the weekly Standard

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THE DECLINE AND FALL OF CALIFORNIA
CHARLOTTE ALLEN

FOUR MORE YEARS!

- FRED BARNES
- MAX BOOT
- CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL
- WILLIAM KRISTOL
- JONATHAN V. LAST
- SAM SCHULMAN

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A Hug Is Just a Hug

Sometimes a picture just isn't worth a thousand words. Or to be more precise, the 947 words the *Washington Post*'s Philip Kennicott published the day after the election about a photograph of Barack and Michelle Obama embracing earlier this year. It's a lovely photo, and we don't doubt that it captures an affectionate moment between the president and his wife. Kennicott, however, wants to inform us of a deeper significance in the photo, hidden to the unenlightened masses who gaze upon it:

> But the photograph has a remarkable and specific latent message, too. Unlike many images of political marriage in which the man lays claim to his wife through a symbolically possessive gesture—touching her shoulder, raising her hand up or kissing—the embrace between these two people seems mutual. The first lady is, among many other things, a big woman, famed for her well-toned arms, and in this image of hugging, she's giving as good as she gets. . . .
>
> It's impossible to know the reality behind this image, whether the president and the first lady are indeed in love in the way that photograph suggests. Perhaps this is just another very successful variation on the carefully staged depiction of love that is mandatory for political success. But regardless of the reality, that variation is significant. The photograph strongly suggests an ideal of mutuality in marriage, unencumbered by older ideas of possession and obedience that still hold sway in some deeply traditionalist religions.

The Scrapbook is not entirely sure what Kennicott is driving at, but he seems to be laboring under the delusion those with traditional views on marriage are morally opposed to hugging. It is, further, astonishing, even at this late date, to see the Judeo-Christian marriage ethic reduced to possession and obedience; this characterization of it seems more like willful hostility rather than simple misunderstanding.

If the Obamas' marriage and fidelity to one another seems admirable, that might be because they seem to have a pretty traditional marriage. The Scrapbook doesn't want to be mistaken for a Philistine—unlike Kennicott, we are not a two-time Pulitzer finalist—but it seems to us that this is just a nice photo of the president and first lady embracing. Looking for much more meaning than that is bound to be political axe-grinding. But when it comes to grinding axes, Kennicott is a veritable Paul Bunyan:

> That [the photo] went viral on the same night that voters in four states broke with decades of anti-gay-marriage voting patterns and endorsed equality for same-sex couples may not be entirely accidental. Opponents of same-sex marriage often speak of the necessity of "defining" marriage in traditional terms, and anxiety about gay marriage is frequently expressed as a broader fear of redefining long-standing gender norms and categories. Conservative authors have produced books that decry the feminization of the American male, describing men as an endangered species.
>
> The Obama photograph shows another reality, what might be called the limitless possibilities of true mutuality, of marriage beyond strict definitions.

Of course, there's much more revealing political context regarding marriage this Election Day than the success of gay marriage referendums. Not that Kennicott found room to acknowledge this, but those who actually enjoy the security and importance of marriage tend to be at odds politically with the president. Married voters favored Romney by 14 percentage points—had only married people voted, the president would have lost in a landslide. However, unmarried voters, who now make up an astounding 40 percent of the electorate, went for Obama by 24 points.

The Scrapbook can sum up its bottom line in 945 words fewer than Kennicott: We're pro-hug. ♦

SCOUT TUFANKJIAN / OBAMA FOR AMERICA

Ageism

Perusing the exit poll data, The Scrapbook noticed that Romney would have triumphed but for losing one pesky little demographic group: voters aged 18-44. This finding reminded us of H.L. Mencken's jaundiced view of democracy—"the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard." In a rare lapse into *Schadenfreude*, it occurred to us that the voters' rebuke to the Romney-Ryan ticket means Social Security and Medicare

programs will chug along unreformed, accumulating greater and greater debts, but still paying out benefits to those of us firmly in the 45-and-above demographic. It's the 44-and-unders who will discover to their horror that the system is bankrupt, right about when they reach retirement age. That'll show 'em!

We admit, this was a deeply uncharitable thought, brought on by electoral disappointment, and unworthy of the usually cheerful Scrapbook. Besides, as a cynical colleague pointed out to us, politics is the art of rewarding friends and punishing enemies. Don't be surprised, given the newfound power of young voters, if the Obama administration should suddenly become keen on entitlement reform, to the detriment of us oldsters' benefits. Duly chastened, we resolve by this time next week to have regained our equanimity and concern for the common good. ♦

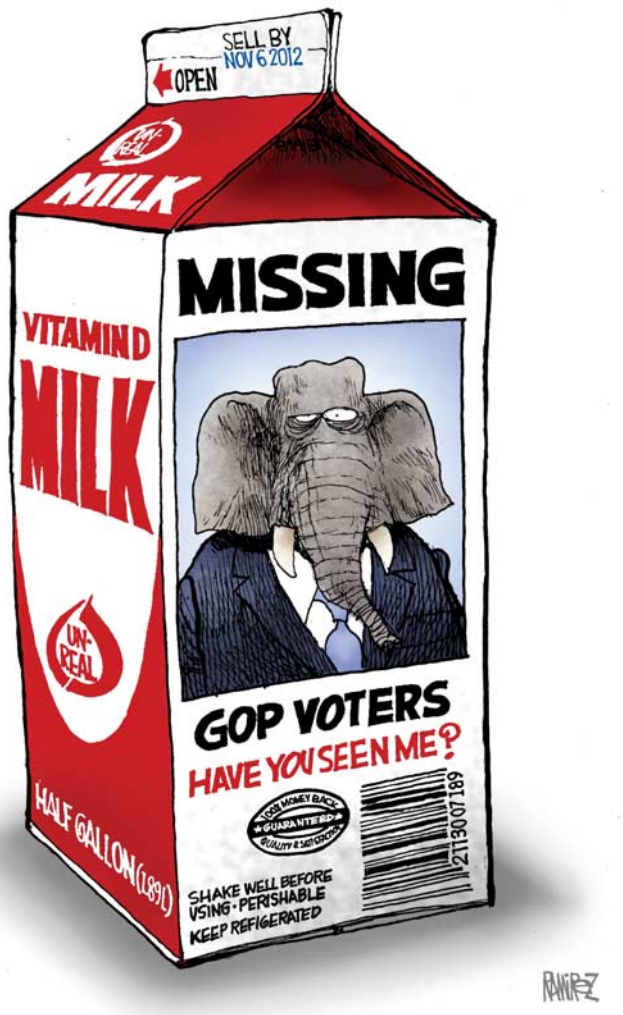
Payback Time

Over at The Root, the *Washington Post*'s online section providing "commentary from an African-American perspective," columnist Keith Harriston reminds President Obama that black support for his reelection was unwavering. "We understand a broad coalition elected you president both terms, not just us. But we have had your back at a rate much higher than other slices of your coalition, and you know it," he writes. And so Harriston asks, "how about some payback?"

He goes on,

> This is not an unreasonable request. Just ask women, gays and immigrants.
>
> For women, your first day in office you signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Later came your birth control mandate that guarantees women access to free contraceptives.
>
> For gays, you announced on ABC your support for same-sex marriage.
>
> For immigrants, you stopped deporting younger undocumented immigrants—most of them Latino—and began granting work permits for some of them.
>
> Noticeably missing from the list is any demonstrable policy change—or change of mind—aimed squarely at the black members of your coalition. Some of your black supporters raised that issue even as they celebrated your victory on Election Night and the morning after.

Is Harriston wrong to think in these terms? Or is this exactly how the Obama campaign secured reelection—with something for everyone (in the winning coalition)? It's a far cry from President Kennedy's plea to "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." ♦



That Giant Sucking Sound

Every Christmas there's some newfangled toy that kids clamor for—Cabbage Patch Kids, Furby, Tickle Me Elmo. Could this be the year of the Breast Milk Baby?

As CBS Los Angeles reports,

> Breast Milk Baby, the brainchild of Spain's Berjuan Toys, is fashioned so little girls can learn how to breastfeed and nurture a child. All children have to do is put on a halter top that has sensors sewn in the nipples, which are covered with petal appliqués. When the doll is held near the sensors, the baby begins to make suckling noises.

Slightly creepy? For now, the doll is available strictly online in the United States. But the toy's maker is undaunted and will probably milk any controversy for all it's worth. Still, at $89, the Breast Milk Baby cannot possibly (we pray) be the next big thing, can it? It is, as it happens, wildly popular in Europe. Then again, so is David Hasselhoff. ♦

Fly the Really Friendly Skies

The best way to fly isn't first class, and it's not on a private jet—the former resembles more and more what economy used to be while the latter usually involves tiny cabins. No, the way to go is on a chartered jet with a professional sports team.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, one recent flight with the St. Louis Rams included grilled halibut, smashed potatoes, and Dove ice cream bars, while a New Orleans Hornets jet came with tables for card games and beds long enough to fit the players. Meanwhile, an unspecified hockey team "wants all organic food on board. Another wants all high-protein food and no carbohydrates."

But it's all rather tame compared with years gone by:

> Team charters often used to amount to a fraternity party of beer, pizza and junk food, sometimes with guitar playing and rookie hazing, but airlines say the days of raucous party flights are gone. Many teams ban alcohol, have nutritionists select menus and set up plane interiors so coaches can study game films and players can sleep. The most popular drink on National Basketball Association flights, according to Delta: Snapple Kiwi-Strawberry juice drink.

The Scrapbook couldn't help but notice a few choice lines in the article, such as: "Some flights carry a therapist for rubdowns and treatments in-flight" and "airlines—particularly Delta—and charter companies cater to teams with tricked-out jets, handpicked flight attendants and meals from players' favorite restaurants, sometimes served on silver trays."

Handpicked flight attendants? That must refer to flight attendants who are always prompt, courteous, and sincere. ♦

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There's Still Football

Whatever the reason for holding elections in November, it works out as a merciful thing. If your party loses, you've still got football to remind you of what is truly important in life. There is nothing like college football—not even politics—for passionate, irrational affections and loyalties. A Texas Republican, for instance, would rather vote Democratic than switch over to Oklahoma. He might even rather die. This is true despite the fact that the most successful coach in the history of Texas football played his college ball at Oklahoma.

Darrell Royal, who died the day after the elections, was one of those old-school coaches, famous for winning and for saying colorful things. Nobody, of course, would remember the colorful things if his University of Texas Longhorns hadn't won so many championships. Royal's most famous bon mot (as they say in Texas) came when he was asked if he planned to do anything different against some forgotten opponent. This is an exceedingly conventional sportstalk formulation: "Coach, you got here on the running game, but you're facing a defense that has been rock solid against the run. Are you planning on doing anything different today?"

"Nah," Royal replied, "we'll dance with the one that brung us."

After an especially hard-fought game, he said that there had been "some snot knocking in the okra."

And when discussing the breaks of the game, he said, "The sun don't shine on the same dog's ass every time."

They don't make them like that anymore. But they still play the game, and this year, it is the enduring nature of the game that you feel. There are four undefeated major college teams remaining, two of them iconic powers. And one of these has been resurrected from near oblivion.

Alabama and Notre Dame are not football teams or "programs" so much as they are traditions and causes to which fans attach themselves with a fervor that is just short of religious. (And in the case of Notre Dame, maybe not short at all.) Even people who have never watched a single moment of college football know the names of the legendary coaches from each school: Paul "Bear" Bryant and Knute Rockne.

CHRIS MORRIS

Both schools had close calls the first weekend in November. Notre Dame needed overtime to put away a middling Pittsburgh team. Alabama got a last-minute touchdown to beat LSU. The game was played in Baton Rouge, on Saturday night, with the home crowd in its usual mood; which is to say, a state of howling-at-the-moon madness. Alabama's quarterback, who is necessarily a tough kid, was weeping on the bench after he threw the game-winning pass.

It is possible, though not likely, that Alabama and Notre Dame will play for the national championship in January. For this to happen, both teams would almost certainly need to win all of their remaining games. This is no sure thing, but you wouldn't want to bet against it.

However, even if both Alabama and Notre Dame should finish undefeated, they might not play each other to settle the thing. Alabama would certainly be in the national championship game but its opponent would likely be either Oregon or Kansas State, both undefeated and likely to remain so and both in front of Notre Dame in the various rankings.

A national championship game between Alabama and Oregon would be a clash of faiths. Oregon plays a version of football in which the defense takes the field just long enough for the offense to catch its breath before coming back to score yet another touchdown. Last weekend, Oregon defeated Southern Cal by a score of 62-51—and they were not playing basketball.

Alabama plays defense, and its fans believe that to do otherwise would be heretical. Some have suggested that this is because the only thing Alabama, the state, has ever been good at is impeding progress. One of Bear Bryant's favorite teams allowed a total of 25 points in an entire season, shutting out six teams along the way. Alabama and LSU have played three times in the last year. LSU won the first, 9-6. Alabama won the next two, 21-0 and 21-17. Numbers like that would represent a low-scoring quarter in most of Oregon's games.

Still . . . it could be the Tide versus the Irish in this year's "Game of the Century." It has been almost 40 years since they last played head-to-head for the national championship, in a game that Notre Dame won by one point. That matchup, in January, would be a gift to the faithful from the football gods.

And whoever wins, as another of those coaches given to pithy remarks once said, "There will be a billion people in China who won't give a damn."

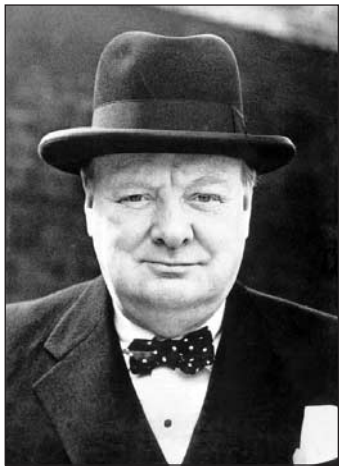
Geoffrey Norman

the weekly Standard

Losing Can Be Liberating

After his defeat in Britain's 1945 general election, Winston Churchill's wife Clementine consoled him: "It may well be a blessing in disguise." Churchill replied, "At the moment it seems quite effectively disguised."

As do any blessings to be found in last Tuesday's election result. The country faces four more years of Barack Obama in the Oval Office, with an increased Democratic majority in the Senate, as a debt crisis bears down upon us at home and our enemies ramp up their efforts abroad. One hopes, for the sake of the country, that on some key issues the president can be persuaded to do the right thing—or, at least, that politics and reality will conspire to pressure the president to do the minimally acceptable thing.



Winston Churchill

Will Rogers

It could happen. Obama won fewer votes than in 2008, and Republicans still control the House and have 30 governors. The public, according to the exit polls, still considers itself more conservative than liberal and, by about 10 points, prefers a government that does less to a government that does more. Obama, though no longer facing reelection, isn't free of political constraints.

As for reality, it will continue to mug liberals. It's true that they've gotten used to being mugged and resolutely refuse to press charges. It's true that liberalism has constructed a set of policies, and the modern welfare state a set of incentives and patronage systems, that postpone paying the piper. Still, reality eventually has an effect. The piper's bills do eventually come due.

Conservatives have a constructive role to play over the next four years in applying political pressure and calling attention to reality in ways that will mitigate the destructive impulses of contemporary liberalism. Conservatives can try to ensure the damage done by liberalism is reparable. But damage there will be. In 1777, following the defeat of General Burgoyne's army by the Americans at the Battle of Saratoga, John Sinclair lamented to Adam Smith: "If we go on at this rate, the nation must be ruined." Smith responded, "Be assured, my young friend, that there is a great deal of ruin in a nation." Over the next four years, we're going to test that proposition.

But even if America can survive the next four years of Obama, we don't want to push our luck beyond that. George W. Bush won about 62 million votes in 2004, John McCain about 60 million in 2008, and Mitt Romney about 58 million (as of this writing). If that trajectory of decline continues in 2016, it's not just the Republican party that's in trouble, and it's not just conservatism that's in trouble. America will be in trouble.

