It calls itself Napoleon's Tailor. I may one day drop in to check out the threads. I assume that it, too, has oversized clothes for the smaller man. The next time you see me I could be wearing a new suit from Napoleon's Tailor, a size 54 small, relaxed fit. Stop me, please, if I suggest we march on Moscow.

Joseph Epstein

the weekly Standard

President Dimple?

We hold fast to the idea that the winner of an election is the candidate who gets the most votes on Election Day. Florida election law embodies this same idea, as it should, and seems to have been reasonably well crafted. The Gore campaign, fearful that its backers failed to produce enough votes during the election, thus had to undermine Florida law to win.

It was dismaying, if not terribly surprising, to see the Florida Supreme Court join last week in such an unwholesome enterprise. In addition to being entirely disconnected from the law, the decision was mean-spirited. It was unconscionable for the justices, as they usurped the Florida secretary of state's lonely effort to uphold Florida law, to characterize her actions as an effort "to summarily disenfranchise innocent electors." With such language, they joined the anti-Katherine Harris lynch mob.

But their partisanship went beyond gratuitous personal abuse. For no good legal reason, the justices decided to give the Gore camp a talking point it wanted on the critical issue of "dimpled chads." Besides undermining Florida law, you see, the Gore campaign also has had to enlarge the meaning of the word "vote" to encompass any ballot with a stray mark or indent in the vicinity of their man's name that might be conscripted into the righteous cause. They therefore cited in their legal filings an Illinois case that might be helpful to them, and the Florida justices were pleased to oblige. The justices described as "particularly apt" a case in which an Illinois judge ruled that "voters should not be disenfranchised where their intent may be ascertained with reasonable certainty, simply because the chad they punched did not completely dislodge from the ballot."

It's a bad idea to resort to an Illinois judge to decide Florida elections, but let us at least accurately construe what he said. This means ignoring Gore's lawyers, who insinuated that the Illinois decision meant the canvassing boards must count indented, unperforated ballots as votes.

Clearly, though, the Illinois decision, in its mention of chads that "did not completely dislodge," is referring not to the infamous dimpled or "pregnant" chads that the Gore camp is now depending on to deliver them the White House. Rather, it is an obvious reference to chads that have been loosened from the ballot yet still cling to it by one or two or three corners. As a lawyer in the Illinois case confirmed the next day, the Illinois judge *rejected* ballots with dimpled or pregnant chads.

The canvassing boards should do the same. The Gore campaign and its lieutenants would have us believe that there is some significant number of voters who wanted to vote for Al Gore but were defeated in their attempts either by their own physical frailty or by some defect of the machinery. This is the only theory left that looks even remotely capable of producing a Gore victory. But here is the crucial thing: It is a *testable* theory. The canvassing boards in Broward and Palm Beach, as we write, have been left alone by the courts to exercise their discretion. Here is what they should ask themselves.

If the voters posited by the Gore campaign exist, wouldn't they also have cast "dimpled votes," as it were, for other offices? If there are dimples for Gore, there should be dimples for Senate and dimples for Congress and dimples for dogcatcher. The Palm Beach election board seems to have been thinking along these lines when it decided, according to a *Miami Herald* account, "that a dimple will count as a presidential vote only if the ballot bears dimpled chads in other races as well."

In the absence of such thoroughly dimpled ballots, the South Florida canvassers should conclude that a ballot full of holes for Democratic candidates, but with some vague indentation where there should be a hole for Gore, can't conceivably mean the voter intended to vote for Gore. If we must divine intentions, it means the opposite: The voter, having demonstrated the ability to punch out chads, can only have intended to refuse a vote for the man at the top of the ticket. Surely there are plenty of such voters, though we can understand why Gore partisans don't want to dwell on the fact. When voters chose all the Democratic candidates on the ballot except the presidential candidate, Al Gore, their intention was not to put him in the White House, but to deny him their support.

It will be something worse than disenfranchisement—it will be a travesty—if the litigators of the Gore war machine and the judges who have linked arms with them traduce the will of voters such as these and hijack their ballots to provide the winning margin to a man they didn't vote for.

—Richard Starr, for the Editors

Against Judicial Supremacy

The judicial branch's bid to run America should be rejected. BY WILLIAM KRISTOL AND JEFFREY BELL

OF ALL THE FALSEHOODS in the Florida Supreme Court's unanimous decision in favor of Vice President Al Gore and his recount attorneys, the greatest is this: "We have consistently adhered to the principle that the will of the people is the paramount consideration. Our goal today remains the same as it was a quarter of a century ago, i.e., to reach the result that reflects the will of the voters, whatever that might be. This fundamental principle, and our traditional rules of statutory construction, guide our decision today."

In fact, this court's hallmark is a persistent pattern of overruling the will of the people of Florida. This has often taken the form of nullifying widely supported laws enacted by the legislature, most notoriously on capital punishment. In recent years, the Supreme Court of Florida has also turned its wrath against the voters themselves, invalidating laws passed under Florida's provision for initiative and referendum—and even denying the state's voters the right to vote on initiatives altogether. Last year, the court deep-sixed an anti-quota initiative similar to ones passed and implemented in California and Washington, for which Florida advocates had obtained far more signatures than legally required. The increasingly imperial court invalidated the measure in an unsigned unanimous opinion, rebuking its advocates for the "confusion" that would have been caused had Florida's voters been allowed to decide for themselves.

William Kristol is editor and publisher of THE WEEKLY STANDARD. *Jeffrey Bell is a principal of Capital City Partners, a Washington-based consulting firm.*

Now, in the name of the voters, the very same court orders a Democratic-controlled hand recount, and praises a loose standard of counting that it misleadingly claims is used in Illinois. The campaign of George W. Bush has been correct in resisting the temptation to accept Team Gore's honey-coated offer to bring Republican-leaning counties into the Democratic-dominated manual recount. For any such decision by Bush would have meant tacit acknowledgment not just of the legitimacy of the Gore campaign's weeks-long search for new votes, but of the appointive Florida Supreme Court's supremacy over laws enacted by elected state legislators, or administered by elected state executives with legal authority to implement the election laws.

To be consistent—and to give Bush the greatest chance to win the presidency, should the judge-sanctioned Gore-Lieberman vote hunt be successful by its 19th day this Sunday—Bush and his strategists need to stick to that stance. That means no requests for hand recounts in additional counties. It means continuation of the ground war for every vote in the Democratic-tilted hand recount. And it means firm refusal of the newest poison pill offered by the Florida Supreme Court and Team Gore: the prospect of a two-week "contest" under Florida law, presumably following a Supreme Court-mandated certification of the Gore electors on November 26 or 27.

It is predictable that not much good awaits a candidate who initiates a "contest." Given the growing public dismay at what is happening, the losing candidate who challenges the result in court will see his negatives soar, which will hurt any chance of a reversal. The process itself, like the statewide manual recount the Bush forces wisely spurned, will resemble a vast, unappetizing scramble for both Republican and Democratic votes, with both sides looking venal and the eventual winner looking less like a victor than a successful scavenger. On top of that, if the losing candidate initiating the "contest" is Bush, he will be placing himself irretrievably at the mercy of the Florida Supreme Court.

It would also be a mistake, in the event Gore takes the lead by Sunday, for Bush to put too much hope in the federal courts. Bush and his lawyers may have a decent case that the selective recount, together with decisions by county election officials to change the standards for counting ballots in the middle of the recount, violate the doctrine of equal protection. But it is hard to imagine, in real time, a decision by a federal court to overturn a slate of Gore electors certified by a state. We know all too well how that is likely to go: Most GOP-appointed judges will vote as federalists, for the right of states to prevail on election law; Democratic-appointed judges will vote for Gore.

The right course for Bush, in the event Gore is awarded the lead on Sunday, is the one strongly hinted at late Tuesday by James Baker: intervention by the Republican-controlled Florida legislature to award the state's electors to Bush on the basis of the 930-vote lead he had at the deadline specified by Florida law on Friday, November 17.

The manner and timing by which the Florida legislature certifies the Bush-Cheney electors is open to discussion, and should be publicly and privately discussed with all relevant parties, especially secretary of state Katherine Harris, whose insistence on following the law in the face of relentless vilification by the Clinton-Gore slander machine is worthy of high praise. But what is not in doubt is that the Florida legislature is the controlling legal authority in determining the disposition of Florida's electors. The Constitution, in Article II, Sec-

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tion I, mentions no other institution, not even the governor, in its description of how members of the Electoral College shall be chosen: "Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress."

Yes, a certification of Bush's Florida electors achieved with the help of the Florida Legislature could be appealed by Al Gore to the federal courts, though probably with little chance of success. Yes, such a Bush victory in the legislature would be unwelcome to Jonathan Alter, Paul Begala, Alan Dershowitz, and other Clinton-Gore apologists. And, yes, millions of more innocent Gore backers would be left with an uneasy impression that, somehow, some way, their man was robbed.

But he won't have been. Jim Baker's decision to bring up the Florida legislature as his only example of a "remedy" to the injustice being done by the Florida Supreme Court was a key moment. It opens up the clearest Bush victory path in the event the pro-Gore recount achieves its aim. It was the most effective way for the Bush high command to signal a steely resolve to Republicans attempting to fight the Gore juggernaut in Dade County and elsewhere. It is also the most solid constitutional ground on which Bush should fight—not just for himself, but for the country.

The Bush campaign is right, both morally and legally, to identify the Florida Supreme Court's decision as a willful encroachment on the roles of both the legislative and executive branches. Baker, echoed by Bush in his press conference the following day, homed in on the right issue. For the way in which Al Gore is trying to steal the election is exactly the way modern liberalism has tried to hijack the American people's ability to govern itself.

For many years, economic conservatives (not to mention moderate Republicans) watched, often with indifference and sometimes with satisfaction, as judges at all levels overruled popular majorities on social issues like abortion and public prayer. As long as the judges stayed out of economic micromanagement, they thought, the country would do just fine.

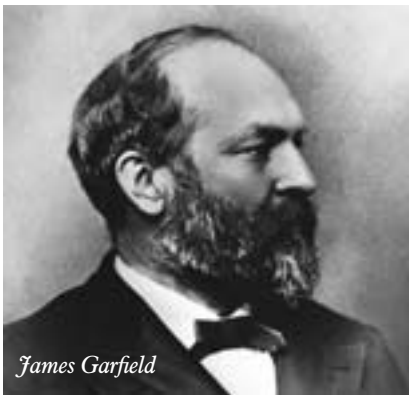
But then came the rise of the elite trial lawyers. At first, they targeted outcast industries like asbestos. Then came the tobacco settlement, never achievable in Congress or any legislature, with hundreds of billions changing hands as a result of pure judicial power. Today trial lawyers as a profession are more politicized (and more Democratic) than public employees, and far richer. Does anyone think it an accident that David Boies, the brilliant trial lawyer masterminding Al Gore's recount strategy, is the same man who has scored colossal breakthroughs against America's two strongest industry groups, computers and pharmaceuticals? Elite trial lawyers no longer find themselves restricted to dining on outcast industries.

Now they show every desire, and every ability, to ravage our political system as well. To his credit, George W. Bush is their most important target, because of his success at serious tort reform in Texas. If he winds up as president in spite of the best efforts of David Boies, Bush should compromise on almost anything before he compromises on reform of the legal system.

But shocking and alarming as their rise is, there is nothing inherently evil about trial lawyers. Their outsize role in economics and politics is merely a symptom, at that a lagging indicator, of the far deeper drive in modern liberalism toward judicial supremacy. The new Bush administration, or the Republican congressional opposition to Al Gore, if it comes to that, should remember the Florida Supreme Court. Either should remember what Bush said Wednesday, that "writing laws is the duty of the legislature, administering laws is the duty of the executive branch"; and that though the court "cloaked its ruling in legislative language," it in fact rewrote the law. A Bush administration, or a Republican congressional opposition, could use this moment of judicial usurpation in November 2000 to lay the groundwork finally to mount a serious challenge to the doctrine and practice of judicial supremacy that in the past few decades has done so much damage to our Constitution. ♦

Back to the 1880s

There is no new conservative era; the good news is things are bad for Democrats, too. **BY DAVID FRUM**



James Garfield

"Their gravely vacant and bewhiskered faces mixed, melted, swam together. Which had the whiskers, which had the burnsides: which was which?"

