the weekly
Standard

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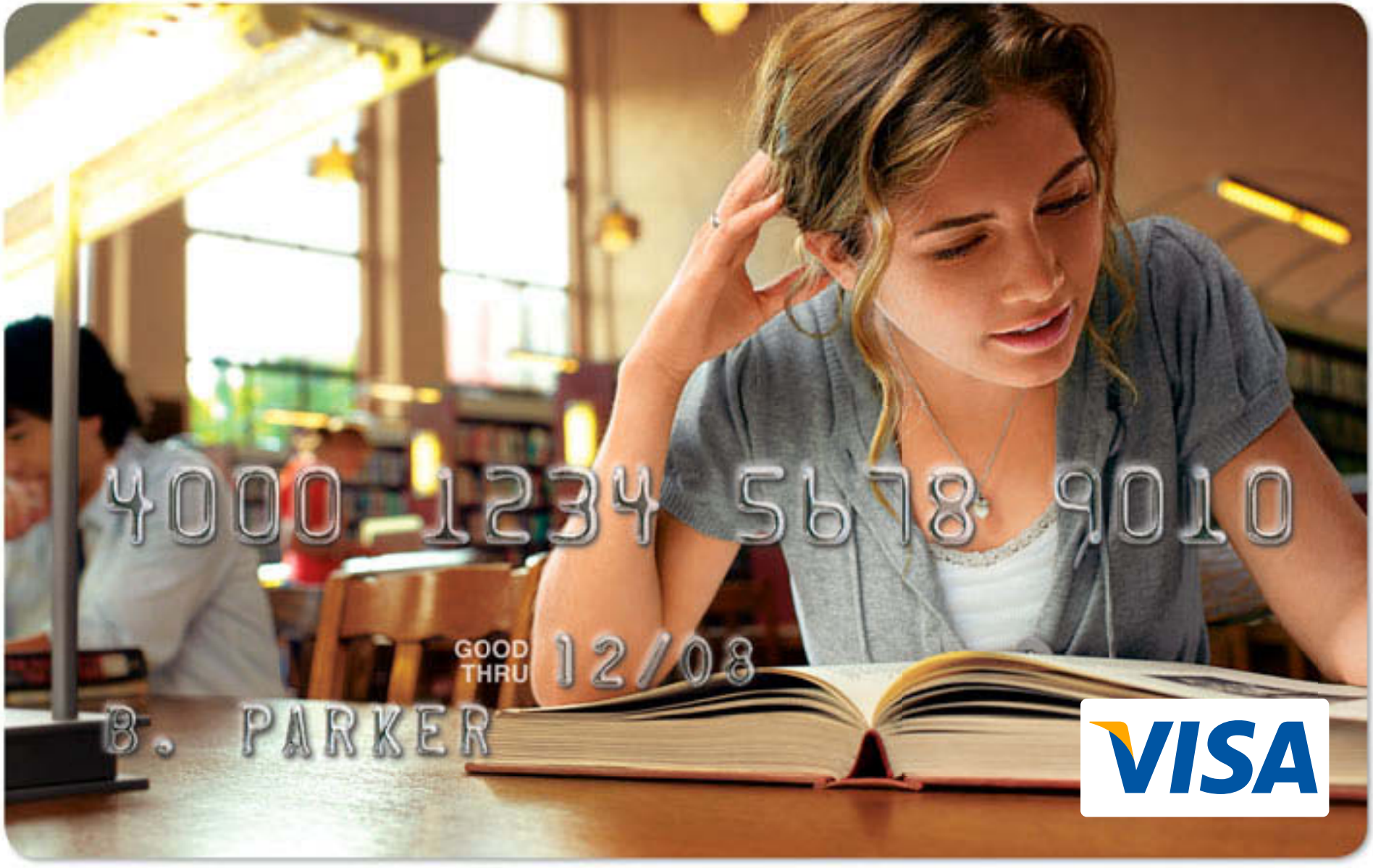
ON THE DUKE RAPE CASE

SEPTEMBER 24, 2007 $3.95

No Child Left Alone

ANDREW FERGUSON
on an education
reform run amok



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In the new issue of *Policy Review*

Held Back

No Child Left Behind needs some work

In critical ways, today's NCLB amounts to a civil rights manifesto dressed up as an accountability system. That's an untenable basis for serious reform, rather as if Congress declared that every last molecule of water or air pollution would vanish by 2014 or that all American cities would be crime free. The law is also pushing states to move aggressively in too many schools at once, ensuring that capacity won't match the challenges at hand. In this light, revamping the remedies means refashioning NCLB as a functional accountability system rather than as an aspirational one. The failure to do so portends an eventual public backlash that will not only threaten NCLB but may also discredit the years of clear thinking and coalition building that have characterized educational accountability since the release of *A Nation at Risk* nearly a quarter century ago.

—Frederick M. Hess and Chester E. Finn Jr.

Supply, Demand and Kidney Transplants

A bad incentive structure creates a dire shortage

A cohort of physicians and economists has sought for at least two decades to persuade the transplant establishment to apply incentives to increase the organ supply. Many creative arrangements—from tax credits to tuition vouchers for children to charitable contributions in the donor 's name—should be given a trial, members of the cohort urge, to see whether new practices could compensate for the limits of altruism. During the past few years, their voices have grown more insistent. In 2003, the American Medical Association testified in favor of a House bill that proposed pilot studies of incentives for harvesting the organs of deceased donors. At the 2006 World Transplant Congress in Boston, Dr. Richard Fine, president of the American Society of Transplantation, asked his colleagues, "Is it wrong for an individual who wishes to utilize part of his body for the benefit of another [to] be provided with financial compensation that could obliterate a life of destitution for the individual and his family?"

—Sally Satel

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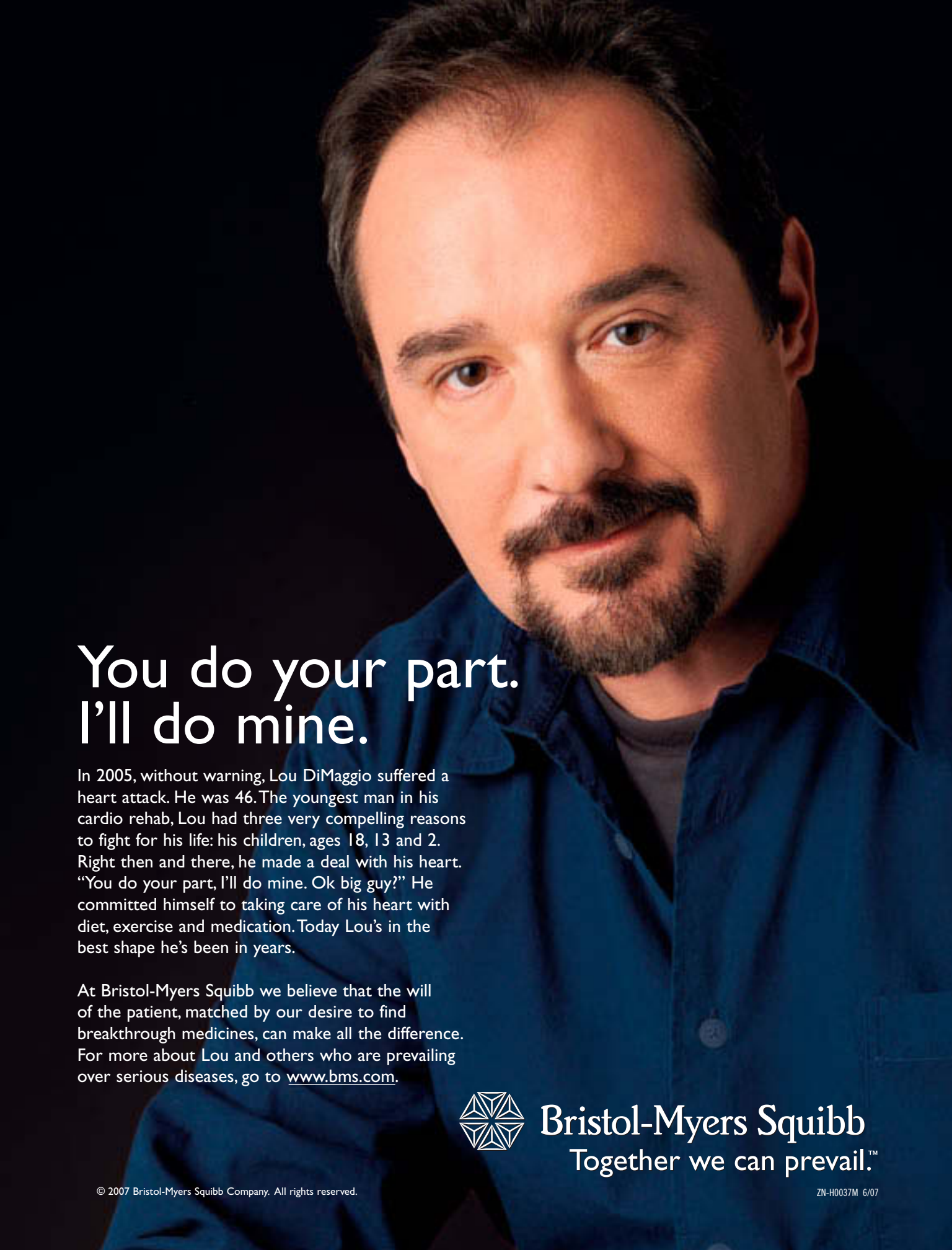

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the weekly Standard

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

Why We're Not in Government

LEV NISNEVITCH / WEEKLY STANDARD

If you watched any of General David Petraeus's testimony before a variety of congressional committees last week, The Scrapbook thought you might enjoy seeing "the rest of the picture" (as Paul Harvey might put it). Spend enough time in Washington, and someone back home will inevitably ask if you ever thought of going into public service. We've always said no and joked that there's a two-word reason for that: breakfast meetings. But there's another two-word reason: congressional hearings.

Our friend Mackubin T. Owens had the best reaction to the spectacle. Watching Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker field questions from the blowdried blowhards, Owens wrote at *National Review Online* that he was reminded of an Army captain who taught at U.S. Field Artillery School. During one session with "a class of brand new lieutenants . . . , one of the students asked him a question. I'll never forget [the captain's] reply. 'Lieutenant, we all know that there's no such thing as a stupid question, but I want you to know that yours is the closest to one I have ever heard.'" ♦

Carter. James Carter.

The Scrapbook felt a twinge—just a twinge, but a twinge nonetheless—of nostalgia when we read Fidel Castro's recent editorial comments in *Granma*, the newspaper of the Cuban Communist party. Whether the essay was actually written by Dr. Castro, who is 81 years old, evidently dying, and has not been seen in public for the past year, we may never know. But as connoisseurs of the old tyrant's rhetorical style, we think it has the ring of authenticity.

First is the revelation, if that's the word for it, that of all American presidents since 1959, his favorite is Jimmy Carter. (Or, as he calls him, "James Carter.") And not because of Carter's snarky comments about George W. Bush, or his indefatigable hammering on behalf of Habitat for Humanity. No, because the Man from Plains "was not an accomplice to the brutal terrorism against Cuba," and concluded a maritime agreement with Castro's regime nearly 30 years ago.

Well, of course: Of all 10 presidents in the White House since Castro's seizure of power, Jimmy ("Inordinate Fear of Communism") Carter was the most easily manipulated by Cuba—and, as anyone who remembers the Mariel Boat Lift will attest, humiliated as well. Like Leonid Brezhnev, Omar Torrijos of Panama, and the Ayatollah Khomeini, Fidel Castro has good reason to think nice thoughts about Jimmy Carter.

But we mentioned nostalgia, and here's why. It's been awhile since anyone referred to Carter publicly by his given

(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of March 2, 1998)

name, and Castro's usage reminded us of the old Soviet style in the pages of *Pravda*, circa 1977, where he was always "U.S. President James Carter."

Then there was Castro's insightful observation that a Democratic ticket of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama would be "invincible" in 2008. THE SCRAPBOOK would like to think that the two senators might be mildly embarrassed by this unsolicited endorsement from Havana; but so far, only silence from the invincible team. This, in turn, reminded us of the good old days when the Ku Klux Klan would endorse a presidential candidate who, in turn, would feel obligated to reject the endorsement.

So, here's the Question of the Week. Are Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama mortified to learn Castro is betting on their candidacy, or do they welcome this as a sign of improving relations between Washington and Havana? Or put another way: Would they approach Cuba in the manner of one Democratic predecessor (John F. Kennedy) or in the footsteps of another (James Carter)? ♦

Kingdom Come

A few weeks ago, we quoted *Entertainment Weekly*, which described director Peter Berg's fear that his upcoming terrorist drama, *The Kingdom*, would be seen as jingoistic. During a screening, audiences cheered loudly when the Americans took down a group of terrorists, prompting Berg to agonize, "Am I experiencing American bloodlust?"

Now it seems *Variety*'s John Anderson has similar concerns. "Shouldn't terrorism be treated as crime—that is, as a civil rather than military matter?" he asks. (We presume his answer is yes.) "It's a question that's at the heart of the Iraq War debate, and it's one raised loudly and clearly by *The Kingdom*, a realist thriller that mixes crowd-pleasing mayhem with provocative politics. Although burdened by far more procedure than plot, this Jamie Foxx vehicle . . . is quietly jingoistic, in a way guaranteed to sell auds on the idea that what's truly American is about more than disputed foreign policy."

Anderson does enjoy parts of the film while other scenes get bogged down in the bureaucracy. Fair enough. But, the critic complains, "Where pic goes astray is in turning anonymous, indigenous peoples into ducks at a shooting gallery. In *Black Hawk Down*, the alleged good guys mowed down hundreds of faceless Africans; here, it's Arabs, in what seem like comparable numbers. The sense of vicarious sport is the same; anyone in a caftan or a kepi is fair game."

"Alleged" good guys? Anderson must have forgotten that those American soldiers were responding to Somali rebels, affiliated with Osama bin Laden, who shot down a helicopter and killed 18 American soldiers, dragging their corpses through the streets of Mogadishu. THE SCRAPBOOK is now really looking forward to *The Kingdom*, no matter what this alleged movie critic says. ♦

Casual

Roger & Me

As a general principle, the best athletes shouldn't be our favorite athletes. We should appreciate greatness, of course. But actually rooting for Tiger Woods or Michael Jordan or Barry Bonds reflects a character deficiency. Like rooting for the Yankees.

My own preferences in fandom run to the tragic. I like my athletes doomed by fate or circumstance. As a boy, I adored Charles Barkley, who was consigned forever to Jordan's shadow. Overachievers such as Jim Courier were also favorites, as were oddballs like Randall Cunningham. But I've always harbored a healthy ambivalence toward athletes who dominate their sports.

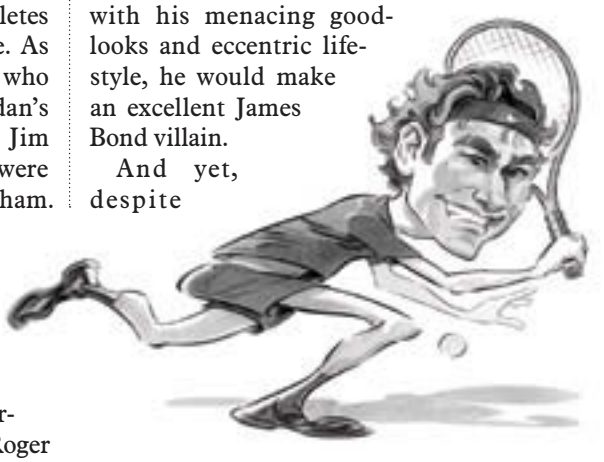
Until I found Roger.

Tennis has fallen on hard times in America, so you'll be forgiven if you don't know about Roger Federer. He's the 26-year-old Swiss fellow who just won his fourth consecutive U.S. Open title. He may be the greatest player to ever play the game.

It's difficult to describe Federer's magnificence. There are individual moments: the behind-the-back-between-the-legs midcourt volley against Tim Henman; the twisting overhead he hit against Andy Roddick, from the baseline, while facing away from the net. Next time you're tempted to procrastinate, go to YouTube and search for "Federer." Trying vainly to render these moments in language last year, David Foster Wallace penned a lengthy essay titled "Federer as Religious Experience."

Roger has been number one in the world for 188 consecutive weeks (the second longest streak was Jimmy Connors's run of 160 weeks at the top); he will almost certainly break Pete Sampras's record of 14 Grand Slam titles (he has 12 now); and he has appeared in 10 consecutive Grand Slam finals (no one else has played in more than 7 in a row).

Federer no longer employs a coach. Instead, he lives on a man-made island in Dubai and lures top-ranked amateurs to his hideout, where he uses them to practice in the 130-degree heat. It has been noted that with his menacing good-looks and eccentric lifestyle, he would make an excellent James Bond villain.



DARREN GYGI

And yet, despite all of this, I love Federer. I went to the U.S. Open this year specifically to see him play, and I cheered as he dispatched John Isner—the type of young, overachieving American I used to pull for—in the second round. Andy Roddick is one of the gifted, tragic types who used to capture my affections, yet when Federer ripsawed through him in the quarterfinals, I couldn't stop smiling. Roddick left the court completely dismantled, his lifetime record against Federer at 1-14. After Roger dispatched Nikolay Davydenko in the semis (he's the fourth-ranked player in the world and is 0-10 lifetime against Federer), a wit in the stadium control booth played the Star Wars Imperial March over the loudspeakers.

Roger's greatness is singular in one sense: With the very best athletes, dominance is almost always apparent from an early age. Both Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods turned pro at 21 and began crushing the rest of the PGA at 22. Wilt Chamberlain started playing professional basketball at 23 and was immediately the best player in the game; so was Michael Jordan when he entered the NBA at 21.

In boxing, the sport most analogous to tennis, Muhammad Ali won the Olympic gold medal at 18, turned pro, and immediately began working his way through the professional ranks, winning his first belt in only four years and remaining undefeated for 11 years. The only other two tennis players in the discussion with Federer, Rod Laver and Pete Sampras, became champions two years after becoming professionals.

But not Roger. He turned pro at 17 and began a merely respectable career. As René Stauffer writes in *The Roger Federer Story*, "Nobody expected greatness from Roger Federer." For *five years* he was a pleasant, talented, top-25 player.

Then something changed. In 2003 he won two minor tournaments. Then he won Wimbledon, losing only one set during the fortnight. That victory began the greatest four-year run in the history of tennis, which continues to this day. It's as if he'd sold his soul to the devil.

Federer seems to understand how strange that change was. "I have this worry that I'm not going to play well," he told the Associated Press this summer. "That the day comes where I don't know how to hit a forehand anymore, you know? That I'm blank."

Whatever happened to Federer in 2003 took place inside him. He didn't get a new coach, or change his technique, or start hitting the ball any differently. The transformation was entirely in his mind. And against my better angels, that is why I root for Roger: His greatness proves exactly how much of sports, and life, is in your head.

Jonathan V. Last

Correspondence

Maligning Mormons

Regarding Fred Barnes's profile of actor Jon Voight ("Hollywood Witness," September 3), apart from the overwhelming consensus of critics that *September Dawn*, in which Voight stars, is a pathetic excuse for a movie, there are several other points that should be made about its misrepresentation of history.

The so-called Mountain Meadows Massacre is in no substantial way parallel to the attacks of 9/11. Speaking as a professor of Islamic studies and Arabic at Brigham Young University, there is no real resemblance between Mormons, even in the nineteenth century, and adherents of Wahhabi Islam.

At least one of the pivotal and most damning statements put in the mouth of Brigham Young by the scriptwriter of *September Dawn* appears to have been entirely invented by an anti-Mormon just a few years ago. It is not only "the church" that denies Brigham Young's alleged role in ordering and masterminding the massacre; no credible professional historian appears to believe it either—for the clear and sufficient reason that there is no evidence to support the charge. In fact, there is considerable reason to reject it. *September Dawn* is a disgrace, a piece of shameless anti-Mormon propaganda. Fortunately, it appears destined to disappear without leaving much of a trace behind.

