

Liberty

November 2007

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Could
Hitler
Have Won?

Let the Dead Hire the Dead

by Jonathan Slow

The Supreme Court vs. The School Board

by Bruce Ramsey

The Wreckage of Truth

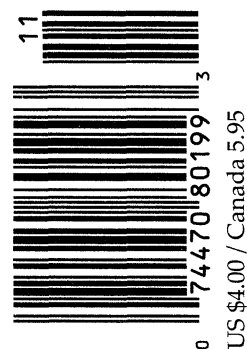
by R.W. Bradford

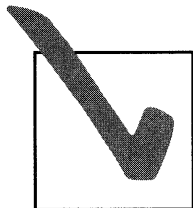
The House of Ninety Keys

by Bill Merritt

Also: *Jon Harrison* discovers a new chapter in the continuing saga of the Kennedys, *Gary Jason* advises Janiacs to relax and enjoy a new film, *Jo Ann Skousen* offers a *tour de force* of the Wild West, fantasy, and crossdressers . . . plus other articles, reviews & humor.

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Letters

Turkish Delight

Reading Bill Merritt's Reflection on "Martial law" (September) brought to mind the "constitutional crisis" in Turkey a few months back, when the Turkish military wouldn't stand for the Islamist president appointing an Islamist prime minister, because it would threaten the distinctly secular government established by Kemal Ataturk, founder of the modern Turkish state. I found myself wishing that our military were such vigilant guardians of our Constitution.

Perhaps it is time to discard the outdated notion of the president being commander in chief, or the Senate being able to declare war. If it were up to a consensus of top generals, all wars would likely be defensive.

Rycke Brown
Grants Pass, Ore.

Not Great

Ted Roberts writes a strange review ("Seeking God, Dead or Alive," September) of Christopher Hitchens' book, "god Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything." To start with, he distorts the title of the book, which does not start with "God" with a capital "G," but instead "god" with a small letter "g."

Then he makes the fallacious argument that merely addressing the issue of whether or not God (or god) exists amounts to an implicit recognition of the existence of a supernatural being. (I suppose Hitchens shouldn't ever write a book about unicorns, for fear that he will be misinterpreted as believing in their existence, too.) If this bit of slight of logic were to be allowed to succeed, then we would have the neat result for theists that, if you deny the existence of god, then you obviously believe in his existence, and if you don't then the

claims for his existence win by default. A win-win for supernaturalists.

Of course, the main thesis of Hitchens' book is not to demonstrate that supernatural beings don't exist; he takes that as a given, given the lack of evidence for such beings. Those who want to read about the lack of proof for the existence of such beings would do better to read such books as "Atheist Universe: The Thinking Person's Answer to Christian Fundamentalism," by David Mills, or "The God Delusion," by Richard Dawkins.

Hitchens does, however, address in passing the lack of any historic evidence for any claim to authenticity of various biblical events which are taken as, well, gospel by believers, many of whom regard the Bible as literally true.

The primary thesis of "god Is Not Great," of course, is that the conception of a supernatural being, as promulgated by the three main theistic faiths of the Western world, is a mass of self-contradictions and moral horrors — and not just in the distant past, either. The acquiescence of the Roman Catholic Church in the Nazi genocide against the Jews in the recent past is well-known; what is not so widely publicized is the much more recent complicity of Catholic priests in the Rwandan genocide (Hitchens cites as an example Father Wenceslas Munyeshyaka, who provided lists of people to be murdered and was later smuggled to France by other priests). This, along with multiple, infamous examples of Islamic fundamentalists' actions, is enough to negate any claims that atrocities by organized religion are in the distant past.

Roberts makes the claim that the only religion anyone should fear today is Islam. He uses an example from the book about people coming from a prayer meeting being innocuous, if not benevo-

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lent. Not if you are an employee of an abortion clinic or a homosexual, having just been denounced in that prayer meeting as a hated sinner. (Of course, my biggest fear would not be meeting this group on the street, but seeing them in the legislature or at a petition table or in the voting booth, as they eagerly support the most horrendous sort of sanctions and restrictions of human rights for those they deem sinful.)

As for the oft-alleged beneficence of religion, Hitchens pretty well demolishes that in the chapter, "Does Religion Make People Behave?" He describes a debate between humanist A.J. Ayer and a Bishop Butler: "The exchange proceeded politely enough until the bishop, hearing Ayer assert that he saw no evidence at all for the existence of any god, broke in to say, 'Then I cannot see why you do not lead a life of unbridled immorality.'"

A few paragraphs later, he concludes as follows: "Was he in fact not telling Ayer, in his own naive way, that if freed from the restraints of doctrine he himself would choose to lead 'a life of unbridled immorality'? One naturally hopes not. But much empirical evidence exists to reinforce the suggestion. When

priests go bad, they go very bad indeed, and commit crimes that would make the average sinner pale."

John Kannarr
Glendale, Ariz.

The Violent Brush

Every time Ted Roberts refers to Islam he is painting all Muslims with a violent brush. I can find violent people in all cultures. It is plainly incorrect to slam Islam, and it smacks of racism or religious bigotry. The American Muslims I know are not like that. God knows that they have been provoked enough to have at least contemplated violence. But *no one* I know is even thinking about it!

Please stop this silliness. Tell the reviewers to leave their bigotry at home.

Dennis Lubahn
Columbia, Mo.

Roberts replies: Mr. Kannarr's reply to my review of "god is Not Great" (pardon my tradition of that capital "G") is interesting. Were it written in the 13th century I would agree with much of his letter — and much of Hitchens' book, too. As I said in the review, the Judeo-Christian culture historically has been far from faultless. However,

it does brighten one's view of mankind to note that, with minor exceptions, the Crusades, pogroms, religious wars, and the Inquisition are subjects for history books, not newspapers.

And for all the bloodletting provoked by religious zeal it's a mere stain compared to the floods of blood shed by secular executioners such as the Nazis and Communists. I'll spot you a couple million deaths and those secular killers will still win the murder derby with ease.

If Hitchens' premise is that man is a murderous animal I might agree, but today I'd still rather meet prayer-meeting folks in that dark alley than stormtroopers of whatever denomination.

As for Mr. Lubahn: yes, there are violent creatures in all cultures. But there seem to be many more in the ranks of Islam — even in areas where they are not persecuted. And I know of no other group that sacrifices their children with such glee. Stacks of corpses in New York, London, Tel Aviv, and the capitals of the Middle East are facts, not bigotry.

Underwhelming Evidence

I beg to differ with David Beito's August Reflection ("Lone swordsman")

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in which he states "the evidence is overwhelming" that Oswald and Oswald alone killed John F. Kennedy.

Research into the Kennedy assassination is perhaps something of a fool's errand. One enters a wilderness of mirrors, to emerge with many questions still unanswered. I would venture to guess that I've probably spent more time and effort studying the assassination than any other two Liberty contributors or readers (I presume most if not all of you are considerably more sensible than I am).

My own conclusion, based on hundreds of hours of reading and reflection, is that Kennedy was the victim of a conspiracy. This conspiracy was domestic in origin and, sad to say, came from the Right. I cannot identify the shooters for you, but the conspirators definitely (as I see it) emerged from the nexus of anti-Castro Cubans, rogue CIA elements, and Mafia types that came together at the time of the Bay of Pigs. They hated Kennedy and were quite prepared to use deadly force against him. That they had some help at a higher level (from J. Edgar Hoover, for example) seems to me quite probable.

The "military-industrial complex" per se didn't kill Kennedy. But it's an

oversimplification to say that it "never had a more dynamic and vigorous champion than JFK." Kennedy, after all, refused to invade Cuba with U.S. forces at the Bay of Pigs or during the Missile Crisis. He didn't tear down the Berlin Wall. He got the test-ban treaty through the Senate in the face of strong opposition from the military and its supporters. In 1963, plans were in the works for both a cut in defense spending and an eventual U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam (on this latter point see for example James K. Galbraith's article, "Exit Strategy," in the October/November 2003 Boston Review).

Professor Beito or anyone else may contact me via this magazine for directions to the source materials that support the statements I've made here.

Jon Harrison
Poultney, Vt.

Maoist Cuisine

Andrew Ferguson's Reflection (September) about Mao's slogan "Serve the people" appearing on Cameron Diaz's handbag reminded me of the old Damon Knight story "To Serve Mankind." Briefly: aliens land on Earth and ceremonially present to UN officials a book, in their own language,

which they say explains their mission on Earth. The aliens say the title is "To Serve Mankind."

After much effort, linguists decipher the text. It's a cookbook.

Dave Lindbergh
Reading, Mass.

Postal Service With a Smile

I read Richard Kostelanetz's entertaining and edifying Reflection on our favorite government agency, the USPS (August). That's my area of expertise, my speciality: I've been berating and therefore implicitly improving the blue suiters for years.

Did I not tell the Postmistress that if she put a scale out on the counter, she could shorten those dreadful lines? (She told me the public was not trained in proper weighing techniques and most of the packages would be returned, "Insufficient Postage." Like Richard says, I wish I was making this up.)

Am I not the epistolary scientist who inspires USPS zeal with exercises like 2021 Misdelivery Lane, instead of 2022 Misdelivery Lane, and then checks the results? Wrong ZIP codes are fun, too — or even better: "Chicabo, IL." Or the ol' right address, wrong name game.

Sometimes in a fit of public-government cooperation I write on the envelope corner: "Mailperson, this is the large green house on the corner, usually has a black Honda Civic in drive — resident works at Sears." That's like telling the information operator: "Ma'am, he's about 5'9" — kinda heavy — Presbyterian, I think." I like to be helpful.

Ted Roberts
Huntsville, Ala.

Letters to the editor

Liberty invites readers to comment on articles that have appeared in our pages. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. All letters are assumed to be intended for publication unless otherwise stated. Succinct letters are preferred. Please include your address and phone number so that we can verify your identity. Send email to letters@libertyunbound.com, or mail to:

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From the Editor

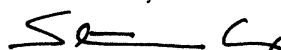
I suffer from a medium-strength case of acrophobia. I don't like going up ladders, mounting scaffolds, or climbing to observation decks where there's any threat that I may remember that buildings occasionally collapse.

This summer, though, I went on a long trip with a friend who is immune to such anxieties. Wherever there was a high place to ascend, it was taken for granted that he would do so, and I would do so with him. The result was a considerable abatement of my psychological disability. Instead of fixating on the remote possibility that I might die in the next 20 seconds, I began to enjoy the spectacle, especially the transformation of street-level disorder into the great and fascinating patterns of life one sees when one attains a sufficient elevation.

Isabel Paterson said that liberty was like that. Other people might take refuge in the safety of a conformist world, but she wanted to see how life looked from the pinnacle. The view, she said, was better up there.

Every issue of Liberty is an attempt to provide a view like that. Of course, there are risks. Even libertarians sometimes need a bit of nerve to encounter the full spectrum of libertarian ideas. Not every libertarian journal provides that opportunity. But we think the view is better up here.

For Liberty,


Stephen Cox

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Reflections

Cry me an interview — The new book “Dead Certain” by Robert Draper, based on the author’s interviews with President Bush, led to this AOL headline: “‘I Cry A Lot,’ [Bush] Reveals.”

This is not surprising. His years in office have had that effect on many people. — Ross Levatter

You’re only as poor as your diet — According to the Trust for America’s Health, a research group that focuses on disease prevention, Mississippi is the fat-test state in the nation. It has become the first state in which more than 30% of adults are considered *obese*.

Mississippi consistently ranks as the poorest state in America, as well. What a wonderful nation we live in, where only the poorest citizens eat too much. — Tim Slagle

Peace with body bags

— Samuel Johnson described patriotism as the last refuge of a scoundrel. If he had seen the recent GOP candidates’ debate, he might have put “honor” in the place of “patriotism.” “We’ve got a responsibility to the honor of this country,” Mike Huckabee lectured Ron Paul, “and the honor of every man and woman who has served in Iraq and our military to not leave them with anything less than the honor they deserve.”

Huckabee was following a long and dubious tradition in American politics. Those who praised him uncritically would do well to remember the story of a Republican politician who tried the same thing in 1968. Richard Nixon successfully smacked down the Ron Pauls of his generation by touting “peace with honor, rather than retreat and defeat.” After winning the election, he turned down the chance for a peace treaty that would facilitate rapid American withdrawal. He said it would not bring an “honorable peace.”

In 1973, however, he signed a treaty that had essentially the same terms as the one he shunned in 1969. In the meantime, more than 20,000 Americans had died needlessly, all for the sake of “honor.” It would be a tragedy if the American people

in 2008 were gullible enough to buy this snake oil for a second time. — David Beito

Preemptive pontification — As we go to press, Gen. David Petraeus is preparing to brief the Congress on the results of the recent “surge” in U.S. troops under his command in Iraq. Some political hacks are already criticizing this report — before it has been delivered. The details of the general’s report are really not so consequential; it is bound to be an important point in the history of what passes for the foreign policy of the current Bush Administration.

That’s a good question: “What passes for foreign policy?”

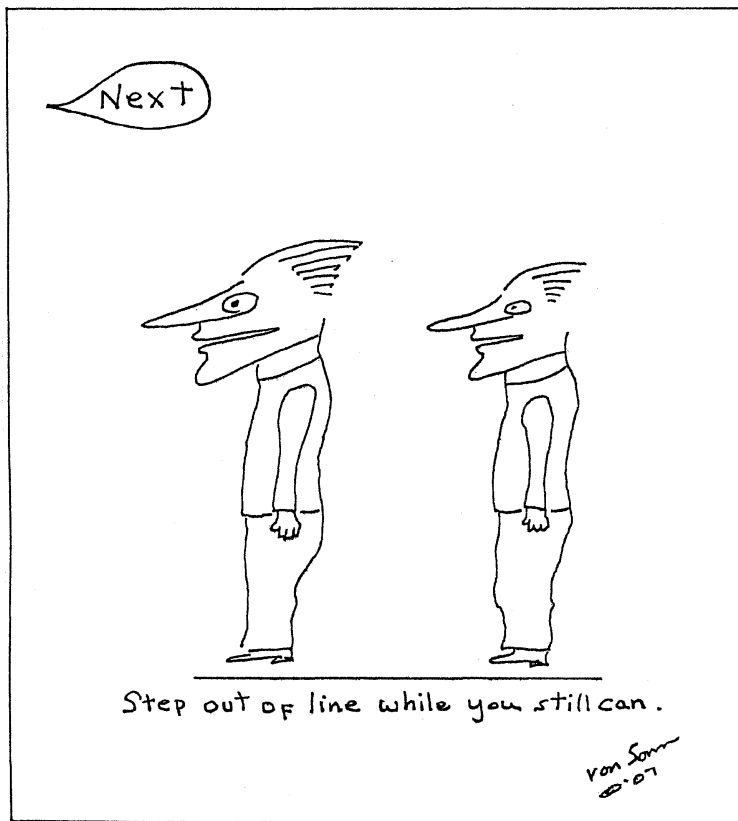
Despite lengthy consideration of foreign policy matters in this magazine and elsewhere, people who value liberty are often criticized as offering little more than mumbles about the “wisdom of the marketplace” when it comes to foreign affairs.

So, let’s try this theory: in terms of liberty (and the wisdom of the marketplace), a foreign policy that focuses on many bilateral agreements is better than one that focuses on multilateral diplomacy. From many one-on-one deals between countries — including everything from free-trade pacts to, well,

war — emerges a foreign policy that is itself a marketplace of ideas. This is bound to be more efficient than a group-grope of multilateral haggling.

It seems strange to me that no one in the president’s corner is defending the present Iraq action as an attempt to establish U.S. foreign policy as essentially bilateral in nature. Philosophically, this is probably the best defense of a bad situation. The current neocon vs. netroots debate seems to be simple party politics hiding in other clothes. Yet that seems to be enough for most people. Too bad. — Jim Walsh

Weighted averages — A local journalist quotes a study by University of Washington researchers that found that in comparing human averages of one Seattle-area ZIP code to another, thin bodies are correlated to the price of housing: the



higher the average house price, the lower the rate of obesity. The journalist thought this interesting and summed it up: "In other words, obesity is, at least in part, a class issue. It appears to be due to the availability of healthy foods: People who can afford to shop at Whole Foods have an advantage over those who don't have health-conscious, low-cost markets handy."

What this guy was saying is that low-income people tend to be fat because they are offered nothing but junky food. They would prefer to buy free-range chickens, organic vine-ripened tomatoes, and arugula, but they buy frozen pizza and instant macaroni and cheese instead because that's all there is. To state such a thesis is to laugh at it.

— Bruce Ramsey

The free road not taken — Competition and free markets are often dirty words to mainstream civil-rights leaders. This was not always the case. The Feb. 9, 1956 issue of *Jet* reported the following news about the ongoing Montgomery bus boycott:

Faced with wholesale arrests of Negroes on minor traffic charges as a result of Mayor W.A. Gayle's "get tough policy," five Negroes filed an application with the Montgomery City Commission asking for a franchise to operate jitneys to serve Negro areas. Officials of the newly-organized Montgomery Transit Lines said they will use 1956 station wagons. Mayor Gayle's reaction to the proposal was prompt: "If Negroes want to ride a public vehicle, they can ride city busses." (p. 6)

Unfortunately, the handful of defenders of the free market who existed at that time did not rally behind this worthy effort. Had they done so, the subsequent civil rights movement might have taken a much less statist direction. — David Beito

Credit where repayment's due — One of Bush's more controversial initiatives was his reform of the nation's scandalous bankruptcy laws. Not a few of our fellow citizens were running up their credit cards to astronomical levels, and then burning their creditors by "going BK," thus passing on their debts to the rest of us.

When Bush signed the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act ("BAPCPA") in 2005, prominent Democrats and populist pundits prophesized that innocent poor and elderly would be horribly squeezed by predatory banks and credit card companies. Self-styled "watchdog" organizations such as Consumers Union and (of course!) the National Association of Consumer Bank Attorneys described the new law in apocalyptic terms.

Essentially, the old law allowed people to receive easy Chapter 7 bankruptcy protection from their debts, irrespective of income level. Not surprisingly, under that easy standard, bankruptcy filings went from 300,000 in 1980 to 1.5 million (!) in 2004. Indeed, the abuse was accelerating, with bankruptcies rising almost 80% from 1995 to 2004.

Under the new law, individuals above median income — which excludes the poor, most of the elderly, and those in financial distress because of medical problems, divorce, or military service — were required to file for Chapter 13 protection, which means that they would have to file a plan to repay at least some of what they owed.

This is one law that seems to have worked as intended. Not only have bankruptcy filings dropped dramatically to about half the earlier level, but the percentage of those filing with above-median incomes has gone from 20% to essentially zero!

A lot more work remains to be done to reform our dysfunctional legal system and, since Bush is a lame duck facing a Democrat-controlled Congress, it is clear that tort reform or other kinds of legal reforms will not occur. Trial lawyers are the biggest contributors to the Democrats. Still, the 2005 BAPCPA was a nice step.

— Gary Jason

Out of the water closet — Some men have a filthy habit of performing sex acts in public restrooms. They enjoy the risk and (often) the degradation. Big deal. On the rare occasions when I've seen a hand or a foot emerging from beneath the stall partition, I've let my neighbor know how annoyed I am to be bothered in this way. But I haven't demanded that he be arrested, or that a police officer be deputed to guard my chastity by squatting among the toilets to entrap other people.

If the cops arrested everyone who annoyed me, or even endangered me, in a public restroom, the jails would be full. My first candidates for persecution would be the idiots who piss on the toilet seat, thus rendering it unusable for anyone else. No one mounts a sting operation to get *those* people. And what about the guys who fail to wash their hands before opening the outside door? I'd like to see them in jail, too, and see them headed there long before people like Sen. Larry Craig, a halfwit who is mainly just a danger to himself. Yet despite these pleasing fantasies of arrests and chain gangs, I really can't regard such repulsive deeds as criminal. Much less can I view attempts to arouse my sex drive as felonious.

But oh! says everyone but Arlen Specter, Barney Frank, and Rush Limbaugh — the strange trinity who remained more or less in charge of their faculties while the rest of the country went berserk over the Great Craig Scandal — but oh! what about the *children*! Should innocent *children* be forced to watch while men have sex in restrooms?

Well, no. But that's not what's going on. This kind of sex is clandestine, and it would remain so if the cops didn't show up to drag the participants out of the stalls. So spare me the business about the kids, and I won't be tempted to discuss the ugly images of sexuality to which children are exposed merely by flipping through the mainstream TV channels. The Victorians weren't the last people to be hypocrites about sex. Our culture is soaking in hypocrisy.

Now look. If you're the proprietor of a store or the manager of an airport, and you don't like what some of your customers are doing in the restroom, kick them out. If you don't like what your senator is doing in Washington, kick him out, too. But what made Sen. Craig's actions subject to legal retribution was simply the American public's ineradicable anxiety and stupidity about sex.

— Stephen Cox

Splitting the top tier, helping Ron Paul

— Ron Paul was a track star in college. Perhaps he should have considered boxing. In the face of a sustained attack by the pro-war Fox team aimed at sending him to the canvas, he hit back hard and drew blood.

Besides Paul, the big winner of the recent presidential candidates' debate (at least as the mainstream media spun it) was Mike Huckabee. A sustained effort is now underway to promote him into the top tier.

But this is good news for Paul. Here's why. With the entry of Fred Thompson, the members of the top tier have increased to four. If Huckabee moves up, that would leave a top tier of

five, with a possible average of less than 20% each. That would make it even easier for Paul to stand out as the only antiwar candidate in the field. Just as importantly, it would make it more difficult for the mainstream media and GOP leadership to find a pretext to exclude him and other so-called bottom tier candidates from future debates.

— David Beito

We don't want to miss graduation — For at least two decades, there has been a spirited debate over the effect of working mothers and their reliance on daycare. Do children suffer from being carted off at early ages — at early hours and sometimes for long days — to stay with non-family caregivers? Are career-track mothers (and fathers) overpursuing their careers and neglecting their children? The discussion can get highly emotional.

Now a lot of these children are going to college. And what is the result? Separation anxiety — on the part of parents.

The Washington Post discussed this puzzling phenomenon in an Aug. 26 story, "Orientation 101 for Parents and Children: Letting Go." Parents are having trouble leaving their children at college. "Forget the quick goodbye hug after unloading the car," writes Susan Kinzie: parents hang around for days. Colleges include them in their orientations. One holds a "good-bye lunch" and hopes the parents take the hint. When Mom and Dad do leave, there is the ubiquitous cell phone helping the "helicopter parents" stay in touch. (Kinzie based her story on colleges near Washington, D.C., including Georgetown, American, and Johns Hopkins.)

Although parents have trouble letting go, there also seems to be genuine closeness on the adolescents' side. Kinzie says it's not unusual for college students to consider their parents their best friends.

This is the neglected generation? The kids raised by strangers? I don't have an easy explanation for the seeming contradiction. Maybe students at these elite colleges are different; maybe their parents did stay home with them; maybe closeness developed after the daycare years; maybe the closeness is, in its own way, a pathology.

But there's another explanation, too. Perhaps, in the end, parents did a better job of bringing up their children than the experts thought — and the kids are fun to be around.

— Jane S. Shaw

The Asians and the paraplegic duck — The Bush administration reintroduced a bold idea at the recent meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in Sydney. It's an idea that the U.S. broached at last year's APEC summit as well: the concept of an enormous Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific, or FTAAP for short — a catchy name, indeed.