—Thomas Wolfe

GEORGE W. BUSH wants to reinvigorate American education, and he has already partly succeeded. Over the past three weeks, the country has been treated to a nonstop television seminar on the elections of 1876 and 1888. The bearded men who presided over the United States in the late 19th century once seemed as indistinguishable as the Smith Brothers on the cough drops. Suddenly their names are being bandied about with easy fluency on MSNBC and CNN.

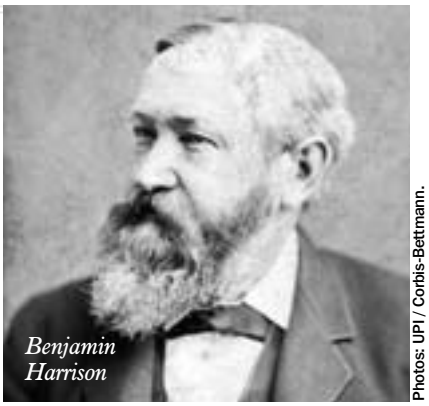
Those old elections are interesting, though, not just because they offer curious coincidences to fill the long cable hours between actual news events. They provide real insight into the workings of the American two-party system—and some clues about the meaning of the 2000 election.

In the century from 1896 to 1992, one or the other party held a clear advantage in presidential politics: first the Republicans, then the Democrats, then the Republicans again. In 1992, the long spell of Republican dominance that began in 1968 came at last to an end. This is a painful fact to admit, and many of us refused for a long time to admit it: We shrugged off Bill Clinton's 1992 win as the lucky side effect of a split in the natural Republican presidential majority and explained away 1996 as a referendum on peace and prosperity. The real news, we told ourselves, was the big congressional sweep of 1994—a sweep that portended, or so we imagined, a new era of conservative governance. All they needed was a decent presidential candidate, and for the first time since the Eisenhower administration, Republicans could look forward to control of both houses of Congress and the presidency at the same time.

So much for that. But if Republicans have lost their grip on the presidency, Democrats have not regained theirs. In 1980, 1984, and 1988, Ronald Reagan and George Bush won a combined average of 54.3 percent of the vote. In 1992, 1996, and 2000, Bill Clinton and Al Gore won an average of only 47 percent. If the Republicans have lost their old governing majority, the Democrats have failed to build a new one.

It's this lack that makes the 1990s look so much like the 1880s.

Elections with clouded outcomes—those that are very close (with the two parties within one percentage point of each other's share of the popular vote), those whose winner fails to clear 50 percent, and those in which the winner of the popular vote cannot muster a majority of the Electoral College—are rare events in American politics. Between 1876 and 1892, there were five such elections in a row:



Benjamin Harrison

Photos: UPI / Corbis-Bettmann.

1876		
Rutherford B. Hayes	(R)	47.95 percent*
Samuel Tilden	(D)	50.97 percent
1880		
James A. Garfield	(R)	48.27 percent*
Winfield Hancock	(D)	48.25 percent
1884		
Grover Cleveland	(D)	48.50 percent*
James G. Blaine	(R)	48.25 percent
1888		
Benjamin Harrison	(R)	47.82 percent*
Grover Cleveland	(D)	48.62 percent
1892		
Grover Cleveland	(D)	46.05 percent*
Benjamin Harrison	(R)	42.96 percent

The 1990s had three:

1992		
Bill Clinton	(D)	43.01 percent*
George Bush	(R)	37.45 percent
H. Ross Perot	(I)	18.91 percent
1996		
Bill Clinton	(D)	49.24 percent*
Bob Dole	(R)	40.71 percent
H. Ross Perot	(I)	8.40 percent
2000		
Al Gore	(D)	49.00 percent
George W. Bush	(R)	48.00 percent

* winner

These are the two longest strings of inconclusive elections in American history. The elections were close because the country was so divided: in the 1880s by the memory of civil war, in the 1990s by the aftereffects of culture war.

In the 1880s, the Republicans were

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still the party of the Civil War blue, the Democrats of the grey, and the bitterness of that struggle did not subside until all who had taken part in it were dead. Here is a small extract from a speech that future president James A. Garfield delivered during the congressional campaign of 1866: "Every Rebel guerrilla and jayhawker, every man who ran to Canada to avoid the draft, every bounty-hunter, every deserter, every cowardly sneak that ran from danger and disgraced his flag, every man who loves slavery and hates liberty, every man who helped massacre loyal negroes at Fort Pillow, or loyal whites at New Orleans, every Knight of the Golden Circle, every incendiary who helped burn Northern steamboats and Northern hotels, and every villain, of whatever name or crime, who loves power more than justice, slavery more than freedom, is a Democrat."

Today, Republicans and Democrats speak rather more politely about each other. But the values gap between them gapes nearly as wide as it did more than a century ago.

The Republicans are the party of the married. Bush had a 15-point lead among married people with children still at home, 4 points more than his lead among people who earned over $100,000 a year. The Democrats are the party of working women, who voted 58-39 percent for Gore, and of those who do not have children in the home, who went for Gore 50-46 percent.

The Republicans are the party of churchgoers. People who attend church once a week voted for Bush 57-40 percent. The Democrats are the party of the secular. People who never attend church voted for Gore 61-32 percent. Republicans are the party of gunowners. The half of the country that owns a handgun or is related to somebody who does voted for Bush 61-36 percent. The Democrats are the party of the sexually liberated. Seventy percent of Americans who believe that abortion should be legal under all circumstances backed Gore, as did 70 percent of self-described gays, lesbians, and bisexuals.

Above all, the Republicans are the party of rules. One-quarter of the voters polled rated "honesty" the most important quality in a president. They favored Bush over Gore by 80-20 percent. The Democrats, meanwhile, are the party of feeling. One-eighth of those polled put "caring" first. They favored Gore over Bush by 83-17 percent.

In short, the Republicans are the party of those who reject the cultural innovations of the 1970s; the Democrats, of those who accept them. And such disagreements over values and morals are much less amenable to compromise than economic disputes.

But if these cultural disagreements cannot be settled, they can be transcended. The Republicans of the years after the Civil War may have enthusiastically waved the bloody shirt to rally their old followers at election time—but they spent their energy between elections prospecting for new issues on which to build a bigger coalition. Like the Republicans of the 1990s, however, they were slow to succeed. For almost 20 years, every new issue they found repelled as many voters as it attracted. Prohibition, for instance, appealed to evangelicals in the Yankee countryside, but alienated ethnic Germans in midwestern cities. Similarly today, school vouchers delight conservative evangelicals but frighten suburban homeowners in solid school districts.

Eventually, of course, the Republicans of the 19th century escaped from their dilemma. Boosted by the economic slump of 1893—a slump that erupted in time to destroy the administration of Grover Cleveland, the only Democrat to win the presidency in the 50 years after Appomattox—William McKinley swept the elections of 1896 on a platform of gold money, protection of industry against foreign imports, and a swaggering new foreign policy.

Is there a McKinley-style new synthesis to be found today, one that will break the deadlock of the 1990s and open a new era in which one party predominates, as the Republicans did

from 1896 to 1930? Each party is hunting desperately for it: the Democrats with their New Democratic Third Way, the Republicans with "compassionate conservatism." The verdict of 2000 is that neither has yet found it.

And it may be that the two parties are hindered in finding it by the very historical parallels that set them looking for a McKinley synthesis in the first place. The lesson of the stalemate of the 1880s is not that economic issues trump cultural issues. History does not repeat itself so neatly. The lesson is, rather, that cultural animosities linger until something new arises to dispel or displace them. The advent of industrialism was that something in the 1890s, and with it the Great Immigration: Between 1880 and 1920, some 24 million people untouched by the Civil War arrived in the United States. Their children and grandchildren gravitated toward the Democratic party, but they also transformed it, erasing its Confederate taint, propelling it instead toward European-style social democracy.

Perhaps the advent of the Information Age will have a similar effect on American politics, creating a new class of "wired workers" with their own distinctive interests and values. Al Gore apparently expected this, and while it didn't happen in 2000, it may yet transpire in some future election. Alternatively, Peter Brimelow and Ed Rubinstein argued three years ago in *National Review* that the second Great Immigration of the 1980s and 1990s is decisively tilting the political balance to the Democrats. That didn't happen this year either, although it is true that Bush would have beaten Gore by one percentage point in the popular vote if only blacks and whites, and no Asians or Hispanics, had voted in 2000.

More probably, though, the something that will jolt the country out of its eight-year stalemate remains as yet unseen: some new crisis, some new leader, some new generational experience. And if the twenty years of deadlock that followed Reconstruction are any guide, it may not arrive anytime soon. ♦

Why Soldiers Dislike Democrats

In the mythology of military life, the Democratic party is the enemy. **BY TOM DONNELLY**

AP / Wide World Photos

WE ARE TOLD one of Al Gore's proudest achievements is winning more votes for president than his boss ever did. However, Al Gore has also surpassed Bill Clinton in a more dubious respect: By his campaign's handling of the issue of military absentee ballots, he has managed to worsen the already frayed state of civil-military relations and to reinforce the view among our troops that the Democratic party despises them.

Military men and women unanimously refuse to be quoted by name, but their anger is palpable. Even as they are willing to concede that, technically, there may be problems with military ballots sent to Florida from overseas, they are jarred by the inconsistency of the Gore campaign—willing to go to excruciating lengths to count reliably Democratic ballots in West Palm Beach, yet unconcerned and even hostile to discovering the intent of military voters. "It's a slap in the face," says one Army officer stationed at the Pentagon. Referring to the protest over the infamous "butterfly ballots," he says, "They want to let Florida Democrats vote twice, but they won't let us vote even once."

Comments in online chatrooms devoted to military matters, like *militarycity.com*, also reflect anger at the ballot snafu. "The Gore hypocrisy!" wrote one noncommissioned officer. "I am sick of the Clinton-Gore era. We must have an honest man in the Oval Office! Come on folks, voice your outrage!"

Some of that outrage is being heard on Capitol Hill, where a spokeswoman for the House Armed Services Committee says they are getting

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"tons" of calls from angry servicemembers and their families. "It's really heated up," reports Michael Higgins, a member of the personnel subcommittee staff who has been fielding calls and e-mails. It appears, to people in uniform, that Florida Democrats are "actually working not to count" their votes.

Even before the question of military ballots arose, Gore "already would have brought an undue amount of civil-military baggage to the White House," believes Peter Feaver, a political scientist at Duke University and executive secretary of the Triangle Institute for Security Studies, which recently completed a survey and study of military attitudes and civil-military relations. "His campaign missteps, such as the careless promise to use attitudes toward homosexuality as a litmus test in choosing the Joint Chiefs; his association with, and defense of, Bill Clinton, a commander-in-chief for whom many service members feel contempt; and his embrace of unpopular nation-building missions—all of these have grated on those in uniform. Even before the Florida mess, Gore advisers understood that repairing his relations with the military would be a top priority. Now that job has become heroically difficult."

How did this happen?

The rift between soldiers and Democrats has taken decades to develop, but, like so much else in contemporary American politics and society, it has its roots in the Vietnam War. Once Vietnam ceased to be Lyndon Johnson's war and became Richard Nixon's war, Democrats often allowed opposition to the war to become contempt for all things military, including "baby killers" in uniform. The loss of Vietnam left a profound mark upon the U.S. military, many of whose members blame politicians—Democratic politicians—for that defeat. The creation of the all-volunteer force in the early 1970s has made Vietnam part of the founding ethos of today's professional military: This force was forged in the ashes of defeat in Southeast Asia.

The shame of Vietnam was rekindled in the Carter years, when the weakness of the American military was a symbol of overall U.S. weakness. Democrats also trumpeted their opposition to the defense build-up of the Reagan years. Not only did they complain about Reagan's spending increases, but they derided his simple patriotism and obvious love for the military. And the second powerful myth that shapes today's military—the glorious victory in the Gulf War—also features the theme of Democratic perfidy, in the form of the partisan vote in Congress on whether to go to war. Ironically, Al Gore's incessant references to his pro-Gulf War vote may only have served to remind those in uniform of this, while gaining Gore little credit for being one of the few to break ranks with his party.

Finally, the Clinton years have confirmed the irredeemable dislike of Democrats for the military, with the battle turning ever more from disputes over policy to a clash of cultures. The issue of open homosexuality in the ranks was just the opening salvo. The Lewinsky scandal and the impeachment of Clinton further alienated the military from the Democrats, who troops believe abandoned any pretext of principle in favor of the desire to maintain power. "They chose party over nation," is how one Air Force officer put it to *washingtonpost.com* columnist William Arkin.

