the weekly Standard

JULY 16, 2007 $3.95

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STEPHEN SCHWARTZ & IRFAN AL-ALAWI

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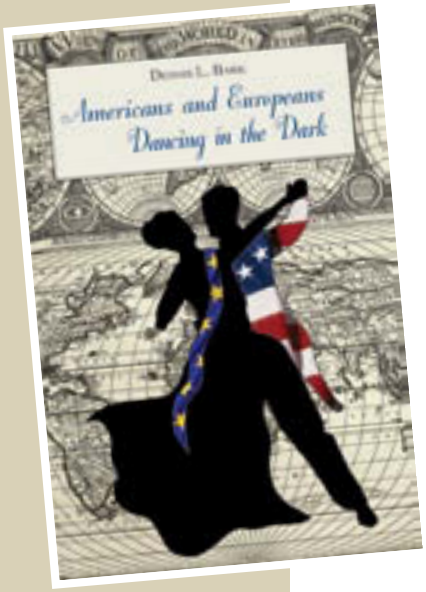

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He explains how this has shaped our historical views of the world as well as our modern interests and attitudes. If our relationship is to be saved, he asserts, we must learn what our essential differences teach us about ourselves and draw on our shared affinities to make us both stronger.

Dennis L. Bark, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, is a historian and political scientist in the field of European studies.

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

Sir Elton's Candle Power

There are many guilty pleasures in the life of The Scrapbook, and not the least of these is celebrity tantrums. This is not because such spectacles prove that celebrities are just like us, but because they prove that celebrities—not all, of course, but many—are not like us in the least, and demonstrate this fact of life on a regular basis.

Case in point: The recent "Concert for Diana" at London's Wembley Stadium, attended by umpteen thousand people, broadcast live to untold millions across the globe, and featuring the late princess's two sons, William and Harry, and a musical performance by (among others) Sir Elton John.

Connoisseurs of kitsch will recall that at Diana's Westminster Abbey funeral, ten years ago this summer, Sir Elton was chosen to play and sing an adaptation of "Candle in the Wind," his musical tribute to royalty of another sort, Marilyn Monroe. So it was right and proper that the organizers of the Concert for Diana should invite Sir Elton to repeat his performance at its grand finale last week.

But, alas! The Scrapbook regrets to report that, after the concert, when Sir Elton and his entourage climbed into his limousine for the grueling 200-yard trek to his dressing room and a backstage reception, the princes William and Harry were expected momentarily, security was tightened, and a policeman stopped the limo and advised its occupants to walk to the party. At this point, according to the London *Evening Standard*, Sir Elton erupted into one of the "rages for which he is renowned," and addressed the policeman in the following words:

> Get out of my ****ing way. . . . Don't you know who I am? I've been working all ****ing day and I need to get to my ****ing dressing room!

There was a brief standoff, more words were exchanged, and Sir Elton instructed his chauffeur to drive around the policeman, who was obliged to threaten Sir Elton with arrest. At last, the great man emerged from his limo and walked the remaining 50 yards to his dressing room (in the words of the *Evening Standard*) "stomp[ing] down the road and shouting at people to 'get out of my way.'"

In Sir Elton's defense, as one of his entourage explained, it had been a long day "and sound difficulties meant his finale was delayed and 'Crocodile Rock' had to be cut off the end, which he wasn't happy about." So, presumably, may Sir Elton be forgiven his contemptuous treatment of a wage-earning bobby, his indifference to the safety of Princess Diana's surviving sons, and his elephant-sized sense of entitlement.

No word on whether his civil partner, Lady John (the former David Furnish), was also in the limousine. ♦

Pillar of the (Intel) Community

In the June 30 *Washington Post*, Tina Shelton took on former CIA director George Tenet. Shelton was one of the authors of the much-discussed "Feith Memo," a Pentagon analysis of the many ties between Iraq and al Qaeda (sent to the Senate Intelligence Committee in October 2003 by former undersecretary of defense for policy Douglas J. Feith). In his recent memoir, Tenet reiterated many of the substantive findings of that memo, at one point listing them: "Ansar al-Islam; Zarqawi; Kurmal; the arrests in Europe; the murder of American USAID officer Lawrence Foley, in Amman, at the hands of Zarqawi's associates; and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad operatives in Baghdad." As Shelton pointed out, Tenet criticized the authors of the memo but embraced its most important conclusion. He wrote: "There was more than enough evidence to give us real concern about Iraq and al Qaeda; there was plenty of smoke, maybe even some fire."

If you get your news from the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*, you probably think intelligence professionals were virtually unanimous in their skepticism about a relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda. But Shelton points out something first reported four years ago by Jeffrey Goldberg in the *New Yorker*: There was a split on the issue inside the CIA. Tenet acknowledges this in his book. Analysts at the CIA's counterterrorism center (CTC) believed "the reporting that suggested a deeper relationship" between Iraq and al Qaeda was "credible." Analysts at the CIA's Near East/South Asia (NESA) desk did not.

There was no *a priori* reason for reporters to defer to the regional experts rather than the counterterrorism experts, but most did. The head of those skeptical regional analysts was Paul Pillar, believed by many Bush officials to be the source of numerous anonymous quotes from "senior intelligence officials" trashing Bush policy. (Columnist Bob Novak reported non-anonymous sniping by Pillar shortly before the 2004 election to an audience in California.) That may be why journalists hold Pillar in high regard.

In a *Foreign Affairs* article last year, Pillar wrote: "The intelligence community never offered any analysis that supported the notion of an alliance between Saddam and al Qaeda." Really? What about his colleagues at the CTC? And what about Tina Shelton, who worked as an analyst at the Defense Intelligence Agency from 1984 through 2006? And what about, as Shelton now points out, his old boss George Tenet? ♦

(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of July 21, 1997)

La Cage aux Mullahs

In fashion news, Pakistani army units last week captured Abdul Aziz, leader of a radical Islamist militia currently holed up inside the Red Mosque in Islamabad, when Aziz tried to sneak through a security cordon wearing a burqa, the head-to-toe women's covering favored by Islamic fundamentalists worldwide. Pakistani soldiers apprehended the rotund Aziz when they noticed that one burqa-clad woman leaving the Red Mosque was much larger than the others. When the soldiers removed the head covering—exposing Aziz's bearded visage—they knew they had their man.

Now, THE SCRAPBOOK has heard before of jihadists disguising themselves in women's clothing in order to elude capture or death. What we couldn't help noticing, however, was that Aziz wasn't wearing just a burqa. According to AP, he was also wearing high heels.

Hmm. High heels would seem to make walking more difficult, not to mention escaping a besieged mosque while eluding the armed forces of a military government. Which suggests that the high heels were sort of . . . ancillary to the whole escaping-certain-death-or-imprisonment thing. Which further suggests that Aziz kinda wanted to, um, wear women's shoes. . . . Not that there's anything wrong with that. ♦

Gaza Mickey, R.I.P.

The Hamas-affiliated executives at Gaza City-based Al Aqsa TV have decided to kill off Farfour, a man in a rodent costume resembling Mickey Mouse who was one of the network's most beloved creative properties. In Farfour's show *Tomorrow's Pioneers*, a Palestinian knockoff of *Sesame Street*, the rodent preached jihad before audiences of children, advocating death to Israel and the murder of Jews. Ghastly stuff. True to form, Farfour's writers decided they'd off the mouse in a sickening fashion. According to media reports, during the show's final segment, an "Israeli officer" showed up and demanded to buy Farfour's nest. Farfour refused, and the "Israeli officer" subsequently beat him to death on screen. Afterward, "Sara," one of the show's teenage hosts, told the audience that "Farfour was martyred while defending his land." You can't make this stuff up. ♦

Supply and Demand

"Abuja, Nigeria—The price of machetes has dropped by half in parts of Nigeria since the end of general elections in April because demand from thugs sponsored by politicians has subsided, the state-owned News Agency of Nigeria reported. A high-quality machete sells for $3, compared with $6 before the elections."

—*Washington Post*, July 3, 2007

Casual

Kind of My Kind of Town

All of Washington is divided into four unequal parts, and in just over two years I've lived in all of them. I acquired that distinction when I moved to an apartment complex in Southwest once occupied by a crack-smoking former mayor.

No sooner had I unpacked last March than I learned I will shortly be leaving town. Now, I find myself deliberately exploring my new neighborhood, rounding out my knowledge of the city before I move on.

Not to be sour about it, but Southwest, for my money, is the ugliest quadrant. As recently as the 1950s, it was an orderly neighborhood of African, Jewish, and Italian Americans—then urban renewal buried character under concrete. Today, it's a wasteland of high-rises, including hideous early works of I.M. Pei.

Only a few landmarks were spared. At St. Dominic's Catholic Church, built in 1875, there's a sign explaining that LBJ used to pray there in the wee hours after issuing bombing orders during Vietnam. And a few of the recent additions aren't bad: At Cantina Marina, with its outdoor tables, you feel miles away from D.C. Seated dockside eating crawdads and mosquitoes, you can watch the boats in the marina and almost imagine you're at Myrtle Beach—if only the talk wafting over from the next table weren't about deputy assistant secretaries and awful neocons.

Except when I lived in the far reaches of Northeast, separated from the office by a stretch of urban jungle, I've made a practice of walking to work. Walking puts the city in your blood—it naturalizes you. Seeking shortcuts, you discover Dickensian alleyways, find statues motorists miss (St. Jerome, Edmund Burke), and meet the panhandlers, like the one who told me, "I make more money just asking for it than I do at my day job. Nobody says no!"

The serious panhandlers are in sprawling Northwest, where the money is, along with the White House, the embassies, the Hoyas, the Wizards, the lobbyists of K Street, and establishments ranging from the classy Irish Cajun pub in Chinatown's Red Roof Inn to the Round Robin bar at the Willard Hotel, where Fifi (from Ethiopia) will serve you a mint julep the way Henry Clay used to have it. Best of all is the oasis of Rock Creek Park, a hilly swath of unspoiled green that runs the length of Northwest. Once, hiking along the high banks of the creek, I stumbled on Pulpit Rock, one of T.R.'s favorite places.


Darren Gygi

I spent a year living in Northeast's Brookland neighborhood, near the National Shrine, the seventh largest church in the world; Trinity University, Nancy Pelosi's alma mater; and a tavern called Kelly's Ellis Island, where I used to sit by a portrait of Stalin hung upside-down. Wear Kevlar if you visit at night.

One of my regular haunts in Southeast was the Eastern Market, before it was gutted by fire in April. I used to order my blueberry pancakes by saying, "I want the blues." But Southeast kept me too busy for the real blues. Once at 3 A.M. I successfully foiled a break-in by yelling and charging at the delinquent. I lived eight blocks from RFK stadium, and spent a lot of time watching the Nats. Afterward, I'd walk out of RFK and head down broad, leafy East Capitol Street toward the white dome in the distance, then turn over to Trusty's, a bar with bars on the window, where the grease-burger was first-rate.

Southeast is packed with churches—from neo-Gothic Episcopal chapels to store-fronts like Tried Stone Fire Baptized Holiness Church—and walking the simmering sidewalks on hot Sunday mornings, I'd listen for the gospel choirs. Their amens and hallelujahs, escaping through open stained-glass windows out across a neighborhood hung-over from a night of politicking or partying, sounded more rational to me than much of what goes on in this stateless city.

For the fainthearted, Washington is best viewed from afar—from a traffic jam, say, on a bridge over the Potomac, where commuters can take in the breadth of the imperial city, with the National Cathedral, the Washington Monument, and the Capitol anchoring the skyline. James Fenimore Cooper had it right when he wrote some words I found cut in the stone of a plaza along Pennsylvania Avenue: "Washington has certainly an air of more magnificence than any other American town. It is mean in detail, but the outline has a certain grandeur about it."

Today, there are still plenty of mean details—more than enough to retire any notion of a gleaming alabaster city I once brought here. But, as I get ready to take off next month, I realize it's the details that have attached me to this place, details collected on foot, one by one. I can't believe I'm saying it, but I've actually grown to like this dirty old town.

Joseph Lindsley

Correspondence

Liberty in Hong Kong

Gerard Baker may be overly sanguine about Hong Kong's democratic future ("One Country, Two Systems, Ten Years," June 25 / July 2). It's unsurprising that Hong Kong's free economy continues to flourish. Why would Beijing kill the goose that laid the golden egg, when China and Vietnam are demonstrating that economic freedom and political authoritarianism are compatible? With more than 50,000 firms and millions of employees located in the Pearl River Delta region, Hong Kong's economy is an integral part of the mainland's. Nor should we expect precipitous, blatant political repression: China has the patience gradually to erode Hong Kong's political autonomy.

Other observers have noted Beijing's reneging on election of the chief executive, its tampering with the courts and lower representative bodies, and the growing self-censorship of Hong Kong's press, quite apart from the overt repression squelching coverage of Taiwan. I wish to draw attention to changes in Hong Kong's Civil Service, once the jewel in the crown of its government, justly renowned for independence, probity, and efficiency. Personnel is everything in government, and several years ago the Hong Kong government introduced a set of Civil Service "reforms," chief of which was an extension from two to six years of the probationary period for granting Civil Service tenure. Six years are not needed for gauging one's professional competency, but such a lengthy period may be useful for determining one's "political correctness." Senior civil servants, still imbued with British standards and armed with their dual passports, opposed the measure. Young, would-be apparatchiks, eager to climb the ladder of political power, embraced it. The nature of democratic rollback in Hong Kong is such that the "light of freedom" that Baker sees on the island will not be visibly snuffed out, but will dim, slowly, over time.

John W. Coffey
Fairfax, Va.

Real Recruits

Tom Donnelly is correct: We need to increase the size of the Army and Marine Corps ("The Army We Need," June 4). But both services should proceed with caution. It will not be easy to recruit these additional soldiers and Marines. The Army has already lowered enlistment standards in its effort to achieve current recruiting targets and softened boot camp training to reduce attrition. Any further lowering of enlistment standards will become all too apparent in operation units, even if there are more of them.

Bruce C. Lyon
Lt. Col., USMC (ret.)
Willington, Conn.

Dept. of Corrections

In the caption for a photograph accompanying James Kirchick's "How Tyranny Came to Zimbabwe" (June 18), Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, sitting next to Andrew Young, is identified as South African foreign minister Pik Botha. Not even close! Botha was at least 50 pounds heavier with a prominent mustache. Do all white people really look alike?

Morris J. Amitay
Fairfax, Va.

Matthew Continetti's "An Unconventional Candidate" (June 18) states that Theodore Roosevelt was once a mayor. TR did *run* for mayor of NYC, but he came in third. The last two former mayors to serve as president were Grover Cleveland (Buffalo) and Calvin Coolidge (Northampton, Mass.).

Roy Nichols
Columbus, Ohio

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RAISING TAXES WON'T GENERATE THE ENERGY SHE'LL NEED

Most Americans agree energy security is a top national priority, because they want to ensure their families' quality of life now and into the future. So why do some in Congress want to raise taxes on the development of oil and natural gas resources?

History shows that changing the rules by raising energy taxes has serious consequences. After Congress levied a "windfall profits" tax in the 1980s, its own non-partisan Congressional Research Service determined this tax diverted $79 billion from domestic energy investment and reduced U.S. oil production by as much as 1.26 billion barrels.

Stable tax policies encourage energy development

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates America will need 25 percent more oil and natural gas by 2030. And to make sure future generations will have it, we need stable tax policies that encourage the development of critical energy resources. Benefiting Americans today – and especially tomorrow.

EnergyTomorrow.org

THE *people* OF AMERICA'S
OIL AND NATURAL GAS INDUSTRY

the weekly Standard

Of Senators and Soldiers

Richard Lugar of Indiana, George Voinovich of Ohio, Pete Domenici of New Mexico, and John Warner of Virginia have together served more than a century in the world's greatest deliberative body. Historians will remember their time in public office for Reagan's challenge to the Soviet Union, for the success of pro-growth economic policies, for welfare reform, for the reinvigoration of a constitutionalist approach to the courts, for the framing of a foreign policy for the post-9/11 world. None of these men played a leading role in any of these major developments. They have been followers of conventional opinion, not leaders.

Now they are following conventional wisdom again, in their stately way, in turning against the Iraq war. They would like an exit strategy, a respectable exit strategy, along the lines of the proposals of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group. They praise and embrace that group's recommendations—ignoring all the evidence that those recommendations are neither feasible nor desirable, and in any case have often been overtaken by events. Lugar, in particular, seems upset that the war in Iraq is undermining our diplomatic efforts elsewhere in the Middle East. Domenici, last Thursday, focused on the failures of the Iraqi government. Neither speaks of the fact that, in Iraq, we are fighting al Qaeda. (Domenici seems not to have mentioned al Qaeda in a conference call Thursday; Lugar mentioned al Qaeda once in his 50-minute Senate floor speech.) Nor do they discuss the fact that we are fighting a proxy war in Iraq against Iran. Nor do they see that we have a strategic interest in changing the status quo ante in the Middle East. Such considerations seem not to enter even slightly into their calculations. They are pre-9/11 Republicans.

Our elected officials should stop thinking of our soldiers as victims, but rather do them the courtesy of understanding them as fighters in a just and necessary cause.

Friday's *New York Times* led with the news of Domenici's endorsement of (partial, gradual, and unspecified in any of its details) withdrawal from Iraq. In striking contrast to the Domenici story was a report from Iraq on the same page by Michael Gordon. It was a fascinating account of how young American soldiers are executing Gen. David Petraeus's new strategy on the ground, and how they're fighting and defeating al Qaeda.

The protagonist of Gordon's story is a 31-year-old Army captain, Ben Richards. Richards commands Bronco Troop, First Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment. They're deployed in and around Baquba, the capital of Diyala Province, an area northeast of Baghdad that is a center of the fight against al Qaeda. The account of the efforts of Richards and his men to rally Sunni tribes in the area against a deeply entrenched al Qaeda enemy is encouraging. As Gordon explains,

> [Al Qaeda] had a firm grip on the city, the provincial capital of Diyala, which Abu Musab al-Zarqawi made the center of his self-styled Islamic caliphate before he was killed in an airstrike near Baquba last year. . . . The militants' hold on the region was facilitated, senior American officers now acknowledge, by American commanders' decision to draw down forces in the province in 2005 in the hopes of shifting most of the responsibility for securing the region onto the Iraqis.

Now, working with his Iraqi partners, Capt. Richards is making real progress against the terrorists. When al Qaeda had controlled the area, it "raised funds by kidnapping local Iraqis, found accommodations by evicting some residents from their homes and killed with abandon when anyone got in their way, residents say. . . . 'They used religion as a ploy to get in and exploit people's passions,' said one [Iraqi], who gave his name as Haidar. 'They were Iraqis and other Arabs from Syria,

Afghanistan, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. They started kicking people out of their houses and getting ransom from rich people. They would shoot people in front of their houses to scare the others.'"

