TIME

LAS VEGAS

The New All-American City
Wherever The International Is Spoken, We’ll Make
Language Of Business
Sure You Don’t Miss A Word.

They speak it in England, France and Germany. It sounds the same in the U.S., Hong Kong and Tokyo. It’s the international language of business. And at Delta Air Lines, we understand how important it is for you to be a part of the conversation. That’s why we offer you a schedule with more than 4,900 flights every day to over 300 cities in 34 countries around the world. And along the way, we’ll provide a level of personal and attentive service so extraordinary, you won’t have to say a word to be understood.

So join us on your next business trip. We think you’ll love the way we fly.

A. DELTA AIR LINES
YOU’LL LOVE THE WAY WE FLY ——

One year while traveling through West Virginia, the Bakers found themselves without any power steering in their Toyota van. Naturally, they called the nearest Toyota dealer. After years of using Genuine Toyota Parts and Authorized Service, the Bakers wouldn’t have settled for anything less.

Fortunately, a Toyota dealer was close by. Unfortunately, the replacement part wasn’t. That, however, didn’t stop a determined service manager from driving over 100 miles to get the right part. Nor did it stop him from fixing the Baker’s van, and sending them on their way. All in the same evening.

The Bakers learned a lot about the United States on that trip. They also learned how seriously many Toyota dealers take their commitment to giving you quality parts and service, no matter where you call home.
Wireless speaker breakthrough!

New wireless technology broadcasts music through walls, ceilings and floors... up to 150 feet away.

Ever drag your stereo system into another room of your house just so you could listen to it? Probably not. If you’re like most people, you can’t afford to risk ruining your stereo equipment.

With these new wireless speakers, you won’t have to. Now you can listen to music anywhere in or around your home without logging heavy equipment or stringing wires.

Imagine listening to your favorite CDs, records, tapes, radio station or TV show anywhere in your home. Imagine stepping into your shower, pool or hot tub and having a self-contained wireless speaker right there with you—without risk.

Patented technology. These patented wireless speakers will work with any stereo, any TV, any VCR. The four-inch full range speakers deliver deep, rich bass and crystal clear highs. Each speaker has its own volume control and separate treble and bass controls. The speaker delivers a peak of seven watts per channel, for a total of 14 watts when two speakers are being used for stereo sound. A built-in crystal-controlled frequency mechanism locks on signals. Chase speakers are also self-amplified, so they can’t be blown out.

Easy installation. The powerful transmitter plugs into a headphone, audio-out or tape-out jack on your stereo, CD player, VCR, or TV. Use one transmitter to send both left and right channels to an unlimited number of speakers.

Try them risk-free. Let’s face it. The best way to test a speaker is to listen to it in your own home. That’s why we give you a full 30 days to try our speakers. If you’re not satisfied, return them for a full, “No Questions Asked” refund. You also get a 90 day manufacturer’s warranty.

Factory direct offer. For a limited time, we can send the Chase wireless speaker directly to you far below the $149 retail price. Through this special promotion, the Chase wireless speaker is only $79. Order more than one and your additional speakers are only $69 each.

For fastest service, call toll-free 24 hours a day.

800-992-2966

To order by mail, send check or money order for the total amount including S&H or enclose your credit card number and expiration date (VA residents add 4.5% sales tax).

Chase Transmitter...

First Wireless Speaker...

Each Extra Speaker...

You need one transmitter to operate speakers. Two transmitters and two speakers are needed to broadcast in stereo.

Please mention promotional code 071-771161.
This Mitsubishi Big Screen television actually has 800 lines of resolution, while this magazine only has 133 lines. Which means you have to see a Mitsubishi in person to get the full picture. Thanks to Diamond Vision technology, a Mitsubishi Big Screen is unlike anything you’ve ever seen before, providing higher contrast, brighter pictures, and longer life. (After years of normal use, a Mitsubishi will retain 90% of its original brightness. Other big screens can lose up to 50% of their brightness.) Now, we realize picture quality is something you expect from the company whose innovations include the world’s first 35" and 40" tube televisions, the first 45" Tabletop Big Screen and the first 50", 60" and 70" projection televisions. But to truly appreciate our picture quality, we would like to remind you of the cliché: “You have to see it to believe it.”