Daniel Peterson
Provo, Utah

Not Everyone's a Critic

John Podhoretz is a fine film critic. Therein lies the problem, however, with "Cheap Thrills" (September 3), his review of *High School Musical* and *High School Musical 2*. Podhoretz says, "It's not enough to explain away my critical reaction to the two *HSM*s by saying they were not intended for adult viewing." While correct in saying *HSM* is for children and young adults (this reader is 15 years old), he fails to register that *HSM* is also not intended for elite artistic critique. *HSM* doesn't try to be anything that it isn't. The music doesn't have a "Broadway show tunes" feel by any means, but wouldn't

that have turned away its main demographic? Instead, a prudent decision was made to give the musical a modern pop sound. Podhoretz may feel that the music is "wretched" and "feeble," but clearly others disagree: the soundtrack to the original *High School Musical* has gone quadruple platinum. The franchise also doesn't make any attempt to pass itself off as a sophisticated movie. The film doesn't quite fit the definition of a bona fide comedy. It certainly doesn't try to give an accurate portrayal of high school (to that I can attest). So what is it, exactly? *HSM* is simply a fun, hopeful (albeit completely unrealistic) movie that fills those who appreciate it (and watch it from start to finish) with happiness. With any movie, what more can one really ask for?

Meaghan Wilson
Spring City, Penn.

Godless Revolutions

Regarding Harvey Mansfield's "Atheist Tracts" (August 13), it seems that while the arguments for and against atheism sometimes get bogged down in rhetoric and complex ideas, I think there is one simple concept that puts the difference between the two systems in stark contrast: the French Revolution versus the American Revolution. The Declaration of Independence presupposes that there is a creator, and that that creator gives man his rights. If the Declaration had been written by a bunch of atheists, it might have read: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are derived from primordial slime, and are endowed . . ."—it is your guess what would come next. How do you get from that to individual rights? The atheist revolutions in France and Russia were both miserable failures, associated with the most horrendous loss of life and suffering in the history of the world. Need we say more?

David A. Farrell
Picayune, Miss.

• • •

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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, reduced U.S. oil production by as much as 1.26 billion barrels and increased oil imports.

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

the weekly Standard

Men at Work, Children at Play

Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress. But I repeat myself.

—Mark Twain

This week, America heard about Iraq from two serious men, General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker. They understand Iraq in all its complexity. They have an astonishing mastery of the details of what's going on in almost every part of the country and an amazing grasp of virtually every aspect of a complex war, a multilayered society, and a new and fluid polity. They have clearly thought about the policy options before us with a seriousness appropriate to individuals who, every day, exercise considerable authority and bear great responsibilities. Last week, they were able, despite the comparative shallowness and guile of their questioners, to explain the choices we face with clarity and honesty at a critical moment in our nation's history.

The congressional critics provided quite a contrast with Petraeus and Crocker. If the general and the ambassador were men at work, the congressmen and senators were—with a few notable exceptions—children at play. They spoke almost entirely in generalizations—often months, sometimes years, out of date. They used selective quotations and cherry-picked facts to play "gotcha." They offered no meaningful proposals of their own. Petraeus and Crocker live and breathe Iraq, dealing with life-and-death problems seven days a week. Congress bloviates Tuesday through Thursday. That's one of the reasons to listen to the general and the ambassador rather than the congressional pontificators.

The contrast between those who know something about Iraq and those who don't continued with the president's speech on September 13. Bush described America's objectives in Iraq clearly, explained the strategy he is pursuing, outlined the progress that it has made in detail and in specific areas of Iraq, explained why he intends to continue that strategy with minor adjustments, and announced a conditions-based reduction of forces, which General Petraeus had recommended. In response, Senator Jack Reed spoke in the vaguest terms. He repeated the Democratic shibboleth that there has been no political progress in Iraq because the Iraqi government has not passed the benchmark legislation—ignoring the complex, nuanced, real-world discussion Petraeus and Crocker (and, yes, Bush) had offered about the different ways in which groups of citizens, local and provincial governments, and even the Maliki government have been able to make varying degrees of progress toward the goals the benchmark legislation is supposed to achieve. Reed also announced that the Democrats "have put forth a plan," which he then sketched in a few sentences. We would all like to know exactly what this Democratic plan is and when the Democrats intend to share it with the rest of us. We frankly doubt that a party whose leaders seem unable to discuss the war in Iraq in any but the simplest terms can develop a plan that will lead to anything other than disaster.

The speeches of September 13 highlighted another key problem in this discussion. Reed dismissed all the hard-won gains of our forces and our diplomats in Iraq with the assertion that the surge was intended to allow the Iraqi government time to pass benchmark legislation, which the Iraqis have failed to do. Ergo, he and other critics say, the surge has failed. But American forces are not in Iraq to enable the Iraqi parliament to have a nice-looking scorecard. As the president said in his speech, our primary objective in Iraq is to prevent al Qaeda from establishing a base there. We must also work, as the president said, to ensure that Iran does not "fill the vacuum." Establishing a stable, democratic Iraq would secure these objectives, in addition to being inherently desirable. But a productive legislative session of the Iraqi parliament is only a means to all these ends, and only one possible means.

By focusing entirely on the political problems in the Iraqi parliament, critics of the current strategy score polemical points by ignoring indisputable gains with respect to the core American objectives. Progress in recent months in Iraq has enhanced American security. Al Qaeda In Iraq has gone from near-ascendancy in 2006 to near-collapse in 2007. The reason Iran has dramati-

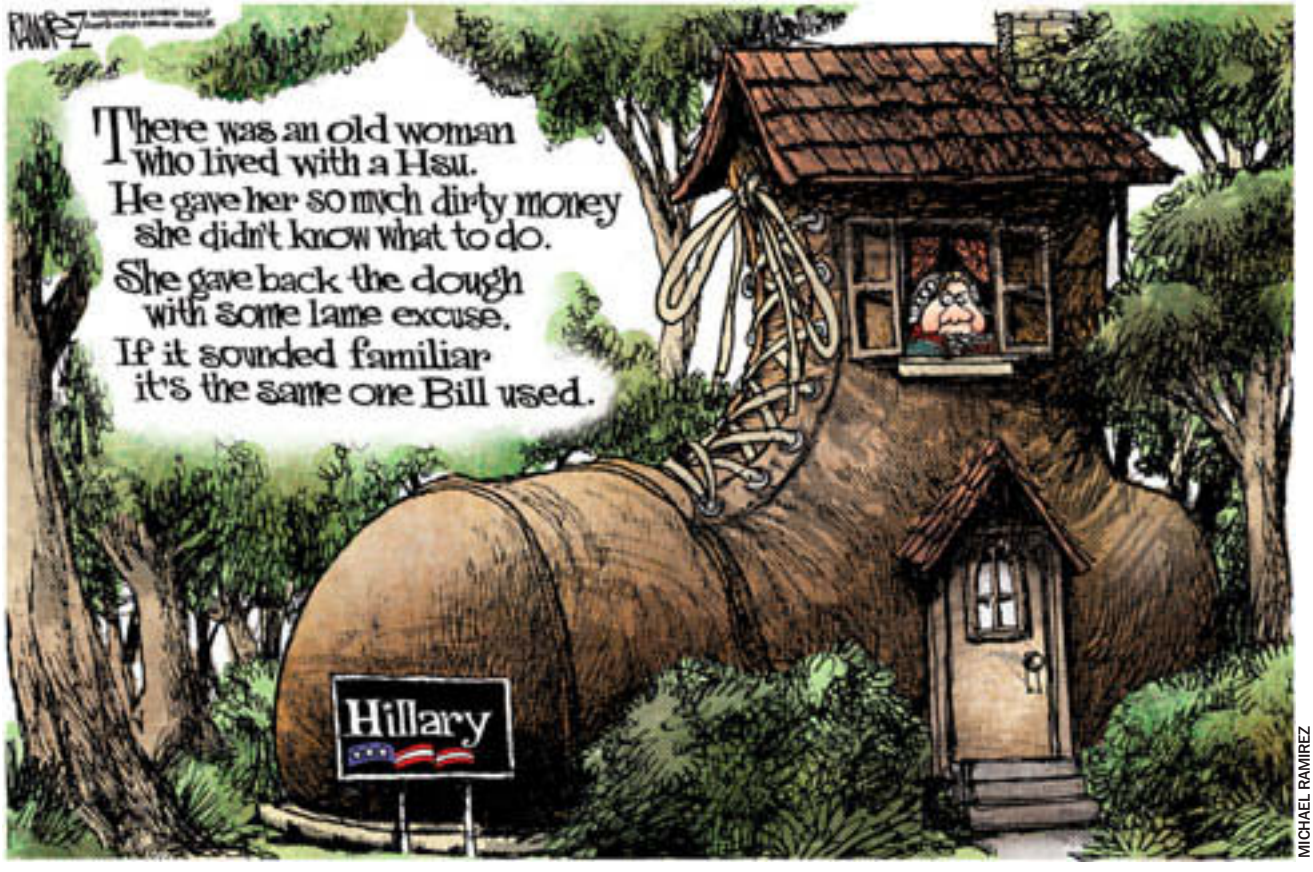
cally increased its efforts to destabilize the elected, Shia-dominated government in Baghdad is that the Shia terrorists, too, have been set back, as American and Iraqi forces have done real damage to the Iranian-backed "secret cells" and death squads that are the agents of this destabilization. These are facts. But congressmen don't deal much with facts.

In his speech, President Bush announced his intention to reduce American forces in Iraq to pre-surge levels by mid-2008, if conditions permit. His critics have been quick to ridicule this announcement, since they reject the notion that there has been any progress in Iraq that might justify it. But they choose to miss the point. The size of American military forces in Iraq is not, and should not be, dependent on the status of legislation in the Iraqi parliament. It is dependent on the security situation on the ground—notably the ability of the Iraqis to maintain security themselves. Despite Democratic rhetoric to the contrary, security on the ground can improve without the passage of benchmark legislation. It has improved over the past few months. Petraeus and Bush know that, which is why they announced an intention to unwind the surge.

In choosing this plan for force reductions over the coming months, the president accepts greater risk than we would have preferred. His decision was clearly driven by valid concerns about the strain on the Army and Marines, and by the reasonable expectation that a continuation of current trends on the ground in Iraq will justify the reductions. But Iraq is a war, and the enemy gets a vote. Continued Iranian escalation could destabilize the south or Baghdad; Al Qaeda In Iraq could strike another lucky blow; and other unforeseen contingencies could arise over the next six months that might be manageable with 20 brigades but dangerous with 15.

At this point, the likeliest sources of most such contingencies lie outside of Iraq, with increased "accelerants" (as our commanders call them) of violence coming from Iran above all, but also from Syria and (indirectly) from Saudi Arabia. We cannot allow Iraq's neighbors a free hand at strengthening the forces of terror even as we work to subdue them. Restricting the ability of these outside accelerants to intervene in Iraq is the best way to mitigate the risks entailed in the announced drawdown. Given the drawdown, and given the emphasis General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker put on the damage done by these outside actors, especially Iran, in fanning the violence in Iraq, we expect that the Bush administration will now turn its attention more directly to this critical problem.

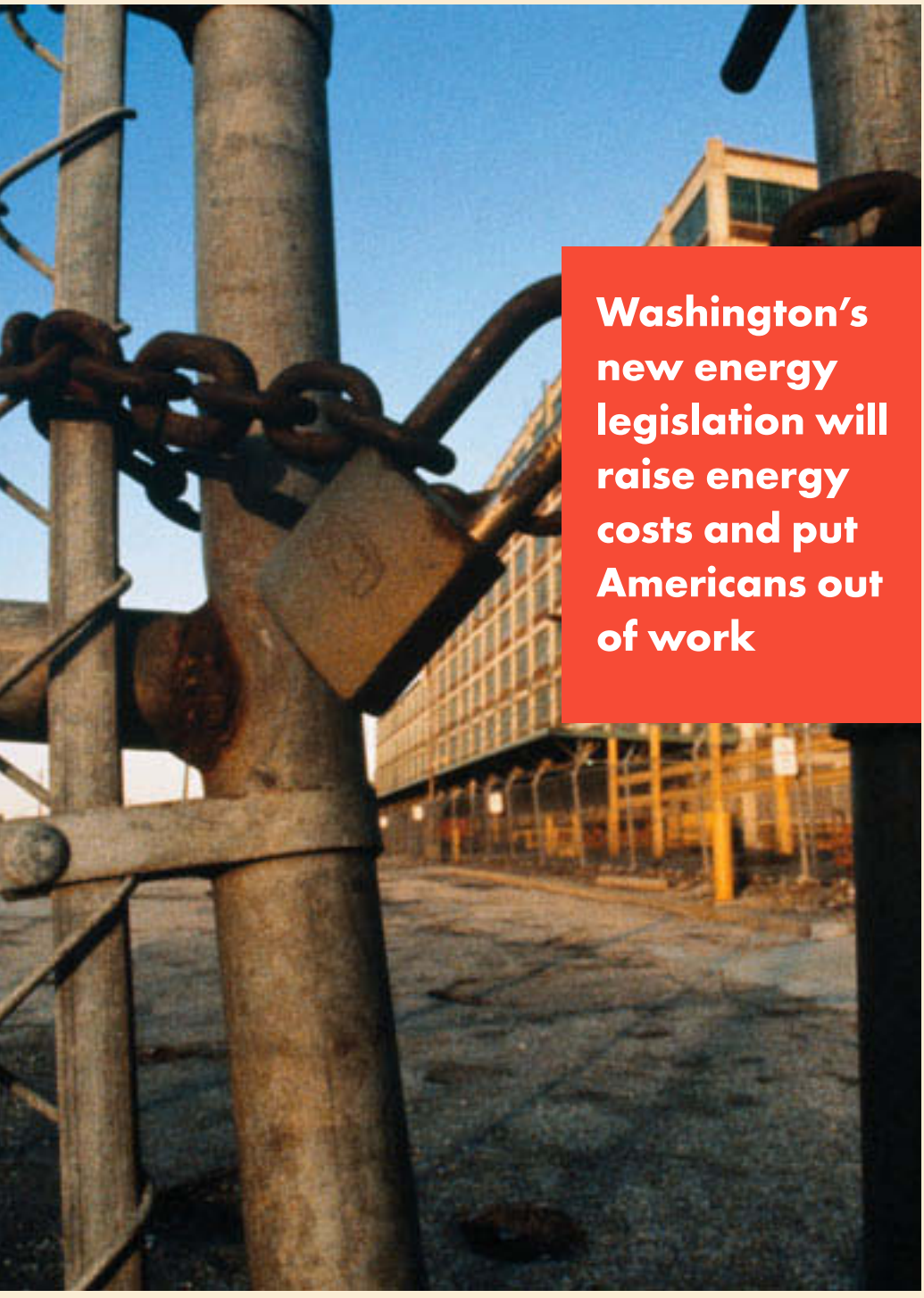
—Frederick W. Kagan & William Kristol



MICHAEL RAMIREZ

Can America's economy afford Congress' ~~energy~~ bill?

Layoffs, new taxes and cost spikes



Washington's new energy legislation will raise energy costs and put Americans out of work

Congress will soon consider sweeping new energy legislation that will raise energy taxes, cost American jobs and further limit the nation's access to domestic energy supplies.

The legislation's energy tax hikes and gasoline price controls will raise energy costs for American consumers, manufacturers and businesses – hurting economic growth and driving high-paying American jobs overseas. The legislation even reduces our ability to increase domestic oil and natural gas reserves here at home – increasing reliance on foreign sources of energy.

We need energy policies that support American jobs and increase supplies of energy from all sources to meet future generations' demand. Congress should reject these provisions of the energy bill and get to work on legislation to secure our energy future.

Reject Congress' Energy Bill

NAM National Association of Manufacturers

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

The Surgin' General

And the reeling Democrats.

BY FRED BARNES

When congressional leaders met with President Bush last week at the White House, the Republicans were upbeat, the Democrats far less buoyant. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a more imposing figure than her Senate colleague, Majority Leader Harry Reid, took the lead in criticizing President Bush's Iraq policy. But to the surprise of Bush and his aides, the Democrats weren't primarily interested in discussing Iraq. They wanted to talk about the budget.

At that point, General David Petraeus had testified on Capitol Hill for one day. And Democrats already exuded an air of defeat. Their assumption had been that opposition to the Iraq war would swell over the August congressional recess, causing wishy-washy Republicans to join them in thwarting Bush's war plans. It hadn't. If anything, opinion polls indicated antiwar fever was easing slightly.

Petraeus capitalized on that. He opened his testimony by knocking down a Democratic canard. He would not be giving a "Bush report" or a "Bush-Petraeus report," as Democrats had alleged. His testimony hadn't been drafted at the White House or the Pentagon. It was his and his alone. In fact, Petraeus didn't hear from Bush last week until he'd finished two days on Capitol Hill and a day of Q&A with the press. And the president called merely to commiserate.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of The Weekly Standard.

The effect of Petraeus's performance was to slow the clock in Washington, as Peter Wehner, fresh from six years at the Bush White House, pointed out on *National Review Online*. According to the clock trope, Washington was racing toward full-blown rejection of America's intervention in Iraq, while the Iraqi government was moving far less quickly to meet Washington's—mainly Congress's—demand for political reconciliation and reduced violence. Now, with the momentum for retreat in Iraq diminished, Petraeus has more time and flexibility.

For Democrats, Petraeus Week was a wrenching ordeal. It meant their efforts to change Bush's policy on Iraq fundamentally were dead. Instead, they decided to push various proposals, some symbolic, some designed to make it more difficult for Bush to carry out his military plans in Iraq.

The *New York Times* ad by MoveOn.org trashing Petraeus as a liar backfired badly. Making matters worse, Democrats were afraid to repudiate MoveOn.org because the party relies so heavily on it for money and campaign workers. Senator John McCain, among other Republicans, seized the moment. He said if Democratic senator Hillary Clinton isn't tough enough to denounce MoveOn.org, she's not tough enough to be president.

Few Democrats distinguished themselves in interrogating Petraeus. Clinton invited criticism when she told Petraeus his testimony required her to suspend disbelief—another suggestion he wasn't telling the truth. Senator Barbara Boxer rambled on about the general's earlier optimism about the war, then gave him no time to answer. Representative Robert Wexler of Florida was histrionic and demagogic, but managed to be widely quoted in the media.

Carl Levin, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, thought he'd found a wedge to drive between Petraeus and Bush. He hadn't. Levin pointed to Petraeus's response to his question whether the general would continue to favor troop withdrawals "as we get down to the pre-surge level" next summer. Petraeus had answered "yes," twice, Levin said, adding, "I don't think the president is saying that."

It turned out the president was. In his nationally televised address from the Oval Office, Bush characterized his policy as "return on success." The more progress in defeating al Qaeda and Iraqi insurgents, he said, "the more American troops can return home."

Even without conferring last week, Bush and Petraeus echoed each other. When Bush met over lunch at the White House with ten TV news anchors, he insisted the drawdown of extra troops deployed in the surge was not automatic. Democrats argued those withdrawals shouldn't be counted as new since they'd always been planned as the surge winds down in mid-2008.

On the contrary, Bush said, he could have altered the withdrawal schedule. Petraeus said he could have as well. "It's just inaccurate to say that, you know, all we're doing is letting this thing run out," he told reporters at the National Press Club. He "could have requested more surge forces" and could keep them longer in Iraq.

One question by a television anchor surprised Bush. Had he considered not addressing the nation in prime time? Might his speech detract from Petraeus's persuasive testimony and subject the surge to more political attacks? This didn't appear to have crossed Bush's mind. The anchor's question, he said half-jokingly, injected a negative thought as he was preparing to give his speech that evening.

Nor had anyone on the president's staff brought up the notion of not speaking. The anchors were invited two days beforehand, the speech having been locked in. "The commander in chief has to tell Americans what he's going to do," an aide said.

The president may have provoked more trouble than he bargained for by endorsing "an enduring relationship" with Iraq. Success there, he said, "will require U.S. political, economic, and security engagement that extends beyond my presidency." This idea is bound to generate Democratic attacks.

The scariest words for Democrats in Bush's speech involved Petraeus directly. Bush said he's directed the general, along with Ambassador Ryan Crocker, "to deliver another report to Congress in March." The prospect of a return engagement by Petraeus can only fill Democrats with a feeling of dread. ♦

Ready, Willing, and Able

We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too. BY THOMAS DONNELLY

In the wake of last week's Iraq-related developments in Washington, the strongest quasi-respectable argument available to Democrats who want to oppose President Bush and General Petraeus while sounding responsible is the claim that a troop drawdown larger than the one they propose is needed to "rebalance risk"—that is, that the surge in Iraq has made us more vulnerable elsewhere in the world.

This has long been a concern to more moderate Democrats, and Rep. Ike Skelton, the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee (and father of an Army officer), reiterated the position in his prepared statement at the Petraeus-Crocker hearings. He asked whether "Iraq is the war worth the risk of breaking our Army and being unable to deal with other risks to our nation. . . . With so many troops in Iraq, I think our response to an unexpected threat would come at a devastating cost."