Capt. Richards, following the lead of Gen. Petraeus's new counterinsurgency strategy, is routing the "insurgents." (Incidentally, now that even Sunni tribes are turning on al Qaeda, can we stop calling the enemy "insurgents"? Can't we just call them terrorists?) As Gordon reports, "Collaborations like the one with [residents] in Baquba are slowly beginning to emerge in other parts of Iraq." The key is the surge—and sustaining the surge: "Captain Richards's soldiers arrived in Buhritz [a neighborhood in Baquba] in mid-March as part of a battalion-sized operation. Unlike many earlier operations, the Americans showed up in force and did not quickly withdraw."

Obviously, we have a long way to go in Iraq. There are obstacles, in part posed by recalcitrant and incompetent elements in the Iraqi government. But the successes of the U.S. combat operations are undeniable:

> The American military is trying to expand the alliance into the western sector of the city, which a Stryker brigade recently wrested back from Qaeda militants. During the recent American assault in the western sector, soldiers from Blackhawk Company got a glimpse of an alliance the Americans hope to see. An Iraqi seemingly emerged from nowhere, announced himself as a member of the 1920s Revolution Brigades and warned the soldiers that insurgents could be found on the far side of a sand berm around the corner. The tip was accurate.

Sen. Domenici seems to have been genuinely moved by a conversation with a father who had lost a son fighting in Iraq. And Domenici commented, "We cannot continue asking our troops to sacrifice indefinitely while the Iraqi government is not making measurable progress." The sacrifices are real. But the troops are also fighting, and winning. The young soldiers believe in their mission. Perhaps they could be given a chance to succeed. Perhaps our elected officials should stop thinking of our soldiers as victims, but rather do them the courtesy of understanding them as fighters in a just and necessary cause.

Lugar, Voinovich, Domenici, and Warner are not the future leaders of the Republican party, or of the country. Now is the time for those who wish to be leaders to step forward. Now is the time for them to stand against the defeatism of the pre-9/11 Republicans and to stand with Capt. Ben Richards and the 9/11 generation, who understand why we fight, and how we can win.

—William Kristol

The Most Popular Governor

Alaska's Sarah Palin is the GOP's newest star.

BY FRED BARNES

Juneau

The wipeout in the 2006 election left Republicans in such a state of dejection that they've overlooked the one shining victory in which a Republican star was born. The triumph came in Alaska where Sarah Palin, a politician of eye-popping integrity, was elected governor. She is now the most popular governor in America, with an approval rating in the 90s, and probably the most popular public official in any state.

Her rise is a great (and rare) story of how adherence to principle—especially to transparency and accountability in government—can produce political success. And by the way, Palin is a conservative who only last month vetoed 13 percent of the state's proposed budget for capital projects. The cuts, the *Anchorage Daily News* said, "may be the biggest single-year line-item veto total in state history."

As recently as last year, Palin (pronounced pale-in) was a political outcast. She resigned in January 2004 as head of the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission after complaining to the office of Governor Frank Murkowski and to state Attorney General Gregg Renkes about ethical violations by another commissioner, Randy Ruedrich, who was also Republican state chairman.

State law barred Palin from speaking out publicly about ethical violations and corruption. But she was vindicated later in 2004 when Ruedrich, who'd been reconfirmed as state chairman, agreed to pay a $12,000 fine for breaking state ethics laws. She became a hero in the eyes of the public and the press, and the bane of Republican leaders.

In 2005, she continued to take on the Republican establishment by joining Eric Croft, a Democrat, in lodging an ethics complaint against Renkes, who was not only attorney general but also a long-time adviser and campaign manager for Murkowski. The governor

Sarah Palin

AP / Al Grillo

reprimanded Renkes and said the case was closed. It wasn't. Renkes resigned a few weeks later, and Palin was again hailed as a hero.

Palin, 43, the mother of four, passed up a chance to challenge Republican senator Lisa Murkowski, the then-governor's daughter, in 2004. She endorsed another candidate in the primary, but Murkowski won and was reelected. Palin said then that her 14-year-old son talked her out of running, though it's doubtful that was the sole reason.

In 2006, she didn't hesitate. She ran against Gov. Murkowski, who was seeking a second term despite sagging poll ratings, in the Republican primary. In a three-way race, Palin captured 51 percent and won in a landslide. She defeated former Democratic governor Tony Knowles in the general election, 49 percent to 41 percent. She was one of the few Republicans anywhere in the country to perform above expectations in 2006, an overwhelmingly Democratic year. Palin is unabashedly pro life.

With her emphasis on ethics and openness in government, "it turned out Palin caught the temper of the times perfectly," wrote Tom Kizzia of the *Anchorage Daily News*. She was also lucky. News broke of an FBI investigation of corruption by legislators between the primary and general elections. So far, three legislators have been indicted.

In the roughly three years since she quit as the state's chief regulator of the oil industry, Palin has crushed the Republican hierarchy (virtually all male) and nearly every other foe or critic. Political analysts in Alaska refer to the "body count" of Palin's rivals. "The landscape is littered with the bodies of those who crossed Sarah," says pollster Dave Dittman, who worked for her gubernatorial campaign. It includes Ruedrich, Renkes, Murkowski, gubernatorial contenders John Binkley and Andrew Halcro, the three big oil companies in Alaska, and a section of the *Daily News* called "Voice of the Times," which was highly critical of Palin and is now defunct.

One of her first acts as governor was to fire the Alaska Board of Agriculture. Her ultimate target was the state Creamery Board, which has been marketing the products of Alaska dairy farmers for 71 years and wanted to close down after receiving $600,000 from the state. "You don't just close your doors and walk away," Palin told me. She discovered she lacked the power to fire the Creamery Board. Only the board of agriculture had that authority. So Palin replaced the agriculture board, which appointed a new creamery board, which has rescinded the plan to shut down.

In preserving support for dairy farmers, Palin exhibited a kind of Alas-

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

kan chauvinism. She came to the state as an infant, making her practically a native. And she is eager to keep Alaska free from domination by oil companies or from reliance on cruise lines whose ships bring thousands of tourists to the state.

"She's as Alaskan as you can get," says Dan Fagan, an Anchorage radio talk show host. "She's a hockey mom, she lives on a lake, she ice fishes, she snowmobiles, she hunts, she's an NRA member, she has a float plane, and her husband works for BP on the North Slope," Fagan says. Todd Palin, her high school sweetheart, is a three-time winner of the 2,000-mile Iron Dog snowmobile race from Wasilla to Nome to Fairbanks. It's the world's longest snowmobile race.

Gov. Palin grew up in Wasilla, where as star of her high school basketball team she got the nickname "Sarah Barracuda" for her fierce competitiveness. She led her underdog team to the state basketball championship. Palin also won the Miss Wasilla beauty contest, in which she was named Miss Congeniality, and went on to compete in the Miss Alaska pageant.

At 32, she was elected mayor of Wasilla, a burgeoning bedroom community outside Anchorage. Though Alaskans tend to be ferociously anti-tax, she persuaded Wasilla voters to increase the local sales tax to pay for an indoor arena and convention center. The tax referendum won by 20 votes.

In 2002, Palin entered statewide politics, running for lieutenant governor. She finished a strong second in the Republican primary. That fall, she dutifully campaigned for Murkowski, who'd given up his Senate seat to run for governor. Afterwards, she turned down several job offers from Murkowski, finally accepting the oil and gas post. When she quit 11 months later, "that was her defining moment" in politics, says Fagan.

Her campaign for governor was bumpy. She missed enough campaign appearances to be tagged "No Show Sarah" by her opponents. She was criticized for being vague on issues. But she sold voters on the one product that mattered: herself.

Her Christian faith—Palin grew up attending nondenominational Bible churches—was a minor issue in the race. She told me her faith affects her politics this way: "I believe everything happens for a purpose. In my own personal life, if I dedicated back to my Creator what I'm trying to create for the good . . . everything will turn out fine." That same concept applies to her political career, she suggested.

The biggest issue in the campaign was the proposed natural gas pipeline from the North Slope that's crucial to the state's economy. Murkowski had made a deal with the three big oil companies—Exxon, BP, ConocoPhillips—which own the gas reserves to build the pipeline. But the legislature turned it down and Palin promised to create competition for the pipeline contract.

She made three other promises: to end corruption in state government, cut spending, and provide accountability. She's now redeeming those promises.

Palin describes herself as "pro-business and pro-development." She doesn't want the oil companies to sit on their energy reserves or environmental groups to block development of the state's resources. "I get frustrated with folks from outside Alaska who come up and say you shouldn't develop your resources," she says. Alaska needs to be self-sufficient, she says, instead of relying heavily on "federal dollars," as the state does today.

Her first major achievement as governor was lopsided passage by the legislature of the Alaska Gasline Inducement Act, which is designed to attract pipeline proposals this summer. The state is offering $500 million in incentives, but the developer must meet strict requirements. The oil companies have said they won't join the competition.

Palin's tough spending cuts drew criticism from Republican legislators whose pet projects were vetoed. But her popularity doesn't appear threatened. "It's not just that she's pretty and young," says Dittman. "She's really smart. And there's no guile. She says her favorite meal is moose stew or mooseburgers. It wouldn't shock people if that were true." ♦

Clearing the Air

Did the EPA really cover up New York's 9/11 air pollution? BY DUNCAN CURRIE

Of former Bush officials, Christine Todd Whitman would seem to be the most difficult to cast as a White House puppet. During her tenure as Environmental Protection Agency director from 2001 to 2003, Whitman looked askance at the Bush line on global warming. It became clear early on, says one ex-administration official, that there were "Whitman people" at EPA who repeatedly sparred with "Bush people" elsewhere in the administration.

Yet the former New Jersey governor, a famously moderate-to-liberal Republican, faced a rabid grilling the week before last by House Democrats, who believe the government lied about post-9/11 air quality in Lower Manhattan in order to expedite the reopening of Wall Street. Growing visibly angry at times, and sighing resignedly at others, Whitman denied the allegations, which gained currency among Democrats after an August 2003 report by the EPA inspector general on the agency's response to the World Trade Center collapse.

The June 25 hearing before a House Judiciary subcommittee chaired by Jerrold Nadler began without a single GOP member present (a few eventually showed up). A New York Democrat whose district includes Ground Zero, Nadler decried the "reckless disregard" of those federal officials who, according to Nadler, deliberately downplayed the risks to first responders digging through the World Trade Center rubble and to those living and working around the financial district.

"Our government knowingly exposed thousands of American citizens unnecessarily to deadly hazardous materials, and because it has never admitted the truth, Americans remain at grave risk to this day," Nadler said. "Thousands of first responders, residents, area workers, and students are sick, and some are dead—and that toll will continue to grow until we get the truth and take appropriate action."

As proof of this malevolent conspiracy, Nadler and other Democrats pointed to the August 2003 EPA inspector general's report, which concluded that Whitman "did not have sufficient data and analyses" to declare the air in Lower Manhattan "safe to breathe" on September 18, 2001, as she did. "At that time," said the inspector general, "air monitoring data was lacking for several pollutants of concern, including particulate matter and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Furthermore, the White House Council on Environmental Quality influenced, through the collaboration process, the information that EPA communicated to the public through its early press releases when it convinced EPA to add reassuring statements and delete cautionary ones." But the report continued: "Because of numerous uncertainties—including the extent of the public's exposure and a lack of health-based benchmarks—a definitive answer to whether the air was safe to breathe may not be settled for years to come."

In other words, the science was murky at the time and remained so two years later. In a September 2003 interview with NBC reporter Lisa Myers, then-EPA inspector general Nikki Tinsley was asked whether she had "any evidence that the public was harmed by reassurances that

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air-quality levels were safe." Tinsley responded, "No, we don't have any evidence of that."

Democrats also highlighted the testimony of former EPA communications official Tina Kreisher, who told the inspector general that she "felt extreme pressure" over the press releases from Samuel Thernstrom of the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

After 9/11, the White House established a "single point of contact" system to aid with crisis management and ensure that agencies such as EPA, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the National Security Council were on the same page. Thernstrom became the press "point of contact" for all EPA news releases, sending those releases to the National Security Council for endorsement. He and Kreisher did squabble over procedural matters—which even led to "screaming telephone calls" (as had also happened before 9/11). Kreisher apparently felt pressured to obey the proper chain of command. But did Thernstrom's edits of EPA press releases amount to a conscious falsification of the science?

Not according to Kreisher. "While editing changes were made based on recommendations by the Council on Environmental Quality," she said at Nadler's hearing, "I believed those changes to be upsetting in some cases but not false. I still believe that to be true." Did she feel "political pressure" to doctor the press releases? "No," Kreisher said. For her part, Whitman said that she "felt no 'extreme pressure' from the White House" either.

Democrat Bill Pascrell of New Jersey was irate over the altering of a news release drafted on September 14, 2001, which noted that debris samples collected in Lower Manhattan's financial district showed traces of asbestos ranging from 2.1 percent to 3.3 percent—above EPA's "1 percent trigger for defining asbestos material." In the original version of this release, prior to White House edits, the next sentence read: "The concern raised by these samples would be for the workers at the cleanup site and for those workers who might be returning to their offices on or near Water Street on Monday, September 17, 2001." Why, Pascrell demanded, was this sentence removed?

Holding a copy of the original draft, Thernstrom responded to Pascrell by reading the next sentence, which had also been cut: "OSHA Director John Henshaw emphasized that the level [of asbestos] found, even if re-suspended in the air, does not violate OSHA standards."

Of all the Thernstrom edits, said Kreisher, "the only substantive change had to do with the cleaning"—specifically, EPA's post-9/11 recommendation that New Yorkers get a "professional cleaning" of their indoor spaces. Thernstrom excised this suggestion because, as he told the subcommittee, "That was a jurisdictional question involving which agency had responsibility for providing New Yorkers the guidance on that issue." In the pertinent press release, EPA deferred to city officials.

Throughout the hearing, Whitman and her Democratic inquisitors often seemed to be talking past each other. She stressed that EPA's encouraging assessments applied to the general ambient air quality in Lower Manhattan, not to the air quality amidst the World Trade Center rubble (referred to frequently as "the pile"). Indeed, EPA distributed fliers—one of which Whitman showed during her testimony—urging Ground Zero workers to wear protective eyewear and respirators, and to clean their gear appropriately. EPA kept up a steady drumbeat about these safety measures, said Whitman.

John Henshaw, the former OSHA chief, enumerated his own agency's efforts. "During the first three weeks following the attack," he said, "OSHA gave out respirators at a rate of 4,000 a day. Over the 10-month [cleanup] period, OSHA distributed more than 131,000 respirators to personnel working at the World Trade Center." Of course, not everyone at Ground Zero chose to wear those respirators—which can be quite onerous, especially in warm weather—and many have since reported respiratory illnesses.

While Whitman and Henshaw spoke before the subcommittee, several World Trade Center emergency responders sat in the audience. Outside the Rayburn building, protesters had been chanting "Compensation Now! Compensation Now!" That gets to the inevitable question of legal liability, which was never far from the surface of this hearing: Are Whitman and others responsible for those who became sick after breathing post-9/11 air?

In February 2006, a district court found Whitman culpable in a class-action suit. This past April, however, an appellate court dismissed a similar case brought by a handful of first responders. "If anything," the latter court explained, "the importance of the EPA's mission counsels against broad constitutional liability in this situation: the risk of such liability will tend to inhibit EPA officials in making difficult decisions about how to disseminate information to the public in an environmental emergency. Knowing that lawsuits alleging intentional misconduct could result from the disclosure of incomplete, confusingly comprehensive, or mistakenly inaccurate information, officials might default to silence in the face of the public's urgent need for information."

Broadly speaking, EPA and OSHA recognized the dangers of Ground Zero air, while taking a more relaxed view of the air quality in Lower Manhattan as a whole. As for the dust, EPA deferred on that score to the New York City Department of Health, which gave instructions to residents on how to clean indoor spaces. City officials may or may not have offered good advice. Likewise, EPA may have committed methodological errors in assessing the ambient air quality. But that is a far cry from *purposely* misrepresenting the facts so as to reopen the Wall Street trading floors—the specific accusation that seemed to

set pulses racing among Whitman's interrogators.

The most authoritative rebuttal of the "White House and EPA lied" charge came from the 9/11 Commission, which has been exalted as a gold standard of bipartisanship. Panel members looked into the post-9/11 air-quality spat and reported their findings in a lengthy endnote (Chapter 10, Note 13). They concluded that "although the White House review process resulted in some editorial changes to the press releases, these changes were consistent with what the EPA had already been saying without White House clearance."

Did Wall Street trump sound science? "We found no evidence of pressure on EPA to say the air was safe in order to permit the markets to reopen," said the commission. "Moreover, the most controversial release that specifically declared the air safe to breathe was released after the markets had already reopened."

The obliteration of more than 200,000 tons of steel and roughly 425,000 cubic yards of concrete in Lower Manhattan on 9/11 created a unique public health challenge, one that experts will probably be arguing about for a long time. As the 9/11 Commission explained: "The EPA did not have the health-based benchmarks needed to assess the extraordinary air quality conditions in Lower Manhattan after 9/11. The EPA and the White House therefore improvised and applied standards developed for other circumstances in order to make pronouncements regarding air safety, advising workers at Ground Zero to use protective gear and advising the general population that the air was safe. Whether those improvisations were appropriate is still a subject for medical and scientific debate."

In short, there was no White House-engineered campaign to put out faulty information. But as long as New Yorkers remain sick, their class-action lawsuits unresolved, and Democrats convinced of the Bush administration's fundamental duplicity, the controversy will rage on. ♦

The Elser Solution

Rethinking the ban on assassinations.

BY GABRIEL SCHOENFELD

Torturing al Qaeda suspects is impermissible in all circumstances, an army of lawyers and moralists are telling us, even if it would stop a nuclear bomb ticking down to zero, hidden in New York City or Fort Knox. But if inflicting pain during an interrogation is always against law and morality, what about inflicting death prior to an interrogation?

We do this all the time on the battlefield, where killing enemy combatants before they kill us is accepted as the ordinary course of war. But now we are engaged in a shadow war off the battlefield, against terrorists who do not wear uniforms and operate in stealth. Is it permissible to strike them before they strike us?

Let's be more specific. In 1981, Ronald Reagan promulgated Executive Order 12333, which, among other provisions, declared that "No person employed by or acting on behalf of the United States Government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in, assassination." This had been preceded by similar restrictions issued by Presidents Ford and Carter. Ronald Reagan was not exactly a pacifist or a slouch when it came to national security. Why did he issue this decree and what have been its implications for the war on terrorism and U.S. foreign policy more generally?