For a demonstration of just how exceptional the new 1994 lineup of Mitsubishi Big Screens is, just call 1-800-937-0000, ext. 178 for a brochure and the name of a dealer near you. ©1993 Mitsubishi Electronics America, Inc.
"You may not see the effects of high cholesterol, but I do."
If You Have Heart Disease
Or If You’re At High Risk Of Developing It...

High Cholesterol Is Serious.

You can’t see it, you can’t feel it, but it can cause a heart attack.

High cholesterol can cause heart disease by clogging the blood vessels that nourish your heart. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. More than half a million people died of heart disease in this country last year and more than 2 million were hospitalized.

Are you at high risk of having a heart attack?

If you have had angina or a heart attack and have high cholesterol, you’re at high risk. If you have very high cholesterol alone or have high cholesterol and answer “yes” to two or more of these questions, you are also at high risk.*

- Are you a man age 45 or older?
- Are you a woman age 55 or older or past menopause?
- Did your father or brother die of heart disease before age 55? Mother or sister before age 65?
- Do you have, or are you being treated for, high blood pressure?
- Do you smoke cigarettes?
- Do you have diabetes?
- Do you have a low HDL cholesterol count confirmed by a doctor?

*Some of these factors can be controlled and some cannot. For every risk factor you can control, you will reduce your risk of heart attack.

People who exercise, lose weight, and stay on a low-fat diet can reduce their risk.

Many people successfully use diet and lifestyle changes to lower their cholesterol levels. For every 1% reduction in high cholesterol, studies show there is a 2% drop in risk.

But many people fail to lower their high cholesterol enough.

Some people respond better to diet and lifestyle changes than others. It may be body chemistry or genes or just that staying on a low-fat diet can be difficult.

A new plan can help make the difference.

The Cholesterol Action Plan is an innovative new program designed to help you stay with a low-fat diet so that you and your doctor can determine how well you respond. The goal is to identify the best way to lower your high cholesterol and your risk of heart disease. If your doctor authorizes your participation, you’ll get guidance to help you stay with a cholesterol-lowering diet—including telephone support from a registered dietitian.

The Cholesterol Action Plan
1-800-710-1111

Call. We’ll send you an informative 8-page booklet on high cholesterol and, if you qualify, a full description of the Cholesterol Action Plan, including details about how you and your doctor can enroll.

Take care. You have a lot of life ahead of you.

MERCK
In cooperation with the American Heart Association
THE MASSACRE ON LONG ISLAND'S 5:33 p.m. commuter train [CRIME, Dec. 20] is only the latest episode in the drama of random violence that airs almost every day in America. Yet even in the midst of this spiraling epidemic, we are confronted by the sophistry of "Guns don't kill..." We all know very well that it is people with guns containing bullets who kill, and it's high time that we confront this reality. Banning handguns, taxing ammunition out of sight and imposing stiff punishment for criminals must form the cornerstone of any meaningful crusade on crime. Let's put an end to the unholy (and perhaps unwitting) alliance between the gun lobby and the criminals who rob us of life and liberty with their brazen abuse of the Second Amendment's right to bear arms.

Jayakrishna Ambati New York City

WHEN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SHUTS THE SPIGOT ON READILY OBTAINABLE illegal firearms and decides to punish severely those who possess these weapons, I will be first in line to turn in my duly licensed handgun, for which I took a firearms certificate on the 3:33 to Hicksville with complete peace of mind, the government should not infringe on my Second Amendment rights.

Harvey Estren Lindenhurst, New York

VIOLENCE WILL EXIST IN OUR SCHOOLS and on our streets as long as it's easier to buy a gun than to get an education or a job—and easier to hate than to hope.

