



**Robert Bork**

# CONSERVATIVE BATTLELINE ONLINE

*The "Bold Colors" Conservative Voice in Washington*

Issue 110 - June 25, 2008

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## Judges Ignore Real Constitution

by Donald Devine

*Issue 110 - June 25, 2008*

Even the very best judges fail to appreciate the real Constitution. It is not their fault. The document is simply ignored in law school. All they get of it is a sentence at a time followed by pages of judicial opinions about what that line really means. Lawyers rarely see the whole document. One lawbook mentioned that an outsider had read its proof copy and suggested printing the entire Constitution at the end, which it did, as if this were a radically novel idea.

The reason judges read other judges and lawyers opinions about the Constitution rather than the document itself is that judicial doctrine today holds that the Constitution is simply what judges say it is. That is what the "supremacy clause" says, right? At least that is what the judges think; so it must be so. Why bother taking the really radical step of reading it, right?



**Robert Bork**

Just a few moments ago a judicial symposium covered by C-SPAN recorded a judge being asked at a conference what he would do in a specified legal circumstance concerning mandatory minimum sentences. He replied "I can do anything I want. I am a federal judge! [Laughter] I am only being a little dramatic. A federal judge has lifetime tenure and can do pretty much what he wants." That is pretty heady stuff.

Even the most conservative jurists are captured by the idea that judges control the Constitution, for better or worse. There is none better than Robert Bork, the man who was so unfairly denied the Supreme Court because his views of the Constitution differed from the majority in the Senate, basically on one issue, abortion. In a recent major essay for *The American Spectator*, Bork was characteristically blunt. "The Federalists who favored the Constitution regarded its structural features as crucial." But these proved a "false hope." The adoption of the Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment "ultimately led to a virtually omnipotent aristocracy" of judges who have "rewritten major features of the Constitution."

In no area has this been more true than in the area of federalism. The original idea that the national government is limited in power by the Constitution is a fantasy.

The idea of confining Congress to the enumerated powers of Article I section 8 (an idea reinforced by the Tenth Amendment) is dead and cannot be revived. Contrary to some conservative fantasies, federalism was killed not by New Deal justices who perverted this aspect of the Constitution but by the American people and the realities of national politics. The public wants a large and largely unrestrained national government, one capable of giving them what they want...

The people demand strong national government and the judges will deliver eventually. The idea that the states or even the institutional structure as a whole can affect this is simplistic. "Today, the vitality of federalism is reduced to the occasional limitation of some federal power that has absolutely no relation to an enumerated power. Such cases tend to be trivial." Notice that it is "cases" that count. He says he is talking about the "decline of federalism as a judicially enforced doctrine." What counts is not the structure but what the judges did pervert, the Bill of Rights, and how they enforce their preferences through it.

It is of great importance what federal courts decide to enforce or not in interpreting the Bill of Rights, of course, but is that all there is to the Constitution? Perhaps so from the judicial perspective. Political scientists see it differently. Judges assume their decisions are self executing. Actually, judges do not "enforce" anything. A president by the name of Andy Jackson sitting in one

of the other structural institutions the Founders relied upon, put it simply: "The Supreme Court has made its decision, now let it enforce it." The Supreme Court had ruled that large tracts of land must be returned to the Cherokee Nation--but the Cherokee never got their property back because the president would not enforce the court ruling against the majority population.



Unlike most jurists, Bork can think like a political scientist, indeed he quotes one, when he explains how the courts have taken power from the other branches through an alliance with what he calls the "intellectual class" to change the meaning of the Bill of Rights. But he does not consider that such political alliances can change and new ones can alter the balance of power—this seems a "utopian myth," although he also says it is possible. But change can take place not only within the judicial branch—but also and more likely can come from the other branches, including the very structures he says are dead. The President can nominate new judges or selectively enforce their decisions or delay or ignore them. Congress can agree to new judges or refuse those holding earlier interpretations, or even pass laws that undermine decisions or void them. Even the weakened states can evade decisions or ignore them.

An old study by the Yale political scientist Robert Dahl should be required reading for every judge. He looked at major Supreme Court decisions over a long period of history and found that Congress --when it was very concerned about the subject matter--often "overrode" court decisions by passing laws that effectively nullified them. Even today, Congress, the president and the states have effectively overruled court decisions against race preferences for decades. As recently as the first Bush presidency, Congress directly overrode the Grove City decision. President George W. Bush has effectively delayed judicial review of the Guantanamo prisoner cases, which will not be settled until long after he leaves office. Even the states have effectively delayed Supreme Court decisions on separation of church and state--cases of religious iconology at Christmas or about prayers keep coming to the courts decades after the judges supposedly had settled the matter.

No, the Bill of Rights does not "have far more viable relevance to individual liberties than do the structural safeguards stressed by Madison." The individual structures--Congress, president, states (and de facto local and private structures too) as well as courts--still are primary. Checks-and-balances live. Most important, there is no reason to think the present judicial supremacy will last forever. Things change. The Founders did not set precise power boundaries between these structures. It is like a bridge that uses flexibility rather than rigidity for strength. Under Abraham Lincoln, the president was supreme, virtually ignoring Supreme Court demands for habeas corpus the entire Civil War—but he was immediately followed by the weakest president, and the strongest (even effectively unicameral) Congress.



**James Madison**

Today, Mr. Bork is correct, the court and national government are the most powerful. But that can change—perhaps as soon as the next election. For the court does follow the election returns—and so do the other structures. And the later can fight back as Jackson, Lincoln and Bush prove. The national government has had a long run since the New Deal. But after its seven generations, its entitlements now are ready to explode and the most likely solution will be to send most other domestic programs back to the state, local and private sectors. After all, the national government was sitting pretty smug in 1787; but the states met, created a new constitution and changed pretty much everything in a few months period.

The law, as important as it is, is not everything. Politics and the structures through which it operates are by far the more viably relevant means, especially for change. That is how the Founders created it and it still pretty much operates how Madison envisioned it—checking and balancing power but with no predetermined result. As strange as this cumbersome and flexible structure seems, it has lasted longer than all of the more legalistic alternatives.

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Editor**

## Dechristianizing America

by Richard Neuhaus

Issue 110 - June 25, 2008

If you're not a Christian and not about to become a Christian, but you're a public intellectual who is paid to be an expert on a society that is overwhelmingly Christian, you have to make a decision about how to position yourself.

For a long time, beginning in the first half of the last century and accelerating in the aftermath of World War II, many thinkers simply decided to ignore "the religion factor" in American life. The dogma was promulgated, and reiterated in textbooks from grade school through graduate school, that religion was once important, but now America is a comprehensively and irreversibly secular society. Historian David Hollinger of Berkeley has written with admirable candor about the decision of the American intellectual class to emulate the more thorough secularism of European thinkers. This decision was strengthened, he says, by the influence of émigré Jewish intellectuals in the 1930s and 1940s. Hollinger, one notes, strongly approves of the turn toward European secularism.



Over more than twenty years, that way of positioning oneself with respect to American culture became increasingly untenable, as religion of the unmistakably Christian kind began breaking out all over the public square. As a result, some non-Christian thinkers, and Jewish thinkers in particular, began to take a different tack. Since religion could no longer be ignored, one had to assume a posture toward it. In recent years, different postures have been assumed. (Not all the figures I will mention here would be recognized as public intellectuals, but they represent nodal points around which public attitudes and commentaries cluster.)

Some, such as Abe Foxman of the ADL, decided that the resurgence of religion in public poses a lethal threat to all they cherish about America, and to Jews in particular. Joining forces with older proponents of a rigid secularism, they rail against the dangers of the "religious right." Foxman, like the very influential Leo Pfeffer of the American Jewish Congress before him, is personally observant. The insistence is that personally religious means privately religious.

Others, such as Michael Lerner of *Tikkun* magazine, recognize that religion in public is here to stay and therefore try to spin the phenomenon in the service of their "progressive" ideology. Lerner and a few others are the leftist Jewish counterparts to Jim Wallis (author of *God's Politics*) in evangelical Protestantism.

A more thoughtful response to the religious resurgence was for decades represented by Irving Kristol's magazine, the *Public Interest*. Kristol—and his mainly but by no means exclusively Jewish colleagues—took a generally benign view of the assertiveness of a new mix of religion, culture, and politics that challenged regnant secular liberalisms. Kristol's understanding of religion in public was usually described as "instrumental": It doesn't much care about the particularities of Christian beliefs; the assertiveness of Christian morality is socially and politically useful.

A more explicit alliance between Judaism and public Christianity is pressed by the likes of Rabbi David Lapin and his movement, "Toward Tradition." Writers such as Michael Medved, Don Feder, Dennis Prager, and David Klinghoffer adopt a similar posture. Such figures are not intimidated by the charge that they are the Jewish wing of the "religious right."

Then there are those such as Rabbi David Novak and the hundreds of Jewish signers of the 2000 statement *Dabru Emet* ("To Speak the Truth"). Although Novak and others are generally on the "conservative" side of contested social and moral issues, their chief concern is the religious and moral engagement between Judaism and Christianity. This is presently the most vibrant expression of the long-standing Jewish-Christian dialogue. It is attentive also to grounding the search for a

more just and free society in shared Jewish and Christian warrants. It is understood that, while there is not a shared Judeo-Christian religion, there is a shared Judeo-Christian ethic. In the long and troubled history of Jewish-Christian relations, this is the enterprise that goes most deeply and could, I believe, have the most lasting consequences.

Yet others take another approach to the problem of being public intellectuals who are expected to be experts on an assertively religious society in which they are, religiously speaking, in a small minority. One thinks, for instance, of figures such as Alan Wolfe, David Brooks, Harold Bloom, Stanley Fish, and Adam Kirsch. These people are very different. Brooks is a frequently brilliant observer of cultural manners and quirks, and Fish is an energetic philosophical provocateur who would be sorely missed. What this group has in common, and what distinguishes them from other the thinkers, is that they have taken it upon themselves to adjudicate what is real and what is only apparent in the Christianity professed by the great majority of their fellow citizens. This might be described as a particularly bold exercise in *chutzpah*, but it is not without its charms.

Here, for example, is a review by Adam Kirsch of *Washington's God* by Michael and Jana Novak. Kirsch does not like the book at all. "It is not a serious work of history. It falls rather in the Parson Weems tradition of Washington biography, using the father of the country as a blank screen on which to project desires and fantasies about the country he fathered." Kirsch is determined not to let the father of the country, which is Kirsch's country, too, be claimed by the Christians. Now, as it happens, I think *Washington's God* would be a stronger book if it focused less on the personal piety and beliefs of Washington and more on the structure of Christian (and Jewish!) thought that marked the American Founders, including Washington. That structure is nicely analyzed in Michael Novak's earlier book *On Two Wings*. More pertinent to this discussion, however, is Kirsch's confident assertion about the kind of religion that can be safely admitted to the public square. It is "a vision of faith that does seem genuinely American: pragmatic, experiential, internal, more interested in love and forgiveness than judgment and punishment. More of this kind of faith, at least can't hurt the republic." A safely neutered Christianity whose hard edges have been replaced by the warm and fuzzy may be, according to Kirsch, admitted, if somewhat grudgingly, to the telling of the American story.

The most audacious effort to acknowledge "Christian America" while, at the same time, redefining it in a way that raises no awkward questions, and especially no awkward questions for those who are not Christian, is represented by sociologist Alan Wolfe of Boston College. In *FIRST THINGS*, I have regularly attended to his writings of recent years in which he assures his readers that Christians do not really believe what they say they believe. Wolfe, who says he does not have a religious bone in his body, set out his oft-reiterated thesis in the 1999 book *One Nation, After All: What Americans Really Think About God, Country, Family, Racism, Welfare, Immigration, Homosexuality, Work, The Right, The Left and Each Other*. Using interviews conducted by his assistants, Wolfe concludes that, except for their views on homosexuality, Americans are, despite their claims to be Christian, more or less good liberals like the rest of us. As for conservative Christians and the much-touted "religious right," they hardly show up on his radar screen. As with other "extremists," they are marginal, and must be kept that way.