The context in which the executive order and its predecessor order arose was continuing public revulsion at what was contained in the CIA's Family Jewels report, the compilation of agency misdeeds commissioned by agency director James Schlesinger in 1973. This report has been much in the news over the past month, with a newly declassified version of it detailing CIA depredations going forward from the Eisenhower into the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon years. Old revelations now being livened up with a scant few fresh details are of CIA assassination plots. These included, according to a Justice Department distillation, plans to kill Patrice Lumumba of the Congo (he died violently in 1961, but "the CIA had no role whatsoever in [his] murder"), General Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic (he also died violently in 1961—"the CIA had 'no active part'; but had a 'faint connection' with the groups that in fact did it"), and Fidel Castro, who was supposed to have been poisoned by a Mafia hit man but four decades later is apparently still alive.

On its face, state-sanctioned assassination of foreign personages and leaders in peacetime seems like a terrible idea, and an absolute ban on the practice fully warranted. The disclosure of these plots badly embarrassed the United States and cast seemingly indelible suspicion on the CIA for all sorts of things in which it was either uninvolved or only peripherally involved, like the 1973 assassination of Salvador Allende in Chile. And even if these assassination plots had been successful, what good would they have achieved? Would a Cuba without Castro, for example, have been guaranteed to move in a non-Communist direction, or might it have gone the other way, literally remaining Castroite under the tutelage of some

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other tyrannical leader like Fidel's brother Raúl? It is impossible to say. In other words, the risk-reward ratio is both uncertain and not necessarily favorable.

On the other hand, history does have conspicuous cases in which the United States and the world would have been far better off if we had been able to dispatch a foreign leader prematurely to his grave. If only we had had a CIA on hand to assist the cabinetmaker Johann Georg Elser, who placed a time bomb near the podium in the beer hall in Munich where Hitler was set to speak on November 8, 1939. Hitler arrived at 8:10 P.M. The bomb exploded at 9:20, killing eight people, seven of them Nazi leaders. Hitler was not among them; he had left at 9:07. Elser's explanation for his action: "I wanted through my deed to prevent even greater bloodshed." World War II was already under way.

Could a similar situation arise today, in which it becomes apparent that a foreign leader, threatening neighboring countries with annihilation, merits having his life taken to prevent greater bloodshed? In any particular case, we do not know how history will unfold, whether we choose to act or not. Yet taking the option off the table, while unquestionably stopping the possibility of abuse, leaves no room for responsible American leaders to employ extreme measures in the extreme circumstances that sometimes arise in our chaotic and violent world.

But we need not trade in hypothetical scenarios to examine the real costs of Reagan's EO 12333. For whatever was intended by the decree, its language was ambiguous in several ways—among other things, it left the very word "assassination" undefined. Over the years the ambiguities have been seized upon by various voices in Congress and various departments of the executive branch to induce a progressive self-paralysis.

An early case came in 1986. Congressional intelligence panels refused to go along with President Reagan's effort to seize the Panamanian dictator, Manuel Noriega, on the grounds that if he were to perish in the abduction, the mission would run afoul of the ban. In light of this experience, Reagan's successor, George Bush, reinterpreted Executive Order 12333 to clarify that if a foreign leader were killed as an *unintended* consequence of an action undertaken by the U.S. government the ban would not apply.

But despite Bush's revision, the hesitations did not ebb. Planning for the campaign to eject Saddam Hussein from Kuwait after he invaded it in 1991 was periodically bedeviled by the question of whether a direct attack on the Iraqi leader would violate the restriction. The Air Force chief of staff, General Michael J. Dugan, was sacked in the middle of the build-up for publicly stating that one of the objectives of U.S. military plans would be to "decapitate" the Iraqi leadership, which he suggested should include "his family, his personal guard, and his mistress."

The idea of going after Saddam left various Democrats outraged. "Targeting Saddam," argued Representative Lee Hamilton, "would help him portray himself throughout the Arab world as a martyr who has singlehandedly taken on the West." Whatever the merits of this contention, and whatever the reality of U.S. war plans with respect to a direct attack on the Iraqi leader, General Norman Schwarzkopf, the commander of allied forces, settled the matter in the negative: The United States does not "have a policy of trying to kill any particular individual," he declared.

By the time al Qaeda rolled into action in the 1990s, this approach, and the penumbra that had gradually emerged from the emanations of the assassination ban, came to hamstring our counterterrorism policy. After Osama bin Laden had successfully launched terrorist attacks against American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the CIA was ordered to find ways to put al Qaeda out of business. Elaborate plans were drawn up, but the executive order dominated the agency's thinking; the upshot of all the preparations, states the 9/11 Commission report, was that "the only acceptable context for killing bin Laden was a credible capture operation." A plan designed to kill bin Laden outright was deemed unacceptable and illegal. Never mind that the United States had launched a fusillade of cruise missiles at one of his camps in August 1998 to do just that; that was a military action, not a CIA covert operation.

One of the most memorable sentences in the entire 9/11 Commission report concerns the CIA contemplating action against bin Laden on a road leading to the Afghan city of Kandahar. James Pavitt, the deputy director of the CIA's Directorate of Operations, "expressed concern that people might get killed; it appears he thought the operation had at least a slight flavor of a plan for an assassination." Not long afterward, the operation was called off and Osama bin Laden lived to fight another day. But Pavitt was proved right. People did get killed, in large numbers—three years later, on September 11, 2001.

Today, Executive Order 12333 remains on the books. President Bush has the power to revoke it or modify it or supplant it by issuing a new executive order. Under certain circumstances, like an attack or an impending attack on the United States, such an amendment or new order need not be published in the Federal Register. It is possible, in other words, that Bush might already have qualified the ban in some instances and not let us or our adversaries know.

Let us hope that this is the case, as it surely must be with respect to Osama bin Laden. The United States is facing brutal enemies around the world who neither wear the uniforms worn by civilized soldiers nor attack military targets, preferring to kill civilians indiscriminately en masse. If it is not already being done, unleashing our intelligence agencies to wage unconventional warfare, employing the tool of assassination where appropriate, against foes who have targeted Americans in the past or are targeting them now, would be just, long overdue, and quite possibly highly efficacious. ♦

The Crisis of the Wahhabi Regime

Surprising developments in Saudi Arabia.

BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ AND IRFAN AL-ALAWI

Long accustomed to abusing their power with impunity, the Saudi *mutawiyin* or "religious police" (more on that misleading translation in a moment) suddenly find themselves on the defensive. Increasingly challenged by critics, they felt compelled early this year to go through the motions of announcing a "modernization": Warrants would be required for searches, the use of force for moral violations would be banned. In practice, however, nothing changed. And when, this spring, two Saudi men died in custody, events took an unprecedented turn: Controversy erupted in the Saudi media; several *mutawiyin* members were dragged into court; and the boldest reformers called for dismantling altogether this hated institution.

But to make the story intelligible, it is necessary to begin at the beginning—with the uniqueness of Saudi Arabia. In addition to being the only state named after its rulers, and having no constitution except the Koran, this is the homeland of the radical Wahhabi form of Sunni Islam. Wahhabism, the official sect of the kingdom, is a patched-together, relatively recent expression of the faith of Muhammad, and the Wahhabi institutions that support the Saudi order often seem amorphous and opaque. Given the general absence of transparency in the kingdom, this should come as no surprise.

But there is no Wahhabi institution more difficult to define than the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. Founded in the 1920s, when the Saudi state came into being, as an enforcer of collective morals, this body of at least 10,000 individuals is known to Saudi and other Muslims as the *mutawiyin*, or "devotees." Although often described in Western media as the "religious police," the *mutawiyin* have little in common with a police force—they wear no uniform and receive no salary—and are better described as an Islamofascist militia, something akin to the Nazi and Communist rank-and-file party members in lands ruled by those movements. Their mission includes ideological indoctrination in the dangers of "imitating the West" (such as watching television), but they mainly enforce Wahhabi standards of behavior in public. Their constant and degrading interference with ordinary people has brought about growing discontent. If judicial scrutiny is imposed on the *mutawiyin*, Saudi Arabia will undergo a profound change in its social life.

A kind of adjunct to the tens of thousands of state-subsidized clerics, the *mutawiyin* are a pillar of Wahhabism in the kingdom. They prowl the streets of the main Saudi cities day and night. Jeddah, the commercial capital on the Red Sea, is the notable exception: Local residents claim to have run the *mutawiyin* out of town. Elsewhere, however, they seek out people they suspect of violating the Wahhabi code of conduct. If a woman walks outside her home in the full body covering known as the *abaya* but allows a fold of cloth to slip, exposing her ankle or face, the *mutawiyin* may scold her or strike her. If they suspect that an unrelated man and woman are meeting in public places, the patrollers may detain and harass them, insulting the female for alleged lewdness, and beating the male. If people keep walking when the call to prayer is heard and do not rush into the nearest mosque, the *mutawiyin* may swarm and assault them for impiety. Given the Islamic ban on intoxication, if the militia are informed that alcoholic drinks or drugs are being used in a private home, they may raid the house and beat and even kill people. If Muslim pilgrims violate the Wahhabi understanding of monotheism by praying at the shrine of Muhammad in Medina, they are likely to be taken aside and roughed up and, if they are foreign, deported.

Until now, the *mutawiyin* have not been called to account for their sometimes drastic deeds. They have no professional standards or training. They are free to assault people and then shove them on their way, making no record of the encounter, having carried out no official arrest, and making no provision for any hearing or further punishment, although offenses deemed particularly grave—alleged adultery, say—may land the suspect before a *sharia* court.

Members enter the *mutawiyin* from the kingdom's strictest schools and mosques. They are not paid, but are assigned to regular patrols. They wear no identifying uniform except a red-checkered headscarf. They travel in unmarked cars. Instead of a firearm, they carry an *asaa*, a long stick resembling a riding crop. But they have offices and detention centers, and both the chief Islamic cleric in the kingdom, grand mufti Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al-Sheik, and interior minister Prince Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz (notorious for asserting that 9/11 was the handiwork of Israel), say the *mutawiyin* are supported by the state. The Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice has a chief, Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Ghaith, and has lately appointed public-relations representatives, still unpaid.

The *mutawiyin* have benefited from the secrecy surrounding their internal functioning, and their "surprise" tactics help them maintain an atmosphere of intimidation. Their defenders claim the *mutawiyin* follow a precedent in the

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strictest school of Sunni *sharia*, identified with the 9th-century jurist Ahmad ibn Hanbal, whose followers organized patrols for "prevention of sin." But such patrols remained a marginal phenomenon in Islamic history, often condemned, until the emergence of the Saudi state in the 20th century.

The Mutawiyin in Court

On July 1, three Saudi judges began a court inquiry into the death last month of a Saudi citizen, Ahmed Al-Bulawi, 50, who had been detained by the *mutawiyin* in the northwestern town of Tabuk. On July 2, however, four members of the religious militia accused of responsibility for the death, and whose trial had already been postponed once, were released on bail; the previous Friday, mosques in Tabuk had broadcast sermons calling on local Muslims to defend the accused.

Al-Bulawi's case represents a microcosm of the *mutawiyin*'s history. His alleged crime consisted of inviting a Moroccan woman who was not his relative and was unchaperoned by another male into his car. His relatives demand that those who caused his death be executed. Local authorities claim that Al-Bulawi died of natural causes, although the lawyer for his family told the media that the victim's remains showed he had been beaten in the face and head. The official medical report has not been released. For what it's worth, the unnamed Moroccan woman has revealed that Al-Bulawi formerly worked as her driver.

A little before Al-Bulawi's death, in May, Salman Al-Huraisi, aged 28, died in *mutawiyin* hands in Riyadh. His home had been raided by militia members looking for alcohol and drugs. The Saudi daily *al-Watan* (*The Nation*) reported on June 28 that a lawyer for Al-Huraisi's family had been denied access to a medical report on the fatality, but that Al-Huraisi had died after blows to the eye and head.

Some 18 *mutawiyin* participated in the raid on Al-Huraisi's home, and one of them is now due for trial. Local authorities initially sought to absolve the *mutawiyin* in the case by throwing a blanket of equivocation over them. Representatives of the governor of Riyadh claimed that the as-yet-unidentified individual accused of the killing was not on patrol when the victim died. The pro-al-Qaeda media enterprise *Al-Sahat* (*The Battlefields*) praised this attempt to deflect blame from the *mutawiyin* as appropriately protecting the militia's status. But some Arabic media insist Al-Huraisi's assailant was a leader of the *mutawiyin*. As in the past, vagueness about how the *mutawiyin* operate enables their alleged misconduct.

Finally, a 50-year-old Saudi woman known as Umm Faisal ("mother of Faisal"—her full name is undisclosed) has filed suit against the *mutawiyin* for an incident in 2003 when she, her daughter, and a foreign maid were verbally and physically harassed while waiting in a car for her two sons. The three women were charged with public immorality, in line with Wahhabi teaching that the presence of women in cars amounts to solicitation of prostitution. On July 3, the complaint of Umm Faisal became the first ever civil action in which a representative of the *mutawiyin* was summoned to court, although, again, the trial was postponed, this time until September.

With all this, the kingdom is atwitter about the *mutawiyin*. It is proof of the entrenched totalitarianism of Saudi society that such small steps as the charging of four militia members for Al-Bulawi's death and the court appearance of a militia member in the Umm Faisal matter are seen by ordinary Saudis as significant developments, potentially heralding a new epoch in the kingdom's life.

Naturally, the defenders of the Wahhabi order are intent on the *mutawiyin*'s survival. Prince Nayef has publicly reaffirmed his support, though not loudly enough for *Al-Sahat*, which complains that the all-male Shura Council appointed by the king has failed to open more *mutawiyin* centers and authorize payment of members. The Shura Council seems to walk a fine line between popular disaffection with the *mutawiyin* and extremist pressure; it also rejected reform proposals that the *mutawiyin* wear uniforms and include female personnel.

Predictably protective of the institution is the Wahhabi establishment. On June 21, the newspaper *Al-Madina* reported that the grand mufti had denounced "unfair" media criticism of the religious militia and called for repression of the critics. The grand mufti is a descendant of Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab (1703-1792), originator of the Wahhabi sect. His position has been hereditary since the Al-Wahhab family contracted a permanent alliance with the Saud clan, who leave religious affairs to the Wahhabi offspring while keeping the reins of state power for themselves.

Amid these investigations and declamations, other sporadic and confusing measures have been proposed to ameliorate public dissatisfaction with the *mutawiyin*. When the case of Al-Bulawi first came to light, it was announced that 380 members of the militia would be trained in "interpersonal skills," surely one of the most bizarre statements yet from the Saudi authorities. The *mutawiyin* further promised to create a review process for their members' practices. At the same time, however, they rejected questions about their activities put forward by Saudi human rights activists.

Moreover, recent examples of outrageous behavior by the *mutawiyin* abound. At the beginning of June, a certain Fahd Al-Bishi of Riyadh complained to the media that the militia had crashed their vehicle into his family car and harassed him on his daughter's wedding day because they suspected his son of drinking or traveling in the company of women unrelated to him. In March, the *mutawiyin* burst into Prince Salman Hospital in Riyadh and fought with security personnel while ostensibly chasing a drug dealer. A few days before that, the *mutawiyin* had been taught a lesson in the restive Eastern Province, whose large Shia Muslim population is subject to continual discrimination. A patrol detained a man who was listening to music, a prime offense in Wahhabi eyes. After the individual

was released, he returned with several friends and beat up the *mutawiyin*.

Indeed, by early this year, criticism of the institution had become so frequent that the militia refrained from its usual practice of violently interrupting the Riyadh International Book Fair, which opened in February, to search for banned literature. Many Saudis saw this as another small, positive step by the circle around King Abdullah, who is at odds with Prince Nayef, and is widely believed to seek a break with the past.

Throughout this chronicle one sees the contradictory symptoms of a deepening, as yet hidden crisis of the Saudi regime. The state defends the *mutawiyin* while promising change, but not too much change. People speak out more candidly, but a primitive institution like the *mutawiyin* continues to get away with shocking acts. Trials are promised, and begin, and then are put off, under the sinister gaze of Nayef. Precisely how events will unfold is impossible to foretell, but it is not too much to say that if the *mutawiyin* are ever finally held to answer for their long career of oppression, the entire Wahhabi establishment may begin to crumble. ♦

Abortion International

What AI now stands for.

BY RYAN T. ANDERSON

Amnesty International has come in for some bad press recently. Can a human-rights organization be taken seriously when its annual report dwells more on abuses in America and England than in Belarus and Saudi Arabia? When it rebukes Israel far more often than Iran, Libya, Syria, and Egypt? Or when it asks who has the worst human-rights record among Darth Vader, Hobgoblin, and Dick Cheney?

As disconcerting as these problems are, Amnesty International's most egregious recent offense almost went unreported—and the organization wanted to keep it that way. Hidden on the members-only section of its website was the announcement of a new policy that condemns as a human-rights violator any country that does not allow broad access to abortion or punishes abortion providers.

"This policy will not be made public at this time," the website instructed its visitors. "There is to be no proactive external publication of the policy position or of the fact of its adoption issued." Amnesty International officials had good reason to want to keep this new policy quiet: It undermines their voice as global human-rights advocates, and they know it.

Perhaps that's why Amnesty International had preemptive talking points posted on the site too. The news was to be kept secret—but if the story got out anyway, members were to respond immediately: "Some media reports and individuals have claimed that AI promotes a 'human right to abortion.' This grossly misrepresents AI's policy on sexual and reproductive rights. AI takes no position on whether abortion is right or wrong, nor on whether or not abortion should be legal."

Of course, that's not true. The new policy calls on governments to "ensure access to abortion services to any woman who becomes pregnant as the result of rape, sexual assault, or incest, or where a pregnancy poses a risk to a woman's life or a grave risk to her health." As the judicial history of abortion in the United States proves, the "health exemption" is an open invitation to unlimited abortion.

But, more directly, Amnesty International also calls for "the removal of all criminal penalties (including imprisonment, fines, and other punishments) against those seeking, obtaining, providing information about, or carrying out abortions." In fact, Amnesty International's commitment to abortion is so extreme that it explicitly opposes the federal ban on partial-birth abortion that the Supreme Court recently upheld.

To add insult to injury, Amnesty International thinks the public is stupid enough to buy its spin. Consider its repeated claim to take "no position as to when life begins." Of course, to demand that every country in the world allow abortion is to take a position: A human being's life does not begin—at least not in a way in which Amnesty International will permit any government on the planet to protect it—until after birth.

And while Amnesty International argues that abortion advocacy follows from its long-standing work to stop violence against women, I saw no signs that it considered whether abortion itself is simply one more attack on women. Though Amnesty International is against "forced abortions," the unspoken reality is that wherever these policy initiatives are adopted, boyfriends, husbands, and employers will be able to pressure women into getting abortions.