Dottie Lentz Austin, Texas

IT IS FAR TOO LATE TO DISARM, because that would be done only unilaterally. Criminals would still have guns, but law-abiding citizens would be rendered helpless. The experiment of outlawing guns has already been tried in Washington, the murder capital of America, which had a horrifying 75.2 homicides per 100,000 residents in 1992. The bumper sticker on my truck says it for me and millions of other Americans: PROTECT YOURSELF—PACK A HANDGUN.

William A. Black St. Cloud, Florida

1 PREFER FREEDOM FROM MURDER TO THE freedom to own a gun. People keep bringing up the Second Amendment, but it came after the constitutional right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Guns are taking away all three of those unalienable rights.

Dennis P. Symanski Redwood City, California

HOW MANY LIVES MIGHT HAVE BEEN saved if there had been on that commuter train at least one law-abiding, responsible, documented citizen carrying a good, working, concealed semiautomatic? That person could have quickly disabled the murderer as he was just starting his rampage. Indeed, such responsible armed citizens are needed whenever heavily armed terrorists go on the attack.

Ben Macaulay Sussex, New Brunswick

CRIME WILL ONLY CONTINUE TO GET WORSE until we as a nation stop treating criminals as if they were a precious resource and start making them pay dearly for their viciousness. Time after time, innocent people are robbed, raped, assaulted or slain by predators the system protects. Criminals who commit serious crimes are given light sentences and turned back onto the streets to rob or kill again and again. And each time some tragedy like this occurs, the politicians and the media simply give lip service to the problem, or worse, try to strip the law-abiding citizens of their rights. We don't need gun control, we need crime control! And no, I'm not in the National Rifle Association, and I don't own a gun.

Ray R. Dunakin III San Diego AOL: RayDunakin

AMERICANS ARE THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO support the right to own a gun rather than the right to walk safely along the street or to feel secure in their homes. It seems that human life no longer has any value. Guns serve only two purposes—to kill and maim.

Elke Zschaebitz William Jones Robyn Duffy Wittlich, Germany

GO TO THE BEDSIDE OF THE NEXT PERSON who has been brutally robbed or assaulted, and ask him if he would have liked to have a gun at the time. There are evil people out there. I demand the right to protect myself and my family with the best means available—a gun.

Stephen Reilly North Mackay, Australia

Entitlements Nightmare

KUDOS FOR YOUR INFORMATIVE ARTICLE about the annual $738 billion government payment of entitlement funds or guaranteed benefits to a sizable number of "comfortably middle class" recipients [THE BUDGET, Dec. 20]. For younger workers to pay Social Security taxes that are redistributed up the economic ladder to $100,000-a-year pensioners collecting Social Security unconscionably violates all Americans' sense of fair play. A way must be found to restore fiscal responsibility in our country. Some sort of means test based on a person's income sounds like a viable method to achieve that goal.

William J. Hartmeyer Emily T. Hartmeyer Orlando, Florida

YOU MIGHT TAKE A DIFFERENT POSITION on entitlement payments if you had paid on an insurance policy for 50 years only to learn that the company wouldn't honor any claim now because you make too much money. That's exactly the situation with Social Security. For most, it wasn't optional. We were forced into the program. If Clinton and Congress reduce or eliminate our Social Security payments because we have worked hard and saved our money, then they are without honor. They will lose what little trust millions of us have in our government.

Robert J. Chevning Sanford, Florida

So Long, Frank

IN HIS TRIBUTE TO MUSICAL ICONOCLAST Frank Zappa [OBITUARY, Dec. 20], Michael Walsh wrote, "On guitar Zappa was no Eric Clapton." Walsh could not have been more correct. Zappa's vision car-
A cat’s urinary tract health is a big concern for millions of cat owners. But research shows that a diet of Purina O-N-E brand Cat Formula can help adult cats maintain a healthy urinary tract. And a healthy everything else, for that matter.

How does Purina O-N-E help maintain Urinary Tract Health?
With a diet that reduces urine pH and provides low dietary magnesium.