This huge free trade zone would include Chile, the U.S., and other Pacific countries of the western hemisphere, along with China, Japan, South Korea, and most of the other Asian nations. If it ever came about, it would represent a giant step toward universal free trade. But it has received only tepid support from the Asian countries, and it stands almost no chance of becoming reality.

For one thing, you have the long-standing Asian animosities. Getting Taiwan, China, Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam to sign off on anything would take a staggering amount of negotiation over many years. And the APEC nations are more focused on getting the Doha Round of WTO talks going again.

An even bigger roadblock, one suspects, is the fact that Bush is a lame duck — worse, a lame duck that the Democrats have stripped of the ability to negotiate trade agreements freely (so-called "fast-track" authority). So he isn't so much a lame duck as a paraplegic one. And the Asians can see that the Democrat-controlled Congress is the most profoundly protectionist since the Smoot-Hawley era.

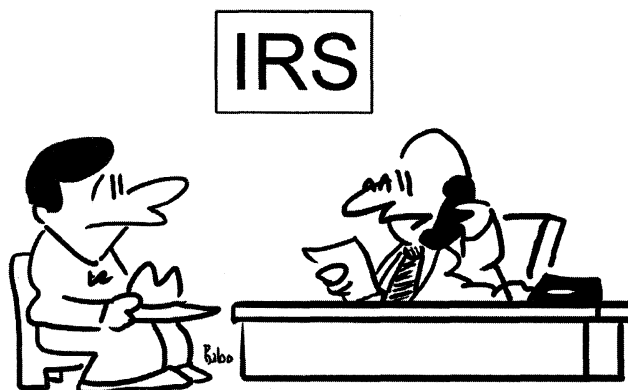
So the ever polite Asians have agreed to think about it — "further studies should be made," as the Japanese minister delicately put it. In sum, it is a bold idea that will not happen, at least not for many years.

— Gary Jason

Two totalitarianisms — A "friend" from my university days is the Collector (the top civil servant) of a city in India with a population of over a million. He just wrote, "I am taking an education break for one year for a Master's in Sustainable Infrastructure Services Management from XYZ University in the UK . . ."

Universities in the UK create fancy courses to bring people from poor countries and teach them about developmental work, a subject of which most instructors have, at best, a marginal understanding. Ordinarily they offer socialist resolutions for the world's problems, with ideas concocted in dreamland. The money for these courses, priced at outrageous levels, comes from the British government fund for foreign aid. Some instructors teach them in order to build their resumes — so that, with help from diplomatic passports, tax-free salaries, and two-acre-garden-with-swimming-pool accommodations, provided by the World Bank or some UN institution, they can leverage their "humanitarian capabilities" into solutions for the world's poverty and misery.

My "friend" will try to learn how British society expresses its frustration, envy, and hatred by directing the power of special interests against businesses and other productive endeavors. He will intuitively see how this gives secret ammunition to the British state to steal money from those who generate wealth and redistribute it to those not deserving, meanwhile skimming off an appropriate amount for the state itself. But mostly he will laugh off what he learns, for he believes in raw, Indian-style exploitation. Concepts of "benign" exploitation by the state will confuse him. Why in God's name would the state not steal everything? he will think without really thinking.



"Okay, but make it look like an accident."

"Stupid people, they run their trains with a mere 20% capacity; we, in India, run ours with 125% [piling one over another]," one visiting, very senior Indian bureaucrat said to me with supreme confidence in 1991, during my university days in the UK. Despite being broke, I was paying for his beer, expecting in return to find out how his mind worked. "Our goods trains never leave empty, saving us on precious energy costs." So who cares what happens to the goods?

Another said, "Amazing that the police here can do only so much. Fortunately, the people here are law-abiding; otherwise this country would be a complete chaos. In India, if we wanted we would arrest all these junkies, beat the shit out of them, and dump them in some obscure location. The English have all these drug-related problems because the police cannot use torture. The government here doesn't understand that the fear is the key; without it, there is no law and order."

"There is one really good thing about this country," said one. "The people here are much more honest about paying taxes. Hope our businessmen learn from them." My "friend's" eyes will refuse to see that the British government returns a part of the stolen money. The Indian government returns nothing, nada, zip.

Of course, he can fool himself only so much. Doubts planted in his mind can do some good one day, if they are not rational-

Sir or Madam,

I am writing to you to congratulate Limerick County Council on treating drivers as adults. I applaud your novel policy.

I am a Dubliner, recently starting studies at the University of Limerick. I was driving through the city center at night a week ago and was shocked at the sight of flashing amber and red lights. More: even in daylight hours, the lights outside the university's main entrance — indeed, entering a busy road — have flashing amber lights! Could it be, I asked, that the idea I have been proposing for years — having been a driver on Dublin roads for over a decade — has actually been implemented?

The idea behind setting the lights all to flashing red or amber, once evening rush hour traffic has subsided, is to recognize that drivers are by and large intelligent, careful, and, above all else, autonomous. Here in Limerick, we are given the chance to skip through the quiet evening streets, on the condition that we take care and look around for oncoming traffic. In effect, we are treated like adults.

Meanwhile, back in Dublin, we sit for ages at red lights at three in the morning, without a car for hundreds of yards. What, I ask you, the county council employees of Limerick, does that suggest the Dublin city councillors think of Dublin drivers? The further and further extension of childhood is almost complete. Overzealous legislation and an overriding distrust of freedom of the individual by the state dominate.

I thank you, good people at Limerick County Council, for treating your drivers as adults.

Yours, etc.,
John Lalor, adult

ized away immediately and if the residue stays potent enough to knock at his conscience amid the noise, smell, and violence of India. And, what the heck, his going to the UK doesn't cost India a penny!

By sending him to the UK, however, the Indian government will get to show that it cares. Indians will be proud, and his superiors will take the credit. The British government can say that it has provided international aid to the poorest of the poor. There will be more administrators in the British Council. Everyone in my "friend's" department in India will get promoted one step upward, making hundreds of families happy and their children proud. As the effect cascades down, one Indian will get a job at the lowest position in my "friend's" department. He will get a holiday, and his wife will spend a year getting recognition from her girlfriends. The British university will get more business and publicity, for my "friend" will tell everyone at home that he is in the best university in the UK. He will contribute to the specialty businesses in Leicester: Indian restaurants, pubs, and lap-dancers who will "use the money" for their own "university education." If he is puritanical about sex and food, he might even bring some foreign exchange back home, making every little bit count for India.

As Frederic Bastiat would say, British taxpayers will hardly notice the con game played on them by the British state. In fact, they'll probably think that all this is good for their economy. They will feel pride in what their government is doing. A lot of wealth and happiness will seemingly get created out of absolutely nothing.

Police in India recently tied a petty thief to a motorbike and dragged him around. Of course, a bunch of frustrated, psychologically crippled people had earlier given him a "well-deserved" thrashing.* The victim is now fighting for his life. Later, the "caring" Muslim community suddenly realized that this half-starved "thief" was a Muslim; so with all self-righteousness, they are now out rioting, fighting for what is right, even if it consumes them and others. Looking at India, I am never sure when to laugh and when to cry.

I have often wondered which kind of totalitarianism and immorality is better: the unadulterated variety, in which the police and society rape, kill, and maim; or the kind with a silky touch that squanders almost half of the total output of the West on jokes of the kind that my "friend" who is visiting the UK will be learning. (Note: The revenues of most Western states are close to 50% of their countries' GDPs.)

Perhaps it is better for totalitarianism to be blunt. At least this does not muddle the understanding and perception of what it is all about. It is so much better that crooks are seen as crooks, not as people working for humanity. If you looked at the faces of the police and the people who are torturing the "thief," you would realize that they actually consider themselves the agents of God. They are absolutely sure that they are doing great social work. The pool we live in becomes our natural environment; we become accustomed to it. And the situation is not very different with the Western busybodies.

— Jayant Bhandari

Slouching towards al Qaeda — At the Republican presidential candidates' debate at the University of New Hampshire in early September, Ron Paul indicated that it was silly to debate tactics ("Is the surge working?" "Can

*<http://youtube.com/watch?v=9yzv9WDZXEU>

Word Watch

by Stephen Cox

This column is a *purist* column. Its standards are not established by the ways in which words just happen to be used in the contemporary world. Oh no! Its lodestar is always the way in which words are used by the few people who bother to think about words. These people aren't just users of language; they're purists about language. And there's no sense in writing for anyone else. People who simply want to go along using words, willy nilly, as others use them — those people won't object to any syllables you slap down on paper. The only folks you have to worry about are the purists, so they're what this column worries about, too.

But . . . well now, I just said "folks," didn't I? "Folks" is an American substitute for the high-class, artsy-craftsy, smells-of-the-university, Britannically sanctioned "folk." It's one of those locutions that makes some self-righteous purists mad. So I wouldn't use it if I were writing an application to law school, because you can bet that at least one person on the admissions committee would be a purist and, also being a lawyer, would be spoiling for a fight. But I don't want to go to law school. I'm not applying for a job, either. And in normal life, even a purist should know when the purism of high-class "usage" ought to yield to the purism of rationality. There's no logical reason not to use "folks." It's sanctioned by the long tradition of this country. It has a colloquial tone that can be useful. Therefore, I use it. It's one more gun in my arsenal.

There are some other alternatives to purism (chiefly, the purism of the British diplomatic class) for which we should all be truly thankful. One is the universal American rejection of the shall-will matrix. Two generations ago, schoolkids all over the English-speaking world were taught to distinguish *prediction* from *promise or determination*, in this way:

Prediction:	Promise or determination:
I shall	I will
you will	you shall
he will	he shall
we shall	we will
you will	you shall
they will	they shall

Thus: "I will pay you back on Monday" (I promise!), but, "I shall pay you back on Monday" (I suppose I shall, but that's just a forecast).

It would take a whole 'nother column to explain why "shall" and "will" performed this strange ballet, but the point is, 99% of modern Americans have never heard of it, praise God. It does have a function. It does make a distinction. But it's a distinction that is much more laborious than, say, the invaluable and efficient (one syllable!) distinction between "disinterested" and "uninterested." So let it go. Even that guy on the admissions committee probably doesn't suspect that it ever existed.

Unfortunately, however, approximately the same number of Americans who have not heard of the rule about shall and will *have* heard of the supposed rule against using contractions "in formal writing," and many of them take that ultrapurist rule very seriously indeed. They don't realize that the rule was unknown to the great writers of the past, or that it's a rule that has never

been consistently followed by other people, except in the official transcripts of British parliamentary testimony, which always used to render an exchange like, "Weren't you in charge of lifeboat number 7? Isn't that the case? — I can't say; M'Lord; I'm just not sure; I don't remember" as "Were not you in charge of lifeboat number 7? Is not that the case? — I cannot say, My Lord; I am just not sure; I do not remember."

Another ultrapurist rule is the one forbidding passives. How many times did someone write in the margins of your freshman compositions the commandment, flaring in scarlet letters, "*Avoid passive constructions!*" Why? you may have wondered. Why should I avoid them? Could I or my loved ones be injured thereby? And if injury should take place, aren't I insured? (Or, as the ultrapurist would have you say, "Am I not insured?" Well, why indeed avoid them, since passives are often necessary for clarity or emphasis: "Who wrote this book? — It *was written by Jane Austen.*" Yes, I know; passives can be abused and overworked, but so can anything else. And besides, that's the subject of yet another column.

More difficult is the sentence-ending preposition. There's a rule against that, too: Never say, "That was the lease she got out of." And here, there's a good reason for the ultrapurist's rule. Primary emphasis in an English sentence ordinarily falls at the end, and you don't want a miserable little no 'count preposition to hold that final place of emphasis.

Very well. On this logic, I try not to end my sentences with prepositions. I almost always succeed. But look: English verbs often come in packages. People don't just *go*: they *go to*, *go up*, *go down*, *go over*, *go after*, *go along*, *go along with*, etc., etc., etc. What am I supposed to say, "Are those the bills over which he'll go?" As Churchill phrased it, that is something "up with which I will not put." Sometimes, you have to nail that preposition right there at the end of that sentence, and just walk away and forget it. It's nothing to be *worried about*.

I know you've heard another purist superstition, the injunction against the use of the word "I," again "in formal writing." I can't find a reason for this rule. Or perhaps I should say:

No reason can be found.

One cannot find a reason.

We cannot find a reason.

The author cannot find a reason.

Reasons are strangely difficult to find in this instance.

The truth is, "I" is a word like any other word. It can be overused: "So I sez to her, I sez, look, jest cuz I drank a coupla highballs . . ." It can be misused: "Just between you and I." But the persistent attempt to avoid it betrays a bad conscience. You *want* to say "I." You *need* to say "I." Now, for the love of God, just go ahead and *say the word "I."*

And while you're at it, be enough of an individualist to indulge a bit of cynicism. As the redoubtable H.W. Fowler argues (in his "Modern English Usage"), there's nothing wrong with a split infinitive, except that some purists don't like it. I would add, this is the only offense that some "purists" recognize. (They're pure, all right — too pure to allow themselves to be sullied by thought or reading.) And that's sufficient reason to avoid it — if you're applying to law school.

But who'd want to do that?

we pull back troop levels in 2008?") and instead proposed debating foreign policy. He argued that we should follow the Constitution, declare war before going to war, and not engage in aggressive wars that make us less safe. In response to his urging as rapid a pullout of American troops as possible, moderator Chris Wallace of Fox News asked, "So, Congressman Paul . . . you're basically saying that we should take our marching orders from al Qaeda?"

My biggest fear: bin Laden will announce that he favors less government, personal health and retirement accounts, and a lower, flatter tax rate.

My biggest hope: bin Laden will encourage Americans to watch Fox News with Chris Wallace. —Ross Levatter

Chicago vs. Austria — In the July/August 2007 edition of *The Free Market*, published by the Ludwig von Mises Institute, Llewellyn Rockwell, president of the Institute and its guiding force, titles his opening piece, "It's the 1930s All Over Again." I read it in hopes of an Austrian-style analysis of likely near-term monetary policy, but Rockwell's focus is largely political. At the same time, current likely near-term policy actions by the Federal Reserve Board to lower interest rates, probably in the vicinity of 0.5 to 1.0 percentage points (cumulatively) over the next six months, leads to the question of how this likely policy action should be analyzed from an economic point of view — or contrasting economic points of view.

From an Austrian perspective, it would appear likely that interest rate cuts by the Fed could contribute to an unsustainable boom and excessive production of capital goods intended for early stages of production. From a monetarist perspective, interest rate cuts should lead to increased economic activity — increased from what might have been the case over the next 18 months or so.

In this writer's view, the monetarist analysis is more plausible. Rockwell's bearish prospect reflects the Austrian analysis: "The American economy may look good on the surface, but underneath the foundation is cracking. The debt is unsustainable. Savings are nearly nonexistent. Money supply creation is getting scary. The paper money economy can't last and won't last. One senses that the slightest change could bring about massive wreckage."

Rockwell should be commended for putting his analysis in the form of candid predictions about the future — unsustainable debt, excessive money supply creation, and so forth. If the economy booms in the next several years, then these predic-

tions will have proved faulty, and perhaps the Austrian analysis of economic activity could be reconsidered. Conversely, lowered interest rates will show the importance of monetary policy, if the economy reacts as it traditionally has — namely, to grow.

Kudos are also due to the Ludwig von Mises Institute for its sponsorship of the long-awaited biography of Ludwig von Mises, doyen of the Austrian school of economics. The book should be out any day now. —Lanny Ebenstein

Home, home again — While debate about immigration rages on, it's useful to keep a demographic principle in mind: populations flow to areas of declining or aging population. In demographics no less than in physics, nature abhors a vacuum.

In times past, Ireland exported massive amounts of its population. Irish immigrants poured not just into America, but also into Australia, Canada, South Africa, and elsewhere. The numbers that flooded into America caused a tremendous nativist backlash, and calls to halt all immigration were as common as they were loud. But recently, as Ireland has modernized its economy (becoming the Tiger of Europe), and its population shrinks, it has been welcoming immigrants from all over the world. It is even running ads in foreign papers to lure back earlier emigrants.

A fascinating new illustration of this law of demographics is the case of Japan. The Japanese have traditionally been very insular people, unwelcoming of immigrants. Between 1639 and 1854, Japan let in virtually no foreigners. The only modern period in which immigration was significant was before and during the Second World War, when Korea was a Japanese colony and several million Koreans came to Japan.

But times are changing because of new Japanese economic and demographic realities. The Japanese economy has been sluggish for more than a decade, and it faces some major demographic challenges. Its working-age population (people 15 to 64 years of age) peaked in 1995 and will drop an additional 15% by 2025. The Japanese are seeing their baby boom generation start to retire. Without any immigration, they would be looking at dropping to one retiree for every worker.

So they are adapting. Over the last decade the number of foreign workers in Japan has risen 27%. Like Ireland, Japan is now trying to pull back earlier emigrants and their descendants. This includes over 300,000 ethnic Japanese from Latin America (primarily Brazil), who have moved back to Japan under special visas.

It also includes 68,000 temporary workers brought over under a special trainee program. These workers can stay up to three years. They are, if we may speak openly, guest workers. Many of them come from China and the Philippines. The Chinese are especially sought by the Japanese garment industry, which — like our own — has been beleaguered by competition from low-wage countries such as China and India. The Filipinos are helping harvest crops on Japanese farms, keeping Japanese agriculture alive as younger native Japanese flee farms for the cities.

Increased immigration has caused conflicts within Japanese society, conflicts that will no doubt grow with the rise in immigration. Even the ethnically Japanese immigrants have lifestyles that native Japanese find jarring, and of course those who are ethnically different are even more challenging. But

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the Japanese are beginning to deal with their demographic situation.

We face our own realities. For 30 years, with all the social changes wrought by the sexual revolution, women's liberation, overcrowding in schools, legalization of abortion, and the rise of the knowledge economy, American women bore children at a rate below population replacement (2.1 children per woman). Even now, and even when one includes the contribution by recent immigrants, who tend to have larger families, our rate of childbirth is barely at replacement level. And our baby boom cohort is especially large — 78 million, 26% of the entire population. As the boomers bust, heading off for retirement and then for the ultimate trip, social stability dictates a certain respect for the notion of allowing immigrants.

The Japanese are confronting their demographic reality, and they don't have anything like our tradition of immigration and ethnic diversity. I hope that we Americans can cope with our own problem.

— Gary Jason

New idea (150 years old) — Both politicians and the public take it for granted that the Minneapolis bridge collapse illustrates the need for bigger government. In record time, Governor Tim Pawlenty recanted his previous opposition to a gas tax increase for bridge and road repairs. Few even considered that the collapse might illustrate the dangers of relying too much, not too little, on infrastructure provided by government.

One hundred fifty years ago, the politicians of Nevada, who faced an even more daunting infrastructure crisis, came to a different conclusion from those reached by the likes of Pawlenty.

Instead of increasing governmental involvement, they turned to the private sector. The state legislature granted dozens of charters to companies and individuals to construct and maintain roads. Between the 1850s and 1880s, local entrepreneurs financed, built, and operated more than 100 toll roads and bridges. This represented an enormous amount of activity in an area with very few people.

While some grumbled about paying tolls, even the sternest critics acknowledged that privatization brought dramatic improvements in quality. Referring to the Placerville Road, which had previously been maintained by government, one observer commented that "a narrow, dangerous, wretched trail [which] was scarcely fit for the passage of sure-footed pack-mules" had been transformed into "a broad, compact, well-graded highway, which might fairly be likened to an old Roman road."

— David Beito

Neg-am renegs — Why is state-administered bankruptcy protection available to foolish borrowers?

Much is being written right now about the effects that the federal bankruptcy reform laws of 2005 have on the current chill in the housing market. The theory is that the more-strict bankruptcy rules encouraged some people at the margins to refinance with subprime loans in order to delay credit card debt reckonings. This may or may not be a precise analysis — but it has directed popular outrage at subprime lenders who loaned expensive money to dubious debtors.

That doesn't make sense; the lenders are just market agents. Popular outrage should be directed at a federal bankruptcy system that — even with its 2005 reforms — encourages peo-

ple to borrow recklessly. We shouldn't do away with subprime loans; we should do away with voluntary bankruptcy protection. It's a state mechanism that, claiming to regulate, interferes with market efficiency. Some defenders of the bankruptcy system claim that it helps capital markets deal with bad debt quickly; but credit card lenders have, until recently, loaned to recent bankrupts because they can't file again for seven or more years. That's not efficient; that's perverse. Defaulting debtors shouldn't be able to hide behind the skirts of Mother State. If they've borrowed more than they can pay, let them deal directly with their creditors. And be "unlendable" for more than a few years.

Historically, bankruptcy was a legal device used most often by lenders to prevent reckless borrowers from continuing in their profligate ways. The current notion of bankruptcy — as a tool for rehabilitating debtors — turns that original notion on its head.

One silver lining to the real-estate market reckoning we may be seeing this year and next is that mortgage lenders who jumped at quick loan origination fees may be forced to renegotiate with their zero-down, negative-amortization borrowers. That's better than a government bailout.

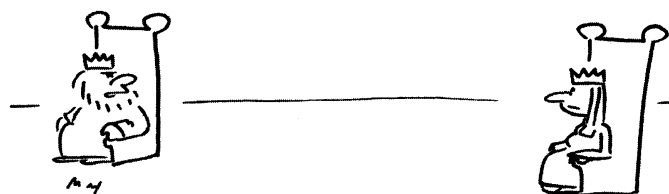
— Jim Walsh

A man-eat-cow world — Football star Michael Vick became a pariah after he pleaded guilty to charges of organizing dog fights. While I find dogfights a sick form of entertainment and refuse to trust any person who doesn't love dogs, I can't see what all the fuss is about. Right-minded people who were shocked to learn that Vick's losing dogs were often executed shouldn't be so easily disturbed.

Animals are used all the time and in many ways for human amusement. There's horse racing and dog racing; both sports have histories of executing losers. There's also bull and cock fighting, which are both pretty harsh realms. Personally, though, if I were reincarnated as a bull and given the choice between being castrated, fattened, and led down a chute to my electrocution or having a chance to gore the swishy Spanish guy in the sparkly suit before I died, I would take my chances with the toreador.

There is a danger in this country of a soft-headed anthropomorphism — that is, of well-meaning dunderheads elevating animals to the human level. PETA and the Humane Society both fight for what they call "animal rights." That is an utterly impossible notion. The lower orders of animals are not self-aware. They are incapable of practicing religion or publishing a newspaper, so the First Amendment is utterly wasted on them.

Animals are property. This might sound cruel but, in the



"You are distancing yourself, aren't you?"

long run, an unsentimental clarity is the most humane way to treat property that can wag its tail. For the most part, intelligent people treat their property with respect and don't like to see it abused or mistreated.

Even wild animals thrive when treated as property. African countries have learned that by giving people the right to hunt elephants legally, they can reduce the amount of poaching that goes on. Here in the United States, endangered species like the alligator and bison have seen their populations rebound when Americans started eating them again.

A delicious animal will never go extinct. — Tim Slagle

A rose by any other network — Has anyone else noticed that the disconnect between contrasting presentations of the news has become greater than at almost any time

in the past half-century? When one listens to Fox and CNN, vitally contrasting perspectives of political situations, especially the situation in Iraq, become a veritable gulf.