But even people who differ on these issues can see why Amnesty International's advocacy of abortion is a mistake. It severely weakens its ability to form broad coalitions of human-rights defenders. It makes Amnesty International indistinguishable from all the other standard-issue leftist organizations that cluster around international affairs. Worst of all, it will have disastrous consequences for relations with religious believers—especially Catho-

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lics—who will be forced to distance themselves from the organization's other work.

In fact, the Church has already responded. Soon after I publicized the new abortion policy on the *First Things* website, the news reached the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. In an interview with the *National Catholic Register*, the Council's president, Renato Cardinal Martino, said that "individuals and Catholic organizations must withdraw their support," since "by pushing for the decriminalization of abortion as part of their platform, Amnesty International has disqualified itself as a defender of human rights."

As expected, that caused quite a stir. In its official public response to the Vatican, Amnesty International repeated its spin about the policy being one of "decriminalization" and not a "right" to abortion. But it also plainly reiterated its commitment "to defend women's access to abortion, within reasonable gestational limits, when their health or human rights are in danger." Notice that the word "grave" wasn't included this time.

Amnesty International also took potshots at Catholics like Martino. Amnesty International—unlike the Catholic Church—exists to "protect citizens including the believer but [it does] not impose beliefs." Its work—unlike religious believers'—is all about "upholding human rights, not specific theologies." Its argument—unlike the pro-life one—"invokes the law and the state, not God." The statement ended with a pompous lecture that warned the Catholic Church "not to turn away from the suffering that women face because of sexual violence and urged the Catholic leadership to advocate tolerance and to respect freedom of expression for all human rights defenders, including Amnesty International, just as Amnesty International will continue to defend the freedom of religion."

Of course, Amnesty International's blustering response is ridiculous. The Church's teaching on abortion is not peculiarly Catholic. Pro-life reasoning requires no invocation of God, no specific theology, and no imposition of beliefs. Nor does articulating a coherent rational argument fail to show tolerance or respect for competing positions—even intellectually incoherent positions like Amnesty International's. And one has to wonder if Amnesty International can really think petitions for abortion rights amount to authentic care for women, while nuns like the Sisters of Life who take in and house pregnant women are merely turning a blind eye.

The pro-life community in the United States has always had genuine admiration for Amnesty International, particularly as the organization kept itself neutral in the abortion debates. But if it now insists on holding what pro-lifers see as a fundamentally flawed view of human rights, pro-lifers' trust in its other work will decline—indeed, it already has. Amnesty International is deluding itself if it thinks that this new support for an unlimited abortion license does not undermine the foundations of human rights and the broad coalition of support the organization once enjoyed.

Even Darth Vader and Hobgoblin could see that. ♦

Cuckoo Clocks and Jihadists

What Switzerland is now producing.

BY OLIVIER GUITTA

As jihadist plots continue to be uncovered from Glasgow to New Jersey, it is plain that no place can be considered entirely safe. That includes placid, would-be neutral Switzerland, where a series of incidents and controversies in recent months points to a small but untiring Saudi-sponsored Islamist presence—and to a growing determination to resist its excesses on the part of some Swiss citizens and the Swiss authorities.

Switzerland has more than 300,000 Muslims—some 4.3 percent of the population—few of whom are of Arab descent. Most came as migrants or refugees from the former Yugoslavia (57 percent) or Turkey (20 percent). Yet the small minority who are Arabs (5 percent) have made their mark.

The influential Geneva Islamic Center was founded as long ago as 1961, with roots in the international Islamist movement. Its leader, Said Ramadan, had been expelled from Nasser's Egypt for ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, founded by his father-in-law, Hassan al-Banna. Ramadan also helped create the World Muslim League, funded by the Saudi establishment for the purpose of spreading Wahhabism around the world. Today, Ramadan's sons Tariq, intellectual superstar of European Islamism, and Hani, head of the Geneva Islamic Center, continue to serve the cause.

But the Islamic Center is not the only Islamist institution in the Swiss capital. There is also the Grand Mosque of Geneva, which has undergone sweeping leadership changes in recent months. It has a new director, fresh from Jeddah, who suddenly fired four executives at the end of March. The Swiss daily *Le Temps* reported that the firings were initiated by the Saudi consul general in Geneva. The fired executives have sued, claiming they lost their jobs for being too moderate.

The new imam at the mosque is

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Youssef Ibram, a Moroccan who studied Islamic law for six years in Saudi Arabia. He is remembered in Switzerland for his part in a public controversy about the stoning of adulterers. In 2004, in an interview with the Swiss French magazine *Coopération*, he said, "Regarding stoning, I cannot be against it since it is included in the Islamic law." The ensuing flap prompted Ibram to resign from his position as imam of the Islamic Center in Zurich. Ibram is also a member of the European Council for Fatwa and Research, a transnational group made up mostly of non-European Islamists close to the Muslim Brotherhood and headed by Al Jazeera star Sheikh Yusuf al Qaradawi. This body takes upon itself to assess the conformity of European laws to Islam.

Meanwhile in Bern, plans were announced in May to build an Islamic center including a museum, a luxury hotel, a conference center, and a mosque, at a cost of up to $50 million. The project raised even some Muslim eyebrows. In particular, Saida Keller-Messahli, founder of the Zurich-based Forum for a Progressive Islam, told *Le Temps* she was concerned about the lack of transparency regarding the benefactors and initiators of the project, and that she did not see how the Bern Muslim community could raise such a sum without petrodollars from Saudi Arabia or Iran. Farhad Afshar, the Iranian who is spokesman for the organization planning to raise the funds for the project, denies this. By now, however, the question is moot: The other day the city of Bern turned down the development.

Others, too, are challenging the Islamists. A proposal to ban minarets in Switzerland has been floated by Ulrich Schluer, a member of parliament from the right-wing UDC (Union Démocratique du Centre). The idea has been featured in the Arabic media and was discussed recently on Al Jazeera's website, where some net surfers proposed boycotting Swiss banks (which hold a lot of Saudi and other Arab money) if the ban is enacted. *Al Hayat* and Al Arabiya television also expressed concern. Annoyed, Schluer told *Le Temps*: "Al Jazeera states that Switzerland wants to ban 'mosques or putting Islamic religious symbols on buildings,' but we never said this! We are against minarets, which we consider a symbol of political conquest, but not against mosques, because we respect the freedom of religion."

Schluer takes a dim view of Al Jazeera. Recently he sought an opinion from the Federal Council as to the propriety of the decision by the largest Swiss cable company, Cablecom, to carry Al Jazeera, despite the channel's showing innocent hostages having their throats slit. Perhaps remembering the Danish cartoons controversy, Socialist MP Andreas Gross has urged Swiss ambassadors in Arab countries to explain the Swiss political system to dampen cross-cultural misunderstanding.

Regardless of whether Schluer's proposal takes off, there are indications that Swiss authorities are taking a stronger stand against Islamist extremists. In May, they denied entry to Switzerland to Salman al Odeh, threatening him with up to six months' imprisonment and a fine of up to 10,000 Swiss Francs (about $8,200).

The Federal Police explained their decision this way: "Al Odeh is one of the most influential men on the Radical Islamist scene, a Wahhabi and a fanatic close to Osama Bin Laden. He was jailed in Arabia between 1994 and 1999 because of his extremist views, and from his cell continued the call for an armed Jihad against the infidel Western nations."

In fact, bin Laden cited Odeh as a favorite religious authority in his early communiqués and defended him after he was jailed. His release in 1999 was negotiated in a deal with the Saudi government. In exchange for promising to mute his criticism of the regime, Odeh was allowed to go free and resume preaching, both at home and abroad. He has done so actively, developing the website Islam Today to spread extremism worldwide, organizing political statements, and encouraging jihad against America in Iraq.

In an interview with the pan-Arab daily *Asharq Al-Awsat*, al Odeh called the accusations "a big lie impossible to believe," and attributed them to "extremist Zionist forces." He dismissed as ludicrous his alleged links to bin Laden, saying, "I met Bin Laden only once 20 years ago while I was visiting the Sharia faculty." Al Odeh added that he is suing the Swiss authorities.

Similarly, courts are being used in new, if hardly draconian, ways. On June 22, for the first time ever, two people were convicted in a Swiss court of support for a criminal organization in a case linked to Islamist terrorism. The two ran radical websites, complete with images of executions of hostages, massacres of civilians, disfigured people, and detailed instructions for bomb-making, as well as a chat room that promoted jihad. One of the defendants, Malika el-Aroud, is the widow of Abdessater Dahmane, who helped assassinate Massoud, the Afghan Northern Alliance leader killed by al Qaeda on September 9, 2001; she was given a six-month suspended sentence. The other defendant, her boyfriend, a Tunisian living in Switzerland, was sentenced to prison for six months.

In its May 31, 2006, Swiss Domestic Security Report, the Federal Police stated plainly that violent Islamists are using Swiss soil as a strategic location from which to spread propaganda and provide financial and logistical support to people abroad. The report also underlined Geneva's growing importance as a transit point for volunteers from French-speaking Switzerland and France going to join the jihad in Iraq. Further, wrote Jean-Luc Vez, director of the Federal Police, in the foreword: "European-born jihadists could come back from Iraq and other war zones as experienced fighters, linked to a network with the same ideology. . . . These isolated individuals, but also al Qaeda, remain capable of organizing terrorist attacks."

Coincidentally, the largest synagogue in Geneva was gutted by fire on May 24, in what has been ruled a case of criminal arson. As of now, no arrests have been made. But any illusion that Switzerland was somehow immune to the fires of intolerance is long since gone. ♦

Read It and Weep

Why does Congress hate the one part of No Child Left Behind that works?

By Charlotte Allen

Richmond, Virginia

In a classroom at Ginter Park Elementary School, a century-old brick schoolhouse on a dreary, zoned-commercial truck route that bisects a largely African-American neighborhood in Richmond, a third-grade teacher, Laverne Johnson, is doing something that flies in the face of more than three decades of the most advanced pedagogical principles taught at America's top-rated education schools. Seated on a chair in a corner of her classroom surrounded by a dozen youngsters sitting cross-legged on the floor at her feet, Johnson is teaching reading—as just plain reading. Two and a half hours every morning, systematically going over such basics as phonics, vocabulary words, and a crucial skill known as "phonemic awareness" that entails recognizing the separate sound components of individual words—that the word "happy," for example, contains five letters but only four sounds, or phonemes.

Phonemic awareness is an important prelude to phonics: learning which phonemes are represented in written English by which graphemes, or combinations of letters. According to the principles Johnson is following, it is the mix of phonemic awareness and phonics that enables children (and adults learning how to read for the first time) to sound out, syllable by syllable, unfamiliar-looking words they might encounter on a page and then link those words to meaning. In the world of forward-thinking educational pedagogy, phonemic awareness is deemed useless, phonics of only intermittent value, and the sounding out of words deadening to a child's potential interest in books.

As her main teaching tool, Johnson is using something that also makes the most advanced minds at America's education schools blanch: a reader. Those fat hardback textbooks that were the staple of grade school until the 1970s are out of fashion these days, replaced in most elementary-school classrooms in America by "authentic literature": illustrated trade-press children's books of the sort that parents buy to entertain their offspring at bedtime (or that older youngsters check out of the public library to read for pleasure) and entirely lacking in teachers' guides or clues as to how they might be used as instructional tools.

Again, not so at Ginter Park. Every one of the dozen children sitting at Johnson's feet holds an open copy of the very same textbook that Johnson holds, whose no-nonsense title makes its purpose plain: *Houghton Mifflin Reading, Grade 3*. It comes supplemented with such fashionably disdained materials as vocabulary lists, ready-made comprehension tests, and teachers' guides that include built-in lesson plans and scripts. Indeed, Johnson is handing out one of those very vocabulary lists: 30 new words that they will encounter in the story to which their books are open but which they haven't started yet: "Poppa's New Pants." Johnson is sounding out the words with the children and going through their meanings: "pattern," "plaid," "draped," "hem."

"What can you tell me about a hem?" she asks. A little girl promptly flips up the hem of her T-shirt and shows it off to the group.

"Sew—S-E-W," says Johnson. "Now, does anyone know a homonym for sew?"

"So—S-O!" shouts another girl.

"Yes!" says Johnson, explaining how it is that two different words with two different meanings can sound the same. A *homonym*—they really still teach such things these days?

The education establishment may sneer at the techniques Johnson uses, but they are part of a small-scale miracle: Ginter Park, despite an unpromising location and a high-poverty-level student body, now ranks in the top third of more than 1,100 public elementary schools in the state of Virginia, holding its own against schools in the ultra-affluent, highly educated suburban counties of northern Virginia just across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. Until only five years ago, Ginter Park, located in a once-upscale trolley-car suburb that has seen better days, was near the bottom of the state's academic barrel, the second-worst-performing elementary school in the Richmond Public Schools district—which was itself the second-worst-performing school district in the state.

Richmond, state capital and onetime capital of the Con-

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federacy, is a classic example of a southern city nearly collapsed in on itself after decades of worsening economic fortunes and out-migration to its exurban ring. The city boasts a handful of genuinely wealthy or artfully gentrified neighborhoods, but there is also much poverty, with its attendant social problems of crime, drugs, teen pregnancy, and single-parent households. Of Richmond's 25,000 youngsters enrolled in public school, 95 percent are African American, and 70 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, a marker of poverty. At Ginter Park Elementary, where all but a tiny handful of students belong to minority groups, the children are on average even poorer, with 83 percent qualifying for the free-lunch program.

During the year 2000, only five public schools in Richmond (and certainly not Ginter Park) were fully accredited by the state of Virginia. Accreditation means that 75 percent of students are proficient at grade level in English, mathematics, science, and history, as measured by a series of tough standardized tests that the state put into place in 1999. This year, thanks in part to a revolution in instructional methods in which the reading program at Ginter Park Elementary played a key role, and thanks in part to a controversial Bush administration grants program called Reading First, a provision of Bush's No Child Left Behind Act that funded the teaching methods on view in Johnson's classroom, 45 of Richmond's 49 public schools enjoy full state accreditation.

Photos by Lev Nisnevitch

Ginter Park Elementary now ranks in the top third of Virginia schools.

Despite Richmond's success story—detailed by education analyst Sol Stern in an article for the Winter 2007 issue of the Manhattan Institute's *City Journal* and duplicated in school districts across the nation that have availed themselves of Reading First grants—it is safe to say that phonics and its related instructional components are no more popular in the public education establishment than they were five years ago. This despite the fact that the literacy levels of America's schoolchildren range from appallingly low to mediocre by both national and comparative international standards. For example, nearly two-thirds of America's fourth- and eighth-graders failed to attain scores of proficient (again meaning "at grade level") in reading in 2005 on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a nationwide sampling survey of academic achievement. Even worse, some 40 percent of those youngsters could not even read at the "basic" level for their grade: a barebones standard of fluency and comprehension that would mean that as adults they would be able to make sense out of a bus schedule or a simple instruction manual. Poor and minority children fared even worse, with 65 percent of them unable to read even at the basic level for their grade and less than 16 percent reaching the proficiency level.

American young people are also significantly behind their counterparts in other developed and even some developing countries. On the Progress in International Reading Study (PIRLS), a multinational test for fourth-graders administered in 2001, the United States placed only 9th out of 35 participating nations, trailing top-rated Sweden, the Netherlands, and England—despite spending more per student on education than any other nation in the world. On the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), a test of 15-year-olds in 2003, American students ranked just about in the middle in literacy skills, way behind their coevals in top-ranking Finland and a score of other countries including South Korea, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. It is an educational commonplace that children who cannot read at grade level by the fourth grade are unlikely ever to be able to read well enough to tackle

the specialized textbooks they will encounter in science, history, and other subjects as they move to higher grades. More likely, they will fall further and further behind in school, eventually dropping out in many cases.

Despite all this less-than-encouraging data, efforts to teach the elements of reading in a direct and systematic fashion—the way Laverne Johnson does at Ginter Park—are derided at most U.S. education schools as "cutting learning up into itty-bitty pieces," or "one-size-fits-all," or "the factory model," to borrow the words of Yvonne Siu-Runyan, a recently retired education professor at the University of Northern Colorado in an interview for this article. Siu-Runyan is an influential proponent of a competing theory of reading instruction known as "whole language" that is favored by such influential entities as the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association, nearly the entire faculty at the prestigious Columbia Teachers College, and the vast majority of American elementary-school teachers, according to a 2002 poll conducted by the Manhattan Institute.

Siu-Runyan and her counterparts would probably find much to criticize at Ginter Park, where the mandatory two and a half hours of reading instruction vastly exceed the hour or so a day that most elementary schools devote to reading in the primary grades. After two hours of Johnson's direct teaching, her pupils return to their desks, arranged in clumps of four around the classroom, or take seats at one of the four computer workstations lined up at a wall, or just sit on the floor with a book. It's time for a half-hour of "enrichment"—independent reading from books of their choice for the more proficient students—and "intervention"—individual or small-group work under supervision from Johnson on reading components on which less proficient students need extra help. Every child in Ginter Park's five third-grade classrooms, 72 youngsters in all, is tested weekly, along with the rest of the school's K-4 students, and their number scores are posted on stickies in the first-floor teachers' conference room at the school, so that every teacher is aware of the fluctuating strengths, weaknesses, and progress or lack thereof of every child. Furthermore, every third-grade classroom follows the same daily schedule of instruction in the five components of literacy that reading researchers at Harvard University and elsewhere have identified over the past four decades and that, it would seem, every teacher at Ginter Park can rattle off the tip of his or her tongue: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency (recognizing words and their letter-components quickly and easily, usually tested by having individual students read out loud), vocabulary, and comprehension. All third-graders at Ginter Park read one story a week from *Houghton Mifflin Reading, Grade 3*.

In one third-grade classroom, a teacher helps a boy with phonics, guiding him as he picks out and lines up, from an array of word-flashcards, every word that contains the short "e"-sound: "step," "set," "hotel." In another classroom, a pile of in-class exercises sitting on a teacher's desk have asked the youngsters to look at a drawing of a common object (a couch, for example) and identify the one word out of five multiple-choice items that contains a letter combination that is also in the word pictured (here, the correct answer is "lunch"). A little girl in Johnson's classroom who is clearly an accomplished reader is standing, actually dancing in slow, swaying circles, while she reads aloud to herself the story of Sleeping Beauty, picked out from one of the numerous attractive children's books arranged for the taking on tables or propped up against whiteboards around the room: *Grandfather and I*, *Froggy Gets Dressed*, *All the Places to Live*, *Androcles and the Lion*, *The Life Cycle of a Salmon*. The girl has turned Sleeping Beauty into a private performance for the audience of one that is her own imagination: reading the dialogue in different voices for the different characters, following the words on the page with her finger, sashaying in place, so engrossed and so captivating that another advanced reader, inspired, joins in with her own book, R.L. Stine's *Mostly Ghostly*, and her own swaying dance.