There have been notable moments of conservative triumph and Republican ascendancy since the end of the Cold War. In both 1994 and 2010, conservatives won decisive electoral victories as the country rose up against big government liberalism, and as the GOP channeled popular discontent into huge congressional gains. But in neither case was the off-year oppositional triumph converted to a positive mandate in the next presidential election. The necessities and responsibilities imposed by controlling one or both houses of Congress meant the task of coalition-maintenance took priority over developing a new and clear agenda. And the tactical challenges of dealing with the president of another party took priority over taking the long view in policy or politics. What's more, the presidential nominating process in 1996 and 2012 produced traditional frontrunners without much interest in shaking up their own party.

So the GOP stayed with business as usual, conservatives had plenty of practical problems to organize around and deal with—and the rethinking of policy and politics was less bold, less comprehensive, and less heterodox than it might have been. Fresh thinking took a back seat. The critiques of big government liberalism in 1994 and 2010 weren't followed by equally compelling articulations of the major elements of a

governing conservatism. The analysis of the failure of what Walter Russell Mead has called the blue state social model wasn't followed by the development of a compelling red state social model. Some Republican governors did have successes, but neither in 1996 nor in 2012 were those translated into national policies and presidential agendas.

The good news is that political parties are more receptive to change at certain times, and one of those times is after an establishment candidate loses in a year in which victory seemed possible. The Democrats turned away from Michael Dukakis's aging liberalism to embrace Bill Clinton's New Democratic agenda (however overhyped) in 1992. They chose Barack Obama and hope and change in 2008, on the rebound from the lackluster and stiff John Kerry. Now it's Republicans' turn to leave behind Mitt Romney's stale and simplistic policy agenda, and his cautious and conventional presentation of it, for new ideas à la Clinton and new excitement à la Obama.

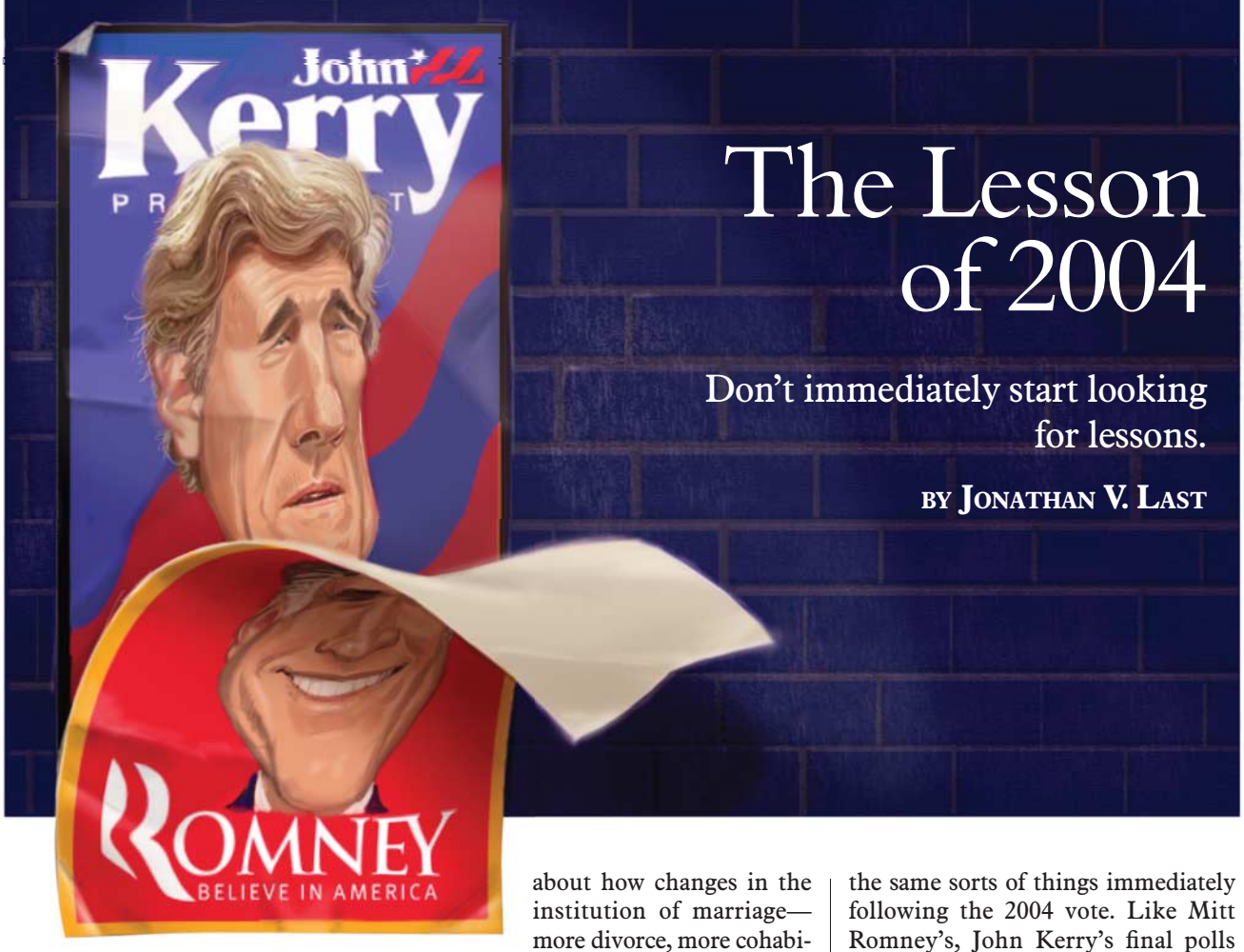
This won't happen because a few GOP poobahs in Washington decide it should happen, or because a few conservative leaders decide on the future agenda of the movement. A revivified and rejuvenated conservatism won't come from the top down. It will happen organically and spontaneously. The best thing "leaders" of the party and the movement can do is to stop thwarting policy heterodoxy and political entrepreneurship.

After all, for a party that claims to value entrepreneurship, Republican politicians at the national level these days show very little of it. The Romney campaign was the opposite of entrepreneurial. Congressional leaders discourage entrepreneurial efforts by backbenchers. And for a movement that claims to understand the dangers of Hayek's "fatal conceit," conservative leaders tend to embrace centralization, trying to enforce pledges upon and punish deviationism by the rank and file.

If a senator or a representative has a good proposal on immigration or monetary policy or education or tax reform, he or she should introduce it. If a candidate has an idea, he or she should run on it. Don't worry about getting the go-ahead from leadership or from power brokers, from donors or from interest groups. The elected officials of a great political party shouldn't play "Mother, May I?"

Will Rogers was famous for saying in the 1920s, "I am not a member of any organized party. I am a Democrat." Those disorganized Democrats, full of vim and vigor and noise and conflict, subsequently controlled and reshaped American politics over the next four decades. The Democrats are now the party of oh-so-well-organized patronage schemes and grievance groups. Let Republicans embrace the spirit of Will Rogers. A few years of healthy, spirited, and fruitful disorganization could be an undisguised blessing.

—William Kristol



The Lesson of 2004

Don't immediately start looking for lessons.

BY JONATHAN V. LAST

In many respects, the 2012 election played out as a close cousin of the 2004 contest. A vulnerable incumbent president in a bad political environment faced a weak challenger who lacked a core ideology and who articulated no clear vision for the country. In both campaigns the challenger chose to present himself as a default choice, rather than an insurgent. In both campaigns the president pursued a base-turnout strategy. And in both years the president won, by a margin of victory just around 2.4 percentage points.

The similarities continued following the elections. After Mitt Romney's defeat, many Republicans and conservatives were caught surprised. In the days that followed there was fatalistic talk about how America had undergone a fundamental change. Some of this analysis centered on demographics. There was concern about a permanent shift in the racial composition of the electorate and about how changes in the institution of marriage—more divorce, more cohabitation, and later marriage—might be permanently increasing the pool of single voters. (The first worry seems mistaken: Romney's main problem with white voters wasn't that they were in decline—it was that so many of them didn't show up for him. The second is more plausible.)

There was also a lot of talk about how Romney's loss was a sign of a fundamental change in America's character. People contended that this was no longer a "center-right" country. Or that the nation had turned its back on the free market. Or morphed into Greece. One of the more prominent lines of thinking was that the "takers" in America finally outnumbered the "makers" and that, per Ben Franklin's warning, the electorate had entered a death spiral where it would continually vote itself more money. It all sounded eerily like Romney's contention that 47 percent of the country isn't responsible for itself and can no longer be persuaded by conservative argument. Doom to follow shortly.

The existential despair was familiar because liberals and Democrats said the same sorts of things immediately following the 2004 vote. Like Mitt Romney's, John Kerry's final polls before Election Day—not to mention the early exit polls on the day itself—suggested he had a reasonable chance of victory. So when defeat came, Democrats were both discouraged and shocked. And their first reaction was to conclude that America had changed in a fundamental way.

A week after the election, a group of African-American journalists gathered at Harvard to discuss the implications of Kerry's loss. Summing up the meeting, the *Detroit Free Press*'s Rochelle Riley concluded that "it could be the end of civilization as we know it" because "Bush's next term is not four years. It is 30 years, based on its impact." In the *Baltimore Sun*, USC professor Diane Winston worried that Democrats were "ill-prepared for this new, faith-based world." A *Seattle Times* columnist wrote, "after three decades of cultural and religious struggle—including a fair amount of concerted, premeditated political exploitation—the religious right is more mainstream in America than once-mainline denominations. This election confirms the influence and

GARY LOCKE

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clout of those described by scholars as the socially conservative, theologically evangelical. They are our friends and neighbors, and unlike 18-to-29-year-olds, they vote in big numbers." All of which led columnist Leonard Pitts to wonder, "Maybe this is where America ends. . . . Small wonder that everywhere I go, people are talking about moving to Canada. That's the kind of joke you make when you no longer recognize your country."

At the *New York Times* the hysteria was even more pronounced. Garry Wills called Kerry's defeat "the day the Enlightenment went out." Democratic operative Andrei Cherny wrote, "On Wednesday morning, Democrats across the country awoke to a situation they have not experienced since before the New Deal: We are now, without a doubt, America's minority party." Thomas Frank identified the Democrats' problem as being one of perpetual weakness on the "values" subject:

> Democrats still have no coherent framework for confronting this chronic complaint, much less understanding it. Instead, they "triangulate," they accommodate, they declare themselves converts to the Republican religion of the market, they sign off on NAFTA and welfare reform, they try to be more hawkish than the Republican militarists. And they lose. And they lose again. Meanwhile, out in Red America, the right-wing populist revolt continues apace, its fury at the "liberal elite" undiminished by the Democrats' conciliatory gestures or the passage of time.

Thomas Friedman swallowed hard and croaked that "what troubled me yesterday was my feeling that this election was tipped because of an outpouring of support for George Bush by people who don't just favor different policies than I do—they favor a whole different kind of America. We don't just disagree on what America should be doing; we disagree on what America is."

This last bit of wisdom was distilled in an Internet meme known as "Jesusland." The day after the election someone on a video-game message board posted a Photoshopped map of North America. Canada, America's West Coast, and

The 'Jesusland' map

the northeast corridor were colored pink and labeled the "United States of Canada." The remaining territory, colored green, was labeled "Jesusland." The map went on to wide acclaim and was featured on nearly every liberal blog and website in the land. There was a Jesusland book. The hipster songwriter Ben Folds wrote a song about it.

Four years later Jesusland elected the most liberal Democratic president since Lyndon Johnson while simultaneously handing his party control of both houses of Congress.

The point of all this isn't to suggest that Republicans are on the cusp of a resurgence or to argue that all politics is cyclical. Both, or neither, of those things might be true. Rather, it's a reminder that the future is uncertain. In 2004 Democrats believed that the culture of America had irrevocably changed. Then came the housing bubble, the financial collapse, and Barack Obama. Events happen, individuals matter, and the first lessons learned are rarely helpful. Or right. ♦

A Setback, Not a Catastrophe

The Democrats' success was Obamacentric.

BY FRED BARNES

The last thing Republicans need is an identity crisis. The losses in the 2012 election shouldn't be sugarcoated. President Obama's reelection does mean Obamacare will go into effect, and another shot at capturing the Senate was squandered. But the election was a setback, not a catastrophe.

Contrary to the media's narrative, Republicans aren't tumbling into any abyss of permanent minority status. No soul-searching is required. Republicans retain the advantages and strengths they've had for decades.

The biggest advantage: America is a center-right country. The election reflected a slight tilt to the center, nothing more. Conservatism lives on. In the exit poll in 2008, voters were asked if government is doing too many things better left to the private sector. By 51-43 percent, they said no. This year, those numbers were reversed, a 16-point swing against government activism.

Yes, a solid majority favors higher taxes for the rich. That's been true since the dawn of man. More telling in the exit poll was the verdict on Obamacare. Forty-nine percent said it should be repealed in whole or in part. Forty-four percent said it should be expanded or left as is. And just wait until it's imposed on all of us in 2014. That will be backlash time.

Another advantage: Republicans have viable solutions for the

Fred Barnes is executive editor of The Weekly Standard.

fiscal crisis and the sluggish economy. Obama and Democrats have zilch—unless you think soaking the rich and building more roads and bridges qualify.

What's the Obama plan for taming the soaring cost of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security? He has none. To his credit, he does admit that entitlement spending must be curbed. Most Democrats don't agree with him. They're willing to trim Medicare only if the money goes to fund Obamacare. Republicans, thanks to Paul Ryan, have conservative reforms to save Medicare from bankruptcy and Medicaid from eating the budget of most states—without slashing benefits.

The electorate has given Republicans two more advantages. One is the white vote. Its share of the electorate is shrinking, but slowly. Whites are the nation's dominant voting bloc today and will be for many elections to come. In 2008, 74 percent of voters were white. That percentage might have held in 2012 as well, if millions of white voters from 2008 hadn't stayed away from the polls last week.

In any event, the white vote is a Republican stronghold—and not because of racism. In 2008, Obama fared better with white voters (43 percent) than Democrat John Kerry had in 2004 (41 percent). In 2012, Obama's white support fell to 39 percent. He won 55 percent of the women's vote overall, but only 42 percent of white women.

Republicans shouldn't feel guilty about their white support. Nor should they apologize for winning the male vote again this year (52 percent). Whites, particularly white men, are simply more conservative than African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans. Their natural home is the Republican party.

This is also true of the middle class, no matter where you set its parameters. The largest body of voters (31 percent) have family incomes between $50,000 and $99,000 a year. Romney won this bloc, 52-46 percent. Voters in the $100,000 to $199,999 income category (21 percent) backed Romney, 54-44 percent.

Among the Republican strengths is one that's visible. Voters under 30 vote disproportionately for Democrats, but in doing so, they bolster a party led by geezers. In sharp contrast, Republican ranks in the House, less so in the Senate, are stacked with members under 50. A sizable group is under 40.

The bad news breaks at Romney's HQ.

Best of all, the Republican bench of potential presidential candidates is young, deep, and impressive. Here's the short list: Senator Marco Rubio (41), Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal (41), Paul Ryan (42), Senator Kelly Ayotte (44), South Carolina governor Nikki Haley (40), Senator-elect Ted Cruz (41), and Wisconsin governor Scott Walker (45). Democrats don't come close to matching this group. With the exception of Obama, they're the age of the Republicans' parents.

With Pat McCrory's election in North Carolina, Republicans hold 30 of the 50 governorships. This is no small feat. Governors invariably are the strongest political leaders in their states. They have statewide organizations. They're politically astute. They're effective vote-getters in areas where other Republican candidates come up short. They're important players in national politics.

When Republican Bob McDonnell was elected Virginia governor in 2009, he won the Virginia suburbs of Washington, where a third of the state's voters reside. He not only captured solidly Democratic Fairfax County (51 percent) but swept the exurban counties of Loudoun (61) and Prince William (59). Three years later, Romney lost all three—Fairfax (39), Loudoun (47), and Prince William (41)—and so lost Virginia.