In the days before religion began breaking out all over, the "religion factor"—meaning the Christian factor—was treated as epiphenomenal. Harold Bloom has an even more ambitious argument in his 1993 book, *American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation*. There we are instructed that Americans, with exceptions, have left Christianity behind in order to join Bloom in embracing an Emersonian gnosticism centered in the actualization of the "divine spark" within each of us.

In these instances, we have non-Christians negotiating their place in a dominantly Christian society and their standing as experts on that society—more specifically as experts on religion in that society—who contend that 85 percent of the population is living in a state of false-consciousness by thinking that they are, in some way that really matters, Christian. It is passing strange.

This attempted de-Christianization of America is not very polite. These writers, in effect, are asserting that Christians in America are the Laodiceans to whom the Lord says in Revelation 3, "I

know your works; you are neither hot nor cold. Would that you were hot or cold. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew you out of my mouth." Admittedly, with Bloom there is the interesting twist that they are not, in fact, lukewarm but hot for Emersonian gnosticism, albeit with some vestigial Christian trimmings.

It is undoubtedly true that many Christians are mediocre in their faith and its practice. Ordinarily, most people are ordinary. And there is surely a strong streak of gnosticism in popular spiritualities. More striking, however, is the claim that people are not what they say they are; that the majority of Christians who say that being Christian is very important to their lives are simply deceiving themselves. Among social analysts, there is no other social indicator or identity claim that is so cavalierly dismissed or redefined in ways contrary to what people say about themselves. If someone says he is a liberal Democrat or a fervent Red Sox fan, he is thought to have said something significant about himself. If he says he is very seriously a Christian, Messrs. Wolfe, Bloom, et al., are eager to disillusion him, or at least to explain to the rest of us why he is deluded.

Stanley Fish's distinctive contribution is to argue that American Christians are not seriously Christian because Christianity is a "comprehensive account" of reality and comprehensive accounts of reality are of necessity fanatical. Since Christians in America are generally not fanatical but tolerant and quite nice, it follows that they are actually good liberals who do not really believe in the comprehensive account that is Christianity. If one accepts the premise, this has the charm of being logical.

Fifty years ago, Will Herberg published his justly influential *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*. In those days, the old Protestant oldline establishment was still very much in place, as was what was viewed as tribally intact Catholicism. Herberg insightfully traced the ways in which Jews and Catholics were successfully melding their religious identity with the American Way of Life as defined by the old establishment. A crucial part of this was the adjustment to an "unconscious secularization" that modified, but did not evacuate, religious particularities. Herberg himself was very seriously a Jew.

In American culture, politics, and religion, a great deal has happened in the past half century. The decline of the oldline Protestant establishment, and the energy with which Catholics and evangelical Protestants are prepared to challenge dominant patterns of thought and life are among the most obvious changes. The consensus about the American Way of Life that Herberg assumed has largely collapsed. Driving these changes has been the divide over abortion and related questions inescapably engaging morality and public policy. Yet all this seems to have bypassed some of the thinkers under discussion here. In 1961, sociologist Gerhard Lenski made the case in *The Religious Factor* that religion is a distinct phenomenon, not an epiphenomenon, in the ordering of public life. All these years later, and we still have public intellectuals working hard to deny that.

The de-Christianizing of America by definitional legerdemain sometimes assumes amusing proportions. I have previously discussed Andrew Heinze's recent book, *Jews and the American Soul* (FT February). His lavishly documented thesis is that, beginning in the early twentieth century, a handful of Jewish psychiatrists and pop-psychologists succeeded in transforming the ways in which most Americans understand themselves and what they believe. It is a provocative argument and there is something to it. At the same time, one may be permitted to observe that the suggestion that American Christianity is now under the magisterium of Jewish psychotherapy warrants a measure of skepticism.

Thinkers and pundits of all varieties are today paying much more attention to religion than was the case fifty or even twenty years ago. Almost nobody today claims that religion is in the process of withering away. What is being said by some who are uncertain of their place in a pervasively and confusedly Christian society is that the resurgence of religion in public is nothing to worry about.

It is nothing to worry about because it is not distinctively Christian, and therefore is not threatening to non-Christians. In the case of Jewish thinkers, this view reflects a longstanding assumption that the less Christian a society is the better it is for Jews. That assumption had some warrant in the

European experience, although one does not forget that the regime that perpetrated the Holocaust was virulently anti-Christian.

Also in this respect, America is something quite new in world history. There is here a context of security and mutual trust that makes possible a genuine encounter between Jews and Christians, and between Judaism and Christianity. This is the encounter called for in the *Dabru Emet* statement and other initiatives.

Almost all Christians, and some Jews, are convinced that America is good for Jews not despite but because it is a Christian society. The mutually respectful encounter between Judaism and Christianity that is called for is a unique opportunity in two thousand years of history. That opportunity will continue to be squandered if we allow ourselves to be persuaded that religion in America is merely an epiphenomenal muddle of congenially liberal dispositions passing as Christianity.

Except, of course, for the members of the "religious right," who really are Christianly serious and therefore really are dangerous. (Some critics now call them the "Christianists," distinguishing them from the safe Christians.)

Once again, America is, as it always has been, an incorrigibly, confusedly, and conflictedly Christian society. There are relatively small minorities of Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. Of these, only Jews play a large role in our public discourse, although that could change in the future. More important, of these only Jews have an intrinsic religious relationship with Christians. Christianity can be understood apart from Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism; it cannot be understood apart from Judaism.

Jewish thinkers who are determined to denature Christianity often do so because they view Christianity as a threat. Perhaps just as often, they do so because they are as alienated from Judaism as they are fearful of Christianity, or even more so. These factors converge in complicated ways.

If they have given up religious particularity in order to be part of the homogeneous American "we," they expect others to accommodate them by giving up their own religious particularity, and resent it when they don't. Or else, as in the instance of Alan Wolfe et al., they convince themselves that others have accommodated them when they haven't.

Will Herberg was right. Protestants, Catholics, and Jews were finding a shared world in the American Way of Life. He recognized the possibility that religious particularity would be sacrificed to the pseudo-religion of Americanism. Critical to his argument was the belief that the American Way assumed and required a vibrant identity as Protestant, Catholic, or Jew.

This is the authentic pluralism in which difference makes a difference; in which, somewhat paradoxically, difference and habits of living with difference without denying that difference conduce to the distinctive form of unity that is the American Way.

Much has changed in the past half century. Protestantism in the form of the mainline-oldline Protestantism that Herberg had in mind has precipitously declined in numbers, influence, and confidence. The return of evangelical Protestantism from its fundamentalist exile was not in his line of vision. Moreover, the tribally intact Catholicism that he thought he knew gave way to the fissiparous dynamics triggered by the Second Vatican Council.

Decades later, the more self-consciously orthodox sectors of Protestantism and Catholicism are converging in a new and more confident cultural assertiveness. There is every reason to believe that these are very long-term trends in American life.

The question inevitably arises: Where does this leave Jews and Judaism? And where does it leave Jews who are alienated from Judaism? In many cases, the latter make common cultural cause with Protestants who are alienated from the oldline Protestantism that Herberg took for granted. The upshot is that there is no longer the secure religio-cultural triumvirate of Protestant- Catholic-Jew.

There is a large and more secularized sector of happen-to-be Protestants, happen-to-be Jews, and happen-to-be Catholics. These are the people who say they are Protestant, Jewish, or Catholic "by background." Together, and quite suddenly it seems, they are faced by, and made uneasy or hysterical by, a combination of more orthodox Christians who are newly assertive about moral truths that they believe should inform the ordering of our common life.

It is all very unsettling. And not least for Jewish intellectuals who make their living as experts on explaining America to their fellow-Americans. The situation is not made easier by the fact that Jews are, as a proportion of the population, a much smaller minority than they were in Herberg's day.

It is understandable that some of these intellectuals resort to the ploy of definitionally de-Christianizing America. "I am only in a small minority," they can tell themselves, "if you assume that the majority is Christian, which it really is not." The ploy is understandable. It is also poignant. More important, it is a great disservice.

It is a great disservice in that it gravely distorts the effort to understand the maddening changes and confusions that are the permanent state of American society. In a larger context that should matter to us immeasurably more, it is a great disservice to a unique moment of opportunity and obligation in which Christians and Jews, precisely as Christians and Jews, can respectfully engage one another in discerning the providential guidance of the God of Israel, also in the right ordering of our life together.

*Father Richard John Neuhaus is editor of First Things, where this first appeared. [First Things \(June/July 2006\)](#).*

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## Mystery at Medjugorje

by Paul Weyrich

*Issue 110 - June 25, 2008*

These are difficult times. Wars and rumors of wars. Troubling times with the world economy. While all of these things are happening, there is a remarkable development in Medjugorje, a small village in Bosnia. More than a million people a year are visiting the site where the Virgin Mary has appeared regularly since 1981.

The visions have affected not just Roman Catholics but Eastern Orthodox, Protestants and even members of non-Christian religions. The local Roman Catholic bishops have tried to throw cold water on these visions. They have been unable to convince people that what is happening there isn't real. Indeed the Vatican has removed them from the process.

There have been all sorts of scientific studies of the two ladies to whom the Virgin Mary has appeared. The women have been judged to be of sound mind and are healthy psychologically. Scripture says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." There have been reports at the site of healings and conversions from the cares and anxieties of this world to a Christian lifestyle.

My son Andrew went there alone. He personally witnessed the statue of the Jesus Christ which daily sheds tears. It has been subjected to x-rays and all sorts other examinations. It is free standing, unconnected to anything. Andrew said he personally felt the tears. In addition, the sun dances as it did at the time of the Communist revolution.

The messages which the ladies have received are consistent with Scripture. That is one of the first things to be examined to be sure that what is taking place at Medjugorje is not a cult. Andrew reports that when the Virgin Mary appears to the ladies birds flock to the area and are perfectly silent. When the visions are finished the birds fly away.

The Virgin implores pilgrims to pray and fast. If enough do the likely chastisement of this world may be averted. She also wants people to read the Bible and to receive the Holy Mysteries of the Roman Catholic Church. No one is obliged to accept that what is happening at Medjugorje is real. I recall speaking with the late Frank Shakespeare, once our Ambassador to the Vatican. He went there multiple times and was profoundly moved by what he saw and personally experienced.

So while there is worldly turmoil, especially in the Middle East, it is comforting to know that there is a place of peace on this earth.

Some 30 million people who have visited this tiny remote village are witness to the authenticity of the visions. The bitterest skeptics have turned around after visiting. Why would the Virgin Mary choose this remote location and these two ladies? Her son Jesus Christ only knows. Meanwhile, if you have not heard of Medjugorje up to this point, chances are very good that you will hear of it and its works as time goes on and as the situation in the world grows more difficult.

*Paul M. Weyrich is Chairman and CEO of the Free Congress Foundation.*



Paul M. Weyrich

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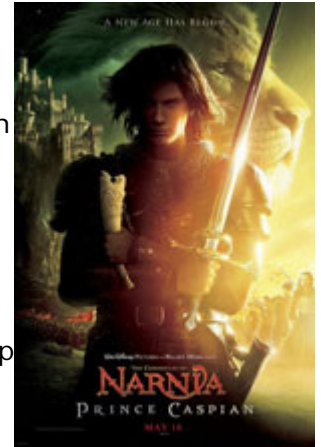
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## Worthy Narnia Fantasy

by Spencer Warren

Issue 110 - June 25, 2008

The filming of C.S. Lewis's children's fantasy classic *The Chronicles of Narnia* is a major event for conservatives in the Culture War. The first of the seven stories, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, was released to much acclaim in 2005. Now we have the second story, *Prince Caspian*, to enjoy during the summer, for it fully meets the high standard set by its predecessor. Both join such movies as the J.R.R. Tolkien *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001-2003), the *Harry Potter* films (2001-2007), *The Lion King* (1994), *The Nativity Story* (2006), *Amazing Grace* (2007) and *Atonement* (2007) as proof that there are some people with the funds and talent to make worthy films based on eternal truths for an audience of normal Americans. We are indebted to billionaire Philip Anschutz, owner of Walden Media and Bristol Bay Productions, for producing the *Narnia* films (all seven stories are planned, with the next one to go into production in the autumn) and also co-producing *Amazing Grace*, *Charlotte's Web* (2006), *Bridge to Terabithia* (2007) and *Ray* (2004). In addition, the two companies' film of Lewis's Christian apologetic *The Screwtape Letters* is in production. (Among his many works, Lewis also wrote in 1943 – ahead of its time -- a stout defense of objective truth and a critique of "Men Without Chests," *The Abolition of Man*.)