Johnson's classroom, like the other third-grade classrooms at Ginter Park, is stuffed with a tidy jumble of visual and written material pitched at 8-year-olds: a world globe, a portrait of George Washington, and on every wall, posters illustrating simple machines, grasslands animals, and the water cycle from rainfall to faucet, a set of multiplication tables, a cursive alphabet with arrow-directions on how to form the letters, "The Gifts of the Ancient Greeks," "The Gifts of the Romans," a list of values ("compassion," "perseverance," "responsibility"). There are certificates of "Math Whiz Achievement" for students who have worked their way successfully through 100 addition problems (Ginter Park teaches arithmetic the old-fashioned way, just as it teaches reading the old-fashioned way). And lest one think that *Poppa's New Pants*, this week's story, is dull see-Spot-run fare reminiscent of the 1950s, it is actually as "authentic" a piece of children's literature as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Its author, Angela Shelf Medearis of Austin, Texas, is a widely read writer of dozens of children's books about African-American life (indeed, *Poppa's New Pants* can be bought on Amazon.com as a freestanding title). Colorful, highly detailed pictures by the award-winning illustrator John Ward help tell Medearis's warm and humorous story about a black farm family and its eccentric members in the Depression-era South. Elsewhere in *Houghton Mifflin Reading, Grade 3*, are lushly illustrated, information-packed chapters about Plymouth Plantation, Ernest Shackleton's

expedition to Antarctica in 1914-1916, and Bessie Coleman, America's first black licensed pilot. The material is not only interesting in itself, but it introduces young readers to worlds and vocabularies that extend well beyond their own neighborhoods.

Being on the premises of Ginter Park Elementary—with its high-ceilinged, tall-windowed classrooms, its wide, spotless hallways whose walls are decorated with samples of student art, its well-stocked library (called the "media center" because it also features computers and DVD players), its attentive and energetic teachers, its lively but well-mannered youngsters in grades ranging from pre-K to fifth, and its ultratraditional curriculum, is like passing through a time warp to the world of, say, your grandmother's public school—except better, because the classes at Ginter Park are smaller and the instructional materials are livelier, richer, more comprehensive, and fortified by up-to-date technology.

The miracle at Ginter Park is partly, perhaps hugely, due to an aggressive new school superintendent, Deborah Jewell-Sherman. In 2001, the year before her promotion to the top post, while she was still director of instruction in Richmond, Jewell-Sherman had already incorporated a set of instructional materials called Voyager Universal Literacy, heavy on phonics and phonemic awareness, into the lowest-performing of Richmond's elementary schools, including Ginter Park. Then, when she took over the city's education system in 2002, one of her first steps was to standardize the reading curriculum, mandating Voyager and the Houghton Mifflin readers for all Richmond elementary schools, and then to start training teachers on how to use them. Before that, every teacher had been free to pick his or her own reading materials and design his or her own curriculum. This led to widespread "hobby teaching," as one Richmond teacher called it: Instructors left to their own devices would sometimes spend the entire school year working with their students on art and other projects that suited the teacher's interests and skipping tests and other written assignments that could be assessed, with the upshot being that the teachers often "never got around to teaching anything." The results from Jewell-Sherman's plan of attack were immediate. By 2003, 22 schools in Richmond had achieved full state accreditation.

The real boost to Ginter Park, and to the Richmond school system in general, however, also came in 2002, when Jewell-Sherman arranged for the Richmond public schools to accept a modest grant of about $450,000 a year, made available through the state of Virginia, from the Reading First program, which hands out about $1 billion a year nationwide for use in kindergarten and the first three grades at schools in high-poverty districts so that the schools can set up programs deriving from "scientifically based" reading research. The programs must also incorporate the five-part approach to teaching reading—"essential components of reading instruction (ECRI)" in the language of the statute—that the Ginter Park teachers know so well. Richmond's grant funded a pilot program at Ginter Park and another bottom-of-the-barrel elementary school in Richmond that paid for the hiring of a full-time reading consultant at each school, comprehensive instructional materials, a system of regular reading assessments so that youngsters could be given extra help either individually or in small groups, and more teacher training. Within a couple of years, the state of Virginia raised Ginter Park's classification from "low-proficiency" to "high-proficiency," and in 2005, the U.S. Education Department recognized Ginter Park as "distinguished" among elementary schools receiving Title I antipoverty funds. The two Reading First schools have become models for other Richmond schools, as teachers reached out to train other teachers in the program's methodology.

Reading First has recently been the subject of a major government scandal of sorts (for the few who know or care about it outside the Washington Beltway and the world of education insiders). Last September the Education Department's inspector general, John C. Higgins Jr., issued an audit report concluding that Reading First's administrator, Christopher Doherty, had stacked the panels that reviewed states' applications for Reading First grants with experts who steered the states toward using certain reading instructional materials favored by Doherty at the expense of others, and that some of those experts, typically college professors with backgrounds in reading science, had either personally developed the approved materials or acted as paid consultants to the companies that developed them. Although Higgins's report made no finding of corruption or conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise (the report referred only to "potential" conflicts and the "appearance" of conflict), and there was no evidence that anyone connected to the Reading First program had improperly mandated or recommended any specific materials by name (the language of the No Child Left Behind Act forbids this, in fact), Doherty, whose wife had been a part-time consultant to one approved program, Direct Instruction, was forced to resign under threat of being fired.

One of the first actions of the new Democratic Congress sworn in this year was a four-hour hearing in April before the House Committee on Education and Labor devoted to rehashing Higgins's report. Higgins disclosed that he had referred *l'affaire* Reading First to the Justice Department for possible prosecution, and Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., chairman of the House Education Committee, stated that,

in his opinion, Doherty had turned Reading First into a "criminal enterprise." Lately, however, little has been heard from Justice or any other federal entity about Reading First, although Congress is expected to vote on whether and how to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind law sometime this year, with much pressure from the education establishment to change its provisions drastically. (The law, which disperses up to $20 billion in federal funds to school districts annually, is highly unpopular with most teachers because it conditions receipt of funds on student progress on state-administered standardized tests.)

One reason many critics of Reading First have grown silent of late is that what Rep. Miller deems a criminal enterprise is possibly the most successful federal education program in history. According to an April 19 report from the Education Department, 97 percent of the school districts participating in Reading First reported gains from 2004 to 2006 of 16 percentage points for first-graders and 15 percentage points for third-graders in meeting fluency goals. Comparable gains were reported in reading comprehension: 15 percentage points on average for first-graders and 12 percentage points on average for third-graders. The progress was across the board: for African Americans, Hispanics, English-language learners, disabled students, and the economically disadvantaged, as well as for the white middle class. These results have confounded both the education-school types who hate the idea of intensive phonics, vocabulary drilling, and standardized testing, and also the many small-government conservatives who believe that the entire No Child Left Behind Act represents unprecedented federal intrusion into education, which has traditionally been strictly a state and local concern.

Furthermore, and ironically, the instructional materials from Houghton Mifflin and Voyager that Doherty's panels deemed acceptable in order to qualify states for Reading First grants—and which Higgins testified at the House hearing had generated an "unprecedented" number of complaints for having been produced by "commercial interests"—are the very materials that Richmond educators credit with turning Ginter Park into a model school. (Voyager was developed by Reid Lyon, a friend of Bush from Dallas who was chairman of child development and behavior for the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) from 1991 to 2005; Lyon subsequently sold the program to ProQuest, an educational company based in Ann Arbor.) The materials marketed by Houghton Mifflin and Voyager might strike an education professor as overly "commercial," but according to the teachers at Ginter Park, they do the job. "We selected a program that fit our needs," said Lynn Smith, Ginter Park's reading coach, concerning the Voyager materials. "It provided for small, flexible groups so that with the changing data, we could respond to children's needs in an individualized way, it encouraged deep thinking by the children, and it included strong phonics. It also contains extra support for the strong students. It's just a real nice fit."

Reading First and the change in Richmond's pedagogical culture over the past five years have had a galvanizing effect on the morale of Richmond teachers. "We could see immediate results," said Cathy S. Randolph, Ginter Park's principal. "It's exciting to be successful."

In his *City Journal* article about Reading First, Sol Stern crunched the numbers and discovered that in 2005 Richmond's third-graders had outperformed, by 15 percentage points on the state reading test, the black third-graders in the public schools of affluent Fairfax County in Northern Virginia, which had turned down federal Reading First money on the theory that the program's restrictions would interfere with Fairfax teachers' classroom creativity. Only 59 percent of the African-American children in Fairfax were reading at grade level in 2005, compared with 74 percent of their counterparts in Richmond. The Richmond percentage barely lagged the 79 percent grade-level ratio for Fairfax's affluent white youngsters.

That Reading First has proved to be a runaway success ought to be a no-brainer. Phonics in a manner of speaking *is* reading: the almost instantaneous process by which the human brain links the troika of spoken sounds, those symbols on the printed page that we call writing, and meaning. The pivotal moment in the movie *The Miracle Worker* in which the blind and deaf Helen Keller suddenly makes the connection for the first time between the world outside her and the letters that her teacher has traced on her arm, is a paradigmatic dramatization of the power of the written word as a code of communication. It would seem obvious that children learning how to read for the first time might benefit from a thorough and systematic grounding in phonics and phonemic awareness. The English language contains a larger number of sounds than many other languages, thanks to English's heavy infusion of French after the Norman Conquest and centuries of changing pronunciation. While English spelling is less arbitrary than most people think, the 26 letters of the English alphabet often have to do double, triple, and quadruple duty in order to accommodate the large number of English sounds. This can be highly confusing to a beginning reader who cannot understand why the word "was," for example, might look like "wass" on the page but is pronounced "wuz"—a pronunciation that is actually logical and regular if you know something about phonics.

It would seem obvious, too, that learning how to read involves real *learning*—receiving and internalizing step-by-

Laverne Johnson's classroom is stuffed with a tidy jumble of visual and written material pitched at 8-year-olds.

step instructions on how to decode the symbols on the page, fit them to spoken sounds, and then link those sounds to meaning. Hence vocabulary lists and the old-fashioned technique of having novice readers "sound out" words by reading aloud in class in order to associate sounds and letters. Children also need to learn how to make all those connections quickly and almost unconsciously, or reading will always be difficult and unpleasant for them, which is why fluency and comprehension are key measures of reading skill. Learning how to read would seem analogous to learning how to play the piano, in which practicing scales, mastering fingering technique, decoding the notes, and developing a feeling for the rhythm and beauty of the music are simultaneous but separate components of the process.

All this common-sense intuition—much of which underlay the famous phonics-intensive McGuffey Readers of the 19th century—is in fact supported by decades of 20th-century scientific research into how people actually learn how to read, starting with the work of Jeanne Sternlicht Chall, a psychologist with a special interest in fostering the literacy skills of poor children who founded the Harvard Reading Laboratory at Harvard's graduate school of education in 1966. Starting in the 1970s, a flood of reading studies—an estimated 10,000 in all—applied quantitative analysis and experimental, control-group-based research to identify the instruction strategies that teach reading most efficiently. The researchers included not only specialists in education and early childhood development but also experts in such fields as linguistics, psychology, neurology, genetics, anthropology, and sociology.

The resolutely apolitical NICHD, part of the National Institutes of Health, has been funding studies of reading development since 1964, and has sponsored longitudinal studies of 44,000 children in more than 1,000 schools since the early 1980s, tracking some of those children and their reading progress for more than 20 years as they grew to adulthood. It was all that research which led the NICHD to identify the five components that appear in Reading First's enabling legislation (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). The value of these studies, their proponents argue, is that like all scientific studies, they are based on rigorous methodologies—assessments, for example, not only of how well children can read using various instruction strategies, but even how they move their eyes as they scan a printed page. And, like all valid scientific findings, the results can be replicated.

"We know how reading is acquired," says Louisa Cook Moats, a protégée of Jeanne Chall's at Harvard and director of the NICHD's Early Reading Interventions project from 1997 to 2001. "It's learning to process very specific kinds of linguistic information and build networks that coordinate phonological processing to the patterns of printed symbols that the eye sees, and it's also connected to meaning and the building of vocabulary. When I explain how the process works to teachers, I compare it to an unraveled rope with the strands sticking out. The strands are all those beginning skills to be woven together in the rope." Reading looks automatic and natural,

Moats explains, but only because skilled readers are practiced enough to decode the symbols at lightning speed.

There are many causes for the resistance of the education establishment not only to the conclusions that Moats and others have drawn about reading instruction but to the research that underlies those conclusions. One bedrock philosophical principle, however, unites all those who oppose the step-by-step teaching of literacy skills: the notion that learning how to read is not at all like learning how to play the piano. Instead, the proponents of "whole language" instruction contend, it is a natural process akin to learning how to speak—something that children don't have to be taught formally but pick up automatically if exposed to a sufficiently print-rich environment. Stephen D. Krashen, a professor emeritus of education at the University of Southern California and self-described "staunch defender" of whole-language strategies, explained in an email: "[A]ny child exposed to comprehensible print will learn to read, barring severe neurological or emotional problems." Or, as Krashen amplified in a telephone interview: "Kids learn to read by reading."

Hence the antipathy of the whole-language proponents to having children read a story out of a reader such as Houghton Mifflin's; that doesn't count as "real reading," to borrow a phrase from Krashen's email. Indeed, textbooks or any other kind of formal instructional material are eschewed. In elementary-school classrooms across the country, reading instruction typically consists of what is called "shared reading." The teacher reads a story aloud to the class, often from a "Big Book," an oversized, large-type edition of an illustrated children's book of the teacher's choosing that is propped up on a table or on the floor in front of the class. The teacher might read the story out loud several times, pointing out words that may be difficult, and then have the class read the story aloud in unison while the teacher turns the pages. There is almost no individual reading aloud, and the sounding out of words phonetically is actively discouraged as tending to turn youngsters into rote parsers of syllables who fail to understand what they are reading.

As for phonics *per se*, both Krashen and Yvonne Siu-Runyan insist that they indeed incorporate phonics instruction into their reading strategies, but only in elementary fashion and on an as-needed basis—"basic phonics," as Krashen puts it. Whole-language instruction also typically includes periods of independent silent reading—"Drop Everything and Read" is the name for these impromptu sessions—in which the children pick out and peruse material of their choice from a classroom library of "leveled books"—that is, books that the teacher deems appropriate for their reading level. During these sessions the teacher typically "models" the process by dropping everything and reading silently from a children's book, too, on the principle that seeing other people read encourages reading. As for vocabulary, whole-language classrooms typically incorporate a "word wall"—an ever-changing collection of large-letter words written on posters that the children chant together cheerleader-style and then write out.

The instructional principles behind whole language—light on formal content and heavy on assumptions that children will learn to read by feeling enthusiastic about reading—are far from new. Indeed, they date back to the end of the 19th century, to the educational theories of John Dewey (1859-1952), the pragmatist philosopher and educational theorist who held that children learn best not by directly absorbing instruction from their teachers in specific subjects such as mathematics or history, but by interacting with the real world. School, in Dewey's thinking, should offer a simulacrum of real-world experience in which learning takes place obliquely as the child explores his or her surroundings under the guidance of a teacher. Dewey was in turn influenced by the romantic philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who believed that children were naturally perfect and that education ought to consist of allowing them maximum freedom to develop their innate talents.

In 1904 Dewey joined the faculty of Columbia Teachers College, regarded then as now as America's premier education school (*U.S. News* currently gives Columbia Teachers its No. 1 rating). From there Dewey's "progressive" theories of pedagogy profoundly influenced several generations of American teachers and school boards, right up until the Sputnik launch of 1957, when it suddenly looked as though the Soviet Union, whose Communist leaders had kept in place a decidedly non-progressive education system dating from czarist days, had the United States over a barrel in science and technology. The Dick and Jane readers widely used in American elementary schools from the 1930s through the 1950s were offshoots of a branch of Dewey-ism that held that phonics instruction was backward and proposed that the way to make children literate was to expose them to simple words repeated interminably. ("See Dick. See Dick run. See Dick run fast.") This so-called "look-say" pedagogy (a forerunner to whole language in its emphasis on context and meaning rather than sounds and letters) met its end after Rudolf Flesch published his bestselling *Why Johnny Can't Read* in 1955, two years before Sputnik. By the early 1960s it looked as though progressive education had run its course in all but the most *outré* private schools. Jeanne Chall's 1967 book *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*, proposed a return to thorough grounding in phonics, but in up-to-date combination with interesting children's literature.

Then came a revolution in pedagogy that swept through the K-12 grades in the 1970s and 1980s as thoroughly as

its college-level sister, postmodernism, swept through the academy. The revolution was called "constructivism." Like postmodernism, it had its grounding in arcane Francophone theory: the ideas of the Swiss cognitive psychologist Jean Piaget. Piaget proposed that children progress through distinct developmental stages during which they acquire knowledge not simply by learning it from the outside but by "constructing" it from within, building upon and reflecting upon what they already know in order to rise to new levels of knowing. In Piaget's theoretical dialectic, the subjective process of learning was more important than any particular content learned. Indeed, Piaget argued, it was crucial that the developmental process taking place within each individual child's mind not be interfered with, but rather nurtured and encouraged by the child's teachers. As the ubiquitous mantra of Piaget-influenced educational theory later put it, the teacher should be "a guide on the side, not a sage on the stage." The essential constructivist principle is that teachers should teach nothing directly, but rather function as coaches while their students basically teach themselves.

This was Dewey's progressivism with a new, fashionably Continental face. "The idea is that education is growth, education is development, and that children grow all by themselves," said Diane Ravitch, an education policy analyst and author of *Left Back: A Century of Battles over School Reform*, a mordant critique of constructivism. "The idea is that children figure everything out for themselves," Ravitch added. "There's no authority."

Piaget acquired an army of American apostles at education schools and elsewhere. Chief among them were Frank Smith, an Australian journalist-turned university instructor, and Kenneth Goodman, an education professor at the University of Arizona. Smith, whose 1971 book *Understanding Reading* derided the teaching of phonics, and Goodman are credited as the creators of whole-language theory. In a 1967 article in an education journal, Goodman had described the process of learning to read as a "psycholinguistic guessing game" in which children decipher words on a page, not by decoding them phonetically as Chall maintained, but by following "cues." The cues, Goodman maintained, can be the individual letters and sounds in the word—or they can be the larger context of the story in which the word appears, the artist's illustrations, or even (and perhaps especially) the child's own previously acquired knowledge. Like Smith, Goodman argued that phonics instruction was useless at best, downright harmful at worst. "Matching letters with sounds is a flat-earth view of the world," he declared in a 1986 book, *What's Whole in Whole Language*. Dramatically turning centuries-old principles of reading instruction on their heads, Goodman maintained that "a story is easier to read than a page, a page easier to read than a paragraph, a paragraph easier than a sentence, a sentence easier than a word, and a word easier than a letter."