Inheriting a 30-year record of mistrust by the military, any Democrat would have a difficult time establishing his bona fides as commander-in-chief. Though Gore was, as Feaver observes, "the most pro-defense Democrat nominee since the Vietnam War," the events of the past week have solidified the partisanship of the military and a division within American society that is deeply troubling. While the Republicans are far from innocent—and the rush to exploit the issue of rejected military ballots was unseemly, as was the parade of generals organized in support of the Bush campaign—the larger share of the blame for the sorry state of American civil-military relations rests with the Democratic party. ♦

Call It the Flyover Party

Republicans control more square miles; problem is, Democrats have more voters. **BY FRED BARNES**

LOOK AT A MAP of how America's counties voted on November 7 and you'd think the Democratic party is barely clinging to life. Al Gore country consists of the West Coast, the Northeast, urban areas of the upper Midwest, and isolated patches with large Latino or black populations. Almost everywhere else—the vast heartland of America—went for George W. Bush. Eighty percent of the land mass of the country is Republican. It's a pretty picture, but unfortunately it gives a false impression of GOP strength. The election revealed more negative than positive trends for Republicans. There was a lot of what Larry Sabato of the University of Virginia calls "bad karma for the future" of the GOP.

To say there's "an emerging Republican minority" would be an exaggeration. Democrats don't have an electoral lock on the presidency. If they did, Gore would have defeated Bush handily. But it's now clear the end of the Republican lock on the White House was not a function of Bill Clinton's strength. Rather, the GOP lock was a product of the Cold War and the conservative backlash against the 1960s. Absent those factors, it's gone. And the country has become a bit more liberal and slightly less Republican.

For the first time since 1964, liberal presidential candidates got more than 50 percent of the vote. True, Jimmy Carter received 50.1 percent in 1976, but he didn't run as a liberal. This year, Gore and Ralph Nader combined got 52 percent. This is ominous, given what happened in 1968: Richard Nixon and George Wallace combined took 56.9 percent of the vote—presaging the Republican presidential lock that dominated the 1970s and 1980s. Compared with 1996, this year's exit polls found 2 percent more voters identifying themselves as liberals and 3 percent fewer calling themselves conservatives. And there were 5 percent fewer self-identified Republicans and 2 percent more voters labeling themselves Demo-crats.

The linchpins of the GOP lock were California and Florida. Capture them, as Nixon and Ronald Reagan did twice and President George Bush did in 1988, and the Republican presidential candidate wins. Now, California is a staunchly Democratic state and Florida a tossup. This year, George W. Bush's biggest failure was in California. He spent $12 million on TV and radio advertising. He devoted many days to campaigning in the state. He relentlessly courted Latino voters. Meanwhile, Gore did nothing. After the Democratic convention in August, he visited once, to appear on Jay Leno's TV show. Yet Bush lost the state by 11 points and failed to make inroads among Latinos, receiving less than a quarter of their votes.

It gets worse: Florida and California aren't the only big states lost for Republicans. GOP pollster Scott Rasmussen says New Jersey and Illinois are also "trending away from Republicans at the presidential level." Reagan won both states twice and Bush senior captured them in 1988. But George W. lost Illinois by 12 points and New Jersey by 15 points. In fact, he scarcely bothered to stump in either state, since they were out of his reach from the start of the campaign.

Among Latinos, Bush did better nationally than he did in California, getting 31 percent of their vote. But this was less than Reagan got in 1980 (33 percent) and 1984 (37 percent). And it came after Bush made heroic efforts to woo Latinos. Not only does he speak Spanish, but he spent millions on ads on Spanish-language television. The good news for Republicans is that Latinos are not a monolithic vote. Many were voting for the first time, so they may not be lost forever. The bad news is that Latinos are still basically a Democratic constituency. Even a pro-immigration, bilingual, compassionate conservative couldn't come close to capturing them. By the way, Bush got 49 percent of Latinos when he was reelected governor of Texas in 1998. He won 43 percent of Texas Latinos on November 7.

More than ever, blacks *are* a monolithic voting bloc. All of Bush's efforts—his speech to the NAACP, his

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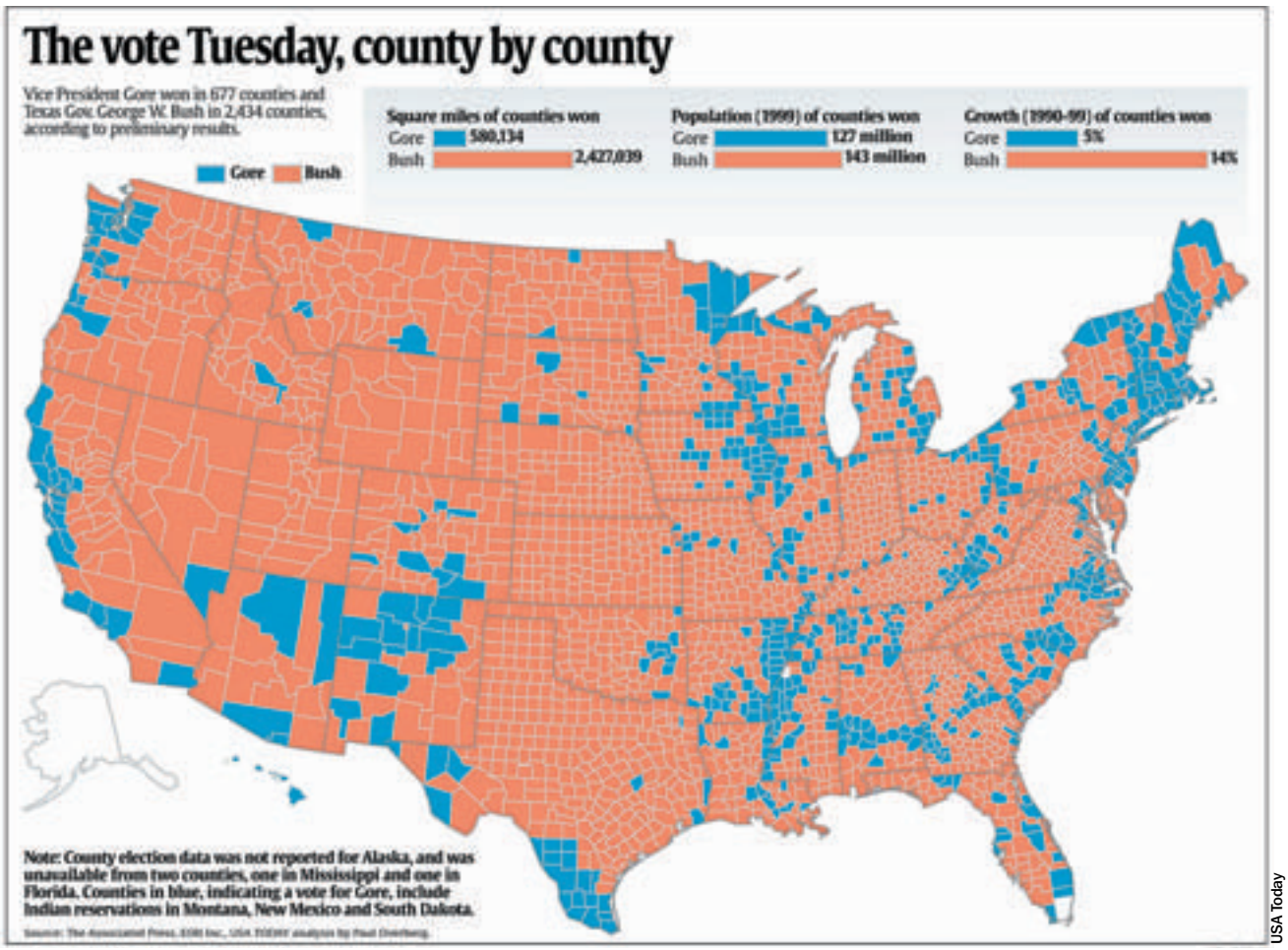


appearances at dozens of black schools and neighborhoods, the high visibility of blacks at the Republican National Convention—were for naught. It turns out that race-baiting is effective in turning blacks against Republicans. There was plenty of it: the NAACP TV ad with slain black James Byrd's daughter, Gore's linking Bush to pro-slavery sentiments, venomous black radio, etc. Bush got 9 percent of the black vote. Bob Dole didn't make nearly Bush's effort to attract blacks in 1996 and received 12 percent. With strong racial appeals, blacks now vote in as high percentages as whites and maybe even higher. Oh, yes, in Texas, where 27 percent of blacks voted for Bush in 1998, only 5 percent did so on November 7.

The issue terrain isn't exactly Republican turf either. Tax cuts are attractive to the converted. But for the foreseeable future, taxes aren't an issue that grips the electorate. Sadly, the so-called investor class, that majority of voters who own stocks or bonds, didn't emerge as a distinct voting bloc. Despite Bush's promise of a big tax cut and use of Social Security funds for individual investment accounts, investors gave him a mere 51 percent to 46 percent advantage over Gore. Bush neutralized the education issue, but not health care. Steve Law, executive director of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, says health care "is probably our Achilles' heel." It hurts Republicans two ways. "People who can be persuaded to care about that issue will vote Democratic," he says. And Republicans, insisting they're also for a patients' bill of rights and prescription drug benefit, are emasculated. They become me-too Republicans and appeal to practically no one.

There's some good news from the election, just not much. Bush has forever altered the politics of Social Security. "The rhetoric on that issue is changed irreversibly," says pollster Rasmussen. Bush may have been hurt marginally by his plan for individual investment accounts. But he wasn't destroyed, and the private accounts were favored by 57 percent of voters in the exit poll. Reapportionment, which comes next year, is another Republican bright spot. The 2000 election gave the GOP more clout in state legislatures—thus power to influence redistricting—than it's had in decades. So Republicans should gain House seats. And then there's that map of how counties voted. It marks off a cultural divide in America. The heartland is solidly conservative on values: gays, guns, abortion, religion. So if Republicans can seize one juicy issue outside the cultural realm, they might burst into some of those Democratic areas on the map and create a political majority. Hope springs eternal. ♦

The Other Post-Election Struggle

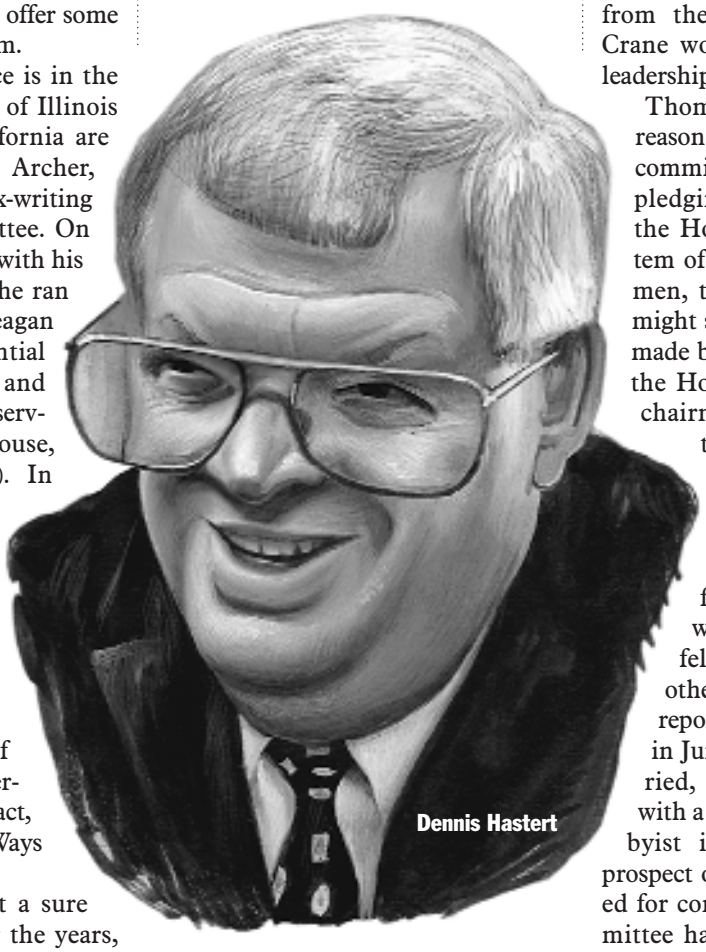
The battle for Capitol Hill.