This argument is a version of the concerns voiced by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Army chief, Gen. George Casey—a point not missed by *Washington Post* columnist E.J. Dionne, who wrote that "Democrats are now hoping concerned generals will support their case [for withdrawal], even if most Republicans won't." Indeed, the goal of driving a wedge between the military and the Bush administration has been a consistent strategy of the antiwar party. As Dionne puts it, "If withdrawing troops from Iraq is dangerous, failing to withdraw them may, in the long run, be even more dangerous." Fighting now compromises future readiness.

Yet the military logic behind this argument is weak. What are the "other risks to our nation" that are so "unexpected" and would exact such a "devastating cost"? It's a dangerous world and the risks are great, but our ability to respond is likewise great. Consider the threats the Pentagon regards as most real. A crisis across the Taiwan Strait or even a Chinese attack would call for the deployment of naval and air power—capabilities not much employed in Iraq. Suppose we collected "actionable" intelligence on Osama bin Laden's whereabouts. We'd launch air and missile strikes and perhaps a special operations raid. Again, not really a problem. Even a North Korean invasion would initially demand the strike power of naval and air forces in support of South Korea's large, well-equipped, and well-trained land forces.

In an emergency, we can even respond to the call for significant land forces. The "surged" force in Iraq of 160,000 represents only about 20 percent of active-duty Army and Marine strength, and less than 15 percent if one includes reserve and National Guard forces. It would be a struggle to make ready and to deploy another large land force—although those forces recovering from Iraq and in the reserves represent a superbly trained, equipped, experienced, and powerful force. But responding to even the most nightmarish surprise, such as a mass-destruction attack at home, is hardly impossible. We should remember that the strains of Iraq come from the

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length of the mission, not the surge.

The strategic logic of the "risk management" argument is similarly weak: It sharply underplays the negative consequences, in the Middle East and around the world, of a U.S. defeat in Iraq.

This is not the place to elaborate that argument fully, yet it's worth noting the insight of Andrew Krepinevich, director of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, a former Army officer and author of the classic work *The Army and Vietnam*. A withdrawal from Iraq, he says, would not be like the American withdrawal from Saigon, but rather like the British evacuation from Dunkirk. In the context of the Cold War, the United States could retreat and recover from a loss in Vietnam without having to retake Saigon. But in World War II, strategic realities compelled the Allies to retake Western Europe from the Germans. It's hard to imagine a victory in "The Long War" against revolutionary Islam without success in Iraq. This grim logic is well understood by troops serving in Iraq, especially those who also fought in Desert Storm. We are fighting in Iraq, they often say, so our children won't have to.

For better or worse, it is and will be for quite a while the duty of America's land forces to fight the Long War. Of the three great security challenges of our time—the rise of China, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the dangers of revolutionary Islam—it is the third that requires of us strong land power capabilities. The way to manage the risks of this extended struggle is to rebuild and reshape our land forces to respond to the challenge.

While not all the battles of this war will be exactly like Iraq, the bitter experience of the last four years should serve as a reminder that we must adapt to the war as it is rather than pretend we have the option of fighting a war we would prefer. Nor should we pretend that there's something more important for U.S. ground troops to do. If they are ordered to retreat from this battle, their next battle is likely to be a lot harder. ♦

The Truthers Are Out There

Leftwing causes converge with the 9/11 denial movement. BY SONNY BUNCH

New York City

Certain events can be expected each time the 9/11 anniversary rolls around. Opinion writers will opine about how the attacks did or didn't change America. Moments of silence will take place in any number of locales. Think tanks will host panels discussing everything from the war on terror to the impact on immigration reform. And the loosely affiliated conspiracy theorists that comprise the 9/11 Truth Movement will hold rallies and conferences around the country to bring themselves attention.

Truthers, as they are called, hold a wide range of (often mutually exclusive) theories about what took place on September 11, 2001. They break down into two broad camps: those who believe that George W. Bush and Dick Cheney made 9/11 happen on purpose and those who believe that they let 9/11 happen on purpose. Truthers bristle at being called conspiracy theorists even as they argue that the president had explosives planted in the World Trade Center to ensure the collapse of the Twin Towers after airplanes struck them, had a missile fired at the Pentagon, and shot down Flight 93 in an effort to start a series of wars that would lead to the seizure of Middle Eastern oil and the securing of a pipeline through Afghanistan.

NY 9/11 Truth held its anniversary celebration, "The 9/11 Truth: Ready for Mainstream," at the Cooper Union in New York City last week. Frequently citing Abraham Lincoln—

WEEKLY STANDARD PHOTOS BY SONNY BUNCH

Sonny Bunch is assistant editor of The Weekly Standard.

who forcefully articulated his political philosophy on the same stage 147 years earlier—the Truthers invited to speak seemed less interested in discussing the intricacies of the various plots they claim to have uncovered than in shoehorning 9/11 into causes they supported long before the terrorist atrocities of that day. Tiokasin Ghosthorse, a Lakota radio host, said he wasn't at all surprised by the events of 9/11 because "America [has been] an 'inside job' since 1492." Mya Schone, another staple of liberal talk radio, entitled her speech "9/11 and the Oppressive Apparatus of the Capitalist State."

Attendance was sparse. Despite warnings to get tickets in advance in order to assure a seat, Cooper Union's Great Hall was at perhaps 25 percent of capacity on the first day. Even fewer showed up on the second day. Truthers varied in age, but the uniform of the event seemed to be T-shirts sporting slogans like "9/11 was an inside job!" and "Impeach Bush." Devotees of Lyndon LaRouche were staked outfront of the premises, warning that the ideas contained within the literature were "heavy, important, man." The LaRouchies seemed to realize they weren't welcome at the event, but it's hard to think that the sermon they were preaching was any more outlandish than, say, that of Alfred Webre, who was given 45 minutes to talk on the topics "9/11 as a war crime" and the "development of [an] international tribunal" for the Bush administration. After touching on those subjects (to great applause), he veered off course, arguing that an "artificial intelligence matrix" controlled by the Rothschild family might have caused 9/11, that the cancer rate in Iraq now stands at 30 percent, that AIDS is a biological weapon created to control the population, that global warming is being caused by a black hole 23 light years from Earth, and that the NYPD was employing a supersonic crowd disruption device that was depressing turnout.

It would be unfair to lump everyone at the conference with such nutty ideas; for every Webre there was someone like Sander Hicks. Hicks, a lanky, clean-cut gentleman sporting wire-rimmed glasses and a firm handshake, was there to help moderate the event. The proprietor of a successful independent coffee and bookshop in Brooklyn, Hicks showed up early to pass around copies of his newspaper, the *New York Megaphone*, which features an exposé of the legal dealings of New York governor Eliot Spitzer and real estate mogul Larry Silverstein (who Truthers cite as a key member of the 9/11 conspiracy, as he collected a massive insurance payout when the World Trade Center was destroyed). We had a chance to chat beforehand, and when he heard the rantings of Webre he hustled over to make sure that I understood not everyone involved in the 9/11 Truth Movement was so crazy.

Webster Tarpley, left, and fellow skeptic

Webre aside, the speeches focused on several similar themes: that Bush is a war criminal for perpetrating 9/11 and the "illegal" wars he has waged across the globe; that a dreaded cabal of neocons at the Project for a New American Century think tank—which included several prominent members of the Bush administration—planned and executed a "new Pearl Harbor" on September 11, 2001, in order to increase military spending; and that Dick Cheney is planning a nuclear confrontation with Iran. Another point of agreement, highlighted by the organizer of the event, was the vociferously antiwar nature of a number of the protestors. Webster Tarpley described those gathered before him as "morally and intellectually superior" to any other movement, since they had begun questioning the events of 9/11 so quickly and fought with such dedication.

Much to the chagrin of many elements within the antiwar left, these 9/11 deniers are now as involved in protesting the Iraq and Afghanistan wars as getting the "truth" out about 9/11. At a rally in front of the White House on the sixth anniversary of the terrorist attacks, the guests that DC 9/11 Truth invited spent far more time talking about the need to end the war in Iraq and the importance of impeaching Bush and Cheney than 9/11. The musical stylings of dR. O kept the crowd a-rocking and a-rolling between speakers. Described as the "Supergroup of Cyberspace" by *Yahoo! Internet Life*, the alt-rock, Pearl Jamlite quartet enthralled with insightful lyrics like "Go f—— yourself, Mr. Cheney / Go f—— yourself, a—hole." Sadly, this was the final stop on dR. O's "Impeach Now or Die Tour."

Most of the speakers took a similarly belligerent tone. Adam Kokesh, the director of Iraq Veterans Against the War, mused about America's commitment to attacking governments that sponsor terrorism, noting that with campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq going on, "It's too bad [the mil-

itary is] stretched too thin to strike America." He added that this is why the Founders included the Second Amendment in the Bill of Rights—"It's time to rise up," he said, and overthrow a tyrannical government. The warmongering fascists across the street probably don't have too much to worry about from the freedom fighters gathered at Lafayette Park; fewer than a hundred protestors braved the intermittent drizzle to show their disdain for the Bush administration.

Near the end of the rally, a group of cross-country marchers showed up holding various signs like "Honk for Peace" and "Pro-War Is Anti-Christ"; one of the marchers took the stage to deliver a rambling monologue in which he apologized for the way evangelicals have supported the war in Iraq. Anthony St. Martin, a spokesman for Pledge to Impeach, addressed the crowd to implore those rallying to go on strike if Bush and Cheney are not removed from office. "This is a different day, this isn't the 1960s," St. Martin told the soggy crowd of aging hippies and college-aged hipsters.

A couple of speakers from the New York conference had also made their way down to Washington. Tarpley was one, and he gave much the same presentation he had three days before. In it, he warned that Dick Cheney is planning a nuclear attack on Iran sparked by "a new 9/11." But the threat isn't from Islamist terrorists or Iranians with nuclear weapons; America's real scourge is Cheney himself, who is planning to stage another attack on American soil (this one nuclear) in order to solidify his and Bush's grip on power and cancel the 2008 elections.

And now we've come full circle: From trying to prove that Bush and Co. had a hand in 9/11 to trying to stop the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to preemptively warning about wholly unsubstantiated future conspiracies, the Truthers never have a moment's rest. There's always the next battle to fight, the next conspiracy to unravel. It will be fascinating to see what they have thought up by September 11, 2008. ♦

Pennies from Heaven

Special one-for-two sale.

BY P.J. O'ROURKE

How much do you suppose it costs the U.S. Mint to produce a penny? Let me tell you—with a deeply self-satisfied howl of execration—*almost 2 cents*. This little brown item of pocket clutter costs twice as much to make as it's worth, and it isn't worth anything. A penny will not buy a penny postcard or a penny whistle or a single piece of penny candy. It will not even, if you're managing the U.S. Mint, buy a penny.

The problem is the cost of zinc, which is what a "copper" is actually made of. For the past 25 years a penny-weight of copper has been worth considerably more than a penny. And we wouldn't want our money to have any actual monetary value, would we? That would violate all of the economic thinking that has been done since the days of John Maynard Keynes. And it would give the Federal Reserve Bank governors nothing to do except sit around saying "oops" and "whoopee" every time the economy went down or up. Therefore the U.S. Mint began making pennies out of less expensive zinc with a thin plating of copper for the sake of tradition and to keep Lincoln from looking like he'd been stamped out of a galvanized hog trough. But then a rising commodities market drove up zinc prices. (Maybe China needs a lot of zinc for, oh, I don't know, stabilizing the lead paint of Barbie dolls so that our girls don't start beating their girls on math tests, or something.)

The above may be old news to the more assiduous readers of the nation's minor newspapers. The penny's cost overrun was the subject of one of those little six- or seven-column-inch filler items that are now the mainstay of the once-mighty wire services. This particular squib was in the August 16 edition of the *Boston Globe*, but I didn't come across it until the day before yesterday. I only buy the *Globe* for the comics, the Sudoku, and to train the puppy. I was arranging sheets of newsprint on the kitchen floor, being careful to keep the editorial pages face down. (The puppy is a Boston Terrier. Our other dogs are a black Lab and a Brittany spaniel with French antecedents. Understandably I try to shield them from the extremes of liberalism.) Anyway, there was the penny article, and I haven't been as pleased and enthusiastic about anything reported in a newspaper since Ken Starr folded up shop.

I suppose, as a fiscal conservative, a concerned citizen, and—at least until the cocktail hour—a decent human being, I should have been indignant. But to tell the truth, I was hopping about in glee. (Something that, by the way, is not advisable in the kitchen's puppy-training area.) You see, there are times when even those of us with the staunchest libertarian principles lose our faith. Or, rather, in the matter of government, we

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lose our faith in our loss of faith. We catch ourselves thinking things like, "Whoa, what about those sub-prime mortgages? The *sub* part is sounding like moldy hoagies. Maybe there *should* be a little more government oversight." Or, "If that rap singer on the radio said what I think he just said, how come a SWAT team didn't teargas his recording studio?" Or, "Where'd my hedge fund go? And where's Eliot Spitzer now that we need him?"

Libertarians are only human. When we're tired and stressed, we occasionally experience delusional hallucinations involving government—the kind Hillary Clinton should be medicated for at all times. But then comes the story about the penny costing two pennies, and we experience a sudden miraculous Hayekian, Misesean, Rose and Milton Friedmaniacal psychiatric cure. All my sane disgust at and mentally balanced distrust of the political process returned like—need I say it?—the proverbial bad penny.

What a moment of redemption and salvation it was! Yes, in for a penny, in for $40,000,000 in government waste on the eight-billion pennies put into circulation each year. Take care of the pennies, and the pounds (of flesh extracted from us by the IRS) will take care of themselves. A penny for your thoughts, and I'm not just picking your brain: I'm offering you a 100 percent return on investment.

Perhaps you yourself, even if you're not a libertarian, have been thinking that there's something chowder-headed about our government. Maybe you were put in mind of this by the postwar Iraq occupation planning that was done at 1 A.M. on a cocktail napkin in an Irish bar across from the Pentagon during open mike night. Or maybe you've been listening to the Democratic and Republican presidential candidate debates and wondering why *none* of them are taking their medication.

Well, congratulations on your insight. The twice-priced penny proves your wisdom about Washington being a wacky-packed *urbanus ignarus* brimful of prize saperoos, mutton-tops, woozy yaps, rattle hats, all day suckers, and asses wagging their ears.

Not only are you smart, the other good news is that you have a lot more money than you thought you did. We all do. A quick survey of my home indicates that the average American household contains something on the order of 900,000 to 1,000,000 pennies stashed in coffee cans, cigar boxes, quart jars, kitchen junk drawers, childrens' piggy banks, under car seats, between couch cushions, and so forth. So it's enormous flat-screen high definition TVs all around, as soon as we get done building our backyard zinc smelters.

And yet, I'm leaving out the best part of the story. Various powerful political interests have been trying to get rid of the penny for years: the Treasury Department, retailers of all types and sizes, vending machine companies, and every industry that has to buy pricey zinc, from the manufactures of barnyard feed buckets to the purveyors of sunblock for lifeguard schnozzolas. But nothing doing. The nation's only supplier of the zinc "blanks" from which pennies are struck, Jarden Zinc Products, managed to block legislation banishing the penny. It did so mainly by paying the political consulting firm of Baker & Daniels LLP $180,000 to lobby against legislation concerning —excuse me, I can't resist— "common cents."

There's no doubt that paying double is a very high price when it comes to obtaining a penny. But $180,000 is a piddling sum when it comes to obtaining effective influence in Congress. Ah, the miracle of democracy—always letting us get our 2 cents in. ♦

GARY LOCKE

The Party of Civil Rights

It wasn't the Democrats.

BY GERARD ALEXANDER

An anniversary passed without much notice on September 9th. It was fifty years since President Eisenhower signed the 1957 Civil Rights Act. This was the first civil rights legislation to make it into law since Reconstruction, and it also marked just about the last time that commentators considered the Republican party to be friendly to civil rights. In the five decades since, the idea that conservatives are hostile to minorities and civil rights has been a mainstay of academic research and publishing, amply reported by the press, and happily echoed by Democratic politicians. But if we revisit the 1957 law and trace events forward from there, we uncover a more interesting story.

The 1957 Civil Rights Act was mainly a Republican achievement. For a close to a century after the Civil War, the Democratic party had been hamstrung on civil rights. Much of their electoral base and congressional delegation was from the South, and southern Democrats worked as a bloc in Congress to nix any civil rights or voting bills. The Republicans had no senators and pitiably few House members from the South, and had many constituents, both black and white, repelled by segregation. So clear was the Republican profile on the issue that Harry Truman's 1947-48 civil rights program—usually seen as kick-starting the postwar civil rights debate—was in part motivated by Democrats' concerns that preexisting Republican efforts on civil rights might win decisive numbers of black votes in key northern states in the 1948 elections.

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Truman did not enact most of his program, and reform legislation hardly came in a rush when Eisenhower succeeded him in 1953 either. But Eisenhower's Justice Department did side with those who found segregated schools unconstitutional when the *Brown* v. *Board of Education* case went before the Supreme Court. Even before his 1956 reelection campaign, Eisenhower proposed a civil rights package that focused on helping African Americans in the South register to vote, though southern Democrats quickly stalled the bill in Congress. And the Republicans' 1956 platform explicitly endorsed the *Brown* decision, while the Democrats' did not.

Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson gutted a key provision of Eisenhower's reforms by ensuring that anyone charged with voting rights violations would get a jury trial, which was understood to practically guarantee acquittal in the South.

When the legislation was revived by the administration in 1957, it was assisted by a key ruling by Vice President Nixon, acting as Senate president, and propelled forward by a crucial intervention by Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson. As author David Nichols and others have shown, Johnson struck one of the bill's key provisions and gutted another by ensuring that anyone charged with voting rights violations would get a jury trial, which was understood to practically guarantee acquittal in the South. With the bill sufficiently watered down, almost all its southern opponents caved and—despite the drama of Senator Strom Thurmond's record 24-hour filibuster—the bill was passed. It created the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, laid the basis for the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, and tried to advance black voting rights in the South, which ultimately proved ineffectual. Within weeks of signing it, though, Eisenhower dispatched federal troops—paratroopers from the 101st Airborne—to Arkansas to enforce the desegregation of Little Rock schools.

Given all this, Nixon entered the 1960 election season with at least as strong a record on civil rights as John F. Kennedy and ran on an equally strong civil rights platform. But he lost, and from then on the idea that Republicans were soft on civil rights and even downright hostile to racial minorities became prevalent. It's a storyline that originated in the 1964 presidential campaign when Johnson easily defeated Barry Goldwater.

Goldwater had voted against the 1964 Civil Rights Act and then as the Republican nominee won several Deep South states with heavy support from segregationists. With that, the main party of civil rights became known for its implied support of segregation. That was reinforced four years later, when Nixon, in his quest for the presidency, implicitly promised Southerners to go slow on integration, and once in office sided with southern school districts and opposed busing. From then on, the story goes, Republican politicians appealed to the politics of white solidarity by opposing busing and affirmative action, criticizing welfare, harping on crime (think Willie Horton), and appointing judges who rendered judgments in these same directions. Worse, these Republicans excelled: What Goldwater had done badly in 1964, Nixon, Reagan, and their successors learned to do well,

often with code-words, a wink, and a nod. They supported civil rights in words but abandoned it in substance.

A close examination shows that, yes, Nixon and Reagan adjusted their rhetoric and behavior to try to attract southern white voters, just as Franklin Roosevelt did when he refused to support anti-lynching bills for fear of antagonizing southern congressmen. Just as John Kennedy did when he wooed southern leaders (including by voting for the 1957 jury trial provision) in the lead-up to the 1960 Democratic nomination battle. And just as Hubert Humphrey did when he rubbed elbows with Georgia's segregationist governor Lester Maddox as the 1968 election approached. The question should not be about electioneering or rhetoric but about whether Nixon and Reagan's policies made conservatism any more racist in practice than FDR's liberalism.

With Nixon, the issue of school desegregation is front and center. He broke with LBJ's strategy on this issue. Rather than threatening recalcitrant southern schools with the loss of federal funding, Nixon formed a cabinet committee, led by George Shultz, that convened black and white leaders from each noncomplying state. Together, they overcame 15 years of foot-dragging and negotiated the successful desegregation of local school systems within a couple of years. Nixon insisted that administration spokesmen not crow publicly about what was being accomplished, to avoid inflaming southern opposition. Nixon—despite the stereotype that he only paid lip service to civil rights—did virtually the reverse: accommodating southern sensibilities rhetorically while delivering desegregation substantively. He also laid the basis for affirmative action as we know it by pressing race-preference guidelines on government contractors. He pioneered sizable minority set-asides in federal procurement and contracting in the hopes of boosting black advancement in business. All in all, Nixon's was a pretty progressive record by the civil rights standards of the time.

