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September 2005

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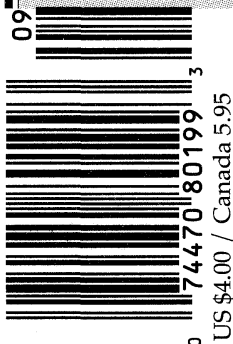
by Stephen Berry and Jacques de Guenin

Dracula and the Da Vinci Code

by Jo Ann Skousen

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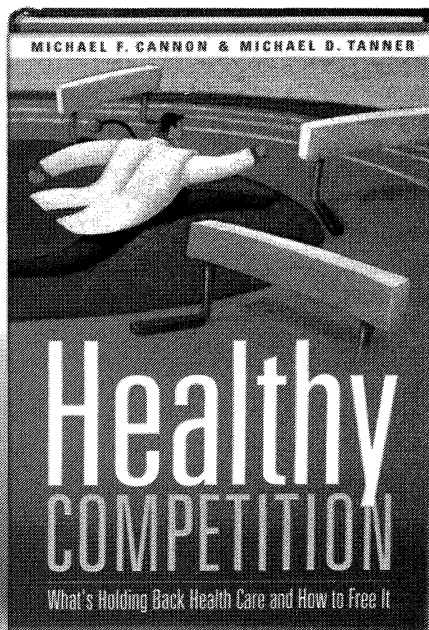
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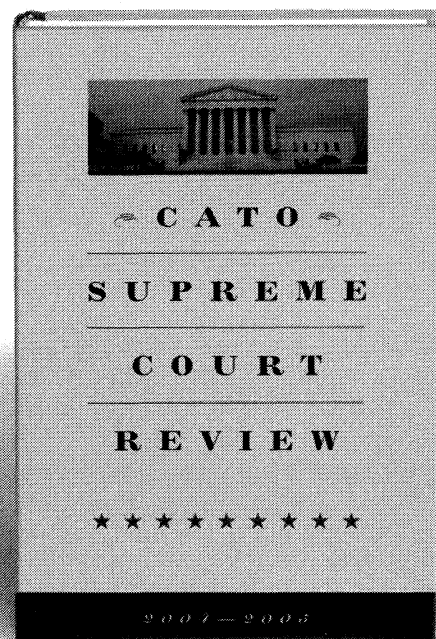
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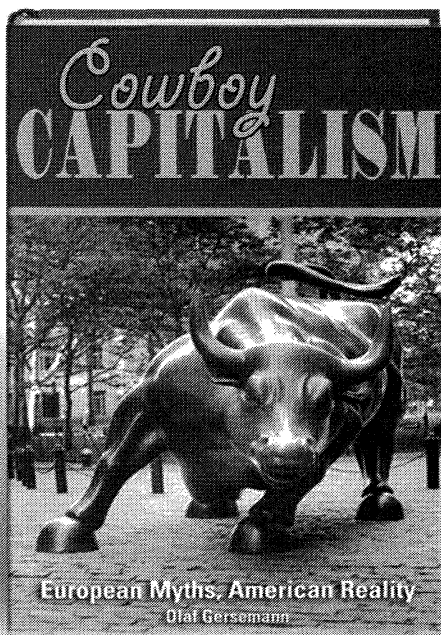


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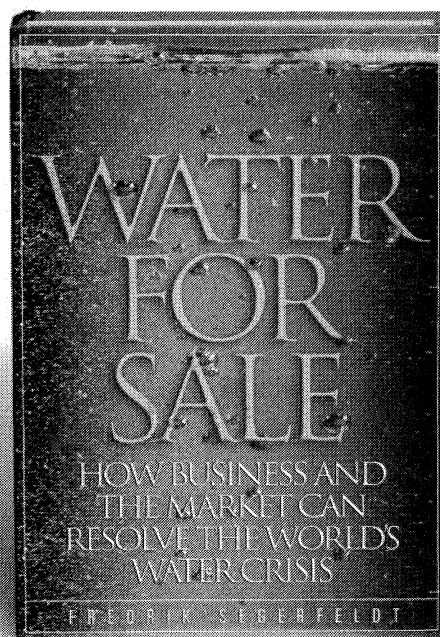
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Inside Liberty

September 2005
Volume 19, Number 9

4 Letters Our readers untangle the webs we weave.

5 Reflections We jump up and down with Tom Cruise, go bionic, kill without guns, dine with amputees, give away stadiums, pave over Connecticut, cut babies in half, and demand an end to world poverty.

Features

15 Kelo: Hope for Property Rights The Supreme Court's *Kelo* decision has brought together property rights advocates and environmentalists to protest. *Timothy Sandefur* points them in the right direction.

18 Just Say "Non" *Stephen Berry* explains why it's a good thing that the European Union is beginning to disintegrate. *Jacques de Guenin* argues that a divided Europe is dangerous.

21 The Peasant Principle Modern peasants aren't necessarily poor or uneducated. They just refuse to see what's right in front of them. *Stephen Cox* explores the ignorance that engulfs us.

27 Two Years in the Yukon Wilderness *Aaron Anderson* tells why he traded civilization for aggressive moose, overprotective bears, frozen thermometers, hashish, and the aurora borealis.

32 The Necessary Evil Some governments are so small that they cannot protect people's rights. Others are so big that they eradicate the very rights they were established to protect. Is it possible to create a government that is just the right size, with just the right amount of power? *Mark Skousen* explores a vexing issue.

Reviews

35 Hammer, Sickle, Action! *Bruce Ramsey* tours the Hollywood of the 1940s, where Stalin was America's best friend, show trials weren't just for show, and totalitarian life was just peachy.

38 Anemic Bloodlust As *Jo Ann Skousen* discovers, sometimes an old vampire just wants to settle down.

40 Aristocrats of the Gilded Age Taking two bullets from an assassin's gun, wrestling him to the ground before he can blow up the building, and sealing big loan deals — *Stephen Cox* finds that it's all in a day's work for a "robber baron."



43 Notes on Contributors They followed us home. Can we keep them?

46 Terra Incognita The supply of the absurd still exceeds its demand.

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Letters

Bartlett's Familiar Misquotations

I loved the postscript of Stephen Cox's July "Word Watch" column, regarding cliché mutilation. It reminds me of an incident from my own experience.

I used to live in Michigan's southwest corner (a vacation hangout on Lake Michigan for rich Illinoisans, such as Al Capone and Richard Daley). A fairly popular and well-established chain of local restaurants had a Tudor-style facility near our house. One of its attractions was a series of trompe-l'oeil stick-on "carvings" of famous and not-so-famous sayings on the exposed interior beams. Among the sententiae was this:

"To be great is to be understood" — Ralph Waldo Emerson.

You can imagine how disappointed I was to see it gotten so exactly wrong — I think it's a damn fine aphorism when it's gotten right! No one in the restaurant cared to know the correct quote; it didn't matter, since it was only there for decoration.

Chris Nelson
Windsor, Conn.

Re: Tort

I'm puzzled by the way the Right and Left have switched roles on the subject of tort reform. Those who think of themselves as belonging to the political right condemn trial lawyers with the same arguments that socialists employ against for-profit business. Alan W. Bock's Reflection, "Tortuous Reform" (April) is an example. I quote:
"Although such suits were always

touted as protection for downtrodden consumers ripped off by giant corporations, they were usually assembled more to collect damages and large fees for lawyers than to correct an injustice."

Physicians are earning fees too. Does this mean they are not trying to heal the sick? Grocers provide food to earn a profit. In fact the whole country is filled with citizens grasping after filthy lucre.

To me, the profit motive makes sense, even in the practice of law.

Thomas Crancer
Denver, Colo.

It's the Economy, Stupid

The successes of the United Arab Emirates ("Freedom Blossoms in the Desert," by Douglas Casey, July) and other nations such as Singapore, Oman, and Bahrain clearly demonstrate the importance of economic freedom and economic opportunity in bringing the third world into the 21st century. How is it that communist China recognizes this and the capitalist United States does not? The U.S. would do much better in bringing about the fundamental, long-term changes in the Middle East that it seeks if nations such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt were encouraged to create free economies rather than pretended to hold free elections.

Howard Landis
Naples, Fla.

No ID, No Cookie

I utterly fail to see why providing drugs to a minor ("The Cookie

continued on page 45

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.*

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Liberty (ISSN 0894-1408) is a libertarian and classical liberal review of thought, culture, and politics, published monthly by the Liberty Foundation, 1018 Water Street, Suite 201, Port Townsend, WA 98368. Periodicals Postage Paid at Port Townsend, WA 98368, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Liberty, P.O. Box 1181, Port Townsend, WA 98368.

Subscriptions are \$29.50 for twelve issues. Foreign subscriptions are \$34.50 for twelve issues. Manuscripts are welcome, but will be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE). A writer's guide is available: send a request and an SASE.

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Reflections

Roberts' Rules — Supreme Court nominee John Roberts has at least two things to recommend him. First, he puts the law above his likes and dislikes. In upholding the arrest of a 12-year-old girl for eating a french fry in a D.C. subway station, Roberts noted that while "nobody liked the situation," the police had not violated the girl's 4th Amendment rights. Second, he shows panache. When a California resort sued the Department of the Interior over a meddlesome regulation involving arroyo toads, Roberts wrote that the interstate commerce clause could not cover the toad, because, "for reasons of its own, [the toad] lives its entire life in California."

Hopefully Roberts will bring his wit and discipline with him to the high court.

— Leo Buchignani

First in the minds of his countrymen

— I celebrated Independence Day by reading "1776," David McCullough's account of that fateful year, and was reminded again of the importance of the only revolution in all of human history that sought liberty. I was especially struck by the steadfast heroism of George Washington. He was not a genius or an intellectual, but he loved and understood the glory of liberty and risked everything for that cause. He was not a brilliant military tactician or strategist, but he persevered and learned from his mistakes and led his ragtag band of patriots through a war in which they prevailed over the greatest military force the world had ever seen. He is the best man this country has ever produced — though it might be more important to observe that he produced the greatest country that ever was. — R.W. Bradford

Every bulldozer has a silver lining—

"Landowners have more and more become stewards who hold their property at the pleasure of the state," wrote Tom Bethell in his 1998 book, "The Noblest Triumph: Property and Prosperity Through the Ages." This claim became a glaring truth June 23, when, in *Kelo v. New London*, the Supreme Court reaffirmed the ability of a public body to take control of property for virtually any purpose it wants. Some of us actually thought that the Supreme Court would change direction.

It did not, although Sandra Day O'Connor has found a place in property rights history with her powerful dissent, saying that "all private property is now vulnerable to being taken and transferred to another private owner, as long as it might be upgraded." Unfortunately, her new role as advocate of limited government was too little, too late, especially as she announced her retirement a few days later. The decision may have had a silver lining — it caused an uproar. Congressmen, editors, bloggers, and even environmentalists were apparently dismayed at the triumph of rich private owners over poor ones. The New York Times reported on July 19 that

"lawmakers in at least half the states are rushing to blunt" the Supreme Court ruling. So far, however, the idea has not yet spread that it is government's near-omnipotence that enables wealth and privilege to trounce the property rights of others. But maybe it's a start.

— Jane S. Shaw

Worst of all, he's a decent human being

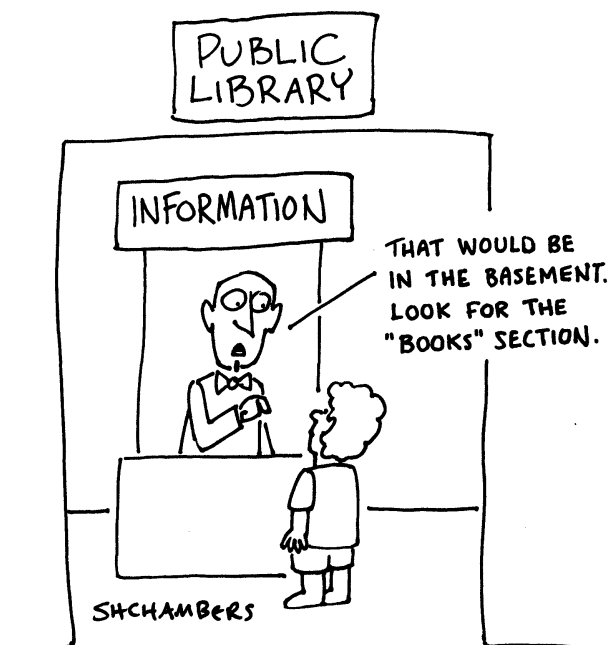
— For as long as Bush II has been in office, there have been bad things to say about Paul Wolfowitz. Even a friendly profile in *The Economist* was rather arch, with the correspondent comparing the deputy defense secretary to a velociraptor, the murderous lizard from "Jurassic Park."

Journalists who consider themselves serious track his career through his days at the

State Department in the Reagan years, and in Defense during the reign of Bush I. They point ominously to his co-authorship of the Defense Policy Guidance document of 1992, which became the plan for the War on Terror with indecent haste after 9/11. They suggest he has been maintaining an invasion plan for Iraq since around March 1, 1991. They demonstrate his connection to that creepy Project for a New American Century

Journalists who shouldn't consider themselves serious (e.g. anyone with a broadband connection to the Internet these days) just harp on his role in promoting and defending Operation Iraqi Fiefdom.

For Pat Buchanan, he is one of Those Jews, and Pat holds a first edition copy of the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Neoconservatism. The ignorant mob that gets its worldview



from Michael Moore only knows him as That Guy Who Licked The Comb.

Yes, it seemed Paul's positioning as a Vulcan-like geopolitician was fixed. And then, with an illusionist's swiftness, Bush II completely changed Wolfowitz's image by nominating him to head the World Bank.

Just about everyone with a stake in the World Bank found this astonishing, even alarming. For a moment I thought Bush was just going down an existing list of candidates in alphabetical order, with Wolfowitz succeeding James Wolfensohn.

It wouldn't be the first time a Defense Department official has moved from destroying one Third World country with bombs to destroying many Third World countries with

Bodies used to running five miles and pounding out 100 push-ups now collapse after a half hour of extending and flexing shattered joints.

"development." That would have been Robert McNamara. The difference was that McNamara was a technocrat and remained a technocrat. Once he began to campaign for his own nomination, Wolfowitz admitted that, yes, he's always been interested in the travails of the less developed countries.

Within weeks we had video feed of him embracing AIDS orphans in Africa. Once his reputation had been thus sullied, even more damaging revelations leaked out. It seems that Fran O'Brien's Stadium Steakhouse in the D.C. megalopolis, not far from the Walter Reed and Bethesda hospitals, hosts a free banquet each Friday for the maimed and scorched veterans of the War on Terror and their families. Our former men and women in uniform undergo painful (and not always

competent) rehabilitation. Bodies used to running five miles and pounding out 100 push-ups now may collapse after a half hour of slowly extending and flexing shattered joints. There are prosthetic fittings and skin grafts. Lessons in hygiene must be relearned. (How does one bathe with a hook for a hand?) Heads must be shrunk by learned psychiatrists — quite a dodgy thing when some of the syndromes in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual are punishable by firing squad in the military and many of the rest are grounds for less than honorable discharge.

In short, these people are hurting. Fran's does what it can to give our vets a short respite from this horror. It is a place that should daunt the idealism of the neocon.

Wolfowitz dined there regularly.

And, because complaints from disabled veterans simply disappeared in the military machine, he would hand out his business card, and tell the aggrieved to call his office. This goes well beyond the art of "image-making," which prefers African AIDS orphans as props.

In a town where networks are everything, the business card of the deputy secretary of defense is worth far more than gold. How many defense industry lobbyists would crawl through a Fort Bragg latrine to grasp the business card that a 19-year-old amputee can reach out and grasp in his new prosthetic hook? How many lobbyists would simply swipe it from the boy?

When history renders its final verdict on America's role in Iraq, and on those responsible, Paul Wolfowitz will probably be among the convicted. But remember what he did at Fran's, week in and week out, for the broken soldiers of Walter Reed. It sets an honorable example.

— Brien Bartels

ThinkAgain.org — On July 14, protesters from MoveOn.org gathered in front of the White House, and demanded that President Bush fire Karl Rove for leaking the identity of a CIA operative.

News You May Have Missed

Court Orders Emergency Homeless Aid

WASHINGTON — In a unanimous decision, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that the federal government has a constitutional obligation to provide homeless people with luxurious free accommodations immediately, provided that the homeless people have law degrees and wear long black robes. The surprise decision was announced not in the court's usual venue, the U.S. Supreme Court Building, but in the Shaky Precedent Bar and Grill, a dark, questionable establishment where the nine justices met following their release on bail from a nearby police station. They had spent the night in the station after being arrested for sleeping in a large cardboard box, on which someone had written "Equal Justice

For All" with a magic marker, on a downtown sidewalk, where they had taken refuge after the homes of all nine justices were seized by local governments following the court's 5-4 decision in late June that allowed the city of New London, Conn., to seize the property of homeowners by eminent domain and turn it over to private developers who proposed building large-scale commercial and residential buildings on it. The controversial ruling relied on an expanded definition of the constitutional phrase "public use" which allows local governments to take into account such considerations as tax revenues, visions of urban renewal, campaign contributions, a slow day at work, dreams, omens, portents,

whether there's a good seafood place in walking distance of their offices, and whether or not they've confiscated anything lately. In arriving at that decision, the five justices who supported it said that they had not foreseen, as a possible consequence, that their own homes might be seized by government officials in Washington and suburban Maryland and Virginia and turned over to Donald Trump, who announced that he will use the properties for casino gambling palaces, which the local officials decided was a legitimate public use after a free fact-finding trip to Atlantic City, from which they returned flushed, giddy, and, as one official described it, "in a kind of wow-I-won-the-jackpot mood."

— Eric Kenning

MoveOn was formed to encourage those in the Senate who were preparing impeachment proceedings against Bill Clinton to move on to more substantial business. At a time when President Bush is preparing for a battle over his Supreme Court nominee, privatizing Social Security, and waging war on at least two fronts, firing an aide who might have done something that's probably not illegal anyway is certainly not a pressing issue. If ever there was a better time for activists and zealots to "move on" to more substantial political issues, I can't remember it.

Perhaps what MoveOn.org is really Moving On to is a government controlled by Democrats. Just as with Republicans, Democrats and other mainline political groups, irony is as invisible to them as is integrity. — Tim Slagle

Pastime on the Potomac — To no one's surprise, the major league baseball team that moved to Washington, D.C. this year has become a political tool. The team is owned by the league, which is trying to find buyers for it. One of the eight bidding groups includes George Soros, the financier who donated \$20 million to anti-Bush action committees before the last election.

But whether Soros' group makes the best bid or not is irrelevant to Capitol Hill Republicans. Rep. Tom Davis of Virginia — who convened the steroid hearings — said that "Major League Baseball understands the stakes" if Soros is part of the ownership group, adding "I don't think they want to get involved in a political fight."

Rep. John Sweeney (R-N.Y.) said, "It's not necessarily smart business sense to have anybody who is so polarizing in the political world." Unlike the grandstanding Davis, Sweeney has some say in the matter, because he's vice chairman of the appropriations committee that controls D.C.'s budget. Whichever group buys the team will have to go through him to get public funding for a new baseball stadium — and Sweeney says that if it's Soros asking, the GOP response will be, "Let him pay for it."

So the GOP has no problems disbursing hundreds of millions of dollars from the D.C. budget to some billionaire so he can build a stadium on top of the homes and businesses of Anacostia (after all, that part of D.C. is filled with poor blacks and gays; the Republicans owe them no favors) — unless that billionaire is their political opponent. Sounds like it's about time for George W. Bush to get back in the baseball business.

— Andrew Ferguson

Pascal's wager (Hindu version) — The really terrifying thing about reincarnation is the possibility of being reborn as someone who believes in it. — Eric Kenning

'Fess up — President Bush probably bought himself a little more time with his recent speech at Fort Bragg, but unless conditions on Iraq improve substantially and soon, he may have blunted criticism only temporarily.

The president was appropriately somber, which was an implicit acknowledgment that things haven't gone as well as he had hoped. But he didn't tell Americans how we will know when things are going well enough that the troops can start coming home.

The president's speech is unlikely to reverse the administration's decline in credibility on Iraq. If he had any instinct for honesty he could have restored at least some degree of

credibility. Wars are unpredictable and chaotic. People from the top levels of strategic planning to the privates in the field make mistakes. Everybody knows that. The American people are mature enough to deal with the possibility that the administration underestimated the amount of opposition U.S. occupation troops would face — and think better of the president for admitting it. That admission might lend credibility to the assertion that they have a handle on it now.

Here's a measure anybody can understand. A recent Brookings Institution study found that the number of insurgent (or terrorist) attacks in Iraq was 10 a day in May 2003, 52 a day in June 2004, and 70 in June 2005. Some 25 Iraqi civilians were killed by warfare in May 2003, while 350 were killed in June 2004, and 600 in May 2005.

When those numbers start to decline rather than increase, Iraq will start looking more like a success to Americans. Those numbers are more important than numbers of Iraqis trained or constitutional assemblies held. — Alan W. Bock

"The Property Protection Act of 2005"

— A bare majority of a bitterly divided Supreme Court has ruled in *Kelo v. City of New London* that private property may be taken for private use if the taking authority considers this action to be in the public interest. An act of Congress to remedy this severe infringement of people's rights would be proper and constitutional.

The 14th Amendment grants Congress the power to enforce its provisions "by appropriate legislation." Among these provisions is a ban on "any State's depriv[ing] any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." The 5th Amendment, also considered binding on the states under the 14th, provides that no person "be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall pri-

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vate property be taken for public use, without just compensation."

Congress should enforce these provisions by resolving that "public use" means "public use" as traditionally understood, period, and does not include private use even if it is deemed to be in the public interest. (In a truly exceptional case of one private party's being unconscionably exploited by the monopoly position of another, and to a degree that blatantly infringes the public interest, the aggrieved party may, in conformance with existing law, seek a civil remedy in the courts.)

Congress should also attend to the "due process" and "just compensation" clauses. A property owner who holds onto his property usually does so because it is worth more to him than the selling price or supposed market price that he could get (net of transactions costs, including subjective costs). If a taking for public use really is in the general public interest, then the expropriated owner should share in this benefit. (The question whether such an overall benefit is available to be shared is a test of whether the taking is appropriate.) The owner should be paid enough to make him, like the rest of the public, come out ahead; he should be paid more than some government unit, perhaps influenced by greed, deems the market price to be. It should also be noted that the market price, to the extent that one can be ascertained, is likely to have been depressed by the prospect of an unfair taking. Paying only the lower price falls short of "just compensation."

One purpose, perhaps the main purpose, of eminent domain is to prevent a holdout owner from insisting on extortionate compensation. It may be difficult in some cases to draw a line between such a price and a price that, though not excessive, is generous enough to render the expropriated owner better off, and justly so, even from his own point of view. This line may inevitably be fuzzy but the principles involved should be clear.