Both Smith, who had never taught reading in an elementary-school classroom, and Goodman, who had, derided the use of textbooks, worksheets, and other formal instructional material. Smith's 1986 book, *Insult to Intelligence: The Bureaucratic Invasion of Our Classrooms*, complained about children being forced by their elders to memorize mountains of useless data. (Memorization is generally considered in constructivist theory to be developmentally inappropriate for elementary school.) In whole-language theory, the teacher's job is to identify the child's errors—or "miscues," as they are called—and nudge the child in the direction of the correct cues. "Drill and Kill" is their derisive term for pedagogy that emphasizes the systematic teaching of content.

Thus began the practice, now a bedrock of whole-language pedagogy, of teachers' encouraging beginning readers to look at the first letter of any difficult word they encounter in a story and guess the rest, or if that strategy fails to produce results, simply to skip the word and return to it later. Although Goodman refused to be interviewed for this article, stating in a pair of dyspeptic emails that he would not respond to "negative" criticism of his theories, Yvonne Siu-Runyan provided an example of how a whole-language reading lesson works in practice. "A child encounters the word 'butterflies' in a story," said Siu-Runyan. "The first time he reads it as 'b-flies.' Maybe the next time he reads it as 'butt-flies' and the next time as 'betterflies.' For me to assume he's not going to get it would be a mistake, because finally he'll say to himself, 'Does this make sense?' He'll look at the pictures of butterflies [in the book] and say to himself, 'Oh, this is a story about butterflies!' And he'll get it right after that. It's a lot more complicated a process than handing a child a list of words."

Whole language and other aspects of constructivist theory swept through the education schools, starting with the flagship Columbia Teachers College, where Dewey's progressive influence had never waned, where courses on reading pedagogy to this day concentrate on erecting a "theoretical framework" for instruction rather than teaching teachers what actually works in classrooms, and where the school's publishing affiliate, Teachers College Press, churns out dozens of constructivist treatises every year. Smith and Goodman crisscrossed the country on the ed-school lecture circuit, where they were welcomed with open arms and standing ovations by professors and students alike. Whole language clearly appealed because it allowed teachers to do essentially what they liked in their reading classes, and it relieved them of the arduous work of ensuring that

their students had mastered specific literacy skills. Teachers and administrators rushed to create "child-centered" and "learner-centered" curricula in every field and at every grade level ("learner" being the fashionable ed-speak word these days for "student," as it connotes the constructivist idea that children take charge of their own education).

Sandra Wilde, an education professor at Portland State University in Oregon, deemed that learning how to spell, like learning how to read, "should ultimately be as natural, unconscious, effortless, and pleasant as learning to speak," so spellers went the way of readers in classrooms across the country. Teachers encouraged youngsters to make up their own "invented" or "independent" spelling, also under the influence of Wilde's self-described "holistic" approach, which theorized that children could learn from their spelling "miscues." Wilde drafted a "Speller's Bill of Rights" that included "the right to be valued as a human being regardless of your spelling." Whole-language advocates and other constructivists also abandoned conventional tests and letter grades, which they thought slighted youngsters' individuality, in favor of what they called "authentic assessment." That usually means having students assemble samples of their work in a "portfolio" (the oversized envelope that artists take to job interviews) that the teacher then evaluates verbally.

Systematic lessons in grammar, handwriting, and punctuation also went by the boards, thought to be developmentally inappropriate for young children. The teaching of writing completely changed focus. Teachers in the primary grades had traditionally taught their students first how to construct grammatical and properly punctuated sentences, then how to form paragraphs, and finally how to build paragraphs into simple essays and stories. All this was abandoned in favor of a kind of writers' workshop approach that focused on students' self-expression and personal reactions. "Journaling," which allows youngsters to choose their own topics to write about, became a favored classroom writing activity, even for kindergartners and first-graders. Students were encouraged not to worry about grammatical and spelling errors, as these could be cleaned up in an "editing" process with the teacher. Imitating the graduate writing program at the University of Iowa and the copy-desk procedures at the *New Yorker* was supposed to turn 6-year-olds into sophisticated writers, critics, and thinkers.

Two education professors at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Donald A. McAndrew and C. Mark Hurlbert, in an award-winning 1993 article in the journal of the National Council of Teachers of English, went so far as to urge students to indulge in "intentional errors" of syntax and usage as a way of rebelling against the "tyranny" of standard English usage. In 2003 the National Council took its own insurrectionist stand against standard English, voting to endorse a manifesto titled "Students' Right to Their Own Language"—namely the right to write their homework in hip-hop-ese, Spanglish, Valley Girl talk, or whatever other nonstandard dialect they believe best expresses their "community" or "personal" identities. Many whole-language teachers do not bother to prepare lesson plans or syllabi, relying instead on querying their students on what they would like to learn on any particular day.

Like their opposite numbers in the reading science community, whole language advocates can point to plenty of published research, fattening the education journals and bolstering what the whole-language proponents insist is their superior approach to teaching literacy. That research, however, almost uniformly consists of anecdotal recollections by its authors of eureka! moments in their classrooms. The story that Siu-Runyan narrated about the child who finally deciphered the word "butterflies" is a perfect example. The education-school slang term for such "qualitative" (in contrast to quantitative) observations, analogous to the material that anthropologists record in their field notebooks, is "kidwatching." Almost all kidwatching research consists of teachers' first-person success stories—because whole-language advocates are human and they almost never report their classroom failures. "But they're sure that those reports [in the education journals] are 100 percent scientific," says Patrick Goff, a professor emeritus of education at San Diego State University in California and reading science advocate. "That's because you can get a Ph.D. in education without ever having to read a single quantitative study. Even my own university would not teach its students about the empirical evidence concerning the teaching of reading."

Fortunately, perhaps, for about 40 to 50 percent of children—the socioeconomic top 40 to 50 percent hailing from upper-middle-class-to-wealthy "print-rich" homes where the reading of books, magazines, and newspapers is an everyday occurrence—whole-language reading pedagogy does little if any harm. The most verbal of these youngsters, the gifted offspring of lawyers, college professors, and Hollywood screenwriters, either already know how to read by the time they get to kindergarten or pick up reading quickly no matter how they are taught. Others who are not so naturally verbal struggle with whole language's guessing games and unsystematic instruction but eventually manage to read at grade level and to write and spell passably. Furthermore, many whole-language proponents, such as Siu-Runyan and Krashen, are clearly patient, gifted, imaginative teachers sensitive to their students as individuals (Siu-Runyan says she slips structure into her student-interest-driven lesson plans, and Krashen,

who currently teaches in a suburb of Portland, Oregon, where whole language is officially *verboten*, runs his classes as a kind of Dead Poets Society, ignoring the ban while the administration looks the other way).

Indeed, even the staunchest supporters of the five-component scientific approach to literacy acknowledge that whole language's emphasis on child-friendly classrooms and high-quality children's literature are valuable contributions to pedagogy. Those desks arranged in clusters, not rows, the children sitting on the floor, and the plethora of stimulating books in Laverne Johnson's classroom at Ginter Park represent some of the best of whole language's legacy. Finally, many affluent parents with progressive political leanings actually prefer the unstructured, arts-and-crafts-oriented methodology of constructivism, which is why private progressive elementary schools such as the Dalton School in Manhattan and the Peninsula School near San Francisco continue to flourish (by the time those children enter high school, though, SAT cram courses and the rat race for Ivy League admissions are the order of the day; few of America's top private prep schools operate on progressive pedagogical principles).

The Reading First curriculum is fortified with up-to-date technology.

The children who suffer from the whole-language revolution are that bottom 40 percent of American children, the poor and near-poor who come from households where books are seldom seen and where unschooled parents have starved their offspring of the rich vocabulary and cultural exposure to which better-off children are accustomed as a matter of course. Children whose parents don't speak English at home fare worst of all in whole language. This group of low-income, print-deprived children is the group that needs direct reading instruction most desperately, and as the results in Richmond indicate, benefits from it most dramatically.

Long before Reading First became law in 2002, there had been a backlash against whole language by parents and school superintendents unimpressed by their students' low test scores despite being assured that their children were being taught according to the most up-to-date ideas. In 1987 the state of California mandated a whole-language approach to reading and writing. Within a few years California's reading scores on the NAEP test plummeted to third-lowest in the United States *and* its overseas territories; only Louisiana and Guam ranked lower. The decline stretched across the socioeconomic board, among the offspring of the college-educated as well as the offspring of Hispanic immigrants.

Jill Stewart, a writer for the *Los Angeles Weekly*, visited a second-grade classroom at a highly regarded school on Los Angeles's wealthy Westside. There she met a little girl who wrote "I go t gum calls" for "I go to gym class" in a journal that was entirely free of punctuation (which hadn't been taught yet). In another classroom, a 7-year-old boy had gotten by with memorizing the "shared reading" story that the teacher had read over and over but could not actually read a single word of the story on his own. At one Los Angeles school parents held nacho sales to buy their classrooms forbidden spellers. In Charles Sykes's book *Dumbing Down Our Kids*, a mother complained that her fourth-grade daughter had received a grade of check-plus (above average) and a teacher's notation of "Wow!" for these sentences: "I'm goin to has majik skates. Im goin to go to disenelan. Im goin to bin my mom and dad and brusr and sisd. We r go to se mickey mouse."

In 1996 California officially dumped whole language. (After parents there discovered that their fourth-graders couldn't do long division, a similar, equally successful grassroots rebellion overthrew another constructivist fad promoted by education schools, "fuzzy" mathematics—in which children aren't taught standard computations, the multiplication tables, or common formulas, but spend hours of class time pretending to be Pythagoras and trying to reinvent his theorem with sheets of colored paper.) A short time after the whole-language revolt, the Los Angeles Unified School District mandated the use of Open Court Reading, a phonics-based instruction program marketed by McGraw-Hill that happens to pass muster

with Reading First. Deborah Jewell-Sherman's decision to mandate Voyager Universal Literacy in Richmond also preceded Reading First. Indeed, after the California debacle, the education-school establishment began a strategic retreat in its antagonism toward phonics instruction. Many whole-language people now prefer to use the term "balanced literacy," which means weaving a bit of phonics weft into the whole-language warp.

The scandal that prompted Christopher Doherty's resignation from Reading First last fall was essentially a playing out of the decades-old antagonism between the whole-language proponents, whose numbers are huge, representing most of the faculty members at most education schools, and the reading-science proponents, whose numbers are small but whose philosophy of reading instruction the No Child Left Behind Act was specifically designed to protect. Doherty's behavior was crude and imprudent—it is always a mistake to send, as he did, emails using four- and seven-letter vulgarities to refer to his whole-language antagonists—but he was certainly within his rights under the law he administrated to do exactly as he did, which was to prevent whole-language programs from benefiting from Reading First grants.

The charges of "steering" largely stemmed from Doherty's targeting for exclusion one particular program called Reading Recovery, a widely used but controversial $9,000-a-year-per-student tutorial system that says it is scientifically based but actually uses a methodology similar to that of whole language that has been criticized as ineffective by some researchers. Doherty's abrasive personality got him into trouble, but he also got caught between the language of No Child Left Behind, which forbids the recommendation of specific instructional programs, and the brute reality of reading politics, which has meant that only a handful of experts have developed a handful of products that are genuinely based on scientific research.

Doherty's downfall turned out to be a godsend to the whole-language people, who had hitherto been grasping at such straws as possible miscalculations in the improved test scores reported by the Education Department, doubts about the efficacy of instruction in phonemic awareness, hints that whole language, like Marxism, had never been properly tried, and the perennial complaint that children taught how to read directly don't understand what they read. Attacking the very idea of standardized testing was another perennial tactic, as was politicization. Kenneth Goodman accused reading-science experts of being "part of an orchestrated campaign by the far right" to discredit his theories, implying that phonics advocates were mostly home-schooling fundamentalists who spent their spare time bombing abortion clinics. Actually, many of those experts are far more likely to vote the straight Democratic ticket. Diane Ravitch is a fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, Louisa Moats is a Bush antagonist quick to point out that she believes in global warming and opposes the war in Iraq, and Reid Lyon served at NICHD throughout the Clinton administration. Now, after the Doherty scandal, there is a new bullet in the anti-Reading First clip: the argument that the program mostly benefits the "commercial" companies that publish readers and other textbooks for profit. That might be a damning accusation were it not for the fact that most textbook companies astutely play both sides of the reading science/whole language fence. Houghton Mifflin, for example, publishes the basal readers used at Ginter Park Elementary and also the storybooks used in many a whole-language class.

Certainly Reading First has its defects: Doherty got caught in the trap of the law's insufficiently specific language about which programs are sufficiently proven to qualify for grants. And No Child Left Behind has defects of its own. It is loathed on the left because of its strict accountability requirements and on the right because it doesn't require enough accountability. It leaves states free to jigger their tests so that students will show enough progress to keep the federal money flowing. Both ends of the ideological spectrum are likely to push hard for changes, but with a Democratic Congress it is highly likely that "changes" will mean a watering down of standards. For the dazzlingly successful Reading First program, that would be too bad. Both houses of Congress approved legislation last month cutting appropriations for Reading First, an ominous sign. Last week in Philadelphia, all the leading Democratic presidential candidates stopped in at the annual meeting of the National Education Association, where No Child Left Behind has the same status as pet food from China—and duly promised drastic "overhauls" in the act that could scuttle Reading First altogether.

The future of Ginter Park Elementary is uncertain, too. Richmond's school system is expensive to operate, and Jewell-Sherman is often at loggerheads with the city's mayor, Douglas Wilder, the former governor of Virginia. Right now, the third-graders of Ginter Park go to school in a cocoon of lavish attention and top-notch instruction. Soon enough, though, they will reach inner-city adolescence with all its temptations, and Richmond, despite its tremendous educational strides, is still beset with hellhole middle and high schools and a dropout rate of nearly 47 percent. Yet Ginter Park's principal, Cathy Randolph, has plenty of hope. "I feel these children will be successful," she said. "I know they'll be successful." Certainly her school has done more than most to give them that chance. ♦

Bettmann / Corbis

Prohibition agents Izzy Einstein and Moe Smith (foreground) with captured still, New York, 1925

The 18th Amendment

When the Constitution 'just said no' to alcohol

BY VINCENT J. CANNATO

At the height of Prohibition, Fiorello La Guardia, then a New York congressman, held a demonstration in his Capitol Hill office for some newsmen and photographers to show them how to make beer easily by mixing legal "near beer" with flavored malt tonics.

"If the Prohibition people think it is a violation of the law to mix two beverages permitted under the law and that a person doing so can be arrested," he told the gathered reporters, "I shall give them a chance to test it." Needless to say, La Guardia was never arrested for the prank. (Note to Jonathan Alter, Jacob Weisberg, and Michael Wolff: There is ample historic precedent for abrasive New York City politicians to push the edge of the envelope in ways that sometimes outrage "respectable" opinion.)

By publicly mocking Prohibition in his Washington office, La Guardia hoped to show Americans how useless and self-defeating the law was. It is no surprise that such a challenge came from a New York City congressman, the son of immigrants who represented a polyglot district in Manhattan. For the central role the Big Apple played in the rise and eventual downfall of Prohibition is the subject of Michael Lerner's *Dry Manhattan.* Politicians like La Guardia and Al Smith were leading "wets," those opposed to Prohibition. Much of the city's immigrant and ethnic communities hated the law and could not understand the big fuss made about alcohol. Throughout the Prohibition era, the city proved to be one of the toughest places to enforce the anti-alcohol laws.

Dry Manhattan
Prohibition in New York City
by Michael A. Lerner
Harvard, 560 pp., $28.95

Lerner rightly notes that Prohibition is a "key to understanding the cultural divides that separated Americans in the 1920s." Today is not the first time Americans have been deeply divided over cultural and social issues.

Prohibition was the great "wedge issue" of its time, dividing Americans politically and culturally. By laying bare the era's cultural schisms, Prohibition was much like abortion today. But unlike the abortion debate, Prohibition receives scant scholarly or journalistic interest, a fact that makes this book so welcome. It is an engaging narrative that brings alive the 1920s, with its speakeasies, flappers, and mobsters.

Lerner believes that the "noble experiment" of Prohibition was a failure, and not even a noble one at

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that. The law appealed to the bigotry of Americans concerned about large populations of immigrants and their children living in big cities, and was an attempt to regulate their behavior. The industrialization and urbanization of the late 19th and early 20th centuries created great insecurities among many native-born Americans. Prohibition was just one of the many reforms designed to manage these changes and lessen their negative impact. But there was definitely a dark side to some of these reforms, as seen in the rise of immigration quotas, the Red Scare, and the revival of the Ku Klux Klan.

The 18th Amendment was ratified in January 1919 in the wake of the anti-immigrant feelings stirred by World War I, especially against German-Americans, who owned most of the nation's breweries. And the Volstead Act of that same year defined just exactly what would be prohibited: any drink with an alcohol content more than .5 percent.

By the time Prohibition was repealed in 1933, in the midst of the Great Depression, a majority of Americans were in favor of some kind of reform of the Prohibition laws, and the nation had other worries. It was a former New York governor, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who signed the law legalizing wine and beer, making it the third piece of legislation during FDR's first hundred days in office. The repeal of the 18th Amendment would come at the end of the year.

Was Prohibition as much of a failure as Lerner paints? In New York City, and other large urban areas, the answer is probably yes. But as Lerner notes in an intriguing footnote: "Not all historians regard Prohibition as a failure." Oddly, he never explains exactly why these historians are wrong. Pointing to opposition to the law in New York and the very real obstacles to enforcing the law there does not exactly prove that the law was an overall failure.

A 1971 Department of Health, Education and Welfare study found that per capita drinking in America declined from 2.6 gallons consumed per capita in the first decade of the 20th century to just under one gallon in 1934, then rose to 1.56 gallons in 1940. On top of that, one historian argues that the cost of alcohol increased substantially during the 1920s, putting it out of the reach of most wage-earners on a regular basis. The wealthy could flout the law and drink at speakeasies much more readily than the rest of the population, and those reports often made their way into newspapers, thus coloring the coverage of Prohibition.

Lerner further argues that the Anti-Saloon League and other "drys" succeeded in achieving Prohibition "through pressure politics rather than democratic debate." It is a peculiar thesis that seems to imply that special interest groups act outside the democratic process. Try telling that to NARAL, the Sierra Club, NOW, and the ACLU. By pushing this thesis, Lerner downplays the decades of activism on the part of temperance groups and the wide base of support that anti-alcohol legislation enjoyed. New Yorkers might have strongly opposed Prohibition, but there was still enough political support around the country to amend the Constitution and pass many statewide anti-alcohol laws.