According to Fox, Iraq may wind up smelling like a rose in the next few months, as sectarian violence subsides and the government finally gets its act together. American troop withdrawals are near.

From the perspective of CNN, however, at least until very recently, it was inevitable that the American involvement in Iraq would lead to a complete disaster, worse than anything yet seen. To be sure, some worst-case scenarios now seem to be less likely, because of a temporary decline in the chaos and violence. But the CNN view seems to be that this is unlikely to continue and a more or less forced United States withdrawal in the face of escalating violence, civil war, possible partition

The AMA Goes After Big Box

by Gary Jason

Guilds are associations of people in a particular profession or trade. In recorded history, guilds go back at least six millennia, to ancient India and Mesopotamia. But they are likely as old as the division of labor itself. Guilds typically have two aims, one noble and one quite ignoble. They aim at keeping the standards of performance high, but they also aim at keeping their own incomes high. To do the latter, they typically aim at limiting free choice for consumers.

In other words, in the argot of the economists, guilds are classic "rent-seeking" institutions. Any guild will expend great effort to get the powers that be to grant it control over who gets to learn the trade, and more importantly, how many get to do so. It will also try to get those in power to limit relevant technological know-how to its members. And wherever it can, it will get those in power to force all customers to patronize only its members.

Worse yet, a guild will often disguise its greed for more income by using the rhetoric of quality control to justify its monopolistic practices.

The heyday of guilds took place in the Europe of the Middle Ages, through to the 18th century. What helped to break their stranglehold, thus opening the door to the industrial revolution, was the rise of classical liberalism. One of Adam Smith's many accomplishments was to provide intellectual ammunition for the war to liberate trade from the domination of the guilds.

But guilds still exist. In the U.S., we have (among others) the Screen Actor's Guild, the Writer's Guild of America, the American Association of University Professors, the American Medical Association, and — most powerful of all — the numerous bar and trial lawyers' associations. They do what guilds have done for millennia: keep their incomes high by restricting access to knowledge, restricting their own membership, and forcing monopoly on the hapless consumer.

A recent illustration is the push by the AMA and other

physicians' guilds to stop the rapid growth of inexpensive health clinics, called "convenient care clinics." The clinics are typically located in retail stores, such as CVS, Target, Wal-Mart, and Walgreens. Currently, there are 730 such convenient care clinics in the U.S.; but the numbers are likely to skyrocket, because they are a "win-win" for retailers and patients.

The retailers win because people who go to the clinic can fill their prescriptions at the in-house pharmacy and may also do some other shopping. It works the other way, too: people shopping for clothes or whatever may pass a clinic and see a sign advertising (say) flu shots, then decide to get their vaccinations while the subject is on their minds.

The patients win because they get very low-cost care for minor ailments. (For any major ones, of course, they still need to go to the doctor or hospital.) Prices are all pre-set at a low level: simple vaccinations for \$15, or treatment of simple problems (such as strep throat) at around \$50. In many places, these costs are covered by insurance, including Medicare.

Convenient care clinics can offer such low prices because of a number of factors. First, the rent is automatically covered by the big box store of which they are a part. Second, the usual economies of scale enter in: flu vaccine is cheaper for those who buy a hundred thousand units at a time than for those who buy a hundred. Third, they tend to employ nurse practitioners, i.e., nurses with additional training (typically at a Master's Degree level), who can treat (including prescribing medications for) a limited number of medical problems.

But the growing popularity of convenient care clinics is making the AMA and other physicians' guilds feel threatened. They are using their political clout accordingly — and predictably. The AMA is pushing for and getting increased restrictions and regulations on the clinics. It argues that nurse practitioners are not sufficiently quali-

of Iraq, and possible intervention by Turkey or Iran, is entirely possible.

The next few months in Iraq will be very interesting to watch. It should become possible to see which perspective on the news, that of Fox or that of CNN, will prove more accurate.

— Lanny Ebenstein

Back in the USSR — An Aug. 17 AP report reveals yet another unfavorable consequence of the flood of dollars going to oil-producing states. Russian president and Stalin manqué Vladimir Putin has ordered his air force to resume long-range strategic bomber flights. Yes, once again Russian bombers, stuffed with nuke-tipped cruise missiles, will fill the skies off Norway, Iceland, and the corner of Russia directly across the Bering Strait from Alaska.

fied, that the clinic rooms aren't large or sanitary enough, and that it is dangerous to encourage patients with possibly infectious diseases to mingle with the general public.

These complaints are of course overblown. The nurse practitioners are limited in the ailments they can treat, and a study (to be published shortly in the *American Journal of Medical Quality*) of 60,000 patients who went to one company's clinics for treatment of sore throats found that over 99% got the proper care. These results are consistent with other studies of the track record of nurse practitioners. And of over 4,000 patients of RediClinic surveyed earlier this year, 97% said they would recommend the care to their friends and family.

As regards the standards for size and sanitary quality, the clinics have been quite responsive. MinuteClinics that once lacked a hand-washing station (using hand-sanitizers instead) have now installed sinks. And as to the infectious mingling with the general public, well, they do so already.

But the physicians' guilds have scored some victories. Florida has passed a law requiring clinics to post notices about whether any physician is present and about his or her professional credentials. A push is on in Massachusetts to limit how often patients can use convenient care clinics. And this year California passed a law that limited ownership of retail clinics to doctors.

Yet the AMA and the state physicians' guilds ought to be very careful about their short-sighted rent-seeking attacks on convenient care clinics. There is growing pressure in this country for socialized health care, and limiting consumer access to low-cost care will only increase that pressure. Socialized medical care would be an even bigger disaster for America than it has been for Britain and Canada. After all, those systems are free riders on the current competitive American system. We develop the vast majority of new treatments and equipment, and of drugs that save lives; the socialized systems then adopt what has been developed here.

In short, doctors who feel threatened by nurse practitioners and simple economics ought to remember how many physicians fled Britain and Canada after they socialized *their* systems, and how lousy the pay and working conditions are for those who remained. Then they should get out of the way and let the clinics grow.

This is just the latest in a string of aggressive displays aimed at showing the world in general and the United States in particular that Russia is reasserting itself militarily. Sometime back Putin announced that he would reprogram missiles so they would once again be aimed at Western Europe. Just recently Russian bombers flew toward Guam (something they hadn't done since the end of the Cold War) and tested British airspace. This from the same Putin who has jacked up military spending across the board, lachrymously mourned the collapse of the Soviet Empire, and meddled ceaselessly in Georgian and Ukrainian politics. Not to mention staking a claim to the bottom of the ocean under the North Pole (which is looking more commercially viable because of the melting of the Arctic ice sheet).

In short, if the Cold War hasn't returned, we are at least in a Chilly War.

What is fueling the Russian ambition to reestablish its former empire? Massive amounts of petrodollars. The flood of revenue funds not only Putin's increasingly aggressive foreign policy but also his increasingly bold and blatant elimination of Russia's all too brief democracy. It is the same flood of petrodollars that supports Hugo Chavez's aggressive foreign policy and continued takeover of Venezuela's formerly democratic system, not to mention Iran's increasingly belligerent military adventurism (soon to be nuclear powered) and its increasing repression of its own citizens. These are the same petrodollars that have flowed into Saudi Arabia, which in turn has funded terrorist organizations devoted to our annihilation.

For this dependence upon foreign oil and the consequent transfer of wealth to a flock of autocratic countries, we have to thank, in large measure, the environmentalist Left. It has done a superb job of choking our domestic energy industries.

Coal? The enviros hate it. They don't want us to burn it, or even dig it up to sell to others. Domestic oil? Fuggedaboutit. For a decade, the enviros have stymied attempts to open up ANWR. They have successfully opposed drilling the ocean floor between Florida and Cuba. (Thanks to them, the Chinese and Cubans will get all that oil.) Their view on domestic oil is: don't explore for it in places where it might possibly be, don't drill for it in places where we already know it is, and — oh, yes — don't build any new refineries for the stuff we are already pumping.

Hydroelectric? The enviros not only oppose any new dams; they'd like to tear Hoover down tomorrow. Nuclear? After killing the industry in the 1970s, the enviros want it to stay dead.

The preferred energy sources of the enviros — wind, solar, and bio-fuels — obviously can't possibly cover the energy needs of this country. This leads us to their hope for massive "conservation." What they really desire seems to be a kind of green heaven-on-earth, with a huge contraction of economic activity (few cars, little mobility, tiny homes, few factories, etc.) and a huge drop in population.

People are free to believe whatever religion they choose. But the neo-Romantic environmentalist faith has taken a horrific toll on other countries' freedoms, and that toll will only increase on America.

— Gary Jason

Racism and Merlot — Last week, I drank with a racist.

At a cocktail reception for Harvard lawyers, she told my friend, a Hispanic lawyer, that retiring Hispanic judges should

arrange whenever possible for Hispanic successors. I gently asked her was that not a sort of racism? She made the usual arguments for affirmative action and for proportional representation of her ethnic (or linguistic?) group in the professions. I suggested that the process might taint the reputations of its beneficiaries. To that, she violently agreed. It was just awful how white professionals assumed that brown ones got their positions through affirmative action.

She appeared to be a bright person, so I was surprised that she stepped so swiftly and willingly into my logical trap. (It certainly wasn't original.) Maybe she is not old enough to remember a time when anyone dared challenge affirmative action in polite society. In any case, I waited for the other shoe to drop. I enjoy doing that — smiling quietly until my opponent in rhetoric begins to make my own arguments for me. She obligingly backpedaled and told me that she did not advocate promoting people who aren't perfectly qualified. I heartily agreed with the sentiment and poured her another glass of Merlot. The wine was good.

Then I asked her if faced with a couple of qualified candidates, one Hispanic and one white and clearly better qualified, what she would do. After long hesitation, she said, "Hire the white guy." So we agreed; no affirmative action, right? Well, no. But she couldn't tell me why not.

Feeling that her side needed bolstering, I guess, she attacked with a dull, ugly weapon: "What do you know about it? What's your ethnic background?" That "argument" was so pitiful that I again waited for the other shoe to drop, but she

waited me out. So I asked in return, "If I'm Hispanic, you will agree with me more thoroughly?" "No," again.

She looked a little deflated, and I wanted to help. "How's this for affirmative action?" I asked. "The old white judge naturally finds a younger white guy to succeed him. There's a better qualified Hispanic candidate, and the judge isn't exactly prejudiced; he just knows and likes the white guy, a nascent good ol' boy." That enthused her. It happens all the time; it drives her mad.

I drank with a racist, and it wasn't so bad.

— Michael Christian

To bee or not to bee — As fall approaches, it looks like the second hurricane season after Katrina is going out with a whimper. Despite apocalyptic talk that global warming was going to make hurricanes stronger and more frequent — that 2005 was just a taste of what was in store — it looks like the doomsayers were dead wrong.

Scientists have historically been inferior prophets. Thirty years ago, the biggest threat facing North America was killer bees; by the year 2000, they were supposed to have swarmed the United States, leaving death in their path. Instead, we have environmental alarmists wailing about an unexplained bee *extinction*, which will result in massive crop failures and leave a trail of starvation and death in its path. With or without bees, the common cry is that humans are going to die tragically.

Thirty years ago, heart doctors were claiming that butter was one of the worst things you could eat and that Americans should switch to margarine. Today, trans fat — a fashionable term for certain vegetable oils and a key ingredient in margarine — is considered one of the deadliest things you can put into your body. New York City has even passed legislation banning restaurants from cooking with trans fats.

I've always had a rule of thumb for measuring predictive ability: somebody who can truly see the future won't live in a dump. People like Warren Buffett and Bill Gates are far more prescient than your other-side-of-the-tracks fortuneteller working out of her living room with a neon sign in the window. Since many academic scientists live in efficiency apartments reeking of ramen noodles and sweatsocks, I doubt that any of them can see much further into the future than the next episode of *Stargate SG-1*.

— Tim Slagle

Free to be unfree — Jonah Goldberg writes in the Sept. 10 *National Review* of "the glory of federalism" — and concludes that federalism is good because it allows communities to limit freedom. This perverse reasoning seems to me characteristic of the conservative under-

That which is about to fall

"I did not have sexual relations with that woman."

— President Bill Clinton, Jan. 26, 1998, at a press conference

"It depends on what the meaning of the word 'is' is."

— President Bill Clinton, Aug. 17, 1998, during his grand jury testimony

Regrettably for Bill, these are his words that are most likely to become immortal.

Memorable words, though not quite in the class of Leonidas' at Thermopylae when, in answer to the Persians demanding his weapons, he said, "Come and take them," or when the sun was blocked with arrows and he merely commented, "Good. Now we can fight in the shade."

But heroic words rarely come out of the mouths of elected politicians.

Many pompous types dislike Clinton for supposedly having brought the presidency into disgrace. That's ridiculous. Whatever nobility the presidency might have had in the near-mythic days of Washington, Adams, and Jefferson has long been buried in tons of scandal, conniving, corruption, and treachery — all seasoned with megatons of low buffoonery.

There were plenty of things I disliked during the Clinton presidency

— especially the people around him in the White House — but he was actually head and shoulders above the likes of Johnson, Nixon, and Baby Bush.

What was really shameful about his impeachment was that it was basically about a trivial sexual episode. Whatever happened, it should have been left to Bill, Hillary, and Monica to sort it out. It was certainly no business of the self-righteous, hypocritical, moralizing Republicans.

But I always look on the bright side. Every incident of this type serves to degrade the government in general, and the office of president in particular. In the past, when America was still an honest yeoman republic, I might have disapproved. Now, with the state having become overwhelmingly large, paranoid, and dangerous, one of our best hopes is that people will come to view it as a laughing stock, delegitimizing it with contempt.

— Doug Casey

standing of federalism, and different from the libertarian understanding of it.

Most American libertarians believe local government is preferable to national government, where practicable, because subsidiarity is more friendly to liberty than centralization. They prefer that decisions be made at the closest possible level to the citizens who will be affected. But libertarians want freedom for everyone: they're not concerned with protecting the "right" of small towns to pass blue laws or enact zoning regulations, but with creating circumstances under which government is most accountable to citizens.

When I hear conservatives talking about federalism, I realize they mean something else, and it can be found in Goldberg's defense of federalism: "America has always been a cornucopia of religious and cultural minorities. . . . The Founding Fathers had a solution to this challenge: federalism. By leaving questions of how people should live up to localities, they ensured that the people themselves would sort these questions out. Some communities would choose to define liberty very narrowly, [and] others would embrace cosmopolitanism or even debauchery."

I live in Seattle because I like the climate, the coffee, and the atmosphere of social tolerance. Seattle happens to be full of left-wing crazies. Does that mean I should be content to pay extortionate taxes, acquiesce in regulation of smoking and trans fats, and take public transit everywhere I go? I suspect most conservatives would say I'm not obliged either to move or to shut up, but that I may legitimately advocate greater freedom from the city fathers and county-council nannies who want to run my life.

There are ways for communities to "set standards" *without* violating rights. They can take advantage of property rights to create associations of like-minded residents, as in gated communities. More radical thinkers might reimagine what a community is, as in the sort of society David Friedman outlines in "The Machinery of Freedom." But if the law says I cannot drink beer in public from an open container (to use one of Goldberg's examples) — or that I can't engage in a certain consensual, private sexual behavior — or limits in any other way, however small, my right to do something only because my neighbor doesn't like it, I am no less oppressed because the gun's being pointed by a small-town thug, rather than a federal one.

— Patrick Qualey

Golden nukes — California has long been a green citadel: the environmentalist lobby has usually gotten everything it desired and more from the California state government. This is leading to an interesting case of *deja vu* all over again.

Environmentalists have recently gotten the California legislature to pass a law mandating a 25% reduction in carbon dioxide by 2020, in order to combat global warming. The Governor, a big greenie himself, supports this draconian piece of legal dreck. So, during a period when the population of the state is projected to grow by a fifth, greenhouse gas emissions must be cut by a fourth. Naturally, the law doesn't indicate how this is to be managed.

Consider the current system of electrical power generation. Most electrical power in the state is obtained from natural gas and coal-fired power plants, both of which produce lots of greenhouse gases. Coal is particularly troublesome in this regard: besides the other pollution it creates, it yields green-

house gases at a rate more than double its contribution to the power grid. Not to worry, though: the enviros got the state legislature to pass another law requiring the complete phase-out of all coal usage in the state over the next two decades!

All this is beginning to make nukes look attractive again, even in the green-added state of California. The four reactors permitted to operate here produce 13% of the state's electricity. We have *only* four, because an environmentalist-backed initiative passed in 1976 banned the construction of new nuclear power plants. Those four, plus the 100 other plants operating in America, produce a fifth of America's power. The 59 nukes operating in France produce nearly 80% of its power, and the ten in Sweden produce nearly half of its power.

Given the new green diktats, sentiment is growing to revisit the issue in California. State Assemblyman Chuck DeVore has introduced a new initiative to restore the right of California power companies to construct new plants (under tight environmental and seismic restrictions). This initiative, with the formidable name of the California Energy Independence and Zero Carbon Dioxide Emission Electrical Generation Act, is aimed at the June 2008 election. To get it on the ballot, DeVore will need to gather 700,000 signatures of registered voters by this November.

With not much of a war chest to spend on advertising, and with the environmentalist lobby apt to fight him tooth and nail, it will be a tough fight. But now that the green-enacted laws mandating steep cuts in greenhouse gases have wonderfully concentrated the voters' minds, he may just have a chance.

— Gary Jason

Aaron Russo, RIP — At the Libertarian Party convention during the summer of 2004, the presidential nomination was competitive. Aaron Russo drew the most votes on the first two ballots but lost on the third ballot, when his two main rivals combined their support.

That convention was the first time that many libertarians had heard of Russo. He was a "Hollywood guy" who struck a few as abrasive . . . but many more as passionate and direct.

Russo was a strong character. He was born in working-class Brooklyn but raised in the middle-class suburbs on Long Island; he had an intense personality and restless intelligence. While still a high school student, Russo started producing local rock and roll concerts. His intensity was a good fit for what could be a tough business.

In the late 1960s, the music business took Russo to Chicago. He owned a popular nightclub called Kinetic Playground; and "kinetic" was a good word for the man. He made a national reputation in the music industry during those years — working as a promoter or manager for acts like Led Zeppelin, the Who, the Grateful Dead, and Janis Joplin. While rock-and-roll paid the bills, Russo's musical interests were broad, including Chicago's jazz and blues scenes; and he developed an autodidact's interest in everything from art to history to politics.

In the early 1970s, he took over as business manager for the New York-based cabaret singer Bette Midler. Under Russo's management, Midler grew from a quirky singer on the fringes of the New York scene to a major recording artist. He booked Midler on Broadway, teaming her with jazz great Lionel Hampton in the extremely popular "Clams on the Half-Shell Revue."

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Tiebreaker

by Bruce Ramsey

Once race gets involved in decisions about schools, you can expect some curious “logic” to evolve. One thing is certain: the individual student will no longer be important.

The U.S. Supreme Court’s 5–4 decision of *Parents v. Seattle Schools*, which outlawed the use of race in assigning kids to public schools, was of special interest to me. I live in the city it concerns, and have a son in the high school where the case began. The school had refused to admit a Caucasian boy because the school was “too white,” and his mother went to court. The outcome of the case, decided this summer, will not change anything for my son, but I care about it and have publicly attacked the school district’s position on it.

It was a case with strong beliefs on both sides. My side believes that government should not use race to determine admissions to schools. Though Seattle is a left-leaning city — it votes 80% Democrat — there are many who agree with me on this, though all community leaders publicly oppose it. Some are being politically “correct,” but many believe the public schools are morally obligated to discriminate by race — even, in the case of liberal whites, to discriminate against their own race.

They don’t call it discrimination; they call it *desegregating*. The two sides in this debate use language differently. The Seattle Schools argued that discrimination is about *exclusion*, and that its policy was aimed at *inclusion* and therefore was not discriminatory. The school district’s champion on the Supreme Court was Justice Stephen Breyer. In his dissent, which was signed by Justices Ginsburg, Stevens, and Souter,

Breyer argued in support of “racial limits that seek, not to keep the races apart, but to bring them together.” But when individuals are in a queue, and there are not places for everyone, allowing someone to cut in line means that someone else loses a spot. *Inclusion* implies *exclusion*. It is discrimination still. I agreed with Chief Justice John Roberts when he wrote, “The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race.”

He was thinking in terms of individuals. The other side thinks in terms of groups. When the Seattle case was at the state supreme court, that court supported the school district, arguing that it had “a racially neutral plan, which gives no race an advantage over another.” Not “no individual,” but “no race.” This was the same manner of thinking that, a century earlier, had justified segregated schools. In the 1896 case *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the U.S. Supreme Court had said that separate railcars for black and white passengers had “no tendency to destroy the legal equality of the two races.”

But actually, Seattle's plan was not racially neutral. The mechanism was neutral, but its categories were not. It defined only one race, the white race, which created two categories, white and nonwhite. The school district collects much more detailed racial data than that, and could have had a plan with more than a dozen races, but stopped with white (meaning non-Hispanic Caucasian) and all others. If you were white, your race was a separate category. I don't recall anyone arguing that this aspect was unfair to whites, because the unfairness was not obvious. The plan did not always disfavor whites, though it disfavored them more often than it favored them.

Each side in this dispute claimed to be fighting for the legacy of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the 1954 case that ordered the desegregation of public schools. But each side read *Brown* differently. To Chief Justice Roberts, what *Brown* forbade was "legally separating children on the basis of race." He had said this in his confirmation hearings at the Senate, and it is what he said in his opinion. To him, *Brown* banned a governmental practice — discrimination. To the other side, *Brown* proclaimed a social objective — equality — the pursuit of which justified discrimination.

There was a similar divide regarding the terms "segregation" and "desegregation." To Justice Clarence Thomas, to say that students were segregated implied that someone had segregated them. Segregation implied a segregator. To *desegregate* meant to undo the immediate consequences of having segregated. To the supporters of the Seattle plan, to desegregate meant to manage the racial balance so that it didn't "re-segregate" by itself. On the day the Seattle Schools lost the case, the district's in-house attorney said at its press conference that Ballard High School's white population had risen from 56% to 62% since the "racial tiebreaker" had ended in 2002. Ballard, he said, was "re-segregating."

At Ballard, the tiebreaker had made a difference of six percentage points. From this, you might think the Seattle Schools went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court to defend a policy that made no dramatic difference. And you would be right. That is one of the ironies: numbers-wise, *Parents v. Seattle Schools* was not about a lot.

It used to be more. In the 1970s, the Seattle school board adopted a plan to bus thousands of kids around the city to achieve racial balance. Other cities were being ordered by federal judges to do this, and Seattle might have been ordered, too, on account of a lawsuit that had been filed by a civil-rights group.

Seattle's public schools had never been segregated by law, but Breyer was right when he pointed out that the history was not as simple as Thomas made it out to be. A number of Seattle neighborhoods had excluded nonwhites by using racial covenants. I still have a record of the covenant on the lot my parents bought near Seward Park in 1940. It was reserved for the "white race." Racial covenants were made unenforceable by a Supreme Court decision in 1948, but Seattle's racial patterns have tended to persist and be reflected in the schools. Also, the schools were run mainly by whites. White parents elected the school board. White parents were more likely to complain on behalf of their own children, and get what they wanted. Yet the largely white leadership was imbued with a certain amount of guilt about this, and took the civil-rights movement as its moral touchstone.