— Leland B. Yeager

We need it because we want it — Glossed over in many of the laments on the recent *Kelo* decision is the fact that the constitutional authorization of eminent domain takings exists for good reason. This doesn't conflict with a consistent minarchist libertarian philosophy. Under certain circumstances, government needs this power to fulfill its proper function. Obviously, eminent domain should be restricted to cases in which the use of the property is clearly defined, the public benefits are clear and direct, and there are no less invasive methods available. The Supreme Court con-

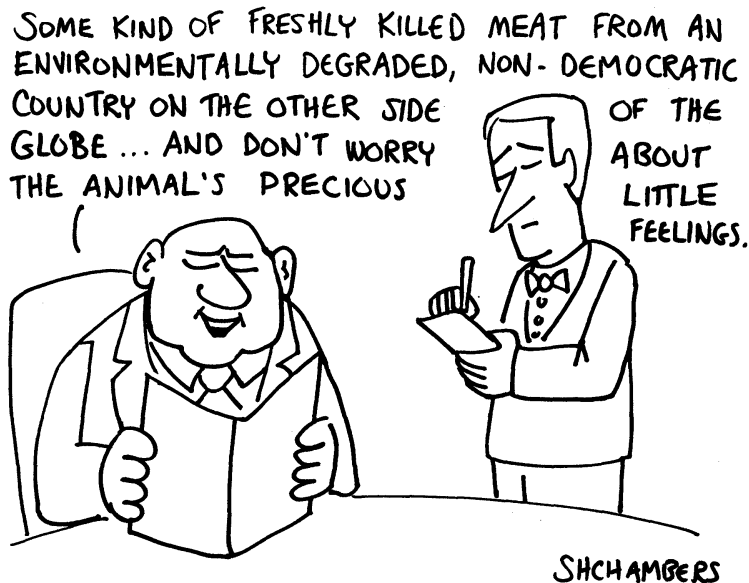
sidered this reasoning when hearing arguments in *Kelo*, and demanded that counsel for respondents clarify the proposed use of the plaintiff's land. Counsel conceded that he didn't know, but that, if nothing else, the home would make a good parking lot.

Apparently, for this court, that's good enough.

— Mark Rand

We have the technology — The first ever bionic prosthesis has been attached to a Tennessee man. Jesse Sullivan's new arm allows him to wash the dishes and shave, and he's now busy relearning how to tie his shoes. What's the cost of all this? Oddly enough, \$6 million — and if Sullivan's new arm lets him juggle chainsaws as adeptly as these scientists juggled their budget to get that PR-friendly number, he'd be not just a success, but a sensation.

— Andrew Ferguson



Solomonic wisdom

— The U.S. Supreme Court's two decisions on the display of the Ten Commandments on government property could be seen as biblical. Remember the story of King Solomon, confronted by two women claiming to be the mother of the same baby? He said he would cut the baby in half, and when one woman objected, Solomon knew that was the

real mother and gave her the baby.

The court went ahead and cut the baby in half. In two seemingly contradictory 5-4 decisions, the court said that a six-foot granite monument on the grounds of the Texas Capitol was constitutional, but framed copies of the Ten Commandments in Kentucky courtrooms were unconstitutional. Justice Stephen Breyer was the swing vote.

Actually, if you buy modern jurisprudence on the establishment of religion, context matters, and there are reasons to differentiate between the two cases.

High court jurisprudence has focused on making sure the government doesn't endorse or support any particular religion. While this is not the same as establishing a church, one can understand the concern. But deciding whether an action supports religion or merely acknowledges its historic importance is a matter for prudence rather than principle.

The court distinguished between the Texas case — in which the Ten Commandments monument was one of 17 historical displays — and Kentucky, where a couple of judges added other items to their religious displays only after complaints. The Texas case, it figured, was a valid acknowledgment of the historic importance of the Ten Commandments, while in Kentucky the judges were pushing religion.

Unfortunately, there's no clear principle to determine where the boundaries are, so these decisions invite future litigation.

— Alan W. Bock

And how does that make you feel? —

Sometime around the 1970s, the government grew a goatee and put all of us on a couch, nodding sympathetically, stroking its beard thoughtfully, and taking notes while we agonized about any trifle whatsoever (except trifles like the loss of privacy and liberty). We live in a frazzled therapeutic culture watched over by a therapeutic state in which every problem or trend, most of them once covered by the far-reaching French theory *C'est la vie*, is labeled a psychological disorder. The list includes most crimes, a persistent taste for alcohol or drugs, high energy when observed among children, easy distraction when observed among children, childish behavior when observed among children, fatness, thinness, hard work, laziness, anger, and absence of anger, all of them now an occasion for feeding frenzies by counselors and consultants and other professional meddlers.

Even those of us not yet officially diagnosed with a jargon-generated disorder are so fragile psychologically that we need to be protected from allegedly offensive speech and humor on college campuses, from jokes and flirtations and racy pin-ups in workplaces, from war photos and unconventional opinions on television. We're also eligible for millions of dollars in jury awards if anything more specific and suable than life leaves us with permanent psychological trauma or distress, and by permanent we mean lasting more than 45 minutes. So every public discussion of every event and issue is now accompanied by the soft murmur of therapists in the background, cautioning us, urging us, and soothing us, and every citizen is under careful scrutiny by therapeutic custodians in white coats armed with verbal straitjackets and quick to pounce, except maybe a president who invades a country and sends thousands of young people to their death for no apparent reason, which is considered normal behavior.

Yet somehow we come out of it more unhappy and with our nerves more on edge, judging from surveys that compare current levels of self-described contentment with those in the 1950s, even though terrorism and AIDS and other headlined menaces today are really no more menacing than communism and H-bombs and polio were then. Maybe the epidemic of therapy is the problem. Maybe we've been taught to exaggerate every transient feeling we dutifully get in touch with.

Maybe being repeatedly and officially told we can't control ourselves leads to a vacuum of self-control filled by others, including the state. Karl Kraus' observation a century ago about the work of his fellow Viennese, Freud, comes to mind: "Psychoanalysis is itself the disease it purports to cure."

But Freud at least had a dark, stoic view of the human condition. Everything essential in his work was anticipated by Book IV of Swift's "Gulliver's Travels," where human life is already reduced to irrational impulse, lust, and excrement. He wasn't what he took himself to be, a scientist soberly making discoveries, but he was an unconscious, inadvertent satirist. Like Swift, he combined a gravely decorous style with grotesque absurdity, and like Swift, he thought the human

Maybe being repeatedly and officially told we can't control ourselves leads to a vacuum of self-control filled by others, including the state.

condition was basically incurable. The occupying army of counselors and therapists in America today is mostly made up of smarmy, officious sentimentalists and busybodies whose only real view of life is that no one should ever be left alone to deal with anything, and that stoic fortitude is to be avoided at all costs. To their everlasting credit, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and other countries affected by the tsunami last December told the American grief counselors to go home as soon as they arrived.

— Eric Kenning

Laissez-scar — Most viewers and reviewers are puzzled by the abrupt ending of Steven Spielberg's "War of the Worlds." The answer can be found early in the movie, when young Rachel (Dakota Fanning) examines a splinter in her hand. Her father (Tom Cruise) offers to remove it but she pulls back, telling him, "Just leave it alone and it will work itself out." This small, seemingly insignificant exchange between a daughter and her nearly deadbeat dad turns out to be the central theme of Spielberg's version of the story. Just leave them alone, and the invaders will work their way out, harming a few cells that get in the way, but leaving the hand with little more than a scar. Many libertarians have the same

News You May Have Missed

Bush's Approval Rating Falls Among Bushes

WASHINGTON — President Bush's job approval rating has continued to plummet, falling to 31 percent in a survey of adults who are related to him, many of whom told pollsters that it's their turn to be President Bush now. The president's plunge in popularity has been even more dramatic among the general public, and according to rumors circulating in the scien-

tific community, physicists who study the concept of Absolute Zero have begun taking an interest in it. But the same survey showed that poll numbers were down for others, too. The overwhelming majority of those surveyed said that they would be extremely dissatisfied with the job performance of Paris Hilton if she ever got one, and approval of Tom Cruise has fallen pre-

cipitously among all sectors of the population except Scientologists. In perhaps the biggest surprise, the polls showed that 79 percent of pollsters who were polled had completely lost confidence in the job that they were doing, while the other 37 percent thought that any mistakes they made were not their fault.

— Eric Kenning

idea about invaders — just leave them alone, and we'll be fine. They'll die out on their own, and will leave little more than a scar.

I wish it were that simple.

— Jo Ann Skousen

Give a hoot! Don't dare shoot! — I admit it: I ride public transportation when I'm in the city. I know it's a folkloric tenet of individualism that you must take a car eve-

rywhere, but I have never felt constrained by it. And I would rather be transported to my workplace in a chair heaped with dung than try to find parking in downtown Seattle.

Seattle's buses are covered, inside and out, with public service ads. There are posters for Job Corps, Planned Parenthood, and, of course, announcements honoring the Operator of the Year. FACE, the FireArm Crime Enforcement Coalition of King County, contributed a black poster with

Word Watch

by Stephen Cox

A friend of mine opened the monthly bulletin of his church and discovered, amid the committee reports and announcements of ice cream socials, a long "think piece" written by the assistant pastor. This man had been inspired by some force, heavenly or demonic, to discuss his own religious experience, which, according to him, included his progress to the idea that "God is a metaphor."

The idea had a disturbing effect on my friend. It made him wonder what sort of religion his contributions were helping to fund. The next time he encountered the assistant pastor, he asked him what he meant.

"I was expressing my conception of God," the AP answered.

"But what is your conception?" my friend replied. "I mean, if God is a metaphor, what is he a metaphor of?"

No articulate response was forthcoming. My friend was left to conjecture that "God" must be either a metaphor for "God" or a metaphor for "nothing."

Of course, it's obvious what was going on. The minister had no idea what he was talking about. His words had no denotative meaning. They pointed at nothing; they expressed no determinate concept. Their significance, if any, was purely connotative, purely a matter of a certain atmosphere he hoped to create. On the one hand, he wanted to give people the impression that he was an advanced thinker, distrustful of all traditional ideas; on the other hand, he wanted to give people the impression that he really believed in God. Thus, God became a "metaphor." The Reverend was dancing the connotative two-step: put one foot here and another foot there, and with any luck the audience will think you're Ginger Rogers.

The world of political discourse is largely the world of connotative and impressionistic "meanings." This was not always so. Despite all the rhetorical fluff in the orations of Bryan and Webster, Douglas and Clay, there were denotative meanings at the core. When Stephen Douglas orated about popular sovereignty, it was clear, God damn it, what he meant by popular sovereignty. Any of those gentlemen could talk by the hour, telling you what they thought and why they thought it, providing in stupefying detail the history of the events and documents that appeared to support their views.

But we live in a purer age. Virtually every news story that involves political speech brings us something approaching the Platonic form of the meaningless message.

Particularly large scoops of piffle were dished out at the political concerts and demonstrations staged in Europe this summer in an attempt to pressure or disrupt the G-8 Conference. In discussing this topic, I cheerfully omit analysis of some of the participants' requests for little things like the total extirpation of capitalism, everywhere in the world. I limit my attention to political discourse focusing on the West's alleged duties to Africa.

Almost any news story would do as an example, but consider this one: an AP report entitled "As Many As 200,000 March Against Poverty." I am always wary of that "as many" phrase. I am warier still when the first line of a story indicates, as this one does, that "as many as 200,000" is actually supposed to mean "more than 200,000," even though "unofficial police estimates" are confessed to be only about half as high.

But never mind. The report concerns a vast demonstration of political opinion, staged in the city of Edinburgh, Scotland: "Anti-poverty campaigners formed a human chain around Scotland's capital on Saturday, echoing the musical call of the Live 8 concerts that [the] world's wealthiest nations act to lift Africa out of misery."

Fine. But let's see. What does it mean to be a "campaigner" against "poverty"? Does that concept apply to me? Every day that I work is a campaign against poverty, mine and that of the bureaucrats who absorb my taxes. But no, it couldn't mean that. That has nothing to do with traveling to Europe and holding hands with other "campaigners" to stop traffic in Edinburgh — a magical act that will somehow help to "lift" another continent out of its "misery."

Perhaps it would help if "poverty" and "misery" were defined in some manner. To do that, however, would be to obtrude an ugly denotative meaning into a situation where none could possibly subsist. Nobody knows what "poverty" means, much less "misery" or the act of lifting something (a continent!) out of it.

Is misery what someone feels when his doctor tells him that he needs an operation? Is misery what a young man feels when his girlfriend tells him that she's not in love with him "that way"? Is misery what an African feels when her farm is confiscated because the government doesn't like the way she votes? Yes, probably, all three. But do you know how to remedy it?

four (racially balanced) mug shots, each with a crime and the caption "15 additional years," or "5 additional years." The headline: "Use a gun . . . Do extra time. Don't use a gun."

See, one layer of our government here — I have given up trying to keep track of which — increases the sentences of those convicted of felonies if their weapon is a firearm. They think it sporting to alert the criminal class to this fact.

The first time I saw this I thought it rather presumptuous

of the transit system to assume that the criminal class, rather than middle age commuters, is riding this bus. But aren't most public service ads wasted on their audience? Most exhortations to civic virtue fall on ears deafened by continuous volleys of ads exploding on all sides.

However, this particular exhortation could be dangerous rather than useless. What message are they sending to young and impressionable thugs and brigands? "Don't use a gun to

And what is poverty? Is poverty what President Johnson promised to eliminate from America? Did he succeed? If not, why not? Or is poverty what most of the people of Nigeria endure, despite the fact that Nigeria is "rich" in oil? Oh, certainly. But again, do you know what to do about it?

One thing we know about Africa is that economic "misery" prevails there because African governments are perpetually at war with private property. Another thing we know is that most African governments would change or vanish if Westerners stopped giving them aid.

Strangely, however, these are things that seem not to have been mentioned at all by the 200,000 "anti-poverty campaigners." They were demonstrating in support of a proposal that Western nations forgive African debts. That's a fairly innocuous suggestion, since the Africans aren't going to pay their debts anyway — although welshing on your debts can make future investments somewhat difficult to procure. Another proposal was the professional do-gooders' routine request for a radical increase in foreign aid.

Whatever could be said for this agenda, it was oddly out of proportion to the sound and the fury, the screaming and the posturing, the forging of human chains and the disruption of Edinburgh's traffic. If the meaning that the activists wished to communicate was a sober conclusion resulting from the study of economic statistics, what was the significance of all that other stuff? The AP story said that the demonstrators sent "a peaceful but powerful message." Let's see. . . . What was that message, exactly?

The mob's intellectual leaders struggled to define it in moral terms. British Prime Minister Tony Blair announced that "poverty in Africa is a 'scar on the conscience on the world.'" His chancellor of the exchequer, Gordon Brown, told "activists" that they were "standing up today for people who have no power of their own but need power." Scottish Roman Catholic Cardinal Keith O'Brien, pretending that he was one of the crowd of 18-somethings, testified that "we recognize our solidarity with the poor of the whole world. . . . We demand generosity and justice in our giving and politics."

Here are three interesting moves in the moral fandango. Tony steps to the right, confesses a guilty conscience — but wait! Now he steps to the left: it's not his conscience that's "scarred"; it's the world's. Then Gordon boldly insists that power be given to the poor. But from whom will the poor siphon off this power? Not from him — he's not losing any! In fact, he's proposing that his own power be increased, so he can transfer more of other people's money to the Africans. Next, Cardinal Keith asserts that all the campaigners for "justice," including and especially himself, are in "solidarity with the poor of the whole world." It's almost as if he were impoverished, too.

But he is not so poor in spirit as to forget the iron fist inside the satin glove. What he wants, he demands. Is this St. Francis, or Father Coughlin come again?

Look at what he's saying. "We demand generosity and justice in our giving and politics." So he demands justice of himself; he is holding himself to the highest standard of justice. (Never mind the oxymoronic nature of a "demand" for "generosity.") But no, that's just the aura, the atmosphere, the impression he's trying to create — because the "we" doesn't point to the same entity that the "our" does. "We" signifies "we pious busybodies, standing here talking about justice and generosity," but "our" must signify "your," as in "your money that we intend to take from you to deliver to the national socialist states of Africa." If he were concerned with his own giving, he could just go ahead and give; why bother to demand anything? But he wasn't.

And there were other people besides the Cardinal who had demands to make: "Scores of shop windows were boarded up along the march route and officials had cleared away any debris

"We" signifies "we pious busybodies, standing here talking about justice and generosity," but "our" must signify "your," as in "your money that we intend to take from you to deliver to the national socialist states of Africa."

that could be used as missiles." The Cardinal's address preceded a week of violence by anarchists and communists, whose rhetoric came from the same barrel of irrational phrases on which he was feasting.

Irrational, and indescribably petty. Here was no solemn clarion, no splendid sweep of emotion, no "Give me liberty, or give me death!"; no "This government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free," no "I have a dream today." Here was vapid nonsense about assuaging guilt by the exercise of power over others. Here was: "We demand generosity." Here was the rhetoric of children.

I remember a cartoon, circulated by one sect of '60s radicals for the purpose of lampooning another sect. It showed a young woman dressed in black, sporting long snaggly hair and a crazed expression, cranking a ditto machine that spat out pieces of paper saying, "WE DEMAND! WE DEMAND! WE DEMAND!" The cartoon made a point: when the medium looks like this, who wants to figure out the "message"?

overpower or overawe your victim. Instead, why not indulge your creativity?" Maybe the next series of ads can supply a few suggestions: "Use a knife. Use a bicycle chain. Use a can of hairspray and a cigar like James Bond. Use a machete, or a cane sword. Use a garrote. A rubber tube. A bag of dimes. A can of pepper spray. Use a gigantic belt buckle swung on a genuine snakeskin belt. Use a power tool. (Be sure it comes with rechargeable batteries, not an extension cord.) Use a car bomb. Or a beaker of acid. Sic a Doberman on your victim. Or a wolverine. Use a zip gun, whatever that is. A shiv. A shank. A skunk. Use Zyklon B or VX gas (but mind which way the wind blows). Be primitive and use a club, or be postmodern and use a volume of Derrida or Foucault. Be surreal and do any of the above, but wear a tomato in your lapel.

"Just don't use a gun. We're afraid of guns."

— Brien Bartels

The money pit — Poverty in Africa is unquestionably real and heart rending. But if sending aid to the continent was the key to economic recovery, Africa would be well on the road to prosperity by now. Between 1960 and 2005 foreign aid worth more than \$450 billion (inflation-adjusted) flowed into Africa. But between 1975 and 2000, African gross domestic product per capita actually declined, at an average annual rate of 0.59 percent.

The problem in most of Africa is not lack of resources, lack of entrepreneurs, or the legacy of colonialism. It is poor governance. Most African governments are run by corrupt

rulers who see governing as a way to seize resources for themselves and their families, tribes, and political supporters. Aid tends to be frittered away on useless projects or squirreled away in Swiss bank accounts.

There are exceptions. Rep. Ed Royce of Fullerton, Calif., who headed the African affairs subcommittee for eight years, notes that Botswana protects private property rights and has an independent judiciary. Its score on reports judging economic freedom has improved steadily since 1980, and while per capita GDP in the rest of Africa has been declining, in Botswana it has grown at an average annual rate of 4.58 percent. Other African countries that have increased economic freedom and improved economic performance include Mozambique, Uganda, Tanzania, and Mauritius.

So Africa has countries that have learned how to succeed. Unfortunately, pouring more aid into Africa is likely to delay rather than hasten the day when other African countries catch on and change their policies. The best way the U.S. can help Africa is to end domestic farm subsidies and reduce tariff barriers on products like cotton, cocoa, coffee, tea, tobacco, and dairy goods.

— Alan W. Bock

Revolutionary evolutionary pace — A study out of Beijing Normal University reports that Chinese elephants are adapting right before our eyes. Since elephants are hunted for their tusks, tuskless elephants are not being slaughtered, and according to a report in the China Daily, 10 percent of all Chinese elephants are now tuskless.

This should be reassuring to those who believe man has been irreparably damaging the planet. It's good to know that nature, which has already survived countless asteroids and ice ages, can survive humans as well. Despite how aggressive these clever hairless monkeys have been towards other species, nature will survive.

— Tim Slagle

"Mr. Bush, tear down this wall!" — As President Bush would have it, the choice is simple. Either Congress renews and expands the Patriot Act, or America will soon be fighting terrorism with one hand tied behind its back. "If we have good tools to fight street crime and fraud, law enforcement should have the same tools to fight terrorism." It's not a bad choice of words, for his purposes. Compared to "the power to demand just about anything from a business and make it a crime to say anything about it," the word "tool" sounds innocuous. Americans love having the right tools for the job.

The problem is that it is far from evident that the Patriot Act "tools" have done anything to prevent further terrorist attacks. Nobody really knows why we haven't suffered a major attack since 9/11. Is it because al Qaeda is weakened or because they think in years rather than

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months? Is it because law enforcement has stymied plots or because there weren't any serious plots? If anybody tells you he knows for sure, be skeptical, especially in the wake of the London attacks. U.S. intelligence, as everybody acknowledges, still hasn't figured out how to penetrate the al Qaeda network.

President Bush implies that if the Patriot Act isn't renewed intact, the fabled "wall" between intelligence and law enforcement will be rebuilt with bigger bricks. Balderdash. Tensions and turf wars between the FBI and the CIA have been the stuff of Washington legend for decades, and the Patriot Act hasn't had any perceptible effect on them. Even Attorney General Alberto Gonzales admitted in a recent congressional hearing that the "wall" was more a matter of culture than of law.

Efforts to improve intelligence and law enforcement communication began before the Patriot Act was passed and they will continue — in fits and starts, and with limited success — whether the act is renewed, reformed, or eliminated.

The recent Justice Department Inspector General report suggests the FBI had ample grounds to stop some of the 9/11 hijackers but never got its act together. It's more important to get these agencies to focus on terrorism than to make new powers permanent.

— Alan W. Bock

Finger lickin' good

— The CDC has acknowledged that it overestimated deaths caused by obesity by fourteenfold. A simple mathematical mistake? It's more than that. Obesity and death have a complicated relationship which is not yet clear to us mere mortals.

Only at the extremes does the semi-science of public health accurately predict the relationship between obesity and mortality. If you're 5 feet, 3 inches tall and weigh 300 pounds, odds are that your life will end sooner than you desire. If you're 5 feet, 3 inches tall and weigh 150, even though skinny friends and health officials condemn you, it's not certain that a chicken drumstick every night will kill you.

All predictions involving weight and mortality are fuzzy generalizations. There's a positive statistical correlation, the scientists say. But that doesn't mean that extra-crispy fried chicken seven days a week, 52 weeks a year will hasten your journey across the Styx.

— Ted Roberts

The crucifixion of Tom Cruise — Actor Tom Cruise created quite a stir on June 25 when he called psychiatry a "pseudoscience," asserted that there is no chemical basis for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and said that

antidepressant drugs mask problems-in-living. He used actress Brooke Shields' postpartum depression as a case in point, which has engendered a fair amount of hostility from those who disagree with him, including Shields. The New York Times published her rejoinder on July 1. Cruise was criticized by psychiatric apologists as irresponsible and dangerous for speaking his mind — and the truth.