Two additional strengths. The 13 Republican Senate seats up in 2014 look unusually safe, while at least 4 Democrats in red states are vulnerable. Win those and 2 more and Republicans would control the Senate. But after the debacles of 2010 and 2012, hope of taking the Senate no longer springs eternal.

Finally, we turn to Barack Obama in his alleged role as the Democrats' Ronald Reagan. The Reagan comparison is inapt except for one aspect. Democrats couldn't beat Reagan, and Republicans couldn't beat Obama, even though he was tied to unpopular policies, a sputtering economy, and a debt crisis. Could any other Democrat have held the White House in 2012 under such poor conditions? I doubt it.

For Democrats, Obama is the man. When he leaves, they'll no doubt yearn for the "new Obama," just as Republicans are constantly on the outlook for a "new Reagan." Neither exists. That means four years from now Republicans won't have Obama (or a clone of him) to kick them around any more. That's more than a strength. It's a relief. ♦

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Values Voters Prevail Again

But they were Obama's values and his voters.

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

Had this presidential campaign been a chess match, one move would have merited a row of exclamation points. A chess master will violate the rules of strategy as neophytes understand them ("*You're gonna lose your Queen!*") but only because he sees possibilities on the board that are invisible to others.

In January, the Obama White House set out to pick a fight with the Catholic church over contraception. A Health and Human Services directive ordered that all insurance plans cover contraception, morning after pills, and sterilizations with no exceptions for religious conscience. This looked like an act of folly. Not only was it an affront to the free exercise of religion, but Catholics are the largest group of swing voters in the country. They are heavily concentrated in Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and other potential swing states. And it was in the name of Obamacare—the most unpopular federal program in living memory—that the administration thumbed its nose at them.

Values, such as they are

The Obama campaign understood that "reproductive rights" are similar to "gun rights." Even if the number of people who care about protecting them is small, all of them vote on the issue. And in a country that now has as many single women as married women, the number is *not* small. President Obama won the Catholic vote on the strength of a landslide among Hispanics. (Non-Hispanic Catholics opposed him 59-40 percent.) His pollster Joel Benenson credits him not just with identifying new demographic groups but also with figuring out how to appeal to them. "He won," Benenson wrote in the *New York Times*, "because he articulated a set of values that define an America that the majority of us wish to live in." For this election he is right.

Not since Jimmy Carter has a Democrat won an election this way. "Values" campaigns have favored Republicans. The journalist Thomas Frank warned in his book *What's the Matter with Kansas?* that Republicans were talking about the Bible and gays and abortion in order to distract attention from their failed economic agenda. "People getting their fundamental interests wrong is what American political life is all about," Frank wrote. In Republicanism he saw a movement "of working-class guys in Midwestern cities cheering as they deliver up a landslide for a candidate whose policies will end their way of life."

That is elegant writing, but the argument was wrong in three ways. First, the Democratic alternative to the Republican economic program had been failing since the 1970s. (That is why Bill Clinton himself rejected it.) Second, to the extent it involved regulation and welfare, federal economic policy ruffled the values even of those who stood to benefit from it. And third, Republicans were not the only ones peddling a values agenda. They were just the only ones succeeding at it.

This year Democrats' arguments on values were heard. This was a "values" election as strident as the ones from culture wars past in which Christians marched against subsidies for Mapplethorpe, creationists vied for seats on Kansas school boards, and William Bennett demanded to know where the outrage was. What was different about this year's culture war is that Republicans lost it. They ran a campaign without any of the abrasive stuff Frank disapproved of. Their presidential candidate lost himself in theories about what motivates "job creators." Certain senatorial candidates did try to raise cultural issues. Those in Missouri and Indiana showed themselves out of practice.

The values were different, but structurally the outcome was the same one that we have seen decade after decade. Where two candidates argue over values, the public may prefer one to the other. But where only one candidate has values, he wins, whatever those values happen to be.

Barack Obama has a core moral belief about abortion. It is that women should always be able to get one. Mitt Romney's views on abortion are roughly those of the old Groucho Marx declaration: "These are my principles, and if you don't like them . . . well, I have others." President Obama has a core moral belief about gay marriage, too. He supports it. His May interview on ABC in which he announced his rallying to the cause was a liberation. He had stacked his Justice Department with pro-gay-marriage litigators. He had announced, along with Eric Holder, that he would not defend the federal Defense of Marriage Act. He had grown dependent on donors who cared about gay marriage a great deal. To have claimed to defend traditional marriage would have exposed him to accusations of hypocrisy. At least in theory—there was, in retrospect, little danger that

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the Romney campaign would bring such things up in practice.

A study by the Wesleyan Media Project last week found that the Obama campaign was the most negative campaign ever. With 59 percent of its ads negative, it outstripped even the notorious George W. Bush reelection campaign (55 percent) of 2004. Romney hardly knew what hit him. He liked to describe his experience running companies as relevant to running a country. This is a misunderstanding he shared with Europeans, and with those of Obama's supporters who have called for an end to all this values talk.

A modern, diverse democratic republic is something very different from a company. It relies for cohesion on shared narratives passionately believed in, even if they are passionately believed in only for a few weeks around election time. Run it as a business and it will fall to pieces. Obama has made a lot of mistakes, but running the country as a business is not one of them. Like Bush before him, he is always stressing how America is the only place where membership in the nation derives not from race, ethnicity, or religion but from belief in an idea.

The bright side of that vision is a beautiful thing, but there is a dark side to it, too. If America is an idea, you can belong to it regardless of your ethnic background. But you cannot belong to it regardless of your beliefs. A tendency to lecture the American public on what they are supposed to believe has become a constant in the president's oratory. "That's who we are," he said in his victory speech on Tuesday. He was talking about the need to help an 8-year-old girl with leukemia, a fairly uncontroversial proposition. But he uses this trope even when talking about the tiniest velleities, usually expanding it to "that's not who we are as a people." If there is one disturbing truth that Obama has always understood, it is that a winning American campaign is always about values, is never lukewarm, and is generally a bit scary-looking to foreigners and losers. ♦

Still Commander in Chief

A few suggestions, in a spirit of bipartisanship.

BY MAX BOOT

A few of your negotiating partners

Congratulations, Mr. President. You scored an impressive victory in a year when the economic fundamentals were not on your side. Now you're in the position of a Super Bowl-winning coach. You have only a few days to exult in your triumph before preparing for "next season." Actually it's worse than that, because in the real world there is no off-season. You have earned the mixed blessing of being in charge of the most powerful country in the world for another four years—and that means you have to deal with the most difficult issues. If it's not too presumptuous on the part of a former Romney adviser, I'd like to draw your attention to a few of the national security concerns that should be at the top of your inbox, and also recommend some courses of action that might draw bipartisan support (as well as opposition).

Syria. The killing is intensifying. Already an estimated 35,000 people have been slaughtered since the start of the Syrian civil war and more are dying every day. You have said that President Bashar al-Assad must go, but what are you going to do about it beyond providing a little nonlethal assistance to the rebels? Presumably, in addition to the risks that always come with greater American intervention and that need to be seriously considered by any commander in chief, you were concerned about getting more deeply involved at a time when you were running for reelection on a platform which stressed the comforting illusion that the "tide of war is receding." But now

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that you've won, you have to decide whether you will sit by and allow further killing, which has grave strategic as well as humanitarian consequences. The fighting is already destabilizing neighboring countries and providing an opening for extremists in Syria. Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and other countries in the region are eager to act more vigorously against Assad—but they will only do so if the United States provides leadership. The fact that Washington has not provided that leadership yet is straining our relationships with key players in the region. This is the moment to implement a version of your "lead from behind" Libya strategy in Syria—mobilize our European and Arab allies to impose a no-fly zone with the United States taking the lead at first but then handing off operations after Assad's air defenses have been taken out. Then send arms to the more moderate rebel factions and send intelligence and special operations personnel to cooperate with them to call in airstrikes against regime targets. And don't forget to prepare a plan for stabilizing Syria after Assad's fall—something that your administration neglected to do in Libya.

Iran. During your first term in office Iran managed to produce, according to the International Atomic Energy Commission's August 30 report, 190 kilograms of 20 percent-enriched uranium. It only needs 240 kilograms to make a nuclear bomb. Some of that enriched uranium has been used for reactor fuel (96 kilograms), but if Iran continues on the current path it will have enough highly enriched uranium to make a nuclear device by the spring or summer of 2013. During your first term you wisely gave up attempts to seek rapprochement with Tehran and instead acquiesced in Congress's push to impose crippling sanctions on Iran's central bank and oil exports. (Not that you had much choice, given the large bipartisan majorities favoring such action.) There are a few more sanctions you can still apply, but that course of action is nearly exhausted. So what's next? Will you attempt to reopen negotiations with the mullahs? Hints of such talks in the offing appeared in the press before the election, only to be denied by both sides. If the talks are real, their most likely result will be to allow the mullahs to stall for time; there is no evidence that they could be persuaded to give up their cherished nuclear program. Or will you undertake military action against the Iranian nuclear facilities—the most effective way to set back its nuclear program? Failing that, will you give Israel the green light to act, or will you continue doing everything you can to block Israeli strikes? Those are the policy alternatives available to you. Doing nothing isn't an option—not if you're serious about your repeated pledges not to allow Iran to go nuclear.

Afghanistan. At the end of September your military commanders in Afghanistan completed a drawdown of surge troops, leaving 68,000 U.S. military personnel in the country. Now you must decide how quickly you want to remove those troops and what the 2014 deadline for transitioning security responsibility to the Afghans actually means: Will all U.S. troops be gone by the end of 2014 or will you leave a substantial contingent of forces labeled as "advise and assist" rather than as "combat" forces? And if you decide to leave troops past 2014, how many will you leave—a token force of a few thousand who will be utterly ineffectual or a more robust force of 30,000-plus that could make a meaningful contribution to prevent a Taliban takeover? Those decisions can't be postponed for long because you need to conclude a Status of Forces Agreement with Kabul soon, and you need to provide guidance to our commanders on the ground. They are waiting to find out how many troops they will have to figure out what kind of campaign plan they can design and execute. (Usually requirements on the ground drive decisions on force size but apparently you prefer to do it in reverse.)

Sequestration. On January 2, as a result of a budget deal that you reached with Congress in the summer of 2011, sequestration is set to take effect—$1.2 trillion in cuts split evenly between the defense budget and domestic discretionary spending. The $600 billion or so in defense cuts, coming on top of $487 billion in cuts already legislated in 2011, will have a devastating impact on our military capabilities as your own defense secretary and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have warned. The cuts are especially draconian because they will hit every line item in the defense budget equally, regardless of merit. You said during the third presidential debate that the cuts won't happen. But what will you do to prevent them? So far you've been absent from the budget negotiations that have occurred between House and Senate members—and leaders of your party have been dragging their feet because they want to use the threat of defense cuts to bludgeon Republicans into agreeing to tax increases. In fact, officials in your own administration have leaked word that you would veto any attempt to stop sequestration if it didn't raise taxes on the "wealthy." Are you going to hold the men and women in our armed forces hostage in order to achieve your domestic policy goals? You need to decide your position soon—although the private group OMB Watch claims you can unilaterally delay sequestration for at least a few weeks to give yourself more time to work out a deal with Congress.

Personnel. The end of a presidential term is the traditional time for senior, and not-so-senior, political appointees to leave office. CIA director David Petraeus has just resigned. Both Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta have made clear they're quitting. Tom Donilon, the national security adviser, has suggested he'd like to stay on, but there is no requirement that you keep him; fresh faces can invigorate a second term and prevent burnout. In any case, you will now have a chance to put an important imprimatur on your national security team. When you began your first term in office you leaned toward centrism and bipartisanship by appointing Clinton to State, Bob Gates to defense, and Jim Jones to the NSC. You have a chance to continue that legacy by filling at least one of these top jobs with an independent or a Republican—

someone like Joe Lieberman, or Tom Kean. If, instead, you choose appointees who are viewed as partisan Democrats—appointing John Kerry or Susan Rice or Tom Donilon as secretary of state, for example—you will do real damage to your relatively successful attempts, at least if we judge by exit polls, to establish your credibility and your party's on the all-important issue of national security.

This is hardly a comprehensive list of the challenges you will face. You will also have to deal with a rising China, a belligerent if declining Russia, a dangerous North Korea, and an al Qaeda organization that has been decimated in Pakistan in large part thanks to your efforts but which has managed to spread its tentacles far afield, from Mali to Yemen. And then, of course, there is always the strong possibility of an unexpected crisis—such as the attack on the Benghazi consulate on September 11, which did real, if limited and temporary, damage to your standing on national security issues.

In confronting all of these challenges, and many others, you have a major advantage from having won reelection by a solid margin. Isolationists in both parties will be reluctant to challenge you, and you will have considerable freedom of maneuver, especially to take steps—such as intervening in Syria with a no-fly zone or making a long-term commitment to Afghanistan—that will not be popular in the short term but that have the potential to improve America's long-term standing in the world and, hence, your own historical standing. If, on the other hand, you choose to act based on short-term calculations—as you seemed to do when you pulled all of the troops out of Iraq at the end of 2010 and all of the surge troops out of Afghanistan at the end of September—you may receive a short-term bump in popularity, but you risk undoing the objectives you have set for your foreign policy. Believe it or not, Mr. President, strong-on-defense Republicans are willing to follow if you lead in the right direction. ♦

Reading Tocqueville in Beijing

The old regime fears a revolution.

BY GARY SCHMITT & JAMES W. CEASER

It will only work for so long.

Does Alexis de Tocqueville have anything to say to the current generation of Chinese leaders?

In recent decades, the case study of political change of greatest interest to Chinese leaders has been the passing into the dustbin of history of the Soviet Union, that most powerful of all Communist regimes. Some analysts blame Mikhail Gorbachev for political reforms that precipitously undermined the government's hold on power; others point to the sclerosis that overtook the Soviet system and the failure of its leaders to adjust socialist principles to new circumstances; others still—good Communists to the end—see the hand of the West at work, manipulating internal weaknesses to bring down America's superpower rival.

Interest in this question is more than academic. For the Chinese government and its supporters, the overriding concern is to head off a similar fate for their own Communist party. But as a new generation comes to power, many increasingly doubt they can avoid such a turn. Major protests throughout the country continue to alarm and bedevil the government and the party, and with good reason. The economic growth that for 30 years helped keep hopes high and dampen social tensions is slowing dramatically. University graduates struggle to find good jobs, even as nouveaux riches proliferate. The party's ubiquitous

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slogan, "Social Harmony," is at odds with what everyone sees. Corruption remains pervasive, elites secrete their wealth overseas, and party "robber barons" appropriate land from farmers only to turn it over to the developer who promises the middleman the biggest cut. Add to this the environmental disasters China faces and the looming demographic crisis (too few females; too few younger workers to support a rapidly aging population), and it is no wonder that so many Chinese leaders worry about the future—not only for their country but also for themselves.

Given these challenges, some in China seem to feel they have extracted all the lessons one can from the fall of the Soviet Union. Which brings us to Tocqueville, who, according to the *Economist*, has "been enjoying an unusual revival in bookshops and in the debates of intellectual bloggers."

Even high-ranking officials are now reading Tocqueville—apparently including Li Keqiang, China's new premier. Feng Chongyi, a Chinese academic teaching in Australia, recently wrote in the *Australian Financial Review* that many Chinese government officials, "including two members of the all-powerful Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party," are studying *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, Tocqueville's other classic, a book that analyzes the causes of the French Revolution and which is barely known to most Americans. Chongyi observes that while "it sounds bizarre that such a book published more than 150 years ago on the history of a seemingly remote country would become popular among top leaders in China at this juncture, . . . a lot of strange things are taking place in China nowadays."