But the terms of debate had changed by the late 1960s. Liberal civil rights activists became committed to the proposition that desegregation was not enough and that not just the moral responsibility but also the capacity to erase disparities between black and white Americans lay entirely with the broader society. They advocated large-scale government intervention to achieve "racial balance" throughout society. In K-12 education, because children were assigned to public schools by neighborhood, and because residential neighborhoods were largely sorted by race, this necessitated busing students across and even between school districts. Greater racial balance in neighborhoods could be achieved by placing housing projects in existing, majority-white communities. Poverty could be eased by greatly expanded welfare programs.

By these standards, conservatives fell short. They were skeptical that racial disparities could be solved by group-based policies and government programs. If anything, government policies risked setting up perverse incentives (financially encouraging the formation of single-parent families, for example) and lowering valuable social standards (dropping all screening for entrants to public housing).

But such interpretations were more than out of favor. The new civil rights activists enforced an orthodoxy of opinion on the subject of how to solve social disparities between blacks and whites. Daniel Patrick Moynihan discovered just how aggressively policed this orthodoxy was when, deeply concerned about black poverty, he authored a 1965 Department of Labor report—"The Negro Family: The Case for National Action"—that voiced concern about high rates of single-parent black families, which tended to have lower incomes. For his trouble, Moynihan was bitterly condemned as a bigot and his report as "blaming the victim." The latter became a common charge against commentators who tried to express genuine concern over the consequences of growing crime, delinquency, and disparities in educational performance, as well as illegitimacy.

U.S. Army troops escorting students as they leave Little Rock Central High School, 1957.

CORBIS

This orthodoxy was shared by academic public-opinion research. Many race scholars began to treat conservative attitudes as presumptively racist, including any skepticism about affirmative action or expression of the belief that opportunities for social mobility are alive and well. One study coded as racist any agreement with the statement that "The streets are not safe these days without a policeman around." Others detected racism in white voters' hesitation to vote for black candidates like Tom Bradley and Jesse Jackson. This line of research accumulated into a general indictment of conservatism.

The result was a chilling of honest

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debate. One Nixon aide later said of out-of-wedlock births: "You weren't supposed to talk about that." This self-censorship was costly, as evidence began to appear that busing had inconclusive effects on academic achievement, that minority set-asides did not spark black middle-class growth, that welfare, while helping many, harmed many others, and that problems like family structure, crime, and educational lags were worsening socio-economic disparities with devastating effectiveness.

It took no time at all for individual commentators to point out these problems, but it took decades for the intellectual orthodoxy to develop serious cracks. In the 1980s, Reagan administration lawyers challenged head-on the most expansive racial preferences and the assumptions that justified them. Welfare came under withering scrutiny from scholars like Charles Murray, and, in the 1990s, politicians and voters from both sides of the aisle enacted welfare reform to propel more of the poor into the labor market and toward lives of greater self-sufficiency. Just in the past few years, scholarship has begun to document some perverse effects of affirmative action programs. In 2005, the fortieth anniversary of the Moynihan Report was noted with articles that validated the original conclusions and condemned the smear that greeted its author.

In the end, the position that has best stood the test of time is the long-standing conservative proposition that improving individual capabilities—through quality education—is the best means of reducing socio-economic disparities, with the additional virtue of not being zero-sum, as racial preferences and minority set-asides are.

In the half-century since the 1957 Civil Rights Act, dramatic gains occurred in many areas, but rigid intellectual orthodoxies heavily contributed to the terrible worsening of problems in other areas. Maybe after 50 years, America is finally prepared to have a debate—driven by facts and not ideology—on how to tackle the remaining racial disparities. ♦

Mr. Chavez's Neighborhood

He's not very popular there.

BY DUNCAN CURRIE

Venezuela's cocksure president, Hugo Chávez, might take a sobering glance through the latest Pew Global Attitudes Survey, conducted this spring and released over the summer. Of the seven Latin American nations polled, large majorities of Chileans (75 percent), Brazilians (74 percent), Peruvians (70 percent), Mexicans (66 percent), and Bolivians (59 percent) express little or no confidence in Chávez "to do the right thing regarding world affairs." As Pew puts it, "He is widely recognized—and widely mistrusted—throughout Latin America." Even in Argentina, perhaps the most anti-American country in the region, a full 43 percent of respondents have little or no confidence in Chávez.

That's not all. Majorities in Brazil (65 percent), Chile (60 percent), Mexico (55 percent), and Bolivia (53 percent), along with a plurality in Peru (47 percent), agree that "most people are better off in a free market economy, even though some people are rich and some are poor." Indeed, a whopping 72 percent of Venezuelans agree with that statement. "There is broad support for free-market economic policies across Latin America," Pew reports, "despite the election in the past decade of leftist leaders."

The term "leftist," though often used to describe authoritarian radicals such as Chávez, is also appropriated for left-wing democrats like Michelle Bachelet of Chile and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil. The leftward drift of many Latin American countries in recent years should not be confused with a massive shift into the Chávez camp. Most Latin governments, whether center-right or center-left, have upheld the institutions of democracy and embraced responsible fiscal policies.

"I don't see this big, looming, radical lurch to the left," says Carol Graham, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. She points to the emergence of "market-friendly reformers" in Brazil, Chile, Peru, Uruguay, Paraguay, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and elsewhere. The conservative Otto Reich, who served as a senior diplomat for Latin America under Presidents Reagan and George W. Bush, stresses that Washington need not fear the "democratic left," epitomized by Bachelet and Lula, which Reich separates from the "extreme," antidemocratic left, epitomized by Chávez. Since 1990, Reich notes, the Chilean economic miracle has been piloted by a center-left coalition, with stunning results. "Chile is a true Latin American success case," which should caution against viewing the Latin left as monolithic.

Chávez may be a throwback to the old South American *caudillos*, who blended populism, authoritarianism, and military rule. But even his two supposed protégés, Evo Morales of Bolivia and Rafael Correa of Ecuador, are hardly carbon copies. In Nicaragua, Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega regained power with less than 40 percent of the vote, thanks to election rules that make it possible for a candidate to win the presidency with just 35 percent. But a majority of Nicaraguans voted for one of the two center-right candidates. Thus far, Ortega has accepted the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

Talk of a populist surge in the region

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contains some truth. But Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua are three of Latin America's weakest, poorest countries, never fully integrated into the global economy. As Christopher Sabatini, senior policy director at the Americas Society and editor in chief of *Americas Quarterly*, points out, the elections of Morales and Correa were based less on ideology than on practical grievances. And Ortega's victory was certainly "not a triumph of leftism," but rather "a triumph of electoral manipulation."

While Argentine president Néstor Kirchner has also cast his lot with the Chávez forces, the post-2002 Argentine economic recovery owes much to "neoliberal" policies charted by former finance minister Roberto Lavagna, whom Kirchner sacked in late 2005. Kirchner is not seeking reelection next month, hoping instead to be succeeded by his wife, the Argentine first lady. Opponents lodge credible complaints about their autocratic tendencies.

Argentina may now be part of the Chávez orbit. But Mexico and Peru are not, demonstrating the very real limits of his appeal. During the 2006 Mexican presidential race, center-right candidate Felipe Calderón repeatedly associated his populist opponent with Chávez and wound up rallying to victory. In the 2006 Peruvian election, Chávez lent full-throated support to a radical nationalist named Ollanta Humala. This allowed the more moderate Alan García to frame the election as a choice "between Hugo Chávez and Peru." Thanks in part to the Chávez albatross, García defeated Humala in the runoff. His center-left regime has pursued a sound economic agenda and backed a free trade agreement with the United States.

Indeed, the regional climate as a whole is relatively encouraging, given the financial crises of the 1990s and early 2000s and Latin America's history of coups and political upheaval. The Pew survey found that Latin publics are, on balance, more satisfied with their quality of life and family income than they were five years ago. The *Economist* reckons that many Latin economies are experiencing their best performance "since the mid-1970s," with solid growth rates and a burgeoning middle class in countries such as Brazil and Mexico. "Economic management has really never been better," says Peter Hakim, president of the Inter-American Dialogue.

Hugo Chávez

THOMAS FLUHARTY

This is not to paint an overly sanguine picture. Poverty is still a serious problem. Judicial systems need reform, as does education. Corruption, cronyism, and crime remain widespread. Drug cartels are raising havoc in Mexico, murdering journalists and triggering bad memories of Colombia. Guatemala's recent presidential campaign was marred by bloody violence and a raft of political murders. Panama just elected to lead its national assembly a pro-Noriega radical, who has been indicted in the United States for the 1992 killing of an American soldier.

Meanwhile, as the Pew survey notes, "The image of the United States has eroded since 2002 in all six Latin American countries for which trends are available." A breakdown in hemispheric cooperation could yield a power vacuum for Chávez to fill with his oil-soaked "Bolivarian" revolution. Resource-hungry China is also competing for influence. Sabatini worries that a failure by Congress to approve the U.S.-Colombia free trade pact would "signal that the United States is abdicating its leadership in the region." In a recent conversation with Reich, a high-ranking Latin American security official expressed alarm over the consequences of isolating Colombia, whose center-right government is a strong U.S. ally.

Finally, a windfall of petrodollars has given Chávez influence beyond Latin America. Using his vast oil wealth, he has moved closer to Iran and Russia, signing energy and arms deals. This summer Chávez agreed to sell Iran cut-rate gasoline; in 2006, he bought fighter jets and helicopters from Moscow. Among others, former Republican senator Rick Santorum has drawn attention to the potential threats posed by the Tehran-Caracas axis.

Chávez-style radicalism may be present in the Andes, but it is not sweeping the region. "There's a lot of reason to be very optimistic," says Sabatini, especially "about the most powerful countries." Whether Latin governments are left or right is ultimately less important than whether they adopt policies that are forward-looking and modern. "Democratic politics is really very healthy in Latin America," says Hakim. "This is a good period for the region." ♦

Defeat At Any Price

Democrats worried that Petraeus would impress the country as dispassionate and serious—which he did. He said that much work remains—but that Iraq has turned a corner. It was a Democratic nightmare.

General Petraeus testifies before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee

By David Gelernter

To prepare for General David Petraeus's long-awaited testimony on Iraq to Congress last week, the liberal pressure group MoveOn.org wrote itself into the history books with an anti-Petraeus ad so repulsive it ranked with Lyndon Johnson's infamous 1964 TV spot in the campaign against Barry Goldwater: A little girl picking flowers dis-

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PHOTOS BY LEV NISNEVITCH / WEEKLY STANDARD

solved into a mushroom cloud, and then the screen went black. (Evidently by voting for Goldwater, you expressed your support for nuclear holocaust.) But gleeful Republicans who are certain that MoveOn has finally tipped its hand and shown America what the left is all about should remember that Johnson won that election, in a landslide. Because MoveOn headlined its ugly ad with an ugly rhyme ("General Betray Us"), it will stick in the public mind. But it is just possible that the public will invite MoveOn to take their ad and ShoveIt.

Democrats at the hearings themselves found it impossible to look this capable, thoughtful, distinguished man in the face and endorse the MoveOn ad. But don't get them wrong: Leading Democrats had dumped on Petraeus often in the past, and were dumping furiously in preparation for the hearings. Petraeus is guilty of "carefully manipulating the statistics," Senator Dick Durbin announced; in fact the general has "made a number of statements over the years that have not proven to be factual" (in strict contradistinction to Majority Leader Harry Reid), said Majority Leader Harry Reid. Barbara Boxer and Joe Biden plunged their knives in also.

The Democrats were scared for a reason. They worried that Petraeus would impress the country as dispassionate and serious—which he did. He called Bush's troop surge no unqualified success, said that much work remains—but that Iraq has turned a corner; has achieved tangible, important results in its fight against terrorism and inter-sect violence since the surge began. It was a Democratic nightmare.

America's ambassador to Iraq, Ryan Crocker, had the harder job of reporting on political progress. He said, too, that much work remained; Iraq's political health is bad in some ways, improving in others. But one fact towers above the rest like the ghost of the World Trade Center: If we stay put until the patient is stable, we face a tough job; if we panic and run, we face catastrophe.

Again this message was bad news for leading Democrats. But their reaction was just what it should've been, given that President Bush is the enemy—and, like the man said, politics ain't beanbag. Surely it's only natural for leading Democrats in Congress and the presidential campaign, and their vicious lap dogs on the web, to hope for the president's policies to fail.

Americans are so accustomed (or inured) to this attitude that they rarely step back and ask, *What the hell is going on here?*

The issue isn't tactics—doesn't concern the draw-down that the administration has forecast and General Petraeus has now discussed, or how this draw-down should work, or how specific such talk ought to be. The issue is deeper. It's time for Americans to ask some big questions. *Do leading Democrats want America to win this war?* Have they ever?

Of course not—and not because they are traitors. To leading Democrats such as Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, Al Gore and John Edwards, *America would be better off if she lost*. And this has been true from the start.

To rephrase the question: Why did Harry Reid announce months ago that the war was lost when it wasn't, and everyone knew it wasn't? The wish is father to the deed. He was envisioning the world of his dreams.

The Democrats' embrace of defeat is inspired by no base desire to see Americans killed or American resources wasted. But let's be honest about it, and invite the Democrats to be honest too.

Appeasement, pacifism, globalism: Those are the Big Three principles of the Democratic left. Each one has been defended by serious people; all are philosophically plausible, or at least arguable. But they are unpopular (especially

the first two) with the U.S. public, and so the Democrats rarely make their views plain. We must infer their ideas from their (usually) guarded public statements.

Globalism and Euro-envy are explicit, sometimes, in Democratic pronouncements—about the sanctity of the United Nations, the importance of global conferences and "multilateralism" (except in cases like North Korea, where the president already *is* moving multilaterally), the superiority of the Canadian or German health care system, and so forth. The Democrats are not unpatriotic, but their patriotism is directed at a large abstract entity called The International Community or even (aping Bronze Age paganism) the Earth, not at America. Benjamin Disraeli anticipated this worldview long ago when he called Liberals the "Philosophical" and Conservatives the "National" party. Liberals are loyal to philosophical abstractions—and seek harmony with the French and Germans. Conservatives are loyal to their own nation, and seek harmony with its Founders and heroes and guiding principles.

The Democrats don't conceal their globalist ideas, but their appeasement and pacifism are positions they can only hint at.

So Democratic senator Dick Durbin had the effrontery to plead with the nation to pray for our Iraq wounded and please not to forget them—as if Republicans need Dick Durbin to remind them to honor our troops. When Democrats dwell on alleged analogies between Iraq and Vietnam, the message is clear. "Bring our troops home," says Harry Reid, and adds the incantation "responsibly"—which magically protects him from all charges of irresponsibility. ("Abolish the Constitution and sink the Navy—*responsibly*!") When MoveOn held a candlelight vigil over the summer to support Senate Democrats, the symbolism was plain. We light candles to remember the dead.

But if we *only* remember the dead and not the cause for which they died, we dishonor and make nonsense of the noblest of all sacrifices. And we mock a president who asked that "from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain." *That* is the issue when Americans die in combat. Do we finish the mission and invest their deaths with meaning? Or do we shrug them off, inscribe their names on some sepulchral black wall in a ditch, and walk away?

Of course if our mission in Iraq were wrong or foolish or impossible, we would be right to abandon it. But recall that Americans have fought and died in Iraq to destroy a

Joe Biden, Chris Dodd, John Kerry

tyranny that was underwriting terrorism, threatening the peace of its region and the world—and torturing its own people to death. Americans died to put Iraq in the hands of a government that would terrorize neither its own people nor any other nor the world at large. Their mission was noble and right.

It is incomprehensible that the administration so rarely discusses the moral side of our achievement in Iraq. No doubt it's still impossible, in today's world, to launch a major war and depose a government merely for the sake of humanity, merely to rescue a people that is being torn apart and eaten alive by its rulers, merely on principle—although it is fair to wonder, 60-odd years after the Shoah, when it *will* be possible. But Americanism has long held that when we are forced to fight for our interests, we ought to fight for our principles too.

It's proving a harder fight than we anticipated. We've made serious mistakes along the way. Both statements apply to most American wars. The difference today is that some leading Americans would prefer defeat to victory.

Compare today's war in Iraq with the American fight to clear the Japanese out of Guadalcanal, from September 1942 through early February '43. Obviously that was a vastly shorter stretch than our time in Iraq—but losses in the South Pacific were incomparably greater. Imagine Harry Reid's reaction to news like this: During our first landings, four Allied heavy cruisers (three American) were sunk and a fifth chased away in a battle lasting 32 minutes; nearly 1,300 Americans died. (Multicultural enthusiasts who teach our children that white men are the bane of the earth should explain why Guadalcanal's native Melanesians "were uniformly hostile to the Japanese," according to Samuel Eliot Morison, "and friendly to the Allies.")

At the start of the Guadalcanal fighting, 1,600 American Marines and GIs died on the ground in a single month. Morison writes that "mid-October marked the nadir of misery" for Americans on that rank and lethal island. But one of the most notorious episodes of the war was still to come: In November the Japanese sank the U.S. cruiser *Juneau*. Six hundred men drowned; another 100 clung to the wreckage—of whom 90 were eaten by sharks or went mad in the open sea without food, water, or shelter and then drowned alongside their crewmates. The 690 deaths in this one crew included the famous five Sullivan brothers.

By the start of February nearly all Japanese troops on the island had been killed, but the rest fought desperately and brutally, as they had from the start; every Japanese soldier was (in effect) a suicide bomber who preferred death to surrender. Guadalcanal was secured at last on February 9.

You might argue that World War II has nothing to do with Iraq; after all, the Japanese started the fight by attacking our fleet at Pearl Harbor. But even the Japanese never succeeded in slaughtering civilians on the U.S. mainland. And those who think that our war in Iraq has nothing to do with the 9/11 murderers, or their friends whose ultimate target is America, are living in Fantasyland.

People like to write nowadays about the courage and resolution of our troops in World War II—praise that is richly deserved. But the facts suggest that our men on the front lines in Iraq today are just as brave and resolute as our World War II troops. ("Men" meaning "males"; Army regulation AR 600-13 of 1994, confirmed by the Department of Defense, bars women from combat in ground warfare—although women can, of course, be exposed to danger and capture in staff and support jobs, to our national disgrace. Then again, why worry? Doubtless no enemy so religious, so very pious that he is willing to slaughter soldiers and civilians at random in exchange for a generous allotment of virgins in heaven, could possibly contemplate molesting a captive American female.) Victory in World War II required brave soldiers—and civilians who backed them up with a different sort of bravery, vastly easier to achieve but just as crucial in its way. It's not our soldiers (Lord knows) who have turned coward in this war; it's we who have turned defeatist. We civilians—or at any rate the Democratic leaders among us.

If you believe in appeasement, defeat in Iraq would show that we were wrong to stop talking and start fighting. If you believe in pacifism, defeat would demonstrate that war is futile even if your motives are good. If you believe in globalism, defeat would suggest that we should have acted strictly in concert with world opinion. In short, if you do believe in appeasement, pacifism, globalism (and many leading Democrats do), your wish for defeat is no evil or traitorous urge. It is merely logical.

Pacifist globalism is radically at odds with Americanism. Where did this new creed come from?

It also, of course, contradicts traditional Americanism right down to the ground. Americanism is the set of beliefs that has always held this country together in its large embrace. Americanism calls for liberty, equality, and democracy for all mankind. And it urges this nation to promote the American Creed wherever and whenever it can—to be the shining city on a hill, the "last, best hope of earth." Ultimately, Americanism is derived from the Bible. The Bible itself has been a grand unifying force in American society, uniting Christians of many creeds from Eastern Orthodox to Unitarian, and Jews, and Bible-respecting deists like Thomas Jefferson—and many others who respect and honor the Bible whatever their own religious beliefs.

Pacifist globalism is radically at odds with Americanism. Where did this new creed come from, and where is it headed?

It was imported from Europe, where it originated during and after World War I. It hibernated in America until Vietnam—America's very own First World War, according to the left: a futile bloodbath. Reagan and, later, the Gulf war sent this European creed into hibernation once again. But Iraq is the left's chance to convert large numbers of Americans from Americanism to Euro-style pacifist globalism. If the balance should tip—if a majority or even a large minority of Americans should abandon Americanism—that would be a cultural watershed.