Narnia is the fairy tale land where the four Pevensie children (Peter, Susan, Lucy and Edmund) find themselves fulfilling their solemn duty, leading the battle for goodness, justice and truth against evil. As in the first story, Narnia is "peopled" with talking animals, including here a shrewd badger and a warrior mouse, Reepicheep, and his platoon of fighting mice. "He was of course bigger than a common mouse," Lewis explains, "well over a foot high when he stood on his hind legs. . . . he wore a tiny little rapier at his side and twirled his long whiskers as if they were a moustache." The Narnians also include fauns, centaurs, and dwarfs, as well as leopards and other animals. Then, above them, there is the awesome talking lion, Aslan, a figure of power, kindness and immense wisdom (Liam Neeson provides his voice). Lewis, an Oxford don, wrote *The Chronicles of Narnia* in the later 1940s and '50s, drawing on classical and Norse mythology for his Narnian characters, and on Christian symbolism for his broad themes. (His Oxford colleague Tolkien converted him to Christianity.) In the first story, Aslan, "the son of the great Emperor over-Sea," sacrifices his life in a torturous death for the sins of others ("the son of Adam"). His Passion makes possible their redemption. Susan (Anna Popplewell) and Lucy (Georgie Henley) mourn at the site of his ordeal. Later, Aslan returns in life to lead the Narnians to victory in their apocalyptic battle against the satanic White Witch and her mighty army.

In that first story, Peter (William Moseley) has been crowned King of Narnia, but with his siblings is at the end transported back to their lives in 1940s wartime England – not for long, as we discover in *Prince Caspian*. Time moves quite differently in Narnia, however, and a thousand years have passed. The Old Narnians have been driven from their homes into the forest by the evil Telmarines (the Humans), whose crown has been usurped by a classic villain truly to be reckoned with, King Miraz (Sergio Castellitto). Thus, after only a short time in England, the Pevensie children find themselves back fighting alongside their friends the Narnians.

When all are reunited in the dense forest, King Peter meets young Prince Caspian (Ben Barnes), who had escaped from his uncle Miraz's castle when he learned he was to be murdered by the usurper and has found refuge with the Narnians. As one of several examples of Lewis's interest in Christian themes, Caspian says, "I've been looking for people like you all my life," when he meets these unusual talking creatures. They are desperately outnumbered by Miraz's medieval-like army, but only the youngest, Lucy, has complete faith that Aslan will appear and deliver them. The accomplished director, Andrew Adamson, directs an affecting (if too short) scene portraying the mystery of Aslan's transcendent spirit. Lucy, alone, is convinced she has sighted him in the forest,

pointing to a quiet opening. The others see nothing there, but the delicacy with which Adamson shoots this spot of nature suggests something special had been present. Also special is Lucy's abiding faith despite the skepticism around her. This is one of the few memorable visual images in the film, which is more focused on narrative drive.

The rest, and the major portion of the film (if not the book), is devoted to truly thrilling battle sequences of the Narnians' bold attack, followed by the Telmarines' counter-attack. Their cavalry assault is met by the Narnian archers with a hail of arrows. Then the enemy follows with its phalanxes of infantry, marching relentlessly upon the ruins of the Narnians' long-ago home, in whose mountain caverns they have now taken refuge. Adamson and his editors show a tremendous command of tempo as they build up these intense, lengthy sequences, keeping the audience (aided by sound effects and the perfectly paced music score by Harry Gregson Williams) at their seats' edge. And, as in the earlier film, these battles, ferocious as they are, involve no blood or excess – their restraint is right out of Golden Age Hollywood's old self-censorship Production Code's rules, which required respect for the sensibilities of a civilized audience. These battle scenes are among the best ever put on screen, as are the absolutely amazing special effects – of the Narnian characters as well as the battle itself. The visual design of the archaic, pseudo medieval sets and costumes also is superb, superior to the *Harry Potter* movies.

Amidst these epic scenes, the film dramatizes the Christian mercy of King Peter, which is met by treachery in return – *Narnia* teaches that there are people who embody unregenerate evil, with whom there can be no compromise (liberals take note). Did Lewis have in mind his country and America's recent victory over such people in the Second World War? The film also shows us Peter, when things look darkest, in a desperate moment of (understandable) weakness – for none of us is perfect -- beginning to fall prey to the seductive temptation of rescue offered by his old antagonist, the satanic White Witch. But the good side fights on against the overwhelming odds; as even Miraz recognizes, "They won't surrender. They are too noble." And throughout the ebb and flow of the mighty battle Lucy struggles to prove her faith in Aslan is justified.

As an epic of good versus evil, the *Narnia* stories are much superior to Rowling's *Harry Potter* tales. The realization on screen of this major work by a beloved Christian author has been joyfully welcomed by Christian groups, as one can see from their study guides and other material posted on the internet. Inevitably, some complain about a loss of emphasis of this or that part of the book, but on the whole the first two *Narnia* films are cause for great celebration – although not to the atheist fantasist Philip Pullman (the recent film *The Golden Compass* is based on his work), who has complained Lewis is racist because the ogres in one book are dark-skinned, and not to a writer like Britain's Polly Toynbee, who wrote in *The Guardian* that "*Narnia* represents everything that is most hateful about religion" and presents a "Republican" version of Christianity!

The success of the first two *Narnia* installments is a great compliment to director Adamson, screenwriters Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely, and everyone else involved in their production, particularly as the director and screenwriters came to this very ambitious project with quite limited experience – thus demonstrating their inspiring innate talent. It is no easy task to bring off fantasy on screen, combining the human and fantasy elements, as credibly and with such sincerity as they have done here; nothing is fake or tongue-in-cheek, unlike certain other recent adventure films based in the past. And, like the books, the first two films work with equal success for children of all ages – including those of us well into adulthood.

Whether this will be maintained in the third *Narnia* movie, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, is open to some doubt, as the new director will be Michael Apted, who piloted *Amazing Grace* with none of the flair Adamson has brought to the *Narnia* series. (See review [here](#).) But let us hope for the best. The future of this series is important. We need these films for our own epic struggle in the Culture War.

*Spencer Warren is ConservativeBattleline On Line's media critic.*

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## Soderbergh's Boring "Che"

by S.T. Karnick

*Issue 110 - June 25, 2008*

Steven Soderbergh makes entertaining films, such as *Ocean's 11* and its two sequels (well, one of the two was good), and he also makes boring, dreary films--most of his output, as it happens. He's one of those cultural creators who is immensely talented and equally arrogant. He assumes that everyone should be interested in everything that interests him and should like everything he likes.

In sum, he appears to be a talented narcissist.

In addition, his politics come off as conventional Hollywood left wing bilge, the same form of hedonistic utilitarianism that drives what passes for thinking on the left today and somehow coexists with the American left's enormous elitism.

Thus it makes perfect (albeit perverse) sense that Soderbergh decided to make a four-hour movie about the Cuban communist revolutionary and former male model Che Guevara in Spanish and without any "movie moments," which is how Soderbergh smugly dismisses the use of filmmaking craftsmanship to entertain, touch, and enlighten audiences.

Two decades ago Soderbergh's film would have been a hit, at least with the critics, no matter how self-indulgent, false, and silly it turned out to be. (Remember *Reds* ?) And as recently as a decade ago the critics would surely have given it credit for good intentions if not aesthetic success, and would have politely glossed over most of its shortcomings.

Not today, however. As noted in recent articles in this august publication, the attitude toward communism in American society and culture has taken a decidedly Reaganesque turn in recent months, a trend that I believe will only strengthen in the years to come. (I will be publishing a full essay on this subject, shortly.)

As a result, Soderbergh's film has generated a good deal of disappointment and derision among critics who attended its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival. Even the *Washington Post*, no hotbed of right-wing conspirators, [ridiculed the film](#):

Comrades, it is our duty to report: There were deserters.

Traitors! Too weak to sustain the continued emotional investment necessary to survive the long, tragic, long, doomed Bolivian campaign of [Benicio Del Toro](#) in Part 2 of "Che." The most highly anticipated movie of the [Cannes Film Festival](#) took a heavy toll. The premiere got underway at 6:46 p.m. and ended at 11:25 p.m. Upon seeing on the screen the words "Day 328," a faint moan could be heard in our section. But the struggle will continue. It must. Soderbergh does not yet have an American buyer for his film. Distribution or death!

Reaction to the movie was, as they say, mixed. It appears that some support Soderbergh and others have joined the *résistance*. At the film's conclusion, the audience at the world premiere rose and gave Soderbergh, Benicio and their cast of internationalistas a sustaining ovation, shouting "fantastico" and "bravo!" Soderbergh, stone-faced during intermission, finally broke into a smile and waved.



But Todd McCarthy of Variety expects it will be "back to the drawing board" for an "intricately ambitious, defiantly nondramatic" work that not only avoids the usual Hollywood biopic conventions, but forgets to include "any suggestion of why the charismatic doctor, fighter, diplomat, diarist and intellectual theorist became and remains such a legendary figure."

Meaning "Braveheart" it's not.

The *Post* article acknowledges that a couple of highly obscure American critics praised the film (for Indiewire and Cinematical, whatever those are), but it made it clear that both the general critical reaction and the *Post*'s writer's reaction were extremely negative:

"The film reeks of authenticity but also self-indulgence. A potentially great performance by Benicio Del Toro in the title role is buried beneath Soderbergh's stylistic tics and an almost complete lack of dramatic tension," wrote Peter Howell in the [Toronto Star](#). "An incredibly ambitious, highly detailed mess," according to Roger Friedman at [FoxNews.com](#).

Interestingly, the *Post* article reports, Soderbergh doesn't speak Spanish and does not really care about Che's politics:

It seems as if the weight of history weighed them down. All these details, which the film obsesses on, like they were going to be graded by Fidel. The director said he himself was not a true believer, nor was he really interested in the Cuban revolution. He was interested in Che. "He's great movie material," said the director. "Who lived one of most fascinating lives of the last century."

Regardless of Soderbergh's opinion of Che's politics, it's clear that being communist or praising communists and communism is no longer a free ticket to American cultural acceptance.

*S.T. Karnick edits The American Culture at <http://stkarnick.com/>*

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## Czech Gore Challenge

by Christopher Adamo

Issue 110 - June 25, 2008

Since leaving office, former Vice-President Al Gore has gained enormous stature within certain circles on the world scene, acquiring it the standard liberal formula. Taking up his "Earth in the Balance" cause, produced the feature length movie "An Inconvenient Truth," which is replete with fantastic prophesies of doom for the planet unless America immediately regresses to third-world squalor.

An insipid and unsubstantiated piece of propaganda, Gore's movie never have resonated beyond the boundaries of a few egg headed film were it not for the concerted efforts of virtually every liberal and socialist special interest known to mankind. Coming to his aid, they collectively proclaimed "An Inconvenient Truth" to be at once the scientific equivalent of Einstein's theory of relativity, packaged in cinematic genius that eclipses Ben Hur. All is not yet lost however. A steadily growing number of brave souls are rising up to challenge the legitimacy of Gore's assertions, despite the certainty that they will be derided and castigated throughout the media, and in virtually all major "educational" institutions. Among the most notable of these challengers is Czech President Vaclav Klaus.



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In the typical modus operandi of liberalism, an avalanche of recognition and awards were conferred upon Gore and his movie, from the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize to an Oscar for "Best Documentary" to effusive accolades from every aspiring tinseltown movie critic. The film, along with all of his efforts to foment a global warming panic, have since been predictably declared as universal truth, a judgment based not on the availability of evidence, but on the profusion of like-minded liberal ideologues who are willing to accept and advance his hysterical claims.

Not surprising was the immediate branding of any who are dubious of Gore's outlandish assertions as "heretics." The liberal agenda, whether in relation to planetary catastrophe or the latest effort to confiscate and redistribute the private property of citizens, cannot tolerate honest examination. Thus, any effort to demand scientific evidence to support Gore's frenzied allegations will result in immediate charges of being a "global warming denier," an obvious attempt to link the honest skeptic to those anti-Semites who claim the Nazi holocaust never happened.