A lot of people misunderstood what Cruise said, or dismissed his argument as a rant from a Scientology brainwashed wacko. Cruise, however, learned a lot about psychiatry from the writings of psychiatric abolitionist

Thomas Szasz, and Cruise's arguments reflect Szasz's ideas. Szasz is an intellectual heavyweight whose ideas about medicine, disease, science, liberty, and responsibility merit serious consideration.

Szasz has upset many psychiatrists over the years because, despite being a psychiatrist, he is psychiatry's harshest critic. In real science this is expected to occur in order to advance scientific knowledge. In pseudoscience, such criticism is forbidden.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA), responding to Cruise's comments on NBC's "Today Show," asserts in a press release dated June 27 that "science has proven that mental illnesses are real medical conditions. . . . It is unfortunate that . . . a small number of individuals and groups persist in questioning [mental health's] legitimacy."

Actress Brooke Shields is understandably upset. She responded by claiming she has a disease caused by changing levels of estrogen and progesterone during and after pregnancy. This disease allegedly kept her from being the "loving parent . . . [she] is today." It is difficult to argue with someone who uses her own experience to prove that something is scientifically correct. If one shows how she is wrong, one can be accused of lacking compassion. But compassion has nothing to do with the truth.

Critics of psychiatry are frequently accused of lacking compassion. I fail to see how depriving an innocent person of liberty, forcing a person to take drugs he doesn't want to take, and shocking his brain with electricity against his will — all done by some psychiatrists in the name of treating mental illness — are indications of compassion.

What of the substance of Cruise's arguments? The truth is that science has never proven that mental illnesses are "real" medical conditions, anymore than it proved homosexuality is a disease. (Homosexuality was declassified as a disease by the APA in 1973, partly because of the writings of Thomas Szasz.) Standard textbooks on pathology do not list mental illnesses



among real diseases like cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, and syphilis. Why? Because only the body can be sick, not behavior.

Certainly people exhibit irrational, socially unacceptable, and abnormal behavior for all sorts of reasons. But it is wrong to call behaviors diseases. Diseases refer to physical lesions, wounds of the body, not behaviors, conduct, or deportment.

In other words, Cruise is right. Some drugs may certainly help people to feel better about themselves, but there is no evidence to support the idea that any drugs cure or restore chemical imbalances. Szasz pointed this out years ago. These drugs influence chemicals in the body, but everything we do is accompanied by chemical and electrical changes in the body. This is not the same as saying the changes in our body make us do this or that. We cannot tell who is depressed by drawing blood, studying fluid balances, or looking at pictures of the structure and function of the brain. There is no such thing as asymptomatic "mental illness" — yet there most certainly is when it comes to real diseases like cancer and heart disease.

Szasz is best known for his insistence that "mental illness" is a metaphor, and that we go astray if we take the metaphor literally. Yet belief in mental illness is not his main target. In Szasz's view, individuals should be free to devote themselves to any variety of psychiatric belief and practice. What Szasz

objects to is forcing people to see (or not see) a psychiatrist, to reside in a mental hospital, to partake (or not partake) of drugs, and to believe (or not believe) in any specific set of ideas. Cruise, again echoing Szasz, rightly objected to the involuntary administration of psychiatric "treatments."

One way people try to discredit both Szasz and Cruise is by playing the Scientology-is-a-cult card. Instead of asking why Scientology endorses Thomas Szasz's ideas, we should be asking why other religions do not.

— Jeffrey Schaler

We have met the enemy and he is us — The Bush administration continues to defend, in the case of Jose Padilla, a genuinely breathtaking legal theory more suited to an absolute monarchy or dictatorship than to a society operating under the rule of law.

Jose Padilla, remember, is the former Chicago gang member and convert to Islam who is accused of working with al Qaeda to plant a radioactive "dirty bomb." He was arrested in May 2002 in Chicago's O'Hare airport, on a flight from Pakistan. He has since been detained in a military brig in South Carolina, with no charges filed against him.

Last year the U.S. Supreme Court declined to rule in Padilla's case, saying he had filed in the wrong judicial district.

continued on page 26

News You May Have Missed

Bush to Ask for Easier Countries to Occupy

WASHINGTON — In a major address to the UN General Assembly scheduled for next week, President Bush will ask, according to an advance copy of the speech, for small, defenseless countries around the world to "step up" and volunteer to be invaded by the United States, adding that only those countries that would be "a whole heck of a lot easier than Iraq" would be deemed eligible. The speech will list, among many other "attractive, photogenic, highly qualified semifinalists," Togo, Estonia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Andorra, San Marino, Monaco, Costa Rica, and Vermont.

Once a country has been invaded, Bush will tell the UN, the two dozen or so regular U.S. troops that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld estimates will be needed to quickly subdue it would be withdrawn and replaced by a much larger occupying force of battle-hardened military recruiters who will be relieved of duty in the unforgiving landscape of malls and high schools across the United States, where the Pentagon has found resistance insur-

mountable. The recruiters would then start "outsourcing" American military jobs, shipping able-bodied citizens in the conquered countries to Iraq in numbers large enough to replace exhausted, fed-up American personnel and sustain the troop levels needed for the projected perpetual U.S. occupation, the linchpin of the Bush administration's ambitious long-range strategy of transforming the entire Middle East into a free, democratic seething cauldron of anti-American hatred.

The job of cooking up the evidence for the immediate threat posed by each country selected for invasion will also be outsourced, according to administration sources, to cable news organizations like Fox that have already demonstrated their resourcefulness in this respect, and in return they will get the kind of wars that they can easily market to restive audiences with short attention spans, with quick victories followed immediately by new invasions that will allow continuous coverage of statues being toppled and fit neatly into 24-hour news cycles and reality format spin-offs.

Hawkish administration strategists like Kenneth Adelman, who predicted a "cakewalk" in Iraq, and Richard Perle, who guaranteed "dancing in the streets," issued a statement that said that by comparison the invasion and conquest of "pushover" countries like Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Surinam, Belize, Syria, Iran, and France that have made their new to-do list will be "a kind of Viennese waltz, New Orleans Mardi Gras, Roman Saturnalia, Club Med cruise, Cancún Spring Break, and Thirty Years' War all rolled up into one."

But reaction at the UN to the president's speech is expected to be mixed, with some small island nations like Tonga, Fiji, and Barbados welcoming an invasion by Americans, figuring that it will be accompanied by a follow-up invasion by Bono, Madonna, and Sting raising money on their behalf or at least buying vacation homes and raising property values, and other countries opposing it on the grounds that it's late and they have a headache.

— Eric Kenning

Kelo: Hope for Property Rights

by Timothy Sandefur

Kelo is not the unmitigated disaster that it appears to be.

In *Kelo v. New London*, the United States Supreme Court held that government may take property that belongs to one person and give it to another. That is hardly surprising. Government today does little else. What is surprising is that for the first time in over a century — perhaps the first time ever — a Justice of the Supreme Court held that the Constitution puts limits on the power of eminent domain. In fact, four Justices contended that government should not be in the business of redistributing property between private landowners.

Eminent domain is the government's power to force you to sell your land for whatever price the government decides is fair. Troubling as this authority is, American law has always considered it legitimate, so long as the government takes the land for a "public use," such as a highway or a post office. But in the past 50 years, government has engaged in much more ambitious projects of redistributing land in ways bureaucrats think are likely to increase revenue. I described some of the awful examples of these takings in *Liberty* (see "They're Coming For Your Land," March).

In its June decision, the Supreme Court upheld a Connecticut plan to take the homes of Susette Kelo and some of her neighbors in New London, Conn., and give the land to a private developer to build a convention center alongside a new Pfizer pharmaceutical plant. Kelo, a nurse who works three jobs to care for her home and her ill husband, was represented by the Institute for Justice (IJ), the Washington, D.C. libertarian legal foundation that does heroic work challenging some of the worst abuses of eminent domain. In their case, IJ cut to the major principle: the state simply had no authority to condemn this tidy, pleasant residential property and transfer it to a private developer for private use. The 5th Amendment's public use requirement, they argued, must

mean something more than "public purpose," since just about anything can be called a "public purpose" in some way, including whatever private development the city officials might envision. In fact, as IJ's Dana Berliner pointed out, the city hasn't even decided what it wants to do with Susette Kelo's property.

But Justices John Paul Stevens, David Souter, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, and Anthony Kennedy rejected this argument. They pointed to 19th century cases which allowed government to take property for railroads, or for dams that powered sawmills; these private enterprises had been authorized to use eminent domain because they contributed to the public welfare, so what was the difference? "The disposition of this case," Stevens concluded, "turns on the question whether the City's development plan serves a 'public purpose.'" Since constructing a convention center would create jobs and increase tax revenue to the city, the condemnation met the requirement. "Promoting economic development is a traditional and long accepted function of government."

None of this was novel. In the 1954 decision *Berman v. Parker*, the Court unanimously declared that Congress could eradicate slums by condemning large portions of Washington, D.C., and transferring the land to private developers. One victim, a storeowner whose business was not

blighted, sued on the grounds that this redistribution violated the public use requirement. Justice William O. Douglas could hardly restrain his contempt. "When the legislature has spoken," he wrote, "the public interest has been declared in terms well-nigh conclusive. In such cases the legislature, not the judiciary, is the main guardian of the public needs. . . . This principle admits of no exception merely because the power of eminent domain is involved." Since the New Deal, it had become the norm for courts to ignore laws that violated property rights, and Douglas was not about to disturb the status quo. In fact, Douglas even found it acceptable for government to take a person's land and give it to someone else directly: "Appellants argue that this makes the project a taking from one businessman for the benefit of another businessman," he wrote. "But the means of executing the project are for Congress, and Congress alone, to determine once the public purpose has been established." The decision was unanimous.

Thirty years later, in *Hawaii Housing v. Midkiff*, the Court again allowed a state to take land from some owners and give it to others. The Hawaii legislature passed a law allowing anyone renting a home to request that the state seize it from the landlord and sell it at a discounted rate to the renter. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote that, although the Constitution did theoretically prohibit the government from taking property from one person and giving it to another, "where the exercise of the eminent domain power is rationally related to a conceivable public purpose, the Court has never held a compensated taking to be proscribed by the Public Use Clause." Public use, essentially, means whatever the legislature says it means. And, again, *Midkiff* was unanimous.

Kelo is probably the first time that any Justice has so directly challenged the validity of any precedent as powerful as *Berman* and *Midkiff*. It certainly marks the first time in well over a hundred years that Supreme Court Justices have taken the public use requirement seriously. Even Justice O'Connor tried to retreat from her own *Midkiff* decision, describing it as containing "errant language." Justice Clarence Thomas went further. *Berman* and *Midkiff* should be overruled, he wrote; the public use requirement means public use, not private use. Even in the railroad and sawmill cases, courts had required the government to regulate the private beneficiaries of eminent domain to prevent that

power from being exploited for private profit. Worse, when government can use eminent domain to transfer land to private developers, it is only a matter of time before powerful lobbyists seize that power for their own profit. As a result, the commonest victims of private takings are people with the least political influence. "Something has gone seriously awry with this Court's interpretation of the Constitution," he wrote. "Though citizens are safe from the government in their homes, the homes themselves are not."

Public outrage over the decision surprised many observers. After all, *Kelo* was predictably in line with precedent. But it seemed to have suddenly dawned on Americans that their homes could be next in line for the bulldozer. Some congressmen proposed barring the use of federal funds whenever

If you've got a barbershop next to a bookstore, and a Costco wants that land — watch out.

eminent domain is used to benefit private parties, and legislators in several states began working on laws to prevent private condemnations.

Meanwhile, in California, redevelopment agencies and contractors immediately began spinning the decision: Californians had nothing to fear from the *Kelo* decision, they claimed, because California's redevelopment law only allows the condemnation of "blighted" property. But this requirement only means that the city must pass a resolution declaring a neighborhood to be "blighted" before they condemn it. And the criteria on which such a resolution may be based are startlingly vague: "Factors that . . . substantially hinder the economically viable use . . . of buildings . . . [including] substandard design, inadequate size given present standards and market conditions, lack of parking, or other similar factors," is one. This seems to mean that if a grocery store's parking spaces are too small for the Nissan Titan, the place is blighted. "Adjacent or nearby uses that are incompatible with each other and which prevent the economic development of . . . the project area," is another factor. If you've got a barbershop next to a bookstore, and Costco wants that land — watch out. "The existence of subdivided lots of irregular form and shape and inadequate size for proper usefulness and development that are in multiple ownership." What sort of usefulness is "proper"? Well, whatever the bureaucrats say, of course.

Worse, a property owner who seeks to challenge the city's declaration that his neighborhood is blighted has little opportunity for a day in court. Take, for example, the case of Ahmad Mesdaq, whose fashionable coffee shop and cigar store, the Gran Havana Cigar Factory in San Diego's Gaslamp District, was condemned earlier this summer to make way for a new hotel. Mesdaq went to court to prove that his land was not blighted, but the judge held that he was not allowed to introduce any new evidence, and that if the city's decision was based on any evidence — no matter how



"It's not accidents in the kitchen that bother me — it's the stuff she does on purpose."

weak — the court would uphold it. When he appealed, the city complained that “if Mesdaq’s 5,000 square feet is not included, the [hotel] project, on 35,000 square feet, has the following deficiencies:

1. The number of rooms is reduced from 334 rooms to 237 . . .
2. The on-site parking is reduced . . .
3. Increased costs are incurred to shore around Mesdaq’s building . . .
4. Change of the project footprint from a rectangle to an “L” shape . . .
5. Loss of 150 linear feet of street footage . . .
6. Reduced ballroom size . . .
7. Changed “back of house” service areas . . .
8. Substandard lobby and arrival area . . .
9. Going back through the review and approval process . . .

The Court of Appeal agreed that these dire public emergencies must be remedied through the use of eminent domain, and Mesdaq was forced to relinquish his shop in May.

This is the reality of eminent domain, and if *Kelo* causes Americans to realize that “economic redevelopment” means just this sort of abuse, it will have taught them a lesson libertarians have tried to teach for years: whenever government has the power to redistribute property, that power will become a prize in a political competition which will be won by the lobbying of concentrated groups with the most to gain — not by the widely dispersed losers, who are often unaware of the legislation passed in their names. Thus the outcome will not depend on justice, but on which group can rally the most political support, which is why poor people so often lose their homes to companies like Costco, Ikea, or Home Depot — and not the other way around.

But at least as important as the education of citizens is the education of the judiciary itself. Since the New Deal, the Supreme Court has — with whatever degree of sincerity — insisted that the only solution for government’s violations of economic freedom is the ballot box. That answer has always been absurd, because the whole purpose of the Constitution is to remove our rights, including the right to property, from

The whole purpose of the Constitution is to remove our rights, including the right to property, from the reach of democracy.

the reach of democracy. The Constitution was not designed to strengthen government — government hardly needs the help — but to limit it. Federal courts, therefore, are supposed to police the boundaries by ensuring that the legislature does not exceed its constitutional authority. Deferring to the legislature on matters of wealth redistribution is simply turning over the henhouse to the fox.

Yet this deferential attitude on the part of the courts has been practically unshakeable. For 70 years, whenever a law that interferes with property rights or economic freedom is

“rationally related to a legitimate state interest,” the courts have given it a pass, and it has been considered almost rude, and certainly crude, to suggest in legal circles that the Constitution limits the legislature’s authority to deprive people of their property or opportunity. According to the most widely respected legal scholars, courts are simply not in the business of “second-guessing” legislative attempts to rewrite the laws of economics. Things had reached such a state that

As Justice Thomas noted, such deference is based solely on the Justices’ political views; it would never be applied in the case of rights that the liberal members of the Court take seriously.

in 1987 the Supreme Court confessed that “our cases have not elaborated on the standards for determining what constitutes a ‘legitimate state interest.’”

That the United States Supreme Court does not know what a legitimate state interest is ought to shock people, but it is entirely understandable, given the Court’s deference to legislatures. The Court has adopted an ultrademocratic principle under which almost anything the legislature decides to do is automatically considered legitimate. The Supreme Court’s assertion that “promoting economic development is a traditional and long accepted function of government” was not supported by any argument or even a footnote, but simply dropped into the opinion as a matter of course. Yet it is simply another instance of the Court ignoring its constitutional duty to ensure that the legislature stays within its legitimate authority. “Long accepted” — by whom? Certainly not by the American Founders, who explained in the Declaration of Independence that government only exists to “secure” our rights, and that the states may only do things which government may “of right” do. It was not accepted by the framers of the Constitution, such as James Madison, who wrote that:

There is no maxim in my opinion, which is more liable to be misapplied, and which, therefore, more needs elucidation, than the current one that the interest of the majority is the political standard of right and wrong. Taking the word “interest” as synonymous with “ultimate happiness,” in which sense it is qualified with every necessary moral ingredient, the proposition is no doubt true. But taking it in the popular sense, as referring to immediate augmentation of property and wealth, nothing can be more false. In the latter sense, it would be the interest of the majority in every community to despoil & enslave the minority of individuals. . . . In fact it is only reestablishing, under another name and a more specious form, force as the measure of right.

Although Justice Stevens’ “deference” wraps itself in the rhetoric of democracy, it is really just substituting force as a measure of right: whenever the legislature decides, in the name of the people, to condemn a person’s home and give it

continued on page 26

Just Say “Non”

by Stephen Berry

The European Union is crumbling — and that’s good news.

On Sunday, May 26, French voters, always seen as staunch supporters of the European Union (EU), voted “Non” in a referendum, thus rejecting the new EU constitution. Barely had the bemused Eurocrats in Brussels prepared their explanations for this Gallic aberration when, three days later, the Dutch too rejected the constitution with an even stronger “Nee.” Although the political leaders of all the major parties in both countries had prophesied doom if further steps along the path of European integration were not taken, the voters of both countries were not convinced. After 50 years, we are undoubtedly witnessing a sea change in the way the EU is perceived by the populations of Western Europe.

During the Second World War, a number of European politicians began to erect European institutions in an effort to neutralize the nationalism which had so damaged the continent in the first half of the 20th century. In 1943, Jean Monnet, one of the main architects of the new European politics, said, “There will be no peace in Europe if the states rebuild themselves on the basis of national sovereignty, with its implications of prestige politics and economic protection. . . . The countries of Europe are not strong enough individually to be able to guarantee prosperity and social development for their peoples. The states of Europe must therefore form a federation or a European entity that would make them into a common economic unit.” In 1951, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was set up, with six members: Belgium, West Germany, Luxembourg, France, Italy, and the Netherlands. The power to make decisions about the coal and steel industry in these countries was placed in the hands of an independent, supranational body called the “High Authority,” with Monnet as its President.

Within a few years, these same six countries decided to go further and integrate other sectors of their economies. In 1957 they signed the Treaties of Rome, creating the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and the European Economic Community (EEC).

In 1967 the institutions of the three European communities (ECSC, EURATOM, and EEC) were merged. There was now a single commission and a single council of ministers as well as a European Parliament. Originally, the members of the European Parliament were chosen by national parliaments, but in 1979 the first direct elections were held, allowing the citizens of the member states to vote for the candidate of their choice. The Treaty of Maastricht (1992) introduced new forms of cooperation between the member state governments in the areas of defense, justice, and home affairs. By adding inter-governmental cooperation to the existing “Community” system, the Maastricht Treaty also created the European Union. As if this were not enough for one year, the EU also decided to prepare for economic and monetary union, including a single European currency managed by a European Central Bank. This single currency — the euro — became a reality on Jan. 1, 2002, when euro notes and coins replaced national currencies in 12 of the 15 EU countries (Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, and Finland).

While national governments transferred powers to the headquarters of the EU in Brussels, the European Union also gained more members through successive waves of accessions. Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom joined in 1973, followed by Greece in 1981, Spain and Portugal in 1986, and Austria, Finland, and Sweden in 1995. In 2004 the European Union welcomed ten new countries: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Bulgaria and Romania expect to join in 2007; Croatia and Turkey began membership negotiations this year and expect to be admitted.

My potted history of the "European idea" clearly shows that, over the last half century, there has been a steady movement towards European integration. The end of this process is undoubtedly seen to be a federation of European states with the EU acting as a super state by virtue of its economic and military clout. The new constitution, which would create an EU foreign minister and a diplomatic service, is only the latest stage of a longstanding development. The rejection of the new constitution by the French and Dutch electorates calls this 50-year-old process into question.

President Chirac urged French voters not to reject the proposed constitution. "It would open a period of divisions, of doubts, of uncertainties," he warned in a televised address from the Elysée Palace, his last speech of a tumultuous campaign. "What a responsibility if France, a founder nation of Europe, took the risk of breaking the union of our continent." But the French have shown that this is a responsibility they are more than willing to shoulder, that a finger wagging from the high and mighty does not faze them. They were quite willing to put up with the displeasure of Washington when they did not wish to become bogged down in an Iraqi quagmire. Bleats from bureaucrats in Brussels who see their expense accounts under threat will only frighten citizens of a very timorous disposition.

Defenders of the EU have made a desperate attempt to maintain that this was not really a vote against the new constitution. In France, their scapegoats are Chirac and what is amusingly called "Anglo-Saxon economic liberalism." Let us leave

Chirac aside for the moment — not easy, when the word is that if he were not president, he would be facing a stiff jail sentence for corruption. What of the charge that the referendum represented a response to globalism and market economics? This is the dream of the "class of '68," the unreconstructed leftists who, like the Bourbons, "have learned nothing, and have forgotten nothing." On this view, the EU constitution should have offered more protection

Setback on the road to peace — Every year on the 11th of November, the people of my village gather at a monument dedicated to the soldiers killed during the First World War. The monument is covered in the names of the dead, including almost every man then aged between 20 and 30. A similar monument can be found in almost every village in France and Germany. My parents told me of the horrors of that war, and I witnessed the horrors of the next one myself.

The statesmen of my generation — those born before the Second World War — undertook to create some sort of European union in order to ensure peace. In 60 years, there has not been a single war between EU nations, and it seems almost impossible that there could be one during the life of any person alive today. In the light of such a great achievement, any argument for or against the EU seems insignificant.

How have we been able to achieve this oasis of peace? Each step of the European construction has been a compromise between classical-liberal and constructivist-socialist governments. The liberals pushed for freedom of movement for people and capital, competition against state monopolies, and increased protection of individual rights. The socialists wanted a common agricultural policy, a joint agreement on nuclear research and proliferation, and shared subsidies to underdeveloped nations. Of course, as a liberal, I resent the socialist measures. But this combination of approaches did have the virtue of moving countries closer to each other, forcing their leaders (and their citizens) to find common ground, and generating lasting friendships.

It has taken 25-odd separate treaties to get Europe to this point, and a desire to synthesize all of them in one single, clear document led to the drafting of a new treaty, unfortunately called a "constitution." (The document contained many items, such as a summary of the previously existing rules, not normally found in a constitution, and that in itself led to many pointless debates which obscured discussions of greater relevance.)

Those who voted against the treaty felt it was either too liberal or too socialist; those who voted for it (as I did) thought it was a reasonable compromise, and one that would enforce some limits on intrusive national governments. It is likely that France would never have had any sort of liberal breakthrough without the pressure applied by the European Union, and, even so, the Heritage Foundation's Economic Freedom rankings list France as 23rd out of the 25 EU nations.