So, 30 years ago, the school board began mandatory busing without a court order. Supporters celebrated the idea that it was "voluntary" — and Breyer makes much of this in his dissent. Busing was not really voluntary for the board — there was that lawsuit — and for individual parents and kids it was not voluntary at all. For the city as a whole it was not voluntary, either: the people were never allowed to vote on it. Like affirmative action, it was *done*.

The first phase of busing lasted from 1977 to 1987. Enrollment in the public schools plunged. It had been over 100,000, and it fell to 50,000. Some of this was demographics, but much of it was the movement of families to the suburbs. Seattle is now the second most childless city on the West Coast, after San Francisco — and of the kids remaining, about 30% go to out-of-district public schools or private schools.

Most whites hated busing, and a lot of Asians, blacks, and Latinos didn't like it either. In 1988 it was modified, making it less draconian, but the white leaders of the school district dared not end it. They simply did not have the moral courage to do it. It took a black school board member plus a black superintendent — a former Army general named John Stanford — to end it. Stanford, who died on the job, is a public hero in Seattle for being a champion of academics, particularly reading. He was certainly that. It is not mentioned publicly that he also ended racial busing, though many are privately thankful that he did.

The tiebreaker was the Seattle Schools' third-generation racial program. There was a reason for having only two racial categories, white and nonwhite. On the one hand, it pitted all the other races against the whites, and none against each other. This fits the ideology of the Left, which argues that the real problem of the schools is white "institutional racism" against people "of color." The Seattle Schools' administration officially adopted this ideology, posting on its website a neo-Marxist definition of racism that applied only to whites, and that included the "white" value of "future time orientation" and having a culture "emphasizing individualism as opposed to a more collective ideology." This definition was attacked in 2006 in the blogosphere, George Will hooted at it in his syndicated newspaper column, and the district took it down — though the district did not repudiate it.

For all its radical patina, the tiebreaker was designed to apply to relatively few students. This minimized opposition. In actual effect, it was a leftist principle mostly for looks. It was, as I once wrote, "the perfect program for liberal Seattle."

Here is how it worked. Any ninth grader could apply to any of Seattle's 10 public high schools. To apply, you listed a first choice, a second, and a third. If your first choice had enough seats for every applicant, you got in. Tiebreaking took effect only for the five schools that were oversubscribed.

There were three tiebreakers. The first was siblings. If you had a brother or sister in the school, you were in.

The second tiebreaker was race. If the school's ratio of white to nonwhite was more than 15 percentage points different from the average for the district as a whole, and you "improved" the white-nonwhite ratio, you were in.

The third tiebreaker was distance from the school. The school chose the applicants closest to it. When the racial tiebreaker was dropped in 2002, this became the second and final tiebreaker.

When last used, the racial tiebreaker determined the assignment of 307 entering ninth graders. In a district of 45,000 students, this is not a big number. Furthermore, a good share of the 307 would have been assigned to the same school under the distance tiebreaker. That is, the racial tiebreaker *determined* their assignment but did not alter it. Also, not all the students who gained by the racial tiebreaker were non-whites. At Franklin High, the district's most heavily Asian high school, the tiebreaker gave an advantage to whites. All of this was purposeful, so that courts might declare the plan "racially neutral."

That the actual effect of the plan was small was cited as a key fact by both sides. Justice Breyer made the entirely logical point that if Seattle's tiebreaker was illegal, "then *all* of Seattle's earlier (even more race-conscious) plans must also have been unconstitutional." But earlier judges had approved busing plans all over the country — therefore, Breyer argued, the vestigial remnant of those plans in Seattle was beyond reproach. Justice Roberts argued that Seattle's vestigial remnant was as bad in principle as the ones that did more harm, but that the Seattle plan accomplished almost nothing. And therefore, if it didn't do anything much, how could the Seattle Schools argue that its use was *compelling*?

Seattle had what appeared to be an educational argument: that racial diversity makes education better. This argument had won over Justice Lewis Powell, the swing vote in the 1978 *Bakke* case, and had since become the very nectar of political correctness. It was not, however, backed by much in the way of evidence, and it was not the argument you heard if you cornered an advocate in private. Then you heard that the ability to get into a mostly white school was good for a black or Latino student of academic promise, because the mostly white schools were better schools. The tiebreaker was good *because it benefited non-whites*. But the argument the advocates make in public, and that Seattle made in the courts, was that diversity benefited all students.

Justice Roberts didn't buy it. He pointed out that the district-wide student body in Seattle was 41% white, 24% Asian, 23% black, 10% Latino and 3% Native American. If Seattle's aim was racial diversity, why have only two categories, white and nonwhite? What was the educational rationale for that? And wasn't it interesting that Seattle assumed that the educational optimum just happened to be the average white-non-white ratio in the district as a whole? (Louisville, which had a

Having only two racial categories, white and nonwhite, pitted all the other races against the whites, and none against each other.

similar case and was part of the same opinion, had assumed the same about its black-nonblack ratio.)

Justice Thomas brought up another thing: the African American Academy. If the white liberals who ran Seattle

believed so deeply that managing white-nonwhite balance was a compelling necessity, then why did the district offer a K-8 school that was, by name (though not by law) for black

The Seattle Schools' administration posted on its website a neo-Marxist definition of racism that included the "white" value of having a culture "emphasizing individualism as opposed to a more collective ideology."

students only? Wrote Thomas, "The Seattle school board itself must believe that racial mixing is not necessary to black achievement."

It was a fine rhetorical point, though really the school board's acceptance of a black academy is more a matter of politics than belief. Seattle offers a black school because a number of black parents want it, black organizations want it, and the mostly white board was not inclined to disappoint them. Seattle offers several other "alternative" schools, not defined by race, because other parents, mostly white and Asian, want them, and would otherwise defect to the private schools. It offers a special program to kids in the 98-99th percentiles of intelligence, and another for the 93-97th percentiles, for the same reason. School board members embody belief and respond to pressure. They are not always logical.

And judges aren't, either. Over seven years, the Seattle case went to federal district court, to a three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, to the Washington Supreme Court, back to the three-judge panel of the 9th, then to the full panel of the 9th, then to the U.S. Supreme Court. At each step, the previous decision was reversed.

Here is another odd thing. Seattle's policy was much more obviously illegal under the state constitution than under the federal one. The Washington constitution says:

It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all students residing within its border, without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste or sex.

This was adopted at statehood, in 1889. It flatly bans what Seattle was doing. But the Washington Supreme Court looked the other way.

Seattle's policy was also obviously illegal under Initiative 200, a clone of California's Proposition 209. I-200 had been placed on the Washington ballot by petition and passed in 1998 — *one year* before Seattle's racial tiebreaker went into effect — with 59% of the vote. I-200 had been opposed by racial groups, community groups, organized labor, organized business, and every major media outlet in the Seattle area — and it passed in every county in the state except King County

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The Search for Home of Truth

by R. W. Bradford

Liberty's founder, R.W. Bradford, was a keen observer of the American landscape — with a sharp sense both for the timeless and for the immediate — the strange, the quaint, the fascinating, the outrageous. Liberty is pleased to present two samples of his uniquely interesting reportage.

— Patrick Quealy

Home of Truth, Utah — The description in my guidebook, a 1940 WPA guide to Utah, was intriguing: "Home of Truth Colony is a religious community founded in 1935 by Mrs. Marie M. Ogden, formerly a prominent welfare worker in New Jersey . . . members are required to transfer ownership of all property to the leader for use of the entire group, and thereafter are entitled to food, clothing and shelter. Mrs. Ogden claims that she founded the colony under divine guidance and that she allows members no meat, except fish and chicken, and forbids the use of tobacco and alcohol."

Wow! A charismatic leader who talks with God and imposes a utopian social order on the initiates — her Home of Truth Colony sounded like a cross between Jonestown, Guyana and Big Water, Utah, with a liberal dose of the fictional Starnesville of Ayn Rand's "Atlas Shrugged."

Especially Starnesville, where Ivy Starnes mixed oriental religion and food faddism with collectivism and low-tech to create a utopia. Like Ivy Starnes, Mrs. Ogden was apparently a person of some means: "She owns the county's only newspaper, the San Juan Record, printed in Monticello." And Home of Truth was a back-to-the-land movement, decrying the wasteful consumption of modern civilization: "The colony has no electrical nor sanitary conveniences; light is provided by candles and oil-lamps, and water is obtained from outdoor handpumps."

In exchange for electricity, Home of Truth promised peace: Mrs. Ogden "has prophesied that the grazing land beyond the gap will eventually be populated by thousands of Home of Truth colonists, and that the faithful will live in peace and prosperity while the rest of the world is caught in the destruction and misery of war."

I wondered: Did Home of Truth deliver on its promise? Did thousands of colonists find good grazing land beyond the gap in the mountains? Did they prosper while the world suffered from the carnage of World War II? Filled with religious fervor, appreciation of the simple, low-tech life, and an understanding of the compulsory sharing that underlies the princi-

ples of welfare, did they find the harmony and prosperity that they sought? Whatever became of Mrs. Marie M. Ogden and her devoted disciples?

My guidebook said that Home of Truth Colony was located on a dirt road 1.7 miles west of an oil-surfaced road at a point 11.6 miles north of Monticello, Utah. This point, my road atlas advised, was a scant 1,200 miles southeast of my home in Port Townsend, Wash. The atlas also showed that the road running north from Monticello was now paved. Assuming that the road was still where it was in 1940, I could certainly get myself there; if Home of Truth survived as a prosperous community, it would be easy to spot in the desert. I packed my camera and a thermos of lemonade, got on my motorcycle and set out to find it.

Southeastern Utah, for those of you who have not had the pleasure, is a lonely and beautiful place. It is desert country; and, like desert country everywhere, few people live there and those that do are a little strange. But in this part of Utah, it is the land that grabs your attention and holds it. Scrawny rivers flow through magnificent canyons. Vast flows of lava bake in the sun alongside towering spires of sandstone. There are more national parks than decent restaurants.

To the south — the direction I am heading — there are ominous clouds. To my left is a huge natural arch, more spectacular than any in Natural Arches National Park. My map has a tiny red square marked "Wilson Arch." I have never heard of it. Why is there no national park here, I wonder, no magnet for America's subsidized geriatrics luxuriating in behemoth Winnebagos and suburban families packed into tiny sedans? Perhaps its closeness to the highway accounts for its obscurity. If people can see it from the window of their car on U.S. 160, how can it qualify as a "natural wonder" worth a \$5 per car-load admission?

I speed by. I reach the point where I calculate that I must leave the highway. The road I select is paved now. I drive up it 0.6 miles and look to my left. Could that rundown shack be all that is left of "the Outermost Point," identified in my guidebook as "a group of frame buildings for the use of non-members and visitors?" Another 1.1 miles down the road, I look for "the Middle Section," which I quickly identify by the low Mesopotamian-style pile of rocks that I take to be "the

unfinished cobblestone church" mentioned in the guidebook.

I continue down the road another 1.3 miles. Sure enough, I come across a group of buildings that must have been "the Outer Portal" identified by the guidebook. This was the most developed part of the colony, the home of Mrs. Ogden and her elect.

It lay north of the road only a few hundred feet. I park my motorcycle and walk up a sandy track to the main group of houses. There is a deep gully in the track, where water runs

Scrawny rivers flow through magnificent canyons. Vast flows of lava bake in the sun alongside towering spires of sandstone. There are more national parks than decent restaurants.

during rainstorms. Anthills rise six inches high and a foot across. Four-wheel-drive trucks have been here since the last rain; tracks are all around.

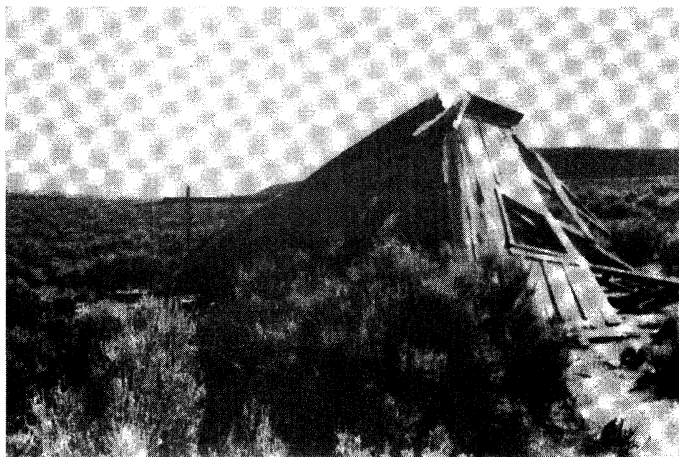
It is easy to spot which house was Mrs. Ogden's. It's the two-story one with several rooms and a long porch facing Shay Mountain to the southwest. "During the summer," the guidebook says, "the colonists make frequent trips to this mountain, remaining at its base while their leader ascends to the summit to receive revelations." Israelites at the base of Sinai while Moses ascends.

But there were no colonists at the base of Shay Mountain today, no Mrs. Ogden at its summit talking to God. Neither were there happy colonists in the Outer Portal or grazing land filled with the flocks of sheep and harmonious colonists beyond the gap. The houses are falling apart. If they were ever painted, there is no hint today. Every piece of glass is gone, every door is open. The only signs of 20th-century occupation are the scraps of linoleum on the edges of floors. Litter is everywhere — the sort of litter that isn't completely broken down by 40 years of the desert: fragments of rusty metal, bits of barbed wire, leprous tin cans, weathered boards torn from buildings. I look in vain for the ruins of an electric motor.

In front of one building is a length of concrete sidewalk; by another is some rockwork. Between two buildings I come upon two trash barrels, one labeled, "Keep Utah Beautiful." They are about half-filled with beer cans; and more beer cans are strewn about.

The Outer Portal has become a place for local teen-agers to drink.

To the south the clouds grow darker. I walk back to my motorcycle and return to the Middle Section. There is a dirt track into it, passing through a gap in a barbed wire fence. I



Ivy Starnes may have lived here.

continued on page 28

Ashram in the Desert

by R. W. Bradford

Rajneeshpuram, Oregon — Like Home of Truth, Rajneeshpuram was founded in the desert as a religious community centered around a charismatic leader.

But the similarity doesn't go very far. Rajneeshpuram was large; Home of Truth, small. Rajneeshpuram was famous; Home of Truth, almost unknown. Rajneeshpuram was rich; Home of Truth, poor. And, ironically, while obscure Home of Truth is easy to get to — located only a few hundred yards from a paved road — well-known Rajneeshpuram is hard to find, a traveller's challenge.

In the early 1980s, Rajneeshpuram was the center of attention. Ted Koppel did live interviews with its officials and the motels of nearby towns were filled with reporters from around the world. Its story was widely known: A guru, who went by the name Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh had left his ashram in India and moved to the United States. Bhagwan's religious teaching combined ideas and techniques from the Western human potential movement with those of the Eastern tantric tradition of sexual mysticism, a doctrine that found a market among well-off Americans. Bhagwan ("God") moved to a ranch in central Oregon that had been purchased by his disciples and established a religious community, which he called Rajneeshpuram.

At its peak, somewhere between 2,000 and 5,000 people lived in Rajneeshpuram, and at one point another 15,000 or so visited to attend a religious festival. In the early 1980s, it appeared on road maps — a foreign sounding name on the southern border of Wasco County, about 50 miles northeast of Madras, a metropolis of 2,260 souls in the high desert of central Oregon.

Rajneeshpuram no longer appears on road maps. But you can find it if you want to.

I drive south on U.S. 97 to Shaniko. In the early part of this century, as much as five million pounds of wool were shipped from Shaniko each year; but overgrazing turned the land to

desert and, in the 1940 census, its population had fallen to 55. My map lists it as a ghost town.

I stop at its only remaining commercial building, a gas station. How many people live in Shaniko, I ask. Less than 10, I am told. I note the billboard announcing in red, white, and blue letters a huge federal grant to improve its municipal water system. The paint on the sign has peeled away in patches; it dates from the 1960s, when the town boasted a population in the 30s. Today, its few remaining buildings bake in the sun, decaying. Grass grows tall in what appears to have been a park.

I turn south on a paved county road, passing through Antelope, the town of some 30 or 40 people that lies only about 18 miles from Rajneeshpuram. It is late afternoon; I check my odometer as I turn east on SR-218. According to my map, the road to Rajneeshpuram is four miles from the intersection. I wonder: will I be able to distinguish it from other dirt roads?

I have forgotten that this is the high desert, where mountains, winter snows and freezing weather make road maintenance a real job. It is not the desert of Utah or Nevada, where a road can be plowed in the earth and remain in good shape for years. Roads are few in these parts. The first dirt track off the pavement I come to is about four miles up the road. This must be the place. I turn.

The road undulates and twists sharply as it climbs and falls. The only sign of civilization is a long-abandoned barn, left unpainted for decades, now the color of charcoal. On its

side a white sign in block letters proclaims, "BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND YE SHALL BE SAVED." This, clearly, was not the ashram. About three miles up the road I come to an intersection. This seems too close to the highway. I continue. The road worsens. The turns get sharper, the potholes bigger, the grades steeper. It is hard work maneuvering my motorcycle but I proceed.

Where is the road to Rajneeshpuram? Should I have turned at the last road? Finally, I come to an intersection: an arrow to the left points to "Ashwood." From my map, I see that I am south of the road to Rajneeshpuram. I backtrack and turn down the road I had passed earlier.

It rises sharply but the roadbed is better. I cross a cattle guard. There is a huge sign, "PRIVATE PROPERTY ABSOLUTELY NO TRESPASSING, VIOLATORS WILL BE PROSECUTED TO THE FULLEST EXTENT OF THE LAW, CONNECTICUT GENERAL LIFE INSURANCE CO., CO-OWNER."

I am in Rajneeshpuram or, more precisely, I have entered the ranch the Rajneeshes purchased to build their home in the wilderness. The ranch is huge — over 100 square miles — and it is another eight or nine miles to the city proper.

Smoke rises somewhere in the distance. The air is fairly clear; but it burns my nasal passages and inflames my eyes. It is very hot and I grow apprehensive. Is Rajneeshpuram on fire? The only signs of man are the road and barbed wire fence and utility poles along its sides. Then I see a large concrete cube. On its front it says, *City of Rajneeshpuram*. It is chipped and parts are missing.

The road ascends sharply: My altimeter indicates I am more than 3,000 feet above sea level. The road twists and falls. The scenery grows more spectacular, with pillars of rock rising alongside the hills of muted grays, greens, and browns covered with scrub. The land is unkempt.

And then I see a lake, sitting incongruously alongside the road. As I reach it, I discover that it is a reservoir backed up behind a small earthen dam. Around another curve I see further signs of man. Buildings. An asphalt airstrip parallel to the dirt road. An apartment complex lies in a narrow ravine. It looks like it could be in a suburb of Denver. Or L.A. Or any other city. But not here, nowhere. On my left is a garage entitled "Siddhartha." Modern street lights. Yellow poles labeled "Bus Stop" at intervals along the road. A bus station.

The road curves. On the left is a Victorian house, an incongruity within an incongruity. It is lovely and beautifully situated, surrounded by a creek and trees. The creek gurgles; four ducks swim in it. A breeze rustles the leaves of the trees. It looks like a nice place to live. And someone lives in it — a caretaker, I surmise. Next to it a street leads down a valley.

There are many buildings down the street, but my view is blocked by trees along the stream; I cannot tell what they are. Like all the other side streets, it is barricaded.

I drive past a shopping mall. The road makes a large "S" curve. I drive on, past more bus stops, more buildings. An overgrown soccer field. A huge wall-less structure of the sort that prosperous ranches use to store hay. But it can't be for hay storage: the Rajneeshes were vegetarians and had no use for animal feed. More bus stops. More streets, all barricaded. It is impossible to see most of the town from the county road; all the side streets are protected by barricades and "No Trespassing" signs.

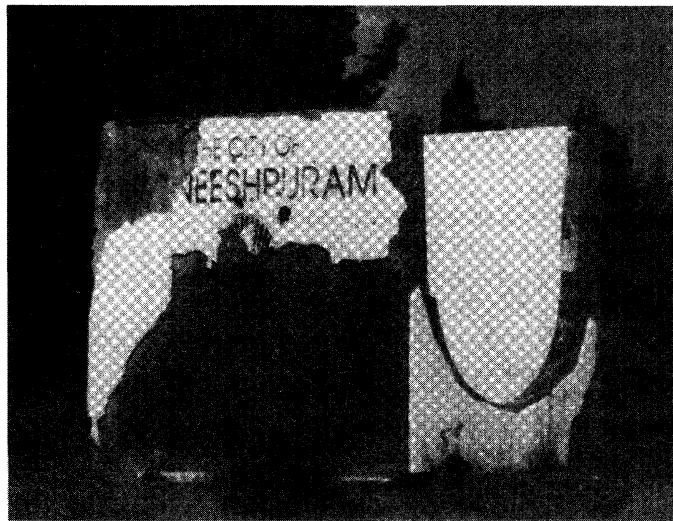
Then the town gives out. I turn around and return to the center. I park my motorcycle and take a good look at a large green building across from the mall. It is "L" shaped, with several bay windows and a covered walkway. Signs on the windows say "New Releases, Photographs, Paperbacks, Bhagwan Magazine, Bhagwan Audio & Video." A wooden sign on the side of the building warns, "Absolutely No Trespassing, All Violators Will Be Prosecuted To The Fullest Extent Of The Law, Connecticut General Life Insurance Co." Aside from a rain gutter swinging in the breeze, the building appears to be in good repair. I peer in through the windows. Empty. Careful to walk only on the county road, I take some photographs.

I walk toward the shopping mall. It is a two-story structure, with four sets of French doors at intervals on either side of its main entrance in the center. I pace it off: it is 300 feet wide. A large, slightly weather-beaten sign over the main entrance says, "Devareeth Mall" in elaborate lettering. One of the doors has "AIR SA ON" written on it: not some strange oriental institution but a hair salon. Part of the roofing material is missing near one end. Otherwise, the building is in good shape. It too is empty.

A ghostly town, but there is none of the decrepitude of a ghost town. It is a complete city, waiting in the desert for someone to live in it. Everything is new, modern. And empty.



Mrs. Ogden brought her flock to the desert of Utah, some 700 miles southeast of Rajneeshpuram and 45 years earlier, to establish their own Promised Land. Her followers gave her all their property and lived a communal life. Their neighbors in Monticello didn't care much for the colony ten miles north of town, but they didn't do much about their dislike. Eventually, as the colonists realized that their religion was bogus, they abandoned Home of Truth. And today Home of Truth is dead, rotting in the wind and sun of the Utah desert.



20th Anniversary Year

Bhagwan brought his flock to the desert of Oregon to establish *their* own Promised Land. The ranch they purchased in July 1981 was 18 miles over a rutted, single lane dirt track from their nearest neighbors, 50 miles from the nearest city. They got the water for their colony by damming up the tiny creeks that result when the snow melts in the spring and by tapping the small aquifer that lies under their own property. It is impossible to imagine a more remote site for a colony — or one which impinged on its neighbors less.