BY MATTHEW REES

AS THE NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT lingers on the turmoil in Florida, back in Washington a number of congressional Republicans are vying for leadership positions and committee chairmanships. The outcome of these contests will offer some clues about the coming term.

The hardest fought race is in the House, where Phil Crane of Illinois and Bill Thomas of California are running to succeed Bill Archer, retiring chairman of the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee. On paper, Crane has the edge, with his conservative credentials (he ran to the right of Ronald Reagan for the GOP's presidential nomination in 1980) and seniority (he's the longest-serving Republican in the House, having arrived in 1969). In years past, these two factors alone would have guaranteed him the top job. But Newt Gingrich shook up the committee assignment system when he became speaker in 1995, passing over members for chairmanships if he deemed them too moderate or passive. (Crane, in fact, was passed over then for Ways and Means.)

The reason Crane isn't a sure thing is that he has, over the years, become a non-entity in the House. He's been a reliable conservative vote, but has done little to build support for his favored issues, largely because he was an alcoholic, regularly consuming 10 Heinekens a night. In March, eight of his friends conducted an intervention, and convinced him that if he was to have any hope of becoming Ways and Means chairman he'd need to stop drinking. He entered a rehabilitation facility shortly thereafter, where he stayed for a month, and he now proclaims himself a new man.



Dennis Hastert

Illustration by Earl Keleny

Crane's willingness to confront his drinking problem has been well received by his colleagues, as has his fund-raising prowess. He garnered approximately $2.5 million for Republican campaign funds over the past two years, with $500,000 coming from a single contribution he solicited from an old friend, Silicon Valley executive Tom Siebel.

Crane is now thought to be the narrow favorite, though he has a formidable opponent in Thomas, who's widely recognized as one of the smartest and most politically savvy House Republicans. But Thomas, a moderate, is often described as too smart for his own good. He tends to alienate not only his adversaries but even his allies with a brash manner. And it's widely believed that if he ends up chairing the committee, he will tolerate little or no interference from the House GOP leadership. Crane would be more amenable to leadership intervention.

Thomas's expected clout is one reason 13 current members of the committee signed a letter recently pledging to support him. But in the House GOP's byzantine system of selecting committee chairmen, this counts for less than it might seem. The choice is actually made by a committee composed of the House leadership, committee chairmen, regional representatives, and one person from each of the three most recent House classes. Even more important, House speaker Denny Hastert gets five votes in the committee, which are likely to benefit his fellow Illinoisan, Crane. The other wild card in the race is the report in a California newspaper in June that Thomas, who's married, was romantically involved with a well-known health care lobbyist in Washington. With the prospect of Thomas being investigated for conflict of interest—the committee has jurisdiction over certain health care issues—Republicans may decide Crane is the less risky choice.

The other high-stakes House contest is for the chairmanship of the Commerce Committee. It pits Billy Tauzin of Louisiana against Mike Oxley of Ohio. This race has been brewing for the past few years, with Tauzin emphasizing his skills as a leg-

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islator and communicator, and Oxley touting the fact that while he may be somewhat low profile he's easy to work with, and has spent many more years as a Republican (Tauzin switched to the GOP in August 1995).

Unlike the Ways and Means race, this contest involves little intrigue. Both candidates are well liked by their colleagues, and the two are ideologically akin, though Tauzin is now the clear favorite. Not only did he raise more than Oxley this year, and campaign for more candidates, he's also viewed as better equipped to win favorable media coverage. After the networks called Florida for Al Gore, he was quick to urge hearings, and received a burst of publicity. He also took the lead in the Firestone hearings, bashing the company and deflecting Democratic charges that the GOP was in the pocket of big business. Last, Tauzin threw the most lavish parties at this year's Republican convention in Philadelphia—something aides and lobbyists are still talking about.

In the Senate, where leadership contests are determined by one-man, one-vote, the stakes are lower. As one Republican senator explains, "There are only two leadership jobs that have any real responsibility," majority leader and the senatorial campaign committee. But this hasn't stopped Pete Domenici of New Mexico from taking on Larry Craig of Idaho for the top job on the Policy Committee. Domenici's candidacy has caught his colleagues off guard, as he's not the insurgent type, and there have been no complaints about Craig. Indeed, Domenici himself says he has no quibble with the job Craig has done over the past four years.

So why's he running? A Domenici aide says his boss is "looking to reenergize the policy shop. . . . He believes he may offer a slightly different slant on how the committee can be an effective resource for Republicans." As a campaign theme, this hasn't bowled over Domenici's GOP colleagues. I asked one of them, who's been lobbied by the veteran senator, why Domenici was running. "I don't know," he replied, after a long pause. Another senator speculated that Domenici is simply looking for something to do two years from now, when term limits require him to step aside as chairman of the influential Budget Committee—though Domenici's aide strongly denies it.

Another popular theory is that Domenici is running to express his displeasure with Trent Lott, the Senate Republican leader. But Domenici and his aides have poured cold water on this. They note that after the Capitol Hill newspaper *Roll Call* reported Domenici's supposed frustration with the Mississippi senator, he called Lott to assure him this was not the case. Allies of Domenici also point out that he's offered to give a speech to the GOP caucus recommending Lott be reelected GOP leader—a meaningless gesture considering Lott faces no opposition, but symbolically important in the tradition-bound Senate.

Tauzin threw the most lavish parties at this year's Republican convention in Philadelphia—something aides and lobbyists are still talking about.

Craig is expected to be reelected, though Domenici's best chance may be to turn the race into an ideological contest, which he has so far refused to do. With all the leadership slots occupied by conservative Young Turks, he could argue there needs to be a moderate/Old Bull presence. That would be a risky strategy in a caucus dominated by conservatives, but it would give his campaign something it currently lacks: a compelling theme.

The Young Turk/Old Bull struggle is also playing itself out in the race for conference chairman. This contest, necessitated by the retirement of Connie Mack, pits Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania against Kit Bond of Missouri. Santorum was elected in 1994 as a crusading conservative, and is still remembered for attempting to dislodge liberal Republican Mark Hatfield from a committee chairmanship because he voted against the balanced budget amendment. Bond, elected in 1986, is slightly less conservative, and less prone to rock the boat, though his efforts to rein in HUD secretary Andrew Cuomo have been a model of congressional oversight.

Asked about the race, a Republican senator said he gave the edge to Santorum for a simple reason: He's been running for a leadership position ever since Mack announced his retirement in March 1999. Bond, by contrast, didn't fully make his intentions known until September. Santorum also benefits from having smoothed over some of his rough edges and winning reelection earlier this month as a conservative in a Northeastern state that tends to favor moderate Republicans like Arlen Specter, Tom Ridge, and the late John Heinz. And while his whip team consists of conservatives like Mike DeWine, Craig Thomas, and Tim Hutchinson, Santorum also has the backing of Specter, which will help allay moderate concerns.

Regardless of how this contest, and the others, turn out, what's most striking about the GOP maneuvering is just how little of it there is. In the House, all of the incumbent members of the leadership were reelected unanimously. And in the Senate, there's no hint of rebellion against Lott or his number two, Don Nickles. This might seem surprising considering Republicans failed to pick up seats in either chamber. But there's a feeling within the GOP that they were fortunate just to keep their majorities. How Republicans build on these majorities is a riddle for the leadership and the committee chairmen to answer. But the person they're all convinced would guarantee a hefty boost in their numbers two years from now is one whose success they are loath to wish for: a President Al Gore. ♦

Our Aaron Burr

Self-obsessed, conniving, and dangerous, Al Gore is the man who will say or do anything to get his way.

By Noemie Emery

Every two hundred years, we tend to have a small problem. A glitch appears in the electoral system; a deadlock ensues; a loophole presents itself; an unscrupulous figure bursts through the breach, calmly creating incredible havoc. In 2000, this figure is Albert Gore Jr., trying to make up new rules after the election is over. In 1800, it was Aaron Burr.

Burr was the dark star of his generation, itself a cauldron of testy emotions and rivalries. George Washington and Alexander Hamilton were locked in a father-son bond, with all the resultant attachments and tensions. Hamilton and James Madison were friends. Thomas Jefferson was also friends with Madison. Then Madison broke with Hamilton to become Jefferson's closest ally. Jefferson and Hamilton became bitter political enemies. Jefferson and Madison broke with George Washington. John Adams and Hamilton detested each other. Adams and Jefferson were the closest of friends, the most bitter of enemies, and then friends again. Most at some times had harsh words to say about one another. But all had harsh words for Burr. He was regarded as brilliant, but self-involved and dangerously ambitious. Gore may or may not be brilliant, but he is certainly divisive and ruthless, and wholly obsessed with achieving his ends.

Illustration by Ismael Roldan

The problem in 2000 is an election so close as to defy belief, and a ballot confusion in some Florida precincts that served as the edge of the wedge for Gore's ambition. The problem in 1800 was a disconnect between the electoral system as set up by the Framers, and the party system that grew up on its own. The Framers had planned for a world without parties, in which the president and the vice president were picked independently, each elector having two votes in the process, with the winner in the Electoral College filling the office of president, and the lesser office going to the runner-up. They were unprepared for what happened in Washington's first term, when his government started to split into factions. The Federalists clustered around Hamilton, John Jay, Adams, and Washington; the Republicans (later Democrats) around Jefferson, Madison, and, in New York City, Aaron Burr.

For the first two elections, the old system lasted, as Washington and Adams, though never close, were of the same party. But in 1796, the first contested election, Adams defeated Jefferson, and the two top offices were split. In 1800, when Vice President Jefferson ran against President Adams, both men ran on de facto tickets, each trying to achieve a measure of balance, Adams running with Charles Pinckney of South Carolina and Jefferson, of course, with Burr. Each party's electors were to vote for both ends of the ticket, holding one vote back from the vice president, to preserve the succession. With the Federalists, this worked splendidly. Adams received 65 electoral votes and Pinckney 64. With the Republicans, something slipped up; Burr and Jefferson ended with 73 ballots apiece. Jefferson waited for Burr to acknowledge the will of the voters and defer to him as president. To his growing shock and horror, Burr did not.

Burr's refusal to defer to Jefferson as the president-designate was perfectly legal, but it brought on a season of maximum danger. There were threats to call a new constitutional convention, threats by Federalists to install Jefferson's enemy chief justice John Marshall as an interim president; threats by Jefferson that should this last event happen, the Virginia militia would march on the capital. Five days and nights brought no

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resolution; the break possibly coming in a surprise letter from Hamilton to his friend James A. Bayard of Delaware, urging a vote for his old rival Jefferson, while calling Burr "a profligate, a voluptuary . . . bankrupt beyond redemption, except by the plunder of his country . . . artful and intriguing to an inconceivable degree." When Jefferson let it be known to the moderate Federalists that he would neither dismantle the navy nor subvert the public credit, Bayard cast a blank ballot, and the crisis was over. Though, as Bayard later said, "by deceiving one man (a great blockhead), and tempting two," Burr could have made himself the president of the United States.

Burr's career after the crisis was even stranger than his conduct during it had been. As vice president under Jefferson, he continued to plot with the radical Federalists, joining them in a scheme two years later to lead New York and the New England states out of the Union, with himself serving as president. This was quashed—once again—by more pleas from Hamilton, and it was things that he said and wrote in the course of this crisis that led to the duel in which Burr shot and killed Hamilton in July 1804. Returning to Washington under indictment for murder, Burr continued to preside over the Senate, though a mortified Jefferson, easing him off of his ticket, was plotting his political demise. In March 1805, Burr gave a stirring farewell speech to the Senate, calling that body an "exalted refuge" from corruption and "phrensy," and a "sanctuary, a citadel, of law." By this time, Burr had been plotting for seven months to once more dismember the country, this time along the spine of the Allegheny mountains, offering to the French and British his assistance in cutting off the western sections of the country from the East. It was in the course of this scheme to "liberate" the west (and then invade Mexico), that Burr was arrested and brought to trial, in 1807, near the end of Jefferson's second term. Largely to annoy Jefferson, John Marshall acquitted him on a technicality, and Burr fled to Europe, where he spent the next five years peddling plots, to no takers. He returned to America in 1812, in what passed for obscurity, married a rich widow, Eliza Jumel, rumored to have once been a madam, and proceeded to run through her money. She divorced him, for adultery, sometime before his death at 80. Meanwhile, the Twelfth Amendment, mandating the distinct election of the president and of the vice president, had been ratified on June 15, 1804.