Although the Constitution was voted down in France, I am happy with the result. Why? Because of the unintended consequences: French president Jacques Chirac involved himself so heavily on the "yes" side that the "no" result made him seem out of touch with the people — his approval ratings are down to 21%. In 2007, there will be new presidential elections in France, and Chirac will likely face liberal Nicolas Sarkozy, the most energetic politician that France has seen for many years. Turning Chirac out of office would be a step away from socialism, towards a partnership with the rising star of the EU, Tony Blair (who, despite his "Labour" label, is far more liberal than Chirac). With the support of the former Communist nations, who don't want to hear any more about socialism, Blair and Sarkozy — and Angela Merkel, who should replace Gerhard Schroeder as chancellor in Germany — can liberalize Europe while maintaining the peace of the last 60 years.

— Jacques de Guenin

from foreign trade, financial competition, immigration, and above all, American culture. But this is a pipe dream for at least two reasons. It would not be acceptable to the general French population, whose appetite for foreign goods and American culture is often underestimated (the top ten movies in France are generally from Hollywood). Sad to say,

The Brussels bureaucracy spews forth an endless stream of red tape and directives, covering such important matters as the correct size of sausages.

the French Left's fantasy of a protectionist anti-American Europe would also be unacceptable to Britain, Holland, Scandinavia, Germany, and the new EU members from Eastern Europe who see the United States as a military guarantor against Russia.

Three years ago the Dutch took an eccentric politician, Pym Fortuyn, to their hearts. A homosexual, anti-establishment, anti-immigrant nationalist, he articulated the mood across much of Western Europe. The Dutch have always prided themselves on being tolerant, but when a Dutch film director had his throat cut on main street for making a film critical of Islam, many Dutch cried, "Enough!" There is, in continental Europe, an open hostility to non-European immigrants which would be thought of as racist in the U.K. or U.S. Tell the Dutch that their social policy is to be decided by the votes of 70 million Turks and they will give an even bigger "Nee" vote. And it's not just the elderly. A poll of Dutch high school pupils showed 70 percent to be in the "No" camp.

Add the fact that a certain amount of fear-mongering coming from the "Ja" camp backfired heavily. In a television campaign, the "Ja" campaign tried to invoke the specters of the Holocaust and Srebrenica in order to spook the Dutch people into voting for the constitution. The Dutch were much more impressed by the "Nee" camp, which printed fake 180 euro notes to represent the amount each Dutch person had to pay in a year towards the central EU budget.

Whichever way you slice it, the vote against the constitution came from two countries always supposed to be at the heart of the European integration process. Remember, France and Holland were two of the original founder members of the ECSC in 1951.

What has gone wrong?

The single European market and the merging of foreign trade policies did create prosperity in Western Europe, but each subsequent stage of European economic and political integration has failed to deliver. In the background, the Brussels bureaucracy spews forth an endless stream of red tape and directives, covering such important matters as the correct size of sausages and how a shopkeeper might advertise his goods. Ever present has been the Common Agricultural Policy which subsidizes European farmers and prevents European consumers from buying food where it

would be cheaper. But if I had to single out one issue which has brought the EU to its knees over the last few years, it would be the euro. The introduction of the single currency has paralleled stagnation and mass unemployment in certain countries in the EU. Two of the major sufferers, Germany and Italy, immediately saw the referendum results as an opportunity to consider leaving the euro bloc. The German Finance Minister, Wolfgang Clements, claimed that currency union is stifling Germany's already stagnant economy, and that euro-zone interest rates do not reflect German needs. The Italian Welfare Minister, Roberto Maroni, called for a referendum to decide whether Italy should revert back to the lira. Milton Friedman's forecast about the brief duration of the single currency experiment becomes more prescient by the day.

What of the view from the other side of the English Channel? The aftermath of the EU referenda saw yet another EU conference to decide the level of subsidies to European farmers — yet another clash between British and French leaders over who pays what into the EU. The simple truth is that the EU has become a huge and expensive distraction for Britain and other forward-looking European countries. India and China are emerging as the new superpowers of the 21st century, set to race past Europe in an era of unprecedented economic, demographic, and geopolitical change. Any British prime minister worth his salt should be devoting time to forging closer economic and cultural ties with Asia, not endlessly arguing the level of handouts to this or that farming group. With the economies of China and India set to overtake that of the United States during the next 50 years, the obsession of the British political establishment with European integration (most clearly articulated on the BBC, the British state-controlled broadcasting channel) seems hugely irrelevant.

While the populations of America, China, and India are expected to grow over the next few decades, the population of Europe will fall by some 10 percent. It might be expected that, for historical reasons, the U.K. would be well placed to gain from the rise of Asia. In 1997, Britain handed over Hong

Any British prime minister worth his salt should be devoting time to forging closer economic and cultural ties with Asia, not endlessly arguing the level of handouts to this or that farming group.

Kong to China, but that vibrant city-state should still be a tremendous asset to the U.K., giving British companies extensive contacts in expanding Chinese markets. Hong Kong's trading relationships with the U.K. remain intact, British financial institutions have a strong presence there, and Hong Kong's British-style legal system is easy for U.K. companies to understand. Why more is not made of these opportunities

continued on page 26

The Peasant Principle

by Stephen Cox

Modern peasants aren't necessarily poor or uneducated. They just can't see what's right in front of them.

I recently found myself on a university campus, attempting to do some research in the Art and Architecture Library. I succeeded in locating the building, but I couldn't figure out where they'd put the library. After circling the lobby ten or twenty times, fecklessly trying to find my own way, I noticed a group of students hanging out in a computer room. Swallowing the shame that every American feels in admitting that he is hopelessly lost, I singled one of them out and made my plea for help.

Me: I'm sorry to interrupt you, but could you please tell me where the library is?

Student: What?

Me: I'm looking for the library. It's supposed to be in this building somewhere.

Student: Huh?

Me: The library. I'm looking for the . . .

Student: What?

Me: Library. Books. Reading. [Hand gestures: the opening of a book.]

Student: I dunno.

Me: Maybe upstairs?

Student: Huh?

Me: On the second floor?

Student: Maybe . . .

Me: Well, thanks anyhow.

Dazed, I blundered onto a staircase and got to the second floor. There was the library, all right. The rest of it, as more blundering later disclosed, was housed in the basement. In other words, the student whose advice I had sought was actually surrounded by books, books presumably about his own field of interest. But he had no conception that they were there.

This was far from the first time that such a thing has happened to me. It happens almost every time I seek directions. And it seems to be happening more and more frequently, and taking more and more ridiculous forms.

A couple of years ago I was visiting family and friends in rural Illinois when I discovered that I had forgotten which road to take. Trying to return to my aunt's house in Bridgeport, I had undershot or overshot the goal. I was traveling through farm country that was wholly unfamiliar and wholly without appropriate signage. Then an oasis appeared — a church with a lot of cars parked in front of it. The church had a school, and the school was having some kind of event. Here, surely, were the cognoscenti of the community; here, surely, were people who could release me from the maze of cornfields. I leaped from my car and accosted two large women striding toward the church with covered dishes.

"Pardon me, ladies," I said. "I must have gotten lost. Is this the road to Bridgeport?"

They stared back at me as if I had asked for the steamer schedule to Siam.

"Bridgeport?" they cried.

Now, there are only two towns in that part of the territory, and one of them is Bridgeport.

"Yes," I repeated. "Bridgeport."

The first turned to the second, and both of them

shrugged. "Say, Helen," the second one called to a third. "Know anything about Bridgeport?"

Helen confessed that she didn't. "Well," said a voice from the gathering crowd, "you *could* take that road you were on . . ."

I don't think that any of my would-be helpers was ignorant of Bridgeport's existence. I just think that Bridgeport was outside their mental universe. I took their advice and went back to the road I'd been on. It led me to Sumter.

The other day I was passing through a small town that was the birth and burial place of a significant American author. He's not as famous as Hemingway or Faulkner, but

It isn't just the shepherds of Arcadia who are ignorant of death; it is also the intelligentsia of little towns in Indiana.

who is? It's enough to say that his work is still in circulation, although things haven't reached the stage where "Birthplace of" appears at the city limits. Nevertheless, when I turned up at the town library to ask whether anyone could direct me to his grave in Evergreen cemetery, the reference librarian seemed to have heard of him. The problem was, she hadn't heard of the cemetery. Neither its name nor its location (which happened to be seven blocks away, next to the fairgrounds) evoked any recognition, either from her or from anyone else in the building. Cemetery? What cemetery? It isn't just the shepherds of Arcadia who are ignorant of death; it is also the intelligentsia of little towns in Indiana.

People who work in historical museums are particularly ignorant of the history that surrounds them. Making inquiries in the municipal museum of a large city of southern California, a city that prides itself on its historical connections with railroading, I discovered that no one could tell me anything about either the history or the location of the old railway depot, which was a five-minute walk down the street. "Never been there," they said, appearing to relish

their ignorance. Guides at a state museum in a tiny town in Michigan could not direct me to the town's one other historic site, a church that was emphasized in the museum's own displays. They guessed that the church was a few miles east on the highway. Actually, it's about a thousand feet south on the same country road on which the museum itself is situated.

What's impressive isn't just the ignorance of the people who are paid to know things. It's the ignorance of almost everybody. Motoring this summer through the beautiful state of Kentucky, I decided to see something that I had missed on previous visits — the enormous monument that marks the birthplace of Jefferson Davis. The 350-foot obelisk, one of the largest monumental structures in the world, towers over the rolling fields east of Hopkinsville. It can be sighted from ten miles away. I didn't want to miss it again, but how *could* I?

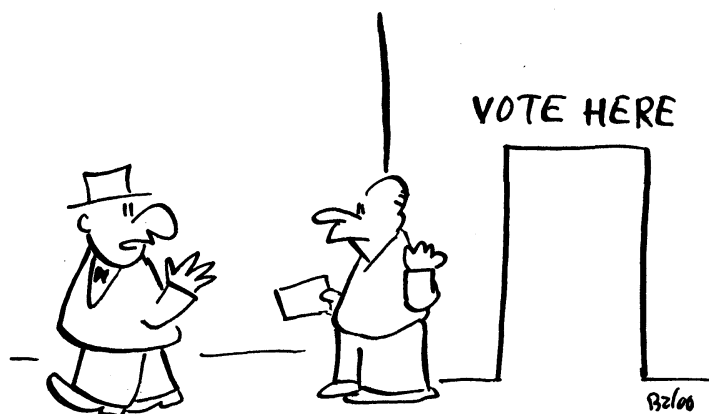
So I thought. But my grotesquely deficient road atlas refused to show any points of interest or even to specify the village of Fairview, where the monument is located. I was confident, however, that any resident of the state could tell me how to get there.

I started asking as soon as I crossed the bridge at Cairo, and I kept asking all along the way east. I asked at state parks and historical sites. I asked at gas stations and McDonald's restaurants (I like their chocolate shakes). Nobody knew where the monument was. In fact, *nobody had ever heard of it*. Not until I saw the thing poking up through the trees was I sure that I was going in the right direction. "I'm surprised that more people don't know about this place," I remarked to the attractive young woman who ran the elevator that took me and two other tourists (not much business that day) to see the great view at the top of the obelisk. "Yes," she said. "It's really too bad."

Yes, it is. It's also too bad that most residents of Manhattan can't tell you where the Chrysler Building is (go ahead, ask them), and that residents of New Mexico who tried to get tickets to the Atlanta Olympics were told by their own representatives to the global village, the employees of the United States Olympic committee, that they should place their orders with the Olympic committee of *their* nation. No one seemed to realize that New Mexico was a state. I used to know a public relations operative who traveled around the country with the clients of her firm. She hadn't the faintest idea of where she was at any time. She had no idea that Iowa was west of New York.

In the early 19th century, during the beginnings of the romantic movement in literature and art, it was sometimes assumed that people who lived amid scenes of great natural beauty were bound to be spiritually inspired thereby: they would know nature and, knowing her, would know both themselves and God. The poet Wordsworth suffered from an advanced stage of this ideological disease. He believed that peasants dwell in an environment in which "the essential passions of the heart find a better soil, in which they can attain their maturity . . . because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature."

Tired of these outbursts, Wordsworth's friend Coleridge informed him that, as everybody knows, or else should



"No thanks — I don't want to get involved."

know, peasants ordinarily understand nothing about “nature” or anything else, unless they are influenced by some neighboring “exciseman, publican, or barber” who reads a weekly newspaper. Where people don’t care to read, even “the ancient mountains, with all their terrors and all their glories, are pictures to the blind, and music to the deaf.”

It is time to go a step farther and state an essential principle of human experience. In honor of the Wordsworth-Coleridge dispute, I will call it the Peasant Principle. It can be formulated in this way: People are least likely to understand or notice the things that lie directly in their way. To put this in plainer language: Ignorance begins at home.

The principle explains much more than people’s ignorance of geography. Oh, much, much more.

Why do men and women select spouses who are plainly worthless in every respect? Why, after getting a divorce, do they go out and make a second marriage, exactly like the first?

Why do the very people who have suffered most from the depredations of government, in the form of crime-ravaged streets, degenerate schools, and the systematic devastation of all job-providing businesses in their neighborhoods, vote en masse for the big-government party?

Why do activists against “hate” employ the most aggressive and abusive language on the political spectrum? Why do rich people constitute the major source of funding for socialist activism of every kind?

Authors are traditionally advised to write about themselves. But why do so many of them (good authors, too) appear to believe that it’s the heroes in their books that are modeled on themselves, when actually it’s the villains?

The answer is not that these people want to demonstrate their hypocrisy, marry themselves to drunks and crazies, make other people laugh at them, or ruin their own lives. It’s that they have not noticed certain obvious features of the

People who work in historical museums are particularly ignorant of the history that surrounds them.

world around them. They are peasants, busily cultivating their gardens, intellectual or emotional, but never lifting their eyes to the dark woods all around them.

Even the history of economic thought can hardly be understood apart from the operations of the Peasant Principle. Although the solution was obvious, the fundamental question of how things acquire economic value went unanswered until the late 19th century. Or rather, the wrong answers were provided. Deep thinkers taught that commodities are valuable either because people worked hard to produce them (the labor theory of value) or because they simply are that way (the intrinsic theory of value). Of course, the world has always been full of things that are worthless, no matter how much work went into them; and there have always been plenty of examples of commodities (like gold and silver) that seem to be intrinsically valuable but aren’t

valuable to you, right now (say, when you are starving to death on a desert island, with only a sack of silver coins for snacks). It took the theory of marginal utility, released to the public in the 1870s, to explain that things become valuable when somebody wants one of them more than anything else

Residents of New Mexico who tried to get tickets to the Atlanta Olympics were told that they should place their orders with the Olympic committee of their nation. No one seemed to realize that New Mexico was a state.

he could spend his time, money, or effort on at the moment. Simple, right? And it took only a few million years for the peasants to see it. A few of them saw it, anyway.

We are all peasants at times. I will spare you an account of my own lengthy and embarrassing failures to see the truth about some of the most obvious features of my environment and myself. I’ll just say that when I was in college I made a special study of Greek revival architecture, often traveling to obscure places to look at old buildings more or less justly suspected of Hellenism; but it wasn’t until many years later, on a nostalgic walk past the rooming house where I spent most of my college days, that I looked at the house next door and discovered that it was one of the best examples of Greek revival in the area.

Do you know whom or what your town was named for? I must confess, to continue in this vein of honesty about myself, that I was well over 40 before I realized that there might be a story behind the names of the communities I knew as a kid. And there was. One, Leoni, was named for a hymn tune (I’m sorry to say that the other natives still don’t know that); another, Henrietta, was named for a European countess — a glamorous origin for what would otherwise seem a very dull moniker.

It’s always interesting to see what a large bag of words the frontiersmen carried with them. But even more interesting to me is the laconic little monosyllabic town of Rives, because, as I found, no origin has ever been established for that name. It’s an indication of the mystery of ordinary things, and it would have been a good education for a little boy, if he’d known anything about it.

Do you know what your own name means, or why it was chosen for you? Most of us don’t. But that’s a question that is arguably much more significant than “Who’s your congressman?” or “What is the capital of Belgium?” — the kind of questions that moralistic pollsters get so disappointed about when they find that people can’t answer them.

The Peasant Principle sheds light on a great deal of behavior that people have tried to explain in other ways. Consider the economic fallacy of the Invisible Dollar. If you are unlucky enough to watch the local TV news, sooner or later you are bound to see a long report (it is always the same) about the horrible things that will happen if the government declines to renew its grant to some local project or

agency. Scores of jobs will be lost; scores of mortgages will be foreclosed; it will be a pretty sad Thanksgiving here in Eaton Rapids, and all because the government stopped "creating economic opportunity."

Well, that may be true; those may be the visible effects of the termination of federal largesse. But what no TV station announces is the jobs that would have been created elsewhere, undoubtedly in greater abundance, if certain funds had not been confiscated by the IRS and spent on that grant to Neighborhood Uplift of Eaton Rapids. This is not reported because nobody sees the money that people would have spent and invested in other ways if it had not been lost to taxation. Those dollars are "invisible." People see only the dollars that are actually spent on the government program. Hence the fallacious belief that there will be a net loss of jobs if the government does not spend money to create them.

That's a plausible explanation. It would be still more plausible if we were dealing with people who truly believed in Santa Claus, people who were certain that every government expenditure was a distribution of funds from some magical source, because they could see no evidence to the contrary. The truth is, anyone who is old enough to work is also old enough to see the supposedly invisible dollars that taxation removes from the marketplace. They're right there on your pay stub. It's very easy to Xerox, videotape, discuss and debate them. Even with the so-called employer's portion of your Social Security "contribution" hidden from your view, you should have no trouble seeing the whopping bite that the government takes out of your pay.

You don't think that money is being wisely invested, do you? No, you don't; you've visited the post office. And I'm sure you can imagine places where you could spend that "invisible" money to great advantage, thereby helping to

a member of my department waxed eloquent about the depraved indifference of the bourgeois political parties, neither of which showed any interest in "teachers" or "education." The result was that our salaries were *eroding*, day by day. Finally someone reminded her that we had just received

If you are unlucky enough to watch the local news, sooner or later you are bound to see a long report about the horrible things that will happen if the government declines to renew its grant to some local project.

a 15% raise. "Well," she said, triumphantly, "I never noticed it." No one could argue with that. She was a proud and happy peasant.

You might argue, however, about the reasons behind the Peasant Principle, the hidden forces that cause people to constrict their consciousness in the manner of medieval serfs. This field is ripe for research and speculation. We can't rely on social class as the underlying cause. "Class" has nothing to do with it. When an establishment authority-figure remarked, in November 1980, "I can't understand how this man Reagan got elected; I don't know anybody who voted for him," he revealed that he was as much a peasant as the illiterate who doesn't know which party won the last election.

Nor does "access to information" offer any insight. Executives at CBS News can get any information they want, but they were the peasants who, on the morning after Dan Rather's disastrous invocation of patently faked documents to smear George Bush, sneered about the bloggers who were smart enough to expose the hoax and laughed about the funny little typographical features that proved it had taken place. Who, they chortled, would bother to notice stuff like that? Again, the important information was present and visible, but not within the universe-as-perceived by the peasants in question.

A great deal of latitude must be allowed to this concept of the universe *as perceived*. The objective universe includes a lot of things that go unperceived by the people who physically inhabit it. One might think it very natural for them to notice such things, but it doesn't seem natural to *them*. It may not even be useful, in the narrow sense of that word.

This is the factor that I call the Cow Component. I once complained to a friend of mine about a group of students who listened unenthusiastically to a lecture I gave. "They stared back at me like cows," I said. "I like cows," he replied. "Cows are dumb," I said. "They know as much," he said, "as they need to know." And that's usually true of people, too — supposing that all they need to know is grazing techniques.

The thing that counts is their conception of what they need to know. You can't tell me that half the population of this country is just naturally and spontaneously fascinated about what happens when two gangs of overweight males try to keep a leather ball away from each other. Some people

Coleridge informed Wordsworth that peasants ordinarily understand nothing about anything, unless they are influenced by some neighboring "exciseman, publican, or barber" who reads a newspaper.

create rewarding jobs for other people. But maybe the figures on your pay stub don't register on your consciousness. Or maybe you never look at them. Most people don't. If they see a two-dollar overcharge on their credit-card bill, they'll go after it like peasants chasing a stolen chicken, but — like peasants — they're just too daunted by the government to meditate upon their pay stub.

And there are other issues. Peasants are not without pride in the untaught wisdom they are alleged to have. A few years ago, my colleagues and I at the University of California were granted an enormous raise by a state legislature that was worried about UC's "falling behind" in its competition for college professors. I know that sounds strange, but soon after it happened I observed something stranger. A party was given for some visiting academic, and at this party

are probably born to be interested in football; the others get interested only because they know they will gain social status and respectability that way. It's expected of them, so they do it.

In the same way, a taste for physical nature — for gazing at it, conserving it, stomping around in it, staying outdoors in tents — is not natural to most people. There was a time, less than three centuries ago, when virtually nobody gave a damn about nature. Now most people do, because they are aware that they are supposed to. To put this more delicately, they have been educated into noticing nature, appreciating nature, making nature part of their mental universe. They didn't use to think that they "liked" it; now they think that liking it is their sacred duty.

There was a time before "nature"; then there was a time when people learned to appreciate it. There was also a time when the vast majority of white people in America did not notice that their relationships with black people were characterized by revolting arrogance and stupidity. They were peasants. Then, in a time of crisis, when black people showed that they weren't prepared to put up with that anymore, white people learned to see what they weren't used to seeing. I think that the results of the Second World War showed the Germans some new things, too.

I don't mean to equate learning about football or nature with learning about racism. I simply want to contrast two ways of learning. Your eyes can be opened by crisis, or they can be opened by a gradual process of encouragement and education. There is every reason to prefer the latter. And isn't it the role of teachers, parents, and friends to help the people they care about attain a richer experience of life? Well, of course it is.

You know what goes on the day after Super Bowl, when you're the only person in your office who doesn't know who won — or even, in my case, that the game was played. The response is shock, horror, pity, an urgent desire to help and instruct. The same emotions should be mobilized to counteract the baneful effects of the Peasant Principle.

Much can be done. Opportunities constantly arise for beneficial interventions. A person is introduced to you. You are told that her name is Mary and she comes from Fremont, California. "Mary," you say, "a lovely, old-fashioned name!" Already you're on the right foot, a much better foot than you'd be on if you'd just nodded and asked the predictable question, "So, uh. . . . What do you do?" "I'll bet you're named after someone in your family," you add. The respondent looks blank. "I dunno," she says. You've embarrassed her. But that's what you're trying to do. A little mild embarrassment, followed by a useful suggestion. "Oh," you reply, "I'm sorry. Perhaps if you asked your parents. . . ."

Mary's resistance to knowledge is now being broken down. You continue your innocent banter. Learning that Mary hails from Northern California, a sports fan would naturally make some comment about the fortunes of a Northern California team. You take a more instructive tack: "The Republican Party has certainly changed since the days of John C. Fremont, eh?"