Strange indeed, but Tocqueville's *Old Regime* may be exactly the book for this moment in Chinese history. As Tocqueville himself explains, his aim in writing about that bloody and ultimately disastrous revolution was "to discover not only what illness killed the patient, but how the patient could have been cured. . . . My purpose has been to paint a picture both accurate and instructive."

Some major themes of the book cannot help but remind the Chinese of their own circumstances. For a Chinese reader, the revolution of 1789 is neither the revolution of 1911, which overthrew the last imperial dynasty and established the Republic of China, nor the Communist revolution of 1949, but the revolution they wish to avoid in the future by achieving a successful transition from their current situation to a more stable order. This reading suggests, paradoxically, that the Chinese are still living under the Old Regime.

In Tocqueville's account, the Old Regime in France went through two major phases. In the first, France had a feudal monarchy in which power was widely dispersed and many institutions of local government existed. In the second phase, modernizing French kings undermined the government's traditional foundations—slowly at first, but at a gathering pace during the reigns of Louis XIV, Louis XV, and Louis XVI. These monarchs sought to eliminate the last remnants of feudalism in an effort to establish greater control over French society and promote what they believed to be progress. In effect, this second phase of the Old Regime was the harbinger of the revolution. According to Tocqueville, the errors of this second phase sowed the seeds of the disaster of 1789.

This second phase is the one in which China finds itself today. The Chinese constitution opens by noting the modernizing achievements of the revolution of 1911 and the Communist revolution, which completed China's "democratic" turn under the "benign" guiding hand of Mao Zedong and the dictatorship of the proletariat. No one in China of a certain age needs to be reminded of Mao's attempts during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution to purge China of any vestige of traditional attachments to family, village, and religion. As Tocqueville explains—in an analysis that could easily apply to Mao's China—these successive efforts at modernization and control created "an immense empty space" between the government and the people, in which there were no intermediate institutions to allow the people's voices to be heard or to mitigate the government's control. Any remaining notion or practice of citizenship had been squeezed out.

Chinese readers of *The Old Regime* might also consider Tocqueville's analysis of how the French government's policies under the modernizing monarchy gradually robbed individuals of any role in public life. Self-governing villages and parishes, not uncommon in medieval times, were slowly deprived of their privileges as power moved to the despotic center. As a result, important parts of the population lost their knowledge of the most minimal practices of self-government. This loss was a key reason why the French Revolution, when it came, lacked the restraint that marked the American Revolution and Founding. A Chinese reader of Tocqueville, seeing the daily reports of violent protests across his own country today, might well worry that the next Tiananmen Square will be even more explosive and deadly than the last in the absence of meaningful village elections in rural China or the growth of national-level nongovernmental associations.

The Chinese reader will almost certainly also be alarmed at encountering Tocqueville's theory of the "revolution of rising expectations," which outlines the dangers that accompany the process of change. In France, paradoxically, the relief of feudal duties and land-ownership reforms during the modernizing period increased the French peasantry's resentment of the remaining taxes and obligations: "Every abuse that is then eliminated seems to highlight those that remain. . . . the evil has decreased, it is true, but the sensitivity is greater." Meanwhile, the aristocratic class no longer played a role in governing, but lived as pampered courtiers at Versailles. Who in China today would not hear echoes of the French peasants' grievances as they survey their own country, a population relieved of the worst abuses of Mao's rule and used to rapidly rising incomes, but now facing an uncertain economic future while "party princelings" and their families continue to

make millions through connections to the governing and party elite?

Tocqueville, in addition to writing about France and America, actually had a few things to say about China, which might provide another cache of insight for Chinese leaders. For Tocqueville, China epitomized the modern centralized state, with an army of administrators able to control and direct the population. A good many 18th-century intellectuals wanted just this model for France. To them, the rational regime was enlightened despotism. The French, they thought, would accept such a system on the grounds that it met the modern test of "democratic" legitimacy: Under the banner of equality, political power would be wielded in the name of the people, if not by the people—a ruse well understood in the People's Republic. As Tocqueville knew, this type of despotism might seem at first progressive and benevolent. Consider Thomas Friedman, writing about China today: "One-party autocracy certainly has its drawbacks. But when it is led by a reasonably enlightened group of people . . . it can also have great advantages."

This Chinese model, though never fully realized under the French monarchy, was exactly the system Tocqueville thought had contributed to the excesses of the French Revolution; and it is the system he feared for the future. It saps people of energy. They grow accustomed to relying on administrative agencies to make decisions for them rather than deciding for themselves, either in local communities or as individuals.

Tocqueville expressed his hostility to enlightened despotism in his comments on economist Guillaume-François Le Trosne's book on French administrative and tax reforms, *De l'administration provinciale et de la réforme de l'impôt*. Le Trosne argued for the superiority of prerevolutionary France over England because the French kings could institute reforms unilaterally and "transform in an instant the condition of a country." Tocqueville wrote in his private notes, "What ignorance! . . . What inexperience in practical politics!" For Tocqueville, it was simply false to assert that an executive order could so easily alter a population's moral dispositions and the "ideas of which the habits of mind are formed." More alarming were the measures to which a despot might turn where gentler methods did not suffice to alter a people's mores.

Tocqueville's intent, as he made clear in the preface to *The Old Regime*, was to diagnose what had destroyed liberty in France. An autopsy is for the sake of the living. His analysis of what went wrong in France's transition to modernity was meant to provide readers with an understanding of the keys to a different future—a future, ironically, the Chinese will contemplate more fruitfully if they combine their study of Tocqueville's *Old Regime* with attention to his more famous account of a successful political transition, *Democracy in America*. ♦

Decline and Fall

California votes for more: taxes, spending, debt, government

By Charlotte Allen

On November 6 voters in California did something nearly unheard of during the past 30 years: They approved, by a margin of 54 percent to 46 percent, a ballot measure raising state income taxes on the most prosperous Californians and sales taxes on everyone, even though the state's sales tax is already the highest in the nation.

The successful tax-hike initiative isn't just a hoped-for generator of revenue: a projected $34 billion over the next seven years, which California desperately needs because it is running a $16 billion budget deficit and its cumulative total debt is at least $618 billion, the highest in the nation. That latter amount includes up to $500 billion in unfunded pension liabilities for 220,000 state employees plus billions in unpaid bills, delayed payments to schools, and amounts raided from dedicated funds to cover general expenses.

The new tax is also intensely symbolic. It represents the culmination of a two-decade-long process in which the nation's most populous state, once a prosperous industrial and high-tech powerhouse and magnet for immigrants from elsewhere in the country, has transformed itself into something else: a high-tax, high-spending, highly regulated, and chronically broke welfare state that is fast losing to out-migration both its middle class and the businesses and industries that create jobs. California factories once housed such industries as steel, automobile manufacturing, tire production, and aerospace. Those are now mostly or entirely gone. Silicon Valley employs only tiny numbers of tech geniuses; the actual manufacturing is done elsewhere. California's unemployment rate tops 10 percent, in contrast to less than 8 percent for the nation as a whole. A full third of Americans on public assistance reside in California, even though it houses only one-eighth of the nation's population. It is safe to say that only the very rich and the very poor—along with the 1.8 million who collect state and local government paychecks (some of the highest in the nation, according to the Census Bureau) and belong to powerful public-employee unions—can afford to make their homes in the Golden State these days. In short, California is the new Massachusetts. Or, given that it now has the worst state credit rating in America, thanks to chronic overspending, massive state debt, and the clout of the pension reform-resisting unions, California is the American Greece.

Until the passage of Proposition 30 last week, California voters had for more than two decades consistently rejected every general taxation measure put before them—and going directly to the voters on tax measures is fairly common in California, because the state constitution requires a hard-to-attain supermajority of two-thirds for a tax bill to pass the state legislature. The last time a tax measure on the general ballot had passed was in 1988, when California voters approved a cigarette levy—essentially a "vice" tax—aimed at funding antismoking and environmental programs. This November, however, voters agreed to raise the state sales tax to 7.5 percent from 7.25 percent, which means that consumers in, say, Los Angeles County, which has its own local sales tax, will be paying close to 10 percent in taxes on every item they purchase, save for groceries. Proposition 30 also includes a soak-the-rich so-called millionaires' tax with an Occupy Wall Street flavor that hits people with household incomes of more than $250,000 a year, the same group that is President Obama's target for raising federal income taxes. State rates for that 3 percent of Californians, many of whom own small businesses but are taxed as individuals, will rise to anywhere from 10.3 percent to 13.3 percent for those earning more than $1 million a year. Living in California has suddenly become even more expensive than it already was, especially for lower-income people on tight budgets, for whom every dollar paid out in sales taxes is a dollar that can't be spent on something else. The tax increases are billed as "temporary"—if seven years for the income-tax hike and four years for the sales-tax hike can be called temporary.

Proposition 30 was the brainchild of California's Democratic governor Jerry Brown as an end run around the legislature and its two-thirds rule. It had been touted as a measure that would save the state's public schools and universities from drastic cuts in state funding. The initiative's trademark was a shiny red teacher's apple. "It sold itself," Brown declared at a victory party. Indeed, California's teachers' unions, widely held to be the richest and most powerful unions in the state, were the largest donors to the more than $40 million that Brown's Proposition 30 campaign

Charlotte Allen, a frequent contributor to The Weekly Standard, *last wrote on comedian Bill Maher.*

raised. In fact, however, none of the revenue that Proposition 30 is expected to produce is actually earmarked for education, which was a "for the children" fig leaf designed to sell the initiative to tax-shy voters. Proposition 30 money will go straight into the state's general fund. A 1988 initiative, Proposition 98, also heavily backed by the teachers' unions, requires the state to devote 40 percent of its annual budget to K-12 schools and community colleges, so the billing of Proposition 30 as an education tax was honest in the sense that more money in the general fund means more money for education—along with more money for whatever California's legislators choose to spend the remaining 60 percent on. Even so, the "cuts" that would have been triggered had the initiative failed weren't really cuts in existing spending. A $6 billion spending increase built into California's fiscal 2013 budget would not have taken place had Proposition 30 failed. The $6 billion expected to be raised by Proposition 30 next year is therefore already spent and will do nothing to decrease the deficit.

The benefactor greets his wards.

Along with passing Proposition 30, Californians voted 56 percent to 44 percent to reject another ballot measure, Proposition 32, that would have barred unions from using automatic payroll deductions to raise money for political campaigns. Such bans are tremendously effective in crippling the political power of public-sector unions. "In 2001 Utah passed a law requiring the contributions to be voluntary, and the rate of contributing members to union PACs plunged from 68 percent to 6.8 percent," says Larry Sand, a retired Los Angeles middle-school teacher who heads the California Teachers Empowerment Network, an anti-union organization for educators. "Idaho passed a law [in 1997] requiring the unions to get written consent from their members, and the rate dropped 75 percent," Sand added in a telephone interview. Unions and their Democratic party allies fought to defeat Proposition 32 even harder than they fought to pass Proposition 30, pouring more than $75 million collected from their 2.4 million members into the anti-32 campaign and enlisting hordes of volunteers to get out the vote. The $60 million raised by the proponents paled by comparison, as organized labor pounded home a class-warfare message that Proposition 32 would pave the way for the domination of politics by corporations and wealthy individuals.

Voters in other states—notably Indiana and Wisconsin—have won important recent victories against public-sector unions, which have been increasingly resented by a recession-hit middle class that sees itself as forced to subsidize via taxes a bloated government workforce that typically enjoys higher pay, lifetime job security, and guaranteed pensions that are nonexistent in the private sector. Indiana became the twenty-third state to limit unions' power to collect dues from non-union workers, and Wisconsin voters rejected a labor-led effort to recall Republican governor Scott Walker as punishment for signing a bill limiting public employees' collective-bargaining rights. In California, by contrast, unions rule, and they have played a major role in promoting the state's toxic combination of crippling taxes and endemic overspending. The political DNA of California now features a double-helix intertwining of a dwindling middle class and a dwindling Republican party, effectively turning California into a one-party state in which Democratic politicians fueled by union dollars and unconstrained by the need for compromise vote their wish lists (and those of the unions that subsidize their campaigns) into law.

"It's the weird opposite of a virtuous circle," says Joel Kotkin, a political analyst and professor of urban development at Chapman University. "California used to basically have a good two-party system that forced both parties to be more centrist. So Ronald Reagan [who was governor from 1967 to 1975] was a much more conciliatory figure than you would have thought, and the Democratic base was still basically middle-class. Now, the Democratic party in California basically consists of rent-seeking capitalists [Kotkin's sobriquet for Silicon Valley tech tycoons who thrive on tax breaks], greens, the bureaucracy, the poor, people with ethnic grievances—and Hollywood. Hispanics vote the same way as rich liberals in Marin County. All of them favor policies that prevent the formation of middle-class households." The greens push environmental regimes that strangle agriculture, construction, and entrepreneurship, while the high taxes demanded to support bulging bureaucracies and a vast and costly welfare apparatus (some 237 California

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localities sought voter approval of special taxes, assessments, and bond issues on November 6) drive businesses and the decently paying white- and blue-collar jobs that accompany them out of state. "It's hard for someone who's not wealthy to live anywhere near the coast nowadays," Kotkin says.

In September the Manhattan Institute published a report, "The Great California Exodus: A Closer Look," that used Census, IRS, and other data to detail exactly how dramatic and seemingly unstoppable the migration of Californians to other states has been. Starting in 1990, when the post-Cold War "peace dividend" shut down California's aerospace industry, generating a recession, the flood of transplants from other states that had been California's hallmark since the end of World War II abruptly reversed itself. Residents moved to other parts of the Sunbelt, chiefly Texas, Arizona, and Florida, where taxes were lower and where the jobs were. During the decade from 2000 through 2010, California lost nearly 1.1 million residents, with Texas alone receiving about one-fourth of them.

The state's population continued to grow during the decade, but mostly because of legal and illegal immigration, chiefly from Mexico. The authors of the report, journalist Tom Gray and demographer Robert Scardamalia, were able to pinpoint exactly why so many middle-class Californians decamped for Texas: California's high taxes and generally poor business climate has deterred many potential employers from setting up shop in the Golden State and prompted many of those already there to leave. The discouraging factors include high rents and real estate prices, more expensive electricity, "unfriendly laws and bureaucrats," mazes of regulation that discourage expansion, clogged freeways (because California stopped building them after the 1980s), union shops that drive up labor costs, and unstable, tax-dependent public-sector finances that have made public services unreliable. The Tax Foundation's 2012 State Business Climate Index "ranks California less favorably than 47 other states," Gray and Scardamalia wrote. The U.S. defense industry eventually revived thanks to the Iraq and other wars—but not in California. The tech industry is booming—but in Texas, Utah, and other states, not California. (Apple, for example, is about to open a $280 million campus in Austin that is expected to generate 3,600 jobs.) The state has experienced some periods of prosperity over the past two decades, but it has been asset-inflation prosperity: the dot-com bubble of the late 1990s, the housing bubble of the mid-2000s. Those burst years ago.

The center-right middle class is the demographic mainstay of the Republican party, and as the middle class has withered in California, so has the GOP, which is now pretty much confined to the state's relatively unpopulated agricultural and desert interior, while the coastal metropolises where the vast majority of Californians live—with the exception of historically conservative Orange County—went solid blue for President Obama. The California legislature has been controlled by Democrats since 1970 (except for one year), but is now almost laughably lopsided. On November 6 the Democrats managed to secure their long-desired two-thirds supermajority in both houses (54 seats out of 80 in the Assembly, 27 out of 40 in the Senate) that will enable them come January to pass budgets and tax increases whenever and of whatever size they like. "The Republicans have been neutralized," says Robert J. Cristiano, a senior fellow at the Pacific Research Institute in San Francisco. "There's not a single Republican holding statewide office," he adds. "Policy in this state is 100 percent dictated and determined by the Democratic party." Republicans can't even gerrymander themselves safe districts anymore, thanks to a 2010 ballot measure, Proposition 20, that effectively outlaws oddly shaped legislative territories. So tight is the Democratic grip on California politics that Sen. Dianne Feinstein, up for a fifth term on November 6 (she won handily), refused to bother debating her Republican opponent, former IBM executive Elizabeth Emken.