There is little evidence that support for Prohibition was, in Lerner's words, the province of a "vocal minority." However one views Prohibition, to call it "undemocratic" (as Lerner does) is to misuse the word. The "drys" may have been wrong on policy and moral grounds, but they used every legal and democratic method at their disposal, including the most difficult—amending the Constitution—to achieve their ends. That sounds pretty democratic to me.

While the repeal of Prohibition was a popular and sensible move in 1933, Lerner paints repeal with bright colors, praising the fact that Americans would now be liberated from "the intrusion of the state into their private lives." Does Lerner really miss the irony here? Yes, the state was lessening (not ending) its regulation of the private consumption of alcohol, but it was also embarking on the largest intrusion of the state into the economic life of the nation with the New Deal, to the extent that the National Recovery Administration would soon tell New York City's burlesque dancers how many strips they could perform in a day.

Dry Manhattan is a colorful history, but too often descends into a crude morality play of narrow-minded and bigoted "drys" facing off against decent and cosmopolitan "wets." Its allergic reaction to so-called moral reforms or moral crusades is puzzling, considering the success of America's greatest moral reform: the abolition of slavery. In more recent times, Al Gore has proclaimed that the fight against global warming is a "moral" issue. The laws that Gore and his allies would like to pass would likely prove far more intrusive in the private lives of individuals than Prohibition ever did.

The book downplays any connection between saloons, prostitution, and corrupt political machines. The link between alcohol and various social ills was real, and saloons helped damage the lives of many working-class families. Liberal reformers like Jane Addams and Lillian Wald understood this.

Prohibition ended up being a big overreaction to these problems, but not all "drys" were fanatical and bigoted prudes, and not all "wets" were tolerant cosmopolitans. In his zeal to praise those who opposed the moral crusaders, Lerner nearly makes a hero out of the frivolous and corrupt Mayor Jimmy Walker. When the villain of the book, the Anti-Saloon League's William Anderson, is convicted of forgery and sent to prison, Lerner glides over concerns that Tammany Hall may have framed Anderson. I guess he had it coming.

Today's New York is still a cosmopolitan stew of various races and ethnicities and, at first glance, seems immune to moral crusades. Yet recently New York has been the focus of antismoking bans and attacks on the use of transfats in restaurants. While lacking in the scope of Prohibition (yet), these issues do carry more than a whiff of a moral crusade. Reformers have not stopped trying to regulate private behavior. That such regulation finds a congenial home in modern New York compli-

cates Lerner's morality tale: Why are such live-and-let-live antimoralists, in favor of abortion and gay rights, so eager to ban cigarettes and trans fats?

And lest anyone take issue with the connection between antismoking campaigns and Prohibition, Lerner reminds us that in 1916 temperance activists narrowly lost in their effort to have the New York legislature pass a law that would have slapped a label on all bottles of alcohol reading: "This preparation contains alcohol, which is a habit-forming, irritant, narcotic poison." Sounds like the warning labels on cigarette packages.

Today, a growing chorus of critics complains that Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is a "neo-Prohibitionist" organization. But the issue that most resembles Prohibition is drugs. Without getting into the merits or weaknesses of the nation's drug laws, it should be noted that the consumption of alcohol was deeply rooted in America—and not just in German-American and Irish-American communities, but going as far back as the high consumption of rum in colonial New England. There is simply no comparison with drugs on that account.

Grappling with moral issues is not a sign of bigotry or fanaticism, as Lerner would suggest. Whether the issue is drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, abortion, or the environment, the issue of how much the state can regulate individual behavior for the common good is what the democratic process is all about. Americans have a healthy skepticism about grand moral crusades, without losing their concern for larger issues, such as the moral complexities of abortion or the health effects of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs.

Prohibition overstepped that careful balance, but Americans corrected their mistake through the democratic process. The discussion of Prohibition in *Dry Manhattan* presents an entertaining narrative, but oversimplifies this debate. Reading Lerner's harping against moralists makes one wonder if he isn't writing more about his concerns with America today than with the 1920s. ♦

No Amnesty for Lepers

Hansen's Disease is a cancer on America.

BY JOE QUEENAN

Levine Roberts Photography / Frances M. Roberts

Lou Dobbs

Two years ago, CNN heavyweight Lou Dobbs inexplicably began propagating the theory that illegal aliens were unleashing an epidemic of leprosy in this country. In an April 14, 2005, broadcast that was recently exhumed by *60 Minutes*, the man who has become a champion of the middle class in the autumnal phase of an otherwise humdrum career announced that 7,000 cases of leprosy had been reported in the United States in the previous three years, as opposed to 900 cases in the previous 40 years.

When these shocking numbers were challenged by *60 Minutes*' Lesley Stahl, no math whiz herself, and were also questioned by mystified experts in the public health field, Dobbs stuck to his guns, insisting that if he reported something as a fact, then it was a fact. This seemed to tie in with his theory that illegal aliens were systematically wrecking the American economy. Because of his refusal to back down from what seems on the face of it to be a preposterous allegation, Dobbs was recently the subject of a withering *New York Times* column which deftly but decisively portrayed him as a charlatan, a xenophobe, a blowhard, and a liar.

Yet, amazingly enough, anecdotal evidence seeping in from the trenches suggests that Dobbs may be on to something, after all. Industry after industry is now reporting that foreign lepers with or without work papers are putting able-bodied Americans out of work all across the nation.

"It doesn't really matter if you have leprosy when you're operating a leaf-blower," says a Rancho Caliente, Colo., environmentalist outraged by the "army" of alien leper gardeners who have invaded her community. "Lawn-care companies hire lepers because they know angry neighbors won't confront them about noise pollution, fearing that they will be pilloried as enemies of the epidermally challenged, while also catching leprosy. And the police won't go anywhere near leaf-blowing lepers."

Local authorities confirm this assertion.

"On a scale of one to 10, enforcing

Joe Queenan is the author, most recently, of Queenan Country: A Reluctant Anglophile's Pilgrimage to the Mother Country.

village noise ordinances ranks about 23 around here," says Rancho Caliente police chief Dirk Carmody. "You toss in the whole leper thing, and you're sending coals to Newcastle."

Leper aliens are also making an impact in the food services industry. Gaston Fenelon, a Dijon native who recently took over as head chef at New York's trendy *Vendredi de Trop*, says that leper chefs are in great demand in New York because they will work for far less money than nonlepers.

"The real payoff is when the entire staff walks out, and the restaurant can replace them with leper chefs, leper busboys, and even leper waiters, though not yet leper *maître d*'s," says Fenelon, sporting a jet-black "*You Wouldn't Understand; It's a Hansen's Disease Thing*" T-shirt. "We work cheap, we don't mind putting in huge amounts of overtime because we have such constricted social lives, and we have a wonderful *esprit de corps* rarely found in the food preparation business. But mostly, we work cheap."

"Most waiters and waitresses have attitude problems because they're only waiting tables until their acting careers take off," explains Phil Kaplan, who opened *Vendredi de Trop* in 1998 after his bistro *Sans Prétension* closed two years before—because of labor unrest. "Leper waitstaff aren't actresses or ballerinas waiting for their ships to come in; they're lepers."

Experts agree that the number of illegal lepers seeping in across the border is less important than the skills the lepers bring with them.

"Half the people writing for Comedy Central are top-flight stand-ups from Pakistan and Venezuela who came down with leprosy," says Natalie Beaumont, media coordinator for the Fibonacci Institute, a Washington think tank that specializes in dubious statistics. "With the exception of P.J. O'Rourke and David Sedaris, I can think of almost no major satirist in this country today who is not an Eastern European leper. Remember: No one knows what a satirist looks like, so being a leper doesn't hurt their careers."

Adds Beaumont: "Most of the top interest-rate forecasters at hedge funds are foreign-born lepers. Ditto private equity firms. But these are all lepers that have a right to be here. What irks me is when Dobbs starts mixing apples and oranges: lumping lepers and illegal alien lepers together because he knows it plays well in the heartland. It's true that tens of thousands of unskilled, low-paid alien lepers entering this country illegally would traumatize our health care system. But white-collar lepers with their papers in order make a great contribution to America, and earn more than enough to cover all their bills for medicine and skin-care products and disguises."

Several commentators have suggested that Dobbs's obsession with disease-plagued illegal aliens may stem from his own fears that a charismatic leper newscaster might one day take his place at CNN.

"Dobbs is engaging in a kind of hale-fellow-well-met way, but he's still basically your chubby, middle-aged, blow-dried newsman," says Chick Gallagher, a media trainer specializing in finding work for news anchors with bad skin. "But CNN has an ancient audience, and as Americans get older and their vision gets weaker, I'm not sure that most viewers would even notice if a leper was manning *The Situation Room*. Anderson Cooper would probably put a few perky leper correspondents on his show just to remind the public that he's a champion of the sick, as well the poor, the black, the Hispanic, and the entire population of sub-Saharan Africa. So this could all come down to one thing: Lou Dobbs isn't so much afraid of illegal aliens with leprosy; he's afraid of illegal aliens with pizazz!

"And, if you've seen his show lately, you can understand why." ♦

BCA

Death and the Maiden

A 'Wuthering Heights' set in Cool Britannia.

BY DIANE SCHARPER

Janet Ward learns that her mother, who died three weeks ago, left her a beach house on a remote British coast. Sounds good until you find out that Janet's mother died 30-some years ago when Janet was three. Is there some mistake?

The answer is just one part of the mystery informing Erica Wagner's first novel. This postmodern love story with a dark twist looks at the effects of maternal abandonment on Janet and on Tom, who coincidentally lives in the very beach house that Janet inherits—although, as she will later learn, Tom's presence is no coincidence.

Seizure
by Erica Wagner
W.W. Norton, 224 pp., $23.95

Diane Scharper's latest book, Reading Lips, *will be published later this year by Apprentice House.*

The literary editor of the *London Times*, Wagner, an American who resides in England, has used the theme of abandonment in her earlier writings. *Gravity* (1997), a collection of short stories, examined the effects of loving and losing on ultrasensitive and introspective protagonists. *Ariel's Gift* (2000) studied the destructive relationship between the poetry power couple Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath, who was so devastated by Hughes's abandonment that she committed suicide—leaving behind young children.

Seizure suggests the influence of both works, as its two protagonists are lonely, looking for love, ultrasensitive, and introspective to a fault. They've both also suffered the loss of their mother. Janet, especially fragile,

is given to seizures which are unexplained but which also seem to be connected to the loss of her mother in infancy. Tom, who was also abandoned by his mother, seems better able to cope than Janet, probably because he was about 14 when his mother disappeared.

Janet can remember nothing of her mother and knows only what her father has told her: that her mother left the house and was run over by a drunk driver. After she died, her bereft husband raised Janet, their only child who, like her mother, was a dark-haired beauty. A doting father, he reminisced about his wife, telling Janet supposedly true stories about how they met, how they spent the early days of their marriage, and how much they loved their daughter.

W.W. Norton

Erica Wagner

Although Janet never saw official papers concerning the circumstances of her mother's death, and didn't ask her father for specific information, she always assumed her father's version of the past was true. When Janet learns of her inheritance and of her mother's recent demise, her father has been dead for several years. So she must find out the truth for herself, which is why she decides to take time off from her job as a city planner and drive to the property that she inherited. If nothing else, she thinks this journey to the shore might relax her and help with the seizures, but it has just the opposite effect.

Called the Shieling, a Scottish noun meaning shepherd's hut, the property is replete with sea, sand, and seals, but no shepherds or sheep. The plumbing is primitive, and the amenities are few. Yet the place has a significant draw in the person of Tom, the handsome, fair-haired man who lives there and considers the house to be his own.

Having lived at the beach house—first with his mother and then by himself for about 15 years—Tom has a meager existence. He supports himself by doing odd jobs and working as a mechanic. Having little contact with the outside world, he fishes, hunts, and reminisces about the good times he had with his mother, with whom he had a semi-erotic relationship. Most of those times were spent listening to stories his mother told him. Some of the narratives were true; others were fairy tales.

A few stories, though, seem to be a mix of truth and invention. Tom remembers his mother telling him about his father, who in demon-lover fashion grew hooves after he beguiled her into following him aboard his ship—an action that required leaving behind a husband and infant. Later, mother and son are also abandoned, although the father returns to visit, with Tom remembering his fears during one such visit. Ultimately, Tom's mother also disappears, and it's assumed that she's gone off with her lover. Now, all that he has left of his mother is this house and a photograph showing her to be a dark-haired beauty. (Tom resembles his father.)

Suffused with poetic language, *Seizure* seems like an overwritten prose poem. Nearly every word does double duty; even its title is a pun playing off Janet's seizures, of her taking hold of the house already held by Tom, of the house and the characters possessed by spirits, and of Tom and Janet held in thrall by each other. But the poetry and the characters' tendency towards self-examination add to the sense of mystery pervading the narrative. So does the Russian stack-doll structure, which is composed of several stories within stories. Wagner juxtaposes one story with the other, making the characters and their reminiscences fuse.

The labyrinthine plot advances through interior monologues in which reality and illusion meet, meld, and create a multilayered novel with numerous allusions to fairy tales and ballads. There's the demon lover, the false knight, the hunter and his seal wife, Tom, the piper's son, as well as Briar Rose. These allusions come together to form the larger story of the novel, giving it an archetypal quality but making it slow to read and sometimes hard to understand.

The echoes of Emily Brontë, Jorge Luis Borges, and John Fowles add yet another layer to the narrative. Wagner's protagonists (*à la* Brontë) are *Wuthering Heights* spin-offs—with Tom as Heathcliff and Janet as Catherine Earnshaw. The ill-fated pair go around in concentric circles not on the moors but on the sand (and in bed) as they try to sort out the past, for themselves and for the reader, but wind up reliving it (*à la* Borges).

Wagner distorts that past (*à la* Fowles) by presenting it piecemeal and by switching the narrative point of view, back and forth from present to past and from Janet to Tom. With their fragile mental states further distorting their view of the past, Tom and Janet don't seem to realize what's happening to them.

When they finally do, it's too late. ♦

BCA

The Good Soldiers

Two senior officers who guarded the American Century. **BY ALONZO L. HAMBY**

Bettmann / Corbis / Al Muto

Generals of the Army Marshall and Eisenhower, 1950

One week after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Colonel Dwight D. Eisenhower, just off a train he had boarded in Texas two days earlier, reported for duty at the War Plans Division to Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall. Ordered to develop a strategy for dealing with the disintegrating situation in the Pacific, Eisenhower found a desk and paper. He returned to his new chief a few hours later. First, Australia had to be secured. Then there had to be a good-faith, albeit likely unsuccessful, attempt to relieve General Douglas MacArthur and his troops in the Philippines.

Marshall listened, approved, and said: "Eisenhower, the Department is filled with able men who analyze their problems well but feel compelled always to bring them to me for final solution. I must have assistants who will solve their own problems and tell me later what they have done."

Partners in Command
George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower in War and Peace
by Mark Perry
Penguin, 496 pp., $29.95

Thus began one of the most important collaborations in American military history.

Mark Perry's readable account of the subsequent relationship between these two giants gives us little in the way of new facts but nevertheless is worth reading because of its focus on military staff and command decisions. Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill occupy their rightful places as ultimate decision-makers, reacting to disputes among their senior commanders.

Perry, a much-published foreign relations analyst, demonstrates that the Eisenhower-Marshall relationship was strictly professional. A hard task-master convinced that familiarity with superiors and subordinates was unprofessional, Marshall always maintained a frosty distance. He addressed Eisenhower by his last name, never socialized with him, and never hesitated to take him to task. Wasting no time with pleasantries, he could be painfully blunt. Years later Eisenhower recalled an early exchange between the two:

> *Marshall*: Eisenhower, . . . you're not going to get any promotion. You are going to stay right here on this job and you'll probably never move. *Eisenhower*: General, I don't give a damn about your promotion. I was brought in here to do my duty. I am doing that duty to the best of my ability and I am just trying to do my part in winning the war.

Marshall's admonition notwithstanding, Eisenhower's moves and promotions were rapid. By mid-1942 he was in London as commander of U.S. forces in the European Theater of Operations. That fall he was Allied commander of the U.S.-British invasion of North Africa; next he oversaw the 1943 Sicilian campaign. By the end of 1943 he had been designated Supreme Commander of Allied Forces for the invasion of Western Europe.

Ike, as almost everyone other than Marshall called him, was smart, hard-working, astute at public relations, an instinctive diplomat, and an attractive personality. He drove himself through 18-hour days, smoking three packs of cigarettes, dealing tactfully with British counterparts who all but openly considered him a simpleton. He won both the American and British publics with his infectious smile. Usually, he enjoyed Marshall's unwavering support, but from time to time felt the sting of his superior's rebuke. (It did not help that Marshall had expected to command the decisive northern European campaign, but wound up, by Roosevelt's orders, in Washington.) Still, Perry avers, Marshall developed a "parental" attitude toward his younger subordinate, and he was in fact the least of Eisenhower's problems.

Both men spent the war handling difficult colleagues. At times, Marshall must have thought the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Ernest King, a more serious enemy than King's German counterpart, Admiral Karl Dönitz. Eisenhower had to deal with, among

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many others, General George Patton. Command must often have seemed a matter of juggling difficult personalities and raging egos.

The most durable challenges came from the British. Generals Alan Brooke, Bernard Law Montgomery, and Harold Alexander all possessed inbred feelings of superiority and scarcely concealed their sense that the Americans were provincial amateurs. Their attitudes were rooted in the experience of World War I, for the British a four-year trench warfare horror. So were those of the Americans, for whom the Great War had been a brief and triumphal experience. American planners advocated a direct attack into the heart of Europe as the logical means of defeating Nazi Germany; they believed mobile armored tactics would overwhelm the Germans and avoid a prolonged slaughter. The British favored attacks around the periphery of German power.

Marshall and other officers who had witnessed squabbling and lack of coordination between British and French forces in World War I were convinced that an effective alliance required a unified command—which inevitably would be led by the United States. The British agreed, in principle, but throughout the war resisted in practice. Even after the D-Day landings of June 1944, with V-1 and V-2 rockets launched from German bases in northwestern Europe devastating London, British leaders from Churchill down pressed for the diversion of resources to Alexander's Italian campaign. Loss of leadership, one senses, was only slightly less painful for British elites than loss of the war would have been.

Only Roosevelt could resolve the differences. He emerges from this book as a leader of greater strategic vision than either the U.S. or British generals. Seemingly understanding better than Marshall or Eisenhower the serious consequences of British loss of control over the Mediterranean, he dictated the North African campaign of 1942-43. By 1944, realizing that the allies had mustered the power to knock out Germany, he backed a single-minded concentration on the invasion of northern Europe. Perry makes less of this pivotal role than he should.

Churchill gave in to the inevitable. "There's only one thing worse than undertaking a war with allies," he told Eisenhower. "Waging a war without allies."