At this, to Mary, extremely bizarre point in the conversation, she will probably decide to fake it, in the same way in which I fake it when somebody tells me, "Too bad about

those Chargers, eh?" "That's right," I answer, "it's really too bad," as if I knew or cared anything whatever about the San Diego Chargers. Should Mary take the dishonest way out, there is little more to be done for her. You're confronting invincible ignorance. But if her resistance is still crumbling, she may say something like, "Who?" or even, "What do you mean?" Then you can clue her in on the fact that John C. Fremont was the first presidential candidate of the Republican Party, and a very interesting person in other ways as well. If Mary is blessed with an unprejudiced mind, vistas will now be opening up all around her. Imagine! There is something to learn!

But suppose that you yourself have no idea whom Mary's stupid town is named after. Have no fear. You're at no more of a disadvantage than the sports aficionados who talk for hours about things they have barely seen in headlines. Most of them don't know how the Chargers are doing, any more than I do; they're just good at making other people feel that *they* should know. So follow their example; keep talking and presume that the other person will feel obliged to come up with something to say.

Simply make some remark like, "Interesting town, Fremont — especially its name." If Mary confesses her ignorance, that's your cue to move in on her with an astonished stare and sympathizing voice: "Oh . . . I'm sorry. I thought you knew. Well. . . ." Then change the subject, with good

People see only the dollars that are actually spent on the government program. Hence the fallacious belief that there will be a net loss of jobs if the government does not spend money to create them.

hopes that your new friend will recognize her duty to go on the Web right away and look it up. Once she looks up "Fremont," who knows what other things she may decide to learn?

I've outlined some elementary moves in the game. Advanced players will find no difficulty exploring more specialized strategies. And there's no reason to restrict the game to naked facts, as if life were "Jeopardy" or a chart compiled by a genealogist. It's good to proceed, wherever possible, to some sense of the significance of facts. Never let a conversation end just because somebody drops a stray fact into it. If your friend comments disparagingly about the money earned by the latest popular mindless adventure film, you can always go one step beyond. "Disgusting," you can say. "And that's only one-tenth the money that the state is spending on that new prison up at Washoe." "Really?" "Yes. And as you know," which undoubtedly your friend does not, "half the men in that prison will be there because of laws against drugs." "Gosh, that's terrible!" "Yes, it's one more example of what happens, once the government starts worrying about people's private conduct." From there on, the conversation is all gravy.

Of course, politics isn't the ultimate stage of discourse. Maybe you remember the thrill you felt when somebody first pointed up in the sky and got you to notice the wan gray light that's visible between the arms of the crescent moon. It's "earthshine," light reflected onto the moon, from the earth itself; and it made you realize that what the moon is to us, we are to the moon. Then there's the sense of intellectual mastery you gained, the first time you encountered a road sign that said "Continental Divide," and you learned the sig-

nificance of the term: on the slope of that hill before you, the waters of the earth are parted, to roll in their separate ways down to the two great seas that bound our continent. To know such things is to see, comprehend, and *imagine* where we are in the world.

Sensations like that are still available, whenever you say to a bored little child, "Do you know what kind of trees those are? No? Neither do I. Let's look it up!" After all, it remains possible that there are things even you and I don't know. □

Kelo, from page 17

away to someone the legislature prefers, that decision is thoughtlessly endorsed.

As Justice Thomas noted, such deference is based solely on the Justices' political views; it would never be applied in the case of rights that the liberal members of the Court take seriously. "We would not defer to a legislature's determination of the various circumstances that establish, for example, when a search of a home would be reasonable, or when a convicted double-murderer may be shackled during a sentencing proceeding without on-the-record findings, or when state law creates a property interest protected by the Due Process Clause." So why the deference with regard to the public use clause? The only explanation is that taking property rights and economic freedom seriously might undercut the welfare state. Certainly it would raise complicated questions about how far American democracy has drifted from its actual con-

stitutional authority. In defense of the welfare state, the liberal justices on the Court are willing even to abandon their traditional concern with political and economic outcasts.

Kelo is an excellent opportunity for civic education. People who have grown accustomed to seeing the redistributionary state as a kind-hearted way to eliminate poverty are now being confronted with the fact that for government to give, it must also take away. But more importantly, *Kelo* serves as an opportunity to teach a group of people who are in far more desperate need of education: the judges. The issue in *Kelo* was unavoidable: What is a legitimate state interest? Until the judges think seriously about that issue, using the materials bequeathed to us by the authors of the Constitution, their interpretations will continue on this chaotic, self-destructive path. That four justices did take these issues seriously is a great advance from the days of *Berman v. Parker*. □

Just Say "Non," from page 20

would be a mystery if the establishment's love affair with the EU were not everywhere to see.

The future for the U.K. in the 21st century cannot possibly lie in ever greater integration with a continent which seems to be in economic, demographic and cultural decline. Nor should it be as the military ally of the United States, which seems intent on wasting its massive political and economic advantages in an expensive and futile attempt to police the world. Instead the U.K. should strive to be an international

trading center, a crossroads to the world. This would require reorienting British foreign policy towards Asia and Latin America, completely free trade, and further liberalization of the British economy, in particular health and education. The world is at the dawn of the greatest global economic boom in history. If the U.K. is to benefit, escape from the present European morass is essential. I hope and trust that the French and Dutch referenda are important steps along the road to the much-needed British disengagement from the EU. □

Reflections, from page 14

But it ruled that Yaser Esam Hamdi, who had been born in the U.S. (and thus is a citizen), raised in Saudi Arabia, and captured on the battlefield in Afghanistan, could challenge his detention in U.S. courts rather than a military tribunal. Hamdi has since been released.

In February a federal judge ruled that the U.S. government must either charge Padilla with a crime or release him. The government appealed, and in late July argued before the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals that it has the right to detain suspects in the war on terrorism "for the duration of the hostilities." That leaves a number of troubling questions. Congress authorized military action in a vague way — you could argue that it was to be directed only against those responsible for 9/11 — but it hasn't actually declared war on "terrorism" or any state, as the Constitution seems to require. Since terrorism is a tactic rather than a nation or a state, we have no idea what would constitute victory or when the war will be over.

Thus the administration is arguing for indefinite detention at the sole discretion of the president, with the judiciary having no say in the matter. So much for separation of powers.

"It is hard to believe that the government thinks it will win this case in the end," said Robert Levy, a constitutional scholar at the Cato Institute. "I think they're maneuvering to drag the detention out as long as possible but will come to a settlement in the end, as in the Hamdi case." For the time being, however, Jose Padilla is in the brig with no charges filed against him, and the administration is making the case for essentially dictatorial powers, for an indeterminate period. That is hardly the model of civilized, liberty-loving behavior we would like to contrast to terrorist barbarism.

Continuing to maintain such a stance materially weakens the case that the current struggle with terrorists is one between "civilization" and "barbarism." The terrorists are certainly barbarous, but working to undermine the rule of law is hardly a hallmark of civilization. — Alan W. Bock

Yukon Interlude

by Aaron Anderson

It was 1972. Judy and I felt the pull to move further from civilization. We bought 40 acres above Tonasket, Wash., on the Canadian border. We never actually moved there, but I did make two hikes from there into Canada, carrying 40 pounds of hash each time. The hikes were fun and profitable, and made us realize that we wanted to get even more remote. I had great memories of Alaska, so we planned a reconnaissance trip to Alaska on our BMW motorcycle. I removed the saddlebags and installed two large backpacks in their place.

I also built a 1x1x3 foot box for the package rack on the rear behind the seat. This held our food and cooking gear. My dog Flossy rode on top of the box. We stowed our tent and rain gear in the fairing in front.

Fairbanks was really torn up and overcrowded due to the pipeline project. This was not the vision from my youth, so we reluctantly got on the BMW and headed back towards our home in Roslyn, Wash. We still had lots of summer left, so we decided to take the Alcan Highway. Soon after stopping at Toke Junction to have a toke, we crossed the Alaska-Yukon border and proceeded to Dawson City, a small town of about 500 folks. We arrived just as the annual Dawson Days Celebration was starting, so there were thousands of people partying. We decided to hang out for awhile and check it out.

We sought out the locals and expressed our interest in finding some good growing land. The Lewis Rauls Homestead came up in several conversations. Lewis had been growing hay there for years, until the steamboats stopped operating on the Stuart and Yukon rivers. He had been selling his hay to racehorse owners in Vancouver. When the riverboats stopped running he just left and no one knew his whereabouts. We found a friend who agreed to lend us a canoe, and he drove us to a place upriver from the old homestead. Judy and I headed downstream on a river we knew little about. We did know that the homestead was on the right bank, so how could we miss it? The Stuart river was mostly pleasant, although we did encounter some pretty hairy rapids here and there. Traveling by canoe allowed us to encounter several moose and large brown bears at close range along the riverbanks.

The third day out we saw a large rooftop over the foliage at the river's edge. We paddled across the current and beached below a steep bank of glacier clay. As we climbed, I noticed some long pointed objects protruding from the bank. Curiosity caused me to scrape and claw one of them loose. Guess what? Mastodon tusks. We continued up the steep bank, and found ourselves staring at two Ford Model-T trucks in near-perfect condition. Beyond the trucks rose a log farmhouse, a barn, and several smaller buildings. The house was in good condition, other than the roof, which had failed under its load of snow. The barn was full of horse harnesses and farming equipment.

The well was fresh and the sloping fields were abundant with tall grass and feral hay. We were excited about the prospects for this place, and after a good hike around the land we spent the night. In the morning we canoed down the Stuart river to the Yukon river, and then to Dawson, our point of origin.

Our friend who had loaned us the canoe showed us how we could stake a claim on the homestead by faking a few documents. We filed our claim. Now we were really excited, and we rode as many as 800 miles a day on the rest of the return to Washington.

Upon arriving in Roslyn, we immediately began preparing for our departure. I purchased a 1946 Dodge 4-wheel-drive military ambulance and a large trailer. Judy's dad had given her a 1950 Dodge 3/4-ton pickup, and we purchased a camper for it. I repainted the vehicles blue and yellow, and yellow and blue. We still faced a few obstacles, like how we would get into Canada with all our gear, looking like hippies.

What we needed was some authentic looking documentation of who we were and what we were up to. As luck would have it, while we were sorting through stuff in preparation to leave, Judy came across a ring of keys to the University of Washington biology department.

The next time we were in Seattle we went out to the university, and sure enough the keys worked. Once inside, Judy looked for and found some University of Washington letterhead stationery. Cool. As we were leaving I bumped into a shelf and knocked

We still faced a few obstacles, like how we would get into Canada with all our gear, looking like hippies.

a little book onto the floor. When I picked it up I saw that it was a requisition book from the university supply depot. Double cool. We took the requisition book with us for future considerations. (Please note our moral disclaimer: at this time we were more in tune with the "smash the state" mentality.) Now that we had the requisition book we found all sorts of things that could help us. We submitted a requisition for two aluminum canoes, some biology equipment, a large first aid kit, camera gear, and a citizens-band radio hookup for the trucks.

We had another stroke of luck one day when a junkie in Seattle approached me with a case of food stamp coupons he wanted to trade for cash. I gave him \$100 for the case (about \$2,400 worth of stamps). We spent the stamps on large bags of rice and millet, wheat berries, and a variety of nuts and dried fruit. We got huge wheels of cheeses, and cases of dates and raisins.

We also went to our friends at Starbucks Coffee Company at the original Pike Street Market location and had them make us a 25-pound package of our own special blend. Starbucks called it Yukon Blend, and I believe they still market it as such.

One of the considerations about leaving was what to do with Flossy. It was obvious that she wouldn't be able to handle the severe cold of the Yukon winters. One day when I was cutting some firewood so that Jim and Jan, our friends from California who would be living in our house while we were gone, would have a supply to last until they could get their own wood

together, I accidentally felled a log on top of Flossy. This was a terribly sad occasion. I buried Flossy under a nearby tree and drove home feeling pretty low. After we had sufficiently mourned Flossy's demise, we loaded all our stuff into the trucks and bade farewell to Jim and Jan. We drove to Seattle to say farewell to friends and decide where to cross the border into Canada.

Into the Wild

We had our University of Washington letters of introduction, which we wrote ourselves, and all the proper papers for our malamute, Clyde. I did a final wrap on the trucks, putting everything in a high degree of order. The two aluminum canoes were tied on top of the truck. We named them Frog canoe and Om canoe. We chose to go through the main border crossing at Blaine, and arrived at the border early in the morning. Judy went inside with our papers and our letter of introduction which explained that I was Dr. Me, she was my assistant, and we were on a limnological survey to the Desdash region of the Yukon Territory. The border guard who came out to inspect the vehicles was so impressed with our trucks and our whole presentation that he just waved us through. We drove a few miles and stopped to smoke a joint in celebration. We'd made it.

It is a long way to the Yukon and over 1,000 miles of the road was unpaved. We traveled about five miles apart to make it easier for faster moving vehicles to get past us. We were in communication through the two-way radios, and we took turns leading. We had both taken a massage course from my friend Calvin before we left home so we were quite proficient at relieving driver's stress at the end of each day.

One day when I was leading I saw a hitchhiker beside a pile of stumps by the roadside. I radioed Judy to pick him up. About an hour later I saw a nice place to stop for the night and pulled off the road to start setting up camp. When Judy arrived and pulled in I heard giggling, and when Judy and the hitchhiker appeared from behind the truck I realized that the hitchhiker was a young woman. She and her boyfriend had been going to Alaska to seek their future, then he had thrown her out of his car. She had been hiding behind the pile of stumps for four days with only a couple of candy bars for food. She was a mess. Her blond hair was extremely matted and her face was swollen from mosquito bites. Judy had properly medicated her with some hashish, so she was fairly mellow by the time they arrived. We fed her, brushed out her hair, and treated her insect bites. She had the same body style as Judy and the same long hair. Her face was ugly from insect bites that Judy washed clean with a special herbal cleanser.

After a good night's sleep she told us that she still wanted to go to Alaska. We appreciated her spunk, and invited her to travel with us. She accepted. Her name was Aimee. When her face had cleared up from the bites and stings she looked just like Judy, except she had blue eyes and blond hair. The two of them together were quite striking.

We had a series of breakdowns. The worst was a broken axle on the military truck. My jack would not lift the fully loaded truck, so we had to empty half the load to jack up the truck and remove the axle. I left the women with the camper beside the road with Clyde and a rifle, and I hitchhiked to the nearest town

to find a new axle. After a few days I returned, repaired the truck, reloaded it, and off we went. As a result of all the breakdowns, we had spent several weeks together by the time we finally arrived at the backroad that would take us to our homestead. We camped overnight and celebrated our journey with some homemade LSD-laced wine we had brought with us from Roslyn.

In the morning I began arranging our trucks for the final leg of our trip, on a road that hadn't been used for over 20 years. The women were having a conversation and Judy walked over and asked me how I felt about Aimee coming with us.

This new idea was dropped on me like a bomb, although I admit I had briefly entertained this fantasy. I flashed on the responsibility for another member, and if we would have enough food and supplies to accommodate a third person. I contemplated deeply for a split second and said "YES!"

The journey from the highway (a gravel road) to our new home was about 30 miles. We had to stop often to remove fallen logs and to shovel landslides from the road. When I say road I mean a two-rut strip that wound around and climbed up and down the countryside. It took four days to travel our driveway the first time. After the first time it only took eight hours one way.

Before we came to the land we came to a huge gold dredge that had been left to rot when the vein ran out of gold. We stopped to examine this oddity and I mentally cataloged its resources for possible future use. A little further on we came upon a grouping of buildings that must have been the mining camp. A mess hall, a bunkhouse, an office, and an equipment shed made up the scene. Oh yeah, and a six-hole latrine.

A mile or so further and we came to Eagle River. The river had obviously deepened and widened over the years because there was no way we could get across it with our trucks. We waded across the river and walked on down the trail for another couple miles or so and came to the homestead buildings we had seen on our visit last year.

Because it was getting late in the season I reluctantly decided we would be better off creating a temporary home at the mining camp for the winter. It would take way too long to build a bridge

We made a large brown-bear rug out of a brown bear that was threatening us while we were stealing his cranberries.

out of the timbers the gold dredge was made of, and we still had to have time to get ready for winter.

We immediately began tearing down the bunkhouse and remodeling the mess hall to suit our needs. I installed two barrel stoves and a cook stove that we had brought with us. We had brought lots of fun stuff to decorate a cabin with, and Judy and Aimee set about doing just that. As soon as we got the cabin tight I began cutting wood for the long winter ahead. After I had 24 cords of wood cut and stacked, I began splitting enough kindling

for starting fires through the winter. We acquired seven more sled dogs from Gus, a trapper about 20 miles away. He was our nearest neighbor. We found a couple of sleds in the barn at the homestead and made our own harnesses out of some of the horse tack that was left in the barn.

The relationship among the three of us was great. I left most of it up to the women and we all loved each other a lot so it wasn't difficult at all. If you're wondering about our sexual arrangements, I left that up to the women to work out. All was well.

In the fall we spent our days harvesting cranberries, mushrooms, fiddler ferns, and lots of stuff we didn't recognize. We documented over 250 varieties of mushrooms. Some were shitty,

One morning we heard a commotion outside — a huge moose was trying to take out one of the trucks we had stored in the shop building.

some tasted good, and some felt good. I just loved the discovery of it all. We used most of the cranberries to make what we called cranberry ketchup. It was good on almost everything. We dried big bags full of herbs and teas for winter. And we made a large brown-bear rug out of a brown bear that was threatening us while we were stealing his cranberries.

In mid-October the snow came. It snowed about a foot thick and after that it was too cold to snow. The snow stayed bright white till spring, except for a strip downwind of our chimney. One morning while it was still dark (it only got a little light for an hour or so at midday) we heard a commotion outside. The dogs were yelping so I went out to see what was up. A huge moose was trying to take out one of the trucks we had stored in the shop building. I attempted to discourage him but he was stubborn, so I shot him. This set us up for a 24-hour marathon of skinning, butchering, and storing as much of him as we possibly could. The women made me an absolutely fabulous pair of pants and a shirt. We chewed on the dried hide to soften it. I made moose-horn buttons, Judy and Aimee created some awesome bead work. We had brought a Pfaff industrial sewing machine that I converted to operate on a treadle. Very high-tech. As the winter progressed, the women also got moose-hide outfits. Mukluks too. I got wolverine mukluks and a seal-skin parka.

We read out loud to each other while doing crafts and the winter just crept on by. We developed a pattern where one of us served the other two every third day. The server's day started with stoking the stoves in the morning, preparing coffee or tea or hot chocolate, brushing hair, giving massages, leading a stretching session, then preparing and serving breakfast. The afternoons consisted of giving baths, massage, reading out loud, and otherwise pleasing the two recipients. Preparing and serving meals became competitive. Each of us constantly sought to create more artful culinary extravaganzas.

One nice diversion, especially during full-moon time, was to harness up the dogs, drop some LSD and go cruising. If we took the dogs out about ten miles we could turn around and they would head home on their own. We could just lie back and listen to the symphony of the sled runners and the panting of the dogs, while the aurora borealis sent its soft green rays deep into our eyes at 50 to 60 degrees below zero — very crispy entertainment.

I built a sauna for weekly sweats. This was major in regards to keeping us warm the rest of the week. We would get as hot as we could stand, then go outside and lay in the snow for as long as we

We could just lie back and listen to the symphony of the sled runners and the panting of the dogs, while the aurora borealis sent its soft green rays deep into our eyes.

could, and then repeat it over and over for hours. I developed a high degree of resilience to extreme temperature changes.

As the long winter subsided and the days got longer, we started getting excited about gardening. After the snow melted and the ground thawed, I got an old Ford tractor running that had been left by the gold miners. It had a high enough clearance to cross the Eagle River, so I drove it to the barn on the homestead and got a plow that was intended to be horse-drawn. I taught Judy how to drive the tractor and we plowed about a quarter of an acre of south-sloping soil for a vegetable garden. I dismantled the six-seater outhouse from the mining camp and spread the human manure on the garden. We planted corn, potatoes, beans, peas, squash, radishes, turnips, and a variety of greens. Oh yeah, let's not forget the strawberries.

The soil was rich and fertile, and the summer sun was hot. We kept a record of the daily temperatures. The lowest was 74 degrees below zero and the highest was 96 degrees above zero. The summer was clear and dry, so we had to haul water for the garden from the creek by the cabin every other day. The sky was always clear, blue, and empty except for the occasional jet stream from planes that were so high we couldn't see them.

We were very happy to be eating fresh greens and other yum-mies from our own local garden of eatin'. Later we enjoyed the root crops which grew enormous in the long days of sunshine. Ten-pound potatoes and huge beets were our favorites. We spent days preparing and canning as much food as we could for the coming winter. We again harvested cranberries and mushrooms and other local herbs. In another location we grew some very good sativa. These plants towered 15 feet tall and produced enough stash to keep us well through the following winter. We named it thunderfuck. Yea, nature.

One morning, after the first snow had fallen, we heard a helicopter over in the next valley. We heard some rifle shots and then the helicopter left. I was curious and decided to hike over there and see what I could see. After slogging along for an hour or so, I

saw some blood on the snow. As I got closer I saw the headless, footless, and tailless body of a large female wolf. This extremely graphic display of human stupidity stunned me to the core.

As I sat there in the snow contemplating the insanity of such an act, I heard some faint squeaks and yelps coming from a snowbank near an old stump. As I got closer, I saw the small opening the yelping was coming from. I stuck my arm into the hole to see if I could extract the noisemaker. The noisemaker responded by biting my finger. I quickly withdrew my arm and put my gloves on to stop the bleeding.

After an appropriate time for issuing expletives and profanity I tried a different idea. This time I got some of the jerky we had made for dog treats that I kept in my pockets, placed them outside the hole, and sat back and waited. Sure enough, after some time went by, out popped two of the cutest little wolf cubs this sourdough hippy had ever seen. I skinned the mama wolf and made a pouch out of the hide, placed the cubs in the pouch, and attached a stick to it. I placed the stick over my shoulder, Huckleberry Finn style, and made the trek home.

It didn't take the women long to domesticate these little rascals, and they grew like wolves. I erected a pen for them out of spruce poles and old roofing metal. The female never took to captivity as well as the male did, and one morning she was dead. We never figured out what caused her death. The male grew very fast, and our daily wrestling matches soon got a bit scary. One day when we were doing our eye contact thing, I decided to let him loose. He hung around for a week or so, and then one night when a pack of his relatives came by to set up a howling concert with our dogs, he left with them. He did come by and check on us a few times after that, and then we never saw him again. By the time he left us he was 36 inches tall and probably weighed 180 pounds. He never had a name. We just called him Big Guy.

Eagle Feather Junction

The Eagle River was the rear boundary of our homestead. Our maps showed that it flowed west, parallel to and north of the Stuart River, which framed our southern border, then turned south to meet the Stuart River. Our trapper friends called the place Eagle Feather Junction. Every year in the fall, all the eagles from the entire upper Yukon drainage gathered there to feast on cranberries and fall salmon in preparation for their long flight south for the winter. They also used this time to pluck each other's excess down and feathers out. This made them lighter and more streamlined.