Gore's life is not yet this picaresque. But there are points of contact. Like Burr, he is a divinity school dropout with a strong sense of moral superiority. Both men share grandiose views of their own historical destiny. Burr saw himself as Alexander or Caesar. Raised to be a great leader, Gore "believes he is a historical figure," Leon Wieseltier told journalist Peter Boyer. "He really does believe that he was born to lead."

Both breach the limits of rational conduct. Burr was understood by his contemporaries to be an unstable and reckless man. Gore is seen as compulsively mendacious. Politicians lie, but few do so as audaciously and with such self-satisfaction as Gore. He never voted for any pro-life positions, he bragged (except that he did). He fought Big Tobacco from the hour of his sister's death in 1984 (except when he didn't). He didn't know it was a fund-raiser. He was out of the room when fund-raising was mentioned. He was a farmer. He was a home builder. He was a combat veteran. He was a romantic hero. He was a crime-busting, crusading journalist, who sent many people to prison (except that he didn't). His managers in his first presidential campaign were so worried by this compulsion that they sent him a memo, to which he did not pay attention, suggesting he establish more touch with reality: "The main point is to be careful not to overstate your role."

David Maraniss, author of a Gore biography, reported that Richard Ben Cramer, in his mammoth multibiography of the men who ran for president in the 1988 cycle, decided in the end to leave Gore out of a book that ran on for more than a thousand pages. Cramer had asked Gore how he decided to run. "He said there were *thousands* of people—that was the honest-to-God number he used, *thousands*—writing to him telling him he ought to be president. . . . I sensed that probably didn't happen. . . . So I thought to myself, life's too short to talk to this guy any more. It wasn't the fact that he wasn't telling the truth, it was the pallid bankruptcy of the lies, all in the service of a picture of himself that wasn't even interesting. He wasn't even an interesting liar. That was the kiss of death for me."

Like his fantasy quotient, Gore's aggression levels are well above average. Politicians attack, but few are uniquely attackers, or attack so readily. When pressed, Gore's first resort is to class and race warfare. His headquarters this year was nicknamed the "slaughterhouse," his researchers were dubbed "killers." The carnivorous metaphors come almost unbidden. In a column about Gore's campaign "brutality," Jacob Weisberg describes Gore "ripping into (an opponent's) flesh like a crazed weasel." Gore likes "sinking his political fangs into the flesh of the other side and ripping it," says Michael Barone.

The tension and unpleasantness of the past days in Florida—the ugliness of it all—is thus a tribute to Gore. It was almost comical when Democrats began complaining on November 22 that Republicans had intimidated the canvassing board of Dade County. Yes, there were angry Republicans in suits and ties, brandishing Sore Loserman posters. But this came after two weeks of provocation. In the hours following the election, Gore had unleashed an

invasion of lawyers, with their stream of drummed-up complaints. He had countenanced the theater of mobs and protests, the frenzied attacks on public officials, the purposeful suppression of the votes of servicemen, the playing of the race card, and the whipping up of hatred against his opponents. All of these things have been Gore's doing. Have a close race, a tie, and you have piles of kindling. Add a Gore or a Burr, and it bursts into flames.

For all his flamboyance, Burr did little harm to the country. With Gore, harm has already been done. Win or lose, he will have damaged himself and the country. The presidency George W. Bush may get may be weaker than usual, but the one Gore might get would be far weaker still.

"Our campaign continues," a Gore aide exulted in the early morning of November 8, and by acting on this in the way they have acted, they have made certain, that should he prevail, the campaign against him will also go on, at full throttle, in every possible avenue, until the bitter ending of his term. On November 20, the *Washington Post* quoted congressmen in both parties saying that while Bush would be able to find allies in Congress, Gore would walk into a threshing machine: "Democrats are concerned about the growing intensity of Republican outrage over Gore's tactics—and what that might mean." Sowing the wind does mean reaping the whirlwind. Has Gore really understood what a presidency ground out in this manner would bring? The bond that unites Gore and Burr over two centuries is a willingness to massage, bend, and twist the law to achieve advantage, heedless of the cost to the country and its culture. Both seem to believe that the Constitution, in Burr's notorious phrase, is a "miserable paper machine" when it does not serve their purpose. "All things are moral to great souls," Burr once told a stunned Hamilton. Exactly. All things are moral, to Burr, and to Gore. ♦

P.G. Wodehouse in his roadster, 1928. Hulton-Deutsch Collection / CORBIS.

Divine Comedy

P.G. Wodehouse's Perfect Pitch

By Andrew Ferguson

Considering that he is the favorite writer of more writers than any other writer—I feel safe, if slightly headachy, in asserting this—the literature about P.G. Wodehouse is surprisingly thin. Scattered here and there are a handful of tributes, by George Orwell and Evelyn Waugh and a few others, and a Wodehouse cultist named Thelma Cazalet-Keir put together a Festschrift of sorts in the early 1970s, called *Homage to Wodehouse*, and then there are the biographies, only three that I know of, including one very good one by Frances Donaldson. Which is not a lot, under the circumstances. By contrast, the literature *by* P.G. Wodehouse, in sheer tonnage, is one of the wonders of the world—in quality, too. It's as if his accomplishment had stunned his fellow scribblers into silence.

That's one explanation, at any rate. Another has to do with the nature of humor in general and humorous writing in particular. It's almost impossible to write funny about humor, and anyone who writes seriously about it is doomed to come off as a fuddy duddy. E.B. White, a funny writer himself, once said that analyzing humor is like dissecting a frog, in that the thing tends to die in the process and the results will be interesting only to the purely scientific mind.

Right Ho, Jeeves
by P.G. Wodehouse
Overlook, 224 pp., $15.95

The Code of the Woosters
by P.G. Wodehouse
Overlook, 220 pp., $15.95

Pigs Have Wings
by P.G. Wodehouse
Overlook, 230 pp., $15.95

As the most successful comic novelist in history, Wodehouse has occasionally been placed under the knife in this way, and the results are gruesome enough to have scared off other admirers who might feel moved to explain the source of their admiration. To get a sense of what can happen, here's a sentence plucked from the first page of *P.G. Wodehouse: A Portrait of a Master* by David A. Jasen: Wodehouse's "humor depends mainly on the use of the literal interpretation of an idiomatic expression out of context for effect." Har de har har.

One last explanation for the relative lack of Wodehousian lit crit is the difficulty anyone would have getting his arms around the Wodehouse corpus, by which I mean his body of work (I'm trying to avoid the word "oeuvre"), in order to deliver some definite pronouncement on it. Wodehouse's first book was published in 1902, when he was twenty-one, and his last came out in 1974, when he was ninety-three; he was in the middle of drafting another one when he was finally carried off the following year.

Published bibliographies differ, so no one can say for certain, but in between he seems to have written ninety-four other books, at least six movies, sixteen plays, the lyrics or book or both for twenty-eight musical comedies, and more than three hundred short stories. (These estimates are Frances Donaldson's.) A fellow who wanted to become a Wodehousian—at least, a Wodehousian who knew what he was

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talking about—would have time for little else.

All of which means that it is probably the wiser course for those who cherish Wodehouse's work to just keep quiet and enjoy it, and not run the risk of chasing away the uninitiated with heavy breathing about why they will enjoy it too. I would take that advice myself, except for the publication, just in time for Christmas, of a new line of Wodehouse editions that look to me to be as handsome as any around. The publisher is Overlook Press, and the press release makes the books sound like dessert (appropriately enough): each volume "edited and reset and printed on Scottish cream-wove paper, sewn and bound in cloth." They're handsome books, hefty in the hand and easy on the eye, and at $15.95 per, the cost of a quality paperback, the price is right, too.

The editors have launched the line with three novels from what might fussily be called Wodehouse's middle period. (A seventy-year career has a lot of middle period.) *Right Ho, Jeeves* and *The Code of the Woosters* are chronicles of the young gadabout Bertram Wooster and his manservant Jeeves, published in the 1930s, and *Pigs Have Wings*, continuing the saga of Lord Emsworth of Blandings Castle and his prize pig the Empress of Blandings, came out not long after World War II. More volumes are planned, of course, but the Overlook editors have obviously chosen to introduce Wodehouse at the very top of his form, which is as good a place to begin as any. He never really gets much worse than this.

Wodehouse's plots aren't easy to summarize. He called his novels "musical comedies without the music," and he did put them together like a musical comedy, with scene stacked upon scene, the narrative driven by dialogue rather than description. But while the storyline of a musical comedy might have two or three reversals before the happy resolution, a typical Wodehouse plot has two dozen or more zigs and zags, which, though dizzying to follow, take place according to an inviolable internal logic. Lots of novelists write outlines before writing their novels. Few are as fastidious as Wodehouse, whose outlines would commonly run to thirty thousand words or more—at least a third as long as the finished book.

The Code of the Woosters, for example, begins with Bertie hungover, as he often is, this time from a bachelor party thrown for his friend Gussie Fink-Nottle. Jeeves, handing his master a morning bracer, suggests to Bertie that the two, Bertie and Jeeves, reserve passage on a round-the-world cruise for a much-needed vacation. Bertie dismisses the idea ("I refuse to be decanted into any blasted ocean-going liner and lugged off round the world") and is then summoned to the London townhouse of his Aunt Dahlia, whose women's weekly magazine, *Milady's Boudoir*, is in financial straits and needs Pomona Grindle to serialize her new book in its pages if fortunes are to be reversed. To pay for Pomona, Aunt Dahlia hopes to squeeze her rich husband Tom, who will be less likely to come up with the money if he pays a large sum for an eighteenth-century cow creamer he hopes to buy from an antiques store that afternoon. Aunt Dahlia therefore dispatches Bertie to the store to impersonate an expert collector and disparage the cow creamer to the owner, so that Uncle Tom will get a better price. Arriving there, Bertie meets up with Gussie's future father-in-law, Judge Basset, who once fined Bertie in his court for stealing a policeman's helmet. Basset, too, hopes to buy the cow creamer. Within moments he is accusing Bertie of trying to steal it. . . .

We are now on page twenty-three—and I see from my little summary that I have forgotten to mention the subplot about Anatole, Aunt Dahlia's gifted chef, and the sub-subplot about Roderick Spode, who quickly becomes essential to the action, which will improbably conclude, two hundred and fifty pages later, with these and several more loose strands tied together. You can see why those thirty thousand word outlines would come in handy. Wodehouse understood, as many funny novelists don't, the preeminence of storytelling. Without a plot to push along, the jokes lose their force. "You must never offer the reader anything simply *as* funny and nothing more," Kingsley Amis once said. "Make it acceptable as information, comment, narrative, et cetera, so that if the joke flops the reader has still got *something*." Amis himself said he learned this from reading Wodehouse, who never wasted a joke merely for the sake of a laugh, or, for that matter, wasted a plot twist without making it the occasion for a joke.

Hulton-Deutsch Collection / CORBIS.

Wodehouse (right) receiving an honorary degree from Oxford in 1939.

And maybe "joke" is the wrong word for humor so embedded in story and character. Wodehouse is hard to quote. No one has ever been better at simile—one robust woman has a laugh "like cavalry over a tin bridge"—but he wasn't really a gag writer or a crafter of epigrams. You will laugh out loud at least once a chapter, and probably more, but you'll be hard pressed to tell a friend why. Most often the humor comes packaged like this, from *Right Ho, Jeeves*, as Bertie and his feckless chum Gussie, a scientist who specializes in the study of newts, discuss his nerve-wracking courtship of Madeline Basset.

> "Color does make a difference. Look at newts. During the courting season the male newt is brilliantly colored. It helps him a lot."
>
> "But you aren't a male newt."
>
> "I wish I were. Do you know how a male newt proposes, Bertie? He just stands in front of the female newts vibrating his tail and bending his body in a semicircle. I could do that on my head. No, you wouldn't find me grousing if I were a male newt."
>
> "But if you were a male newt, Madeline Basset wouldn't look at you. Not with the eye of love, I mean."
>
> "She would, if she were a female newt."
>
> "But she isn't a female newt."
>
> "No, but suppose she was."
>
> "Well, if she was, you wouldn't be in love with her."
>
> "Yes, I would, if I were a male newt."
>
> A slight throbbing about the temples told me that this discussion had reached the saturation point.

Wodehouse's novels, a large number of them, reach a kind of perfection. They offer almost everything a reader-for-pleasure could want: indelible and sharply drawn characters, complicated and perfectly controlled stories, and the most exquisite prose style in the whole of the language.