With Democratic ascendancy has come union ascendancy. California's unions, and especially its public-sector unions, which can use member dues as piggy banks to bankroll the candidates of their choice, can essentially dictate that those same legislators always vote to further union interests. They can also use their volunteer-commandeering abilities to harvest the signatures ballot measures such as Proposition 30 require. California has a long-running populist tradition of heavy use of the initiative process, which can be a godsend to the measures' promoters, who can use advertising to appeal to emotions rather than having to horse-trade with legislators on a bill. This year's ballot, for example, included a raft of sentiment-inspired initiatives, including proposals to abolish the death penalty and to require genetically modified foods to be labeled as such. Voters rejected both measures.

The most powerful of the unions—and perhaps the most powerful special-interest group in the state—is the California Teachers Association (CTA), with 325,000 members paying about $1,000 apiece annually in dues. The CTA, which had thrown its clout behind Jerry Brown in his 2010 race against GOP contender Meg Whitman, then turned and helped shape Proposition 30 with its trigger cuts that suggested to voters that their schools and universities would be financially gutted if the measure didn't pass. Propositions 30 and 32 were only two of the initiatives and legislative bills in which the CTA became heavily invested in order to ensure that its members remain among the highest-paid teachers in America (the average annual salary for California teachers is $68,000), with lifetime

job security and no responsibility to ensure that their students learn anything. In 1996, for example, the CTA spent $1 million on ads to push through a "class size reduction program" providing state subsidies to school districts that capped classrooms at 20 students. From 1996 through 2009 California spent $20 billion on the subsidies without making a dent in students' chronically abysmal performance. (In 2011 the National Assessment of Educational Progress ranked California 46th out of 52 states and jurisdictions in students' reading and math.) Yet the program did result in the hiring of more than 18,000 new teachers statewide whose dues fattened union bank accounts. In 1998 and 2002 the CTA spent $7 million and $26 million respectively to help defeat ballot measures that would have set up voucher programs to enable low-income parents to send their children to private schools instead of failing public ones (the CTA has also waged a long-running war against charter schools and making student performance a criterion for teacher review).

The most stunning CTA victory was its political emasculation in 2005 of Arnold Schwarzenegger, who may well be the last Republican governor of California in our lifetimes. Schwarzenegger that year decided to take on both the unions and the Democratic-controlled legislature with four separate initiatives in a special election. One resembled Proposition 32 and would have required unions to obtain their members' consent before using dues for political purposes. A second would have lengthened the time that teachers would have to be employed in order to receive tenure (it's currently a shockingly short two years). A third would have slowed the growth of state spending, and a fourth would have redrawn state legislative and congressional districts in ways that would have reduced Democratic power. Nearly every union in California joined forces to wage a $225 million campaign that resulted in the defeat of all four measures. The CTA alone spent $58 million. "The CTA got so invested that it mortgaged its headquarters in San Francisco," says Troy Senik, a senior fellow at the Center for Individual Freedom who lives in Palos Verdes, California. The 2005 debacle spelled the end of Schwarzenegger's career as a challenger to the state's political status quo. He won a second term in 2006, and began making nice to the left with carbon-emissions cuts and opposition to offshore oil-drilling.

The attitude of both Brown and the California legislature toward the state's runaway budget and forbidding economic climate seems to be "whatever." In July Brown signed a bill authorizing $5.8 billion to begin construction—with union labor—on California's controversial high-speed rail line, even though no one knows where the money will come from to pay off the bonds, and few Californians are likely to ride the train, which will run between Bakersfield and Fresno, two smallish cities in the rural Central Valley. Brown had campaigned on a promise of reforming the state's grossly underfunded public-employee retirement system. But when it came time to pass legislation this year, the reforms turned out to be anemic. A pension law signed by Brown on September 12 did raise the retirement age to qualify for full benefits, for some employees as low as age 50, to age 62—but only for brand-new employees hired after 2012. The new law does put an end to the widespread practice of giving raises to employees just before retirement so as to increase the dollar amount of their pensions. The law also could require new employees to contribute 50 percent of their pension cost—but allows that provision to be modified by collective bargaining.

Brown did make a show of fiscal sobriety during the weeks before Proposition 30 passed, when public support for his pet tax measure seemed to be waning. He dared to anger unions by vetoing bills that would have made it a crime for farmers not to provide shade and water to their agricultural employees and established a bill of rights for housekeepers that mandates mealtimes and rest periods. He likely annoyed teachers by refusing to sign a bill that would have dictated what their archenemies, charter schools, could serve in their cafeterias. In a fourth union-defying move, Brown wielded his veto pen against a bill that would have allowed families of police officers and firefighters to collect job-related death benefits worth up to a quarter of a million dollars, even if the death occurred as long as nine years after the cop or firefighter left the public payroll.

But now that Propositions 30 and 32 are on the books, the spending party is likely to resume. Some Californians are hoping for a charismatic and strong-willed political figure—a Giuliani for the Golden State—who can bridge the partisan divide and help them avert the fiscal ruin headed in their direction faster than the Bakersfield-to-Fresno high-speed train. That's unlikely to happen. What is more likely to happen is a collision with reality. Earlier this year three strapped California cities overwhelmed by their unfunded pension liabilities—Stockton, Mammoth Lakes, and San Bernardino—filed for bankruptcy. Two other cities, San Jose and San Diego, saw what was happening and drastically overhauled their pension plans with voter support that came close to 70 percent. Richard Riordan, the former Republican mayor of Los Angeles, hopes to place on the 2013 ballot a similar measure that would make the city's pension plan more like the 401(k) plans that most private businesses offer, with employees contributing substantially to their own retirements. "The city is technically insolvent right now," says Alexander Rubalcava, a financial consultant working with Riordan on the overhaul. And so is the state of California. ♦

The World's Dumbest Conservatives

How to turn a successful majority coalition into a perpetual election-losing machine

By Sam Schulman

In 2012, American conservatives occupied themselves with the stately process of challenging a sitting president. While we were enjoying the pomp and ceremony which just ended, European conservative parties and governing coalitions have been quietly disintegrating. The disease runs through the free-market conservative coalition that governs Germany, and erupted last week in the Netherlands at what should have been a moment of triumph for the leading free-market party, the VVD. It also afflicts the conservative-led government of the United Kingdom and Nicolas Sarkozy's UMP party in France, which lost power in May and June after 10 years of holding the presidency and a parliamentary majority.

Angela Merkel's rigid determination to defend the euro and the eurozone countries with every bit of her citizens' wealth is still popular. But her desertion of free-market principles and her adoption of radical Green nostrums has just about ground her coalition partner, the venerable Free Democratic party, into oblivion. A classical liberal party, the FDP has served as the free-market conscience of a number of governments before Merkel's. It typically received from 6 to 10 percent of Bundestag votes in the '90s. In the mid-2000s, as Germany's market liberalization paid dividends, its share of the parliamentary vote rose to 15 percent. But as Merkel pushes her coalition in the direction of social-democratic policies, voters blame the FDP for her sins. New polls show its support has fallen by 75 percent; should it fail to clear the 5 percent hurdle for Bundestag seats, it will vanish. Merkel's next government partner will be a left-of-center party, and the conservative half of Germany's political spectrum may have no political voice at all.

The U.K.'s David Cameron has been trying to hold together a coalition between his own Conservative party, which he seems to loathe, and his tiny left-wing partner the Liberal Democrats, who loathe him. Cameron's performance has alienated increasing numbers of Tory MPs, 53 of whom voted against their own government last week. In late October, polls agreed that Labour will win the next election with a 110-seat majority. Last week Cameron begged MPs who wanted more conservative policies to observe the U.S. election. Obama won by running to the center, he told them, while Romney ran an extremist campaign. Thanks to his training in PR, Cameron ignored the fact his analysis was the opposite of factual, and that Romney's stubbornly centrist campaign cut Obama's 2008 margin of victory substantially, which would be highly significant in a parliamentary system.

In September, Mark Rutte, prime minister of the Netherlands, was standing on top of the world. His VVD had shed its alliance with the Freedom party of Geert Wilders: unpredictable, populist, in favor of free speech, Israel, America, and gay rights, and opposed to the EU and the encroachment of *sharia* law upon Dutch Muslims and social norms. Dutch bien-pensants in the media congratulated Rutte for his wisdom, and in the September parliamentary election, the VVD won 41 seats, enough to lead a government. Rutte ignored centrist parties and chose the PVdA, the mainstream social democratic party, to govern with. The new "Purple" government neglected VVD core principles of entitlement to one's own income and announced that health care premiums would be income-adjusted, hitting middle-class Dutch families hard. The result? Screaming headlines in last week's VVD flagship newspaper, *De Telegraaf*: "Desperate VVD Seeks Way Out: The largest party in the government desperately searches for a way out of the misery which it created." As the journalist Joost Niemoller wrote, "the VVD is not interested in ideas, but solutions. Rutte accepted his coalition partner's desire to level incomes because it didn't occur to him to consider how this conflicted with his own party's core ideas. Only when half the electorate

Sam Schulman, a frequent contributor to The Weekly Standard, *last wrote on the right to die.*

deserted them were they prompted to make the intellectual effort—which they will announce next week."

At least Cameron, Merkel, and Rutte still cling to power, no matter the abandonment of principle. In May, France's voters, who largely agreed with the nominally conservative ideas of President Sarkozy's ruling UMP party, fired it. The UMP had controlled the presidency and often the chamber of deputies since Jacques Chirac was elected in 1995, when he led the UMP's predecessor party, Rally for the Republic. Sarkozy was vulnerable because his 2007 presidential platform was Schwarzenegger-like: cracking down on crime, liberalizing work rules and limits on weekly hours, and lowering taxes. Alas, he governed as Schwarzenegger did as well. He pushed reforms until students and unions pushed back, then lowered his flag and declared mission accomplished. After 17 years of infinitesimally conservative rule, the public had had its fill. Sarkozy did better than expected, but he lost to the Socialist party's François Hollande, who boasted, like Harding, of his normalcy. French journalists, far to the left even of our own, couldn't wait to quote the cliché coined by the 1950s Socialist premier Guy Mollet when he said, "We're lucky to be running for reelection against the dumbest conservatives in the world." After the second round vote in May, the media promptly fired or demoted several popular conservative columnists and on-air commentators. The UMP naturally turned on itself.

A kiss before dying off: Cameron and Merkel

The media explained that a left-wing government was long overdue and hungered for by the French public. French conservatives weren't so sure. The two-round system by which French presidents are selected enabled a detailed look at the actual electorate between the two election days. Anyone who was not a reporter could see that at least 46 percent—perhaps as much as 48 percent—of voters were right-of-center, 43 percent left-of-center. Looking at these numbers, Parisian conservative politician Bernard Debré declared, "We are not only the dumbest, but the most pretentious right wing. And more: the most selfish and the least diligent." How could they have lost?

Ten parties faced off against one another in round one: The major players were the Socialist party on the left, and the two big right-wing parties, Sarkozy's UMP and Marine Le Pen's National Front (FN). The Socialists and the UMP won the right to go to the second round with vote counts of 10.3 and 9.8 million respectively, together 56 percent of the total voters who chose a party. Coming third was Le Pen's farther-right party, with 6.4 million (if you don't count the astonishing 9 million blank ballots cast). To win the second round, Sarkozy had a right-of-center pool of 7 million additional first-round voters consisting of Le Pen's following and supporters of a smaller conservative party.

Hollande's Socialists and the French media had no objections to electoral alliances with the smaller parties on the left, however extreme: Communist, neo-Stalinist, and anti-Semitic ("anti-Zionist") parties were welcomed. But they brought Hollande only 5.5 million more voters. Up for grabs were the 3.3 million voters for a centrist group led by an ex-Sarkozy associate, not rightists but certainly anti-socialists. Adding only the avowedly right-wing and left-wing voters to the first-round winners would give Sarkozy 16.8 million supporters, Hollande 15.8 million.

Was the deciding second round close? It was neither close nor right-of-center. Sarkozy did indeed add 7 million votes to his first-round total. But Hollande received the votes of 7.7 million. The *partie le plus bête* had earned its name. National Front supporters who didn't stay home likely divided their votes between the two frontrunners. For a number of good reasons the UMP gave her, Marine Le Pen had refused to give a "voting directive" to her supporters to back Sarkozy. The first was that in an ambush clearly organized by Sarkozy's party just six weeks before the first round, Le Pen suddenly found it almost impossible to get the 500 signatures of French mayors she needed to qualify for the ballot—signatures that even eccentric little parties normally have no trouble collecting. While she chased after mayors willing to sign in the glare of media publicity, Sarkozy seized the opportunity to run to the right. He promised to do what he had neglected to do in his first term: check immigration, reform welfare, and institute law and order policing and justice. Simultaneously, Sarkozy's surrogates announced that if Le Pen made it into the second round, UMP supporters should vote for the Socialists rather than Le Pen—whom they styled as extremist, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic, when in fact she was the only candidate who had committed herself to treat Israel as if it had the same standing as non-Jewish states.

Sarkozy's surrogates denounced Le Pen's extremism, but not that of Hollande's Stalinist allies. Le Pen's policies might be regarded as conservative in France, but her views on regulation, protectionism, and immigration would place her firmly in the ranks of Blue Dog Democrats here:

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Recently she demanded a government takeover of France's biggest automaker, Peugeot. For that matter, the UMP's official observers at the Republican convention this August informed American reporters that their party was to the left of Obama. Nonetheless, had Sarkozy and Le Pen reached a private accommodation, a right-of-center government would now be presiding. Sarkozy's capitalist and neoliberal supporters would have had to join hands with Le Pen voters, Catholic and Protestant traditionalists, French patriots who deplore the expulsion of French history from the schools and the rush to multiculturalism. Both sections would be glad to come to terms on immigration, which has never been put before French voters, and in any case, 93 percent of France's Muslim citizens support the Socialists.