Sadly, far too many on the political scene who should recognize the "global warming" alarmism as the transparent power play that it is, instead choose to seek safe haven by accepting the premise of cataclysmic man-induced climate destruction. Others, hearing constant warnings of impending disaster, may actually be impressed by their shrillness and intensity, and thus prone to believe them.

In any case, a veritable ideological "stampede" is presently taking place, which threatens to undercut every aspect of American industry and commerce, thereby reducing the standard of living for all Americans. The exorbitant cost of gasoline, and impending extinction of the incandescent light bulb, are merely the first harbingers of a general degradation of modern civilization if the situation indeed remains unchecked, with much worse to follow.

In stark contrast to the pampered elitists of Western Academia, or their Hollywood and D.C. minions, Klaus has endured decades of deprivation in Soviet dominated Czechoslovakia. Thus he has seen, first hand the hardship and suffering possible under the iron fist of unrestrained governing institutions who have no regard for the common citizen except as a mere "resource" to be exploited for the good of the state.

During that time, he personally witnessed the denial of basic freedoms and sustenance to the people, while those in key positions of government enjoyed relative plenty. In many ways, what he saw was a sorry likeness of the hypocrisy among "climate change" movement leaders, as they regularly fly around the world in their private jets while issuing calls for more meager lifestyles among lesser people.



Recognizing the potential menace of the current situation and how liberals are exploiting it, Klaus has boldly challenged Gore to an open debate on the entire topic of "climate change." Knowing that the tenets of his "green religion" cannot withstand intense scrutiny, it is a challenge that Gore cannot afford to accept.

As the title of Klaus's book underscores, the question is not one of dangers to the climate, but of threats to the freedoms and well-being of average citizens. And though the theories of "global warming" are merely open-ended speculation, with time tables continually rolled back since the looming atmospheric upheavals never seem to keep pace with those dire forecasts, the encroachment on basic freedom and liberty is indeed progressing on schedule.

With unassailable insight, Klaus properly characterizes the moral arrogance of the global warming advocacy, again likening it to the ravages of communism with which he was so painfully familiar. At a national press club gathering recently, he compared the two sinister ideologies, sternly warning that "Like their predecessors, they will be certain that they have the right to sacrifice man and his freedom to make their idea reality. In the past it was in the name of the Marxists or the proletariat. This time, in the name of the planet."

To the degree that the major media and liberal political machine take notice of President Klaus and his effort, it will undoubtedly be only to demean and undermine him. Yet as someone who understands the consequences of allowing a monster of this nature to grow unchecked he continues his fight, grimly confident in the knowledge of what awaits western civilization if the "global warming" apostles ever gain the power which they crave.

*Christopher Adamo is a Staff Writer for the New Media Alliance, Inc. ([www.thenma.org](http://www.thenma.org)).*

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## Libertarian Health Paternalism

by John Goodman

*Issue 110 - June 25, 2008*

As of January of this year, U.S. employers can automatically enroll their employees in 401(k) plans with diversified portfolios - without fear of lawsuits and without certain regulatory burdens. This automatic enrollment should increase participation by about one-third, and diversification should produce larger and safer returns, although employees are able to opt out of both decisions. In the future, roughly one of every two 401(k) enrollees is likely to be so enrolled.



**John Goodman**

This opportunity was created courtesy of the Pension Protection Act of 2006, which reflected the joint efforts of the National Center for Policy Analysis (NCPA) and the Brookings Institution, including Capitol Hill briefings, publications, speeches, editorials, etc. Yet the real intellectual groundwork came from University of Chicago professors Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein. They call the theory behind this effort "libertarian paternalism," and they have written a book about it called *Nudge*. <http://www.nudges.org/>

I first discovered part of the theory on my own about a decade ago. The NCPA created after-tax Medical Savings Accounts (MSAs) for our employees, allowing them to pay medical expenses directly and to withdraw any remaining cash balances at year-end for other purposes. According to economic theory, this practice should have made our employees worse off. Why? Since there was no tax advantage to the MSA, we could have paid higher wages instead. Employees could have established their own MSA account or exercised other options, and economics teaches that we are never worse off if we have more options. Yet not a single employee complained.

In *Nudge*, Thaler and Sunstein have an explanation of this phenomenon. True enough, they concede, in a world full of Econs, more choices are always better than less. But in a world of Humans, things are often different. They argue convincingly that senior citizens forced to choose among 50 different Medicare drug plans faced a decision-making nightmare and often made bad choices. Similarly, unsophisticated employees faced with myriad portfolio choices are often poor managers of their 401(k) money.

There is a pattern here. People tend to "make good choices in contexts in which they have experience, good information and prompt feedback," such as choosing among ice cream flavors. They often make poor choices in contexts in which "they are inexperienced and poorly informed and in which feedback is slow or infrequent." Choosing an investment portfolio is one example. Choosing a drug plan is another.

So why can't markets solve these problems? They can and sometimes do. But often it is more profitable to cater to peoples' frailties and exploit them. So what can be done? Since Thaler and Sunstein are libertarian, they are not calling for big-brother government solutions. They are perceptive enough to realize that regulations often do more harm than the problems they are designed to correct. But since they are paternalists, they are intensely interested in how to get people to make good choices. Fortunately, coercion is rarely needed anyway. Often a simple nudge will do.

With respect to 401(k) plans, far too many people fail to enroll - even when there is an employer match. Some do not enroll even when the employer is paying 100% of the contribution and they need not invest a dime of their own money. Once in a plan, people tend to make two more mistakes. Either they invest in what they know (their employer's stock) or in what they think is safe (money market funds). The first mistake puts all their investment eggs in one (very risky) basket. The second generates an inadequate rate of return.

That's where defaults come in. Employers can automatically enroll their employees in diversified portfolios, leaving them free to opt out of decisions if they choose. Of course, for homo economicus, a default would matter not one whit. Yet amazingly, ordinary humans have a very strong tendency to stay wherever the default puts them.

According to Thaler and Sunstein, a great many social problems could be solved with simple nudges. Some examples:

- For the problem of too few organ donors, why not assume that people want to be donors - leaving them free to opt out of that presumption if they choose?
- For our wasteful, inefficient medical malpractice system, why not assume that people prefer a no-fault alternative - allowing them to pay more to secure their common law litigation rights if they prefer?
- Why not default seniors on Medicare into plans that minimize out-of-pocket costs and maximize coverage for their current drug needs - at least for chronically ill, poor seniors for whom government is paying almost the entire bill anyway?

All three of these examples are from the health care field. Yet it is with respect to health care that the authors most disappoint. After all, people are no better at choosing a health plan than they are at choosing an investment portfolio. Employers could help, but their incentives are skewed by the desire to attract healthy employees and avoid the sick. Insurers could help, but they make less money if consumers make good decisions rather than bad ones.

Ideally, one would form a committee to recommend an insurance plan toward which people could be nudged. Trouble is, how many people do you know who are (1) knowledgeable, (2) disinterested and (3) rational about health insurance? Out of 300 million people, I can't think of more than about five.

*John Goodman is President of the National Center for Policy Analysis*

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## School Nightmare

by Alan Caruba

Issue 110 - June 25, 2008

A friend of mine recently wrote to me saying, "My wife is retiring in June after thirty years of teaching. A high school degree means nothing. No Child Left Behind is an even bigger joke. It is a scary situation that could lead us to third world status, but we are prepared for that since we already teach English as a second language."



Alan Caruba

I remember my Father, the son of Italian immigrants, telling me how, when he entered kindergarten in the early years of the last century, the teacher paired him with a boy who spoke both English and Italian. *That* was how he learned to speak English. He was not considered special, the school was full of immigrant's children and they were expected to pick up English as best they could and as fast as they could. Later, my Father worked his way through New York University and became the youngest person at the time to pass the exam to become a Certified Public Account.

The difference between my Father's era—and mine at mid-century—and the children in today's schools is that there were subjects we were *expected* to master and grades reflected *actual* achievement.

Today's schools reflect the opening quote from a friend of mine, a fellow with a master's degree in education who tried his hand at teaching and discovered that his school was a jungle of incompetent teachers, indifferent administrators, and a majority of students for whom the expectation of good behavior and a dedication to learning was laughable. And his school was *every* public school.

That explains why Dr. Renato C. Nicolai, Ed.D, with forty years of teaching elementary and middle school as well as being an administrator in California schools, sat down and wrote *"The Nightmare That is Public Education: An Expose of What Really Happens in Public Schools"* (\$17.95, iUniverse). I recommend this book to parents so that the blinders can fall from their eyes and especially to teachers who still have a desire to actually teach.

"I believe teachers and principals work in school systems throughout the United States that are ineffective, poorly administered, and broken," says Dr. Nicolai. He cited six "myths" the public is spoon-fed to keep them in the dark.

1. The Money Myth—"Schools perform poorly because they need more money."
2. The Special Ed Myth—"Special education programs burden public schools, hindering their academic performance."
3. The Myth of Helplessness—"Social problems like poverty cause students to fail; schools are helpless to prevent it."
4. The Class Size Myth—"Schools should reduce class sizes; small classes would produce big improvements."
5. The Certification Myth—"Certified or more experienced teachers are substantially more effective."
6. The Teacher Pay Myth—"Teachers are badly underpaid."

Politically conservative parents have an even greater problem with today's schools that are totally in the grip of unions with a demonstrative leftist agenda. "The terms *multiculturalism, modernism, diversity, secular humanism, individual self-expression, moral relativism, and political correctness* identify the secular-progressive," writes Dr. Nicolai.

"When these terms are discussed with praise and commitment, you know you're on the trail of persons who believe that traditional values, rights, and responsibilities are old-fashioned and out of step with modern thought."

"Public schools are havens for liberal thought and practice. Secondary teachers are generally far left, left, or left-leaning." The greatest complaint of parents with children in today's school is that they are factories for indoctrination of values that run contrary to their own "old-fashioned" views.

It is doubtful still that parents have any idea how bad the situation is in their local schools, even if their children attend those in prosperous suburbs. Dr. Nicholai simply says they have been hoodwinked. Everyone participates from the students to the teachers to the administrators.

"Actually, at most public high schools, chaos is just under the surface of the daily routine, with cops on campus and administrators supervising before and after school, during passing periods, and at lunches and recesses, with walkie-talkies and cell phones."

Not exactly the description of a serene, safe environment in which to learn or teach anything.

We as a nation have known about this as far back as 1983 when the National Commission on Excellence in Education issued its report, "A Nation at Risk." Here we are, twenty-five years later, and the situation is infinitely worse. At a current average cost of \$9,200 per student, an increase of 69% over 1980 per-pupil spending, taxpayers are spending more and getting worse results.

*Alan Caruba writes a weekly column posted on the Internet site of The National Anxiety Center, [www.anxietycenter.com](http://www.anxietycenter.com).*

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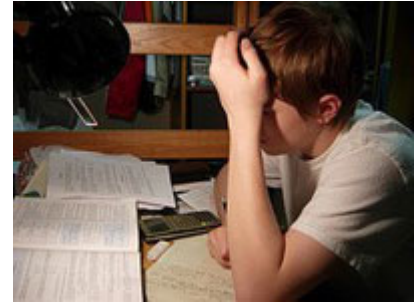
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## Girl or Boy School Crisis?

by Jeffery Leving and Glenn Sacks

*Issue 110 - June 25, 2008*

Boys have trailed girls in most indices of academic performance for at least two decades. In recent years, boys' educational struggles have finally been acknowledged and explored in the mainstream media. This has resulted in an unfortunate backlash from misguided women's advocates. The latest example of these advocates' efforts to minimize or deny the boy crisis in education is the American Association of University Women's highly-publicized new report "Where the Girls Are: The Facts About Gender Equity in Education."



The AAUW says its report "debunks the myth of a 'boys crisis' in education," but the study provides little evidence to support this contention. According to the Report's own data, girls get much better grades than boys, are far more likely to graduate college, and are on the good side of a longstanding "literacy gap."