What they lack is heft. Once in a while someone will try to correct this by claiming Wodehouse as a satirist. All but a small minority of the books are set in country houses in a vaguely prewar England, and they concern almost exclusively the doings of earls, lords, ladies, clubbable heirs, public school ne'er-do-wells, and other figures of the upper class—an impressive percentage of whom are imbeciles. For this reason uplifters, progressives, and other reformers occasionally pretend to see a slyly subversive critique of the class system running beneath the laughs.

But a satirist, it seems to me, is precisely, emphatically, what Wodehouse wasn't. The son of a civil servant and himself the product of a second-rank public school, Wodehouse was English to the core. He spent most of his adult life abroad, first in France and then in the United States, but he was as sensitive to class distinctions as any writer who ever lived, and never showed the slightest resentment toward them. In fact, he has, with meticulous care, excluded from his books anything that could be at all relevant to the real world. One sign of this is the dispute, such as it is, about when the books take place. Orwell among others thought they were set in the Edwardian period, on the literal-minded grounds that spats-wearing dandies like Bertie had all been killed off in World War I. But Orwell, who was born in 1903, wasn't up and about in the Edwardian period and had no firsthand adult knowledge of it, and perhaps for this reason he missed the obvious point that spats-wearing dandies like Bertie had never really existed at all. (His mistaken belief that they had is probably one of the things that made him a socialist.)

Wodehouse himself, late in life, said that the books were set "sometime between the wars." Interestingly, though, Wodehouse didn't set foot in England from about 1920 until after World War II. His England "between the wars" was as remote to him as the Edwardian period was to Orwell—to both of them a realm of fantasy and the imagination. Fantasy is the key word. Waugh put his finger on it, in a much-quoted tribute written for Wodehouse's eightieth birthday. Wodehouse's characters, Waugh said, are not

> survivors of the Edwardian age. They are creations of pure fancy. . . . All, whatever the delinquencies attributed to them, exist in a world of pristine paradisal innocence. For Mr. Wodehouse there has been no fall of Man; no "aboriginal calamity." His characters have never tasted the forbidden fruit. They are still in Eden. The gardens of Blandings Castle are that original garden from which we are all exiled.

This otherworldliness carried over into Wodehouse's personal life. Money ceased to be a problem early on in his career; by the 1920s, the *Saturday Evening Post* was paying him $10,000 for a short story, $50,000 for a serial, and his books, once published, seldom went out of print. His devoted wife protected him from mundane demands (he was a loving father to her daughter from an earlier marriage, but they had no children together). For three-quarters of a century he just sat in his

houseslippers and wrote—seven days a week, all morning and much of the afternoon, with breaks, in his later years, to watch *The Edge of Night*, the daytime soap opera that was his life's second grand passion. He worked as diligently to exclude anything unpleasant and sinister from his own life as he did from his stories, with about equal success. Colleagues and friends spoke unfailingly of his kind heart.

That private equanimity and professional dedication, quite apart from his unimprovable technical skill, may be what accounts for his standing as the favorite writer of so many writers. He represents a kind of Platonic ideal of the trade, work and life alike absolutely unspotted from the world. Overlook Press does right by him, presenting his work so handsomely. For those who love them, and have encountered them only in one of the many paperback editions, it's pleasing to have Bertie and Jeeves and Lord Emsworth and the Empress enshrined on the shelf between hard covers. For those who haven't had a chance to explore the corpus, there is no time to begin like the p., and no better books to begin with than these. P.G. Wodehouse was a very great artist, but don't let that put you off. ♦

Recounting Cleveland

Our underrated 22nd—and 24th—president.

BY ALVIN S. FELZENBERG

Grover Cleveland keeps popping up in American politics. He made his last appearances in the nineties as journalists sought to prove that charges levied about Bill Clinton's "private life" and public conduct were hardly without precedent. Cleveland, however, had admonished his "handlers" to "tell the truth" when responding to allegations—a far cry from Clinton's motto, "We'll just have to win, then."

An Honest President
The Life and Presidencies of Grover Cleveland
by H. Paul Jeffers
Avon, 384 pp., $27

Grover Cleveland
A Study in Character
by Alyn Brodsky
St. Martin's, 512 pp., $35

With the nation still awaiting the outcome of the 2000 presidential election, Cleveland is back in view. He was, after all, the last man to win the popular vote but lose the electoral vote. But, again, the parallel is limited. Cleveland, unlike Vice President Gore, refused entreaties to contest his defeat on the "moral" ground that he was the people's choice. He was mindful of having sworn to uphold a Constitution that included the Electoral College. And he wanted to avoid the tumult that occurred a dozen years earlier when Samuel J. Tilden won the popular vote but lost the electoral after a partisan congressional commission intervened.

Two new and welcome biographies vividly describe the man known to his nephews as "Old Jumbo": H. Paul Jeffers's *An Honest President: The Life and Presidencies of Grover Cleveland* and Alyn Brodsky's *Grover Cleveland: A Study in Character*.

A towering politician of his generation, Cleveland has been unfamiliar to most Americans and even many historians. Students of presidential trivia know him as the only Democrat elected president between James Buchanan and Woodrow Wilson, the only president to serve non-consecutive terms, a "draft dodger" who sent a substitute to fight in the Civil War, the candidate who admitted to having fathered a child out of wedlock, the first president to wed while in office, and the president who vanished from public view to undergo surgery for cancer.

Richard Hofstadter once observed that Cleveland "stood out, if only for his honesty and independence, as the sole reasonable facsimile of a major president between Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt." Jeffers and Brodsky both see Cleveland as a major historical figure, a leader of courage and conviction who compiled a substantial record of achievement as president. Brodsky's is by far the superior study, but Jeffers's, in spite of various factual errors, will appeal more to general readers. Together, Brodsky and Jeffers fill a glaring gap and finally give Cleveland his due.

Cleveland thought of public service as a "business engagement" between officeholders and the public. He stressed the "trusteeship" aspects of his various jobs so often that his handlers worked it into the Cleveland motto: "Public office is a public trust." In his meteoric rise from mayor of Buffalo to governor of New York to president in a span of four years, he showed himself, like his hero Andrew Jackson, the master of the "veto." He used it to block what he perceived to be unfair giveaways, measures he deemed unconstitutional, and encroachments on the powers of the executive. His willingness to oppose special interests (especially Tammany Hall) gave meaning to another line associated with Cleveland: "They love him for the enemies he has made." To reformers of all stripes, Cleveland seemed the perfect antidote to the political corruption of the "Gilded Age," which included "Credit Mobilier," "Whiskey ring," scandals in the Grant administration, and rampant patronage and payoffs.

A Democrat, Cleveland led a party that was considerably different from what it became under Franklin Roosevelt and remains under Al Gore. As president, he stood for strong states' rights, low taxes, a limited federal government, the gold standard, and free trade. The modern Democratic party—or at least the faction that marches

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under the "New Democrat" standard—embraces only the last.

No friend of entitlements, Cleveland vetoed an appropriation of $10,000 to assist Texas farmers who had suffered through a drought. His reason was simple. "Though the people support the government," he said, "the government should not support the people." Cleveland took satisfaction in the fact that his first administration had "not corrupted or betrayed the poor with the money of the rich." And so he vetoed what he considered lavish pensions to Civil War veterans, contributing to his defeat in 1888.

Cleveland opposed tariffs because they provided politicians with the means of dispensing favors. He saw surpluses as temptations to bribe voters, reward friendly constituencies, and, worst of all, spend public moneys for the benefit of only some. Funds taken in by the government in excess of its costs were an "indefensible extortion and a culpable betrayal of American fairness and justice."

Even when he deviated from his principles, it was for the sake of a greater good. Cleveland sent 4,000 federal troops to Chicago to break the Pullman strike in 1894. A believer in arbitration, he had asserted that the federal government should not weigh in on such matters. He justified this intervention, though, on the need to keep interstate commerce and mail deliveries flowing.

Cleveland showed an enlightened attitude toward Native Americans. He favored dispersing reservation lands as private property to Indian families, improving education, and extending citizenship. Unlike his Republican opponents, however, he was unwilling to enforce the voting rights awarded emancipated slaves. During his second term, the Supreme Court handed down *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* ("separate but equal"), which he supported.

Throughout his public life, Cleveland displayed an integrity rare in the annals of the presidency. He confided to a friend after losing in 1888 that he did not want to be reelected without—as some had urged—letting the public know where he stood on the tariff question. "Perhaps I made a mistake, from the party standpoint," he said, "but, damn it, it was right."

Speaking to a gathering of students at the University of Michigan, Cleveland distilled his philosophy of government:

> Interest yourself in public affairs as a duty of citizenship, but do not surrender your faith to those who discredit and debase politics by scoffing at sentiment and principle, and whose political activity consists in attempts to gain popular support by cunning devices and shrewd manipulation.

This remains good advice for anyone following the machinations that have been going on in Florida weeks after Election Day. ♦

Hulton Getty Collection

Irish Tales

William Trevor defines the stories by which we understand ourselves. **BY MARGARET BOERNER**

The Irish writer William Trevor has just published *The Hill Bachelors*—his tenth collection of stories, his twenty-eighth book—and nearly everyone who has read him agrees that he ranks among the greatest living writers in English. Indeed, for many, his tight, perfected short stories—each an astonishing performance in which melodramatic situations are turned, by acute psychological insight, into classic drama—make him *the* greatest living writer in English. And the shock of reading him is that he's *living*, for Trevor's stories are world literature like a return to the mode of Chekhov, English literature like a recovery of the strength of Hardy, and Irish literature like a rebirth of the world of Synge and Joyce.

The Hill Bachelors
by William Trevor
Viking, 240 pp., $22.95

As Trevor reports it, his stories "are essentially about people," but that formula does not reach down to the deepest level of his work. Much of Trevor's work, in fact, consists of stories *about stories*—about the narratives that we make of our lives. At the end of a tale, Trevor's characters often achieve a moment of recognition. But the tricky and subtle thing is that this recognition is not exactly of the "meaning" of what has happened. It is rather a recognition by the protagonists of their own stories—of what will give form to their feelings and provide them with the words by which they will recount it. Often a Trevor protagonist resolves events by determining no longer to lie to herself (Trevor is particularly acute about the feelings of women), while nevertheless keeping the "story," her feelings, a secret.

In one of the stories in *The Hill Bachelors*, for instance, a malicious practical joke leads a newspaper to publish a professor's obituary. Fearing he will be hurt and thinking it simply a mistake that will be retracted in later editions, the professor's wife conceals that page of the paper from him. He is thus bewildered in the afternoon by his colleagues' remarks at a regular sherry party given by the master of the college.

But finally he is told what has happened. And after the party, he stops off in a pub and gets drunk for the first time in his life. When he comes home, his wife tries to apologize for her well-meaning deception, but he forestalls her with a bit of speculation (which involves her personally) as to why the obituary was made. The story ends when he "holds her as he did the day he first confessed his adoration."

"Death of a Professor" is the masterpiece in *The Hill Bachelors*. Like most of Trevor's stories, it has no plot in the conventional sense. Instead—with a typical Trevor device of never telling the reader what the premature obituary actually said—the story is devoted both to his wife's and colleagues' reactions and to the professor's own ruminations on what the obituary *should* have mentioned: "the orderly precision that enhances his work and affects him as a husband," and "his wife was younger by sixteen years . . . as lovely in her day as Marilyn Monroe."

In addition to his story collections, Trevor has written twelve novels, fifteen radio plays, and some forty television plays (mostly adaptations of his stories). The man seems never to have suffered writer's block. Born in Ireland in 1928, Trevor has been publishing prize-winning and best-selling fiction in Britain for almost half a century. Born a Protestant Irishman and married to an Englishwoman, he has lived in England for forty years—emigration from depressed Ireland a necessity in the 1950s for graduates of Trinity College Dublin.

He started as a sculptor, but despite some success he became disappointed with the modernist style his pieces were assuming and devoted more time to his fiction. He wrote his first short stories while he was employed by a London advertising agency, and he now lives in Devon, in England's west country. Nonetheless, Trevor's writing comes from the well-developed tradition of the short story in Ireland, which essentially began with George Moore and flowered with James Joyce, Liam O'Flaherty, Sean O'Faolain, and Frank O'Connor.