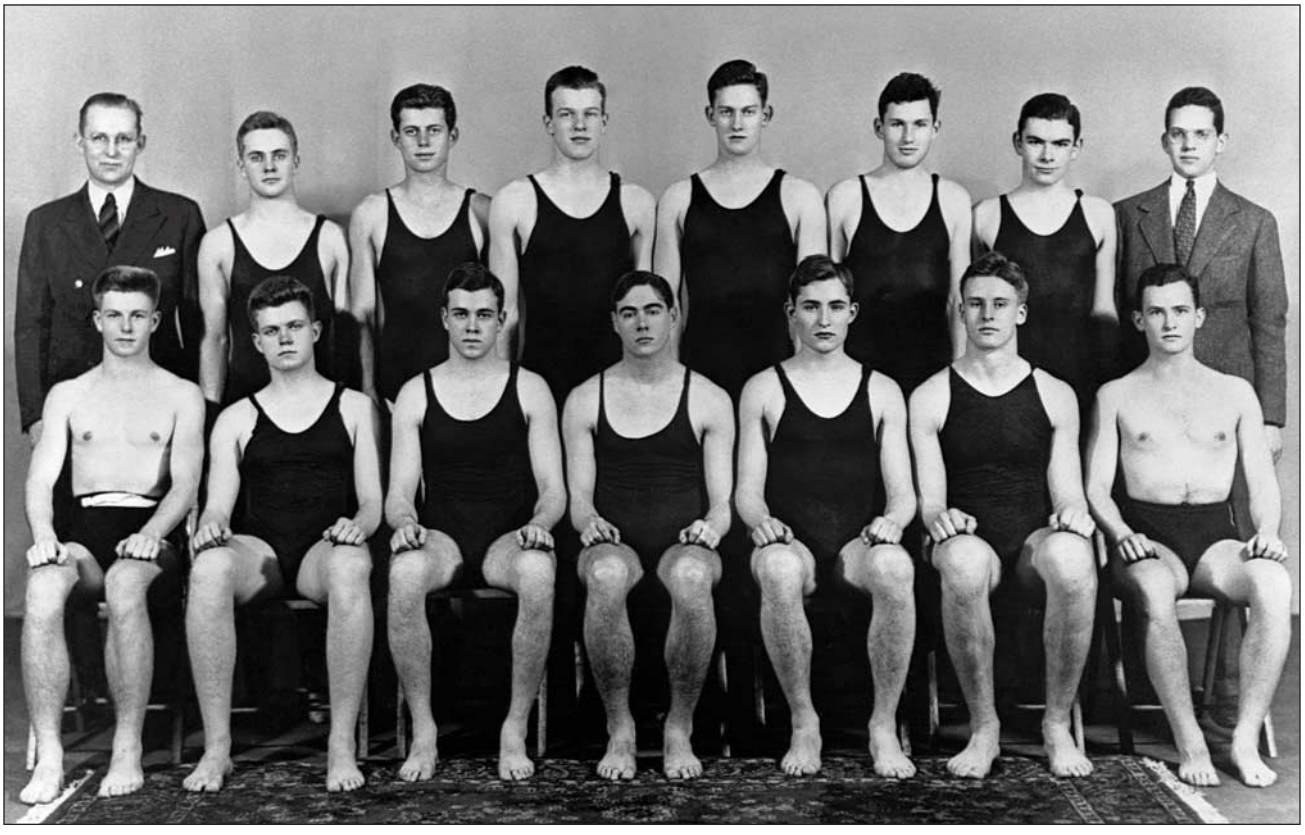
Such an alliance is in fact all but impossible in France, not because of the inherent differences, but because the cultural left won't permit it. According to the historian and law professor Frédéric Rouvillois, it was the cagey old socialist François Mitterrand, himself a colleague both of Pétain and de Gaulle, who devised the divide-and-conquer strategy in the '80s. There was a social and educational split between the urban, civilized, and business-oriented conservatives and the rural, religious, and patriotic right-wing. Institutionalize this split, and the left would rule. Now, as Rouvillois observed in April, "the conservatives, even when they're in the majority, continue to be paralyzed by the political-moral malediction laid against the so-called 'extreme right.' The Machiavellian genius of Mitterrand allowed the FN to siphon votes from the center-right, and at the same time [taught elites to utter] perpetual anathema against any alliance between the UMP and the FN. This weakened the conservatives and regularly opens the doors of power to left-wing governments supported by electoral minorities." Now an unquestioned aspect of French public life, Mitterrand's strategy ensures that conservatives who have every incentive to work with one another and learn to tolerate one another's differences have become estranged from one another and beholden to elite opinion-makers. The UMP remains what *Le Figaro* columnist Ivan Rioufol calls a *machine à perdre*.

Watching the collapse of these European governments—either losing power or becoming slightly more buttoned-up versions of the left—should be instructive to American conservatives now engaged in a furious battle to blame someone for the failure of the GOP's closest shot ever at defeating a Democratic president running for reelection. The GOP's Sarkozyites now blame House leaders who didn't treat the Democratic House minority as if it were a majority. Of course the minority status of the House Democrats is a direct result of the electorate's militant unhappiness with President Obama in 2010—an unhappiness expressed again last Tuesday by cutting Obama's popular vote margin from over 9 million in 2008 to 3 million in 2012. GOP Sarkozyites deplore the effective and venerable compromises that have been reached between social conservatives and accountability-based policy wonks in education, health care, and other areas.

Our Sarkozyist Tendency seems ready to declare that opposition to open immigration—or legal abortion—should not be tolerated. They are willing still to accept the votes of conservatives who have a negative view of immigration, but they read the polls and believe that many Hispanics are pro-immigration, and they yearn for the votes the GOP is not getting. Although they are pro-business, it's unlikely they know the profit and loss ratio of courting Hispanics in this fashion. There is a "revenue upside"—how many votes the party will gain with a grand immigration reform—but there is also an expense side, i.e., how many votes would be lost by alienating anti-immigration conservatives. Our Sarkozyites shun the intellectual work of understanding how they might alleviate the concerns of anti-immigrationists. Might some acknowledgment that promises made to them, even by such honorable Republicans as Senator John McCain, have often been broken? Might they recognize that Hispanic "targets" are also perfectly capable of discerning when opportunism and insincerity drive a political decision, rather than conviction?

Pro-choice and pro-life Republicans—both of whose voting blocs have propelled conservative presidents to office—have a common interest as well. Both need a political regime that allows their arguments to be heard, because both groups want to persuade voters to adopt their view, rather than leaving such matters to a coin-toss from a judge's bench. Those, like me, who tend to favor immigration, need to assure those who think that's crazy that we are absolutists about the right of the nation's voters to determine immigration policy, and no one else. We ought all to agree that we demand legislative solutions accountable to voters, not merely fashionable notions that appeal to an unaccountable elite.

Even those who live in Cambridge might recognize something else. The concern social conservatives have with the definition of marriage and exactly when a child's life begins is an expression of something all conservatives and even mainstream Protestants share: that the family is a crucial but terribly fragile institution with an enormous impact on human well-being and economic success. Social-science-oriented free-market types know this about the family as well as committed Christians: They merely approach the issue from a different direction. We need to fashion a moral and intellectual Hyde Amendment (the fiscal Hyde Amendment wasn't a bad idea either) to allow both sides in the GOP coalition to converse with one another rather than despise one another—or, worse, to think they can win elections or govern the country without one another. ♦



The Harvard swim team, ca. 1937. Yes, that's John F. Kennedy '40, third from left, top row.

Their Right Stuff

The evolution of the Harvard guinea pigs. BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

In the 1930s, a group of psychologists and physical anthropologists at Harvard chose 268 students whose medical, amatory, and career experiences they wished to document over the remaining decades of their lives. Department-store mogul W. T. Grant, who bankrolled the study, was curious about what made a good commanding officer or retail manager—more generally, a good leader of men. The Grant study is now ending, as its youngest subjects pass 90. George Vaillant, the psychiatrist who has directed the study since the 1960s and published periodic updates on its findings, offers a final report in *Triumphs of Experience*. Turns out the main thing the study has discovered is the corruption of the various worldviews in the name of which it was conducted.

Triumphs of Experience
The Men of the Harvard Grant Study
by George E. Vaillant
Harvard, 480 pp., $27.95

Even at the height of the egalitarian New Deal, professors were certain that the place to find leadership material was in the high-achieving segment of the upper classes. Since this was to be a study of optimal, not average, development, it was screened even further. Future *Washington Post* editor Benjamin Bradlee '42, scion of the Crowninshield family of Massachusetts, was among those whose features piqued the interest of investigators. Neither Leonard Bernstein '39 nor Norman Mailer '43 made the cut.

Not to beat around the bush, the Grant study was a study in eugenics, as that term was understood in the 1930s. This was just a decade after Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote the Supreme Court's 8-1 decision in *Buck* v. *Bell*, upholding Virginia's sterilization policy on the grounds that "three generations of imbeciles are enough." One of the study's early leaders, the anthropologist Earnest Hooton, hoped it would lead to "effective control of individual quality through genetics, or breeding."

A mesomorphic (muscular) body type was a sign of the right stuff;

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Christopher Caldwell is a senior editor at The Weekly Standard.

blubbery endomorphs and gangly ectomorphs were less promising. But Sigmund Freud had made inroads into American academia, too. So the Grant study was, from the outset, an uneasy mix of phrenology, somatotyping, race theory, and psychoanalysis. Not only did the young men have their skulls, pulses, and scrota measured; they also took Rorschach tests and filled out questionnaires about how they'd been toilet trained and how often they masturbated.

The study was barely a decade old when the revelations of World War II and the nascent civil rights movement brought its original eugenic slant into disrepute. But there had to be some use for those hundreds of blue-blood men on the hook to be studied intimately for a lifetime, and a use was found. In 1954, the tobacco industry gave the study money to look for "the positive reasons" that people smoke. For a decade after 1972, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism sponsored its research, and Vaillant published his book *The Natural History of Alcoholism* in 1983. At big research universities, intellectual curiosity waits on grant money, and not vice versa.

Through every change of focus, the study continued to take its bearings and biases from psychiatry. In the second half of the 20th century, Harvard's psychology department was under the sway of Erik Erikson, a protégé of Freud's daughter Anna. Erikson's vision focused on relationships and life "tasks," such as intimacy, "generativity," career consolidation, and "guardianship." Back then, this seemed an open-minded alternative to the penile dogmatism of Freud; today it sounds only marginally less nuts. When Vaillant writes about coding subjects "for the highest Eriksonian psychosocial task they had mastered," readers will be reminded less of social science than of those glossy-magazine features about Scientology that appear any time Tom Cruise acts up.

As with orthodox Freudianism, there is a hedonistic bias to the ideal of maturity that the study proclaims. To blossom is to shed "rigid" attitudes. There is nothing more contemptible than an "inhibition." Perhaps you think that, in a free society, *in*-hibitions are good since they spare us from having to submit to others' *pro*-hibitions. But if that is how you think, you will find this book's system of values unintelligible. Vaillant sees evidence of one Episcopal minister's maturation in the way "he had put aside absolute convictions about faith, morality, and authority in favor of a new appreciation of their relativity and mutability." If this book has a hero, it is a meathead named Boatwright, who says, "I don't give a damn if I'm remembered for anything. I've enjoyed my life and had a hell of a good time."

Harvard social scientists have a track record of tarting up ruling-class preferences to look like hard-won common sense. The thought has dawned on Vaillant, too, and he is on the lookout for his own biases. "I held a deep belief," he writes, "that Republicans are neither as loving nor as altruistic as Democrats." To his credit, he frets at the way his sample of the best and brightest somehow wound up even more wildly skewed than anyone would expect it to be. Seventy-one percent describe themselves as "liberal." Ninety-one percent favored de-escalation in Vietnam in 1967—a time when national majorities remained hawkish.

Vaillant is no apostle of hardline Freudianism, but there are certain parts of it he means to defend to the bitter end. He recognizes that most mid-20th-century psychoanalysts' bogeymen have turned out, upon further examination, to be figments of the academic imagination. "Even that old standby, the cold, rejecting mother, failed to predict late life emotional illness or poor aging," he admits.

Like a progressive Christian or a Gorbachevian Communist, Vaillant aims to defend his religion's ethics while disbelieving its revelation. He demands credit for Freudianism's good intentions. He wants to keep the Freudian typology of oral, anal, and phallic personalities: "Orality," he writes, "is more usefully seen as a metaphor for the longing of hearts that have not learned to fill themselves with hope and love." (Society at large is having a similar difficulty weaning itself off the word "anal" as a synonym for "neat.")

Vaillant is particularly insistent that "defense mechanisms"—character adjustments that allow psychologically wounded humans to adjust to, and overcome, their pain—"are not just one more dogma of the psychoanalytic religion." He even developed a four-stage hierarchy to prove that mature defense mechanisms, such as humor and altruism, produce a better adjustment to life at age 65 than immature defense mechanisms, such as psychotic distortion and hypochondria. In other words, his study has proved that an ability to adapt predicts an ability to adapt.

Vaillant's boldest conclusions generally take this form: tautologies presented as if they belong in *Ripley's Believe It or Not*. He sets up a "Decathlon of Flourishing"—a rather redundant list of career, health, and family outcomes—and then speaks of a "capacity for intimate relationships that predicted flourishing in all aspects of these men's lives." Since Vaillant has already defined flourishing as an ability to enter and nurture relationships, this is not a surprise. He also establishes that a person who is well-integrated (i.e., able "to surmount common problems which confront him such as career choice, competitive environment, and moral and religious attitudes") is more likely to flourish later in life. In other words, people who are good at addressing life's problems do better at life than those who are not.

The study does deliver surprises in describing the effects of alchoholism. Vaillant may be boasting when he writes that his work was able "to disprove the illusion that securely diagnosed alcoholics can return to successful social drinking" since that illusion had been long-dispelled by the 1980s. But he is right that alcoholism is "the most ignored causal factor in modern social science." In this study, alcoholism is the most important factor in divorce. (Certainly it causes marital problems;

it may also cause problem marriages in the first place.) Booze also affects longevity considerably more than total cholesterol, frequent exercise, and obesity do.

In its alcoholism data, the Grant study has something precious that very few studies of alcoholism have ever had: reliable blind data on alcoholics *before* they became problem drinkers. It is the tendency of drinkers to say that they drink to remedy unhappiness, and of those around them to say that there was always something funny about Old Jack, even before he began falling over at Rotary Club breakfasts and making passes at the boss's wife.

These impressions turn out to be quite false. The only important way in which alcoholics differ from nonalcoholics before they become addicts is in their dramatically higher tolerance for booze, which is inherited. This does not justify calling alcoholism a "disease"—"condition" would be a better word—but it does point to a strong genetic component. The Grant study has recently set out to collect DNA samples from all of its surviving subjects. The study has also made the bizarre discovery that subjects' late-life mental health is strongly associated with the longevity of maternal grandfathers. That indicates a link to both traits somewhere on the X chromosome.

Vaillant is led to the uncomfortable conclusion that there are certain grounds on which nature is always more important than nurture. Having arrived at the Grant study after it rejected the idea that biology is destiny, he has presided over biology's return. "In retrospect," he writes, "I can see that environmentalism in the post-war social sciences was just as extreme as the pre-war hereditarianism had been." What a come-uppance. Gene science has brought a partial vindication of the men with the skull-clamps and the scrotum-calipers.

Just as communism, according to an old Hungarian joke, was the long road from capitalism to capitalism, psychiatry now looks like the long road that led from Darwinism to Darwinism. ♦

B&A

Happy the Man

Dana Gioia has the courage of his contentment.

BY JAMES GARDNER

As contemporary poets go, Dana Gioia is a classicist. In his new collection of poems, his voice, well-modulated and never shrill, falls effortlessly into the rhythms of iambic pentameter, and occasionally into rhyme, as he explores emotions that are none the weaker for being held so fastidiously in check. Gioia, who is also a librettist and translator of Seneca's *Hercules Furens*, is distinguished among his contemporaries for the striking clarity of his diction: Disavowing the morbid self-referentiality of so many of today's poets, he has written poems that can usually be understood at the first approach. And, lest there be any risk of inclarity, he has the decency to provide, where needed, brief explanatory notes at the end of the volume.

Pity the Beautiful
Poems
by Dana Gioia
Graywolf, 88 pp., $15

To praise his clarity may not sound like much of a recommendation, but it is. Though thoroughly alive to the complexities of life—a subject that occupies his poetry as much as it does that of his contemporaries—Gioia is nevertheless so confident in the force of his message that he rarely resorts to those diversions and obscurities by which many of his contemporaries contrive not so much to conceal *what* they have to say as to conceal how little they have to say in the first place.

That is not the only respect in which he stands as something of an anomaly among his contemporaries. Although I would not presume to characterize his politics, I observe that he served honorably as head of the National Endowment for the Arts under George W. Bush; that—as mentioned—he writes admirably in iambic pentameter; and that his poems have appeared in the *New Criterion* and the *American Arts Quarterly*, two publications associated with the cultural right. Furthermore, he has worked unapologetically in corporate America, as a marketing executive at General Foods. It was only at the age of 40, two decades ago, that Gioia took up writing as a fulltime career.

And yet, as everyone knows, poets are supposed to hew to the left. True, Coleridge and Wordsworth started out as ardent defenders of the French Revolution only to end up as Tories, and e. e. cummings was more of a Republican than most of his admirers realize. But that was long ago. For the past few generations, the poetic establishment, like Hollywood, has been largely inhospitable to anyone on the right. Even though the poems in this volume, in their quest for universal truths, transcend politics, Gioia's proximity to Washington makes him something of a nonpareil among today's poets.