When the fall chores were completed we wanted to make some short journeys around the area, and Eagle Feather Junction was high on the list. The trip would take us down the Eagle River to the Stuart, and on down the Stuart to the Yukon and then to Dawson. The only obstacles to our plan were that the canoe would only hold two of us, and one of us would have to drive the truck to Dawson, since we would need transportation for the return of the canoe and its passengers. We agreed that Judy and Aimee would draw straws to see who would go with me in the canoe, and who would drive the truck to Dawson. Judy drew the long straw, so she got to drive the truck. Remember, our drive-

way took eight hours in first gear. We didn't have an accurate estimate of how long the canoe trip would take, so we had her wait five days before heading for Dawson.

When Aimee and I arrived at Eagle Feather Junction we were astonished at the huge congregation of eagles that was there. The surrounding bushes were loaded with eagle feathers and down. We had brought rakes and large cloth sacks, and we spent a day raking up feathers and down. After securing the bags in the canoe we continued downstream to Dawson. When Judy arrived with the truck, we drove back home to create some awesome eagle-down mattresses and blankets. Very soft, very warm.

One day a middle-aged couple showed up in our yard claiming that they owned the mining buildings that we were occupying. I knew the buildings weren't on our homestead, so there wasn't much to argue about. They had a pretty "redneck" attitude and they demanded \$1,000 for the buildings or we would have to move out. We didn't want any trouble with the authorities, so much to their surprise we gave them 50 twenty-dollar bills and asked for a receipt. That was the last we ever heard from them.

Saying Goodbye

After cutting another 20 cords of wood we had completed our preparation chores for the coming winter. We decided to take a trip to Dawson to see what we could see. We met a young couple at the only store. I can't recall their names. He was the new teacher at the Dawson school. They invited us to stay at their place and shared some of their British Columbia buds with us. Of course we reciprocated.

By this time I had harvested some of the mastodon tusks from the riverbank and had made a lot of paraphernalia and jewelry. I was able to sell it all for a good profit in Dawson. I also got several orders for knife handles, pistol grips, and stash boxes. We

We heard some rifle shots and then the helicopter left. I decided to hike over to see what I could see. After slogging along for an hour or so, I saw some blood on the snow.

bought some fabric and other sewing supplies to help keep us productive through the coming winter. After a few days we got homesick, so after filling two drums of gasoline and one drum of kerosene, and purchasing a 50-pound bag of dried milk, we went back to the homestead to settle in for our second winter.

When we got back home it still hadn't snowed, so I tried my hand at panning gold in the creek. At first it was disappointing, however as I got better at it I could scrape up several hundred dollars a day. The downside was standing in frigid water wearing rubber boots while bent over at the waist, for hours. This was clearly not a healthy activity so when the snow came I was happy to give it up.

About a month into our winter schedule a helicopter landed in our yard and two Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers climbed out. I went out to greet them while the women hid our

The journey from the gravel highway to our new home was about 30 miles. We had to stop often to remove fallen logs and to shovel landslides from the road. It took four days to travel our driveway the first time.

paraphernalia. I invited them in for tea and they explained that Judy's mom had called them because her dad had died, and she wanted Judy to come to New Mexico to help out for a while. Judy decided to go, and after getting her pack together she left in the helicopter.

This of course really changed the rhythm of life for Aimee and me. We had never had a relationship that just involved the two of us so it seemed awkward at first. About six weeks later, just as we'd adjusted to our new arrangement, the Mounties returned. This time the message was from Aimee's mom. Her grandmother, Bessie Birdsong, was dying and had requested to see Aimee before she died.

This was a severe blow to the very foundation of our life on the homestead. Aimee felt she should go, and she didn't feel good about leaving me there alone. Neither did I. We sent the Mounties off with a message for her mom that she would come soon. I got the battery out of the truck and brought it inside to warm up. I made a small fire under the truck engine to warm up the oil, replaced the battery, and the truck eventually started.

By this time we were packed and ready to go. We chained all the tires on the truck and worked our way down the driveway to the now frozen Alcan Highway. We dropped off the dogs and some food at trapper Gus' place on the way out. We first drove to Dawson and called a friend in Whitehorse, the nearest city, to make plane reservations to Michigan.

The temperature was 63 degrees below zero, our surroundings were entirely white, and the sky was bright blue and cloudless as we headed down the Alcan towards Whitehorse. We had our traveling gear and two 45-gallon drums of fuel, two new sets of chains, and a quarter pound of our homegrown thunderfuck. We had our long johns, moosehide pants and shirts, our parkas, mukluks, wool caps, and hoods. We had two eagle-down comforters and two warm hearts inside the cab of the truck. We had the heater and the defroster on max. The side and rear windows iced up and the heat from the heater was undetectable, but the defrosters kept two eight-inch circles of clear glass to see through.

We arrived at the airport and after an emotional separation, Aimee boarded the plane to Michigan. I never saw her again, and saw Judy only twice more, but I did receive a beautiful bright wizard's robe Aimee made for me. It came in the mail with a nice letter about her grandmother. □

The Necessary Evil

by Mark Skousen

Too much government and the economy chokes. Too little, and it cannot function. Is there a Golden Mean?

Today libertarians spend most of their time lamenting the consequences of big government. And rightly so. Today government is less a defender of freedom and more a Hobbesian leviathan that undermines prosperity. When we do talk about limited government, it is often seen solely as “a necessary evil.”¹ George Washington best summarized the libertarian view: “Government is not reason; it is not eloquence; it is force! Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master.”²

So it is with some trepidation that I suggest that societies or countries may not have enough good or legitimate government. In the never-ending battle against big government, it might be well to consider what constitutes “good government” to see how far we have strayed from the proper role of the state.

Each year the Fraser Institute publishes their Economic Freedom of the World Index (see www.fraserinstitute.org), which measures five major areas of government activity in more than 100 countries: size of government, legal structure, sound money, trade, and regulation.

The most surprising thing about the study, according to its author James Gwartney, a professor of economics at Florida State University, is the importance of legal structure as the key to maximum performance for an economy. “It turns out,” he told me in a recent interview, “that the legal system — the rule of law, security of property rights, an independent judiciary, and an impartial court system — is the most important function of government, and the central element of both economic freedom and a civil society, and is far more statistically significant than the other variables.”

Gwartney pointed to a number of countries that lack a decent legal system, and as a result suffer from corruption,

insecure property rights, poorly enforced contracts, and inconsistent regulatory environments, particularly in Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East. “The enormous benefits of the market network — gains from trade, specialization, expansion of the market, and mass production techniques — cannot be achieved without a sound legal system.”³

The Proper Role of the State

Milton Friedman identifies the legitimate roles of the state: “The scope of government must be limited. Its major function must be to protect our freedom both from the enemies outside our gates and from our fellow-citizens: to preserve law and order, to enforce private contracts, to foster competitive markets. Beyond this major function, government may enable us at times to accomplish jointly what we would find it more difficult or expensive to accomplish severally.”⁴ Adam Smith suggests that this “system of natural liberty” will lead to a free and prosperous society. As Smith declares, “Little else is required to carry a state to the highest degree of opulence from the lowest level of barbarism, but peace, easy taxes, and a tolerable administration of justice.”⁵

The division between the positive and negative role of government can be represented visually. In the diagram on the next page, we have on the vertical axis “socioeconomic

well-being": some general measure of the quality of life in a free and civil society. For empirical studies, economists might want to use changes in real per capita income, but this may be too confining.

On the horizontal axis we have "government activity." At point O, we have zero government, and as we move along the horizontal axis, the size and scope of government activity increase. The ultimate extreme is the totalitarian regime, which institutes "total government," though I would hesitate to label this "100% government," since no government can control all activity.

Too Little vs. Too Much Government

My thesis is that as a society moves from zero government to point P, economic well-being increases to peak performance. Then, as it adopts a larger and less necessary government, its growth diminishes, and can even turn negative if government becomes too burdensome and controlling.

Looking at the left side of the mountain, point O (zero government) to P (optimal government) constitutes "too little" government. For example, a nation may spend too few of its resources on personal protection, property control, and government administration. Here we see how increasing the size and scope of government activity initially leads to increased well-being, as measured by individual freedom and prosperity. Point P represents the right amount of government and the optimal amount of expenditure necessary to fulfill its legitimate functions. This is the ideal of the minimalist state. Any point to the right of P represents too much government, when the central authority becomes a burden rather than a blessing. I've drawn it as a gradual downward slope, so that the more bad government a country adopts, the greater the decline in performance, even to the point X where government is so large and so intrusive that it results in the destruction of economic and social well-being, which is probably worse than the costs of anarchy.

Quantifying the Right Amount of Government

Can we quantify P, the optimal size of government? Several economists have attempted to determine the ideal level of government spending as a percentage of GDP. In the

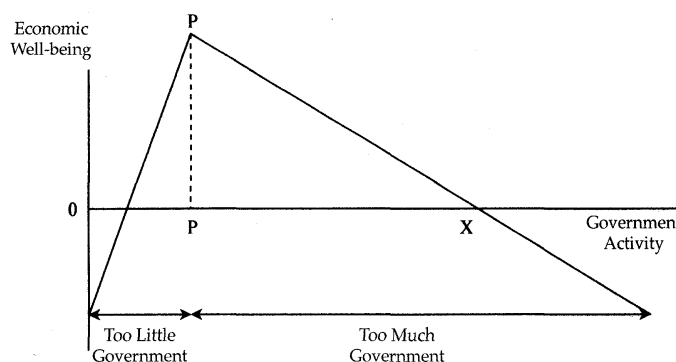
The legal system — the rule of law, security of property rights, an independent judiciary, and an impartial court system — is far more statistically significant than the other variables.

1940s, Australian economist Colin Clark said that the maximum size of government should not exceed 25% of GDP. Anything higher would hurt economic growth.⁶ Professor Gerald W. Scully, of the University of Texas at Dallas suggests that the tax rate ought not to exceed 23%.⁷ World Bank economists Vito Tanzi and Ludger Schuknecht analyzed 17 countries during the period 1870 to 1990 and concluded that public spending in newly industrialized countries should not

exceed 20% and in industrialized countries not more than 30%.⁸

Is optimal government (point P) the same for every country? This would make an interesting study, but I suspect that differences in culture and socio-economic circumstances suggest that some nations require more government than others. As Benjamin Franklin states, "A virtuous and laborious [industrious] people may be cheaply governed."⁹ And a lazy, dishonest people must be expensively governed.

Optimizing Government Power



Optimistically, I would think that if all nations were featured together on the diagram above, the various points P would constitute a fairly narrow mountain range.

Almost every country in the world today is to the right of Point P, and could grow faster and enjoy a higher quality of life by reducing the size and scope of government. Countries from China to Ireland to Chile have demonstrated how dramatically the economy can improve by cutting back the state. I'm sure even Hong Kong, #1 in the Fraser Institute's study in terms of performance and freedom, could benefit from some improvements by scaling back some types of government services. According to the latest surveys of economic freedom by the Fraser Institute and Heritage Foundation, countries on average are becoming more free, and not surprisingly, the world's economic growth rate is rising.¹⁰ After noting that government represents 40–50% of GDP in most developed nations, Tanzi and Schuknecht conclude, "we have argued that most of the important social and economic gains can be achieved with a drastically lower level of public spending than what prevails today."¹¹

Two Case Studies in Little or No Government

Are there any examples of countries to the left of point P, that have too little government? The United States suffered from too little government under the Articles of Confederation, which was the basic law of the land from its adoption in 1781 until 1789, when they were replaced by the Constitution. The Articles limited the federal government to conducting foreign affairs, making treaties, declaring war, maintaining an army and navy, coining money, and establishing post offices. But it could not collect taxes, it had no control over foreign or interstate commerce, it could not force states to comply with its laws, and it was unable to pay

off the massive debts incurred during the Revolutionary War. States were already putting up trade barriers, striking a serious blow to free trade, and the economy struggled. After the Constitution became law, the United States flourished because of improved government finances, protection of legal rights, and free trade among the 13 states.

A modern-day example of too little government is Somalia, located east of Ethiopia and Kenya, where life has been difficult and often dangerous without any central authority since 1991. For example, drivers pass seven check-points, each run by a different militia, on their way to the capital. At each of these "border crossings" all vehicles must pay an "entry fee" ranging from \$3 to \$300, depending on the value of goods being transported. Competing warlords vie for control of the countryside, which has frequently collapsed into civil war. Only an estimated 15% of children go to school, compared to 75% in neighboring states.

However, a recent report by the World Bank indicates that an innovative private sector is flourishing in Somalia. This vindicates the Coase theorem, named for economist Ronald Coase, which argues that in the absence of government authority, the private sector will step in to provide alternative services, depending on the transaction costs.¹² The central market in Bakara is thriving: all kinds of consumer goods, from bananas to AK-47s, are readily sold; mobile phones proliferate and internet cafes prosper. But with no public spending, the roads and utilities are deteriorating. Private companies have yet to appear to build roads — the transaction costs are apparently too prohibitive. Public water

Under the Articles of the Confederation, the federal government could not collect taxes. States were already putting up trade barriers.

is limited to urban areas, and is not considered safe, but a private system extends to all parts of the country as entrepreneurs have built cement catchments, drilled private boreholes, or shipped water from public systems in the city. There are now 15 airline companies providing service to six international destinations, and airplane safety can be checked at foreign airports. After the public court system collapsed, disputes have been settled at the clan level by traditional systems run by elders, with the clan collecting damages. But there is still no contract law, company law, or commercial law in Somalia. Sharp inflation in 1994–96 and 2000–01 destroyed confidence in the three local currencies, and the U.S. dollar is now commonly used. Because of a lack of reliable data, neither the Fraser Institute nor the Heritage Foundation's economic freedom indexes rank Somalia.

The World Bank concludes, "The achievements of the Somali private sector form a surprisingly long list. Where the private sector has failed — the list is long here too — there is a clear role for government intervention. But most such interventions appear to be failing. Government schools are of lower quality than private schools. Subsidized power is

being supplied not to the rural areas that need it but to urban areas, hurting a well-functioning private industry. Road tolls are not spent on roads. Judges seem more interested in grabbing power than in developing laws and courts. Conclusion: A more productive role for government would be to build on the strengths of the private sector."¹³

In short, most countries could use less government, but a few countries could use more of the right kind of authority. There is an optimal size and structure of government, and

Countries are becoming more free, and not surprisingly, the world's economic growth rate is rising.

when it is reached, the result is, in the words of Adam Smith, "universal opulence which extends itself to the lowest ranks of the people."¹⁴ □

Notes

1. Thomas Paine, "The Thomas Paine Reader" (Penguin, 1987), p. 66.
2. George Washington, "Quotations of George Washington" (Applewood Books, 2003), p. 29.
3. James Gwartney and Robert Lawson, "Economic Freedom of the World, 2004 Annual Report" (Fraser Institute, 2005), p. 35.
4. Milton Friedman, "Capitalism and Freedom" (University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 2.
5. Quoted in Clyde E. Danhert, editor, "Adam Smith, Man of Letters and Economist" (Exposition Press, 1974), p. 218.
6. Colin Clark, "Taxmanship" (Hobart Paper 26, Institute of Economic Affairs, 1964).
7. Gerald W. Scully, "Tax Rates, Tax Revenues and Economic Growth" (National Center for Policy Analysis, 1991).
8. Vito Tanzi and Ludger Schuknecht, "Public Spending in the 20th Century: A Global Perspective" (Cambridge University Press, 2000).
9. Benjamin Franklin, letter to Charles de Weissenstein, July 1, 1778, in "The Papers of Benjamin Franklin" (Yale University Press), vol. 27, p. 4. I discovered this quotation in my research for my forthcoming book, "The Completed Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin" (Regnery Books, 2006).
10. According to the 2005 Index of Economic Freedom published by the Heritage Foundation, "the scores of 86 countries are better, the scores of 57 are worse, and the scores of 12 are unchanged." (p. 2).
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12. Ronald H. Coase, "The Problem of Social Cost," The Journal of Law and Economics 3 (October 1960), reprinted in "The Firm, the Market and the Law" (University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 95–156.
13. For an analysis of Somalia's ability to survive without government for over ten years, see Tatiana Nenova and Tim Harrford, "Anarchy and Invention: How Does Somalia's Private Sector Cope Without Government?" Public Policy Journal 280 (November 2004): <http://rru.worldbank.org/PublicPolicyJournal/Summary.aspx?id=280>.
14. Adam Smith, "The Wealth of Nations" (Modern Library, 1965 [1776]), p. 11.

Reviews

"Mission to Moscow," directed by Michael Curtiz. Warner Brothers, 1943, 123 minutes.

"Red Star Over Hollywood," by Ronald and Allis Radosh. Encounter Books, 2005, 309 pages.

Hammer, Sickle, Action!

Bruce Ramsey

Propaganda in the movies will always be with us. The movies I saw as a boy contained a fair amount of it: I still enjoy "The Longest Day" (1962), but wince at the mini-speeches. And consider some of the movies made during World War II: even "Casablanca" (1942), which is canonized as a classic about old lovers, ends with the conversion of a cynic who sacrifices his private love for the war against Hitler.

It is difficult to find a copy of the propaganda movie "Mission to Moscow" (1943), and for good reason. It deals with Soviet history from 1936 to 1939, which few people care about now, and it falsifies the history to boot. Warner Brothers regretted making the picture; that it was made at all is a telling comment on the political atmosphere in 1943, when the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was our ally. "Mission to Moscow" is the most pro-Soviet movie ever produced by Hollywood.

This lying docudrama is based on the book of the same name by Joseph Davies. President Franklin Roosevelt named Davies, a liberal businessman, as ambassador to the USSR from 1936 to 1938. Davies portrays himself as a

straight shooter, untainted by the sophistries of diplomats, and paints a portrait of the USSR as a wonderful country to have as an ally. The book hit the market at the right moment — three weeks after Pearl Harbor — and became a bestseller.

Jack Warner later testified that he had agreed to make it into a movie as part of the war effort. The screenwriter was Howard Koch, a leftist who had co-written "Casablanca." The "technical adviser" — actually political adviser — was Jay Leyda, a communist who had made a political pilgrimage to Soviet Russia. But it's not as if they twisted Davies' message. The former ambassador had unusual control over the script, and appears at the beginning of the movie to endorse it.

The movie focuses on pushing four big lies: that living conditions in the Soviet Union were good; that the show trials of 1936–38 were fair and just; that Britain and France forced Stalin to sign a non-aggression pact with Hitler; and that Stalin was a special friend of the United States.

In "Mission to Moscow," everything about the Soviet Union is good. A cosmetics store in Moscow is compared to Fifth Avenue in New York. The first Soviet woman we see is a

smiling train engineer. Foreign diplomats, playing billiards in Moscow, pooh-pooh the Five-Year Plan — "big plan, small fulfillment," says one — but Davies tours smelters, dams, and collective farms and sees the wondrous accomplishments of totalitarianism for himself. Everything in Soviet Russia is wonderful: its food is delicious, its soldiers tough, and its women capable.

Davies meets an American engineer who tells him that the Soviets have done great things. There is only one problem: a rash of sabotage. The film illustrates this problem by showing a magnesium plant in flames, its manager saying the fire was set deliberately. Needless to say, the fact that Davies first learns about the sabotage from an American soldier gives the charge credibility.

By that time, Stalin's government had held highly publicized, but faked, campaigns against the saboteurs, or "wreckers." The only character in the movie who mentions that the campaigns are faked is the Japanese ambassador. The message is that to doubt the Soviet government is to side with the Axis.

The Soviet secret police follow Davies' car openly, with no more skill than small-town American cops. His

response is to call to them in jocular fashion: "Don't you GPUs get any sleep?" He also takes it lightly when the Italians find a microphone in their embassy, and refuses to allow a search in the U.S. embassy, saying, "Let them listen. Then we'll be friends that much

"Mission to Moscow" ends by asking the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" An authoritative voice answers: "Yes, you are."

faster." By the time the GPU arrests old Bolsheviks Nikolai Bukharin and Karl Radek, the audience has been conditioned to view the secret police just as Russian cops.

Bukharin and Radek are put on trial. They confess: they are tools of a plot by Leon Trotsky to seize power. "Our plan" says Bukharin, "was to seize the Kremlin, financed by the fascist governments."

Was there pressure to confess?

"None whatsoever," Bukharin says. Davies believes it, and the movie audience is urged to believe it, too.

After the trial, Davies attends the 1938 May Day parade in Red Square. He takes satisfaction in the show of Soviet military power. "At least one European nation with no aggressive intentions is ready for whatever comes," he says. "And thank God for it."

No aggressive intentions? Why, then, in August 1939 did Stalin ally his country with Hitler? Why in September 1939 did the USSR annex the eastern third of Poland? Why in November 1939 did it attack Finland demanding territory? Why in 1940 did it annex Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and the eastern reaches of Romania? These things and more had happened by the time "Mission to Moscow" was filmed.

In the movie, Davies has an interview with Stalin, who says, "We feel more friendly to the government of the United States than any other nation." Stalin intimates that he would like to ally with the West against Germany, but that "reactionary elements in England" won't cooperate. "We may

be forced to protect ourselves in another way," he says.

On his way home, Davies stops in Britain to visit Winston Churchill, who is not yet prime minister. He tells Churchill he is fearful that the democracies will drive Stalin into Hitler's arms, leaving no doubt that the Hitler-Stalin pact is Britain's fault.

And the invasion of Finland? The Soviets needed some strategic pieces of territory to defend against Hitler, and the Finns refused to swap some other land for it. The Soviets had to take it in order to defend themselves.

About the Baltic states and Romania, not a single word.

"Mission to Moscow" ends by asking the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" A voice answers, authoritatively: "Yes, you are." A chorus sings, "You are your brother's keeper; now and forever you are."

Was there a substantial communist influence in Hollywood? Yes. In "Mission to Moscow," they showed their colors. "Song of Russia" (1943) was another wartime suck-up to the Soviets, as Ayn Rand testified to the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC)* in 1947. So was "The North Star" (1943), a movie about Ukrainian partisans written by Lillian Hellman, the leftist writer who admitted being a party member from 1938 to 1940, and was later glorified by Jane Fonda in the movie "Julia" (1977).

Ronald and Allis Radosh's new book "Red Star Over Hollywood" chronicles the Hollywood Reds. It has an entire chapter on "Mission to Moscow." It also lists other movies with pro-communist portrayals: "Hangmen Also Die" (1943), written by Bertolt Brecht and John Wexley; "Action in the North Atlantic" (1943), written by John Howard Lawson; and "Cloak and Dagger" (1946), written by Ring Lardner Jr. and Alvah Bessie. Lardner, Bessie and Lawson had all

* Alert readers will note that the acronym varies from the actual initials. Defenders of the Committee claim that this is because its critics on the Left preferred that the general public think of the committee as the "House Un-American Activities Committee" or even as the "House Un-American Committee." Many such defenders of the committee used the HCUA acronym, but the HUAC acronym was more often used by the press, and remains more widely used to this day.



Jolie, Barbra, even Sammy, Leo, and Liz

"Almost every Jew in America owes his life to laissez faire capitalism. It was relatively laissez faire America that welcomed Jews in unlimited numbers and progressive, New Deal America that turned them away by the boatload, and back to Auschwitz... For Jews especially: God Bless America should be God Bless laissez faire capitalism."