Quite why Trevor's fiction has not found the same level of popularity in the United States that it enjoys in England and Ireland remains a mystery. It may have something to do with his decidedly ambiguous slant on life. But it probably has more to do with the interesting plotlessness of his stories.

Unlike novels, short stories are not required to have plots (although they often do, as writers from O. Henry to Jorge Luis Borges have demonstrated).

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Trevor hardly ever puts his characters into much more action than a stroll home, a bus ride, or an evening meal. But in this, Trevor falls squarely in a classic tradition of the short story, manifesting the single action, unified mood, and economy of means established by Edgar Allan Poe, Guy de Maupassant, and—especially for understanding Trevor—Anton Chekhov. Trevor's stories typically present his protagonists' characters at a moment in time in which a previous event (sometimes events) brings them to a flash of recognition about their own lives.

Thus even the titles in *The Hill Bachelors* point to the essence of the stories. Half are set in England, half in Ireland, but nationality is not particularly important to most of the stories. "Three People," for instance, shows a woman, her father, and their handyman bound to each other by the handyman's having provided an alibi for the woman in the death of her disabled sister. "Of the Cloth" shows an Anglican priest realizing he has a bond with the local Catholic priest whose church is suffering the same diminution as the Anglican's once powerful Church of Ireland.

In "Good News," a child picked for a screen part undertakes to conceal from her ambitious mother the sexual abuse she realizes she must endure to keep the part. "A Friend in the Trade" focuses on the moment at which an eccentric and troublesome antiquarian goes too far and is dropped by the couple in whose house he has been welcome for thirty years, reverting to being only an acquaintance—while the wife of the house (who knows he loves her) grieves, "Who will listen to him now? Who'll watch him talking to the air?" Even his misfits Trevor treats with sympathy.

"Le Visiteur" tells of a lonely Englishman in France visiting his godparents. Back at his hotel, he imagines having an affair with a woman at another table in the dining room—who does, in fact, take him to her bed. But it turns out she merely wishes to humiliate her vulgar, drunken husband. Left alone, the visitor comes to the realization that the woman behaved as she did because, for her and her husband, the scene was a part of "how they lived, . . . it was how they belonged to one another, not that he understood."

In "Against the Odds," a Belfast woman, experiencing the "benign infection" of the current cease-fire in Northern Ireland, calls off her swindle of a turkey farmer and goes back to marry him. In "The Telephone Game," a young German woman realizes the Englishman she will marry in the morning has childish cruelty in his character. And in "The Hill Bachelors," a young man takes over his widowed mother's farm, where no girl these days would want to follow him as his wife. He "harbored no resentment"; he accepted that,


William Trevor

Viking

"enduring, unchanging, the hills had waited for him, claiming one of their own."

At first blush, these might seem like the height of modernist art, the story as artifact and icon. But Trevor is not a modernist: "I don't write in metaphors." His stories are dense with details of the physical worlds that his characters inhabit, and one of the greatest pleasures of reading Trevor stems from the unmetaphoric richness that complements his grasp of psychological dilemma. In his introduction to the *Oxford Book of Irish Short Stories*, Trevor characterizes the short story as "the distillation of an essence. It may be laid down that it has to have a point, that it must be going somewhere, that it dare not be vague. But art has its own way of defying both definitions and rules."

Trevor's "distillation of an essence" sometimes confuses readers who seek to give his stories more plot, more action, more narrative. Reviewing *The Hill Bachelors* in the *New York Times*, Michiko Kakutani recently (and wrongly) wrote that the hill bachelor "must choose between his love for a woman and his obligations to his widowed mother"; that the turkey farmer finds himself "made the butt of a cruel swindle" by the Belfast woman; and that the professor learns "what the world really thinks of him when his obituary is prematurely published."

It's true, of course, that Trevor can be indirect and difficult: The impossible story "Low Sunday, 1950" is the closest the author has verged on self-parody; it beats me who in this tale is doing what to whom, or when, or why. The temptation in reading Trevor is to think that he intends only to show unhappiness and confusion, a world in which romantic fantasies give way only to resignation.

Trevor himself would disagree. Asked if he believes in "grace in people's lives," he replied, "I'm a Godbotherer. Most of my fiction seems to do that. I'm definitely on the side of the Christians." Indeed, he added, "Life can be melancholy, but that is not the same as depressing. If life were depressing, it would be intolerable." It may be that "no storyteller of any worth can be happy," but "no story of any worth can afford to be given over to gloom."

Much that is bad does happen to the characters in Trevor's stories, often by coincidence, that great motor of fiction. And the cause of these coincidences is the author's sense that "I don't think one has any sort of feeling of controlling one's destiny." But it is precisely because they live in a chaotic world filled with accident—precisely because they are not in full control of their destiny—that what matters is the character of his characters. What matters is the heroism they show in taking on their own stories, or the cowardice they show in refusing to recognize themselves as the protagonists of the tales they use to explain their lives. What matters is not their stories, but—in William Trevor's hands—the story of their stories. ♦

Peking Won't Duck

Bill Gertz on the threat of China.

BY TOM DONNELLY

Last February, *Washington Post* reporters Robert Kaiser and Steven Mufson uncovered the existence of the "Blue Team," an especially alarming and alarmist element of the Vast Right Wing Conspiracy dedicated to undermining the Clinton administration's policy of "engagement" with China and preventing a lasting détente between Washington and Beijing. In their thirty-five-hundred-word exposé, Kaiser and Mufson described the guerrilla activities of the Blue Team, which "attaches riders to legislation in Congress," "promotes fears of a Chinese takeover of the Panama Canal," and "harasses China's biggest oil company, complicating its efforts to sell shares on the New York Stock Exchange."

The China Threat
How the People's Republic Targets America
by Bill Gertz
Regnery, 280 pp., $27.95

Most damning of all, "Members of the Blue Team initially drafted and then helped push through the House of Representatives"—Just think of it: Not only drafting, but passing legislation!—"the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act, a measure designed to strengthen U.S. military ties with Taiwan that has angered China." In Bill Clinton's post-Cold-War world, there are few graver sins than placing national security concerns over trade, or than angering Beijing. Who in his right mind would wish to prevent China's biggest oil company from trading on the Big Board? Why should we worry about who runs the Panama Canal?

And there's more. Blue Teamers have concluded—perhaps an understandable mistake if one spends too much time reading what the Chinese government and Chinese strategists write—that China considers itself in a long-term strategic competition with the United States for power in East Asia and elsewhere.

The best-known Blue Team scribe is the reporter Bill Gertz, across town at the *Washington Times*. With his impeccable sources inside the intelligence community, the Defense Department, and on Capitol Hill, Gertz has routinely broken stories about the China scandals surrounding the Clinton administration. He also is well informed about the new directions in Chinese military strategy and technology that pose a large portion of the Blue Team's worries.

Gertz's new book, *The China Threat: How the People's Republic Targets America*, is a comprehensive summary, discussing both events and developments inside China and the effects they have in the United States. Because the Pentagon, alone of all the agencies of the government, has begun to accumulate a growing body of Chinese strategic writings, many of them simply from open sources, and because Gertz is well known and respected among American military officers and defense officials, he can draw upon materials other reporters miss.

Nonetheless, *The China Threat* is likely to be ignored by the conventional-wisdom types in Washington. And, unfortunately, part of their ability to ignore it derives from the book itself. Gertz's prose mirrors its author: blunt and bold, substituting exposition for nuance. Gertz insists on describing China as "communist China" at nearly every point—which, though certainly true, serves only a hortatory purpose and obscures some larger truths. The Communist party rules in Beijing, but it has long ago and permanently renounced Communist economic theory. In place of Communist ideology it is now increasingly substituting a mercantilism and a virulent, quasi-racist form of Chinese nationalism; the result is more nearly fascist than Communist. And it will surely keep Beijing a dangerous adversary.

The China Threat is especially strong in piecing together the larger pattern of modernization in the Chinese military and the looming U.S.-China confrontation over Taiwan. In a chapter on "Flashpoint Taiwan," Gertz reveals how China's rapidly growing fleet of ballistic and cruise missiles will soon greatly complicate the defense of the island. "Beijing is working on an overwhelming theater missile advantage over Taiwan and is adjusting its doctrine to focus on launching massive, no-warning attacks," Gertz reports. A future American president may face a difficult choice: to intervene at great potential risk and cost, or to permit China to bully Taiwan into reunification on Beijing's terms. Not only would the budding democracy in Taipei perish in the bargain, but so would America's position as the leading power in East Asia.

As the lopsided 83-15 vote in the Senate to grant China permanent normal trading status demonstrates, the Clinton policy of engagement is now accepted by almost all American politicians. George W. Bush repeated the Republican line when, during the fall campaign, he argued that the mediating habits of trade would moderate China's political ambitions and aggressive policies.

But Gertz makes a compelling case that balancing engagement with a policy of military containment is necessary for economic development to work its liberating magic. And if Gertz lacks the sophistication and slickness possessed by the advocates of engagement, he more than makes up for that with his clarity. ♦

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The Knox Family

Whether writing fiction or a biography of her uncles, Penelope Fitzgerald was superb. **BY BRIAN MURRAY**

"I think that everyone's got a certain amount in them that they can write about," Penelope Fitzgerald told an interviewer earlier this year. "And they can write about it early in life, or late."

Fitzgerald chose late. She was fifty-eight when, in 1975, she published her first book—a biography of the English painter Edward Burne-Jones—and nearly sixty when she started writing fiction in a serious way. Fitzgerald's 1979 novel, *Offshore*, won Britain's prestigious Booker Prize; three others—*The Bookshop* (1978), *The Beginning of Spring* (1988), and *The Gate of Angels* (1990)—were shortlisted for the same honor. In 1998 Fitzgerald won the American National Book Critics Circle Award for *The Blue Flower*, her final novel and first international best-seller. She died this April at the age of eighty-three.

The Knox Brothers
by Penelope Fitzgerald
Counterpoint, 288 pp., $26

The Means of Escape
by Penelope Fitzgerald
Houghton Mifflin, 224 pp., $18

Publishers, mindful of Fitzgerald's continuing popularity, are now making her earlier works available to American readers. Fitzgerald's novels are marked from the start by an assurance of structure, a maturity of tone: They're wry, graceful, and lean. Fitzgerald often focuses on oddballs and outcasts, as well as on self-deluding souls encumbered in life's struggles by their own weaknesses and flaws. "One should write lives of people one admires," Fitzgerald once explained—but "novels about people who are sadly mistaken."

Thus, in *The Bookshop*, Fitzgerald's most representative novel, a widow named Florence Green opens a bookshop in Hardborough, a dull and soggy coastal town in East Anglia. Florence is middle-aged and wary, suspecting for example that "men and women aren't quite the right people for each other." Still, as her last name suggests, Florence has remained something of an innocent; she has "a kind heart," which "is not of much use when it comes to the matter of self-preservation."

The people of Hardborough, Florence soon learns, aren't much interested in books or culture. They are, however, quite good at petty bickering and stirring up suspicion and spite, and in the end Florence's little bookshop folds in a squall of unexpected controversy. She leaves Hardborough with her "head bowed in shame," far less green than before. Florence, Fitzgerald suggests, will no longer "blind" herself to the grim fact that, in the final analysis, human beings are "divided into exterminators and exterminates, with the former, at any given moment, predominating."

The same issues of power and themes of cruelty are present in *The Means of Escape*—a new collection of eight stories previously unpublished in the United States. These fable-like pieces, most written in the 1990s, illustrate vividly Fitzgerald's fondness for indirection and avoidance of heavy-handed explanation. Indeed, many readers will decide that several of these stories—"Beehernz," "Not Shown," and "At Hiruharama"—are rather too pared down: turned into puzzles, not tales. Others, like "The Axe" (Fitzgerald's first published story), are oddly surreal. For readers new to Fitzgerald, *The Means of Escape* is not the place to start. Still, even in these stories you can see her fascination with power and cruelty. "The Axe" features a cold-blooded manager who, for little reason, fires an old and pathetically devoted employee, with vicious and haunting results. "Not Shown" includes an oppressive woman who, we're told, "belongs to the tribe of torturers. Why pretend they don't exist?"

In all her work, Fitzgerald favored underdogs, the weak against the strong, and she despised self-importance and careless brutality. Just as emphatically, she prized wit, ingenuity, and generosity—qualities amply displayed in her remarkable family of clerics, writers, and intellectuals. In fact, back in 1977, Fitzgerald published a fine family biography, *The Knox Brothers*, that pays tribute to her father, Edmund ("Eddie") Knox, and his three younger brothers—who are now largely forgotten, but who were men of considerable achievement in their day.