There are numerous reasons to admire these poems. Gioia has the courage of his contentment. It hums, often unspoken, as the base note of these poems—even where the poet addresses some deep pain he has known, like the death of a 4-month-old son. Many poets today, like people in general, seem to operate on the assumption that happiness is a condition morally and intellectually inferior to depression. They agree with Keats in "Ode to a Nightingale" that *to think is to be full of sorrow / And leaden-eyed despairs*. Such happiness as poets avow is of that spasmodic and Dionysian sort that you find in Whitman and in Allen Ginsberg.

James Gardner recently translated Vida's Christiad *(I Tatti Renaissance Library).*

But the well-mannered contentedness of Gioia's verse is rarely tolerated, even in prose. Yet, despite his awareness of life's complexities and its grief, he can still conclude "Prayer at Winter Solstice" in this way:

Blessed is the pain that humbles us.
Blessed is the distance that bars our joy.
Blessed is this shortest day that makes us long for light.
Blessed is the love that in losing we discover.

Beyond that happiness, I admire his courage to seek beauty and to communicate it effectively—once more without apology—whenever he finds it:

Underneath the murmur of the wasp
we hear the dry grass bending in the wind
and the spider's silken whisper from its web.

Elsewhere he describes his wife's coat as *this relic of your grace / A pink Persephone among pin-striped shadows*.

If there is anything with which I would reproach him, it is the liberties Gioia takes with his chosen forms, especially iambic pentameter. Consider this passage:

The tales we tell are either false or true,
But neither purpose is the point. We weave
The fabric of our own existence out of words . . .

The first two lines are cast fluently, unimpeachably in iambic pentameter, but the third line is, according to the conventions of that meter, two syllables too long. To my ear, this surplus is irksome and immelodious—even though I am well aware that most living poets who take up the form would not hesitate to do as Gioia has done.

But why? I fear there is an element of insincerity here: a hesitancy to jump body and soul into the spirit of the meter, for fear of seeming out of step with one's time. Those two extra syllables represent a leaven of rebellion, a sop to Cerberus, thrown in to deflect the criticism that the poem is too beholden to tradition. In this otherwise charming and meritorious collection, Dana Gioia needs to exhibit more consistently the courage of his prosody. ♦

B&A

War of Necessity

The anti-anti-Communist perspective on anti-communism. BY HARVEY KLEHR

The ostensible subject of Jon Wiener's account of his visits to several dozen Cold War museums, monuments, and memorials is how badly many of them convey what actually happened during that era. He reports that, by and large, they do a poor job of explaining the Cold War and of justifying the sacrifices and costs it required. However, while a number of his specific examples are indeed cringeworthy, he is far more interested in using them to argue that America was at least as much at fault as the Soviet Union was for starting the conflict, that we have little to be proud of regarding how it was fought, and that there is no reason to claim that America won.

How We Forgot the Cold War
A Historical Journey Across America
by Jon Wiener
California, 384 pp., $34.95

Most of the places Wiener visited, either in person or online, gloss over inconvenient or unpleasant historical events. One of the creepiest sites, the Weldon Spring Mound, a 75-foot pile of radioactive waste products near St. Louis, downplays the dangers of radiation and the exposure of workers at the uranium factory that once produced weapons-grade material. Others de-emphasize the Cold War. At the Churchill Memorial in Fulton, Missouri, the prime minister's famous Iron Curtain speech gets much less attention than his leadership of wartime Britain. Few of the attractions get large numbers of visitors: The Whittaker Chambers National Historic Landmark in Westminster, Maryland, site of the famous Pumpkin Patch, is virtually inaccessible and so obscure that even the county Visitor Center doesn't know where it is.

Pieces of the Berlin Wall are displayed at more than 30 sites throughout the United States, including a casino in Las Vegas where visitors to a men's room are invited to urinate on it. A 2009 Los Angeles art festival paired a real section of the Wall with a "Wall Across Wilshire" upon which artists painted their interpretations, comparing it to the Israeli security wall and the U.S.-Mexican border fence. Wiener gleefully notes that, even at the Ronald Reagan presidential library in Simi Valley, "Hippie Day" generated more interest from visitors than the Berlin Wall exhibit.

That the Cold War has not been commemorated in ways that resonate with large numbers of Americans affords Wiener, a historian at the University of California, Irvine, and contributing editor to the *Nation*, the opportunity to crow that the public has not bought the "triumphalist" conservative view that the Cold War was actually worth fighting, or that it ended in an American victory. One of his prize examples is the Victims of Communism Museum, authorized by Congress in 1993, which planned to raise $100 million for something on par with the Holocaust Museum. Instead, the result was a "ten-foot-high replica of the thirty-foot-high Goddess of Democracy from Tienanmen [sic] Square" on a traffic island on Massachusetts Avenue in Washington, D.C. Wiener derides the "conservative view" of its original sponsors that the

Harvey Klehr, the Andrew W. Mellon professor of politics and history at Emory, is the coauthor, most recently, of Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America.

Cold War was a moral conflict between good and evil; its detractors were right to suggest that it was just a conflict between states with different interests—one in which (Wiener notes) the Americans laid waste to Korea, militarized Europe, and supported dictators throughout the world. The Cold War was neither inevitable nor necessary, according to Wiener: Lots of money and lives could have been saved, and repression avoided, if only the United States had recognized that the Soviet Union was never a direct threat to its interests.

While offering a brief acknowledgment of Communist responsibility for famine in China and repression in Stalinist Russia, Wiener does his best to excuse and minimize the horrors and crimes of communism. He piously notes that the victims of Communist regimes "deserve better" than the barely noticed statue in Washington, but he goes on to deride *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* for attempting to equate the Soviet Union with Nazi Germany, and for exaggerating the number of victims of communism. Victims of famine should not be put in the same category as Jews gassed or executed by *Einsatzgruppen*, he argues. After all, as J. Arch Getty, an academic who for years tried to minimize the number of victims, once noted, the Soviet famines were caused by "the stupidity or incompetence of the regime," and not deliberate policy. Wiener sagely explains that "a significant proportion of the hundred million" alleged victims of communism died "due to poor nutrition and inadequate medical care." And he inaccurately and offensively suggests that the editors of *The Black Book* were attempting to minimize the evils of Nazism by emphasizing the evils of communism and blaming Jews for giving Hitler pride of place among mass murderers.

Both of these arguments parallel, and are as morally offensive and factually obtuse as, the one offered by the Nazi apologist David Irving, who asserts that most of those who died in places like Auschwitz simply succumbed to illness—that Hitler never had a deliberate policy to exterminate the Jews, and that the Holocaust has been used for narrow political purposes.

During their years in power, Communist regimes in the Soviet Union, China, Cambodia, Eastern Europe, North Korea, and Vietnam have murdered and starved to death tens of millions of people, targeted for death

Victims of Communism Memorial, Washington

because of their ethnic origin or economic status. They have herded millions more into brutal concentration camps. But Wiener isn't sure what this has to do with the Cold War or with Communist ideology. If America had been wise, he writes, it would have used its power not to defeat its "enemies," but to negotiate "to maintain the status quo." While the Cold War might have been "bad news for the Eastern Europeans," the Soviet Union and, presumably, Communist China posed no threat to American interests, either at home or abroad.

Some commemorative efforts do elicit Wiener's approval. He is delighted by the Truman Library's willingness to consider that president's decisions at the dawn of the Cold War as possibly mistaken. Maybe Henry Wallace was right after all! Also, CNN's 24-part series on the history of the Cold War is lauded for giving equal time to the Soviet perspective, enabling the network to produce a "universal, not a partisan story." Wiener defends CNN from conservative charges that it equated McCarthyism with Stalinist repression: The Gulag and the senator were both examples, he writes, of how domestic affairs were affected by the Cold War rivalry. Both topics got an equal number of minutes from CNN, prompting complaints from conservatives, but Wiener notes that their whining can be dismissed since the narrator clearly mentioned that the number of victims was not on the same scale.

Wiener is not nearly as complimentary about the ways in which museums have remembered major cases of domestic communism and espionage such as the Rosenbergs or Alger Hiss. He criticizes the National Security Agency's Cryptologic Museum for not sufficiently highlighting the Venona Project, which broke Soviet codes and revealed that hundreds of Americans had spied for the Soviet Union, including the atomic physicist Theodore Hall. But he misinterprets the decrypted cables to claim that the FBI "decided to pursue Julius Rosenberg and let Hall go," ignoring the fact that the FBI was able to develop admissible evidence that Rosenberg was a spy, while Hall escaped prosecution because the only evidence against him came from decrypted cables that could not be used in open court.

Wiener also falsely claims that the Venona cables and subsequent evidence have confirmed that Ethel Rosenberg was not guilty of espionage. In fact, KGB files reveal that she *was* guilty of conspiracy to commit espionage! Wiener continues to clutch at the left-wing myth that Alger Hiss was framed by the FBI's use of a forged typewriter, and, more seriously, he peddles the discredited—and McCarthyite—myth that an innocent State Department employee named Wilder Foote was the real spy in the department. Of course, he does not consider what Venona and other revelations from long-closed American and Russian archives tell us about Communist subversion in Cold War America, or the rationale they provide for an extensive loyalty-security program.

KAREN BLEIER / AFP / GETTY IMAGES / NEWSCOM

The lack of interest in Cold War history, the low attendance at many historical sites and museums, and the gaping holes in many exhibits are all the evidence Wiener needs to conclude that the public is suspicious of the argument that, like World War II, "the Cold War was a good war," and that it represented an ideological conflict between communism and freedom. He never considers the possibility that decades of deeply dishonest books by such popular historians as Howard Zinn have contributed to Americans' moral amnesia about the defeat of the second totalitarian enemy of liberal democracy in the 20th century. (On the same note, Wiener recently added his hosannas for Eric Hobsbawm, the British Communist historian who famously agreed, a few years ago, that the murder of millions of innocent people was justifiable if it could have brought about the promised Communist utopia.)

The Cold War was not a simple battle of good against evil, and historically accurate memorials need to recognize that fact. It entailed moral compromises, American support of unappetizing regimes, and the abandonment of countries and peoples to decades of brutality and mass murder because a prudent strategy to overthrow communism was not available.

At home, it meant building weapons of mass destruction, often in slipshod conditions and in ways that threatened or compromised the health of defense workers and polluted the environment. Seen in retrospect, some of the simplistic rhetoric and plans were laughable (the Greenbrier Congressional Bunker in West Virginia, designed to shelter government officials during a nuclear war, is one example).

Despite Wiener's sneering tone, there was a national consensus, among both conservatives and liberals, that the Cold War was necessary. It ended with an American victory, a triumph that was also a victory for democracy over communism. That is worth celebrating. And perhaps one day there will be a suitable monument to commemorate that happy occasion. ♦

B&A

Bad for the Jews

Another unintended consequence of the 18th Amendment. BY TEVI TROY

Izzy Einstein, Moe Smith after Prohibition

The relative lack of interest in drinking among those of the Jewish persuasion is familiar enough that it is the subject of numerous jokes of various degrees of wit. It is well known, for example, that caterers think it is in their own commercial interests to tend an open bar for Jewish events and offer a cash bar at gentile ones. This is confirmed by insightful jokes like the story of the German, the Russian, and the Jew who are lost in the desert:

German: I'm so thirsty, I must have beer.
Russian: I'm so thirsty, I must have vodka.
Jew: I'm so thirsty, I must have diabetes.

Tevi Troy, senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, is a former senior White House aide and Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Jews and Booze
Becoming American in the Age of Prohibition
by Marni Davis
New York University Press, 272 pp., $32

Given the Jewish people's reputation as a relatively temperate people, one would think that a book on the subject of the relationship of American Jews and alcohol, even one cleverly called *Jews and Booze*, would have little ground to cover. Nevertheless, Georgia State University's Marni Davis has pursued this very subject, providing not only an opportunity to revisit some classic jokes, but also to imbibe a rich intellectual cocktail of interesting facts and oft-ignored history.

According to the Yiddish humorist Michael Wex's *Just Say Nu*, "It isn't that Jews don't drink, it's that they don't drink without a pretext." It is in part because of this pretext-driven

drinking that the Jewish community in the United States was largely against the temperance movement and specifically against prohibitionist efforts. In addition to the desire to protect the Jewish use of wine for sacramental purposes, the reasons for this stance included the involvement of many Jews in the business of booze—as manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and bar-owners—and a generalized concern, still prevalent among Jews today, regarding the rise of what Davis calls "sectarian religious forces."

As it turns out, the Jews were right to be concerned. According to Davis, Prohibition helped foster anti-Semitism in two ways, at least. First, many bootleggers (such as the Bronfman family of Canada, which made its fortune through smuggling) were Jewish, angering the Prohibition forces. Second, both prohibitionists and antiprohibitionists—also known as imbibers, tipplers, and general fun-lovers—resented the exception Jews received in order to be able to partake of sacramental activities. (Catholics, of course, received a similar exemption for communion.) These grumblers correctly surmised that some Jews would take advantage of the loophole for both fun and profit.

In fact, so many Jews were involved in the efforts to skirt Prohibition, both via the sacramental exception and through more straightforward smuggling efforts, that the Treasury Department even hired Jewish agents, such as the semi-famous Izzy Einstein, to address the problem. According to Davis, "Einstein and his partner, another Jewish Lower East Sider named Moe Smith, fashioned themselves as enforcers of a law brought into being by decades of activism on the part of Protestant lobbyists and anti-immigrant interests." The temperance movement, in Davis's description, was itself a barrier to Jewish integration into the mainstream of American society. With its departure, other barriers fell as well, and American Jews became what some have called the "model minority," due to their ability to become accepted and even thrive in a post-dry America.

Although Prohibition is gone, some of the developments that Davis writes about are still with us. She explains, for example, that kosher wine's reputation for being nauseatingly sweet comes from the turn-of-the-20th-century winemaker Sam Schapiro, who used dreadful-sounding "musky-smelling" grapes for his wines and had to mask the resulting flavor by adding copious amounts of sugar to the product. This brings to mind a classic *Frasier* routine in which Frasier needs to pretend to be Jewish in order to assuage the mother of his Jewish girlfriend. The exchange goes as follows:

Niles: What if she's expecting Jewish wine?
Frasier: Gosh, I'm afraid I don't have any of that on hand.
Niles: It's all right, it's easy enough. It's just like regular wine plus a little bit of this . . .
Niles takes some sugar and puts two teaspoons into the glass.
Niles: Try that.
Frasier: It's dreadful!
Niles: Perfect.

Yet, even now, the story of Jews and drinking is changing. These days there is a wide variety of excellent kosher wines, and the best ones are reviewed annually in the weeks before Passover by the *Wall Street Journal*.

Nevertheless, the twin perceptions of Jews as nondrinkers who partake only of sickly sweet Malaga or Concord grape wines persist. The good news is that this allows the jokes to continue, such as the one about why Jewish mothers don't drink. (Because alcohol interferes with their suffering.) But what people joke about is often an insight into what they believe. As Christie Davies, author of *Jokes and Their Relation to Society*, has written: "There are very few jokes about Jewish drinking habits and an enormous number about those of the Scots."

For those greatly interested in this relatively narrow topic, *Jews and Booze* is thorough and well-researched. For everyone else, insights on the subject will likely continue to derive from a standard Jewish joke book or Catskills comedy routine. ♦

B&A

Funny Peculiar

The genius of the poet laureate of nonsense.

BY SARA LODGE

Just as American children grow up with Dr. Seuss's *The Cat in the Hat*, British children grow up with Edward Lear's fantastical but touching poem "The Owl and the Pussycat."

The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat,
They took some honey, and plenty of money,
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
And sang to a small guitar,
"O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are,
You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!"