It is also true that girls are much more likely than boys to graduate high school, and boys are far more likely than girls to be disciplined, suspended, held back, or expelled. The vast majority of learning-disabled students are boys, and boys are four times more likely than girls to receive a diagnosis of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. Although more girls than boys enroll in high level math and science classes, boys do score a little better in math. However, girls' advantage in reading is several times as large.

Most of the AAUW report's claims are superficial and unconvincing. The Report tells us "the crisis is not specific to boys; rather, it is a crisis for African American, Hispanic, and low-income children." Of course--low income and minority children do not fare as well as children from more advantaged groups. But the boys of any cohort are still behind the girls in most indices.

The Report reassures us that both sexes have stayed the same or improved on standardized tests in the past decade. This isn't the point--the gender gap isn't new, but has existed for well over a decade.

The AAUW says the report's "results put to rest fears of a 'boys' crisis' in education, demonstrating that girls' gains have not come at boys' expense." This is another irrelevant point. Nobody claims the boy crisis exists because of girls' gains--the issue is that boys' performance fell significantly behind girls', and has remained behind because we've failed to address boys' problems.

This is not the first time a highly-publicized study has claimed to debunk the boy crisis. In 2005, Duke University announced its study on child wellbeing by telling the media "American boys and girls today are faring almost equally well across key indicators of education, health, safety and risky behavior." Press reports followed suit, with headlines such as "Boys, girls fare equally in U.S.: Study debunks both sides in long debate" and "Boy-girl gender gap? Not so fast."

Yet the study showed nothing of the sort. Boys and girls fared equally in six of the 28 categories studied by the researchers — and girls fared better than boys in 17 of the remaining 22. Even the few advantages the study found for boys were modest. By contrast, many of girls' advantages were very large.

The new AAUW report, unable to dispel the boy crisis, falls back instead on the alleged wage gap, claiming, "Perhaps the most compelling argument against a boys crisis is that men continue to out earn women in the workplace." They explain that among all women and men working full time, year-round, median annual earnings for women were 77 percent of men's earnings in 2005.

It has been amply demonstrated that the wage gap is largely caused by the career sacrifices mothers make to care for their children and the primary breadwinner role most fathers assume when their children are born. The wage gap is very questionable in and of itself, and certainly is of no relevance when discussing gender and school performance.

The boy crisis is real. England has widely acknowledged a similar crisis in its system, and has taken steps in recent years to address the problem. The U.S. has not. Instead of giving credence to the AAUW's unfortunate sophistry, we instead need to focus on how to change our educational system to address boys' problems.

*Jeffery M. Leving is Chairman of the Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood. His website is [www.dadsrights.com](http://www.dadsrights.com). Glenn Sacks taught elementary school and high school in Los Angeles Unified School District and others, and was named to "Who's Who Among America's Teachers" three times. His columns have appeared in dozens of America's largest newspapers. His website is [www.GlennSacks.com](http://www.GlennSacks.com). This column first appeared in The Buffalo News.*

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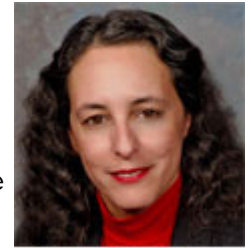
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## Stop Baseball Crime

by Lisa Fabrizio

Issue 110 - June 25, 2008

Years ago, when only a triad of arbiters policed the baseball diamond, enterprising organists were fond of playing "Three Blind Mice" when the men in blue took the field. Of course, that was long ago and the mellifluous music that once wafted through ballparks has given way to the mind-numbing assault of rock and roll on the senses of horsehide fans. But one unchanging aspect is that Major League Baseball umpires have been under fire since some far-off fan in the 19th Century shouted, "You're missing a good game, ump!"



Lisa Fabrizio

As has often been said, baseball is a natural fit as our national pastime; a word which is defined as 'the pursuit of leisure'. Unlike other sports such as NASCAR, whose races have attained a holiday-like atmosphere, baseball's milestones are actually marked by our national holidays; a team gauges its success in terms of its won/loss record by Memorial Day, the Fourth of July and Labor Day. And each of these holidays would be incomplete without that quintessential American backdrop; the sound of a ballgame blaring from a tinny AM radio.

Also exemplary of our nation is the tendency of its citizens to enjoy expressing their diverse and sometimes contentious opinions on just about everything, particularly sports. Baseball, with its languorous pace and abundance of statistics, lends itself to this in an almost perfect way; yet all fans would agree that criticizing the umpires is a sacred right. What self-respecting fan has not, at one time or another echoed the old chestnut, "We wuz robbed!?" As Hall of Famer Nestor Chylak said, "This must be the only job in America that everybody knows how to do better than the guy who's doing it."

But instead of embracing this time-honored tradition, some folks--angered by the seeming spate of blown home-run calls--have issued a call for the artificial and culturally invasive practice of instant replay. The increasing popularity of the NFL has brought about the odd desire of some baseball people to make the game more like football. From the institution of wild-cards and inter-league play, to the noxious attempts at *parity* via the imposition of luxury taxes, baseball has tried its best to conform to its gridiron stepchild.

But baseball is not, nor should it ever be, in any way like football, especially when it comes to officiating. Even without instant replay, football referees--like those in hockey and basketball--are more or less like traffic cops who from time to time interrupt the organized chaos around them. But the baseball umpire controls nearly every aspect of the game. His decisions effect every pitch, hit and catch since he, in a way, determines whether or not the ball will even be put in play because he is the arbiter of balls and strikes.

Since the very length of a game often depends on his decisions, particularly those concerning the strike zone, the official Rules of Baseball state that these decisions cannot even be argued or appealed to other umpires, let alone be set aside. In other words, the baseball umpire enjoys a prominence above all other sports officials in that his authority is essentially perceived to be beyond question. Any use of instant replay would diminish this elevated status. It would also reduce the paying customers' need to yell, "Kill the umpire." After all, no one bothers to abuse NFL refs anymore because most of their power has been technologically neutered.

And this would be a crime in baseball, because an umpire's duties leave more room for personal interpretation than in any other sport. From bean-ball infractions to balks; from catcher's interference to the short fuse of a disgruntled manager; a Major League umpire must be a baby-sitter, a mind-reader, a drama critic and a weatherman. But most of all, it is the integrity that superintends these roles which must never be in question. Lessen the human interpretive input of any of these and you lessen them all.

Finally, the very nature of the baseball season itself is reason enough to eschew instant replay. Unless an umpire's bad call is made in the late innings of the deciding game of a series--where, not coincidentally, there are two additional men in blue--there's always another day in baseball; in fact, 162 of them. In football, each of the 16 games has a life-and-death feeling to it and so each set of downs acquires a critical aspect that is happily absent in baseball.

Those who favor the adoption of instant replay in limited circumstances must be aware that its implementation would be a step out onto the brink of a very slippery slope. When was the last time 'progressives' have been timid in advancing their agenda in any field? And, just as in a government dominated by tax-loving Democrats; once the initial incursion is made they will surely take the mile, having already won the inch.

Harness the zebras if you must, but stay true to our men in blue.

*[Lisa Fabrizio](#) is a columnist who hails from Connecticut.*

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Editor**

## Drive Coal, Not Gas

by Dennis Avery

*Issue 110 - June 25, 2008*

We are truly conflicted about energy. Everyone agrees gasoline prices are far too high, but:

Congress claims the oil industry is manipulating gas prices, while not allowing drilling.

President Bush's corn ethanol mandate has nearly doubled the world's food prices, while producing a tiny amount of low-grade auto fuel.

The Senate is meanwhile debating the Lieberman-Warner bill, which would deliberately tax gasoline and every other fossil fuel more and more heavily until we stop using them. That's to "save us" from global warming.

The most foolish "solution" of all—the new law that lets us sue Arabs (we have zero jurisdiction) to force them to produce more oil while we sit on billions of gallons of oil and thousands of American jobs, refusing to drill in our own backyard.

The most logical answer to high gasoline prices has to be coal. We have centuries' worth of coal, and we have clean-burning systems such as fluidized bed combustion. But we've been retiring the old coal-fired power plants, and burning scarcer oil and natural gas in our power plants. That has driven up both gas and gasoline prices. Hybrid cars conserve a little oil, but shifting the power plants to "clean coal" would conserve a lot of it.

Instead, the Eco-Department of Kansas has just forbidden the construction of two new coal-fired power plants because they would emit greenhouse gases. Governor Sibelius has backed up the environmental regulators. Texas has been forced to drop plans for several new coal-fired plants as well.

Kansas and Texas are naïve. In Europe, they're openly burning more coal already. German coal burning was up 3.5 percent last year, never mind Kyoto. Britain is building a whole generation of new coal-fired plants to keep the lights on with a minimum of Middle East oil and Russian natural gas.

California wins the Hypocrisy Medal as it brags about its small carbon footprint while letting Arizona and New Mexico burn California's coal just over the border, and paying the transmission costs back to California.

In the longer run, when we come to our senses, nuclear power will be a big player; but it will take a long time to get new nuclear plants on line. Nor is it clear what they will cost, even if we can rein in the Green lawsuits that seem to have paralyzed both the courts and Congress.

Don't blame Big Oil. Countries own their oil—and the U.S. won't let U.S. workers produce it in this country. Don't blame the Arabs for the Greenpeace plan to scuttle "clean coal," along with every other viable energy source. Don't even blame Congress, which foolishly tries to represent our own ambivalence about cars, energy, and "conservation." Is leaving coal in the ground part of conservation? And what are we conserving it for if we refuse to use it as energy?

The crowning irony is that NASA now says the Pacific Ocean has entered a 25–30 year cooling phase. The last time this happened was from 1940–1975, when we had moderate, erratic global cooling. The climate science shows a 79 percent correlation between our temperatures and sunspots



**Dennis T. Avery**

but no correlation with CO 2. This means CO 2 cannot be the dominant factor in our climate. So the high gas prices, the reliance on foreign oil, the loss of American jobs in the oil and coal and potential jobs in the nuclear fields are all for naught

*Dennis T. Avery directs the Center for Global Food Issues for the Hudson Institute of Washington, D.C. He was formerly the senior agricultural analyst in the U.S. State Department. He is the co-author of the 2006 best-seller **Unstoppable Global Warming Every 1500 Years**. His 1995 book **Saving the Planet With Pesticides and Plastic: The Environmental Triumph of High-Yield Farming** continues to be popular as a readable overview of realistic agriculture for the future and for today.*

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## Obama and McCain on Israel

by Daniel Pipes

Issue 110 - June 25, 2008

How do the two leading candidates for president of the United States differ in their approach to Israel and related topics? Parallel interviews with journalist Jeffrey Goldberg of *The Atlantic*, who spoke in early May with Democrat [Barack Obama](#) and in late May with Republican [John McCain](#), offer some important insights.



John McCain and Barack Obama, in close discussion.

Asked roughly the same set of questions, they went off in opposite directions. Obama used the interview to convince readers of his pro-Israel and pro-Jewish bona fides. He thrice reiterated his support for Israel: "the idea of a secure Jewish state is a fundamentally just idea, and a necessary idea"; "the need to preserve a Jewish state that is secure is ... a just idea and one that should be supported here in the United States and around the world"; and "You will not see, under my presidency, any slackening in commitment to Israel's security."

Obama then detailed his support within four specifically Jewish contexts.

- *Personal development*: "when I think about the Zionist idea, I think about how my feelings about Israel were shaped as a young man — as a child, in fact. I had a camp counselor when I was in sixth grade who was Jewish-American but who had spent time in Israel."
- *Political career*: "When I started organizing, the two fellow organizers in Chicago were Jews, and I was attacked for associating with them. So I've been in the foxhole with my Jewish friends."
- *Ideas*: "I always joke that my intellectual formation was through Jewish scholars and writers, even though I didn't know it at the time. Whether it was theologians or Philip Roth who helped shape my sensibility, or some of the more popular writers like Leon Uris."
- *Philosophy*: "My staff teases me sometimes about anguishing over moral questions. I think I learned that partly from Jewish thought, that your actions have consequences and that they matter and that we have moral imperatives."