And it would mark the start of America's decline just as surely as World War I and its consequences marked the start of Europe's.

How did pacifist globalism, grossly unpopular in the Western world before the First World War, rise to a dominant position in contemporary Europe—and then come to threaten Americanism on our own shores?

World War I barely exists in American memory. When Americans think about it at all, they are apt to picture a violently buffoonish comic opera with men dying by the million. Which is partly true: On the western front, where Germany grappled with the Allies (led by France, Britain, and later America), the war was indeed fought with murderous irresponsibility on both sides. The nearly incomprehensible destruction (60,000 British casualties at the Somme—on the first day) has obscured the fact that Britain entered this war for almost exactly the same reason she entered World War II. Germany had smashed, splintered, and slaughtered her way into a small neighboring state that Britain had promised to protect: Belgium in World War I, Poland in World War II.

Appeasement, pacifism, globalism: Those are the Big Three principles of the Democratic left. They are unpopular (especially the first two) with the U.S. public, and so the Democrats rarely make their views plain.

The cause was right, but the casualties were so enormous, they turned European thinking back on itself (like bending a steel beam in two, or making a U-turn in an aircraft carrier)—and it's no wonder. Pacifist globalism was a natural response to unspeakable war casualties, just as disabling mental illness was a natural response to awful childhood trauma in the Freudian worldview that once dominated Western thinking.

Pacifist globalism has nearly always been popular with intellectuals. But in 1920s and '30s Britain, it suddenly became the creed of the nation—*and* of Conservative prime ministers with large majorities in the House of Commons: of Stanley Baldwin (said by a colleague to be "for peace at any price") and Neville Chamberlain, his chosen successor. "Many and varied were the suggestions made" on behalf of pacifism, wrote Malcolm Muggeridge; "many and varied the enterprises launched, great the expenditure of energy and passion, enormous the area of paper covered, heartfelt the vows taken, undeniably sincere the words spoken." (Muggeridge notes that "postcards were dispatched to addresses chosen at random from German directories, stating that the writers of them were resolved in all circumstances to practice non-resistance, surprise being expressed that these communications were duly delivered.") Globalism expressed itself, meanwhile, in earnest dedication to the League of Nations—an institution that proved itself even more useless than the United Nations. An impressive feat.

Pacifist globalism was so popular it lost World War II for the tragically underprepared French and nearly lost it for the British. The British pulled themselves together and made a heroic stand, but the French will never live down (least of all in their own minds) the humiliation of being overrun by German armor in a matter of weeks; of choosing not even to defend their beloved capital city. Poland put up a stiffer fight than France in the Second World War.

America proved immune to pacifist globalism, until Vietnam. The Vietnam war was nothing like World War I, despite the implicit analogies that emerged later. At first it was run badly, but when General Creighton Abrams replaced William Westmoreland as supreme American commander in May 1968, our strategy changed dramatically. With Abrams in charge the war "was being won on the ground," wrote the historian Lewis Sorley, "even as it was being lost at the peace table and in the U.S. Congress." Americans continued to support the war effort nearly until the end. The 1972 presidential election was a referendum on Viet-

nam; "Come home, America!" preached the antiwar Democrat George McGovern—and lost to Richard Nixon in a landslide. Of all U.S. population segments, 18- to 24-year-old men—who were subject to the draft and manned the front lines—were consistently the war's strongest supporters. "It was not the American people which lost its stomach," wrote the British historian Paul Johnson, "it was the American leadership."

But intellectuals succeeded in squeezing Vietnam into the dreaded iron maiden of World War I. They succeeded in smearing it, in other words, as a futile, pointless massacre. The results were inevitable. In the 1970s, Americanism was in danger for the first time since the Civil War. Americans, who had always seen the distinction between just and unjust wars, were in peril of contracting the moral blindness called pacifism—and of laying in stocks of the ever-popular snake oil called globalism.

Americans traditionally like their two opposing parties to differ on domestic affairs but agree on basic foreign policy, especially in an age when maniac, murderous jihadists are on the march.

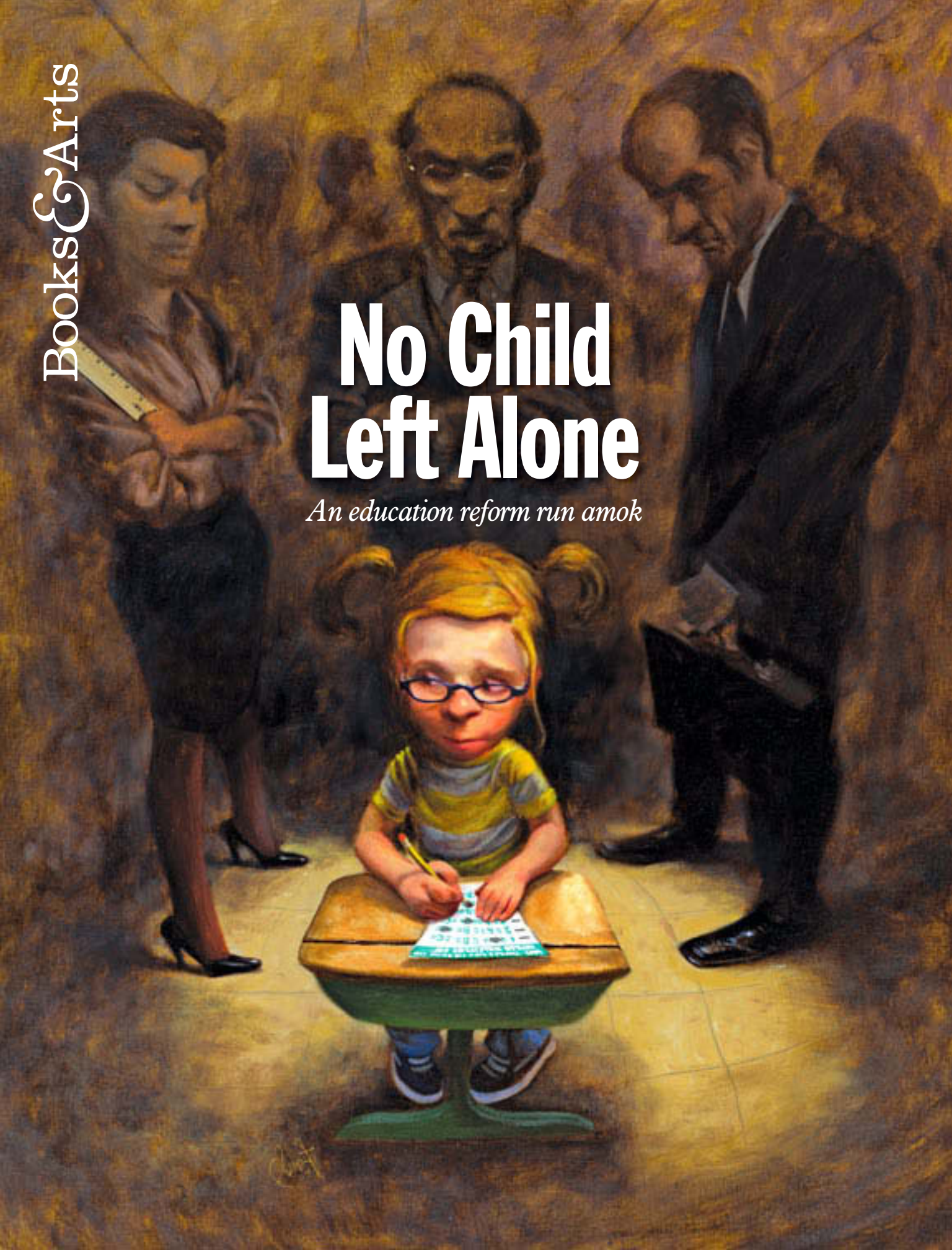
Ronald Reagan turned things around. He brought Americanism back; he repeated what John Winthrop had written in 1630 about America, the shining city on a hill. Americanism had weathered its greatest crisis since 1861. Or so it seemed.

But Iraq has made everything fresh and new for the Democratic leadership. If it can paint Iraq as another Vietnam and relive its great triumphs of the 1970s, the damage done to the American psyche might be permanent. Americans might stop believing in liberty, equality, and democracy for all mankind and retreat to the revised European version: liberty, equality, and democracy (of a sort)—for us. Instead of believing Lincoln's words—"with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in"—Americans might become self-satisfied and complacent pseudo-Europeans. Hollow men. Without Americanism, America joins the European robot republics that have no spiritual life and don't even miss it.

But it's also possible that the Democratic leadership's wish for American defeat in Iraq will make it clear to this nation (to conservatives and liberals) that today's Democratic party is no longer a responsible party of government—at least at the national level where America's security, vision, and honor are at stake.

Possibly "New Democrats" à la Tony Blair will rally round such lonely voices as Joe Lieberman's—but remember that New Labour fought its way out of the political womb and all the way to Number 10 only because of the Tories' ongoing nervous breakdown. More likely, America's political spectrum a decade or more in the future will be defined by two parties both born of today's GOP after a natural and painless mitosis. There's at least as much distance between a Rudy Giuliani and a Mike Huckabee as there ever was between JFK and Nixon, or even Adlai Stevenson and Dwight Eisenhower. Americans traditionally like their two opposing parties to differ on domestic affairs but agree on basic foreign policy—not because things are nicer that way; rather because foreign-policy arguments are good for our enemies, bad for our friends, and hugely dangerous to ourselves—especially in an age when swarms of maniac, murderous jihadists blacken the Middle East like toxic locusts.

Listen to what the Democrats are *really* saying. Consider what they actually want. And pray God they never get it. ♦



No Child Left Alone

An education reform run amok

BY ANDREW FERGUSON

There used to be a lot of school kids crowding the Surratt House Museum in Clinton, Maryland, a few miles south of Washington. Their teachers would haul them in by the busload—more than a thousand a year. The museum is housed in the homestead of one of the conspirators who was hanged for the murder of Abraham Lincoln. It's small, but it offers an unexpectedly comprehensive review of the Civil War, with a special emphasis on the assassination, and for years grade-school teachers in southern Maryland have used a field trip there as a convenient way to keep their students awake long enough to introduce them to an important episode in their nation's history.

In the last couple years, though, attendance has dried up—cut by more than half, according to Laurie Verge, the museum's director. Laurie is a former history teacher herself. From talks with old colleagues, she's pretty sure how to account for the undesired quiet that has fallen over her museum most weekdays: "The schools just don't have as much room for history or social studies in their curriculums any more," she says. "Ever since No Child Left Behind."

That would be the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, or NCLB as it has come to be known, the totem of national education reform and bipartisan bonhomie that for six years has stood as the signal domestic achievement of the Bush administration—and the exemplar of the Big Government Conservatism with which George W. Bush's reformers hoped to remake the way Republicans govern. Among many other things, the bill authorized the federal Department of Education to subject every student in every public school in the country to an elaborate regime of testing in reading and math. How well the students do on those tests determines how much money their schools and school districts receive from the federal government, and determines also, in remarkable detail, how the federal government will allow that money to be spent.

Reformers are busy people, tireless people, whose displeasure with the world as it is inspires them to improve the lives of their fellow human beings no matter what, and they get cranky when you bring up the law of unintended consequences. They dislike the implication that the benefits they confer in one field might lead to a shrinking of benefits in another. Yet the decline in attendance at Laurie Verge's wonderful little museum is, indeed, an unintended consequence of NCLB—just one of many, and a small one at that. Though no one thought of it in the long, sweaty hours while the bill was being written, or mentioned it in the self-congratulatory giddiness surrounding its final passage, NCLB's exclusive emphasis on reading and math has led a high percentage of schools (around 40 percent, according to one recent survey) to cut back on the teaching of history, civics, and government to the country's schoolchildren.

The irony here is hard to avoid: Republicans, who used to lament the rising tide of "historical illiteracy," have now reformed the nation's schools in such a way that can only swell the tide. But there are lots of ironies in Big Government Conservatism. Luckily for us, a handful of new books provides an opportunity to think about NCLB and its many consequences—and, by extension, to ask the question: So how's this Big Government Conservatism thing working out for us?

No Child Left Behind
Peter Lang Primer
By Frederick M. Hess and Michael J. Petrilli
Peter Lang Publishing
152 pp., $18.95

No Child Left Behind and the Public Schools
Why NCLB will fail to close the achievement gap—and what we can do about it
By Scott Franklin Abernathy
Michigan, 216 pp., $24.95

Leviathan on the Right
How Big Government Conservatism Brought Down the Republican Revolution
By Michael D. Tanner
Cato Institute, 165 pp., $22.95

Mis-Education in Schools
Beyond the Slogans and Double Talk
By Howard Good
Rowman & Littlefield
104 pp., $19.95

The Educational Morass
Overcoming the Stalemate in American Education
By Myron Lieberman
Rowman & Littlefield
256 pp., $24.95

THOMAS FLUHARTY

Andrew Ferguson, a senior editor at The Weekly Standard, *is the author, most recently, of* Land of Lincoln: Adventures in Abe's America.

Michael Tanner, of the libertarian Cato Institute, devotes only a single chapter to NCLB in his manifesto against BGC (as he doesn't call it but I will, to save my fingers the typing). His critique of both the education reform and the philosophy it grew from is unrelenting, absolute, and refreshingly dyspeptic. With the authors of the other books here, liberal and conservative alike, he shares the near-universal diagnosis of the country's education troubles:

> No one can deny the need to reform our education system. Our society is becoming increasingly divided between those with the skills and education needed to function in the increasingly competitive global economy and those without such skills and education…. At the same time that education is becoming increasingly crucial, government schools are doing an increasingly poor job of educating children.

("Government schools," by the way, is Libertarian for "public schools.")

Evidence for the failure of the schools, as Tanner says, is longstanding and everywhere. It's found in a generation's worth of falling test scores and in the poor performance of American schoolchildren in international rankings (21st in math, 16th in science). More to the point, the creators of the nation's wealth have expressed their displeasure with America's primary and secondary schools. Sixty percent of businessmen in a poll last year rated the reading and math abilities of their recent hires as "fair" or "poor."

Among federal officeholders, including some Republicans, feeble education has been a public concern for a long time. The decline in schools, from the conservative point of view, has had many causes: poorly trained teachers, undemanding curriculums suffused with political correctness and multiculturalism, the abandonment of drill and memorization and other traditional tools of learning, and a general refusal on the part of a new generation of administrators to impose, and live up to, high standards of achievement. And one way to reverse these trends, it was thought, was to hold schools accountable for the education of their students: Test the kids, publish the scores, and let parents, armed with the results, decide whether the teachers and administrators were doing the job they were hired to do.

It's certainly a sound idea—which is not, of course, the same thing as saying it's an idea that should be imposed nationwide by the employees of the Department of Education. The distinction is usually lost on the practitioners of BGC, however. Their premise, as Tanner puts it, is this: "If something is a good idea, it needs to be a federal program." In the past, of course, this eagerness to nationalize good intentions has been more commonly associated with Democrats than Republicans. But that was before the onset of BGC.

The seeds were sown in the 1990s, when the most powerful and successful officeholders in the Republican party were governors. With the executive branch in Washington in the hands of Democrats, Republicans were ardent believers in the principles of federalism and subsidiarity. Subsidiarity—the idea, if not the word—had long been considered essential to the American scheme of dispersed power: There are spheres of action appropriate to state governments, and to local governments, that are not appropriate to the federal government. Some things are controlled by only one level of government, in other words, so that no one level of government controls everything. Subsidiarity acts as a stay. It requires, on the part of the governing class, a restraint and humility unique to self-government—a willingness not to exert power over others, no matter how tempting the thought might be or how admirable the cause.

"As I would not be a slave," said the founder of modern American conservatism, "so I would not be a master."

But in the 1990s, federalism and subsidiarity had political benefits, too, as the governors discovered. States, Republicans said (borrowing a phrase from the socialist Louis Brandeis), were "the laboratories of democracy," hothouses of the hinterland. It was there that new ideas in welfare policy, education, taxation, and environmental regulation could be put into practice and their results tested and measured, while keeping the (Democratic) busybodies of Washington at bay. Even better, or so it seemed, the passion for state and local activism allowed Republicans to overcome their reputation for being antagonistic to government. It wasn't just Democrats who embraced, as the phrase went, "proactive solutions to today's problems."

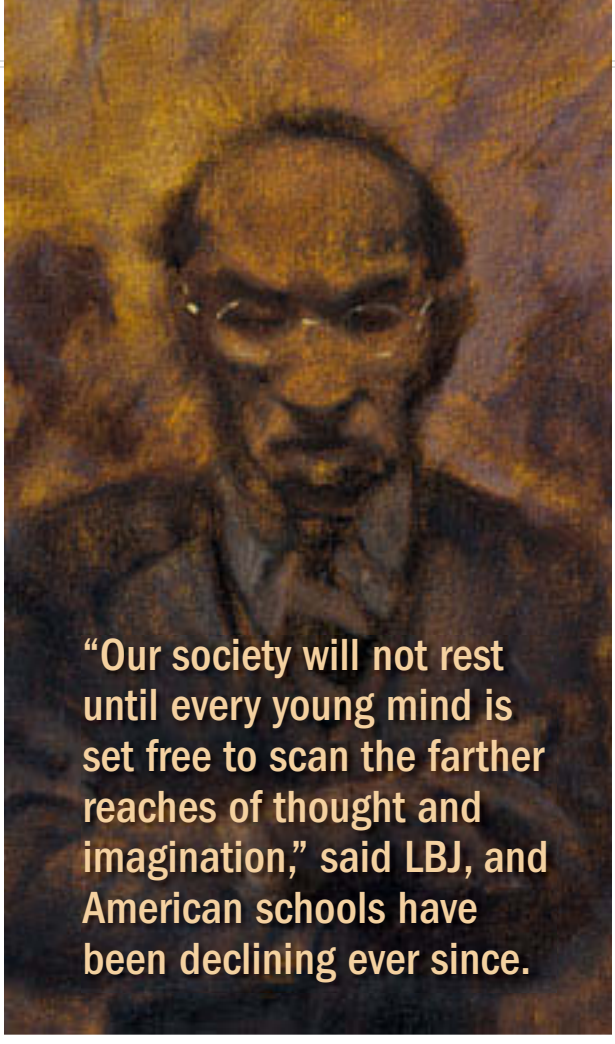
One of those can-do Republican governors of the 1990s was George W. Bush. When he gained the White House, no one should have been surprised that he transferred his taste for "conservative activism" to the biggest laboratory of them all, the federal government.

"I care about results," he said often during the 2000 campaign. "I'm passionate about getting things done." His passion for federalism, however, was less ardent, and it terminated with his governorship. For Big Government Conservatives, as Tanner shows, subsidiarity is an indulgence that people serious about governing can't afford.

"At a fundamental level," he writes, "Big Government Conservatives are much more concerned with ends than means. Something as process-oriented as federalism can't be allowed to get in the way of doing things that big-government conservatives believe need to be done." This was true even in the treatment of public schools, where the tradition of local control is as old as the institutions them-

selves. In putting together NCLB, all the BGCs of the Bush administration had to ask themselves was: Will this work? Given the national calamity of failing schools, self-restraint seemed almost irresponsible. The desire to do good, joined to a plausible forecast of success, was enough to override such philosophical or procedural objections as subsidiarity, federalism, or the decentralization of power.

In this Bismarckian approach to "getting things done," modern liberalism and BGC are essentially indistinguishable. "Big government conservatives," writes Tanner, with his usual acerbity, "share a common arrogance with contemporary liberalism." Nowhere is the impertinence better displayed than in the NCLB—so much so that Tanner, a rightward-leaning libertarian, wonders whether the act can even be considered "conservative" in any identifiable sense at all.



"Our society will not rest until every young mind is set free to scan the farther reaches of thought and imagination," said LBJ, and American schools have been declining ever since.

Scott Franklin Abernathy, a political scientist at the University of Minnesota, wonders the same thing, and arrives at the same conclusion, from the opposite direction. On the evidence of his new book, *No Child Left Behind and the Public Schools*, Abernathy is no Republican. Indeed, he seems actively hostile to the Bush administration. But he is a great booster of NCLB, which he sees more clearly than many Republicans do. The overriding goal of NCLB, as he notes, is to close the "achievement gap" between students who perform well in school and those who perform poorly. (Confusingly—in a mistake common among education reformers—Abernathy calls the former "advantaged" students and the latter "disadvantaged" students, though of course many students from wealthy families do horribly in school while many poor students excel.)