These strange companions, eloping with their honey and money, purchase a wedding ring from a pig, who has been wearing one through his nose. This enables them to be married by the turkey who lives on the hill, after which they dine on *mince, and slices of quince, / Which they ate with a runcible spoon*. But the best line is the last: The happy couple, *hand in hand, on the edge of the sand*, become a reflection of perfect harmony—

Sara Lodge, a senior lecturer in English at the University of St Andrews, is the author of Thomas Hood and Nineteenth-Century Poetry: Work, Play, and Politics.

They danced by the light of the moon,
The moon,
The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

I have heard this poem read at more than one wedding. There is always an awkward moment during the line when the owl serenades his bride-to-be—*O lovely Pussy!*—as the modern wedding guest tries not to allow his or her mind to descend to low thoughts. But it is striking that a "nonsense" verse, published in 1871 and intended for children, has become so entwined with the national heartstrings that people recite it at a ceremony of the greatest adult emotional importance.

The reason is that Lear's best nonsense poetry is charming in the most powerful sense of that word: It casts a musical spell that is both hopeful and poignant. We all know, after all, that in the workaday world, birds and cats can't love each other. But the impossibility of this romance is part of a wider, wilder, fragile dream of escape that Lear's poetry enables—*to the land where the Bong-tree grows*. Significantly, in "The Owl and the Pussycat," these two creatures of darkness don't dance "in the moonlight" but *by the light of the moon*; we hear "delight" in "the light," and a quiet joyfulness shimmers off the page.

Edward Lear (1812-88), whose bicentenary we have celebrated this year, had a curious life. He was born in London, the 20th of 21 children. Like Dickens, he experienced early the fiscal uncertainties of middle-class life. His father was a sugar-refiner turned stockbroker who lost his shirt in the stock market when Lear was 4, and was imprisoned for debt. Lear's mother, perhaps understandably, given her huge brood, handed over Edward's care to his oldest sister, Ann, his "guardian spirit." He was a playful but sensitive boy: epileptic, depressive, and (possibly) the victim of some kind of abuse from an older child during his brief encounter with school.

The result was that he was ejukated (as Lear liked to spell it) at home, and his pursuits were closer to those of Victorian young women than those of tougher boys, who thrashed out a syllabus of Latin and rugby and mathematics. Instead, Lear learned to paint birds and flowers and butterflies, with which he decorated fans and albums. He learned to sing and play the piano, which he continued to do all his life. And he learned to write poetry and entertaining letters—often combining the two to make the recipient smile.

It is in the intimate dialogue of letters that Lear's nonsense begins. He plays with phonetic representations of words: "Oliver Cromwell" becomes

Edward Lear by W.N. Marstrand

"Allofacrumble." He uses words that sound like their more appropriate cousins, but have divergent meanings: "at my advanced age" becomes "at my advantageous." Ultimately, words evolve that are clearly adjectives, but whose meanings are entirely suggested by their sound and shape: "runcible," "scroobious," "polybingular." Most of Lear's nonsense poems and stories were originally produced for friends' children in the context of playful correspondence, and they still have the quality of private language and escapade that makes them seem peculiarly "for us," whoever we may be.

Lear's principal career was as an artist. He was an ornithological illustrator of genius and deserves to be remembered alongside John James Audubon—who prized Lear's work—as one of the foremost exponents of a new style of natural history painting. Where the birds and animals rendered by earlier artists often look stuffed (they generally were drawn from dead specimens), Lear's creatures are vivid, vibrant, and vivacious in every luminously colored feather or shiny-shelled carapace. His parrots and toucans eye us amusedly, askance. His tortoises contain worlds of detail in their whorls of black, brown, and green. Strange animals new to science, like the Whiskered Yarke, saunter across the page with an independent air.

Lear's early work, documenting species in the newly founded London Zoo and the Earl of Derby's menagerie at Knowsley Hall, is astonishingly assured for that of a man in his teens and early twenties. Charles Darwin admired it. When Lear began to illustrate his "nonsenses," as he called his poetry, he would bring the same energy to drawing people who leap and dance off the page, behaving in an exhilarating manner that gleefully oversteps the margins of the Victorian drawing room.

At Knowsley Hall, when he wasn't drawing lemurs, Lear began writing what we now call limericks for the Earl of Derby's grandchildren. He didn't invent the form: He borrowed it from a book called *Anecdotes and Adventures of Fifteen Gentlemen*. But Lear allowed his imagination to run away with him (in Lear's poetry, something is generally running away with something else). Thus, scores of old and young persons from places all over the globe prove to enjoy erratic behavior that includes ignoring their parents, eating spiders, dancing with ravens, and fishing at night using their noses for illumination.

For example:

There was an old man of Peru
Who watched his wife making a stew
But once by mistake
In a stove she did bake
That unfortunate man of Peru

The illustration, adding to the joke, makes it clear that the wife is rushing her husband towards the oven with pointed intent.

These poems erupt with physical activity. They are full of adults who are

GETTY IMAGES

as willful and disobedient as children. The tight rules of the limerick are like the tight rules of society. Despite them, a whole world of delightful eccentricity opens up as we turn each page. The fact that the pictures are so large in relation to the text is also liberating and pleasurable. This is emphatically not a textbook; it is a book we can enjoy with our eyes and ears, even if we can't yet read for ourselves.

Most early-19th-century literature for children was moral and educative: Evangelical authors produced, as one contemporary complained, "cold, unimaginative ... prosaic good-boy stories." Lear, who was a dissenter in religion, did not believe in original sin or damnation. In his "nonsense," nutty and naughty nonconformists run riot. Children were entranced.

Lear moved to Italy in 1838, when he was 26, so that by the time *A Book of Nonsense*, containing these limericks, was published in 1846, he was an infrequent visitor to England. He was a man who needed to keep moving. His depressive temperament led to what a friend called "vehement reversions." When Lear was happy, his delight in color, variety, people, and landscape bubbles up in diary entries popping with exclamation points. Arriving in India, he exclaims: "O new Palms!!! O flowers!! O creatures!! O beasts!! ... anything more overpoweringly amazing cannot be conceived!!!" When he was miserable, his reflections are clouded in "utter disgust."

Lear became a landscape painter and travel writer, undertaking arduous journeys across Greece, Turkey, Albania, Egypt, and the Holy Land. He would rise at dawn to capture the light on mountains, ruined temples, or rugged pelican coasts, producing delicate pencil sketches washed with smoke-grey and hyacinth-blue watercolor that, at their best, suggest the same longing for the far horizon as his poetry, where the "Dong with a Luminous Nose" gazes out perpetually, looking for his lost love, and the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bò, a rejected suitor, disappears on a turtle's back.

While Lear earned a living as a painter, notable success eluded him. Increasingly, from middle age, he became a figure in his own nonsense: a lovable caricature with a large stomach and sticklike legs, a big beard, and spectacles which are perpetually falling off. Sometimes he is a composite creature: a man-bee or a man-goose, or one who strolls confidentially arm-in-arm with frogs or slugs. Lear's insistence on *being* nonsense, rather than just relating it, brings the reader closer to him than we ever get to Lewis Carroll, or perhaps to any other children's writer.

THE OWL AND THE PUSSY-CAT.

In his self-caricatures, Lear is small and silent but physically exuberant, like an animal or a pre-verbal child—we read him through his comic body. In aligning himself with the strange creatures who populate his nonsense, Lear makes himself appear foolish, impotent. Yet the effect of his dumb show is also to place himself beyond the reach of adult concerns. He offers adult viewers a glimpse into their own subconscious desire to remain a child.

This is why Lear's best, long poems—such as "The Owl and the Pussycat" and "The Jumblies"—are wistful as well as wishful. They conjure realms to which characters can sail, against the prevailing tides of decorum and probability. The mesmerizing chorus of "The Jumblies" has the insistent rhythm of the sea itself in its lines:

Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

What follows is the opposite of a cautionary tale. The Jumblies set off in their sieve, ignoring well-meant public advice. In an ordinary Victorian nursery narrative they would be punished for disobedience. They would come to grief. But the Jumblies come, instead, to a land of happiness, where they buy *a hive of silvery Bees ... / And a lovely Monkey with lollipop paws*. When they sail back home, the naysayers are converted: *And every one said, "If we only live, / We too will go to sea in a Sieve ..."*

As in Lear's limericks, there is delight in defiance here. The nonconformists turn out to be right. They seek their pleasures freely, and gain by the adventure. But there is also, more subtly, an air of melancholy about "The Jumblies." They sail away, but *in twenty years they all came back ... / And everyone said, "How tall they've grown!"* It seems that the Jumblies are children, whose magical thinking keeps them safe from sinking. But adult readers know, even as we gaze at the delicious country of wish-fulfillment the Jumblies discover, that neither they nor we can go back. *Far and few, far and few* is a poignant lament for the lost empire of childhood.

Lear survived the Modernist distaste that swept other Victorian classics off the shelf. W.H. Auden and T.S. Eliot loved the sound of his poems and learned from them. Aldous Huxley and George Orwell admired his resistance to tyranny. But in our own time, critical aspects of Lear's work—particularly his painting, his travel writing, and his letters (some lost, some still secreted in private collections)—have fallen from sight. The bicentenary has witnessed a number of small exhibitions; the *Oxford English Dictionary*, on Lear's 200th birthday, made "runcible" its featured word.

But Edward Lear deserves to be known and regarded as more than the author of "The Owl and the Pussycat." He was an artist who captured hitherto unexplored worlds in the natural kingdom, and a writer whose art was to show words as a set of characters that might meet, meld, rejoice, and rebel, making a new language of creativity. ♦

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B&A

Beyond the Apps

The Blue Helix should suffice for the next few months.

BY JOE QUEENAN

Consumers are justifiably confused when it comes to picking out a smartphone. Many high-end iPhones and Androids contain features that are not terribly useful in everyday life. Not-so-early adopters also worry that they will purchase a state-of-the-art phone for $399 and then, just a few months later, burn with envy as a less expensive unit offering many more features hits the market.

The public need no longer fear either of these scenarios. With the release of the Blue Helix, a solar-powered telekinetic unit that is easily the most powerful cell phone ever invented, consumers will find themselves in possession of a self-regenerating smartphone that automatically downloads new apps and features the very moment they come into existence. The phone is a living, breathing organism that not only need never be replaced, but keeps getting better and better.

The Blue Helix is very much like a plate of *osso buco* that miraculously reappears as soon as it is eaten, or a stein of award-winning Pilsner that automatically improves its taste before it has even finished dribbling down a person's throat. It is a phone that will never be obsolete, a phone that will never require an upgrade, a phone that will never need servicing. Understandably, because it has a life expectancy of 4,000 years, it is a bit on the pricey side: $30,000 per unit. But anyone who has tried out the Blue Helix will agree that the thirty thousand clams is money well spent.

In addition to all the basic phone, email, texting, and search engine functions that are standard features of smartphones, the Blue Helix has certain applications never before seen in a device of this sort. The polygraph app lodged in the upper right-hand corner of the screen tells the user whether the person he is talking to or receiving texts from is lying—a useful application when chatting with a broker, a politician, a philandering spouse, or a child. Via high-powered satellite cameras, a second app instantly pinpoints the location and identity of the person phoning, texting, messaging, or emailing, making it impossible for telemarketers to disguise their identity and making it useless for people who frequent online dating sites to lie about their height, age, weight, or the quantity of hair of which they are still in possession. Not with a resolution of 376,000 pixels.

It also removes cataracts!

A multifaceted GPS unit alerts drivers when they are entering a ZIP code where their political views and bumper stickers are not likely to be well received. And yes, it can be specially programmed for libertarians.

Standard features of the Blue Helix include a 35 mm camera, a telescope, a periscope, a high-powered microscope, an atomic collider, and a disposable EKG unit. Via an invisible, genetically modified camera made entirely of soy, the phone can be used to perform CAT scans, endoscopies, and colonoscopies, automatically texting the results from inside the stomach in any one of 35 languages, including Urdu. It also removes cataracts.

For an additional $599, ranking members of the armed forces can purchase an app allowing them to activate the nation's antinuclear missile defenses from remote locations. The phone comes equipped with four microtorpedoes, a state-of-the-art antiaircraft gun, 12 compact heat-seeking missiles, and a small, but remarkably effective derringer. The ordnance adds little to the weight of the phone, as it is made entirely of optical fiber fused with an extremely supple form of tungsten.

In emergencies, the Blue Helix can morph into a lifeboat, a glider, a parachute, or a roulette table; it can also be expanded to serve as a mattress, a gazebo, a helicopter landing pad, or a small but well-appointed Gothic cathedral. The phone works well as a portable space heater, DVD player, television, and microwave, and can readily be used to detect termites, cholera, radon, or intruders. Optional add-ons include a portable chemotherapy unit, an electric piano, a virtual studio apartment in Paris's fashionable 16th *arrondissement*, and a four-car garage.

Does the Blue Helix have any drawbacks other than its price? Only a few. Some users complain that the laser gun app can accidentally be activated, causing nearby buildings to go up in flames. Several have pointed out that the female voice on the GPS unit bears an annoying resemblance to Carol Channing's. And the stitches created by the personal auto-surgical unit may chafe against sensitive skin. Other than that, the Blue Helix is nothing short of a miracle.

This just in: The Blue Helix can also be used as a lunar landing device, a magnetic resonance imaging unit, a mobile funeral home, and a changing table. Once the price on this baby comes down a few bucks, look out. ♦

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Joe Queenan is the author, most recently, of One for the Books.

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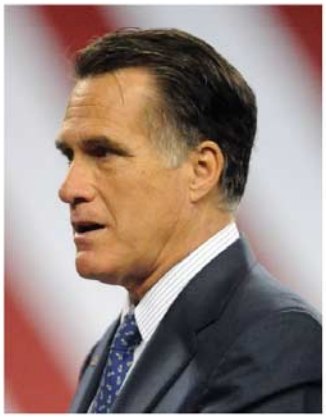
The Truth Behind the Rhetoric | By Glenn Kessler

38 Comments

Romney concedes to Obama... or does he?



Posted by Glenn Kessler at 06:02 AM ET, 11/08/2012

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With the election over, our readers probably thought the Fact Checker's work was done. But the end of the election does not mean the end of dishonesty. Quite the contrary. For example, many people think that Mitt Romney gave a very gracious speech conceding the election. But a number of statements in Mr. Romney's speech gave us pause. Let's go through the transcript:

"Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, my friends. Thank you so very much."

While it is possible that Mr. Romney was indeed grateful for the efforts of his supporters during his campaign, it is unlikely that all of the people in the audience or watching his speech at home could be classified as "friends." Google defines "friend" as: "A person whom one knows and with whom one has a bond of mutual affection, typically exclusive of sexual or family relations." We concede it is possible, even probable, that Mr. Romney did not have sexual intercourse with the millions of people watching his speech, and that he was not related to them all. We are willing to grant that all in attendance may have a bond of mutual affection with Mr. Romney, since they voted for him. But we have difficulty believing that Mr. Romney knows them all. It is very rare for a person to have even a dozen friends, let alone millions. In our experience, people usually have three friends, and most other people ignore them or come up with excuses why they can't come to their dinner parties. So, in our view, if this statement was not a flat-out lie, it was at least a misleading embellishment.

Two Pinocchios

Moving on:

"(APPLAUSE)"

This line indicates that the audience for the speech was applauding, a common practice at public gatherings, usually consisting of a person or group of people moving their hands rapidly together, creating a "clap" sound. When several people perform this act simultaneously, it generates a loud sonic event that can be quite jarring to truly sensitive and introspective people. Anyway. After reviewing several videos of the speech taken by well-trusted news outlets, we were able to confirm that there was a large group of people present to witness the speech, and that they were, in fact, "applauding." Had Mr. Romney won the election, we would take this applause at face value. But since he lost, it is difficult to believe that his supporters were applauding in full sincerity. In our experience, when faced with a disappointing outcome—for example, when Clay Aiken lost to Ruben Studdard on American Idol