In contrast, McCain felt no need to establish his Zionism nor his pro-Jewish credentials. Taking them as a given, he used his interview to raise practical policy issues, particularly the threat from Iran. For example, asked about the justness of Zionism, he replied that "it's remarkable that Zionism has been in the middle of wars and great trials and it has held fast to the ideals of democracy and social justice and human rights," then went on: "I think that the State of Israel remains under significant threat from terrorist organizations as well as the continued advocacy of the Iranians to wipe Israel off the map." Again referring to Iran, McCain committed himself "to never allowing another Holocaust." He referred to the threatened destruction of Israel as having "profound national security consequences" for the United States and he stressed that Tehran sponsors terrorist organizations intent "on the destruction of the United States of America."

A second difference concerns the importance of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Obama presented it as an "open wound" and an "open sore" that infects "all of our foreign policy." In particular, he said, its lack of resolution "provides an excuse for anti-American militant jihadists to engage in inexcusable actions." Asked about Obama's statement, McCain slammed the idea that radical Islam results mainly from the Arab-Israeli confrontation: "I don't think the conflict is a sore. I think it's a national security challenge." Were the Israeli-Palestinian issue resolved tomorrow, he pointedly continued, "we would still face the enormous threat of radical Islamic extremism."

Finally, the two disagree on the import of Israelis continuing to live on the West Bank. Obama places great emphasis on the topic, commenting that if their numbers continue to grow, "we're going to be stuck in the same status quo that we've been stuck in for decades now." McCain acknowledged this as a major issue but quickly changed the topic to the Hamas campaign of shelling Sderot, the besieged Israeli town that he personally [visited in March](#), and whose predicament he explicitly compares to the mainland United States coming under attack from one of its borders.

Goldberg's twin interviews underscore two facts. First, major-party candidates for the U.S. presidency must still pay homage to warm American ties to Israel, no matter how, as in Obama's case, dramatically this may contradict their [previously-held views](#). Second, whereas McCain is secure on the topic, Obama [worries about winning the pro-Israel vote](#).

*Mr. Pipes ([www.DanielPipes.org](http://www.DanielPipes.org)) is director of the Middle East Forum.*

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## Abusing Presidential Trust

by David Keene

*Issue 110 - June 25, 2008*

It was 1973 and the White House was under siege. I was working for then-Vice President Spiro Agnew, who was under investigation by the Justice Department and peripherally involved in dealing with the day-to-day hits the Nixon administration was taking as a result of the Watergate break-in and cover-up.

In the midst of all this, a journalist friend made a suggestion. "Keep a diary," he said, "because when this is over there will be a book in it and you could write it as an insider."



David Keene

I thought about it and for a few days jotted down what I saw and heard, but when I reviewed what I had written, I tore up my notes and kept no more.

While reviewing my notes, I realized that if I ever used them, I would be writing about or reporting on conversations and deliberations with people who trusted me and had a right to expect that I could, in fact, be trusted. If I later turned on them and used what they said during these meetings (or even conversations in the hallways of the White House and Executive Office Building), I would be betraying that trust. I didn't think I could live with myself if I did that.

Scott McClellan obviously had no such qualms when it came to betraying those who trusted him. While folks today are obsessing over why he did what he did, the fact that he did it tells us more about him than about the people he betrayed. I don't know the man myself, but I have to say I wasn't all that impressed with the job of spokesman that he did before White House Chief of Staff Josh Bolten sent him packing.

In his book, he rails on about the fact that the Bush White House engaged in an effort to "sell" the war to the American people. That should come as no surprise to anyone. Every administration engages in an ongoing campaign to "sell" the public on its policies, both foreign and domestic, and every wartime president has realized that support for his goals at home is as important as the success of our armies on the battlefield.

As one of Bush's salesmen, McClellan strove mightily to convince the public of the justness of policies he now says were wrong. Whether the policies were or not is, in evaluating McClellan, less important than his enthusiasm for them when things were going well and his willingness to abandon them and his former friends when he perceived it to be in his interests to do so.

McClellan was and is like too many people one finds in today's Washington. Politicians attract at least three kinds of people. They come to town surrounded by those dedicated to them personally and others who share their ideals and beliefs, of course, but their entourage also includes people who signed on for the ride not out of a sense of public duty or dedication to certain principles, but to further their own ambition.

Scott McClellan was obviously one of the latter. His actions in office and since leaving strike one as those of a man seeking "the main chance." He was Bush's man when the president was riding high, but once the public mood soured on the president and his policies, McClellan turned on his former patron and will make money for doing so.

John Dean, who turned on Nixon during Watergate, got his start as a staffer for then-Rep. Bill Cramer of Florida, befriended Attorney General John Mitchell at the poker table and managed to use Mitchell to land the job as White House counsel. When it became clear to him that Nixon was in trouble, it took him no time at all to turn on the president and his former mentor and join the chorus of those after their hides.

Cramer had soured on Dean even before he'd moved on. He thought he was little more than, to put it euphemistically, a rank opportunist who would walk over his best friend if he thought for a minute he would benefit from doing so. "That's the kind of people they wanted at the White House," Cramer told me back then, "so how can they be shocked by the fact that he's acting just as they should have known he would?"

Cramer said the real problem then was with a White House that would employ such people in the first place.

Maybe McClellan used John Dean as a character reference when he sought employment in the Bush White House. If he didn't, he should have.

*David Keene is the chairman of the American Conservative Union.*

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## Political Appearance or Truth?

by John Ransom

*Issue 110 - June 25, 2008*

We are in the Age of Talking Points. The problem is that the distinction between what is campaign rhetoric and what is true has gotten so muddled that it's often impossible to tell where the dirt starts and the clear water begins.

That's especially dangerous for politicians today who live in a surreal world of TV appearances, press releases, speeches and other communications media in which they fight every day to define the truth (and the appearance of it) often on a minute by minute basis.

At a time where political analysis is practiced, not day-by-day but minute-by-minute by wire-service press organizations that are supposed to be non-partisan, it's only natural that some confuse the appearance of truth with the truth. And it's also natural for those that frame the appearance of truth to confuse skill in creating appearance of truth with actual righteousness.

Like the Emperor and his new clothes, the natural tendency for politicians in every age is to get confused as to the difference between the truth and the appearance of truth. Successful politicians are often surrounded by fawning staff and, because of the incumbent advantage, they are encouraged to believe that what they think of others is more important than what others think of them. After all, these are the "great people" who create the truth for the rest of us.

Because of that ingrained arrogance, it's becoming increasingly more important that a story sells rather than it is true, whether you're the New York Times that does the selling, or the president's press secretary. Indeed, as was recently shown, presidential press secretaries sell many more books if those books contain an apologia for allegedly pushing false stories to the media. It's almost as if our society says: "A book wouldn't be a bestseller if it weren't true."

So it's only natural that the incumbent advantage the GOP has enjoyed for these many years in the US House, Senate, governors mansions and state houses did its normal magic and eventually moved the Party to be one that governed not by the substance of what it believed but by the appearance of what it believed.

It's also only natural that people, including many in the GOP eventually, caught on to that fact.

What the Republican Party needs today is a set of grand ideals that GOP really represents, a sort of "True Deal" that represents a pledge to govern by certain unchangeable truths in fact and not govern as only appearance dictates. It should also contain challenge to accomplish certain goals for the American people that underpin those truths, come what may.

Some of the "True Deal" points could include:

1. Our tax code is broken and needs to be changed.
2. Never go to war without the American people getting a real assessment of the causes and issues involved. They don't have to agree, but they have to be told clearly.
3. Energy Security comes through more choices including more traditional choices and more alternative choices but each choice has to be economically viable without government regulation.
4. Our healthcare system will be improved by more choices not by a government take over.
5. Social Security is broken and needs to be phased out.

6. We should commit to a fixed level of funding to the Federal government's primary purpose, national defense- say 5 percent of GDP.
7. The Federal Government should be smaller in real-terms not smaller in Washington terms.
8. Protecting life, in all stages, and liberty, in all forms, is the purpose of government. When government does less than that or more than that, it threatens both life and liberty.
9. The Republican Party should all be committed to the idea of rotation in public offices, that is: self-imposed term limits.
10. Free trade ensures American's get the best products for the lowest cost.

The True Deal shouldn't go into such specifics as to be limiting but it should be broad enough to include the range of truths embraced by the GOP.

Its strength should be that the values traditionally embraced by conservatives (and Americans) of all sorts, from fiscal policy to life issues, always rely upon an appeal to truth first.

Like our founding document, the Declaration of Independence, which is elegant in its reliance upon self-evident truths, the GOP True Deal should rely upon those truths that contain no sophistries or muddiness.

It should be elegant in its simplicity instead of ingenious in its rationale.

America is tired of the ingenious no matter how plausible it might sound.

What they want is the truth.

If only the GOP will give it to them.

*John (Bam) Ransom is a Masters in Fine Arts candidate (Non Fiction Writing) at Spalding University, runs his own freelance writing practice in Denver, Colorado and is on the board of advisors for Slipglass, a computer security company that works in the defense and intelligence sectors.*

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## TV Obama Observer Affect

by Mark Rhoads

*Issue 110 - June 25, 2008*

For those who have studied physics, you have at least heard about the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle which makes it impossible to pin down both the momentum and location of a sub-atomic particle because both the location and speed are inexact variables that cannot both be measured precisely at the same time. The related "observer affect" suggests that one cannot observe such an event without also affecting it just because the act of observing alters the event.



There is a version of the observer affect often at work in political reporting in America. For more than forty years starting before the Kennedy-Nixon debates in 1960, the TV news divisions of ABC, NBC, and CBS regarded themselves as the gatekeepers of American elections. At first, some pretense was made to really be observers of the news and reporters of events. Soon, that pretense dropped and assignment editors and reporters actively became part of the story while still posing as observers. Maybe this is a harsh judgment, but It always seemed as if Dan Rather as a floor reporter at the 1964 and 1968 conventions would relish opportunities for confrontations so he could be carried off the floor.

With each presidential election, the hubris of the three major networks grew to the point where Election Nights were considered to be the Super Bowl for political commentators and reporters and it was hard to tell any difference between the two species. As far as viewers were concerned, there were no county clerks or state counting boards that were in charge of counting votes and certifying their accuracy. The networks ran the "show." It literally was a "show."

By the 1970s, the network news divisions actually had their announcers make pronouncements, backed by appropriate theme music and drums, such as "We now award the state of Illinois to President Ford." "We now award New York to Gov. Carter." States and voters, in the language of networks, became their gift to award to some candidate at the time and place of their decision. Even when networks got it wrong, they still seldom apologized for major mistakes as for example when former Chicago reporter Frank Reynolds announced on ABC that Presidential Press Secretary Jim Brady of Centralia, Illinois had died of his wounds on the day that John Hinckley shot and wounded President Reagan. It turned out the impeccable ABC source was someone on Capitol Hill listening through a keyhole in the office of a Senator who had no inside information at all other than indirect rumors from the George Washington University Hospital several miles to the west of the Capitol.

Only in the last eight years have the traditional networks lost ground to cable networks because of more money devoted to political coverage by cable and as a consequence of the nonstop 24-hour news cycle. Now the cable networks, CNN in particular, have shown in 2008 more arrogance than their network ancestors did in their late 20th Century glory days. Not only did CNN "award" states based largely on fallible exit polls, but on Tuesday night, June 3 CNN "Declared" that Sen. Barack Obama was the nominee of the Democratic Party. Sometimes they used qualifying terms such as putative nominee and sometimes not. For those of you who think Democratic delegates will nominate Obama at a convention you are mistaken. CNN has nominated him and the delegates are mere window dressing. At the same time, the "observers" reverted to their same form as before the Saturday Night Live "debate" during which a reporter asked Sen. Obama if he would care for a pillow.

In 2000, the media was for John McCain because he was not Ronald Reagan or George H.W. Bush or George W. Bush. McCain was the media candidate just as surely as Gov. Bill Clinton was the media candidate in 1992 or John Anderson was in 1980. But America has not until this year seen anything like the overwhelming media crusade in favor of Sen. Barack Obama at the expense of a patina of objectivity to any candidate in either party who is not Obama.

Yes it is both historic and newsworthy that Sen. Obama will be the first African American to win a major party presidential nomination. Few remember now that Rep. Geraldine Ferraro was the first woman to be nominated on a ticket for Vice President in 1984, or that Republican Sen. Margaret Chase Smith ran a serious campaign in 1964, or the Republican Sen. Charles Curtis of Kansas was the first American Indian to actually be elected Vice President on a ticket with Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover in 1928. These events also were historic.