"If properly implemented and sufficiently funded," writes Franklin, "NCLB holds the promise of being one of the great liberal reforms in the history of U.S. education." Earlier reforms, such as mandated busing or the Americans with Disabilities Act, were "about equality of opportunity; NCLB aims to provide equality of outcomes. This is a very radical and ambitious goal."

In their indispensable primer on NCLB, Frederick Hess and Michael Petrilli make the same point, quoting the education adviser to John Kerry: "At its heart, this is the sort of law liberals once dreamed about. . . . The law requires a form of affirmative action: States must show that minority and poor students are achieving proficiency like every one else, or else provide remedies targeted to the schools those students attend."

The goal of forcing equality in performance would have been beyond the wildest dreams of the most starry-eyed reformers back in 1965, when the federal bureaucracy made its first great lunge at local schools. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was a cornerstone of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and the forerunner of NCLB. The motive behind the 1965 act was, as reformers' motives always are, beyond criticism: A desire to improve schools in poor neighborhoods.

"Our society will not rest until every young mind is set free to scan the farther reaches of thought and imagination," said LBJ, and American schools have been declining ever since. Johnson's overwrought rhetoric might sound familiar, too: The same extravagance and grandiosity would reappear in Bush's education speeches 40 years later. The difference is that Bush tried to write his into law.

To close the achievement gap, NCLB requires that every teacher in America will be "highly qualified" and that every student will be "proficient" in reading and math by the 2013-14 school year—a 100 percent success rate that no government program has ever reached. Johnson's bill mostly left good schools alone, while showering poor schools with money in hopes they might become good schools. NCLB ropes all schools together, entangling successful schools in the same bureaucratic regime designed

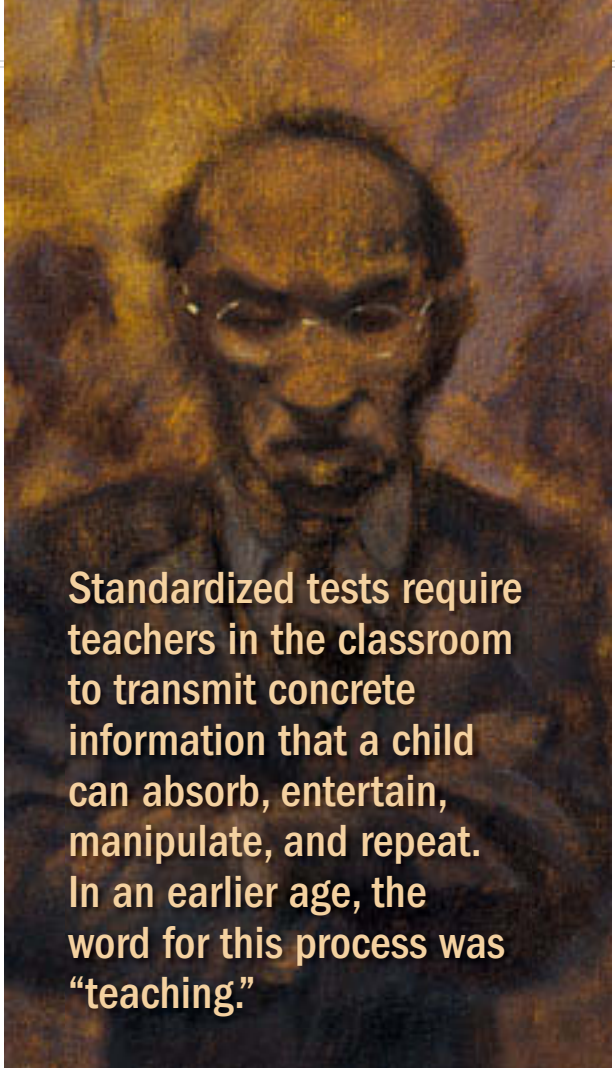
for schools where most students aren't succeeding.

Schools whose principals and teachers have set high expectations and standards will face a federal funding formula that requires much less of them. In its practical application, as Abernathy notes, NCLB is a classic exercise in leveling—a way of slowing the caravan, so to speak, to keep the slowest wagons from falling further behind.

That's the intent, anyway, though how effective it will be is uncertain—and at the moment unknowable. The statistics generated by the law are impenetrable to all but the bureaucrats themselves. NCLB, for example, makes a fetish of racial classification; it is, indeed, the most explicitly racialist piece of legislation since the fall of Jim Crow. (The principle of colorblindness is another nicety that Big Government Conservatives have no patience for.) Students in every school are zippered-up into eight different categories, five having to do with race and ethnicity, three with income and the ability to speak English. If students in any one of these categories fail to perform to the Department of Education's demands, the entire school faces sanction. Over time the sanctions grow increasingly severe. After a few years, the Education Department nationalizes the school, dictating budgets, personnel policies, and hiring decisions.

By Abernathy's reckoning, there are 36 possible ways in which an individual school or district can earn failing marks and thus find itself an object of special attention from Washington. What happens to well-performing students in those schools, who will see resources diverted or dry up altogether, is apparently a matter of indifference—another unintended consequence.

The problem of leveling doesn't trouble Abernathy too much. He dwells, instead, on the more conventional objections made by reformers who think NCLB doesn't go far enough in nationalizing local schools. In a nod to federalism that seems quaint in retrospect, NCLB allowed the states to define "proficiency" and "highly qualified."



Standardized tests require teachers in the classroom to transmit concrete information that a child can absorb, entertain, manipulate, and repeat. In an earlier age, the word for this process was "teaching."

Abernathy worries that the lack of a single standard makes cross-state comparisons, and even school-to-school comparisons, difficult and sometimes impossible. It also opens statistical loopholes that allow individual schools, school districts, and entire states to create the impression that they're meeting NCLB goals when they're not.

To satisfy these objections, federal policymakers would have to make NCLB even more intrusive than it is. And sure enough, some BGCs have begun calling for the Education Department to impose national standardized tests fitted to a national curriculum in reading and math. The step is already implicit in the logic of NCLB. In fact, this final sweeping-away of the vestiges of local control would probably be inevitable, except that some supporters of NCLB have come to dislike the very idea of standardized tests—the primary means of establishing the "accountability" that Big Government Conservatives say lies at the heart of the law.

Standardized tests are one-size-fits-all, say the critics; clumsy and crude, tests can never adequately measure student achievement. The worry, says Abernathy, is that teachers, hamstrung by NCLB, are smothering their marvelous creativity and resigning themselves to "teaching to the test." This is another way of saying that standardized tests, at least in theory, require teachers in the classroom to forgo therapeutic exercises in self-expression and to transmit concrete information that a child can absorb, entertain, manipulate, and repeat. In an earlier age, the word for this process was "teaching." Now it is a threat to our educators' self-image—indeed, their way of life.

"In their single-minded desire to improve test scores," Abernathy writes, "schools and teachers [may] damage the breadth and quality of their curriculum." Which assumes, of course, that their curriculum actually had breadth and quality.

Abernathy's anti-testing bias is widely shared, even, as he shows, among supporters of NCLB. As a philosophical

proposition, the bias leads sooner or later to a kind of cul de sac of postmodern relativism: Who's to say, really, what a good education is? "So many factors," Abernathy writes, "contribute to and confound what ultimately happens at the interface between a student's mind and the school's products that policymakers should think very carefully about how to measure 'educational quality.'"

Note the ironical quotation marks around those last two words, as though the idea of educational quality was some sort of fuddy-duddyism, like "motorcar," that no up-to-date person would use. "Can we ever really know if a child's education is good?" he asks.

Leave aside whether education can really be reformed by people who invent phrases like "the interface between a student's mind and the school's product." Abernathy's question represents a potentially fatal objection to NCLB, coming as it does from a vigorous supporter of the law. It strikes directly at the case that BGCs have made for their education reform, which, after all, aims over the next seven years to ensure that the education that every student receives is *good*—provably and objectively good, without ironical quote marks.

But Abernathy does give us a sense of how the vast new powers that NCLB has handed to functionaries in Washington will be used, and will not be used, when the Republican functionaries are replaced by Democratic functionaries—when supervision of the Department of Education is given over, as it will be inevitably, to those who dislike the BGC emphasis on standardized tests and "accountability."

Meet, for instance, Howard Good, an education activist, former president of his local school board, journalism professor with the State University of New York, and a frequent contributor to *American School Board Journal*, *Education Week*, and *Teacher Magazine*. I have no idea whether Good would ever make the trek to Washington to serve as a political appointee in President Obama's Department of Education, but people who think just like him will, and his *Mis-Education in Schools: Beyond the Slogans and Double-Talk* (his fifth book on education) exquisitely displays the turn of mind that we can expect soon to see in the upper reaches of the federal educational establishment.

Like Abernathy, Good defines education loosely. Education means pretty much whatever anybody wants it to mean—and who are you, or anybody else, to disagree? He writes:

> My mom was my first teacher. The stuff she taught me—how to tie my shoes, cook an omelet, read for pleasure, speak my mind—has proved more useful and durable than most of what I learned in school. . . . Schools today wouldn't dare adopt this as their educational agenda, even if it meant happier kids and a better world. Why? Student tests might suffer.

His reference to tests is meant to be witheringly ironic. About NCLB itself Good is ambivalent—like the BGCs, he doesn't object in principle to federal interference with local schools, as long as people like him are doing the interfering, and the more money spent, the better—but he's outraged at all this talk of tests. He calls NCLB the "Leave No Child Untested Act." Already, he writes, "the stratified society that exists outside schools has been replicated within our schools."

Testing can only make the inequality worse. This, he says, is an offense against the egalitarian impulse that should animate the public schools. He approvingly quotes a professional educator: "Let's put all our children in the same boat, then work together to raise the level of the river." Good seems not to understand how deeply this egalitarianism is built into NCLB; it is, in fact, the bill's premise and object. But Good wants to go a step further, toward the obliteration of any classroom distinctions at all.

"At the very least," he writes, "let's abandon the notion that children who learn on a different schedule are 'Special' or 'Regular'—edspeak for 'inferior.' They aren't; no child who's loved by someone else ever is."

This last sentence—so precious, so heartwarming, so thoroughly beside the point—gives you a sense of Good's command of logic. As you read his thoughts about schools teaching "what truly counts in life," in contrast to those Neanderthals who insist on teaching facts and conveying information, you can easily imagine his manuscript as it arrived at his publisher's office, with the little doodles of unicorns and rainbows up and down the margins in purple ink. What's interesting is that so many of his objections to modern schooling are made by right-wingers, too. Good is correct that social studies curriculums are often timid and wandering. Many schools are overformalized and overregulated, requiring (for example) student athletes to sign "contracts" not to smoke or use drugs rather than just insisting they not smoke or use drugs. Administrators are often petty and overweening. The emphasis on elite sports teams is, as he says, an expensive distraction from a school's primary purpose.

His fixes, however, are another matter. He thinks schools should more or less abandon efforts to discourage drug use. He worries that the dissatisfaction with mushy social studies might lead to a return of "teachers who emphasize rote memorization of facts and textbooks that contain dry outlines of procedures (how a bill becomes law and so forth)." Instead, he longs for teachers who teach "tolerance for ambiguity and an aversion to either/or solu-

tions." Perhaps, he says, schoolkids could learn about democracy by voting on which books to read during storytime as a way of "modeling" the responsibilities of citizenship. It sure beats learning how some boring old bill becomes some stupid law.

Every school district has a kibitzing parent like Howard Good; some school districts are overrun with Howard Goods. I don't envy the traditionalist parent who has to face him at the PTO meeting. But that doesn't mean that such culture war disputes will be any more tolerable, or resolvable, when they are nationalized, as NCLB aims to do. Scott Franklin Abernathy notes that among the act's secondary provisions are a host of desirables inserted by big-government Republicans during their season of triumph, back in 2001-02: With federal funds as a cudgel, NCLB forces local schools to ensure "constitutionally protected prayer," open their classrooms to Boy Scout meetings, and provide student data to military recruiters upon request. One BGC-sponsored "sense of the Senate" resolution even mandated "intellectual diversity" among the teachers of any school receiving federal aid.

With such busybody precedents enshrined in the NCLB, Howard Good and his allies will be unstoppable when they at last regain power in Washington. Mandatory omelet-making, maybe? (*My friends, we can no longer afford to send this nation's most precious asset—our children—into the global economy ignorant of how to make a nice, fluffy, three-egg . . .*) In the hands of Democrats, no less than in the hands of the BGCs, the tangle of restrictions on local schools will only grow thicker and tighter—at once more frivolous and more burdensome.

How to disentangle the Gordian knot tied by NCLB and its reformers? This, lucky for us, is the question that Myron Lieberman addresses in *The Educational Morass: Overcoming the Stalemate in American Education*. A former public school teacher and for many years an official with the American Federation of Teachers, Lieberman has written the bravest, most bracing book about education in years. He strips NCLB and the accumulated daydreams of education reform down to their bare premises and, with discomfiting logic, tips them over, one by one. His book will almost certainly be ignored.

Lieberman reminds us of truths that have been repeatedly demonstrated, statistically and otherwise, since 1965: There is no correlation between how much the government spends on schools and how much students learn; meanwhile, of course, the Bush administration boasts that it has increased federal education spending by more than 40 percent and Democratic critics complain that NCLB hasn't been "fully funded."

As for the achievement gap, the principal target of NCLB: No research has ever established that the quality of individual schools is a cause of the gap in test scores among groups of students—especially compared with the other facts in a student's life, such as the safety of his neighborhood, the income of his family, the presence of books in his home, the amount of television he's allowed to watch, or whether he's being raised by a mother and a father: facts, every one of them, beyond the manipulation of any education reformer.

"The evidence that the formal school is not likely to compensate for negative nonschool factors is quite strong," Lieberman writes in his (unfortunately backwards) prose. "A major finding from the research literature is that schools and school quality contribute little to the emergence of test score gaps among children."

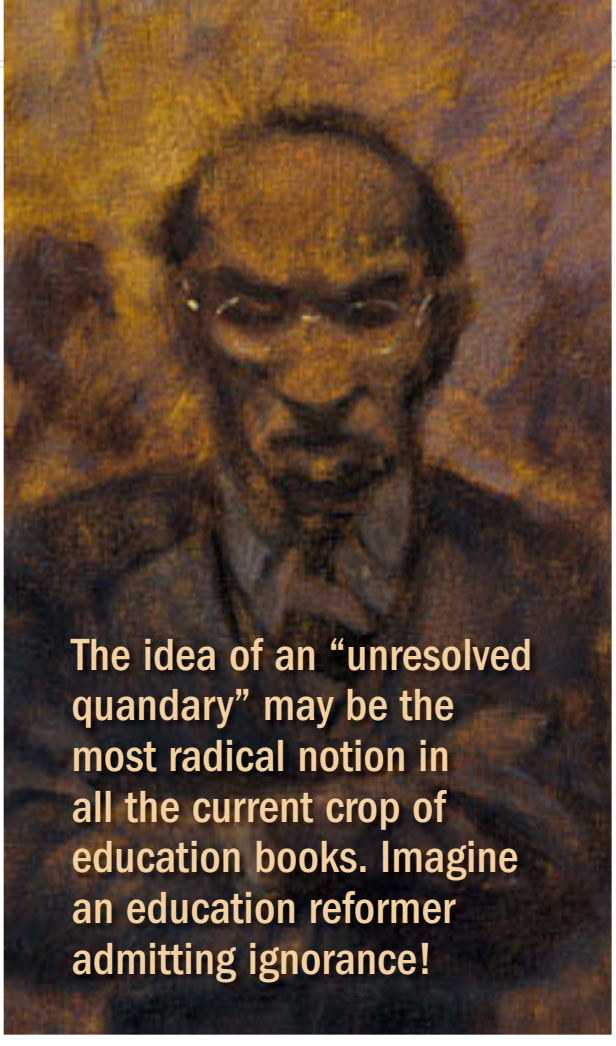
Lieberman asks reformers in Washington, sometimes politely, to consider the practical consequences of the reforms they hope to impose on schools. How, precisely, would each reform work? Every good Big Government Conservative, of course, wants schools to hire better teachers, for example—and bravely, unflinchingly, the BGC will acknowledge that this will require paying the teachers more. At the same time, also of course, every BGC wants smaller class sizes, too.

Well, says Lieberman, let's think this through. If we make classes smaller, we'll have to hire more teachers. If we have to hire more teachers, we'll have to expand the pool from which new teachers are hired. If we expand the pool, we're likely to see a drop in the quality of applicants and hires, which will defeat our goal of hiring better teachers. And if we do enlarge the teacher workforce, we'll make any hoped-for increase in teacher pay much less affordable and, hence, less likely—especially when the pay is matched with an increase in benefits, which routinely account for 20 percent of a teacher's compensation. And better teachers are unlikely to materialize without an increase in pay.

Lieberman dares to run the numbers, and they are daunting. The Teaching Commission, yet another blue-ribbon panel led by businessmen dedicated to improving public education, has proposed a salary increase for teachers nationwide of 10 percent—as much as 30 percent for teachers who are identified (in some unnamed fashion) as the most effective in the classroom. The cost, Lieberman reckons, would be $33.6 billion annually. With school districts funneling an additional $5,600 to $16,800 to individual teachers, the pay raise would have several effects. It would increase pressure to enlarge class size—even though the reformers who demand higher teacher pay also demand smaller classes. And because the unions who represent teachers also represent support personnel, pressure

would intensify for a 10 to 30 percent raise in their salaries as well, doubling or tripling the expense of an increase in teacher pay.

Then, too, the highest paid teachers would soon enough find themselves better compensated than low-level management—principals and department chairs—making it less likely that the most talented teachers will take these demanding jobs. And because the base pensions of most teachers is computed on the salaries of the final three years of their careers, a large but incremental boost in pay would lead to fewer retirements, thus slowing the infusion of new talent that the reformers say is so desperately needed. And so on and so on and so on.



The idea of an "unresolved quandary" may be the most radical notion in all the current crop of education books. Imagine an education reformer admitting ignorance!

To their credit, some BGCs understand some of the practical difficulties in an across-the-board increase in teacher pay. They advocate "merit pay" instead—rewarding teachers for how well they teach. Merit pay especially flutters the hearts of BGCs who don't consider how their ideas might work when they collide with the real world. Leave aside the fact that, in many countries whose students outperform the United States, merit pay for teachers is not only discouraged but outlawed. Lieberman asks the practical questions about how merit pay would work here.

Who, for example, will choose which teachers receive merit pay increases? "The majority of principals," he says, in a voice heavy with experience, "will not want the assignment." Teachers who are passed over will challenge the assessments, to put it mildly, subjecting whoever made the decisions to a degree of scrutiny that few professionals, in whatever field, would welcome. Fair and accurate assessments of how well a teacher does his job would require considerable hours spent watching him in action, in the classroom—a distraction for principals and administrators, who oversee dozens and sometimes hundreds of teachers, that would be prohibitively expensive, both in time and money.

None of this is to say that such reforms are worthless or even necessarily unworkable: Lieberman himself endorses higher pay scales and school vouchers, as well as other ideas he's come up with himself. It's merely an acknowledgment that the reforms are endlessly complicated, and that the vast majority of their consequences are likely to be unintended. In the end, Lieberman says, how to close the "achievement gap" with merit pay, or charter schools, or smaller class size, or more testing, or any other reform encouraged by NCLB, remains an "unresolved quandary." And if the quandary is to be resolved, it will be done according to that hoary idea of subsidiarity: at the local level, where reforms can be enacted, monitored, and overseen—and rejected, too, if that's the wish of the parents and teachers themselves.

This idea of an "unresolved quandary" may be the most radical notion in all the current crop of education books. Imagine an education reformer admitting ignorance! The sentiment is utterly alien to the spirit of Big Government Conservatism, where faith in the power of reformers to alter institutions however they desire, with the ultimate goal of altering human behavior in pleasing ways, is almost limitless. Unresolved quandaries aren't acknowledged because they slow the march of progress.

Not long ago I mentioned to Laurie Verge, at the Surratt House Museum in Maryland, that Congress had discovered that some schools had cut back on teaching history, as an unintended consequence of NCLB. So two senators, Lamar Alexander and Edward Kennedy, have proposed expanding the bill to require testing in American history, too—just as it now requires testing in reading and math, which of course led some schools to cut back on teaching history. True to the spirit of Big Government, whether embodied by liberals or conservatives, the senators will solve the problems created by NCLB's intrusiveness by making NCLB more intrusive. And then, I told her, maybe the busloads of kids will come pouring back to the Surratt House.