For *The Jewish Debt to the Right*, the New Mises Seminars, an Open Forum of the Right, and new ideas that the old libertarians don't want you to know about see *Intellectually Incorrect* at intinc.org

Note: Sorry for the ghastly incongruities on the website but they have been fixed now...so hope you'll give it another chance.

been Communist Party members and would later be among the Hollywood Ten, who were jailed for contempt of Congress when they refused to answer questions about Party membership. Brecht, hauled in front of HUAC at the same time as the Ten, claimed to be a mere anti-fascist, but soon after moved to East Germany.

Besides these, communists and fellow travelers wrote screenplays for a number of movies — “Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo,” “Confessions of a Nazi Spy,” “Joe Smith, American,” “Watch on the Rhine,” “Sahara,” “The Great Dictator” and others — that are not described in the Radosh book as propaganda films. “Red Star Over Hollywood” focuses more on the Hollywood communists’ allegiances than their work, leaving the authors open to the criticism, “So what? So a handful of movies were pro-Soviet during the time when the USSR was our ally.”

The Radoshes are more interested in personal political connections. Ronald Radosh was a Red-diaper baby who went to communist schools and summer camps, grew up to become an

Davies refuses to allow a search for Russian microphones in the U.S. embassy, saying, “Let them listen. Then we’ll be friends that much faster.”

academic who opposed the Vietnam War, and went on pilgrimages to Cuba and Nicaragua. He began turning rightward in the late 1970s, when his investigation of the case of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg convinced him that Julius was, in fact, a Soviet spy. He made the case in “The Rosenberg File” (1983). The reaction to his book from the Left — that the facts didn’t matter, that people had to believe the Rosenbergs were innocent, whether they were or not — moved him further rightward, until a decade or so later he had abandoned the Left altogether. He chronicled his evolving political perspectives in “Commies” (2001).

The most fascinating part of “Red Star Over Hollywood” is its description of the fall of the Hollywood Reds. Though the HUAC finished them off, the Radoshes show that the Reds were already in deep trouble. The reason was geopolitical. From 1941 to 1945, Stalin was our ally against Hitler, and it was okay to praise Stalin and Soviet Russia. By supporting President Roosevelt and the war effort, the Communists put themselves on the side of liberals and the patriotic new Communist Party line that Harry Truman was encouraging fascism and war against the innocent Soviet Union.

Political groups in which liberals and communists coexisted began to break apart. In June 1946, actress Olivia de Havilland was supposed to deliver a speech for one such group at a rally in Seattle. She was given a text written by communist screenwriter Dalton Trumbo, later one of the Hollywood Ten. The speech condemned “the drive of certain interests toward a war against the Soviet Union.” She refused to give it; instead she gave her own speech, telling liberals they had to distance themselves from Moscow.

The battle was also fought in the labor movement, between anti-communist and pro-communist unions. In 1946 there was a jurisdictional battle for Hollywood backlot employees between the AFL and CIO unions. The anti-communist AFL union narrowly won. Later that year there was another fight, which the anti-communists won decisively. This was the fight in which Robert Montgomery and Ronald Reagan persuaded members of the Screen Actors Guild to cross the pro-communist union’s picket lines. More than anything else, the Radoshes write, losing these union battles brought “the golden era of the Hollywood Communists . . . to an end.”

A battle was also fought inside the Communist Party over politics and art. The Party’s new line

in 1945 put more pressure on working screenwriters. Some buckled under; the book’s saddest story is of the artistic rebellion of Albert Maltz, who wrote an article for *The New Masses* objecting to the subordination of art to politics. The Radoshes say the Party

The movie pushes four big lies: that life in the Soviet Union was good; that the show trials were fair and just; that Britain forced Stalin to sign a pact with Hitler; and that Stalin was a special friend of the United States.

organized a “struggle session” against him, resulting in his “abject self-abasement.” Other followers left rather than abase themselves. One was Robert Rossen, writer, producer and director of “All the King’s Men” (1949). After his picture appeared, the Party hacks called him to heel because his movie, based on the life of Huey Long, could be interpreted as an attack on the dictatorship of Stalin. Rossen stood up and said, “Stick the whole Party up your ass,” walked out, and never came back. In 1953, he named 50 names to HUAC.

HUAC played a role by subpoenaing the leftist writers and producers known as the Hollywood Ten, but it



“You’re bipartisan? Ooh, sounds kinky!”

didn't do so until 1947, when, the Radoshes write, "the Communists' position in Hollywood was precarious." By then, Eastern Europe was becoming Communist. In 1948, the Soviets would blockade Berlin, America would be riveted by the Hiss-Chambers spy case, and former Vice President Henry Wallace, running for president on a friends-with-Russia platform, would get only 2 percent of the vote. In 1949 China would fall to Mao Zedong; in 1950 America would be at war with Reds in Korea. No one in Hollywood was going to make more movies like "Song of Russia" or "Mission to Moscow."

The Ten, all writers and directors, were sent to prison for short terms — not for being Communists or pro-Communist, but for contempt of Congress. They had refused to answer questions about their Party membership. In fact, they had been so snotty that they alienated their liberal supporters, who had organized a group to defend their right not to be questioned. Humphrey Bogart, the most prominent member of this group, disavowed the Ten afterward. The Ten embarrassed the studios, which blacklisted them and other Reds.

What of the blacklist?

"It is right to condemn the blacklist," the Radoshes write. "It was wrong to deprive artists of their livelihood because of their political views." I'm not so sure about that; a private blacklist is private business, and people who hate communism may not want to patronize communists. At that moment in history, I would have been happy to boycott Reds. A Dalton Trumbo, of course, could still get work under an assumed name, because he was highly skilled. A John Howard Lawson, party-line enforcer and second-rate writer, would be ruined. Well, too bad.

Congress should have kept out of it; as Ronald Reagan said to HUAC, the best way for opponents to combat communists was to "expose their lies

when we came across them." Reagan opposed outlawing the Communist Party. "As a citizen," he said, "I would hate to see any political party outlawed on the basis of its political ideology." But there was political hay to be harvested by the resurgent Republicans, and they did it. By doing so, they turned the Reds into victims. The story that was created is now culturally

dominant: that in the 1940s heroic leftists were run out of Hollywood by a right-wing witch hunt.

There is some truth in that: the Reds were run out of Hollywood, and the right wing did give them the final kick. But not the only kick. And the Hollywood Reds were not witches, or any other sort of mythical being. They were quite real. □

"The Historian," by Elizabeth Kostova. Little, Brown, 2005, 642 pages.

Anemic Bloodlust

Jo Ann Skousen

"The Historian," Elizabeth Kostova's fictional search for the historic Dracula, is being touted by reviewers as the book of the year, the new "Da Vinci Code." Like Bram Stoker's original "Dracula," "The Historian" is told through letters, journals, and postcards, as several historians travel through four decades and three continents in an attempt to unravel the secret of the "undead" and discover Dracula's final resting place. Each scholar is guided by an ancient book containing the print of a sinister dragon — books that have mysteriously appeared on their university desks. In some ways the novel is a metaphor for the cutthroat world of academia, where a scholar's worst nightmare is the discovery that someone else is already researching one's topic, one's thesis stretches dragonlike across the blank pages of a dissertation, and a friendly librarian may actually be working for one's opponent.

Little, Brown purchased the manuscript after a bidding frenzy raised its price to over \$2 million — not bad for a first novel, even for a Yale graduate. The publisher hopes that this sophisti-

cated novel will duplicate the wildly successful run of Dan Brown's "Da Vinci Code" (still on the bestseller list after two years). Both books rely heavily on historic research, both take the reader on a wild ride throughout Europe, and both focus on the occult. But while Dan Brown's novel is genuinely impossible to put down, Kostova's book bogs down in too much detail and too much literary flair. "The Historian" begins with a bang, but the reader must slog through more than 400 pages of medieval history, cloying imagery, and minuscule detail before finally getting back to the story line. And the story, after all, is the reason we read novels. The book begins chillingly enough, with the foreboding words, "My dear and unfortunate successor." It has moments of deliciously unresolved eeriness, brief moments of unrequited horror; for example, the narrator writes, "I saw in a coffin of glass the skeleton of one small woman. . . . When I bent over the case to look down at her, she smiled at me suddenly out of eye-sockets deep as twin pits." But moments like this are too few and too scattered to sustain any satisfying suspense, and they seldom turn out to have anything to do with the actual story.

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Kostova seems proud of her academic credentials; her biographical notes list only that she "graduated from Yale and holds an MFA (Master of Fine Arts) from the University of Michigan." And in many respects, her book reads like an MFA novel-in-progress, with its heavy-handed use of simile, metaphor, and personification. Kostova overwhelms the reader with her literary prowess, populating her novel with sentient boats and castles and rivers to the point of distraction: "Boats rock and swell in the Lagoon as if launching themselves, crewless, on adventure" . . . "The whole city puffs up like a sail, a boat dancing unmoored, ready to float off" . . . "The castle was made of brown stones like discolored bone, joined neatly together after some long state of dilapidation" . . . "The castle seemed to be clinging to the edge of the precipice with only its toes dug in for support." A little imagery goes a long way, and 642 pages of it can become more oppressive than Dracula's coffin.

Just as distracting is Kostova's attempt to satisfy the multiculturalist expectations of modern academia while presenting the traditional elements of the Dracula legend expected by the reader. One can almost imagine her horrified MFA colleagues exclaiming, "You can't present Christian icons

"The Historian" begins with a bang, but the reader must slog through more than 400 pages before finally getting back to the story line.

as a protection against evil!" Consequently, a woman bitten by a vampire cries out, "Bring me a towel and the basin — I will wash my neck and bind it . . . Later we will go into the church and clean this wound with the holy water," but then muses to herself, "How strange, I have always felt all this church ritual is nonsense, and I still do." The historian warns his daughter: "I ask you from the bottom of my heart to wear the crucifix at all times, and to carry some of the garlic in each of your pockets," but then adds

in the next sentence, "You know I have never been one to press either religion or superstition on you, and I remain a firm unbeliever in either." Huh?

To offset her references to the icons of good and evil lifted from the original Dracula legend, Kostova links vampirism with Christianity, making Christianity both the remedy and the poison in her telling of the tale. One heroine asks cynically, "Is [vampirism] any stranger than hoping for bodily resurrection?" (Well yes, actually, since vampirism is a continuation of life on earth, while resurrection is a promise of a happier life in heaven after one dies.) The narrator, observing a painting of the raising of Lazarus from the dead, comments, "The Christ who stood impatiently at the tomb's entrance, holding up his hand, had a countenance of pure evil, greedy and burning." And, if Christ must be made a villain, Dracula must also be made a hero. She describes the cruel nature of the 15th century baron, Vlad Tepes, on whom the Dracula legend is based, as a man who "liked to feast outdoors among the corpses of his impaled subjects," but then reports that he heroically protected his people — what was left of them, after he had tortured and impaled hundreds of them himself — from the invading Ottoman Turks. Dracula laments, "I should have been allowed to rest there [in Transylvania] forever. Imagine, after fighting so hard for my throne, for our freedom, I could not even lay my bones there." Poor misguided terrorist, he has no place to lay his head.

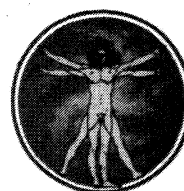
Kostova can't settle on painting the Ottomans as bad guys either. She describes their butchery as they invaded Europe, and decries the way they built their mosques in the rubble of the churches they destroyed along their way. Yet she decides that an Islamic crescent is just as useful as a crucifix in warding off vampires — perhaps even more so, since its use isn't accompanied by the disclaimer, "not that I actually believe in Islam." Such unwillingness to set up consistent, believable rules within her fictional world makes the suspension of disbelief, so essential to fantasy, nearly impossible for the reader.

Stoker's Dracula was erotic and sadistic, charming and horrifying, all at

once; his nightly feasts on the blood of beautiful young virgins made sure every page was filled with dread. Kostova's Dracula, on the other hand, seems to have run out of steam, able to wait years between nocturnal relations with his female victims and preferring, it seems, to settle down with a good

Kostova overwhelms the reader with her literary prowess, populating her novel with sentient boats and castles and rivers to the point of distraction.

book. (Is it mere coincidence that he sleeps in his coffin with his hand firmly grasping a dagger over his pelvis?) At one point in Kostova's novel, the historian searches a library in vain for a copy of Bram Stoker's "Dracula"; no one has told him, I guess, that he could buy a copy at any Barnes &



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Noble. Fortunately for you, dear reader, the secret is out: Stoker's "Dracula" is the best-written horror story of all time, and it's available in a variety of editions at your nearest bookstore. That's the one I recommend

this summer if you want to be thoroughly spooked. But if you have a long flight ahead of you, and you enjoy picturesque travelogues mingled with vague horror, "The Historian" will fill the time nicely. □

"Dark Genius of Wall Street: The Misunderstood Life of Jay Gould, King of the Robber Barons," by Edward J.

Renahan, Jr. Basic Books, 2005. 369 pages.

"Henry Clay Frick: An Intimate Portrait," by Martha Frick

Symington Sanger. Abbeville Press, 1998. 599 pages.

Aristocrats of the Gilded Age

Stephen Cox

On Saturday, July 23, 1892, Henry Clay Frick, manager and chairman of the Carnegie Steel Company, sat in his office in Pittsburgh talking with the firm's vice president, John Leishman. At the moment, the major concern of Carnegie Steel was the epic strike in progress at the company's Homestead works. Responding with hostility to a hostile union, Frick had closed and fortified the plant and summoned hundreds of strikebreakers. The Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers had replied by taking over the village of Homestead, organizing workers on what a union official called "a truly military basis," breaking into the plant, repelling the police with threats of murder, and trying to destroy the strikebreakers by shooting them, hitting them with cannon fire, blowing them up with dynamite, and

burning them alive. At least ten people had been killed. Despite these events, Frick continued to conduct his business in an office with glass walls, in a building that anyone could enter.

"Anyone" turned out to be Alexander Berkman, age 21, scion of a wealthy Lithuanian family who had migrated to the United States and become a professional "anarchist" (i.e., non-Marxist communist). Berkman decided that it was his duty to murder Henry Clay Frick. At 1:55 p.m., Berkman rushed into Frick's office and pulled out a pistol. Frick looked up at him, his eyes suddenly dazzled by the sight of his daughter Martha, standing beside his desk. Martha, aged five, had died in 1891.

Berkman was also dazzled by the light, although he believed it was sunshine bursting through the outside window (a window that was facing north). But he managed to fire. He shot Frick twice. Then, to his great disappointment, he discovered that his adversary, writhing on the floor, was still alive. Frick and Leishman rose up to attack him. Berkman kept firing, trying to finish Frick off.

Leishman and Frick and Berkman


wrestled around the room, the three of them almost toppling through the window to the street below. A carpenter ran in and started hitting Berkman with a hammer. "Don't kill him, I tell you," Frick shouted. "Let the law take its course." Berkman was not subdued. "I have it!" he exclaimed, pulling a dagger out of his pocket and stabbing it repeatedly into Frick's body.

By now others were rushing into the office, pinning Berkman down, pulling him by the hair. Then they noticed that he had something in his mouth. He was chewing on enough fulminate of mercury to blow up the building. Another struggle ensued, the lethal medicine was extracted from Berkman's maw, and he was hustled away, protected with some difficulty from a mob of 2,000 that had formed outside, clamoring for his blood.

The doctors stretched Frick across his chaise lounge and started probing for the bullets. It took them over two hours to find them. Their patient, who had declined anesthetic, emerged from the process half naked, covered with blood, and expected to die momentarily. What happened next was perhaps the most surprising event of the afternoon. Instead of going to the hospital, he sat down at his desk and (to quote Martha Sanger's account) "took up his affairs exactly where he had left off. Frick completed the day's paperwork,

Workers repelled the police, and tried to destroy the strikebreakers by shooting them, hitting them with cannon fire, blowing them up with dynamite, and burning them alive.

signed letters, and concluded an important loan deal." Then he dictated a statement: "This incident will not change the attitude of the Carnegie Steel Company toward the Amalgamated Association. I do not think I shall die, but whether I do or not, the Company will pursue the same policy and it will win." Finally Frick went home, promising to return to his office on Monday. And yes, he won the strike.



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If you think of men like Frick (1848–1919) as “robber barons” (a phrase popularized by socialist historian Matthew Josephson) and picture them as actuated solely by “greed,” the story that I just related may suggest that they are a lot more interesting than you assume. The books considered in this review go part of the way toward showing who those people really were.

Sanger’s biography of Frick offers an unusually intimate view of a man who was, in his day, not only a leading figure in steel production and the largest private investor in American railroads but also one of America’s great collectors of art. The book, which is well worth its \$50 price tag (you can get it for much less from amazon.com), is filled with ravishing pictures from Frick’s collection, an assemblage of masterpieces in which its owner’s intelligence and sensitivity are shown to great advantage. And the book contains much more than that. Sanger is a great-granddaughter of Frick, with unique access to the memories and written records of a family in which her ancestor remains “a living presence.” By the time one finishes her mammoth volume, one feels almost as if that presence were standing in the room, coolly observing one’s reactions.

You would expect a biography written by a descendant to be ridiculously adulatory. This one is not. Although Frick’s strength of character comes through so strongly as to make everything else seem somewhat beside the point, Sanger has little difficulty establishing her critical distance. If anything, she is rather too prone to discover deficiencies in her subject.

She has little interest in politics or economics, so we are spared the neo-socialist cant of some of her reviewers, who describe Frick as a monster “achieving new heights of infamy” in the field of labor relations. Sanger does appear to assume that anyone who resisted the Amalgamated Association (which was clearly attempting, before and during the strike, to claim the Carnegie mills as its own property) must have done *something* morally wrong. She intimates that impression from time to time, but it doesn’t detract from her main story, because it has no vital connection with it. That story is

overwhelmingly the tale of an intelligent, determined, and courageous man, sternly just, mysteriously sensitive, who from bitter experience learned to go his own way, consulting his own judgment and ignoring the opinions of others.

The tiresome part of the book isn’t Sanger’s political observations but the boatload of psychobabble that she tries to float on the current of Frick’s affairs. Noting that Frick never recovered psy-

I think I would have sympathized with Alexander Berkman if the daffy little terrorist had decided to liquidate Andrew Carnegie instead of Henry Clay Frick.

chologically from the death of young Martha, whose picture was engraved on every check he wrote, and noting, further, that he maintained an exceptionally close relationship with his other daughter, Helen, who like a second self maintained his collections and defended his reputation throughout her very long life (and had Martha’s picture engraved on her own checks, too), Sanger resorts to Jungian and other “authorities” to answer the burning question: How can this be? How is it possible that a man should have such deeply sentimental relationships with his daughters?

She is certain that the relationship with Martha was emotionally crippling to him and that the relationship with Helen was inappropriate and blighting to her. Helen, can you imagine, *never got married!* Sanger doesn’t ask herself whether Helen would have had a better chance for independence and self-fulfillment if she had ditched the old man and run off with a cowboy. And, like most people for whom Freudian and Jungian assumptions are still the thunderbolt of wisdom, Sanger never stops to ask herself whether the whole of modern psychology is really expressed in psychoanalytic “insights” about the family romance.

Frick invested tremendous psychic energy in his business relationships,

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his religious feelings and apprehensions, his aesthetic motives. Yet for Sanger, the explanatory thread always leads us back to the monstrous guilts and fears of the nuclear family. To hear her tell it, what Frick sought in the pictures he purchased was endlessly repeated images of family members and family problems — representations, too, of the most direct kind. Sometimes, indeed, similarities can be found. At other times, there is no more resemblance between the painted people and the real people than there is between any two figures who have noses, eyes, and mouths. The family feelings supposedly reflected in the canvases on Frick's walls can never tell us as much about him as Sanger's story about Martha's last hours, when her father urged her to try to lessen the pain of her illness by biting his own fingers. There was nothing Oedipal about the scars he acquired.

Fortunately, Sanger is an eminently clear writer, and it is easy to leap over her attempts at psychoanalysis and go directly to her stories of life and art. Frick, who would have liked to have been an artist, constructed his final home in New York City with the secret intention of making it a museum after his death. He gave the bulk of his estate to the creation and endowment of this public institution — unlike his colleague Andrew Carnegie, who built public libraries by the hundreds, an endless parade of immediate self-advertisements, but gave no thought to equipping them, or endowing them for later years. Frick cared little about “the public” but very much about the indi-

viduals who might possibly share his cultivated interests. Even before his death, his home functioned as a museum; people were free to come in

Workers repelled the police, and tried to destroy the strike-breakers by shooting them, hitting them with cannon fire, blowing them up with dynamite, and burning them alive.

and look at the art. No one was refused: “Certainly they shall have a[n] admission card. Come any day you wish.”

I'm not sure that Sanger has fully penetrated Frick's personality, or that anybody could, but she does give you some light to go by. She has the good sense to see that Frick's daughter Helen was almost as interesting a character as he was, and she spends a lot of time telling what happened to Helen in the 65 years following his death. She also sheds some interesting light on the sickening hypocrisies of Frick's sometime partner and would-be boss, the unjustly sainted Carnegie. I think I would have sympathized with Alexander Berkman if the daffy little terrorist had decided to liquidate Carnegie instead of Frick, although Frick is the member of the partnership who is supposedly so hard to love.

In Carnegie's autobiography, I find only one reference to Frick by name. Carnegie calls him “a man with a positive genius” for “management.”

But it is obvious whom Carnegie is contrasting with himself when he talks about visiting Pittsburgh after the Homestead strike and hearing from workers “that if I had been at home the strike would never have happened.” He says that one of the workers told him, “Oh, Mr. Carnegie,

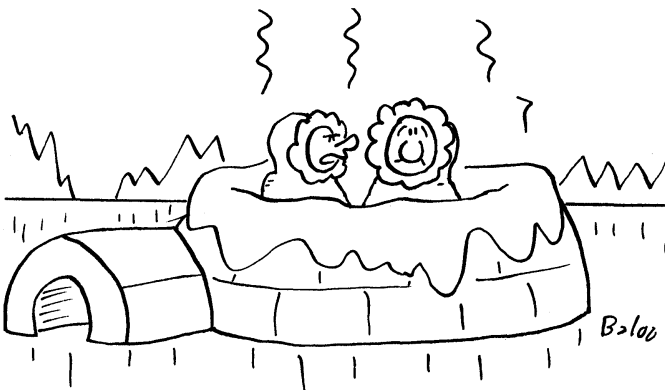
it wasn't a question of dollars. The boys would have let you kick 'em, but they wouldn't let that other man stroke their hair.” It's a point in Frick's favor that he spent the last years of his life refusing to communicate with Carnegie.

If there's anyone who has suffered more than Frick from the “Robber Baron” accusation, it's Jay Gould (1836–1892). Gould's ill fame rests on three tall pedestals. First, he tried to corner the gold market in 1869, failing but precipitating a panic. Second, he speculated in railroads, especially the Union Pacific and the most financially notorious of all the roads, the Erie. Third, he gave a lot of money to politicians so they wouldn't pass laws against the companies he ran.