Like the colonists at Home of Truth, these people sought to make the desert bloom. Like the colonists at Home of Truth, their main assets were their own labor and the money they brought with them. Today, only traces remain of Home of Truth. Today, Rajneeshpuram is a city without people, waiting in the desert. Waiting for nobody.

Home of Truth died a natural death. Rajneeshpuram was murdered.

In order to live on the land they had purchased, the Rajneeshees had to get the permission of the politicians in The Dalles, a resort city located some 90 miles to the north on the Columbia River and the seat of Wasco County. Thanks to the land-use regulations of the state of Oregon and of Wasco County, the Rajneeshees had to limit settlers to agricultural workers. But the Rajneeshees didn't want to use the land as a cattle ranch, populated by a single family and one steer per hundred acres. They wanted to capture the land's scarce water and use their own labor to cultivate the desert. This required far more workers than does a ranch.

So in October 1981, three months after purchasing the ranch, they applied to the politicians in The Dalles for permission to hold an election to organize a city on their land. The politicians granted them permission and the City of Rajneeshpuram was created.

But their neighbors called on a group of wealthy city-dwellers in Portland — 150 miles and a world away — a group with the money and legal resources to fight the Rajneeshees. In December 1981, a group calling itself "1000 Friends of Oregon" filed a lawsuit, arguing that the city was

Before long, the local cafe was painted red and renamed "Zorba the Buddha," the town renamed Rajneesh, and old-time residents of Antelope found out what it was like to be treated as they had treated the Rajneeshees.

not in harmony with Oregon's comprehensive land-use program. When the Rajneeshees wanted to operate a printing press to produce pamphlets and books about their religion, 1000 Friends of Oregon reminded them that all buildings and operations not directly related to farm use were prohibited

at the ranch, and suggested they locate their printing press in Antelope. Moreover, 1000 Friends warned them that they "may not rely on the hostility of Antelope residents" as an excuse for establishing their printing operation on their own land at the ranch.

So the Rajneeshees purchased a plot of land in Antelope and applied for a license to operate their printing press there. The city council of Antelope denied them permission. It

It is a ghostly town, but there is none of the decrepitude of a ghost town. It is a complete city, waiting in the desert for someone to live in it. Everything is new, modern. And empty.

occurred to someone on the city council that, with fewer than 20 registered voters in the city, Antelope's city council could easily be taken over by the Rajneeshees — all they needed to do was to move a handful of people to their property in town. So the city council decided to abolish the city. The disincorporation measure passed the council, but it had to be approved by the voters. During the month between the council action and the election, more Rajneeshees moved to town, and disincorporation failed.

The next city council election brought a Rajneeshee majority. Before long the local cafe was painted red and renamed "Zorba the Buddha," Main Street renamed Melvana Bhagwan Street, the town renamed Rajneesh, and old-time residents of Antelope found out what it was like to be treated as they had treated the Rajneeshees. They complained loudly and found sympathy with most of the people of Oregon.

When Bhagwan drove the 50 miles to Madras, his car was surrounded by angry demonstrators shouting "Bhagwan out of Madras." "Repent your sins!" and "America will be free!"

A siege mentality developed. Tempers flared. Before it was over, wild charges and crazy actions were taken by both sides. By 1985, the Rajneeshees were finished: their city had been declared illegal, their leaders put in jail, their treasury depleted by a huge number of legal battles and tax judgments.

The Rajneeshees reacted to their persecution in a bizarre, paranoid, and vicious way: plotting to set fire to the county planning office, to assassinate the prosecutor, and to poison a county commissioner. But the reaction of the people of Oregon to the arrival of the Rajneeshees was crazier. It dropped all pretense of tolerance and civilized behavior and engaged in an orgy of nativist witch-hunting: setting fire to a Rajneesh-owned hotel, arbitrarily changing the voter-registration procedures a few days before an election to prevent a Rajneesh victory, and harassing the Rajneeshees at every opportunity.

What would have happened had not the people of Oregon used the power of their government to destroy Rajneeshpuram? Eventually Rajneeshpuram might have suffered the fate of

Home of Truth: members would have learned that subjugation to Bhagwan provided no more long-term satisfaction and happiness than the Home of Truth cultists got from subjugating themselves to Mrs. Ogden, and they would have abandoned the colony.

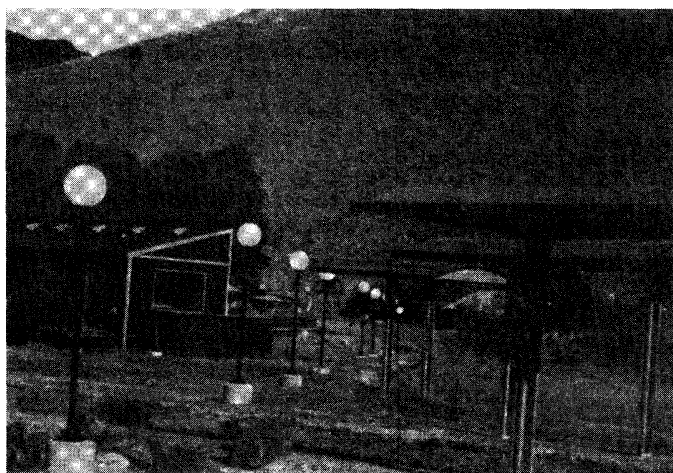
More likely, the Rajneeshees would have fallen gradually from their faith but remained in their community for economic reasons (they had millions of dollars invested there) — as the members of the Amana commune of Iowa did a century ago, eventually converting the communal property into individual property by a distribution of stock and land.

Either development would have denied the media a circus and the American public the entertainment provided by the Rajneeshee episode. And either would have proved less expensive to the people of Oregon, who had to pay the bill for the legal war against the Rajneeshees — and who continue paying the bill today: they must live in a society that cannot tolerate diversity. “America will be free!” they shouted at Bhagwan. Yes, Americans will be free. But only so long as they choose not to follow your religion, Bhagwan — only so long as they do not wish to live in their own city on their own land.

As I kneel and focus my camera on the shopping mall I hear a voice: “Hello! What’re you doin’? You better not trespass.” A middle-aged man walks toward me. I stand up and say, “I am on the county right of way.” I am apprehensive.

But once I convince him I do not intend to trespass, the man is friendly and loquacious, like many who live in the desert. “The reason I cannot trust everybody, I’ve tried to and I can’t. I’ve let people come in here and walk around . . . I don’t check these buildings daily, but I do weekly, and I find a goddam door busted back here somebody’s gotten in. They think they can get into the mall, but there’s nothing in the mall. You can look through the windows and see there’s nothing in there. But they think there’s gold in here. . . .

“I feel fortunate that I haven’t had vandals. I’ve been here two years . . . well, make that 20 months. The city came to a screeching halt in 1985, approximately October or November of 1985. There were still people here because it still belonged to the Rajneeshees. The Rajneesh got out of here, taking his



money with him and what have you. Sheela went the other way, went to jail over here in California for two years in one of those federal prisons where you can’t play golf but once a week or tennis but once a day or some goddam thing, you know. And you can’t have beer but once a week.”

I tell him I am writing a magazine article. He does not want his name used, he says. “A guy came out here and I didn’t realize he was writing stuff in the back of a truck when I was talking he had a travel-all one of those large Chevy trucks and so when I got over here you know and I started to pile out and you know I saw the yellow pad and I said, ‘What’re you doin’?’ and he said, ‘I’m just writing down what we’re talking about’ and I said ‘You’re going to have to clear that with the insurance company.’ ‘I will, I promise you that.’ I said, ‘Okay, if you don’t, I’m going to look you up.’ And so he called the insurance company and the insurance company said, ‘We won’t talk to you.’ So he went ahead and printed the fucking story and it wasn’t three, four days later, goddam if I didn’t get a call. ‘We told you not to talk to anybody.’ I said, ‘Well what the . . . there’s nothing in the paper that’s derogatory.’ He said, ‘I know that. But they know how many people are there, they know this, they know that.’ See what I’m saying, it’s touchy.”

How many tourists come here, I ask. “We had a helicopter come in here yesterday at 8 o’clock in the morning. People land their planes, hit the damn runway, touch down and are gone . . . if it was snowing I’d probably have 15 cars; if it was 95 degrees, I’d have one. You just can’t predict who’s coming through or when . . . I told the guy up at the store, the cafe in Antelope, ‘Tell everybody the place got rained out, or the roads are bad.’”

What’s going to happen to this place? It’s been sold, he said, to an outfit called the Hanover Corporation, which will make it a resort. They paid \$300,000 down on the deal. They won’t walk away from that kind of down payment. The purchase price is between \$5 million and \$6 million.

“Can they use it as a resort?” I ask. “I read that it was emptied out of people because of a violation of Oregon’s statewide land-use regulation, after a lawsuit from an environmental group.”

“Oh, no,” he said. “It was closed down because Bhagwan was an illegal immigrant, and because he was flying in immigrants from Mexico and landing them on the strip.”

It was repossessed by the insurance company in 1985. “They’ve had a gold-mine dumped in their lap and they don’t know what to do with it. These developers told me this fucking place is worth \$50 million, it’s worth a hundred million. There are computer line trunks under the ground here that will make your head spin. I mean this fucking place was computerized. It had the latest IBM computers in it.

“Were you ever down here in their heyday? It had the third largest bus service in the state of Oregon, teetering on the brink of being the second. There is a 170-room motel, you can see it through the trees.

“It was the biggest city in Oregon east of the mountains. Except for Bend. Bend is the fastest growing city in Oregon right now. People are flocking in from California and I wish to fuck they’d stay in California.

“Well what happens is they come in here long enough to establish residency. And then they go back to California. They

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use this as their summer place or their winter place to ski or what the hell they do. They got homes all over this goddam place and they don't live in 'em half the time. And then if I go down to the local bank and I want to get a fucking loan down there and all the money is loaned out to these people cause its cheap, taxes are cheap, and like one guy said in the cafe one day, it was years ago, and a truck driver came through and says, 'What do you guys got against Californians?' and he says 'If you want to move up here, move, but bring your fucking money out of the bank, sell your house and move up here. Don't tell me what you did in L.A.' We're getting too fucking many board members there from L.A. I moved up to Bend in 1974 and it used to be the nicest little city, polite people, you know, you'd drive down the street and stuff and they'd stop and let you out of the side street and wave at you and stuff. I'm at the bank. Now I'm this way, I get in the fucking car and I raise hell. Now I'm at the bank and I'm waiting while the goddam people pile up in front of the bank at the entrance and exit and I'm trying to get out and cars are lined up down the street a half a block and do you think those fuckers could leave enough space so I could get out? I get out of the fucking car and I says to this guy, 'Didn't you see me trying to get out of this goddam driveway?' And he says, 'Oh, no. I didn't see you. I was just looking straight ahead.'"

The sun is low in the sky. It gets cold in the desert when the sun goes down, and I want to take more photographs. I excuse myself, finish my roll of film and leave. The sun is near the horizon, and I have 15 miles of dirt roads ahead of me. Again I smell smoke. It gives an odd color to the air and burns

my eyes and nasal passages. I had forgotten about it while concentrating on the road driving in, but paying more attention to the smoke, I see now that it comes from north and west of Rajneeshpuram.

I stop at the Antelope Cafe and buy a paper cup of orange soda and copy of "The Rajneesh Chronicles," a book that the caretaker had recommended. I ask the man working the counter whether many people come through looking for Rajneeshpuram. He has little interest in talking to outsiders like me. He points to a hand-lettered piece of cardboard. "I wrote that four months ago."

"To Guru Ranch. From store 18 miles. Take road to Fossil, turn right 4 miles, from here on Cold Camp Road go 4 miles, turn left on Muddy Road and continue to ranch. Leave this here."

The cardboard is soiled and a bit frayed from handling. I guess a few people had been through during the previous four months.

In Madras, I find a room at the Royal Dutch Inn. I mention to the proprietor that I had visited Rajneeshpuram. "That was the best thing that ever happened around here," he says. "In small towns everybody loves to hate somebody. They hate the Japanese and they hate the Chinese and they hate the Scots and they hate the Spanish and they hate the Italians and they hate the Poles. But when the Rajneeshes came to town, they all put their arms around each other and hated the Rajneeshes." □

"The Search for Home of Truth" and "Ashram in the Desert" first appeared in the November 1990 issue of *Liberty*.

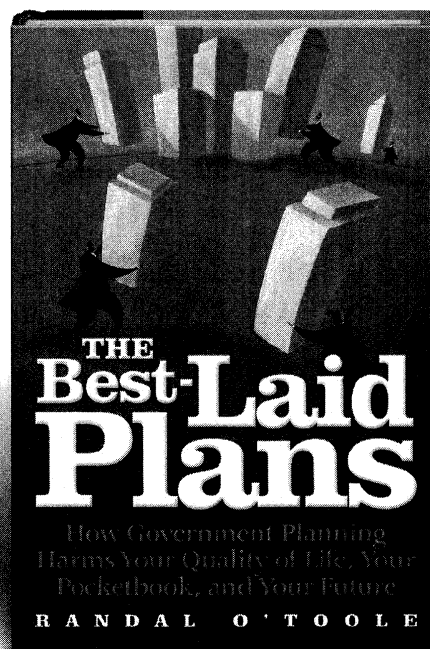
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Tiebreaker, from page 20

(now Martin Luther King County), where Seattle is. It was tested in court and found constitutional. It says:

The state shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education or public contracting.

Everyone knew what this meant. The Washington Supreme Court pretended not to understand it, and argued that the tiebreaker did not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any *group*. The state court's ruling was 8-1. The lone dissenter was a libertarian, Justice Richard Sanders.

The conservative majority at the U.S. Supreme Court sided 5-4 with Sanders, sinking the tiebreaker with that part of the 14th Amendment that says:

No state shall . . . deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

This is not so clear. Though the 14th Amendment was about racial equality under the law, and there is a good argument that these words should forbid racial discrimination, it is not obvious. The Court's 5-4 majority has applied the 14th Amendment in that way because it wants to, and I am glad it has, but I cannot deny that such a decision is ultimately political. Then again, so is Breyer's position.

Roberts' opinion was signed in full by justices Thomas, Scalia, and Alito, but only in part by Justice Anthony Kennedy. The four right-leaning justices wanted to slam the door on 40 years of racial management. Kennedy's position, which now effectively becomes the law, is that the leaders of a school district may look at race, think about it, and have some goals regarding it, but they cannot discriminate among individual students. Roger Clegg, president and general counsel of the Center for Equal Opportunity, described Kennedy's position as allowing "race-conscious means that are nonetheless race-neutral on their face" — and not merely neutral to a group, but to individuals.

Some saw Kennedy's acceptance of race-conscious intent as a big concession. On the morning of the decision, the Seattle Schools held a press conference and spoke as if they had won. A door that is left open a crack is easier to swing wide than a door that is locked — yet Kennedy, who'd opposed the pro-affirmative action ruling in the 2003 Michigan case, did not make it easy to swing the door open any wider.

The Michigan case, *Grutter v. Bollinger*, had allowed the use of race in admission to an elite law school, which, unlike 9th grade, is not a service the state is obliged to offer to all comers. *Grutter* allowed the use of race as one part of a "holistic" evaluation — the sort of evaluation a law school has the time and staff to make, but a public school district does not. *Parents v. Seattle Schools* was an effort to broaden *Grutter* to the public schools. Legally, its strategy was to establish that inclusionary racial discrimination was more acceptable under the law than exclusionary racial discrimination.

"The law was evolving that way, and the U.S. Supreme Court turned that back," said Harry Korrell, the Seattle attorney who argued the case for the parents. Or, as Chief Justice Roberts put it, the Seattle plan was an effort to "justify the imposition of racial proportionality throughout American society." That effort was defeated.

Perhaps when the Democrats recapture the White House they will reverse this, but I am fairly optimistic they won't. Many, many white Democrats are quite ready to accept this decision. Publicly it was taboo to favor it, but now that the "right-wing" Court has told them they can't discriminate against their own race anymore, they will not complain. Many African-Americans will privately admit that they didn't like assignment by race either. They have other and better strategies to advance their children, and the schools have other and better ways of identifying motivated students of all colors and helping them. The battle over racial preferences in the public schools may be about over.

I could be wrong about that; perhaps I am basking too much in an historic victory. Well, it *was* a victory. □

The Search for Home of Truth, from page 22

cross over a dilapidated cattle guard made of wood. I pass the rockpile foundation of the cobblestone church that was never completed. Ahead lies a house that appears to be covered with tar paper. Does someone live here? Am I trespassing? There are no vehicles about. I park the bike and walk toward the house. "Hello? Is anybody home?" No one answers.

I soon discover why: Through a window I see that the house is full of hay. I hear the sound of an animal: I have startled a jackrabbit, which runs from one sagebrush to another. Then the whisper of the desert breeze is interrupted by a sound that seems out of place: a quiet mechanical sound. I look about and discover that the ramshackle windmill to the west is turning. It is pumping water from a well and dumping it on the ground. There are no animals here to drink it. Has this windmill been quietly pumping water onto the thankless desert for 50 years?

But of course, this land is being used. There are cow pies everywhere, and someone has filled the house with hay and is probably caring for the windmill. This field is used for cattle,

probably during the winter. Real production in the debris of utopia.

The clouds to the south look threatening. I mount my motorcycle and drive past the rockpile church to the paved road and back toward the Outermost Point.

At a weather-beaten shack, I dismount, startling another jackrabbit. The shack has no doors, no glass. Nearby is a collapsed building.

It is anticlimactic. After you've seen the Middle Section, how can you be impressed by the Outermost Point? The sky is dark now — the clouds are fearsome. I am taking photographs when the first giant drops of water hit me. I head for the paved road, and it is raining hard when I reach it. I dismount and put on my jacket to protect me and my camera. I am in what in these parts is called a "gully washer." Yes, the gullies are washing: brown rivers of mud rush alongside the road, and I am back on the highway, racing through a downpour away from Utopia, leaving Home of Truth to jackrabbits, lizards, and ants. □

Getting Serious About Diversity

by Jonathan Slow

*It's fall. Do you
know who's
educating your
children? An
intercepted memo
reveals the truth.*

Office of the Chair
Department of Social Sciences
Acme University

Dear Colleagues,

At the conclusion of our meeting last Thursday, I confess that I was somewhat depressed by the tenor of the discussion and the decision (or rather the non-decision) that resulted from it. On further reflection, I have realized that those who wanted to wait for a better candidate for a senior professor hire were actually wisest.

Such a person, I have learned, is indeed available, and he comes with an almost unsurpassable set of virtues, virtues that should immediately make him everyone's favorite candidate.

My use of the pronoun "his" does reveal his one major defect — he is a DWM or "dead white male" — but I believe his other attributes more than compensate for this defective chromosome count. Indeed, they allow us to affirm our commitment to diversity in a new and exciting way.

The person I have in mind is Jeremy Bentham.

My contacts at University College London, where Mr. Bentham currently holds a tenured position, assure me that he is eager to move, and would readily accept an offer from our department. As you undoubtedly know, since his demise in 1832 Professor Bentham has resided, by his request, in a glass container in the main hall of the College. While his position is prominent and honorific, Professor Bentham sometimes finds it difficult to interact with students and other faculty. I am reliably informed that he was also taken aback,

and quite justifiably upset, when the longstanding practice of wheeling him in to preside wordlessly over meetings of the Academic Senate was abruptly discontinued a decade or more ago.

A proud man with much to be proud of, Professor Bentham did not appreciate the slight, and his alienation from the institution he helped to found has been intensified by his meager pay. As you are aware, the pay scale for faculty at major research universities in the United States is significantly higher than the paltry sums on offer in Great Britain. And, taking advantage of Professor Bentham's presumed loyalty, and notwithstanding his extraordinary international eminence, the UCL administration has fixed his remuneration at the very bottom of their miserly salary structure. This was a grave mistake on their part. As one who always stressed the importance of maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain, Professor Bentham gives short shrift to such sentimental nonsense as loyalty and collegiality. He is perfectly ready to take on new challenges.

I understand that the administration at UCL would endeavor to retain him but is unwilling to pay more than he is paid at present — particularly since the Tony Blair government showed no disposition to augment the higher education budget, and the new Brownian regime seems even more hostile to the just claims of the professoriate. Our major cost, therefore, would be nothing more than the price of moving Professor Bentham's corpse across the Atlantic and arranging for a suitable office in our own department.

Since Jeremy (if I may be so bold as to call him by his first name) left instructions in his will that his body should be present at all faculty meetings, I suggest that we place him in the seminar room on the first floor (Room 101). This will, of course, have the additional advantage of minimizing any problems created by his limited mobility — a consideration that is particularly relevant when one recalls the slowness of the elevators he would otherwise be forced to use. It is not often that we are in a position to lure such a distinguished senior figure to join us without someone being asked to give up an ocean view office. In this case, we shall not even have to sacrifice the office shared by the emeriti or by some graduate students in order to add someone who will immediately rank as by far the most widely

Moribund faculty are ten-a-penny in academia, but those who have literally given up the ghost are quite another matter.

cited and prolific scholar in the department. With his addition, we shall immediately quadruple, if not quintuple, our mean citation count, and put ourselves on the map, not just nationally, but internationally.

Bentham is, of course, dead, and some may view this as a distinct disadvantage. To the contrary, I think that from many points of view it adds to his attractiveness as a faculty member. We can be certain that he can be counted as a vote in favor of all merit increases and promotions; thus none need worry about the political effects of his arrival on the scene. We can be sure, too, that at least one full professor will henceforth attend the meetings of the tenured faculty, which have been somewhat ill-attended of late due to the pressures of travel, shopping, swimming pool maintenance, and the like.

Though Jeremy was notoriously a stern critic in life, at his death his embalmer fixed a very friendly smile on his face. Consequently, we know for a fact that he will look benevolently, not just on the record of all his faculty colleagues, but also on the efforts of all graduate students who choose to work with him.

Since Jeremy is widely hailed as the founder of rational choice theory, and the most important contributor to what is without doubt the leading theoretical perspective not just in sociology but in the social sciences more generally, his arrival should do wonders for our ability to attract graduate students to our midst, and for our capacity, thanks to his genial qualities as a mentor, to ensure their subsequent placement in first-rate departments round the country and even abroad. Furthermore, all faculty can take comfort in the knowledge that their own record of scholarly publication will at least equal his in any two- or three-year period. If their performance is comparable to that of someone as eminent as Jeremy, campus reviewers will regularly endorse their advancement, perhaps even their accelerated advancement.

Jeremy's greatest asset, however, is his contribution to the diversity of our department and campus. It is one thing to recruit women, African-Americans, differently-abled veterans, and members of the LGBT community, regardless of their strictly "academic" qualifications. It is quite another to transcend the barrier that has, for too long, separated the living from the dead — who, after all, represent a significant and rapidly growing segment of all the people who have ever lived on earth. The dead are responsible, let us not forget, for many of our world's greatest cultural accomplishments, although their voices have yet to be heard in our department.

The department — indeed, our whole society — can only benefit from the employment of talents that have for too long lain dormant and neglected. We have heard much impassioned and justified talk about the ways in which a white male hegemony has silenced the voices of all sorts of excluded classes. Yet none have been so systematically silenced in the halls of academe as the dead. Jeremy's appointment will decisively end this deplorable history, and will undoubtedly spur others to follow our example.