One cannot take away the achievement of Obama and even those of us who shake our heads in wonder that such a poorly-qualified lawmaker with no major accomplishments attached to his name must take note of his political and rhetorical skills. Sen. Obama will now start the fall campaign with enormous advantages including the "neutral observers" in the news media who will by their voice inflections and spins make in-kind donations to the Obama campaign worth tens of millions of dollars. Remember how much was made of the fact in 2000 that Vice President Gore had 500,000 more popular votes than Gov. Bush did on election night? Few have ever studied the observer affect of network spins that night long before the polls closed in the mountain and western time zones. The spin was, why even Virginia is in doubt and "too close to call" when such was not the case. But if California Bush supporters were being told, in effect, there is no point in you going to the polls that could easily have made a huge contribution to the popular vote of Vice President Gore in the western time zone states.

So Sen. McCain will not be the favorite of CNN this year. Sen. Obama has in effect already been endorsed by the group that never tires of calling itself the "best political news team on television (or some similar boast)." Maybe some day there will be someone who takes pride in hiring the most objective reporters on television. But that day will have to wait. For now, the cable news outlets are enjoying their time in the sun. They have the heaviest thumb on the scale of American politics and if Sen. McCain can overcome that handicap, it will be quite a story.

*Mark Rhoads is a former state senator from Illinois, a political activist and analyst.*

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## Obama "Change" Exploited Teens?

by Renny Hartmann

*Issue 110 - June 25, 2008*

"Change!" "Hope!" "Future!" are all catchwords the presumed Democratic nominee for president chronically proclaims in speeches - where college women are reported to faint. Well, people swooned over Hitler, too, so one should be careful about rhetoric alone.

But one "change" Barack Obama will never make is his unbridled and intemperate support for abortion all the time for any reason whatsoever. As an Illinois legislator, he voted "present" and "no" consistently on all abortion issues but is most infamous for voting "present" on the Born Alive Infants Protection Program in 2001 and 2002. That bill tried to protect very late-term abortions where a living child is born. In that state, these anomalies could be simply left literally on shelves until they died. Obama said his "present" strategy was suggested to him by Planned Parenthood. A similar bill past the Senate in 2001 with "yes" votes from Barbara Boxer, Hilary Clinton, Joe Biden, Chris Dodd, and John Edwards, all acknowledged very liberal Senators.

Obama also supports no parental notification of parents of minors seeking abortions. NARAL (National Abortion Rights Action League) has given the Democratic heir presumptive a 100 percent rating for 2005, 2006, 2007, and doubtless, 2008.

Nevertheless, I am less concerned about Obama's various bows to leftist ideology than about the results of this social program that so-called liberals have pushed for forty years. It has resulted in the worst possible circumstances for women. No one wants to mention it, but the misnamed "sexual revolution" may be great for teenaged males and any guy with a wandering eye, but it has overall been miserable for young girls and women. These are the young people Democrats always kvetch about having such compassion for and worrying endlessly about how many villages it takes to raise them.

Here are the current reports from the sexual revolution and the kind of society that this program has produced:

- 4,000 abortion are performed every day
- 1, 293,000 abortions were performed in the US in 2004
- 40,000,000 abortions have been performed since 1973
- 1 percent are for incest/rape
- 3 percent are for health
- 96 percent are for birth control
- 75 percent are performed on females 12-25 years old

These statistics are from Planned Parenthood; ergo, they must be the least provoking or disturbing. Even many of those opposed to limiting abortion agree it is a negative social phenomenon. Presumably, one should want to change this trend. Will Mr. Obama make any proposals for "change"? How about for other results of the sexual revolution?

Concurrently, the CDC claims 25 percent of college-aged women are infected with a contagious venereal disease (they like STD for sexually transmitted disease, but I like venereal from Venus, goddess of erotic love—whenever liberals want to remove moral assessment from a subject, they change the terminology) such as (most commonly today) Chlamydia, Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), genital herpes, and genital warts. Valtrex ads claim 20 percent of all American adults are specifically contagious for genital herpes.



Sen. Barack Obama

Chlamydia is a bacterial infection and can be cured by antibiotics. However, NO VIRUS HAS ANY CURE. People contracting genital herpes or HPV (associated with cervical cancer) are infected for life. Condoms and the typical liberal jargon about "protection" are belied in problems like herpes or warts because they tend to infect the general public area, thighs, and buttocks, which are not covered by a condom.

Obama says he favors teaching abstinence but still encouraging contraception use. I would say his thoughts on the subject are entirely specious.

In parallel, teenaged girls' depression rates have skyrocketed recently. The increase is 76 percent, up from 8 percent in 2003. This increase has been accompanied by increased adolescent suicide, of which 75 percent have been tied to incidences of depression.

900,000 teens THINK ABOUT SUICIDE, most of them girls. Twice as many females suffer suicide ideation as young men, although of those who are successful suicides, the majority are boys.

Looking at older people, an epidemic of infertility rages in America, with couples spending up to \$50-\$60,000, often mostly cash, as the treatments are usually not covered by insurance, for medical assistance in conceiving. A couple is considered infertile if it has not conceived after a year of "unprotected" sex. According to Penn State's Women's Health, not a group probably afflicted by any conservative leanings, the infertility situation is probably connected to younger and younger minor girls' becoming sexually active and passing around the variety of venereal diseases now available (56) and causing pelvic inflammation that can create lesions and scarring internally in women, who may never be aware of either the condition or its damage.

And lastly, parental groups scream that there is a pandemic of autism and want to blame such life-saving techniques as vaccinations against viral diseases like small pox, measles, mumps, whooping cough, diphtheria, typhus, typhoid, tetanus, and polio, killers that kept infant mortality almost 50 percent for children up to two years old for millennia.

My answer, and I am no physician, is the prevalence of autism is another reflection of rampant precocious sexuality combined with the wonderful drug culture concocted by lefties of the 60s. If one glass of wine in a pregnancy's first trimester, when almost no one knows she is pregnant, can cause fetal damage, how much more damaging must be marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, yadda, on a developing embryo? And we already know some venereals can inflict congenital conditions, so I would imagine chronic pelvic inflammations might also heavily contribute to harming fetal growth.

I have seen a fourteen year old keel over from hemorrhage in a freshman high school English because she had an abortion at lunch—this in 1983. In New Jersey, twelve year olds can have abortions without parental knowledge, My own family has seen the younger generations seeking repeated medical help because the children they waited so long to have are not happening. These are now just daily occurrences and personal experiences that the sex "revolution" have made the norm.

In the early 2000s, I became aware in teaching high school that prom nights had become a time for some partiers to have public sex, have it video'd, and uploaded to on the web. I had one girl brag that she was proud of herself. I did not ask why.

But I did begin telling my students that if they want careers in law, medicine, education, even if only driving a school bus and working as a nurse' aide, that in any field known for deep background checks, their youthful "indiscretion" could cost them a law license or teaching certificate. New York City cops cannot pose for Playboy. No teacher can "date" a student. These prohibitions may seem common sense, but since the left has removed sexual activity from moral consideration, many people think any animal urge they experience needs to be documented and published.

Actually, a recent issue of the NEA (National education Association) newsletter published an article on dozens of "professional" educators across the country that have been suspended and fired for abrogating their moral turpitude clauses in their contracts and/or committing outright crimes against minors in their charge. Some examples are a teacher who posted explicit sex pictures of himself on the net, a coach and administrator who had sex on a school desk and keep the artwork on a school computer, and numerous so-called teachers molesting their charges for the delight of net surfers.

All of my examples show a society and ideology at total odds with people's health, their educations and plans for futures, their most serious emotional commitments, and their life-long medical security.

All evidence so far is that Candidate Obama is one of the culprits promoting and reinforcing the liberal "norms" forty years of leftist social programming have embedded in our lives. He may want change and hope and a "new" future, but he certainly doesn't want it for young girls being taunted into sexual practices they can't even name while they are in junior high. He is not promising anything for the abandoned single mother except corrupting the Supreme Court by appointing judges who will make law while she suffers. Nothing Obama has ever said or voted on would make him seem a person who has compassion or even understanding of the brutality and horror of teenaged depression, abortion, unwanted sexual advances, and lives ruined by the very tenets he claims to stand for in his campaign for the US presidency.

*Renny Hartmann is an adjunct college professor in New Jersey and was formerly a high school teacher.*

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## McClellan, Iraq War, Religion: A Discussion

*Issue 110 - June 25, 2008*

Scott McClellan is the epitome of the Peter Principle – just compare him to Ari Fleisher, Tony Snow and now the young lady Dana Perrino – every one of them displayed confidence, knowledge and real courage in doing their jobs...unlike McClellan, who was an embarrassment to the administration and the government. After +40 years in Wall Street I learned a long time ago to always “follow the money”, and that’s what this is all about. McClellan is terminally unemployable – he needs money and will take it from anyone. But there’s more – he has a family problem. His Mother is also angry with George Bush because he supported his Lt. Gov. Perry for governor of TX after he left while Mrs. McClellan ran against Perry. Oh, isn’t it true that McClellan’s father is the author of a book accusing LBJ of having orchestrated the assassination of JFK? Look it up. Nice crowd down there in Austin. Follow the money – please – take a look at the thread between his leftwing publisher and that solid citizen George Soros, and then tell me this wasn’t a set up. Dan Calabria



**You have done a vigorous job of shooting the messenger. In yesterday’s Washington Post. Bob Novak ([Parrotting the Democrats](#)) and former McClellan deputy Trent Duffy ([Will the Real Scott Please Stand Up](#)) took better aim. This leaves the message. Who hired McClellan and other buddies, and who put the welfare of his friends ahead of that of the nation. You might also wish to shot other messengers (Paul Bremer—Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority of Iraq under whose sad leadership I served in Baghdad, George Tenet—former Director of the CIA, General Ricardo Sanchez—commander of the coalition forces in Iraq while I was there, and Douglas Feith—who did the most damage--who in their insider books all agreed that the White House failed to supply sufficient troops to Iraq, that follow up planning was inadequate, and that inter agency turf battles were intense and destructive. At the end of the day, what matters for the well being of our nation is the message. George W has been a disaster for our nation’s security, and well being. His presidency has been the enemy of those of us who believe in limited but effective government, a strong national defense (defense), individual freedom, the Bill of Rights, and the U.S. Constitution as our founding fathers intended it. These are the values I joined the conservative movement for in the 1960s, not the side games of character assassination that boys seemed to like to play (as clever and amusing as they some times were). The stakes are too high. Warren Coats**

I regret if my comments were misunderstood. Although as too often in the past, I voted for Bush as the lesser of 2 evils, I am not fan of George Bush and I detest any number of people he brought to the national stage. I believe, we should have been in and out of Iraq within 12 months had adequate thought and planning been applied. However, we ended up with Bush accepting the assurances of many of his pals and cronies without thinking any further. By the way, most of these “messengers’ were part of that insider gang. They own what occurred in Iraq as much as anyone. So what else is new? The only thing accomplished was grist for the mill on the left which served to take away the spotlight from the truly despicable religious fanatics in Chicago. By the way, in viewing the Chicago zealots’ antics, how much do they differ from the religious zealots in the Middle East? Dan Calabria

**I basically agree with every thing you say here (except for a 12 month in-out of Iraq—launching the war as we did was, in my opinion, a big mistake to begin with). I assume that you would also agree that fanatics of all sorts are not easy to live with if not dangerous to our way of life, whether they are “ Chicago zealots” (not meaning my alma mater, of course), Islamic Jihadists, or what ever we call the creationist, fanatic fringe of the so called religious right. Warren Coats**