Whether any of this made Gould a “robber baron” depends on one's ability to identify what and whom he robbed. Gould operated before the time when financial markets developed adequate means of protecting themselves from the grosser forms of price manipulation. Gamblers could make a lot of money by running prices up and down. They could also lose a lot of money. In the process, clever gamblers could demonstrate both the risks and the dynamic potential of modern finance. Jay Gould did all those things. It is not very clear whom he hurt by it.

That doesn't mean that he didn't hurt anyone. Often he hurt himself, as he did in the gold market speculations of 1869. More often, he hurt gamblers who weren't as good as he was — most of them effective illustrations of the maxim that you can't cheat an honest man. Sometimes, undoubtedly, he hurt “the public,” ordinary people whose jobs or investments were predicated on price stability. At other times he helped “the public” by showing the ways in which capital could be raised to finance promising enterprises, or in which the stream of capital could be cut off from unpromising ones.

Gould's career as a manager of the Union Pacific and other western railroads was solidly constructive. He tried to make them worth their salt, and he had the kind of energy and vision that almost achieved that goal. The Union Pacific, the road that, with the Central Pacific, constituted the



“Well, so much for your electric blanket brainstorm.”

nation's first transcontinental line, had been commissioned by politicians for political purposes. It was built through territory where there was little or no population and little or no commercial enterprise. It could not pay its own way; it could not begin to repay its debts to the government. Gould restructured its operations, sponsored business concerns along its route, attempted to rationalize its relationships with other railroads, and offered sensible proposals to free it from debt.

In the process, he encountered every conceivable attempt by every conceivable agent of government to hinder the Union Pacific's operations.

Just as some stereotypes are true, despite the fact that they are stereotypes, so there are real heroes and real villains in this world, despite the stereotypical nature of "heroes" and "villains."

It's not surprising that when he dispatched a lobbyist to some legislative body, he sent a lot of money with him, hoping that it would be distributed where it would do the most good. Though he was not averse to paying legislators and judges (many, many judges) for preferential treatment, he increasingly realized that what he really needed to do was pay them to leave his business alone. To follow his career is to follow the course of an intelligent person's education in the developing capitalist system.

Maury Klein, author of an excellent biography, *"The Life and Legend of Jay Gould"* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), observes that "the political role of railroads has long been misunderstood as part of a morality play in which selfish, powerful corporations trampled the public interest until their depredations were curbed by regulation." In fact, Klein says, the "worst abuses" of such enterprises as the Union Pacific "were often born of weakness." Simply "to transact its business the road needed friends at every level: governors, congressmen,

judges, legislators, mayors, aldermen, sheriffs, agents, editors, and merchants. . . . For every favor granted a dozen were demanded in return . . . "Who, it may be asked, were the real "robber barons"?"

Klein scorns Josephson's use of that phrase, calling his "handling of the facts . . . careless to the point of being shoddy." I would say something worse

about other leading authors in the field, going back to Gustavus Myers' *"History of the Great American Fortunes"* (1909). Myers pictured Gould as "a pitiless human carnivore, glutting on the blood of his numberless victims. . . . an incarnate fiend of a Machiavelli in his calculations, his schemes and ambushes, his plots and counterplots." If anybody wants to

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study the rhetoric of anticapitalism, I recommend a reading of Myers' several works, especially the 1936 edition of his *History*, which is remarkable for its rancidly self-pitying account of his battle against free enterprise. (As late as 1939, Myers was still banging away at "wealth" and hoping that FDR would follow through and confiscate it all.) His influential treatment of Gould is characterized not only by a rabid plutophobia but also by a zest for lying that contrasts very oddly

Virtually all biographers write about their personal heroes, who remain heroes to them, no matter what.

with his constant moral indignation. I agree with Klein: something really ought to be done to separate the vocabulary of history from the vocabulary of writers like that.

The real Jay Gould was a Victorian gentleman of highly conventional and respectable views on morals and manners, views that he richly exemplified in his private life. He loved to read, walk, and look at flowers. He made himself an expert on botany, pursuing a special interest in orchids. Family life stood at the top of his scale of values. He said that he knew his domestic "inclinations" were not "calculated to make [him] particularly popular" with the sporting lads of Wall Street, but "I cannot help that."

Like most big capitalists, he indulged himself in charity; unlike many of them, he made no attempt to use his charitable impulses to curry favor with the public. I like the story about Gould's sending a check to an organization that was fighting an outbreak of yellow fever in Memphis. His message was: "Keep on at your noble work till I tell you to stop, and I will

foot the bill. What are your daily expenses? Answer." He was interested in quelling yellow fever, not in organizing charity balls where he could hob-nob with other celebrities.

Gould was scornful of union organizers, writing to one of them, "I beg to say that I am yet a free American citizen. I am past forty-nine years of age. I began life in a lowly way, and by industry, temperance, and attention to my own business have been successful, perhaps beyond the measure of my deserts. If, as you say, I am now to be destroyed by the Knights of Labor unless I sink my manhood, so be it." Like Frick, he won out against the union; and like Frick, he continued to be interested in the happiness of working people as individuals. He made his personal libraries available to his employees, and if any of them used his books frequently, he sponsored their professional education.

As a business executive, Gould expressed his pleasure in order and solidity by shaping rational and efficient enterprises, becoming less of a gambler and more of a manager as time went by. When, late in his career, the behavior of other businessmen threatened a panic that might have imperiled the financial system, he used his own funds to avert a collapse, accepting losses for the sake of long-term stability. He didn't rely on government; he did it himself. He took great satisfaction from his creative work with Union Pacific, Western Union, the New York elevated railroads, and other concerns.

He also, one cannot doubt, continued to take satisfaction in playing the market. Like other gamblers, he saw it as a game, a serious, instructive game, full of the interest and romance of life, but a game nonetheless — a game whose rules existed before he came to the table and could not be changed by the private ethical ambitions of any one individual. You can quarrel with him if you like, but calling him a pitiless human carnivore won't shed much light on the question.

This, more or less, is the attitude that Klein takes to his subject, and I think it's well advised. I've talked so much about him because I think his book is still the best one available about

Gould. It has its limitations, however — limitations resulting directly from its strengths. It is a well researched business biography, constrained by the necessity of describing Gould's financial adventures in great detail. Klein is a very good writer, but one can read only so many accounts of Gould's buying stock X so he can drive down the price of stock Y, etc., etc., before all the frenetic activity starts to resemble the daily business of a beehive — constant, enormous, meaningless.

It wasn't really like that. Gould's financial dealings were brilliant feats of insight and courage. Many of them were also illustrations of an important economic truth, that large, well capitalized enterprises can be successfully attacked by small ones, if the small ones know what they're doing. Such attacks, as Klein observes, were Gould's specialty. But the literary problem remains. It's hard to make Gould's adventures seem adventurous.

Renahan's new biography, from which I have drawn many of the particulars in the preceding discussion, does much to resolve this literary difficulty. It presents Gould's financial career in as much detail as most read-

Like most big capitalists, Gould indulged himself in charity; unlike many, he made no attempt to use his charitable impulses to curry favor with the public.

ers would desire to have, and it attends, with more color and emphasis than Klein's genre permits him, to the substance of Gould's personal and family life. Renahan's style is sometimes too breezy, and one needs to understand that there is more to be said about virtually every subject that comes up. Still, "Dark Genius" is an attractively written volume — despite the lurid title, which has little to do with the substance or attitude of the book itself. Like Klein, Renahan is impressed by Gould and determined



to give him the objective treatment that he rightly believes will rehabilitate his reputation.

And, like Sanger, Renehan knows that the descendants of an important person may also be of interest. The final part of Renehan's book is an attempt to account for what happened to the heirs of Gould's estate after Gould's death. Out of innumerable small facts, most of which, by themselves, would seem dull and dispiriting and hardly worth looking up, Renehan constructs a fascinating picture of an American family. You know that if you study enough generations

and connections, any family will begin to seem like its own universe, filled with every conceivable species of human being, but in this case you really see what a family universe looks like. Renehan's presentation, which is almost extensive enough to be used as the basis of a scientific study, is surely enough to knock down convenient stereotypes about The Rich.

According to Klein, "No man remains a hero or a villain to his biographer. Stereotypes are the first casualty of character study . . ." I respect Klein, but what he says is false. Virtually all biographers write about

their personal heroes, who remain heroes to them, no matter what. And just as some stereotypes are true, despite the fact that they are stereotypes, so there are real heroes and real villains in this world, despite the stereotypical nature of "heroes" and "villains." There are, besides, many kinds of heroism and many kinds of villainy that do not conform to stereotypes and generalizations. A hero can be a unique individual; a hero can be something other than a paragon of newspaper morality. A hero may, perhaps, be someone like Jay Gould or Henry Clay Frick. □

Letters, from page 4

Monster Goes to Jail," August) should be tolerated on libertarian grounds. "15 sometimes looks like 21"? Give me a break — there are thousands of bar owners and convenience store clerks who could offer the same excuse. Forbidding the provision of certain categories of goods to minors is no violation of libertarian principles, and providers can be required to take reasonable steps to verify age. Rycke Brown is clearly guilty of a crime.

Robert Kelley
Austin, Texas

Wrongthinkers

Thomas Giesberg's review of Susan Jacoby's book "Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism" ("America the Secular," July) failed to make an important point: Jacoby's way of thinking represents the single greatest danger for the modern libertarian movement and also the reason it has not been a greater influence in American politics. Liberty is not now, never has been, and never will be secure without a firm basis in Christian belief by most citizens.

It is true that the Founders envisioned a secular constitution and federal government, precisely because it was to be a minimalist "night watchman" state. They believed that secularism is healthy for a strictly limited government, but fatal for society as a whole. As our government has grown far beyond its intended boundaries, it has been increasingly necessary for believers to fight to minimize its damage to society.

The only real enforcer of limited government is the Christian view of the individual conscience. Our Founders were leery of basing American liberties on the secular "rights of man" (as in the French Revolution, which led to a bloodbath), but understood the need to provide checks and balances against human error and evil, while we try together to seek God's will for us individually and as a society. Thank God America never bought into the French anti-Christian version of the "rights of man!"

Although left-liberals don't like to admit it, their way of thinking promises liberty but actually delivers top-down centralized power, wielded by "expert" elites (contemptuous of traditional values) without mercy or restraint (e.g., communism, Nazism, fascism, welfare-statism).

Steven P. Sawyer
Fountain Hills, Ariz.

Tyranny of the Majority

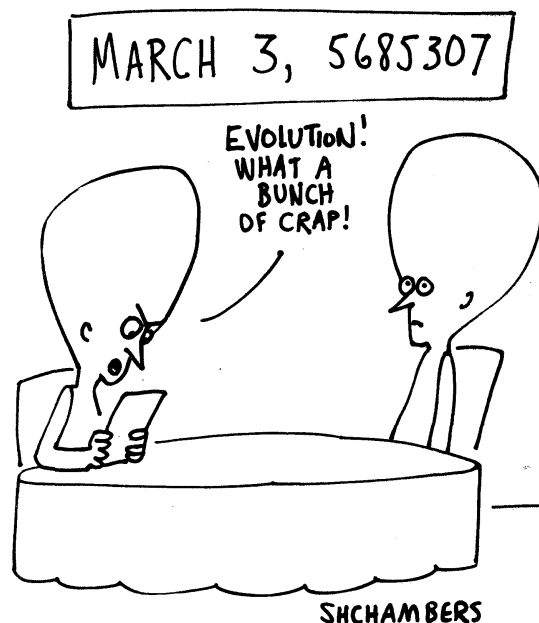
In his review of "To the Flag: The Unlikely History of the Pledge of Allegiance" (August), Bruce Ramsey wrote: "Ellis covers the 'under God' controversy about as impartially as one could," then notes it wasn't meant as "ceremonial deism" and that it shouldn't offend anyone, religious or not.

But whether it offends anyone or not is beside the point.

Congress is not empowered to pass whatever laws the majority of citizens clamor for, or whatever they think might be good for us. Adding "under God" to the Pledge violated the 1st Amendment's Establishment Clause.

Atheist Michael Newdow's suit to remove "under God" has the U.S. Constitution on his side, although most Americans want to continue ignoring it. It will be interesting to see how the U.S. Supreme Court rules — will it uphold the Constitution and offend religious America, or approve the violation and cement federal power over rights?

James Harrold
Springdale, Ark.



The United Kingdom

Advance in educational terminology, reported in *The Scotsman*:

The Professional Association of Teachers (PAT) has recommended at their annual conference that schools discontinue use of the word "fail" in favor of the concept of "deferred success."

Isleworth, England

Progress in the War on Crime, from the *London Times*:

A team from West Middlesex University Hospital said violent crime is on the increase, and called for a ban on long pointed kitchen knives. After surveying ten chefs in the U.K., the researchers said they could see no reason for the knives to be publicly available.

Summit, N.Y.

Curious incident from the War on Terror, from a dispatch in the *New York Post*:

Citing a provision regarding "attacks and other violence against mass transportation systems," town attorney Howard Yospin has invoked the Patriot Act to justify kicking Richard Kreimer, a homeless man, out of a city train station. Kreimer has sued the city in federal court, seeking \$5 million in damages.

Chicago

Proactive merchandising, as reported in the *Bloomington (Ill.) Pantagraph*:

Chicago has become the first major city to ban the sale of marijuana-flavored lollipops, gumdrops and other confections. The candies are flavored with hemp oil, which does not contain any of the psychoactive ingredients in marijuana.

Kaukauna, Wis.

Inside the competitive world of wheelchair pageants, from the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*:

Two months after being named Ms. Wheelchair Wisconsin, Janeal Lee was ordered to forfeit her crown and return her prizes. Pat O'Bryant, the executive director of Ms. Wheelchair America, saw a photograph of Ms. Lee standing — which she is able to do for as long as fifteen minutes before her muscular dystrophy forces her back to her wheelchair.

Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Unforeseen consequences of a negative film review, from the *Florida Sun-Sentinel*:

In response to what FBI spokeswoman Judy Orihuela called "a napkin with a bomb threat written on it," American Airlines Flight 605 returned to Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport 30 minutes after taking off. All passengers and crew were evacuated and bomb-sniffing dogs searched the plane, but found no trace of explosives.

The napkin, which was found when a passenger flipped down his tray table, had the words "bomb" and "(meet the parents)" written on it.

Santa Fe, N.M.

Warning against a virulent new journalistic tactic, recorded by the *Albuquerque Tribune*:

In a recent email, Matt Dillman, director of relations for the state's Children, Youth and Families Department, warned employees against "unscrupulous reporters" who will use a "Jedi Mind Trick" to get them to divulge sensitive information.

Gurnee, Ill.

Curious police technique from the Land of Lincoln, noted in the *Chicago Daily Herald*:

Illinois State Trooper Jeremy Dozier was charged a second time for forcing a young couple to remove their clothes in exchange for him not citing them for what he said was illegal activity. He also ordered the couple to run around a nearby construction site while naked.

Seattle

Advance in public health, from a report in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*:

City Council members, concerned about childhood obesity, voted to ban ice cream sellers, pizza vans, and other fast food vendors within 1,000 feet of public schools. Operating Engineers Local 609, a union representing 300 school cafeteria workers, sought the ban.

Clackamas, Wash.

Protection and service, celebrated in a Clackamas County Sheriff's Office press release:

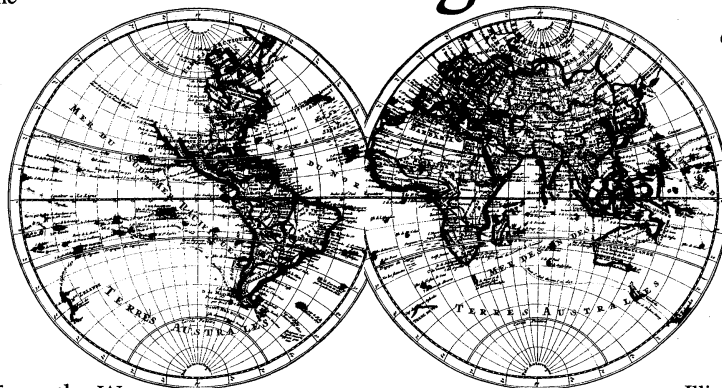
Livestock Deputy Robin Iverson was dispatched to answer a call from an anonymous informant who said that a chicken had been left in a pickup truck in an apartment parking lot. A locksmith was called to open the truck, and the bird was removed. Iverson noted that it was "stuffy and hot" inside the vehicle.

Providence, R.I.

Program note on the celebration of our freedom from tyranny, from the *USA Today*:

Fox affiliate WPRI used a five-second delay on its broadcast of the Providence Fourth of July parade, fearing that tipsy attendees might say something off-color that would leave them vulnerable to fines from the FCC.

Terra Incognita



Announcing Mark Skousen's controversial new book.... CLASH OF THE TITANS

"You're all a bunch of socialists!"

— Ludwig von Mises (Vienna)

"We are friends and foes!"

— Milton Friedman (Chicago)

Austrian and Chicago economists have battled Keynesians, Marxists and socialists alike, but they often fight each other as well. What are the differences between the Austrian and Chicago schools, and why do free-market economists disagree so much?

After years of research and interviews in both camps, Columbia Professor Mark Skousen has uncovered the strengths and weaknesses of each, and determines who's right and who's wrong at the end of each chapter by declaring either "Advantage, Vienna" or "Advantage, Chicago." He ends with a chapter on how they could reconcile on major issues.

Chapters from *Vienna and Chicago, Friends or Foes?*

1. Introduction: A Tale of Two Schools
2. Old and New Vienna: The Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of the Austrian School
3. The Imperialist Chicago School
4. Methodenstreit: Should a Theory be Empirically Tested?
5. Gold vs. Fiat Money: What is the Ideal Monetary Standard?
6. Macroeconomics, the Great Depression, and the Business Cycle
7. Antitrust, Public Choice and Political Economy:
What is the Proper Role of Government?
8. Who Are the Great Economists?
9. Faith and Reason in Capitalism
10. The Future of Free-Market Economics:
How Far is Vienna from Chicago?

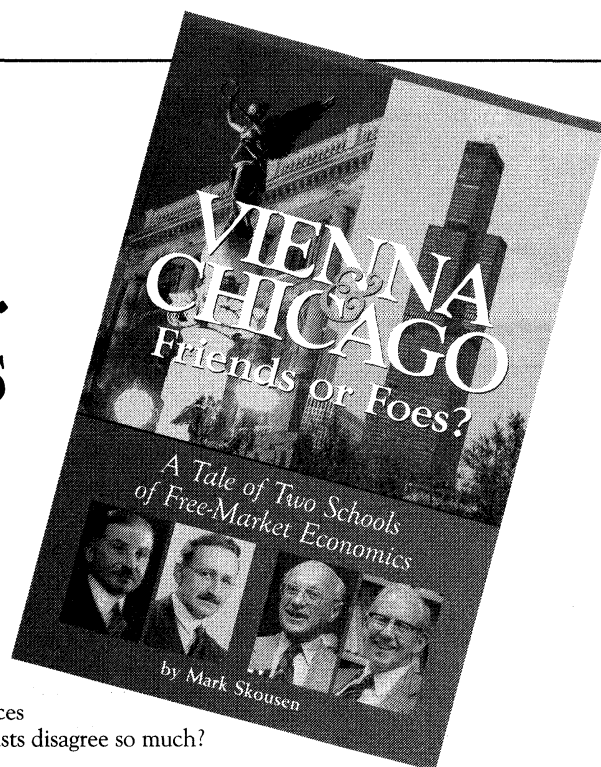
How to Order this Book

Vienna and Chicago is a 320-page quality paperback available now from the publisher Capital Press (www.regnery.com), Laissez Faire Books (www.lfb.com), Amazon, or directly from the author (see below). The book normally retails for \$24.95, but Liberty subscribers pay only \$20.

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Highlights.....

- Whose methodology is more controversial—Mises or Friedman?
- A debate that the Austrians have clearly won.
- Why Chicago economists have won more Nobel Prizes than the Austrians.
- Why did Israel Kirzner call George Stigler's essay on politics "bizarre, disturbing, unfortunate, and an affront to common sense"?
- Emotional fights at the Mont Pelerin Society, Foundation for Economic Education, and other freedom organizations.
- Why Friedman and Mises admire Adam Smith, and Murray Rothbard despises him.
- Why some Austrians call Friedman a "Keynesian" and "a statist" while Friedman calls Mises and Ayn Rand "intolerant" and "extremist."
- Major differences between Mises and Hayek..... and between Stigler and Friedman.
- The "fortress" mentality: Why the Mises Institute doesn't advertise, or appear on TV.
- Amazing similarities between Austrians and Marxists, and between Chicagoans and Keynesians.
- Why Mises refused to use graphs and charts in his books.
- How Friedman shocked the audience when asked "Who is the better economist, Keynes or Mises?"
- Why Austrians are usually pessimists and Chicagoans optimists.
- Powerful contributions by the "new" generation of Austrian and Chicago economists.....

From the Chicago school: "This tale is thorough, thoughtful, even-handed, and highly readable. All economists, of whatever school, will find it both instructive and entertaining." —**Milton Friedman**

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From an anonymous reviewer: "A novel approach. Skousen sells neither school short and takes a non-doctrinaire view. He spices up his narrative with materials from personal correspondence and one-on-one discussions. No one other than Skousen could have written this book. Advantage, Skousen!"

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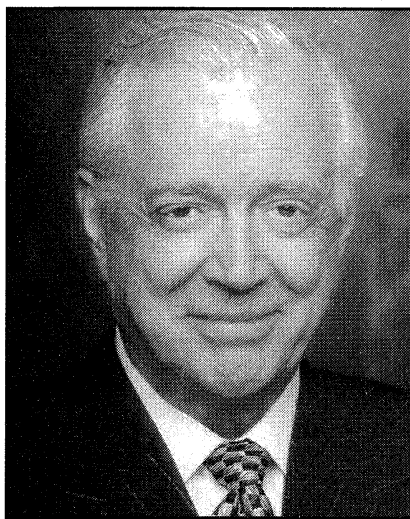
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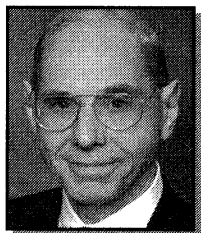
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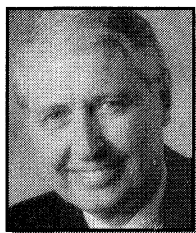
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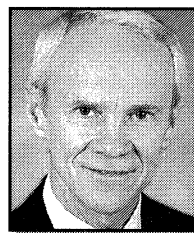
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Author,
*Restoring the
American Dream*



Ron Paul
U.S. Congressman
(R-TX); 1988 Pres.
Candidate



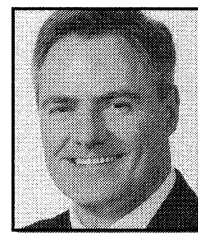
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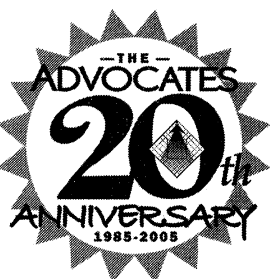
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