Yet who among our rivals will be able to secure an equally eminent and well-preserved corpse? During the past generation, some might have been tempted to recruit Lenin or Stalin, whose physical representations were, at first, even better preserved than Jeremy's (Lenin's, perhaps, still is); but with the fall of the Evil Empire, their reputa-

tions as social scientists declined perceptibly. And even if they re-emerged from the ashcan of history, they would still lack the academic credentials of Jeremy Bentham. He represents the vibrant heart of contemporary social science; they are irrevocably wedded to the discredited dogmas of Marxism.

It is now universally agreed that the greatest possible diversity produces the greatest possible excellence, and Jeremy Bentham *is* diversity. I anticipate that, from the first moment of his arrival here, he will involve himself in programming and advocacy for the dead community, in encouraging dead students, and in mentoring dead colleagues. We all stand to benefit from his insights and perspectives as a leading member of an underacknowledged group. Indeed, I intend, on his appointment, to propose that the administration create this university's first Commission on the Dead, empowered to investigate discrimination against the dead in all its forms, and to recommend immediate action for its elimination. I think Jeremy would make a terrific chair for that commission. We've talked about death for a long time. Now is the time to do something about it!

My inquiries have revealed that the heirs of Max Weber, the reputed founder of modern sociology, may also be willing to transfer his remains to us, should we choose to move in that direction. Yet despite the surface attractiveness of his appointment, and despite the fact that I cannot see how we can meet our affirmative action goals without beginning aggressive recruitment of the dead, I believe that the choice of Weber would be a mistake. Some may argue that he would fill our needs in the sociology of law and the sociology of organizations, but Bentham has at least equal claims to recognition in these subfields. And I must remind you that Weber was deeply concerned with history, a discipline whose findings have often had an unsettling effect on academic departments, and one with which mainstream sociology rightly has no truck.

Thus Weber's presence here might actually worsen our standing in the discipline, by suggesting a heterodoxy that our colleagues elsewhere might use against us. Besides, Jason French, our estimable former chair, has established himself as a world authority on Weber, surely rendering superfluous the recruitment of the man himself.

There is one final, and in my view decisive, argument in favor of prioritizing Bentham over Weber. At Weber's death, no special effort was made to preserve his remains. Consequently, he is now nothing more than an anonymous pile of dust — not very impressive to show to students, outsiders, or even to ourselves; and by any measure a rather depressing commentary on the fate that awaits many of us. By contrast, Jeremy left instructions that he was to be preserved in thoroughly lifelike form; and in the more than a century and a half since he last drew breath, his smiling visage has been preserved in pristine condition.

If appearances count, and assuredly they do, Professor Bentham is the right person for us. Without question, the presence of such an illustrious name on our masthead will do much to raise our reputation in the discipline. Indeed, I believe that we can confidently look forward to an instan-

taneous advance into the top ten departments in sociology, and perhaps in anthropology as well.

All these advantages will accrue while costing us remarkably little. The recent retirement of Susan Richmond, who was moribund for many years, opens up a full-time

Because the dead are literally ageless, sexless, and without ethnicity, they can be added to any demographic category we wish.

position for an actually dead person. Moribund faculty are ten-a-penny in academia, but those who have literally given up the ghost are quite another matter. I am assured by American Airlines that its policy on repatriating corpses will allow us to import Bentham for no more than the equivalent of a first-class airline ticket — approximately \$5,000, which we can probably cover with the normal moving allowance. Given Jeremy's stature in world scholarship, there seems little reason to anticipate that the government will refuse him a visa, even in the more vigilant atmosphere we now inhabit, post-9/11. Jeremy was no religious fanatic in life, and in his preserved state, he can be relied upon not to threaten the security of the state.

Nor does that exhaust the benefits of choosing a dead person as a colleague. Once Jeremy is installed downstairs, there is every reason to expect that he will make few demands on the staff — far fewer, for example, than most senior (or even junior) faculty. At the same time, his appointment will produce the standard \$5,500 for our support budget. One can realistically anticipate, in consequence, that he will actually generate discretionary dollars for the rest of us to spend (on journal subscriptions and new printers, for example), since it appears that he will not require such items as a computer or even a telephone. In general, it seems clear that Jeremy will require minimal departmental services, mostly periodic dusting, a task I'm sure our staff will be glad to add to the roster of services they already perform on behalf of the faculty. (Alternatively, we can require that this minor additional duty be performed by the graduate adviser, whose job, after all, will be made infinitely easier by Jeremy's presence.)

Even if we need to allocate a small maintenance sum to purchase an annual insect control policy from Terminix (to ensure that nothing untoward happens to our distinguished colleague), the funds remaining should amply suffice for the hiring of two new assistant professors. Adding such a world-renowned scholar while also being able to bring in significant new blood at the junior level represents a truly spectacular triple whammy, and should reassure those

continued on page 46

The House of Ninety Keys

by Bill Merritt

Americans are making themselves safe from
every risk except being too risk-averse.

Some of the most ominous signs of the collapse of American civilization can be found on the walls of bus stations, hospitals, and almost any other place of business you care to name. They are signs bragging, "Safety is our most important business."

When I see a sign like that in a bus station, I want to ask, "What about transportation? You run a bus station. Transportation is what I'm paying you for. Why isn't transportation your most important business?" And, if you run a hospital, how come it isn't medical care? Sometimes, I think, we Americans have become so risk averse we've turned stupid. Why else would the U.S. government rate the capital of Botswana as a high-crime area?

It gives Gaborone this rating in spite of the fact that every other source of information on crime, I'm thinking "Lonely Planet" here, places it in the same category as the Garden of Eden before Adam and Eve got kicked out and their son went bad. But Uncle believes what he believes; and every week he dispatches the Regional Security Officer to the embassy to deliver the news that one more cellphone has been lifted from a handbag at RiverWalk Shopping Center.

The odd thing, at least to someone who has wrenched his neck looking over his shoulder on the streets in Washington, D.C., is that a lot of Batswana agree with our State Department. (Citizens of Botswana are *Batswana*, unless they are only one person. Then he's a *Motswana*.) For people who a few years

ago really did have a crime rate comparable with that of the Garden of Eden, this constant cellphone snatching seems like the death spiral of the social order, and they take it very seriously. A young cellphone thief was all over the news last week when a judge put him away for 10 years. And he was one of the lucky ones. If a crowd had gotten to him first, he wouldn't be thinking about cellphones or jail time. He'd be worrying how to pay his funeral bills.

It's the Zimbabweans among us, Batswana say when the subject of crime comes up. Then they launch into the terrible things refugees from Zimbabwe do. Never leave your window open when you go to sleep, they will tell you, because a Zimbabwean will blow sleepy gas into your house and make you sleep even deeper. Then, he will steal everything you own, including your bed and your pajamas, and you will wake up naked on the floor. If you keep your windows closed, a Zimbabwean might *still* blow sleepy gas under the door. But it won't have time to get to you before you leave in the morning and you will be okay.

Uncle must have listened to too many of these stories, at least judging by the kind of housing he thinks government-connected Americans should live in here. Every wall in our house, even the interior partitions, is made of concrete that looks thick enough to absorb rocket propelled grenades and requires a hammer drill to hang a picture.

Every floor is covered with ceramic tile, as is the roof. The fact that it would take napalm to ignite the place does not appear to have reduced the need for smoke detectors. Or a

It is very expensive to recondition a house to American standards. And, once a house is reconditioned, Americans are going to live there for a long time.

CO detector to let us know when the house fills up with carbon monoxide. So far, no one has been able to provide us with an explanation of how this might happen.

The yard is enclosed by an eight-foot-high concrete wall topped with wicked-looking curved steel spikes called tigers' teeth in the front, eight strands of electric wire on the sides, and tigers' teeth and eight strands of electric wire in back. Like the best medieval castles, the wall has one, and only one, gate. It is a remotely operated, electrically powered sliding steel gate that we can work by pushing a button on a key chain so we don't have to risk getting out of the car.

At night, the outside of the house is lit like the Washington Monument — with security lights that shine into the windows and make you long for sleepy gas. In case there happen to be Zimbabweans lurking in the glare, each exterior door has a peephole, a lock, and a deadbolt. And, because Uncle has an investment in all those doors, peepholes, locks, and deadbolts to keep an eye on, each set of *those* is protected behind its own Zimbabwean-proof steel gate.

Every window is covered with imported burglar bars. And no cheap, local burglar bars for us, thank you very much. Americans accept only the finest in South African manufacture. Then, because burglar bars can block your escape if the family needs to make a quick exit ahead of the flames, the windows are fitted with pedal devices you can stomp and the burglar bars will fall away.

The house is equipped with its own citadel — the Embassy Security Office calls it the *safe haven* — which is sealed off from the rest of the house behind a locked and deadbolted door, and a locked steel gate, in the hallway. It is where we go when Zimbabweans get into the unsafe part of the house.

If the Zimbabweans don't know which part of the house they are supposed to break into and wind up in the safe haven by mistake, a different protocol applies. We ask them to wait a bit while we rummage through our keys trying to find the ones to unlock the gate and door in the hallway and let us

escape. This can take more than a moment's rummaging.

To start with, the house has 43 locks. Six of the locks are massive, hand-thrown deadbolts that don't use keys, just muscle power — so to escape a Zimbabwean and rush to the safe haven, we need to sort through 37 keys.

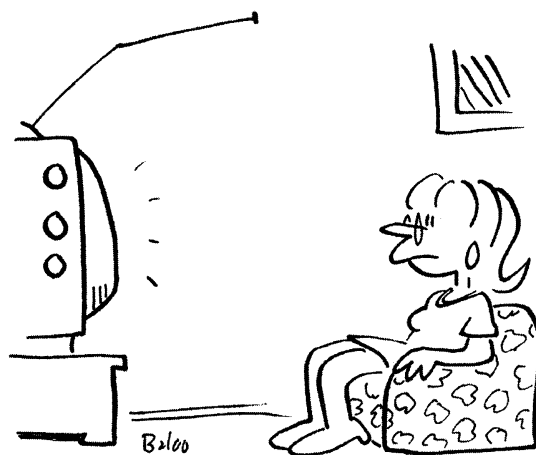
Or so you might think. But door keys aren't the only ones we have to deal with. We have a 38th key that disconnects the motor to the electric gate so we can shove the gate open by hand when the electricity stops working. And, of course we don't have just one set of keys. We have two. Which brings the total to 76, not counting the 14 additional keys we keep in a Ziploc bag in a dresser. We are pretty sure they go to something.

The Ziploc keys were carefully laid out on the kitchen counter when we moved in and they bear mysterious labels like, "Bar Bathroom," although we do not have a bar. For all we know, the previous resident might have had the bar dismantled and shipped to Nairobi, where he is now assigned. Nairobi *really* is a high-crime posting. It's pleasant sitting on the patio on a warm evening, listening to the gentle crackle of the electric fence, and imagining the wheelbarrow loads of keys he must be keeping track of up there. No matter what happened to the bar, we can't locate any sign of the bathroom that went with it. The "Bar Bathroom" key and its 13 brothers remain orphans.

This brings our total to 90 keys, which is one fewer than we'd have if the previous resident hadn't misplaced the key to the strongbox that holds the duplicate keys.

In case locks don't do the trick, the U.S. government has set us up with a high-tech burglar alarm that divides the house into 16 zones so we will not only be notified the moment a Zimbabwean lets himself in, we can track his progress by the lights blinking on the control panel as he heads toward our bedroom.

When he comes too close, we can push one of the panic buttons built into the walls and alert, I kid you not, the Marines. If the nearest wall button is too far away, we can push one of the his-and-her portable panic buttons designed to be worn



"Another country fell apart today, but it wasn't anyplace you ever heard of."

around our necks like dog tags. Or, call the Marines directly on the two-way radio.

Regardless of whether we call the Marines, on Tuesdays at 0700 they call us to make sure the radio is working. They make their way alphabetically (sometimes antialphabati-

If someone breaks in, we can push one of the panic buttons built into the walls and alert, I kid you not, the Marines.

cally, you never know with them) through the call signs the American community uses, while we sit by the radio wondering, "Who's Port Townsend?" and, "What kind of American would want to be known among Marines as Tinkerbell?"

Tinkerbell is, most likely, a friend. The American community in Gaborone is not all that big and everybody tends to show up at the same parties. But as much as I would like to know the truth about Tinkerbell, nobody, as far as I know, gives out call signs at social functions. Just too many ears and . . . well, you never know.

One thing we do not have is a Neighborhood Watch. It isn't that easy to keep an eye on whoever is on the other side of an eight-foot wall topped by an electric fence. So, to provide the human touch in all the technology, Uncle has hired a security firm to peek through the gate three times a night to be sure everything is okay on our side. Since we tend to be unpatriotically sloppy about making sure doors are actually closed when we go to bed, sometimes things on our side aren't okay, the phone goes off at 0300, and a Marine informs us something is amiss.

These can be puzzling messages to receive when you are half asleep. The explanation, which usually comes the next morning, often involves a security company guard noticing some objective fact, such as that we forgot to close the steel gate on the front door, then calling the Marines and reporting that the burglar bars are open. This is close enough to get the ball rolling and, I think, pretty impressive given that the security guards are making their reports in a language they did not grow up speaking. And how very different their language is from English.

Setswana does not — I don't think it does, anyway, it's really hard for somebody with my ear for language to know for sure — conjugate verbs. What it seems to do is decline nouns, so all sorts of meanings are built up by attaching different syllables to the fronts of otherwise innocent-looking noun roots. And the language is tonal.

I gave up on the whole enterprise 10 minutes into my first Setswana disk when the instructor instructed me to note the difference between two phrases, then said something in Setswana that sounded like, *dumela rra ne onkon le bo kangelang mphane*, and meant, "Good morning, Sir. Did you sleep well? How are your cows?" followed by a second phrase that

sounded like, *dumela rra ne onkon le bo kangelang mphane*, and meant, "A long pair of trousers." If there was a difference other than meaning, I couldn't wrinkle it out.

Setswana-accented English sounds just as strange to Marines at three in the morning and, when confronted with "the burglar bars are open," a Marine is apt to hear something about "butler bars," and awaken you with the news that the domestic staff has escaped.

One consequence of all this safety is, it is very expensive to recondition a house to American standards. And, once a house is reconditioned, Americans are going to live there for a long time.

Another consequence is, well, it sure makes it hard to get to know the neighbors. Which, when you think about it, would seem to defeat some of the person-to-person contact which is the reason Uncle sent us here in the first place.

It's the same at the embassy. Even though Botswana rates as low as you can get on the Danger-of-Political-Violence scale, our embassy is so hard to get inside of, diplomats from other countries have told the ambassador that, if it's all the same with her, they'd rather not attend meetings at her place and, please, try to schedule them at other embassies.

Back during the Cold War, people could walk into the U.S. Information Agency and look at books, watch films, and generally find out about our country. The government still thinks we have a way for them to do that but, now, the U.S. Information Agency has been folded into the State Department where it's called the Office of Public Affairs. If it sounded hard for a diplomat with an invitation from our ambassador to get into the embassy, just think what it's like for a mere foreigner off the street. The whole thing makes you wonder why we bother.

In a way, there is something endearing in this: good old American can-do-ness. I imagine every time one of our houses is broken into anywhere in the world, somebody launches an investigation, which results in recommendations to make sure nothing like that ever happens again, followed by a planet-wide bulletin upgrading security in every house any government employee lives in, anywhere.

This is the sort of thing that has virtually eliminated airplane crashes. But when applied by security offices with the limited mandate to make sure overseas Americans are safe,

There are 90 keys to our house, which is one fewer than we'd have if the previous resident hadn't misplaced the key to the strong box that holds the duplicate keys.

the day is coming when we will be so safe we won't have any contact with foreigners at all, and it will be easier, and a lot cheaper, just to let them learn about our country from watching "The Bold and the Beautiful." □

Reviews

"The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy," by Adam Tooze. Viking, 2007, 832 pages.

Could Hitler Have Won?

Bruce Ramsey

In 1940, libertarians Garet Garrett and Rose Wilder Lane had an argument about Nazism. Lane maintained that National Socialist Germany was not economically viable enough to sustain a war against the West, and that there was no need for a big American armaments program. Garrett was writing the Saturday Evening Post's editorials, which opposed American intervention in the war but supported a massive armaments program — and conscription. He told Lane she might be right in the long run "that Nazism will wreck itself," but that too much could happen in the short run. Earlier that year, France had fallen in a few weeks.

In a reference to National Socialist economics, Garrett wrote to Lane that Germany had "beaten everyone else at production in the last six years."

In 1943, in "The God of the Machine," Isabel Paterson made a detailed and radical argument for the proposition that the Nazis lacked economic viability. Three years had gone by, and Germany was still in the war, but the Nazi economy was running on "storage batteries," Paterson declared. It was using energy borrowed from the

capitalist West. (So was Soviet Russia, she thought.) Germany had "inherited a technology . . . from its previous condition of comparative freedom. Germany also used every fraudulent device of currency inflation, huge loans obtained abroad and foreign credit — deliberate embezzlement over a period of 20 years — to get goods produced by the free economies."

I kept this old dispute in mind while reading Adam Tooze's new book, "The Wages of Destruction," an 800-page history subtitled "The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy." The account did not shake my conviction that Garrett had been essentially right: that it is quite possible to supply an army from an unfree economy and win a war. It is a mistake to argue that, because the free market is the best system for peace, a totally free market is the best system for war. The free market is designed to satisfy individual wants, but a big, serious war demands the subordination of individual wants. War is a government program. Historically, it has always been accompanied by home front heavy-handedness. To argue that economic intervention during war is mistaken is to argue that war-making governments have been inattentive to

their interests. Some of them may be; but to say that all of them have been, all the time, is to stretch credulity.

Experience simply does not support the thesis that you need a free economy to win a war. Go back to 1941 and ask Poland or France.

But to show that Lane and Paterson were wrong, I have stated the question in an absolutist way. Turn down the amplitude a bit, and there is a valuable piece of truth in their argument. America in 1940 faced a decision about how deeply to involve itself as a war-time supplier to Britain. In thinking about that decision, Americans needed to know that there *were* weaknesses to the Nazi economy. Germany *did* run on its "storage batteries" to an important degree. It *had* used fraudulent devices. And the kind of economics it had — the kind of *politics* it had — limited its military reach.

Consider how Nazi Germany traded with the occupied countries of Holland, Belgium, and France. The German war effort needed steel. Suppose it bought steel from a French producer under German military authority. It would send the French producer a check denominated in Reichsmarks. The French producer would present the

check to the (occupied) Bank of France, which would create a deposit in French francs. The Bank of France would then send the check to the Reichsbank in

Three years had gone by and Germany was still in the war. But the Nazi economy, Paterson said, was running on "storage batteries."

Berlin, which added the amount to a running tab that was never settled.

That is not trade; it is looting made to look like trade. Historian Angelo Codevilla, in his 2000 book on war-time Switzerland, "Between the Alps and a Hard Place" (which I reviewed in *Liberty*, April 2001), described the same system in Germany's purchases from Switzerland early in the war. In the Swiss case, it was tribute to keep the Germans out.

When Paterson said the Germans were running off their "batteries," it was this sort of bloodsucking she had in mind. She thought of it as short-circuiting the flow of economic energy, as not renewing one's capital. To be sure, the French steel company was not short-circuited. It could well make a profit in francs and invest them, or at least try to, in the economy that existed then. The company was not being plundered. But, with the Bank of France forced to pay in inflation money, France was.



Back to the beginning. In January 1933, at the bottom of the Depression, the Nazis took over the direction of the economy of Germany, which had huge numbers of idle workers and plants. Much more effectively than the American New Dealers, the Nazis put that idle productive power to work. The Nazis used make-work that some fans of the New Deal still perversely admire — such boldness! — but, Tooze says, the German WPAs took money away from the military and were scrapped within

a couple of years. The Nazis were not New Dealers.

In Germany, Tooze says, the driving force at least as early as 1936 was preparation for war. In 1933, the military's share of output in Germany was 1%. By the outbreak of war in 1939, the Nazis had increased it to 25%. Tooze calls that the "largest transfer of resources ever undertaken by a capitalist state in peacetime." Production *had* increased, all the while the government was imposing "a system of ever more comprehensive bureaucratic control on the German economy and on German business."

Fans of the free market may wonder how a laying-on of controls could increase production. Tooze doesn't ask the question that way, but some answers can be distilled from his story. The Nazi government directed the economy entirely to military ends, which was simpler than to a multitude of private ends. It didn't do this without error. Tooze's account has numerous cases of bad investments — the Ju-88 bomber, which didn't carry enough bombs; the government tank plant in Austria, which produced hardly any tanks; and the V-2 rocket, which was a great achievement in technology and propaganda, but did little to affect the war.

State power had its advantages. In 1934, the German state repudiated the Dawes Loan, which it had undertaken in 1924 to reestablish the Reichsmark. The Nazis had portrayed the Dawes payments in its campaign posters as foreign chains on the German people. In a sense they were — and default was an immediate relief to the German economy. It also cut off Germany from British and American finance, which Hitler was happy to do.

A country's economic tie to the world is through currency exchange, and by 1934 the Nazis' policies had brought on a crisis in the foreign-exchange account. Germany was not earning enough foreign currency by exporting to pay for its imports. The market answer was to let the currency devalue, cheapening its exports and raising the price of its imports. The Nazi answer was currency controls: the state would provide foreign exchange only to those buying what the state wanted. The German shoe industry was not allowed to import its customary amount of leather, so it had to shrink. The textile industry was required to import less wool. Military contractors

could import what they needed.

During its early years the Nazi government pressed Jews to emigrate. But when emigrants sold their assets and were ready to leave, the Reichsbank wouldn't convert their Reichsmarks into foreign currency. It didn't *have* foreign exchange for that purpose. For several years there were some financial loopholes, and some Jewish emigrants got some of their money out, but for the most part Jews had to choose between their stuff and their safety. Between March 1938 and September 1939, some 200,000 wisely chose safety — while, Tooze writes, "a rapacious German bureaucracy . . . stripped them of virtually all their material assets."

By 1938 the Reichsbank was about broke. That was the year Hitler took Austria, a country much smaller than Germany but with an unlooted central bank. The Nazis drained it, which sustained the German government for a few months. But in late 1938 domestic investors refused to subscribe to a Reichsbank bond issue, and the regime had another financial crisis.

Hitler's decision to go to war in September 1939 stemmed from his dream of an eastern empire. He reckoned Germany would have to fight for that against the Western powers. The country's odds were none too good, but after 1939 they were not going to get better: the Nazis had revved up the German war machine as much as possible for a country officially at peace. France and Britain were trying to catch up. When they did, the odds for Germany would

The free market is designed to satisfy individual wants; a big, serious war demands the subordination of individual wants. War is a government program.

be worse. If America ever caught up — it was giving its military a piddling 2% of GDP — Hitler's dream would be extinct. Hitler believed that time was

not on Germany's side and, Tooze says, he was "essentially correct."

One of the fascinating accounts in Tooze's book is the conflict between Hitler and central banker Hjalmar Schacht, who was trying to maintain a fiscally solvent Nazi state. In early 1939, Tooze writes, Schacht's Reichsbank assumed that Germany's conquests were completed, having absorbed the German-speaking regions of central Europe. The Reichsbank argued in a report to Hitler that Germany had to cut back military spending immediately, for the sake of the nation's economic health. "The politicization of Germany's economic system was so far-reaching," Tooze writes, "that it was virtually impossible to find reliable standards of valuation, whether for agricultural labor or any other commodity."