Laurie sounded skeptical. "You'd think they'd just let people down here decide for themselves," she said. ♦

Mary Gordon and her father, 1996

JAMES KEYSER

Mama Dearest

Anna Gordon's daughter writes a painful memoir—for readers. **BY MEGHAN COX GURDON**

It has become fashionable for memoirs to be scorchingly honest, and for authors to spare no ugly detail in recounting events and personalities that shaped them. In the Age of Oprah, if you don't have a genuinely moving personal saga (e.g., Ayaan Hirsi Ali's *Infidel* or Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes*) or a horror story (say, Augusten Burroughs's *Running with Scissors*), then you are left with little choice, it seems, but to dig out the family dark bits and cast the people from whom you come in the cruelest possible light.

It sells copies, gets you talked about, and best of all, you cannot be blamed for the hurt you cause, for you are a brave truth-teller.

Circling My Mother
A Memoir
by Mary Gordon
Pantheon, 272 pp., $24

Novelist Mary Gordon, author of *In The Company of Women* and *Final Payments*, among other works, has joined this last unhappy group by writing a pitiless, self-regarding remembrance of her mother's life that will surely be enjoyable only to her fans. It's hard to imagine any other sort of reader who would wish to spend time in the narrative company of a woman who reveals herself on virtually every page to be as humorless, pretentious, and unforgiving as Gordon does. It is like spending the evening with a vampire.

In *Circling My Mother*, the author sets out to look at different aspects of Anna Gagliano Gordon, an apparently rather coarse, contemptuous woman who was born in 1908 and died at the age of 94. Anna had four sisters, each more difficult than the one before. She was disfigured by polio when she was three; she married only in midlife, gave birth to Mary Catherine, lost her husband to a heart attack, and eventually ran disastrously to drink. Gordon uses the device of successive chapters devoted to Anna's various relationships: with her employers, friends, sisters, Roman Catholic priests, with Gordon's adored father David, with music, and her own (that is, Anna's) polio- and alcohol-wracked body.

It's a clever way to try representing someone else's life, and it might have succeeded had Gordon been able to keep from thrusting herself to the fore of everything. As it is, the most important word in the title of this dismal exercise is "my," and the memoir's main purpose seems to be to express wordy wonderment that so splendid a specimen as Mary Gordon could have sprung from such bitter, chalky soil.

Gordon begins by posing questions—a rhetorical affectation that persists throughout. "What would a book like this be called?" she asks of the work she has just published. "Memoir? Biography?" The author isn't sure. But she swiftly overcomes her confusion by drawing our attention to the artist Pierre Bonnard, who painted *The Bathroom* in the year Anna Gagliano was born. Bonnard raises the tone, you see, although working-class Anna herself wouldn't have heard of the guy since, as we're told, "It is very possible that my mother has never been inside a museum in her life." But Gordon intones:

> I am involved in a job of making. Of making something of my mother. Or perhaps I invoke Bonnard simply to allow myself a companion on the journey. To have the companion of a great painter on this writer's journey, this writer's task: trying to

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> understand in the only way a writer can—by writing. A job that is never completed, and never anything but a failed attempt. And yet we begin, and we begin again, because it is the thing we do.

I'm afraid this whole book is like that passage: It reeks of writerly self-regard, showy intellectualism, and sentences of such fruity floatiness that it's almost embarrassing to read them. In one passage, for instance, Gordon describes dining at the house of a hated aunt and weeping angrily in the car on the way home. Her husband (who, interestingly, thinks her tears are a put-on) urges her to get over childhood resentments.

"After this, I write less and less poetry," she tells us. "I feel called to story now; I rename my vocation in this way." Called to story? Yeesh. At another point, grad student Gordon is miffed to learn from her mother that a dead librarian, whose books she has been bequeathed, once had complicated financial dealings with Gordon's father.

"The next morning my mother forgot that she had told me the story. But it had tainted the books, and so I left them in the garage, not unpacking them for years, until I too was married, housed, and tamed."

Everything and everyone brings Gordon circling back not to Anna, but to herself. The chapter titled "My Mother and My Father," for instance, asks: "What did they make of each other at first meeting? What did he make of her? What did she make of him? What they made was—me." A few pages on, she describes going as a child with her parents to visit other people and observes, without irony: "Occasionally, I would be asked to sing or to recite a poem, and I understood very well that my successful performance made my parents feel that everything in their lives was worthwhile."

Recounting her memories of her mother's close friend Jane, Gordon is unable to construe a basis for their lifelong relationship that does not involve her own fascinating self.

> When I try to remember conversations my mother might have had with Jane, or to imagine what they might have done when I wasn't there, I draw a blank. What does this mean about their friendship? I know they were important to each other, but I have no idea what the flavor of that importance might have been. I don't like to think that Jane was interested in my mother because she was my mother, that it was not my mother's company she craved but mine.

At another point, Gordon beholds a formal portrait of Anna and her sisters: "As I look at the photograph, the five of them seem to beg for allegory; they are yearning to be made, at my hands, into types." Can't you just hear them? "Mary, it wasn't enough being real women with actual interior lives. Please, oh please, won't you make us into allegories?"

Gordon's solipsistic lack of sympathy, her seeming inability to visit, even briefly, the interior lives of others, is somehow surprising in a novelist. Here, for example, Gordon describes visiting another of her mother's good friends, a sweet woman named Peggy, who lost a son in a car accident:

> Even though the older one died when I was three, he loomed in Peggy's mind, and in the apartment where I visited her, where his photo dominated the piano with its hard, unforgiving stool that seemed to have the imprint of buttocks on it, lightening the wood and giving the illusion of a softness that had no basis in the physical world.

It's hard to know where to start with such a monstrous sentence; perhaps the tasteless juxtaposition of a dead youth with the "imprint of buttocks"? Or the suggestion that there's something suspect about Peggy continuing to mourn her dead boy "even though" Gordon was only three when he died?

The casual arrogance is as heartbreaking as it is galling. And that's just the callousness that comes in passing. When Gordon attacks explicitly, she does so with adolescent relish. Her aunt Rita is "selfish" and "murderous," her grandmother is "austere, judging, cold," her mother's body in old age is "rotting" and "leprous," now in death she is a "skeleton, or ash."

Page after page shows Gordon despising, hating, punishing, cutting people off, never forgiving, savoring bitterness. That some of her loathed family members suffered dreadfully in their own lives—disease, paralysis, abuse—seems to give the author not a moment's pause in putting the worst possible construction on all they ever said or did relating to her mother and her. And she throws in gratuitous ugliness, such as the "long, snake-like, single turd" she saw in a French lavatory after taking Anna to Chartres Cathedral.

The sordidness of Gordon's account is perhaps best understood by comparison with another memoir that, like hers, begins at the bedside of the author's senile mother.

Twenty-five years ago, Russell Baker began his book, *Growing Up*, with the admission that he had found his mother's life uninteresting, and was chagrined to realize that his own children now felt the same way about his.

Far from leading him to gaze into Narcissus' pool, this insight gave Baker humility, and a new tenderness towards his family (and, for his memoir, a Pulitzer Prize).

> These hopeless, end-of-the-line visits with my mother made me wish I had not thrown off my own past so carelessly. We all come from the past, and children ought to know what it was that went into their making, to know that life is a braided cord of humanity stretching up from time long ago, and that it cannot be defined by the span of a single journey from diaper to shroud.

No such humane proportion appears in *Circling My Mother*. Just before Anna turns 90, Mary Gordon returns to her bedside after a month of traveling to find that "my mother has erased me from the book of the living. She is denying the significance of my birth." Like Baker's aged mother, Gordon's has also forgotten that she has a child at all.

"So much has happened to me in my life," Anna tells her daughter. "You can't expect me to remember everything." It is one of the only droll bits, though unintentional, in this self-admiring pottage of Baby Boomer awfulness. ♦

Durham Bull

The phony Duke rape case, and who was really assaulted. **BY CHARLOTTE ALLEN**

Now that: (1) all rape and related felony charges stemming from the supposed white-on-black sexual assault said to have been committed by three Duke lacrosse players at a team party on March 13-14, 2006, have not only been dismissed but the three young men have been completely exonerated as "innocent" by the attorney general of North Carolina; (2) the prosecutor, Durham district attorney Mike Nifong, who brought the patently false charges in an effort to court the black vote in his election race, has been disbarred, obliged to resign from office in disgrace, and even sentenced to jail for a day for lying to the court; and (3) the supposed rape victim has been revealed to be, if not a pathological liar, certainly pathological, I'm waiting to see exactly how many members of the mainstream press assigned to review this meticulous and damning dissection of the case by Stuart Taylor Jr. of *National Journal* and *Newsweek* and Brooklyn College historian K.C. Johnson will finally name the name in print or on television of the hired stripper/exotic dancer/*soi-disant* student who caused all the trouble.

Her name is Crystal Mangum.

Taylor and Johnson do so. And they also publish a photograph of the bruise-, contusion-, and cut-free face of the then-27-year-old Mangum, taken by the Durham police on March 16, 2006, exactly three days after she said she had been beaten, kicked, and choked (with her head banged against a sink), as well as penetrated orally, vaginally, and anally for 30 minutes in a group-house bathroom by the three Duke students she later identified in a rigged photo lineup as the since-graduated lacrosse cocaptain David Evans and then-sophomores Reade Seligmann and Collin Finnerty.

Until Proven Innocent
Political Correctness and the Shameful Injustices of the Duke Lacrosse Rape Case
by Stuart Taylor Jr. and K.C. Johnson
Thomas Dunne, 432 pp., $26.95

Of course, outside of Mangum's story, which changed materially about a dozen times as the months passed, there was not a shred of evidence—physical, forensic (as in DNA), testimonial, or otherwise—to link the three (or any other member of the Duke lacrosse team) to a gang-rape of Mangum.

In fact, there was no evidence that sex of any kind between Mangum and any lacrosse player had taken place, or even could have taken place, on the night of the party, given that (as Taylor and Johnson have carefully documented using time-stamped photographs, receipts, phone records, and police statements, as well as multiple interviews of the players present that night) Mangum spent the entire hour she put in at the party either "dancing" (four minutes of "mumbling and stumbling," according to Taylor and Johnson), locking herself in the bathroom in the sole company of her fellow stripper, Kim Roberts, haggling incoherently with assorted players in the living room and outside the house over whether she deserved to be paid $400 for a four-minute performance; and beating on the door to be let back into the house to retrieve a lost shoe, until she finally passed out on the back stoop and was carried to Roberts's car by several players.

One of the three accused, Seligmann, had left the party well before the supposed sex crimes occurred, as his trail of cell phone, taxicab, and ATM receipts indicated, and Finnerty departed soon afterwards.

So you would think that after April 11 of this year, when Attorney General Roy Cooper, who had taken over the case from Nifong in January and appointed two of his senior prosecutors to conduct an independent investigation, declared at a press conference that "these three individuals are innocent of these charges," Mangum would have forfeited the last shreds of her status as an alleged sex-crime victim deserving to have her name kept out of print, and

Crystal Mangum, exotic dancer

been inducted into the Tawana Brawley Memorial Hall of Rape-Hoax Fame.

But I'm not counting on it. As Taylor and Johnson observe, most of the nation's major media outlets—"including, of course, *The New York Times*—continue to protect the anonymity of false accusers such as Crystal Mangum *even after* they have been proven beyond any doubt to be vicious liars bent on sending innocent men to prison."

That is because, from March 2006 to April 2007 and beyond, much of the mainstream media, including the *Times*, operated as a "journalistic echo chamber" (the words are Taylor and Johnson's) that credulously channeled not only Nifong—who violated all canons of prosecutorial ethics by publicly declaring the three defendants guilty

Charlotte Allen is the author, most recently, of The Human Christ.

before trial and accusing the rest of the team of erecting a "wall of silence" to cover up the crimes—but also a considerable segment of Duke's arts and sciences faculty, who turned viciously against their own students in order to further political agendas that included race-baiting, Marxist class war, man-hating feminism, and plain hostility toward competitive sports and the athletes who engage in them.

Crystal Mangum was a piece of work. She had been discharged from the Navy after showing up for assignments drunk and getting pregnant by someone other than the man to whom she was then briefly married; had pleaded guilty in 2002 to larceny, drunk driving, and assaulting a government official after stealing a taxicab, leading police in a high-speed chase, and aiming the stolen cab at a pursuing officer who had exited from his squad car (fortunately, he jumped away just in time); and had claimed to have been the victim of an earlier three-man gang-rape in 1993 when she was 14 (her father said she had made that up), and also a death threat by her former husband in 1998 (he denied any such thing).

She had a history of psychological problems, including a brief mental hospitalization in 2005, and she frequently combined large quantities of alcohol with an array of prescription and nonprescription drugs while pursuing multiple careers: dancing (and passing out) at an outfit called the Platinum Pleasures Club; giving half-hour "private performances" in hotel rooms and elsewhere; having sex with a man she described as her boyfriend and also with at least one of the "drivers" who transported her to the "private performances"; oh, and also reputedly taking courses at the historically black North Carolina Central University in Durham—although, as Taylor and Johnson point out, "virtually no one on campus appeared to have any contact with her before the fall of 2006."

Attorney General Cooper gave up on Mangum after she showed up "significantly impaired" for an interview on April 4, 2007, and "admitted before the meeting that she had taken Ambien, methadone, Paxil and amitriptyline."

Mike Nifong was another piece of work. The various prosecutorial outrages he committed that led to his June 16 disbarment on grounds of "dishonesty, fraud, deceit and misrepresentation" included: arranging for the rigged photo lineup that Mangum was told consisted solely of the 46 white members of the Duke lacrosse team (enabling her to pick out the three defendants in a pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey process), even though he knew that she had failed to identify a single one of her supposed assailants in two earlier photo lineups that had included, as is proper, nonteam ringers to ensure that the lineup was not unduly suggestive; securing felony indictments against Evans, Finnerty, and Seligmann *after* learning the results of the DNA tests that exonerated them; and, most egregiously, concealing from the defense lawyers (*via* deliberate omission from a May 12, 2006, lab report) the fact that a medical exam conducted on Mangum shortly after the supposed rape revealed the presence of DNA from at least four different men on her person and underwear, none of which, needless to say, matched that of anyone on the lacrosse team.

Taylor and Johnson report the endorsement by Duke faculty of a series of rowdy demonstrations in which activists distributed "Wanted"-style posters bearing the photographs of the lacrosse team's white members, hurled death and arson threats, and shouted "Rapist!" and "Castrate them!" whenever they saw a lacrosse player on campus.

Even while excoriating the team's "stone wall of silence," Nifong refused to meet with lawyers for Seligmann offering the young man's airtight alibi, and repeatedly rebuffed other attempts by the defendants to clear themselves without going to the expense of a trial. He pursued a trumped-up accessory-to-shoplifting charge against Moezeldin Elmostafa, the Ethiopian immigrant cab driver whose records corroborated Seligmann's alibi. (Elmostafa was quickly acquitted by a jury.)

Taylor and Johnson have plenty to say about Nifong and his pandering to Duke's black electorate, but the gravamen of their book is the appalling conduct of Duke's radicalized faculty members and the numerous journalists who were only too eager to report the story as a morality play of "race and gender"—privileged white males carnally abusing an impoverished black woman—rather than as a real-live case of an alleged rape concerning which there was plenty of evidence, even during the earliest weeks, to suggest that it had not actually occurred.

The negative results of the players' DNA tests—"virtually conclusive proof of innocence," as Taylor and Johnson note—were released by North Carolina's State Bureau of Investigation on April 10, 2006. Defense lawyers had already tried to show Nifong—and had certainly shown the press—the time-stamped photos that had recorded all but six minutes of Mangum's hour-long stay at the lacrosse party. It was public knowledge that Mangum's medical examination had revealed no cuts, bruises, or abrasions consistent with rape; the only sign of possible physical trauma had been some moderate vaginal swelling consistent with voluntary sexual activity (the suppressed May 12 lab results suggested plenty of that) or the ingestion of prescription drugs that Mangum admitted to having taken the day of the party.

For most Duke students, "DNA day was a huge turnaround," as one undergraduate informed Taylor and Johnson. They simply stopped believing anything Nifong said. Not so their professors and the press. Throughout the spring and summer of 2006, Duke's faculty radicals and their media camp

followers repeatedly tried, convicted, and hanged the three defendants. Taylor and Johnson report these travesties—which included, on the faculty side, endorsement of a series of rowdy demonstrations in which activists distributed "Wanted"-style posters bearing the photographs of the lacrosse team's white members, banged pots and pans throughout the night in front of players' off-campus houses, hurled death and arson threats, and shouted "Rapist!" and "Castrate them!" whenever they saw a lacrosse player on campus—in exhaustive but fascinating detail, drawing in part from Johnson's blog, Durham-in-Wonderland, which chronicled most of them on a day-to-day basis throughout 2006 and 2007.

(I must state here, in the interests of full disclosure, that Taylor and Johnson quote from my January 29 cover story for THE WEEKLY STANDARD, "Duke's Tenured Vigilantes," on page 122; I have also met Stuart Taylor professionally on one occasion.)

The leader of the anti-lacrosse faculty contingent was Wahneema Lubiano, an African-American literature professor who labeled herself a "post-structuralist teacher-critic-leftist" and had somehow received tenure at the academically prestigious Duke, despite never having published the scholarly monograph that is the usual prerequisite for elevation to lifetime job security at a major research university. Lubiano became famous for drafting a "listening statement" signed by 88 Duke professors and published in the campus newspaper that thanked the protestors for "making collective noise" and endorsed the proposition that something had "happened" to Mangum on March 13-14.

During the summer of 2006, even as evidence of the players' innocence mounted, Lubiano published an online article implying that Evans, Finnerty, and Seligmann had to be guilty because they belonged to the "dominant race and ethnicity, the dominant gender, the dominant sexuality, and the dominant social group on campus"—they were "perfect offenders."

That seemed to be the prevailing view, as Duke professors used various bully pulpits on hand—articles, emails, op-ed pieces in local newspapers, and interviews with the media—to denounce and belittle lacrosse players, varsity sports in general, and any Duke undergraduates (such as the members of the women's lacrosse team, who wore the numbers of the indicted players on their wristbands) who dared to stand up in solidarity with the young men they knew were not guilty of rape.

Duke president Richard Brodhead

Reacting to all this, the Duke administration, led by English professor and university president Richard Brodhead, covered itself in cowardice. Within weeks after the alleged rape, Brodhead, seemingly terrified of the protestors and a radicalized faculty with the power to turn him into another Lawrence Summers, terminated the lacrosse season, fired the coach, suspended Finnerty and Seligmann (Evans was in the process of graduating) and a fourth, never-accused, lacrosse player who had the misfortune to send a tasteless joking email about the incident, and appointed a "campus culture committee" stacked with members of the Group of 88, as it came to be called, to investigate racism and sexism at Duke.

As for the media, the standouts of the unskeptical print and electronic press were: MSNBC, whose frequent guest Wendy Murphy, confronted with the negative DNA evidence, speculated out of nowhere that that was "because a broom handle was used," falsely stated that the players "took the Fifth . . . [and] refused to cooperate" with police, and declared that she was tired of being obliged to "respect the presumption of innocence"; CNN, whose Paula Zahn complained about "what seems to be a concerted effort by the defense to trash this alleged victim"; and of course, the *New York Times*. There, columnist Selena Roberts inveighed against "a group of privileged players of fine pedigree entangled in a night that threatens to belie their social standing as human beings." Reporter Rick Lyman closed a story with the quotation, "Is this going to be a team of rich white men who get away with assaulting a black woman?" And reporters Duff Wilson and Jonathan D. Glater (as late as August 25, 2006!) wrote a front-page story parroting an *ex post facto* memorandum compiled by a Durham police officer at Nifong's request that miraculously corroborated Mangum's latest version of events but contradicted the contemporaneous reports of medical personnel and other police.

As can be seen, this is a merciless and unsparing book, but it is also fair. Taylor and Johnson do not minimize the negative aspects of Duke student culture—heavy drinking and loud, late-night partying, of which the lacrosse affair was a sadly typical example—and the often-justifiable resentment that Durham's blacks, many of whom worked low-paying jobs on the Duke campus, harbored toward the students who paraded,

ASSOCIATED PRESS

sometimes rudely, their wealth, leisure, and moral carelessness.

On the night of March 13-14, two players (none of them the three accused rapists) flung racial epithets at Mangum and Roberts, although in all fairness this was in response to a disparaging remark Roberts had made about the sexual inadequacies of "white boys." Columnist Ann Coulter summed up the situation best: "Lie down with strippers, wake up with pleas."