Her father's family, Penelope Fitzgerald reports, included many Anglican churchmen: ministers, missionaries, and minor religious authors. But it was Edmund—her grandfather—who ascended most impressively in ecclesiastical rank, serving as bishop of Birmingham and, later, Manchester.

This Bishop Knox would probably not be remembered at all today, were it not for the fact that he sired four extraordinary boys. Edmund (1881-1971), the eldest brother, made his mark as an essayist, wit, and editor of the humor magazine *Punch*. Though now defunct, *Punch* prospered under Edmund, "the King of Fleet Street" as he was popularly known. The second brother, Dillwyn (1884-1943), even more impressively, was a world-class classicist and cryptologist who played a key role in cracking German codes, from the First World War's "Zimmermann telegram" to the Second World War's "Enigma" machine. The third brother, Wilfred (1886-1950), was an Anglican priest and a biblical scholar—an unassuming man known for his singular piety and visible good works.

The fourth brother, Ronald (1888-1957), however, was the real star—an

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engaging and sociable figure once dubbed by the *Daily Mail* as "the wittiest young man in England." Schooled at Eton and Oxford, "Ronnie" was throughout his life most comfortable with artists and academics, and moved easily among members of Britain's social elite. At Oxford, Ronald's closest friends included the poet Julian Grenfell and the future prime minister Harold Macmillan; in later years he counted among his confidants a distant cousin, Evelyn Waugh. Waugh, indeed, published a biography of Knox in 1959, hailing him as a man "who never lost a friend or made an enemy."

In 1917, however, he came close—shocking and disturbing much of Britain when he left the Anglican priesthood for membership in the Church of Rome. Two years later, Ronald Knox was ordained a Catholic priest, "taking"—as Fitzgerald notes—"the antimodernist oath" against "all liberal interpretations whether of scripture or history."

Almost overnight, Father Knox became one of Britain's more controversial figures and the most famous convert since John Henry Newman left the Church of England in 1845. In 1926 Knox became Catholic chaplain at Oxford and—requiring supplementary funds for the post—threw his writing career into high gear. In a continuing series of sermons, essays, and books, Knox aimed to illuminate Catholic doctrine and, more broadly, defend Christian belief in an increasingly secular age. By the mid-1940s, Knox was known internationally for his learned but accessible religious writings; he was "at his best," Fitzgerald writes, "in the art of clear explanation." Among his English-speaking contemporaries, only C.S. Lewis or G.K. Chesterton achieved more influence and fame.

The donnish Knox lacked Chesterton's volcanic imagination and theatrical flair. Still, like Chesterton, he wrote lively, stylish, and often highly colloquial prose. And, like Chesterton, he repeatedly challenged many of the era's most prominent secular thinkers. Knox's *Caliban in Grub Street* (1930), for example, includes chapters entitled "The Higher Cretinism," "The Prudery of the Moderns," and "Bungling Up Damnation." It challenges Arnold Bennett, Rebecca West, and other advocates of what Knox ironically calls "the modern enlightenment."

One hears clear Chestertonian echoes when, for example, Knox chides Bennett for Bennett's contribution to the 1925 volume *My Religion*, a now hilariously outdated collection of essays by Arthur Conan Doyle, Hugh Walpole, and other famous English writers about their attempt to roll their own faiths. Bennett had written, "I do not believe, and never have at any time believed, in the divinity of Christ, the Virgin Birth, the Immaculate Conception, heaven, hell, the immortality of the soul, the divine inspiration of the Bible." And Knox responded, "This statement lacks, perhaps, scientific precision. Does Mr. Bennett believe in original sin? I imagine not; and if he does not believe in original sin, then he believes in the Immaculate Conception; not merely in the Immaculate Conception of our Lady, but in the immaculate conception of everybody else."

Father Ronald Knox

Little, Brown

Like Chesterton, Knox enjoyed detective stories and published in the 1920s and 1930s several well-known essays about the genre, then nearing its golden age. Knox's "Studies in the Literature of Sherlock Holmes" is a true classic, spoofing the pomposity of much academic writing as it pretends to grapple seriously with the "grave inconsistencies" one finds in Dr. Watson's account of "the Holmes cycle." Later, in his foreword to *The Best Detective Stories of the Year 1928*, Knox famously laid down ten rules he deemed necessary for "the full enjoyment of a detective story." This "Detective Story Decalogue" included the avoidance of twins, secret passages and other cheap distracting tricks—as well as the counsel that "the detective must not himself commit the crime."

Knox practiced what he preached. During the 1930s and 1940s he published several good mystery novels of his own, including *The Viaduct Murder* (1926), *The Three Taps* (1928), and *Still Dead* (1934). Knox's novels sold well and were critically praised, although one Chicago reviewer suggested that "the witty and soft-hearted Father Knox" wouldn't recognize "a real crook," while another complained that Knox's thick plots were redeemed only by his "witty asides."

In *The Knox Brothers*, Fitzgerald rightly stresses the importance of Ronald Knox's *Enthusiasm* (1950), a superbly written account of Christian heresy by a man who, in his own words, "dreaded the undue interference of emotion in religion." Fitzgerald also amply records Knox's struggle to produce a new, more modern translation of the Bible—the chief project of his final years. Knox, Fitzgerald writes, wanted to produce "a Vulgate which could be read aloud with pleasure and which English Catholics, perhaps for the first time, might study together at home." Although admirable in many respects, the Knox Version never quite caught on, and was harshly dismissed by some reviewers. "It was," Fitzgerald writes, "an exercise in humility to read these opinions, and Ronnie said that on his deathbed, if he found he had no enemies left, he intended to forgive his reviewers."

Fitzgerald, however, provides little of the flavor of any of Ronnie's books; in fact, she rarely quotes from—or comments on—any of the Knox broth-

Counterpoint

Left: Penelope Fitzgerald's father, Edmund Knox, who edited Punch *under the name "Evoe."*
Right: a family portrait c. 1903. Standing: Wilfred, Dillwyn, Winifred, and Edmund. Seated: Ethel, Bishop Knox, and Ronald.

ers' published writings. Fitzgerald records, for example, that in the late 1940s, Wilfred hit Britain's best-seller lists with a brief life of St. Paul. But we learn nothing else about the book's argument or style. Fitzgerald does note that her own father's humor "came partly from a sheer love of words," particularly puns; he was the sort of fellow who once began an address to the Omar Khayyam Society with the words "Onaccustomarkhayyam to public speaking." Otherwise, she ignores the popular light essays and verses that Eddie published under the pen name "Evoe."

There are other omissions and gaps. Fitzgerald says very little about the range of her subjects' friendships, or the personalities of their children, or the qualities of their wives. We aren't told, for example, that Edmund's second wife, Mary Shephard, not only illustrated the children's classic *Mary Poppins*, but used Edmund himself as a model for one of its characters—the fatherly Mr. Banks.

But then, *The Knox Brothers* doesn't aspire to be a conventional literary biography. Instead, Fitzgerald has constructed a book that is very much like the best of her novels: understated, sympathetic, and tight. *The Knox Brothers* is fueled by the power of loving memory—a daughter's desire to make her father and his brothers live again through an affectionate rendering not only of their deepest convictions, but their habits and idiosyncrasies.

As Fitzgerald makes clear, the brothers didn't invariably think or act as one. Neither Edmund nor Dillwyn shared the religious beliefs of their younger brothers; "Dilly," in fact, was a "ferocious agnostic" for much of his life. Ronald, one gathers, had little regard for Wilfred's socialist views. Still, the brothers were bound by mutual respect and a shared sense of humor—by the values and attitudes they acquired as children growing up "in a Victorian vicarage." In addition to a lifelong fondness for games and jokes, the Knox brothers were bound by their modesty, their industry, and their belief in "getting on with it" in the face of adversity.

They were also, all of them, intellectually curious and gloriously quirky. Thus we're told that, as a student at Oxford, Wilfred devised "a series of ingenious tasks" to fill his idle moments, including "a series of controlled experiments in the college gardens" to determine, once and for all, "whether tortoises really preferred yellow flowers."

As an adult Wilfred was famously shabby, sporting cheap raincoats and preferring paper clips to collar studs. He was, moreover, "unusual in manner." Malcolm Muggeridge recalled that, upon meeting Wilfred, he was "greeted with an almost unintelligible remark out of the side of the mouth, followed by a number of disjointed sentences. Could they connect? Well, that was the fascination."

But perhaps the most attractive Knox trait was their "tenderheartedness," to use Fitzgerald's phrase. These were plainly decent and firmly anchored men whose ambitions didn't eclipse their consideration for others, and for whom civil behavior was, simply, the gentlemanly way. Thus Eddie's friends would remember the "casual courage" he displayed during the air raids of the Second World War. "He took to wandering about wherever the bombs fell thickest," a friend recalled, "with a bottle of whiskey in his pocket, looking for people who needed it."

In the foreword she wrote, shortly before her death, for this year's republication of *The Knox Brothers*, Fitzgerald observed that her father and his three brothers were "characteristically reticent about themselves, but, at the same time, most unwilling to let any statement pass without question." "I have tried," she continued, "to take into account both their modesty and their love of truth, and to arrive at the kind of biography of which they would have approved." The result is an unusually attractive and readable book that, in its idiosyncratic way, provides a vivid portrait of four good and talented men whose values, it's clear, are also Fitzgerald's own. The Knoxes, one thinks, would have heartily approved. ♦

Parody

ABC News was on the defensive last week when personality Barbara Walters began plugging Campbell's soup on her morning talk show, *The View*. In one show Walters asked audience members, "Didn't we grow up eating Campbell's soup?" The audience responded with a chorus of M'm M'm Good! "You wouldn't think modern TV would go this far," one critic told the *Wall Street Journal*. "The shocking thing about this is that nobody is trying to disguise it. There's always a sneaky way to do product placement . . . but this is absolutely shameless."

—News item

ANNOUNCER: This is World News Tonight with Peter Jennings. Here's Peter Jennings in New York, the city so nice they named it twice.

JENNINGS: Good evening. We begin tonight with the continuing saga of the vote count in Florida, home of delicious Florida orange juice—a day without which, incidentally, is like a day without sunshine. The Florida supreme court has complicated an already complicated picture by issuing an order that has Bush forces riled. For the latest, we go first to Ann Compton, with the Bush campaign in Austin, Texas. Ann?

COMPTON: It's been another long day here in Austin, Peter, and Bush officials tell ABC News that when they're feeling tired, they reach for PowerBar, the low-fat pick-me-up for people on the go. Spokeswoman Karen Hughes ate six during her press briefing today—that's how yummy these little buggers are.

[video] KAREN HUGHES: Mmmffmpppffmm.

COMPTON: So that's the picture from Austin. Peter?

JENNINGS: Ann, how is the campaign taking this latest setback from the Florida supreme court?

COMPTON: Not as bad as you might imagine, Peter. A large number of the Bush people down here began drinking almost immediately after the order came down. We're told they're particularly fond of Harvey's Bristol Creme over at Bush headquarters, which as you may know has been a favorite potation, as they call it, of the Bush family for generations. Harvey's: for the times of your life. Peter?

JENNINGS: Thank you, Ann Compton in Florida, wearing a lovely Ferragamo scarf, available this week only at Bloomingdale's and selected outlets. The Gore campaign had a good deal to say about the court ruling, too, and for that we go down to Linda Douglass in Tallahassee. Linda?

DOUGLASS: Peter, once the Gore people heard the news, campaign chairman Bill Daley appeared jubilant . . .

JENNINGS: Linda, speaking of campaigns, wouldn't you say that Mr. Daley is a pretty good candidate, as it were, for the Hair Club For Men?

DOUGLASS: Indeed, Peter. In fact, if Chairman Daley calls now, he and our other viewers will be able to take advantage of this exciting one-time offer: Buy three gallons of Rogaine, get the fourth for free. Operators are standing by. Peter?

JENNINGS: Linda Douglass from Tallahassee, thank you. Linda, incidentally, wearing a quite provocative lace teddy from our friends at Victoria's Secret—who were also, in the interests of full disclosure, kind enough to provide the male girdle I'm wearing right now. In a moment—after this commercial message—ABC News analyst George Stephanopoulos. As always, George's analysis is brought to us by the Democratic National Committee . . .