This echoes Ludwig von Mises's point about the impossibility of economic calculation under socialism. The Nazi system wasn't exactly socialism, but it was state intervention to such a degree that it created the same problem the socialists had. A few years earlier, the value of the Reichsmark might have been adjusted by a simple devaluation, but by 1939, the system of controls and permits was so extensive, as Tooze says, that "the Reichsmark now lacked any well-defined value."

Hitler fired Schacht. He was not going to let an economist talk him out of his war.

Paterson was right, then, in some of the things she said. Nazi Germany *had* cheated creditors. It *had* stolen wealth. It *had* inherited wealth and spent it. And yet it would sustain a war longer than most people thought. "Nobody in 1939 expected Germany to be able to last as long as in World War I," Tooze writes. Germany faced severe constraints on coal, oil, iron ore, rod iron, steel, copper, animal fodder, food, foreign exchange, gold, and — most of all — people.

One way Hitler loosened those constraints was his August 1939 pact with Stalin. Under it, the Soviet Union supplied Germany with 74% of its phosphates, 65% of its chrome ore, 55% of its manganese, 40% of its nickel, and 34% of its imported oil — in exchange for such manufactured goods as machine tools. The Russian trade helped Germany, but only so much. From the diaries of General Georg Thomas and others, Tooze sketches out the Nazis'

economic calculus after the conquest of Poland. Germany had enough resources to defend against Britain and France for three years, as long as it did not go on the offensive. After three years, it would be outgunned.

Hitler would have none of that. The only answer was to go for broke and wager everything in an attack on France. In preparation, Germany was to run down its stocks of copper, which it used for shells and cartridges. It scrapped its plan to build a surface fleet for the Navy, diverting the remaining steel to airplanes and tanks. The attack was to use everything the Wehrmacht had. No divisions were held in reserve.

On paper, it was a long shot. But following Gen. Erich von Manstein's brilliant battle plan, the Wehrmacht defeated the French in six weeks.



By the summer of 1940, Germany's calculus had changed. It held the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Denmark, Norway, Austria, the Czech territory, and most of Poland. It had enlisted as allies — satellites, really — Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania, and it was in a position to squeeze neutral Switzerland. It could trade with Finland, Sweden, Italy, and Spain.

Seeing the Germans sweeping across France, the Romanians agreed to sell Germany the bulk of their oil. The capture of Norway gave Germany sea-borne access to the iron ore mined in northern Sweden, for which Germany would trade coal. Norway also had aluminum needed for aircraft production. The Swiss traded precision instruments for German coal.

"If it had been possible to preserve activity at prewar levels, the German European block would have comprised an economy with a combined GDP greater than that of either the United States or the British Empire," Tooze writes. But it wasn't possible. Germany's attitude toward its new satellites — and particularly toward the lands it had conquered — was predatory. To mobilize its army, it confiscated French trucks. The French dairies depended on trucks to move their milk. They also depended on fodder imported from America. The dairies folded, shrinking French output of milk, butter, and cheese. French coal

production fell because there weren't enough trucks to move the coal, thereby shrinking the French production of steel. French production of nitrogen-

Victory over the Soviet government had to be quick, because Germany and its minor allies could not win a war of attrition. As in the invasion of France, nothing was held back. There were no reserves.

based chemicals went into explosives rather than fertilizer for French farms. And so on.

Among German enterprises were many counterexamples to Paterson's claim that Nazi Germany was "living off its storage batteries." Germans invested strongly in their industry during the war. Tooze's book has a graph showing a great mountain of Reichsmarks invested. But on a continental level, much of what Germany did *was* "living off its storage batteries." One example of this was the "trading" system already described. Another aspect was labor. Germany was short of it, having drafted so many men into its army. To man German factories, it conscripted people from occupied countries, and that weakened output there. So did the confiscation of all companies owned by Jews.

The French economy, writes Tooze, "collapsed in 1940, never to recover." Both France and the Netherlands had aircraft industries that could have supplied Germany with many planes. They supplied only a few. Much of it, no doubt, was because the French and Dutch were not eager to do a fine job building Me-109s. But it was more than that. In the Nazi economy of rationing and permissions, non-Germans were at the end of the queue. So the total military output in the occupied territories in 1943 was only 9.3% of the armament production available to Germany.

A number of historians have accepted John Kenneth Galbraith's report in 1945 arguing that Germany

might have beaten Russia had it mobilized women for war work as much as Britain had. Tooze dismisses this statement by the “celebrity economist” and the implication that the Nazis were too sentimental about women. The problem with the statistics on German women, he says, is that they didn’t include farm work. Around Berlin and other centers, German women did work in factories. In rural areas, they were working on farms while their husbands were at the front. Both sorts of work were part of the war effort.

In June 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Hitler’s decision to attack Russia was not based mainly on economics, but there was a kind of economic rationale for it. For ideological reasons, Hitler wanted a self-contained empire that could hold its own against Britain and America. The territory controlled by Germany at the beginning of 1941 was huge, but it was not self-sufficient in food, animal fodder, or petroleum. The Ukraine and the Caucasus could remedy that. And anyway, Hitler hated the Bolsheviks, whom he associated with the Jews.

The German plan was to best the Soviet government by the fall of 1941. Victory had to be quick, because Germany and its minor allies could not win a war of attrition. As in the invasion of France, nothing was held back. There were no reserves.

The fight began in June, to smashing success. But by October the lines of supply and powers of production had reached their limits. On the front, the troops were too far ahead of the rail lines. At home, the German economy could not make enough steel. It could not finish the ersatz fuel plants and rubber plants. It could have, but did not,

produce enough heavy coats and long underwear to keep the German soldiers warm.

Finance aside, Germany could not mobilize enough *stuff*, and as soldiers died, it could not mobilize enough men. Ernst Udet, chief of procurement for the Luftwaffe, believed the war was lost and committed suicide on Nov. 17, 1941, three weeks before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Walter Borbet, the industrialist who masterminded the mass production of the famous 88 mm antiaircraft gun, sensed the doom and shot himself dead in January 1942.

Later in 1942, physicist Werner Heisenberg presented his proposal for Germany to develop an atomic bomb. Hitler rejected it. It would take too long, and the Nazi economy could not afford it. Tooze says Hitler was right about that. Germany could not have done it.

By Tooze’s reckoning, the tide had turned against Germany even before America officially entered the war. And that means that Isabel Paterson and Rose Lane had a piece of truth in what they said about the weakness of Nazi Germany to fight a war. It was not as simple as they said, nor as absolute. Germany’s weakness was not that it was authoritarian as such. Soviet Russia was more economically authoritarian than Germany was, and it outproduced Germany in tanks. Germany’s problem was that its management of the occupied territories was so predatory as to be self-defeating. Tooze does not say Germany could have done differently and won. It did as it did. It was in a hurry, and it fed itself by plunder. When it failed to win quickly, it was cooked.



Tooze’s book also sheds some light on the economic ideology of the Nazis, whose official name was the National Socialist German Workers’ Party. The Nazis were not a pro-market party. Hitler despised bourgeois values. Tooze writes that Hitler “regarded the liberal ideology of progress through industry, hard work and free trade as nothing more than a lie spread by Jewish propagandists.” But when Hitler came to power in January 1933, it was with the support of nationalist conservatives, represented by Paul von Hindenburg. A year into his regime, when an ailing

Hindenburg was still in office, Hitler had to choose between a nationalist policy, which would please the military and its supporters, and a more socialist policy, which would please the supporters of Ernst Roehm, who was calling for a “second revolution.” Hitler suppressed Roehm’s brownshirt paramilitary force, the SA, and had Roehm killed.

The most distinctively National Socialist economic program, Tooze writes, was for the farmers, who constituted about a quarter of the German people. The Nazis envisioned a new order for the middle farmer — what in Russia would have been a “kulak.” This was the *Erbhof*, or hereditary farm. *Erbhoefe* could not be pledged for a loan, repossessed, or sold. They were to be owned only by men, and the line of inheritance was fixed in law to one male heir. All pre-existing debts were to be assumed by a state bank in exchange for a uniform property tax. The tax was to be levied on *Erbhoefe* whether they had had debts or not. All this, says Tooze, was supposed to liberate the German farmer from usury and economic uncertainty, but it also amounted to an “extraordinary intervention in the property rights of German peasants.” The system was put into effect, but it was unpopular and the Nazis had to bend some of the measures in practice.

One of the sweeteners was the new agricultural tariff. Under the Nazis, Tooze writes, prices for German farmers were “at least twice those prevailing on world markets.” Purchasing of farm output was taken over by the state, and by the late 1930s, Tooze writes, German agriculture “resembled less and less a market-driven industry and more and more a strange hybrid of private ownership and state planning.”

But what to call all this? Socialism? It was socialistic but also feudalistic. It made the farmer a serf in a way, just as collective farming in the Soviet Union made him a serf in a way. But not in the same way.

The Nazis created some state-owned companies, particularly under Goering. Early in their rule the Nazi state seized the Junkers aircraft works from its owner. They also seized all Jewish-owned companies. But generally they left the ownership of business alone.

Over the years, the Left has made much of the industrialists’ cooperation with Hitler, with the intimation

Calling All Economists!

The “new idea” here, that taking from the rich to give to the poor did not reduce but increased inequality, was your greatest challenge and opportunity. But you have chosen to ignore it, burying your heads in the sand while calling it the sunshine, and still heaping praises on yourselves while betraying everything that you had stood for.

When you’re ready to do your simple duty, redeem your honor, and perhaps even demolish the Left, see *Intellectually Incorrect* at intinc.org and *The Mises Anti-Institute* at intinc.blogspot.com.

that Nazism and capitalism are the same stuff. And they are not the same stuff. "Nothing suggests that the leaders of German big business were filled with ideological ardor for National Socialism," Tooze writes. But as in the United States, the Depression left business politically demoralized. Unlike in the United States, in Germany it faced the possibility of a communist government under which it would lose everything. Businesses in Germany, as elsewhere, were owned and operated by human beings who had opinions and ideologies distinct from their interests as owners. The German industrialists had gone through World War I and many were as nationalistic and resentful as the Nazis were.

The Nazis promised to make Germany strong. They promised to suppress the communists and tame the trade unions. That sounded sort of like freedom for business, but really it was, Tooze says, "state interventionism . . . from the right."

Business support came in different intensities. Least supportive was the export sector, which tended toward economic liberalism. Most supportive was the I.G. Farben chemicals combine, which had invested heavily in new technologies for synthetic oil and rubber, and was facing a total write-off. A gusher in Texas had wrecked the world oil market in the late 1920s, and by the 1930s rubber and the other world commodities were cheap. What I.G. Farben needed was a tariff. "It was this need for political assistance that impelled IG to make contact with Hitler's party," Tooze writes. I.G. Farben became the centerpiece of the Nazi program for economic autarky.

Recently, IBM and Ford Motor have been accused in popular histories of being willing collaborators with the Nazis — in IBM's case because its technology was useful to the police, and in Ford's case because of Henry Ford's anti-interventionism and anti-Semitism. (For the accusations against Ford, see my review of Max Wallace's "The American Axis" in the November 2003 *Liberty*.) Tooze discounts these "sensationalist claims," noting that the largest U.S. investments in Germany — most of them from the 1920s — were by Standard Oil and General Motors, not IBM and Ford. The American-owned companies, he writes, tended to do well

"the more they detached themselves from their foreign parents." In any case, an operation in Germany became part of the Nazi economy no matter who owned it, and its Reichsmark earnings could not leave German Europe.

In all of Tooze's large and detailed book, there is no mention of the common idea that Hitler was out to "take over the world." No doubt Hitler would have tried it if he thought he could do it, but it was never remotely possible. Compared with its rivals, says Tooze, Germany had "an economy of modest resources." It shipyards had built the *Bismarck* and the *Graf Spee*, but at the beginning of the war the naval program was reduced to submarines in order to conserve steel. Britain was not going to be invaded by

submarines, nor was the United States. Perhaps, if Germany had taken Russia, it could have been a global contender. But probably not. It looted Russia more harshly than France, and left the place a ruin. Its plan in Russia was to starve the people there and resettle the land with Germans — on *Erbhoefe*.

A thought one could take from Tooze's book — though not an explicit thought of his — is that America did not have to go to war with Germany in December 1941. By doing so it profoundly shaped the peace, much of it for good. But Germany had already reached its limit, because of the kind of economy it had. In that sense, Lane and Paterson were right. □

"Brothers: The Hidden History of the Kennedy Years,"
by David Talbot. Free Press, 2007, 478 pages.

The Continuing Story of the Kennedys

Jon Harrison

John and Robert Kennedy are not exactly libertarian heroes. In domestic policy, they generally followed the New Deal-Fair Deal line of the modern Democratic Party. Abroad, at least at the outset of JFK's term, they espoused an activism ("support any friend, oppose any foe") that amounted to imperial overstretch. Their legendary ruthlessness, both in pursuing power and in exacting revenge upon their political enemies, has little appeal to the libertar-

ian psyche. Add to this JFK's satyriasis,* which some people regard as a character flaw or worse, and you have a picture that many libertarians turn away from in disgust.

It is clear that in 1960 John Kennedy was not really qualified to be president. Once in office, he was not well served by the CIA, the State Department, and

*John Kennedy inherited a hyperactive libido from his father. It was further stimulated by the testosterone he took to counteract the side effects of the steroids he was required to take for his Addison's disease.

the Joint Chiefs of Staff, particularly over Cuba and Vietnam. That aside, it was largely his youthful inexperience that led to the disastrous outcomes of

With Kennedy out of the way, the descent into Vietnam became inevitable. Nov. 22, 1963 marked the beginning of America's lamentable decline.

the Bay of Pigs in April 1961, and the Vienna summit with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev the following June. JFK's poor handling of these events nearly led to thermonuclear war, first over Berlin, then during the Cuban Missile Crisis. As a nation, we came close to paying the ultimate price for Kennedy's learning curve.

On the other hand, JFK *did* learn. This is more than can be said for most politicians. His American University "peace" speech of June 1963 was dramatically different from the inaugural address. "Let us reexamine our attitude toward the Cold War," he told his audience.* Much had happened in two and a half years to change his outlook. In the early days of the administration, the American military and the CIA had revealed themselves as dangerously belligerent.† In addition, both sometimes displayed a cavalier disregard for the chain of command. As a result, Commander in Chief Kennedy (a World War II combat veteran) became "almost a peace at any price president," as he himself said privately.

The record is clear that by 1963

*The text of this speech is available at multiple sites online. An audio recording can be heard at the Kennedy Library site. For a contemporary's view of the speech see David Halberstam, "The Best and the Brightest" (Random House, 1972), 253–54.

†See for example James K. Galbraith, "Did the U.S. Military Plan a Nuclear First Strike in 1963?" *The American Prospect* (Nov. 30, 2002). A remarkable and chilling essay.

Kennedy was looking to wind down the Cold War. He and Khrushchev were of like mind by then. The American University speech, the Nuclear Test-Ban treaty (Kennedy's most significant achievement as president), and a plan to end U.S. involvement in Vietnam by the end of 1965 (whether that war was going well or ill) are indicative of his intentions.‡

Dallas put an end to Kennedy's far-reaching plans. Whether he died as a result of his inclinations to forge a detente with the Soviet Union, seek accommodation with Castro's Cuba, and withdraw from Indochina remains controversial. If the "military-industrial complex," or rogue elements thereof, were in fact responsible for Kennedy's death (as opposed to a 24-year-old who, rather than being a Marxist, was almost certainly a low-level U.S. intelligence asset,[§] and who moreover was a poor shot[¶]), then Kennedy's predecessor, Eisenhower, was truly a prophet. His successor, Lyndon Johnson, is said by some to have lived in fear of sharing Kennedy's fate. What really matters is that with Kennedy out of the way, the descent into Vietnam became inevita-

‡There is now a well-established case for JFK's intention to end U.S. involvement in Vietnam. The literature on this has grown large. The most recent book-length treatment is Howard Jones, "Death of a Generation" (Oxford University Press, 2003). Also important is Major John Newman's "JFK and Vietnam" (Warner Books, 1992). For a brief but cogent summary of the evidence see James K. Galbraith, "Exit Strategy," in the Oct.–Nov. 2003 Boston Review.

§On this see Philip H. Melanson, "Spy Saga" (Praeger Publishers, 1990); also Peter Dale Scott, "Deep Politics and the Death of JFK" (University of California Press, 1993), 242–66.

¶As a Marine, Oswald barely earned a passing score on the rifle range. He had done very little shooting since leaving the Corps in 1959. No one who knew him has ever remembered him as anything other than a poor shot. Anyone acquainted with firearms should know that the antiquated Italian rifle he supposedly used was not capable of firing three shots (with two hits) on a moving target in a span of six or seven seconds. (One of the hits, by the way, supposedly caused seven wounds in two men. These wounds included five inches blasted off a rib and a fractured wrist. Yet this "magic bullet" emerged from its travels in pristine condition.)

ble. In a real sense, then, Nov. 22, 1963 marks the beginning of America's lamentable decline.

Kennedy was in some ways more conservative than is generally recognized. Witness his tax-cut proposal, enacted a few months after his death. At the same time, the Kennedys were the only contemporary political figures capable of riding the storms of the 1960s, which rent the American social fabric. Much of the worst that occurred back then (including the excesses of Johnson's "Great Society" program) might have been averted had they remained in power.

David Talbot, the founder of Salon, has written a heartfelt account of John and Robert Kennedy (he was a youthful volunteer in RFK's doomed quest for the presidency in 1968) in power and out during the '60s. While the book occasionally waxes too lyrical for my cynical ears, it by no means whitewashes the brothers. It is certainly far more objective than Seymour Hersh's one-sided "The Dark Side of Camelot."

While the book focuses on the assassinations, it breaks little new ground as to the mechanics, the possible perpetrators, or the development of the cover-ups. It provides an introduction to those who know little or nothing about the crimes but is only a starting point for someone seeking a thorough understanding of the evidence.

Nevertheless, Talbot is able to show why the Kennedys, especially Bobby, were silent after Dallas. It has

RFK was, for all his faults, a patriot. This is more than can be said of many of the men who hated him.

always been a vexed question — if the Kennedys believed in a conspiracy, why didn't they speak out? Why didn't they seek justice? They were, after all, notorious for getting even.

Here Talbot casts new light. He seems to have spoken to just about every person still alive who knows something about Dallas and the Kennedy family's reaction to it. As a result, he makes a very convincing case that while the Kennedys believed a conspiracy killed JFK, for their own reasons they chose not to speak out publicly. He supplies the *why* behind Bobby's endorsement (pro forma though it was) of the Warren Commission's conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone. This by itself makes the book a worthwhile read.

Talbot also provides some insight into why the House Assassinations Committee, which was active from 1976 to 1979, and which concluded that there had indeed been a conspiracy behind the events in Dallas, nevertheless failed to uncover its true scope.

Could Robert Kennedy, if elected president, have solved his brother's murder? "Only the power of the presidency can unlock the secrets of my brother's death," he is said to have told intimates. Was his own death inevitable from the moment he chose to run? Talbot paints RFK's post-Dallas journey in a tragic light. This may jar on those who remember the earlier Bobby — the driven and ruthless prosecutor and political operator. The younger Kennedy underwent an existential crisis after Dallas, as Talbot shows. He emerged in many respects a different man — not the storybook liberal hero the Left pretends to remember, but a complex personality seeking to make sense of the reality of 1960s America. He was, for all his faults, a patriot. This is more than can be said of many of the men who hated him, such as Jimmy Hoffa and J. Edgar Hoover.

Robert Novak (by no means a liberal) recently told Tim Russert that the country has never fully recovered from JFK's death. Sentimentality aside, there's a deep truth in Novak's words. The events of 1963 and 1968 derailed

American democracy. Talbot compares the Kennedy brothers to Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, Romans of the late Republic who were not above playing dirty politics to achieve their high ends. They were overmatched by their

opponents, who murdered them. The consequence for Rome was tyranny and decline. On the evidence of the past four decades in America, one can only conclude that history indeed repeats. □

Notes on Contributors

Baloo is a *nom de plume* of Rex F. May.

David T. Beito is an associate professor of history at the University of Alabama, and author of *Taxpayers in Revolt* and *From Mutual Aid to the Welfare State*.

Jayant Bhandari is a Vancouver-based writer.

R.W. Bradford (1947–2005) was the founding editor of *Liberty*.

Michael Christian is in early semi-retirement in a semi-paradisaical corner of California.

Stephen Cox is a professor of literature at the University of California San Diego and the author of *The Woman and the Dynamo: Isabel Paterson and the Idea of America*.

Lanny Ebenstein is author of *Friedrich Hayek: A Biography*.

Jon Harrison lives and writes in Vermont.

Gary Jason is a university instructor and a contributing editor to *Liberty*.

John Lalor writes for the *Jerusalem Post* and Ireland's *Sunday Independent*.

Ross Levatter is a physician in Phoenix.

Bill Merritt is a sometimes-novelist living in Gaborone, Botswana. If you are offended at what he has to say, you are welcome to try to pursue him through the Botswana legal system.

Patrick Quealy may be found in his natural habitat, a Seattle coffee shop.

Bruce Ramsey is a journalist in Seattle.

Jane S. Shaw is the executive vice president of the J.W. Pope Center for Higher Education Policy in Raleigh, N.C.

Jo Ann Skousen is entertainment editor of *Liberty*. She lives in New York.

Tim Slagle is a standup comedian living in Chicago. His website is timslagle.com.

Jonathan Slow is the *nom de guerre* of a distinguished social scientist at a leading research university.

Andy von Sonn, proprietor of Mayflower Unlimited publishing company, is an attorney in Hawaii.

Jim Walsh is an assistant editor of *Liberty*.

*The case for conspiracy in RFK's death is considerably harder to make than for JFK's. Before closing one's mind to the possibility, however, one should consult Philip H. Melanson, "The Robert Kennedy Assassination" (Shapolsky Publishers, 1991) and John Marks, "The Search for the Manchurian Candidate" (Times Books, 1979).

"3:10 to Yuma," directed by James Mangold. Lionsgate Films, 2007, 157 minutes.

Yuma Redux

Jo Ann Skousen

What motivates a person to take risks and make choices? Is it money? Family? Honor? Revenge? In a classic western, it can be all of these. Complex characters and a compelling story by Elmore Leonard are keys to the success of "3:10 to Yuma," James Mangold's remake of the 1957 movie starring Glenn Ford and Van Heflin.

The film's title refers to the train that will take notorious outlaw Ben Wade (Russell Crowe) to the Yuma state penitentiary — if the posse, led by Pinkerton man Grayson Butterfield (Dallas Roberts), can get Wade aboard the train before his gang can free him. The most determined member of the posse is Dan Evans (Christian Bale, still gaunt from filming "Rescue Dawn"), an accidental hero who needs the \$200 reward to pay off the mortgage on his ranch before he loses it to the railroad. Almost as important, Evans needs to show his 14-year-old son, William (Logan Lerman), that he is not the cowardly weakling William sees him to be.