Until Proven Innocent should be required reading for all college professors and journalists as a lesson in the trumping of facts by ideology. Fat chance. Although many reporters and media commentators eventually acknowledged, and corrected, their mistakes, others did not, including the *Boston Globe*, which labeled Evans, Finnerty, and Seligmann as "louts" the very day after their exoneration, and ESPN.com columnist Dan Shanoff, who called them "douchebags."

The Duke faculty, with the exception of a handful of professors who braved the vindictiveness of their fellows, behaved even worse. Lubiano and other Group of 88 members staged a defiant teach-in in which they portrayed themselves as victims of a campaign of intimidation. The campus culture committee issued its report recommending that all Duke undergraduates take a required course in "diversity" taught by members of the Group of 88. (To his credit, Brodhead responded less than enthusiastically to that suggestion.) And, just a few days ago, Group of 88 sympathizer Scott Eric Kaufman, a journalism instructor at the University of California at Irvine, posted an entry on his blog, *Acephalous*, calling for Johnson to be ostracized by the prestigious history website *Cliopatria*, even though Johnson has a doctorate from Harvard and is the author of four scholarly books.

The Duke lacrosse debacle, which cost three innocent young men and their families a year of disgrace and millions of dollars in legal bills, seems to have made only the smallest dent in the ideological carapaces of our nation's chattering classes. ♦

BCA

Money for Nothing

The road to you-know-where is paved with good intentions. **BY RYAN T. ANDERSON**

"For God's sake, please stop the aid!" The Kenyan economist James Shikwati made headlines a year ago when he pleaded with the West to stop sending relief to Africa. Foreign aid led to political corruption, he said, drove native industries out of business, sent faulty market signals, and encouraged perpetual dependency.

The Commercial Society
Foundations and Challenges in a Global Age
by Samuel Gregg
Lexington, 190 pp., $75

Samuel Gregg agrees, and in this new book the Oxford-trained moral philosopher and economic thinker reflects on the history of commercial societies and the key figures who have studied and developed their principles. With guides from Adam Smith to Pierre Manent, Gregg presents a synthesis of the moral-cultural, economic, and legal foundations required for commercial societies to flourish, and of the temptations that cause them to founder.

With clear prose and abundant references, *The Commercial Society* provides a concise summary for students of political economy and a solid introduction for novices. Most important, though, it offers policymakers indispensable scholarly reflection on what economic success requires. Those working to alleviate the destitution in Latin America and Africa should heed Gregg's advice about the necessary institutions and laws—for nothing but commercial society "provides greater wealth to increasing numbers of people and progressively diminishes poverty at an unprecedented rate." And anyone concerned about stagnating European economies should look to Gregg on the importance, even primacy, of moral-cultural values—for nothing can make a commercial society tick if its people lack motivation, imagination, and concern for the future.

Indeed, Gregg identifies cultural-moral foundations as central. Citizens of vibrant societies must have certain "values and habits of action," especially personal responsibility, liberty, and self-interest rightly understood (what Aristotle and Aquinas would describe as a reasonable self-love). They must understand themselves as the primary actors in their lives, assume ownership for their futures, and make long-term plans for their own well-being.

Yet to understand self-interest correctly, they must agree with Tocqueville that "by serving his fellows man serves himself, and that doing good is to his private advantage." Other vital virtues include creativity (to find new ways to meet needs), economic prudence (to plan for the future), thrift (to save for the future), trust (in commercial partners), and civility and tolerance (toward those we must do business with despite conflicts).

Yet these personal virtues will flourish only within the proper economic structures. To the central economic question—how to deal with a scarcity of resources—there are three possible answers: force, altruism, or exchange. Because men ought not be beasts, and are not angels, scarcity is best resolved by exchange in the market economy. Against the mistaken

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notion that "one person's commercial gain is another person's loss," Gregg argues that exchange is mutually beneficial because economic value is subjective. I love music but have baseball tickets; you love sports but have opera tickets. Since we value our goods differently, trade would leave us both better off. So the market reflects the nature of humans and their ability to be self-directing, free choosers.

What is true of consumers is also true of producers, so vibrant entrepreneurship and private commerce are crucial for human liberty. And production, consumption, and exchange will succeed only if the market is truly free to allow for fair competition (to let the best producers prevail) and properly functioning price signals (to let consumers indicate their preferences, especially important to investors). All of this will require a standard of worth—money—and, for exponential growth, a system of banking and credit.

Beyond strong public character and the right economic institutions, robust legal protections are indispensable, especially "the right of private property, freedom of association, freedom of contract, the rule of law, and constitutional guarantees against arbitrary government." What would commercial life be like if you couldn't count on retaining the capital investments you made to your business, had no copyright on your research, or were left defenseless against state meddling? Wherever properties are seized by the state, bank accounts frozen, ideas stolen, and capricious rulers left to reign, commercial activity is impossible. As Americans with a relatively stable government, we often overlook the importance of good law. Gregg's reminders are particularly helpful for anyone thinking about the developing world, where Hernando de Soto's observations apply: "They have houses but not titles, crops but not deeds, businesses but not statutes of incorporation."

Gregg devotes equal attention to the *challenges* that perennially confront commercial society. Chief among them are the tendencies to mistake equality for sameness and to accept anything "democratically" agreed on as *de facto* furthering liberty. The problem with understanding political equality as either equality of result or equality of opportunity—rather than equality in dignity and equality before the law—is that it furthers "the evolution of politics into a type of redistributive machine." This creates a welfare state in which redistribution is guided by special interests to curry favor and garner electoral support.

Gregg's reminders are particularly helpful for anyone thinking about the developing world, where Hernando de Soto's observations apply: "They have houses but not titles, crops but not deeds, businesses but not statutes of incorporation."

Such policies "inevitably undermine key institutions of commercial society," writes Gregg. They also provide false incentives for the poor and end up squeezing the middle class, since the upper class can hire experts to shelter money and avoid taxes. Instead, states should provide the necessary order for the long-term economic growth of all, which does most to aid the poor by enacting fair policies and generally applicable laws.

Democracies often focus so much on *who* is making the decisions (the people!) that they don't consider whether the state should be acting in the first place. Pierre Manent explains that "the modern idea of representation leads naturally to a continuous increase in the state's power over society, because it continually erodes the intrasocial powers that ensure the independence and solidity of this society." Citizens become slaves to the state under "the illusion that they are obeying their own will." Combine the politics of redistribution with this soft despotism and you get a government that eliminates the voluntary associations and platoons of civil society that best serve the immediate needs of the poor, while at the same time wrecking the economic institutions that best secure their long-term well-being.

For all his focus on problems posed *to* commercial societies, Gregg entirely ignores problems they create for human flourishing. Consider the tendency of commercial society to become commercialist society: Gregg entirely ignores the materialism so rampant in the West today, and his discussion of the pitfalls of equality-as-sameness ignores one important truth. While it is certainly the case that the poor in wealthy societies are often better off than the rich in poorer societies, Gregg forgets that much of human fulfillment is social fulfillment. The wide, and widening, gap between rich and poor is cause for concern, and man's absolute well-being (measured in material terms) is insufficient.

These quibbles aside, *The Commercial Society* is eminently reasonable, particularly for its closing discussion of the possibility of "forced" commercial order. While we shouldn't view humans as passive victims of history, neither should we assume that generations of habits and institutions can be reorganized overnight—or by force. Whether it is European economic and demographic stagnation, Middle Eastern political turmoil, or Latin American and African liberationist policies, culture must be the driving force of economic and legal change. This places a special responsibility on religious leaders, who must understand and communicate social values to their flocks. Many religious leaders still harbor disdain for commercial order, but *The Commercial Society* could go a long way to educating them in the basics. In fact, this book is important for anyone who seeks to do what Gregg's home institution, the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty, advocates: To "connect good intentions to sound economics." ♦

Robert Erburu, Franklin D. Murphy (1967)

ASUCLA PHOTOGRAPHY

Dr. Culture

Franklin Murphy and the hunt for treasure in Los Angeles. BY ANTHONY DAY

The Culture Broker vividly tells the story of the post-World War II emergence of one of America's great metropolises through the actions of a man who, by force of will and good connections, made himself one of the prime creators of a new kind of great city.

The "broker" of the title was Franklin D. Murphy, best remembered as the doctor from Kansas who, as chancellor of UCLA, successfully challenged Berkeley's supremacy among the several campuses of the University of California and created a research university eminent in its own right.

Less known to the general public, but very much at the fore of the attention of insiders, was Murphy's role in creating, and in some cases directing, the great arts institutions of Los Angeles and America: the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Ahmanson Foundation, the National Gallery of Art, the J. Paul Getty Trust, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, the Huntington Library, and the Los Angeles Public Library.

The Culture Broker
Franklin D. Murphy and the Transformation of Los Angeles
by Margaret Leslie Davis
California, 495 pp., $34.95

A friend, noting that Murphy was up to his ears in all these institutions as trustee, chairman, president, board member, or just plain adviser and friend, said that he was "a walking conflict of interest."

"That's how I get things done," Murphy replied matter-of-factly.

He was, from first to last, an institutional man, almost as if born to work within an establishment and webs of relationships to achieve his ends. He had a public face and gave many speeches, but his heavy lifting was done in private, behind doors that, to outsiders, remained forbiddingly closed.

Murphy prided himself on his long experience with men of the world. Much of his success depended upon his skill in using his combination of force and charm. So it was a sharp blow to Murphy when the elaborate system failed. It happened three times with potential major acquisitions that, perhaps, *might* have gone to the L.A. County Museum of Art: Armand Hammer's uneven collection of art, the magnificent Norton Simon collection of Old Masters and Impressionists, and the dazzling Walter Annenberg collection of Impressionists and post-Impressionists.

Rumored (and hoped-for) marriages and mergers between Hammer and Simon and others (chiefly UCLA) gradually unraveled. The treatment Annenberg dealt to the National Gallery and to Murphy looks like an act of deliberate cruelty and public humiliation. A fancy party for the 50th anniversary of the gallery was planned, and Murphy was to be presented with the gallery's highest honor, the gold Andrew W. Mellon Medal, named for the gallery's founder/benefactor. Just 48 hours before the medal was to be draped over Murphy's neck, Annenberg announced that all his splendid, costly art was, in fact, going to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Among other things, it turned out that Annenberg was furious about a *Los Angeles Times* article by its art critic, William Wilson, that laid out—wholly appropriately—the murky origins of the Annenberg fortune in the nether regions of publishing in Milwaukee and Philadelphia. Robert F. Erburu, then chairman of the Times Mirror Company (which owned the *Times*), sent Annenberg a fawning letter of apology, as did Murphy; but the damage was done. (It was undoubtedly going, all along, to the more prestigious Met.)

"Murphy thought his relationship with Annenberg had reached a stage of mutual respect and affection," Davis writes. "It came as a wrenching realization that the truth was otherwise."

Davis is blunt about Murphy's disappointments in the hazardous games he was playing with the biggest of the big boys. They had the treasure; he wanted them to give it to Los Angeles. She writes:

Anthony Day, editor of the editorial pages at the Los Angeles Times *during 1971-89, died on September 2.*

Friendship with a targeted collector was a touch-and-go relationship at best. Nevertheless, Murphy approached each situation expecting cordiality and loyalty, and he was taken aback when he was not at least privy to the intentions of men he thought he knew so well.

It was inevitable that a personality and will as strong as Murphy's would set him at odds with Clark Kerr, president of the whole UC system. Murphy seemed an obvious choice—never made—to have succeeded Kerr.

I should point out that, over the years, Murphy and I came to regard one another as friends, especially after he retired from his Times Mirror duties in 1986. He conversed animatedly about the art scene and its participants, especially about Armand Hammer, who he despised; but his real passion was art, and knowledge itself. He was, for instance, a most knowledgeable admirer of Aldus Manutius, the early, elegant Venetian printer, so influential on the look of the type we use today. At UCLA Murphy, with librarian Robert Vosper (who he brought from Kansas), built the stellar collection of the Venetian's works.

Perhaps more important to the intellectual life of Los Angeles than any particular thing Murphy did—except, of course, his vision for UCLA—or tried to do, was his fierce insistence on appreciating, collecting, and presenting to the public the finest works of art money then could buy.

From his long encouragement of Howard Ahmanson and his foundation, from the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, from the mighty Getty to the National Galley to the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History to the Norton Simon to the Kress Foundation to the Franklin D. Murphy sculpture garden at UCLA to the Skirball Cultural Center (for exploring the relationship between Jewish culture and American ideals)—in ways large and small, modest and grand, Murphy built and left his monument for all the rest of Los Angeles, California, and the nation.

It was a magnificent achievement, now handsomely and fully told by Margaret Leslie Davis. ♦

B&A

Fifty Years On

The boulevard of broken dreams, and Sal Paradise.

BY TED GIOIA

"That's not writing. That's typing," griped Truman Capote in a famous put-down, when asked about Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*.

Yet Kerouac himself was responsible for this image of his most famous work rising spontaneously from the battered keys of his Underwood manual typewriter. Capable of banging out 120 words per minute, the aspiring novelist completed a draft of the novel in 20 frenzied days, during April 1951, on a roll of architectural drafting paper—producing a 120-foot-long scroll.

By comparison, the papyrus of Ani, the source of the best-known version of the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, runs a mere 78 feet in length. And the longest Dead Sea Scroll doesn't even reach 10 yards. Kerouac's scroll, with a span that matches the distance the Wright brothers covered in their first flight at Kitty Hawk, puts them all to shame—and it's typed single-spaced in the bargain.

In honor of the 50th anniversary of the publication of *On the Road*, Viking has issued a "scroll version," in addition to a commemorative volume of the standard text. Hipsters and beatniks will be disappointed that the scroll release comes in a standard bound volume, typeset and proofed like any other book. But scholars and students will appreciate the chance to savor this longer, uncensored version of a much-loved text.

Kerouac delighted in the idea that writing could be a performance art, a type of jazz in print. In *On the Road*, he describes hipster Dean Moriarty looking over the narrator's shoulder as he writes, shouting out "Yes! That's right! Wow! Man!" and "Phew!"—like a fan at a sporting event or a nightclub.

But the true history of *On the Road*'s composition is hardly so dramatic. Even before the scroll draft, Kerouac had labored over many of the characters and scenes in journal entries, drafts, and letters, and extensive revisions took place before final publication. In fact, the famous scroll was never submitted to a publisher.

I embarked on rereading *On the Road* with some trepidation. I spent much of my youth hitchhiking up and down the West Coast—visiting many of the sites Kerouac described in his books—and my recollections of his most famous novel are mixed in my mind with fond memories of those footloose times. Would revisiting his novel in the harsh light of middle age dispel all the warm, fuzzy afterglow?

My recent experience with Kerouac's 1962 novel *Big Sur* (lauded by John Leland as his best novel) didn't help matters. Some time ago, I performed and recorded with bassist Paul Smith, and was amazed when he told me that he had served as the inspiration for a character in *Big Sur*. How cool was that? I finally got around to reading it last winter and, sure enough, Paul was

On the Road
50th Anniversary Edition
by Jack Kerouac
Viking, 320 pp., $24.95

On the Road
The Original Scroll
by Jack Kerouac
Viking, 416 pp., $25.95

Why Kerouac Matters
The Lessons of On the Road (They're Not What You Think)
by John Leland
Viking, 224 pp., $23.95

Ted Gioia is the author, most recently, of The History of Jazz *and* Work Songs.

there in all his teenaged splendor (as a character named Ron Blake). But I was depressed by Kerouac's world-weariness, his alcoholism and delirium tremens, above all by the self-loathing tone that permeates this novel. Was this the same author whose vitality and impetuousness I had once admired?

But *On the Road* held up well when revisited by this jaded reader, and for reasons I didn't expect. It's more multi-layered than I remembered, quite powerful in its honesty, and periodically deflates the very myths of the Beat Generation that it entrenched in the American psyche.

Yes, the ecstasy of the road is writ large in its pages, but also the agonies and letdowns; and the highs and lows are balanced in an artful counterpoint. Kerouac's enthusiasms and visionary moments no longer seemed quite so naive to me, but showed an exemplary tenacity and resilience in the face of constant disappointment.

In truth, *On the Road* is a book of broken dreams and failed plans. Almost at the start of his first journey, the narrator, Sal Paradise, finds himself at a dead-end: Caught in a downpour, 40 miles north of New York, with no ride in sight. He is forced to return to New York in a bus filled with a delegation of schoolteachers, and forge a new plan for his trip west. This first misstep is followed by countless others. Almost every page of the book describes some failed scheme, an improvised plan, an unexpected detour, or some unstable equilibrium about to collapse.

The prose is as unpredictable as the plot, and I enjoyed reading aloud some of the more spirited passages. The ending still leaves me misty-eyed, with its celebration of "all that raw land that rolls in one unbelievable huge bulge over to the West Coast, and all that road going, all the people dreaming in the immensity of it."

Of course, the novel breaks every rule taught in Creative Writing 101. Kerouac lets rich incidents pass in a few sentences that other writers would build into entire chapters. Key characters—Dean Moriarty's father, hustler Elmer Hassel—are mentioned repeatedly, but never appear. Episodes do not build toward a final conclusion, but merely follow one another in haphazard sequence. Yet all these deviations from standard procedure enhance the potent realism and vital flow of the narrative.

Jack Kerouac (1959) and his manuscript scroll

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I also detected a conservative streak in Kerouac that I had missed before. Commentators tend to forget this side of the Beat Generation icon—his admiration for William F. Buckley Jr.; his surprising claim that Billy Graham was a living exponent of Beat philosophy; his impatience with the counterculture. And for all the glamour of his image as an incessant traveler, Kerouac spent most of his life living with his mother.

Squares have reason to rejoice: The King of Hip was one of them!

These traditional sentiments surface from time to time. Even the narrator's name, Salvatore Paradise, points to a type of redemption not found on the American highways and byways. Spiritual matters are mentioned as often as intoxicants in the text. Paradise increasingly distances himself from his uninhibited friend Moriarty as the novel proceeds, and the tension between the two emerged as a key theme on my rereading.

"All these years I was looking for the woman I wanted to marry," Paradise relates midway through the book. "I couldn't meet a girl without saying to myself, What kind of wife would she make? . . . This can't go on all the time—all this franticness and jumping around."

John Leland, in *Why Kerouac Matters*, effectively explores these complexities. At times, Leland is a bit too glib—as when he offers a checklist of self-help tips drawn from *On the Road*, such as "stay on schedule" or "plan ahead, but improvise." But his book is insightful and offers a valuable corrective to the stereotypes that have clouded our vision of this seminal author.

Leland convinced me that (contrary to his subtitle) *On the Road* cannot be reduced to a list of lessons for life. Kerouac constantly subverts every ideology and timetable he proposes, and there is no rule or bit of advice offered in *On the Road* that is not trashed somewhere else in the book.

Yet this constant shifting is what keeps this novel vital after five decades, and allows us to return to it again and again, continuing to find new facets in the story. If Kerouac had been only a Beat Generation hipster, his book would be as outdated as the hula hoop or the Edsel. But he probed much deeper into the realities of life on the road, and the false allure of his elusive destinations.

Jack Kerouac's brutal honesty gives *On the Road* enough gas to keep going for at least another 50 years, and probably much longer. ♦

Sex, Drugs and Premature Death

Study Finds Rock Stars Die Earlier Than Ordinary Citizens

By Tariq Panja
Associated Press

stereotype of rock stars was true
— recreational drugs and al
days by aging music stars

SPECIAL PARODY CHALLENGE!
The Washington Post headline above is real. See if you can find five fake headlines below.

1. **Analysts Find Most Democrats Leaning Left**

(*The* Columbus Dispatch, *August 15*)

2. Study Finds Naps Can Be Rejuvenating

(*The* Bradenton Herald, *January 20*)

3. Dogs Hate Cats, and Vice Versa, Study Shows

(*The* Macon Telegraph, *May 13*)

4. Report Warns Obese Youngsters Eat Too Much

(Birmingham News, *August 11*)

5. Study Shows Men Like Pretty Women

(Chicago Tribune, *September 4*)

6. *How Do You Pray? Study Shows Americans Different, Yet Similar*

(*The* Augusta Chronicle, *December 16, 2006*)

7. Report: Economic Growth Reduces Joblessness

(Los Angeles Times, *September 1*)

8. *Stock Market Will Fluctuate, Panel Concludes*

(*The* Journal of Commerce, *April 22*)

9. Research Finds Snacking Helps Seniors Maintain Weight

(Reno Gazette-Journal, *August 29*)

Solution: 1, 3, 4, 7, and 8 are fake.