Perry, writing with an eye to our own times, concludes that Churchill was right. Democracies inherently recoil from warfare, reject protracted conflict, and need alliances. There is much to be said for these judgments; but how do we realize them in an era of faint-hearted friends, shadowy foes, and our own moral irresolution? ♦

Another Country

'Young American novelists' can't find America.

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

In 1983 the chic British literary magazine *Granta* published its Best of Young British Novelists issue. It was a prescient list. Six of the 20 selected writers—Martin Amis, Julian Barnes, Kazuo Ishiguro, Ian McEwan, Salman Rushdie, and A.N. Wilson—went on to receive commercial and critical acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1993, *Granta*'s editors produced a follow-up, *Best of Young British Novelists 2*. This time, however, the editors weren't so prescient. Only two of their choices, Alan Hollinghurst and Will Self (or three if you count Ishiguro, who made a second appearance on the list) received a wide audience and critical recognition. So it would seem as though the number of talented writers in a given 20-year generation is small.

Granta 97
Best of Young American Novelists 2
Edited by Ian Jack
Grove Press, 320 pp., $14.95

That also seems to be the case with *Best of Young American Novelists 2*, a collection of short stories and excerpts from larger works in progress. In 1996, when *Granta* published its first Best of Young American Novelists issue, the pool of gifted and substantive writers from which the judges could choose was large. Sure enough, 8 of the 21 writers selected—Sherman Alexie, Madison Smartt Bell, Ethan Canin, Edwidge Danticat, Jeffrey Eugenides, Jonathan Franzen, Lorrie Moore, and Stewart O'Nan—went on to make noteworthy contributions to the national literature. (Whether these contributions will remain noteworthy is another question.) The prediction game is always risky, but it's a reasonable guess that this second list of Best Young American Novelists will turn out much like the second list of Best Young British Novelists. Which is to say: *Best of Young American Novelists 2* is filled with a lot of duds.

In some sense, of course, the whole project is little more than a gimmick. *Granta* editor Ian Jack writes that the judges lowered the age limit for consideration to 35 in order to maximize the number of new writers on the list and avoid the inclusion of "establishment" writers like *McSweeney's* impresario Dave Eggers and *The Namesake*'s Jhumpa Lahiri. That was a mistake. Eggers and Lahiri may be "establishment," but they are still two of the most interesting young writers working today, and their exclusion mars this collection.

The restriction is limiting in other ways. Because longevity is increas-

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ing, the definition of a "young" writer is open to negotiation. As the postmodernists like to say, it's all relative. Franzen is 47, which means, barring accident or illness, he has at least three decades left in his career. Such is also the case with David Foster Wallace, who is 45. Thomas Mallon, who at a sprightly 55 years is probably at the upper limit of young, still has plenty of writing ahead of him. All three are important writers who produce fine work.

Even skilled writers who are under the age limit didn't make the cut. Ian Jack laments the exclusion of Joshua Ferris, whose novel *Then We Came to the End* tackled office mores in a humorous and insightful manner. And the young writer who makes me laugh the most, David Schickler of the excellent story collection *Kissing in Manhattan*, and the uneven but entertaining novel *Sweet and Vicious*, is 38 and missing from *Granta* altogether.

Laughter is in short supply in *Granta 97*. The writers in the collection are so concerned with being *serious* that they devalue life's ironies and inanities. The stories are long on sex, drug abuse, violence, and profanity, but short on fellowship, commerce, goodwill, and laughter. Religion is absent, except when it's a force of ill will or the status quo. It's as though the writers here divided life into the "good" and the "bad," sliced off what they considered the "good," and decided to showcase the "bad." But life isn't that simple. And the absence of life's pleasures is noticeable.

It also speaks to a larger absence. The most striking thing about *Young American Novelists 2* is that the writers here are unconcerned with America. The huge, rich, powerful, complex, dizzying country in which they live is missing. The writers are more concerned with identity—namely, their own—and American encounters with the Other in a globalized world. They want to focus on "over there," not here. They might as well be living in Vienna or Djibouti. The result is a reduction of the sphere of "American fiction." It used to be that the subject of American fiction was . . . America. Today the subject of American fiction is the American who is writing it.

Granta's judges "agreed on one thing," Ian Jack writes in his introduction. "Ethnicity, migration and 'abroad' had replaced social class as a source of tension despite the fact, as [*Slate* culture editor Meghan] O'Rourke pointed out, that the gap between the wealthy and poor in the United States is wider than ever." Jack says this may be because one-third of the 21 writers here are foreign-born, and that is probably true. But the overall myopia of American fiction writers today

is staggering. Two-thirds of the writers in *Best of Young American Novelists 2* went to elite colleges such as Harvard, Columbia, or Swarthmore. Almost all of them went to a writers' workshop or graduate school in creative writing. One-third of them teach writing at secondary schools or colleges. Two-thirds of them set the stories included here in cities. Most of the characters in these stories are college graduates who live in apartments in crowded cities—just like the people who wrote them.

The typical young American *Granta* novelist is Daniel Alarcón, who was born in Lima, Peru, in 1977, went to boarding school in Alabama and to Columbia University, and now teaches at Mills College in Oakland. His story "The King is Always Above the People" is set in an unidentified country experiencing the transition from dictatorship to democracy. The narrator is a nameless young man from the provinces who travels to the metropolis to work on the docks, but is forced to return home when his girlfriend shows up pregnant. It's a well-turned narrative about the tensions between the past and the present, the village and the city. And it has absolutely nothing to do with contemporary American life.

You turn from page to page in the volume looking for a mention of a suburb or an exurb, a visit to a shopping mall or big-box store or chain restaurant, all to no avail. There are no homeowners, office-park workers, traders, or farmers. Few of the characters have families. Current events, popular culture, and social trends are thrown to the wayside in favor of allegory, symbolism, and highly detailed portraits of relationships. Two stories deal with "war" as a concept, but only one deals with a specific war, the one in Iraq. Gabe Hudson's "Hard Core" is a graphic mess, however. It's set in the Iraq of 2003, not today, and so feels slightly behind the times. Also, it's derivative, slavishly copying antiwar clichés from movies such as *Full Metal Jacket* and *Three Kings*.

A few writers are worth watching. I liked Christopher Coake's "That First Time," about a soon-to-be divorced guy who goes into a fit of nostalgia when a former high-school fling dies of cancer. Coake's characters are realistic. That his story is set in Indianapolis and not New York or San Francisco is worth cheering. For some reason, though, Coake decided against using quotation marks to indicate dialogue, so I spent half the time trying to figure out who was talking to whom. The selection from Gary Shteyngart, "From the Diaries of Lenny Abramov," confirms that he's one of America's most perceptive, talented, and—this is always underrated—funny writers. Dara Horn's "Passover in New Orleans" is an engaging narrative dealing with race, faith, urbanity, and identity in American life. Too bad it's set in 1870.

If this is the best the young *Granta* can do, then American fiction is in greater trouble than we previously thought. ♦

Metaphor Madness

In which a line is drawn in the sand for political journalists. **BY BARTON SWAIM**

Browsing the children's books at Barnes & Noble the other day, I was exasperated to find so many books based on, or otherwise employing, metaphors.

We know from experience that children, especially young children, take everything literally. But many children's authors have adopted the mistaken supposition that because adults find metaphors useful in learning the lessons of life, children do as well. This is not so. My four-year-old daughter was recently given a book based entirely on an extended metaphor; it's called *The Room In My Heart* and has to do with a mother's affection for her first daughter even after a second baby is born.

My daughter doesn't like it. She seems to think it involves some cardiological cavity in which a variety of furniture is inserted for reasons having to do with her mom's love. It's frightening, really, from her point of view.

Now I'm as far as one can be from a Rousseauean, but sometimes I think children are, in this respect at least, more intelligent than adults. Why must adults use metaphorical and otherwise figurative language so incessantly, and with so little regard to the demands of clarity? Why must we get things "straight from the horse's mouth" instead of from the original source, "jump ship" instead of abandoning a friend or institution, and "draw a line in the sand" or "lay down the gauntlet" instead of declaring a position on which we're not prepared to compromise?

My wife possesses a strange genius for combining these figurative expressions. "Don't throw the cat out with the bathwater," she once said, and occasionally I still think of that poor screeching cat sailing out the back door with a tubful of dirty bathwater.

But it's not my wife's job to render her observations with clarity and precision. That's the job, or I thought it was, of the nation's political journalists, most of whom can hardly get through a single explanation without recourse to some tired, clumsy metaphor. *They're digging up more dirt on the president because they say he hasn't tried to reach across the aisle. They say he's thumbed his nose at the opposition, and turned his back on them. The president's response is that they haven't put anything on the table. He says they're just on a fishing expedition. But he's not out of the woods yet.*

Agence France Presse / Mandel Ngan

'A state of war is not a blank check'

About once a month some idiotic metaphor gets nationwide attention. Suddenly the world of punditry descends into another appalling brawl about the thing supposedly signified by the metaphor, and nobody is exactly sure what that thing is. Readers of this magazine will remember the Supreme Court's decision in *Hamdi* v. *Rumsfeld* (2004) in which Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, writing for the majority, asserted that "a state of war is not a blank check for the President when it comes to the rights of the Nation's citizens." For months, it seemed, the talking heads and editorial pages couldn't stop talking about blank checks and whether the president had or wanted one.

Everybody knows what a blank check is. Its holder can cash it for as much money as he wishes, provided sufficient funds. I should point out that, as a mere *littérateur*, I haven't the slightest clue what all the legal hubbub was all about; but I'm pretty sure that O'Connor's statement was factually identical to the statement that an American president can't legitimately assume the powers of an absolute monarch. Somehow, though, the phrase "blank check" made everybody start talking as though the president had tried to dissolve Congress or suspend *habeas corpus* or have suspected terrorists shot in their homes in New Jersey. Maybe we needed a good knock-down debate about wartime presidential power. What we got was an argument about a metaphor about a series of claims that hadn't been made. Sometimes these metaphors start to overlap, and confusion becomes comedy. Think of James Baker insisting that the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group be taken as a whole rather than piecemeal. He hoped "we don't treat this like a fruit salad, and say I like this but I don't like that, I like this but I don't like that."

That sound clip became headline news for about 36 hours, and suddenly everybody was arguing about whether the ISG Report was a fruit salad or something else. Maybe it was a pizza, or a steak, or maybe black bean soup; who knew? David Shuster of MSNBC even speculated that Baker's fruit salad simile had been intended as a furtive reference to the accusation that the president had "cherry-picked" prewar intelligence.

"The words 'fruit salad,'" said a grave Shuster, "could be construed

Barton Swaim is writing a book on 19th-century Scottish literary critics.

as a reference to cherry-picking and to questions about the Bush administration's cherry-picking of prewar intelligence."

Picking cherries out of a fruit salad? I wouldn't have thought cherries were so widely objectionable as that, but my wife tells me that many people don't like them in their fruit salads. In any case, "cherry picking"—and on this I am confident—has to do with picking the best fruit from trees, not the least likeable bits from a fruit salad. A cherry picker is a hydraulic lifting device used to pick fruit from the otherwise inaccessible parts of large trees. Imagine using one of *those* to get at a fruit salad.

But suppose for a moment that Baker really *did* want to remind his listeners (as if they needed reminding) that George W. Bush had been repeatedly and energetically accused by his Democratic adversaries of misusing intelligence: a highly doubtful supposition in my mind, but just suppose that's what he would have liked to do. The thought of James Baker, the drawling no-nonsense Texan and former secretary of state, intentionally devising just the right pomological simile to achieve this effect in his listeners' minds is so fantastic as to make one wonder whether David Shuster hasn't missed his calling as a postmodern literary critic.

And what was "cherry-picking" supposed to signify, anyway? I never heard anybody explain how a president, amidst his war cabinet and a sprawling array of undersecretaries and advisers, could plausibly pick only those bits of intelligence he likes and pass over those he doesn't. It seems to me that if you're going to use a metaphor, you ought at some point to be prepared to say exactly what the literal activity looks like. All I ever heard was that blasted metaphor, "cherry-picking."

I had been hoping Nancy Pelosi et al. would put a metaphor reform initiative on the congressional agenda. Ill-conceived metaphors do far more damage than junkets and earmarks, whatever those are.

My daughter would agree. ♦

Rodent's Delight

'A portrait of the artist as a young rat.'

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Disney • PIXAR

Funny, inspired, and visually staggering, *Ratatouille* is one of the most beautiful films ever made. Everything about it is wonderful—everything, that is, except its mostly tiresome plot.

Remy is a French rat who wants to be a French chef. He can read books and understand human speech, and is even able to communicate with people by nods and shrugs and smiles. Writer-director Brad Bird offers no magic spell or other supernatural explanation for Remy's abilities, which are not matched by any other animal in the movie. Fine. Since this is an animated feature, we'll go along with it.

Ratatouille
Directed by Brad Bird

Remy gets his chance to cook when he finds himself in the kitchen of a once-great, now inert, Paris restaurant. The rat runs around throwing ingredients into a huge pot of soup, and the soup proves to be a brilliant success.

This sequence, which can be viewed online for free, lasts nine minutes, and it's absolutely amazing. Brad Bird has succeeded in designing and executing a scene from a perspective no one before him has ever even attempted, and it's not an exaggeration to say that you sit through the nine minutes with your mouth hanging open in wonder.

After this triumphant debut, *Ratatouille* has to contrive a way to keep Remy cooking. And here's where its story begins both to kick in and to fray at the seams. Remy makes a new human friend in Linguini the janitor, the lowest of the low in the kitchen.

John Podhoretz, a columnist for the New York Post, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

Linguini needs Remy to cook for him, otherwise he'll lose his job. Suddenly and conveniently, Remy discovers he can control Linguini's physical movements by pulling this way and that on Linguini's hair.

"This is strangely involuntary," Linguini says. Remy can hide under Linguini's toque and move the man's arms and legs as though Linguini were a puppet.

This crucial plot point is just . . . weird. Remember—no magic is involved and no explanation for this mystical talent is proffered. Meanwhile, every other element in *Ratatouille* strives for hyperrealism. The depiction of the restaurant kitchen is meticulously accurate, and the visual rendition of the City of Light is so precise you are lulled into thinking a rat and a man are having a private moment at night along the banks of the Seine right where Gene Kelly and Leslie Caron danced in *An American in Paris*.

Endowing a rat not only with the talent to cook but also with the ability to turn a human being into a marionette is one inexplicable endowment too far for this movie.

It doesn't help that Linguini is such an unattractive character: ugly, whiny, stupid, and dull. Watching him being yanked about by the rat in his hat while he howls and complains about it isn't in the least funny. It's off-putting. Linguini is so useless that Remy even has to maneuver him into the right position to plant a kiss on the kitchen's hard-as-nails sous chef.

The complications continue, and get mind-numbing. Linguini turns out to be the love child of the restaurant's now-dead chef. Its current chef is more interested in putting the restaurant's name on frozen fast food than he is in cooking. Remy's rat family shows up and wants him to get them food from the kitchen. Even though Remy arranges it so that Linguini ends up inheriting the restaurant, Linguini pitches an unbelievable fit because Remy is stealing food from him.

None of this is interesting. What's interesting is Remy and only Remy. At its best, *Ratatouille* is a portrait of the artist as a young rat—a bracing introduction for its younger viewers to the idea of pursuing and creating excellence. This was a primary theme of Bird's previous Pixar movie, *The Incredibles*—with superheroes struggling to hide their exceptional talents in a world where they get sued more often than they get celebrated. (There's more than a whiff of Ayn Rand in Brad Bird's worldview.) But with Remy stuck in Linguini's toque, the movie loses the indelible charm of the rat's (and Bird's) delightful inventiveness in the soup scene, when Remy has not only to think up good ingredients but also figure out how to dump a carton of crème fraiche into a stewpot when he doesn't have the body mass to lift it by himself. Instead, it's about Remy pulling Linguini's hair.

There wasn't a false moment in *The Incredibles*, a sensational piece of work. *Ratatouille* doesn't get back to its proper subject until the last 15 minutes, when it frees Remy from Linguini's toque and allows him to lead his fellow rats into culinary battle all the way to a rousing and moving finale. Pixar's last film, *Cars*, also found itself in its concluding scenes. One thing you can say about Pixar: This is one company that knows how to end a picture. ♦

"Iran on Monday put into operation a 24-hour English-language satellite television channel to extend its global reach during a period of growing pressure from the United States. The satellite channel, called Press TV, is sponsored by Iran's state-run television operation, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting. 'Press TV was born out of the need to break the global media stranglehold of Western outlets,' the channel's Web site says." **—New York Times, *July 3***

WED., JULY 18	THIS WEEK ON Press TV®
4:00 a.m.	***Ayatollah You So!***—A lively morning of news, documentaries, compulsory advice, featured executions, and study from the pages of the Holy Koran with Iran's most colorful cleric and puppet master, the Grand Ayatollah Mustafa Hibijibi!
4:30 a.m.	
5:00 a.m.	
5:30 a.m.	
6:00 a.m.	***Islamacize***—Join Fariba Watabadi and friends as they stretch and bend their way to good health and personal purity, broadcast live at daybreak from the exercise pavilion at Tehran's historic Evin Prison.
6:30 a.m.	
7:00 a.m.	***Profit or Prophet?***—Today's business news from an Islamic perspective. Morteza Makkebuk, host.
7:30 a.m.	
8:00 a.m.	***SuperFriends***—Enjoy the cartoon adventures of Little Reza, Bloody Ahmad, and Mighty Mo (Muhammad) as they battle the loathsome Yehuda and despicable Dubya, foot soldiers of the Great Satan!
8:30 a.m.	
9:00 a.m.	***For Women Only***—Today's program: How to drive your man crazy with piety as host Shirin Huchimahmah adds tantalizing layers of coarse material to her hot summer burqa.
9:30 a.m.	
10:00 a.m.	***Ali Maqbiel***—Tehran's most lovable unmarried female lawyer, defending a Revolutionary Guard accused of defending a holy site with excessive force, falls in love with her client's zeal for the teachings of the Ayatollah Khomeini.
10:30 a.m.	
11:00 a.m.	***The Babawa al-Wahaltars Special***—Exclusive interview from the home of the deputy director of the Islamic Republic's program on uranium enrichment and alternative energy research.
11:30 a.m.	
12:00 p.m.	***News-CNN.***
12:30 p.m.	
1:00 p.m.	***Iranian Bandstand***—Dick Cleric, the Islamic world's oldest teenager, invites boys and girls to dance separately to the latest hits from The Martyrs, The Isfahan Club, The Flying Maghazedeh Brothers, and a nostalgic look back at some favorite Bubble Qum bands of the Eighties!
1:30 p.m.	
2:00 p.m.	
2:30 p.m.	***The Wide World of Islam***—The holy cities of Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, Grosse Pointe, and Ann Arbor: Where to stay on pilgrimage,