Wade is ruthless, demanding, deeply masculine, and brutally just. When one of Wade's men endangers the rest of the gang through sloppy inattention to his assignment, Wade shoots him. Yet he is also charming, humorous, intelligent, and artistic. Early in the

film, moments after shooting his own man, Wade is uncharacteristically merciful when he lets Evans and his young sons go after they have accidentally witnessed the crime. This unexpected act of kindness is one of the driving forces behind the film: why does he do it? What does it reveal about his character? The answer unfolds gradually, leading to a spectacular closing scene as the men race across rooftops. (And that's all I'm going to say about that.)

When Wade is captured by the Pinkertons, his partner, Charlie Prince (Ben Foster) leads the gang of outlaws to rescue him. Prince is flamboyant, stylish, and intense — watch for his "coat trick" when he rides into Bisbee. Ruthless with others yet fiercely loyal to his leader, Prince is indeed the prince, heir to Wade's throne, and a foil of Evans' son, William, who also shadows the group in an attempt to protect his father.

William is 14, on the cusp of manhood, deciding who he will be. Will he follow his father's retiring, somewhat cowardly footsteps, or will he emulate the dashing, courageous outlaw chieftain? Both men compete for the admiration of this son. With William, Wade seems to stand at the crossroads again and look down the path he might have taken.

There are only two unfortunate choices in casting. One is Dallas Roberts as Grayson Butterfield. It's a serious

and important role, and Roberts performs it well, but he looks so much like John Ritter, complete with mop of brown hair and oversized handlebar mustache, that I kept waiting for the pratfall. The other is Luke Wilson, who seems out place in his nearly cameo appearance as a railroad man. But the rest of the cast is outstanding.

I went to this film expecting to write about libertarian issues like property rights, private security companies, and eminent domain. I planned to comment on the fact that private companies develop new technology, like armored wagons and Gatling guns; I wanted to chastise Hollywood for its insistence on "muddying the past with the present" (to quote Ben Wade) by making veiled references to the current war in Iraq.

But within minutes I was thoroughly caught up in the story itself. Director Mangold returns to the classic western's long, luxurious shots of dusty men on horseback, moseying into town. His action shots are full-bodied and intense without being gruesome. Even his background characters contribute to the classic setting, many of them looking downright familiar, as though they literally stepped out of an episode of "Gunsmoke." I appreciated his addition of the Chinese immigrants who built the railroad tracks, and his subtle treatment of the Apaches. Yes, there are a couple of weaknesses in the plot — couldn't the posse foresee the disastrous outcome inherent in their plan? Doesn't Evans realize that he is

I went to this film expecting to write about libertarian issues, but within minutes I was thoroughly caught up in the story itself.

helping the very railroad that is threatening to take over his ranch? But these are minor criticisms of a nearly perfect film. Don't miss it. □

"Becoming Jane," directed by Julian Jarrold. Miramax, 2007, 112 minutes.

Imagining the Young Jane Austen

Gary Jason

Given the enduring popularity of Jane Austen's writings, and the recent worldwide popularity of films based on those writings ("Sense and Sensibility," "Pride and Prejudice," "Emma," "Clueless," "Bride and Prejudice"), it was inevitable that someone would make a biopic about the redoubtable Miss Austen. Now the inevitable has happened, with the appearance of "Becoming Jane." The result is an enjoyable, though somewhat controversial, work.

The story centers on Jane Austen's twentieth year (1795). We see her as a budding writer, scribbling constantly and giving readings, often to her sweet and lovely older sister, Cassandra. She is also being pursued by not one, but three suitors. "Are there no other marriageable women in Hampshire?" she wails at one point. Her parents want her to marry well, as her father is a poor parson struggling to support his daughters. Her mother in particular hopes Jane will accept the affections of Mr. Wisley, the nephew of the wealthy and imperious Lady Gresham.

But Jane is determined to marry for love, not money. Enter the arrogant, roguish, but oh-so-lovable Mr. Tom Lefroy. Initially sparks fly as Jane is repelled by Tom's arrogance, but, of course, before long she falls in love. A

lawyer in training, Tom is poor but has expectations, if he cooperates with his uncle and benefactor, Judge Langlois. Naturally, before the two can marry they must first win his approval. The film ends . . . but no, the ending should be left mysterious. So far, however, it's obvious that the incidents in the movie are close to some of those in Austen's novels, especially "Pride and Prejudice."

Now, if these incidents and characters seem close to those in Austen's novels, it isn't by chance. Like "Shakespeare in Love," "Becoming Jane" suggests that the characters and incidents in Jane's real life became the models for characters and incidents in her books. The indigent clergyman with ditzzy wife and numerous daughters; the overbearing dowager who controls the family inheritance; the older, lovelier, and sweeter sister; the superficially arrogant but basically decent and supportive young man; and the lack of options other than marriage for women — all are reminiscent of Austen's fictional work.

It is this aspect of the film that has irked more than a few critics. Some Janiacs have been angered at the liberties taken with Austen's true biography. Tom Lefroy did indeed visit Hampshire in the winter of 1792, where he and Jane attended the same balls and engaged in flirtation. Tom later married and became Chief Justice

of Ireland; Jane apparently refused all offers and died a spinster. Beyond that, the details are unclear. I confess that literary history is not my metier, but I wouldn't be surprised if there is considerable biographic invention here. Nor would I be particularly annoyed — this is after all a biopic, not a documentary.

But I do think that the film, which clearly aims to show that Austen's fiction is partly autobiographical, is simply too reductive. I say this as someone who is both professionally as well as personally intrigued by the process of intellectual creation. And I think that there is some truth to the old cliché that most creative writing is autobiographical. But while the upbringing (family life, education, and so on) of an author doubtless informs her prose, certainly at the level of values expressed, and even perhaps some characters or incidents portrayed, it is just simplistic to suppose that the creative literary process is a mere transcription of one's memories.

The makers of this movie were up against one of the inherent limitations of the medium: in a short two hours they attempt to portray a process that is inevitably a long-term and largely invisible mental process. I think here of other biopics that have tried to portray the wellsprings of creativity but wound up trivializing it, such as the original "Moulin Rouge" (1952), in which director John Huston shows Toulouse-Lautrec's artistic epiphany coming from a crush on a dance-hall queen

While an author's upbringing doubtless informs her prose, it is simplistic to suppose that the creative literary process is a mere transcription of one's memories.

and ogling the dancers in the bistros of Paris. The problems such films face is that they are using a medium meant primarily to entertain, not to educate.

To use an imaginary case from the history of science: faced with trying to portray how Newton devised his laws of motion (which took a considerable period of time, and grew out of a research community with a specific history), a filmmaker might simply show Newton getting hit on the head by an apple as in the apocryphal story. But anyone who seriously wants to show the creative process of any writer, artist, or scientist would need to convey a long history of training, followed by a lot of practice, against the backdrop of a historical setting. The proper venue for that is — *a book*.

Yes, the best movies work at the literary and philosophical level as well as the visual, and human intellectual creativity is surely interesting philosophically. But movies aren't ever likely to do justice to it. So my advice to the Janiacs and other literary realists is to just get over it.

Take the movie for what it is. You have a good storyline, with good dialogue. The acting is first-rate throughout, with an excellent cast. Especially delightful are the performances by Maggie Smith as the formidable Lady Gresham, Ian Richardson as the harsh Judge Langlois, James Cromwell as the sympathetic Reverend Austen, and James McAvoy as the hapless Tom Lefroy.

In particular, though, I was quite impressed with Anne Hathaway's portrayal of Jane Austen. Hathaway has hitherto starred mainly in teen flicks, most famously the "Princess Diaries" movies and last year's "The Devil Wears Prada." She has matured into a fine actress, able to resist the temptation to exploit her cute looks with a cutesy performance. She plays the young Jane as a spirited, intelligent but callow young lady who develops into an older, wiser, and slightly sad figure.

Janiacs, just let go and enjoy. ☐

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"Hairspray," directed by Adam Shankman. New Line Cinema, 2007, 117 minutes.

"Stardust," directed by Matthew Vaughn. Paramount Pictures, 2007, 130 minutes.

A Bitch, a Witch, and Two Men in Dresses

Jo Ann Skousen

One of the great pleasures of the 2007 film season was the return to Hollywood of Michelle Pfeiffer, still looking sleek, sexy, and radiant, in not one but two fine films, "Hairspray" and "Stardust." Oddly, she was lured back to each film by the prospect of playing a witch opposite a macho superstar wearing a dress. Despite five years' hiatus playing full-time mommy, her ability to choose just the right role and play it just the right way is as keen as ever.

Pfeiffer has been one of my favorite actresses since I first saw her in "Ladyhawke" back in 1985. Look at her IMDb site and you'll see that in 25 years of filmmaking, she has never made a bad film. (Well, okay, I'll admit I haven't seen "Amazon Women on the Moon." But it actually looks pretty wacky.) Yes, she is breathtakingly beautiful, but more than that she is a skilled actress, equally adept at playing a mobster's moll, a budding journalist, a torch singer, an inner-city teacher, or a harried mother in need of a Tide pen. And yes, she has played a few witches in her time.

"Hairspray" is a remake of a remake, based on the Tony Award winning Broadway musical (2002) that was itself based on the 1988 John Waters film of the same name. The story is set in 1960s Baltimore, as America was on the cusp of breaking down segregationist barriers. When the main character, Tracy Turnblad (Nikki Blonsky), wins a spot as a featured dancer on "The Corny Collins Show" (a thinly veiled *roman à clef* for Dick Clark's "American Bandstand"), she uses that platform to campaign for racial integration on the show. Prejudice against obesity also surfaces, and I think the stage play could easily be updated to argue for integration of gay and lesbian couples as well.

The film is good, but suffers from the same malady that afflicts most straight-from-the-stage movie musicals ("Dreamgirls," "The Producers," "Rent," "Chicago"). I miss the immediacy of the stage, the ability to see all of the choreography at once, and the cathartic applause at the end of each showstopping number. Remember the long, flowing, full-bodied takes of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers? Every tap of their feet and movement of their hands

was captured on film. Not so with today's musicals. Quick-cut editing of closeup shots gives the impression of snappy movements while covering the reality that the actresses can't dance. (This was particularly noticeable with Renee Zellweger in "Chicago.") Still, I'm glad the show has been put on film for those who don't have access to a good stage production.

Pfeiffer plays Velma von Tussle, "The Corny Collins Show's" producer and a consummate stage mother, constantly pushing her own daughter to the forefront of featured dancers. She isn't literally a witch, but in her attempt to keep overweight Tracy and her integrationist ideas off screen, she acts like one. One of the film's funniest numbers is "Big, Blonde, and Beautiful," sung as a split screen duet with John Travolta (playing Edna Turnblad, Tracy's mother). The gorgeous Pfeiffer does everything in her vampy power to seduce Wilbur Turnblad (Christopher Walken) but he only has eyes for Edna.

Walken is hilarious as Tracy's father, the hapless owner of the Hardy Har Hut. But to me, Travolta falls short. Yes, it's fun to see him dancing again, this time as a full-figured woman, but the concept of using a man to play Edna doesn't translate as well to film. For one thing, the men who have played the role on stage (Harvey Fierstein, Bruce Vilanche) are full-figured men who did not need rubber body suits and facial prosthetics. By contrast, the close-up nature of film made Travolta's face disconcertingly numb, as though Edna's face were full of Botox.

Still, it was a hoot seeing Travolta singing a lusty duet ("You're Timeless to Me") with Walken. And you have to give him credit for being willing to relinquish his heartthrob status to Zac Efron, the hottie from "High School Musical" who plays dance king Link Larkin. With his slicked back hair and forehead curl, Efron channels an excellent Travolta from the old days of "Welcome Back, Kotter," "Grease," and "Saturday Night Fever." Queen Latifah also stands out as Motormouth Maybelle, the matriarch of the black dancers, especially with her powerful anthem, "I Know Where I've Been." But I really missed that applause at the end of her number.

Pfeiffer also plays a sexy witch opposite a man in a dress in "Stardust," where Robert DeNiro is a high-flying pirate with a penchant for women's clothing. In this cinematically spectacular fairy tale, witches can maintain their eternal youth and beauty only by eating the heart of a star that has fallen to earth. And for Pfeiffer and her two sisters, it has been a long time since one has fallen. (It must have been difficult for Pfeiffer to see herself in the aging prosthetics, after working so hard to get herself in shape for filming!)

When a star (Claire Danes) finally falls to earth, Pfeiffer eats the last of their supply to restore her strength in order to capture the star and bring her heart back. Each time Pfeiffer uses some magic, she ages a bit, and reacts with the despair of any woman reaching middle age.

Meanwhile, Tristan (Charlie Cox), a young man from the nonmagical village of Wall, wants to find the same fallen star, to bring it back as proof of his love for the local brainless beauty (Sienna Miller). To do so, he must cross over the forbidden wall that surrounds his village, into a magical realm that is nothing like Oz. In the process he discovers true love and princely valor.

Like all fairy tales, the story of "Stardust" is somewhat predictable, but the way it is told is charming. Beautiful cinematography, especially the pale blue waters of Iceland; stunning visual effects; an important message about stepping outside the borders established by previous generations; Michelle Pfeiffer; and Robert DeNiro in a dress. What more could you want? □

Sometimes ignorance truly is bliss. Last month managing editor Andrew Ferguson expressed disappointment in "Stardust" because of its infidelity to the Neil Gaiman book on which it is based. However, not having read the book, I came with no expectations and thus had no reason to be disappointed. "Stardust" doesn't have the staying power of "The Princess Bride," but it's worth the price of popcorn and a ticket.

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Reflections, from page 17

When Hollywood called Midler, Russo followed. He was a driving force behind her first movie — a fictionalized version of Janis Joplin's life called "The Rose." Midler earned an Academy Award nomination for the part; Russo earned a producer credit and . . . entry. Through the 1970s and 1980s, he settled into a career as a Hollywood *macher*. His movies included "Trading Places," "Wise Guys," and "Rude Awakening."

In the early 1990s, Russo had some major tax disputes with the IRS and California state authorities and was inspired to get active in politics by Ross Perot's maverick presidential campaign. Russo formed the Constitution Party, which had a small-government platform similar to that of the Libertarian Party. Perhaps *too* similar. The new party failed to get off the ground.

In 1994, Russo created the pilot for a one-hour political TV show he called "Aaron Russo's Mad as Hell." The show, expanding on the style of political comedians like Dennis Miller and Bill Maher, highlighted libertarian views on the IRS, Social Security, and NAFTA. Unable to find a syndicator for the show, Russo sold the pilot as a video with some success.

Russo made his first formal bid for political office in 1998, when he sought the Republican nomination for governor of Nevada. He came in second in the primary, drawing over 25% of the vote in a four-way race.

The following year, Russo joined the Libertarian Party. In 2000, he delivered a fiery speech at its national convention, calling the LP the "last, best hope for freedom in America." He planned to run again for governor of Nevada in 2002; but, early that year, he was diagnosed with bladder cancer. He put politics on hold while getting treatment for the disease.

In January 2004, with his cancer apparently in remission, Russo announced that he would seek the LP's nomination to run for president. On the campaign trail, he hammered out a clear vision:

I will bring our troops home from every corner of the globe. I'll revoke the Patriot Act. I'll cut taxes, cut spending. I'll cut the

size of government. I'll stop corporate welfare. I'll engage all nations in trade and commerce. I'll protect our air and water, and I'll protect our borders. But, most importantly, I will protect our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

After several close ballots, though, Russo fell short of the votes he needed.

Next, Russo turned his attention to the tax protest movement. He wrote, produced, directed, and starred in a documentary feature called "America: From Freedom to Fascism." The film positioned Russo as the Michael Moore of tax protest. Promoting the film, he said:

[T]he IRS is putting people in jail for no reason, no law. In 1894, the Congress tried to pass a law but the Supreme Court shot it down. In 1916, the Supreme Court . . . said that the U.S. government did not have the authority to tax the labor of the people. Income as a corporate gain is taxable; it doesn't mean your labor is taxable. Each person owns their own life and their own labor. . . . I will do everything in my power to shut down this system, this Federal Reserve system, and this takeover of our government by them. It's about freedom of the individual, not about institutions.

The tax protest movement is reviled by establishment media — and the response to Russo's film reflected this. A New York Times article made snide reference to the tax liens resulting from Russo's disputes with the IRS as the real reason for his political beliefs.

In the end, though, Russo's cancer was a far bigger problem than the bitchiness of the New York Times. Earlier this year, it returned and — on August 24 — prevailed.

Aaron Russo was 64. His children and long-time girlfriend were with him at the end.

Russo generated lots of quotable soundbites during his several campaigns. One, from the 2004 presidential run, stands out: "I believe there are millions and millions of unheard voices in America who would come out and vote for someone they believed in."

Amen, brother.

— Jim Walsh

Getting Serious About Diversity, from page 31

colleagues who have expressed their worries about the demographic profile of the department. Because the dead are literally ageless, sexless, and without ethnicity, they can be added to any demographic category we wish.

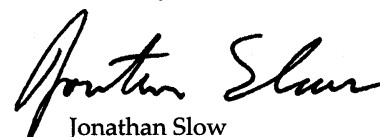
During some recent recruitments, we have found it difficult to convince the college administration that the candidate's spouse should also be hired, as a means of luring, for example, a promising minority candidate to campus. We have even endured baseless charges of nepotism. On this occasion, no such charge can possibly be lodged. Even while alive, Jeremy Bentham was notoriously sexless.

On all counts, therefore, I now believe that our decision last week was in retrospect an extraordinarily astute and far-sighted one. I'm sure you will share with me an eagerness to attract to our midst someone who will add so much to our departmental culture and luster. I only wish we had been aware of his availability some months ago, so that we could have spared ourselves the tedium of meeting for a half hour or so with three inferior candidates, and sitting through some

pretty dreadful job talks. The talk about the alleged social benefits of "fairness" and "intellectual standards" was especially depressing. Jeremy, by contrast, has a well-deserved reputation for not wasting people's valuable time.

All in all, this is a most delightful prospect, and I cannot tell you how grateful I am to those of you who made it possible. If we begin the hiring process immediately, we should be able to lure Professor Bentham here by next September. Think of the impact that will have on our colleagues in other departments, including the supposedly "hard" sciences. For once, we shall be on the cutting edge.

Cordially,



Jonathan Slow
Professor and Chair

Sioux City, Iowa

Curious divine revelation, from the *Des Moines Register*:

God's will is for Iowa to have the first-in-the-nation caucus, Democratic presidential candidate Bill Richardson told a crowd at the Northwest Iowa Labor Council Picnic.

"Iowa, for good reason, for constitutional reasons, for reasons related to the Lord, should be the first caucus and primary," Richardson, New Mexico's governor, said.

New Zealand

Notable gustatory trend, described in the *Christchurch* (New Zealand) *Press*:

A new phenomenon in New Zealand is taking the idea that "you are what you eat" to the extreme.

Vegansexuals are people who do not eat any meat or animal products, and who choose not to be sexually intimate with non-vegan partners, whose bodies, they say, are made up of dead animals.

The co-director of the New Zealand Centre for Human and Animal Studies at the University of Canterbury, Annie Potts, said she coined the term after doing research on the lives of "cruelty-free consumers."

One vegan respondent from Christchurch said: "I believe we are what we consume, so I really struggle with bodily fluids, especially sexually."

New Mexico

Summerhill for the TV generation, as seen in the *New York Times*:

"Kid Nation" is a CBS reality show whose premise is to take 40 children, ages 8 to 15, and place them in a "ghost town" in New Mexico to see if they can build a working society without the help of adults.

But after the production ended in mid-May, the parent of one child in the production complained to state officials that the children's treatment bordered on abuse. Four children received medical treatment for accidentally drinking bleach, one child was burned on her face with hot grease while cooking in an unsupervised kitchen, and most of the children were required to work 14 hours or longer per day. They received a payment of \$5,000.

State officials pointed out that a new state law would soon go into effect specifically limiting the amount of time that children can work each day on television productions.

Kansas City, Mo.

Fahrenheit 451 as civil action guide, from the *Kansas City Star*:

The owner of a midtown bookstore set fire to hundreds of books to protest a "decline in reading."

"We hope to spark a conversation about the importance of books in the face of a marked shrinking in reading trends, and staggering waste streams of actual books," said Tom Wayne, owner of Prospero's Books.

Beijing

Diktat from the karma police, transmitted by the *London Times*:

Tibet's living Buddhas have been banned from reincarnation without permission from China's atheist leaders. The ban is included in new rules intended to assert Beijing's authority over Tibet's restive and deeply Buddhist people.

"The so-called reincarnated living Buddha without government approval is illegal and invalid," according to the order. The 14-part regulation issued by the State Administration for Religious Affairs is aimed at preventing the reincarnation of the 72-year-old monk without approval from Beijing.

Kathmandu, Nepal

Exceptional ameliorative measures for malfunctioning aircraft, logged in the *Nepal Times*:

Officials at Nepal's state-run airline have sacrificed two goats to appease Akash Bhairab, the Hindu sky god, following technical problems with one of its Boeing 757 aircraft.

The goats were sacrificed in front of the troublesome aircraft at Nepal's only international airport in Kathmandu in accordance with Hindu traditions.

"The snag in the plane has now been fixed and the aircraft has resumed its flights," said Raju K.C., a senior airline official, without explaining what the problem had been.

Philadelphia, Pa.

Innovative augmentation of local constabulary, reported by the *Baltimore Sun*:

Sylvester Johnson, the embattled police chief of Philadelphia, acknowledging that police alone cannot quell a run of deadly violence, has called on 10,000 black men to patrol the streets to reduce crime.

Johnson, who is black, says black men have a duty to protect more vulnerable residents. "We're going to put men on the street. We're going to train them in conflict resolution," Johnson told the *Philadelphia Daily News*.

Union City, Ga.

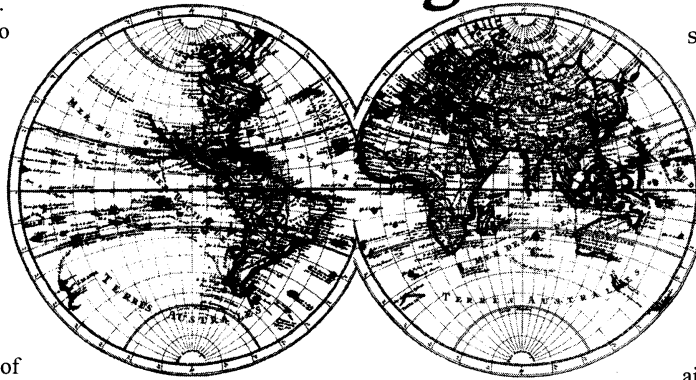
Culinary dispute, from a dispatch in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*:

A McDonald's employee spent a night in jail and is facing criminal charges because a police officer's burger was too salty.

Kendra Bull said she accidentally spilled salt on hamburger meat and told her supervisor and a co-worker, who "tried to thump the salt off." Police Officer Wendell Adams got a burger made with the oversalted meat, and he returned a short time later and told the manager it made him sick.

Police sent samples of the burger to the state crime lab for tests. City public information officer George Louth said Bull was charged because she served the burger "without regards to the well-being of anyone who might consume it."

Terra Incognita



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(Readers are invited to forward news clippings or other items for publication in Terra Incognita, or email to terraincognita@libertyunbound.com.)

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Then Minneapolis took away my freedom to design and hang signs.

Thankfully our Constitution protects my right to earn an honest living.

I stood my ground and won.

I am IJ.

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