Warren , somehow lost on me (and perhaps others) is your comparison of Islamic Jihadists and "the creationist, fanatic fringe of the so called religious right." If followers of Billy Graham, John Hagee or Jerry Falwell have hijacked aircraft to fly them into mosques in Damascus, Baghdad or Tehran, most of us missed the news reports. Likewise, there have been very few beheadings of Islamic journalists by Christians, at least around Los Angeles. Additionally, I have no knowledge of recent "honor killings" of Christian wives or sisters who have been raped. Those of us on the creationist, fanatic fringe of the religious right generally only reserve that practice for jaywalkers. Believe me when I tell you, as a Christian, I am not "dangerous to your way of life". That you may believe the human race are benefactors of lucky mud is certainly your right. As for me, I believe in the intelligent design called God or the Creator....One who always was and always will be. I seriously disagree and doubt that the design of the universe, the majesty of the order of the stars and planets, the complexity of the human body and the beauty of our Earth is attributable to one cosmic speck. From an admirer and a not-so-religious fanatic on the Left Coast, and r espectfully, Allen Brandstater

**Thanks for your very civil observation that I may have stretch my examples. Obviously your religious beliefs do not threaten me at all, nor mine you (nor those of Muslims, Hindus etc) as long as we all respect the separation of church and state (a challenge for some but not all Muslims) and don't endeavor to impose our views on the rest of society. These are the ground rules of our individual freedom and mutual peace. Terrorists of whatever beliefs are the extreme who endanger the most (physically at least). History is full of terrorists of all sorts (Christian crusaders against Muslims, for example) and those we face today are among the nastiest. I agree that few Christians (none who ascribe to the teachings of Christ I accept) fall into this camp today but there are some (abortion doctor murderers, for example). Warren Coats**

A little ambiguous: are you referring to people who murder abortionist doctors or to abortionist doctors who are murderers? The latter outnumber the former by a factor of millions. Charles Mills

**Perhaps, but I am sure that you are not suggesting that one class of murders is justified and the other isn't. Warren Coats**

*The above discussion took place recently between a group of long-time conservatives who now often take differing positions on current issues.*

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**E-mail the  
Editor**

**Reader Comments***Issue 110 - June 25, 2008***CONSERVATIVE  
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Editor: I was a bit disappointed in your editorial "Why Not Multiple Wives?" particularly its concluding rationale that the only reason polygamy can be considered wrong is because our tradition requires it. With all due respect for Martin Luther, the reason we know polygamy is wrong is because of what the Bible says. To the extent that the success of Western Civilization has been because of monogamy, credit should be given to the various Biblical admonitions on the subject. While I understand that there are lots of objections made from many quarters (you quoted a number of them in your article), this does not lessen the reasonably plain teaching of the Bible. "Plain teaching", you might object, "there seem to at least be some ambiguities on the subject, even in the Bible". Please allow me to present this in a reasonably plain way. A Christian should have no objection to beginning his review of this subject by starting with Jesus Christ (as opposed to Martin Luther). He clearly set forth that marriage is to consist of a man and a wife. He speaks plainly in the singular in Matt. 19:3-6. In doing so, he quotes Genesis. For the Federalist, this brings to mind "our Creator", who no less an authority than Jesus Christ reminds us that He created a man and a woman, not a man and a man. In fact, the familiar words of Genesis 2:24 are the words spoken in most marriages still today. Another Biblical point is the comparison of Christ to his church with marriage (Eph. 5:22-33), which only makes sense if marriage is monogamous. Another Biblical point is the 10th commandment, which speaks in the singular and presupposes monogamy. The fact that the Bible provides stories about those who were polygamous does not mean that God approves of it. In fact, the above references clearly show that God disapproves of polygamy. In fact the cited passage of Jesus Christ explains plainly and succinctly why He tolerated polygamy in the Old Testament: because of their hardness of heart. On the other hand, I do believe that it is an understatement to say that the success of Western Civilization was due simply in part to the widespread practice of monogamy. It would be more accurate to say that monogamy was a key cornerstone in Western Civilization. It is not too much to say that Western Civilization as we know it would not have occurred without monogamy. The modern liberal mostly agrees with this and thus modern liberals mostly oppose monogamy, favor homosexual marriage, etc. Sincerely, Ross Little, Jr.

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Editor responds: You are, of course, correct but (1) the Bible is part—arguably the most important part—of the Western and American traditions and (2) the editorial ended by saying that polygamy was wrong because "our tradition (and, contra Luther, its initiator) commanded it so." Notice the "and" and who was its "initiator," including initiator of the Bible?

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Editor: Regarding your editorial "Why Not Multiple Wives?" monogamy is definitely what is at the core of Christianity. The issue before the Texas courts should be "child slavery and rape." Those children should never be returned to that environment. It is wrong to force a 13 or 14 year old into marriage with a cousin or anyone else. Those children should be protected from future harm by placing them in foster care and in-depth counseling. Judi Moore, Chesterfield, Missouri

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Editor: I was reading in the Bible book of II Chronicles today just before I read your editorial "Why Not Multiple Wives?" essay on polygamy. I wondered as I read that such and such a king of Judah had umpteen wives and walked in all God's ways. There was no correlation to the godness or

badness of kings in Judah or Israel and the number of wives they had. In fact, none of them were monogamous, even David, a man after God's own heart. So how did they keep the peace if men had so many wives? What about the unattached men? I think I figured it out. War. They went to war and killed off the men regularly. So the women needed polygamy so they wouldn't be left without the protection of a husband, in whom all the wealth resided. Today we don't kill off our warriors nearly as much. Six-plus years of the War on Terror, and we haven't lost the population of small city yet. I wouldn't be surprised to find that the number of children born to soldiers while deployed exceeds the number of troops lost. The question I have is this: What will happen in China, where there are not nearly enough girls to go around, even one per man? War again? Art Douglas

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Editor: Regarding your editorial "Why Not Multiple Wives?" courts these days will approve anything that feels good, including multiple wives, sex with animals, cannibalism, pornography, sex with children, turn prisoners out on society, whatever feels good - do it. Of course, California's court recently imposed same sex marriage against the will of the people. This court has no standards, and it is outgrowth of liberals and old communists from the San Francisco/Bay Area. Olin D. Poole, Duncanville, TX

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Editor: "Why Not Multiple Wives?" Probably because you just can't get away with it! John A. Quayle

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Editor: Kudos on a great article by Tom Coburn, "Republicans in Denial." I agree with him completely about his appraisal of our party and how we got into our current mess. But I'm aghast at his closing paragraph about John McCain. McCain's record proves him, quite conclusively, to be more of a "liberal" than even Bush has been, recent campaign rhetoric aside. And McCain screaming at his colleagues for being "s\*\*\*heads" and "idiots" who should "shut up" doesn't exactly strike me as a mark of humility. I can practically guarantee you that McCain will only lead our party further toward destruction. I wish that Coburn's foresight were even a tenth as good as his 20/20 hindsight in this otherwise-wonderful column. David Edward Garber

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Editor: In his "Republicans in Denial." Senator Tom Coburn rightly accuses many Republicans of being in denial—saying that their party is in chaos and without any coherent leadership. However, Sen. Coburn is engaging in his own denial. Sen. McCain couldn't lead someone to the bathroom, much less the Republican Party though its current travails! Sen. McCain, like many with monumental egos, has nothing to back up the ego. He is a Mr. Bluster (of Howdy Doody fame). He is singularly lacking in leadership qualities; he is petty, vain, utterly without understanding of economics, computer illiterate and perhaps worst of all, a globalist! He is perfectly willing to accept most of the Democrat Party's premises on how to deal with immigration, global warming, energy self-sufficiency, etc. He is a passive campaigner when we need aggression; an apologist and all around Mr. Milquetoast! While he is a better choice than the Marxist Obama, he is hardly the Republican Party's "leader through the wilderness". Yes, McCain WAS an American hero. However, he went from Air Force pilot, to prisoner of war, to U.S. Senator. In reality, a thin resume. His senatorial years were marked by outbursts of ego, unwarranted arrogance and lack of cooperation with his own party! He is a perfect example of a last choice candidate. As the days go by and McCain, daily, opens his mouth to insert his foot, I'm not sure that holding my nose when voting for him will be sufficient. Perhaps the saddest thing of all are his apologists, like yourselves, who "for the good of the party" delude yourselves! The Republican Party desperately needs to lead—to lead McCain! Paul Cohen, Byron, GA

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Editor: Senator Tom Coburn says Senator McCain will lead us through our wilderness????  
HAHAHAHAHAHAHA. He is the GOP package that has big government liberal agenda inside. Every time I think that I have to vote for McCain (because I hear something new about Obama), McCain opens his big mouth and I realize to vote for him is the same as voting for Obama. Idiots, both of them. Sue Blum

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Editor: Regarding "Republicans in Denial" by Senator Tom Coburn, don't give up compassionate conservatism. Just give up the wasteful spending. And, yes, establish priorities. Many Republicans are very good and caring people and it hurts our party if we are not perceived that way. We defend the truly needy. We are the party that stands up against euthanasia and denying care to the defenseless, preemie babies who need costly medical care, the handicapped, the weak and vulnerable! We must continue and be proud of this moral fight. We want to provide great care for our courageous veterans! We should not back away from this. It is not inconsistent to be compassionate and to be financially conservative! It is good both morally and politically to do both! Sincerely, Barbara Delo

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Editor: I disagree with Mr. Coburn's assessment of McCain being able to lead us out of mess Republicans have allowed us to get into against the voiced will of the American people. His stance on immigration and border security alone will go a long way towards bankrupting the nation and jeopardizing national security. Too much Kennedy and Lieberman in McCain to be the leader we need. In my opinion he is just one step above Obama and Clinton. We should be ashamed of allowing the media to pick our presidential candidate. Many of the candidates who ran for the nomination were much better leaders than the "Honorable McCain". Please do not mistake soft-headedness for "humility". I will not only hold my nose and vote for him, I will need to have my barf-bucket close by. James Hauser

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Editor: Paul Weyrich's "Coherent Assimilation Culture" article on immigration is right on target. I entered the U.S. in 1963 from Canada. At that time I required 2 American sponsors rated as financially affluent and of good character. This was not a problem for me as my sponsors were relatives with large congregations of Episcopalians in the State of Massachusetts. In 1963 you just didn't come into America and become a financial burden (or raise havoc or protest) as a proud American would have put you in your place. This was a Proud Nation; with American flags flying everywhere and on Sundays the families were in Church. American spirits were high. Then came the assassination of President Kennedy. Peoples attitudes changed and in my opinion have never returned to the happy; will take it in stride pace of yesteryear. The removal of prayers from schools signaled the beginning of God's removal from our children's heritage. Without the presence of God surrounding our schools they (the schools) became the scenes of massacres. The removal of the Ten Commandments was just another break away from Christianity. To sum it all up since my entry into the U.S. I have seen a great deal of destruction of the American Heritage, Christian Principles and the reasons I first wished to become an American. This country remains the greatest in the world and it is my hope we as a nation will maintain the strong foundations that many wise, incorruptible souls instilled in Our Constitution. Sincerely, Allan G. Miles

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Editor: Good job with Dennis Avery's "31,000 Climate Skeptics." Isn't it amazing how a few people (Gore) can total bum out a nation and make money doing it. GOD HELP US. Patty

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Editor: I agree with Dennis Avery's "31,000 Climate Skeptics." that global warming has been oversold--a mantra for Gore and his followers. Daniel M. Brown PhD, P.E., (Texas #39612)BS Baylor University, Physics & Math, 1956, PhD Catholic University 1971 in Theoretical Physics

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Editor: Timothy Carney's "Legal Farm Bribery" is a very powerful piece and I will be sending it to all the people in my address book. Another thing that makes me so mad is the people as a whole are very rude. They push their way in front of me and want me to get out of their way in the stores. That is not the way to endear themselves to me. Thanks Morris Lindsey

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Editor: Regarding Spencer Warren's list of westerns, I think some others deserve merit. For example, anything done by Leone (especially Once Upon a Time in the West, and Good, Bad, and the Ugly)....Rio Bravo...Silverado....Bend in the River.....Firecreek..... The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence....Unforgiven...Wyatt Earp (at least Costner can do westerns, Dances With Wolves is excellent, too). If you want something fun in westerns, try Cat Balou.....Paint your Wagon...Rustlers Rhapsody..... Benjamin Szemere

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Editor: "Jimmy Stewart" American" by Spencer Warren was superb. This is an opinion from an old old lady from New England who still lives by Jimmy's rules of morality, and who mourns the passing of truth and morals in Hollywood. Geraldine Nelson

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**E-mail the  
Editor**