Purina O-N-E Cat Formula gives cats the protein and the special balance of nutrients they need, thanks to high-quality ingredients like corn gluten meal, corn, rice, wheat and real chicken, all blended to have a taste that’s irresistible to your feline friend. Purina O-N-E makes other quality formulas for dogs and cats of all life stages.

So ask your veterinarian about your cat’s urinary tract health. And for a free sample of Purina O-N-E Cat Formula, simply call 1-800-787-0078, ext. 670.
A Ride on the Wild Side

Steve Naidamast of Mineola, New York, was a passenger on the ill-fated 5:33 commuter train. He sent us the following eyewitness report via America Online:

I was just coming out of an uncomfortable sleep when I saw several passengers rushing down the aisle of my car. I’ll never forget the fear in the eyes of the blond-haired woman who literally streaked by me. At first nobody was saying anything; they were just running. Suddenly the car was packed with terrorized passengers. Something was dreadfully wrong. A man ran into the car screaming, “He’s coming! He’s got a gun, and he’s shooting people! Get out! Get out!” My wife and I looked around for an escape but found none. The doors to the platform were locked shut, and more than a hundred terrorized people were trapped in the car. My hands started to tremble. It might only be moments before a madman burst in, spraying the whole car with bullets. My wife asked, “What do we do now?” All I could say was, “Stay calm. Don’t panic.” The terror was paralyzing. After what seemed like a long delay, one of the doors finally opened, and the frightened crowd streamed out. My wife and I made it out and ran, but suddenly I stopped. Something drew me to stay and watch the pandemonium that was unfolding. A man toward the forward part of the train burst out and screamed, “He’s coming out!” Traumatized commuters were in shock, walking about trying to figure out where to go or what to do. Police cars and ambulances raced to the train station, while a police copter with its search light on circled overhead. A man waving on the platform was trying to signal to the police that people had got to Colin Ferguson. They had stopped him. But this can happen anywhere, anytime. No one is safe any longer. You could be next.

Maria Alemany
Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
University of Barcelona

Mind over Food

AS A BASIC NUTRITION SCIENCE RESEARCHER, I am deeply chagrined by the diet promoted by French restaurateur Michel Montignac, which limits sugar and starch but allows alcohol and fat [FOOD, Dec. 20]. There is no sound scientific basis behind Montignac’s nutrition reasoning, in fact, ketogenic diets, of which his is an example, have been widely used with mixed results. Some of these diets are not followed because of their intrinsic dangers to a person’s well-being. Montignac’s consideration of glucose as some kind of poison is preposterous. For really obese people, it is very difficult to lose weight permanently, but right now there are easier, safer and more comfortable ways of losing weight than using the snake-oil vendor appeal of a “diet” such as that suggested by Montignac.

Maria Alemany
Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
University of Barcelona

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TIME JANUARY 10, 1994
THE WEEK

December 26 - January 1

NATION

New Deputy at State
Warren Christopher announced that he would nominate Strobe Talbott to replace ousted Clifton Wharton as Deputy Secretary of State, the No. 2 post in the department. An Oxford roommate of President Clinton's and still his close friend, Talbott now serves as ambassador-at-large to the states of the former Soviet Union, and has helped formulate the Administration's staunchly pro-Yeltsin Russian policy.

Gays in Military Appeal
In a strange turn of events, the Clinton Administration will challenge a court ruling that said the Pentagon's old policy toward gays was unconstitutional. The appeal, which avoids the constitutional aspects of excluding gays from the military, is based on the narrowest technical grounds: whether it is within the purview of the court to order the Pentagon to commission Midshipman Joseph Steffan, an admitted homosexual. The White House says it must challenge the ruling in order to ultimately defend its new and slightly more liberal "Don't ask, don't tell" policy when, as expected, it meets with legal challenges.

Compensation for Test Victims
With hitherto classified examples of cold war-era radiation tests on humans being revealed on a weekly basis, an appalled Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary said the government should compensate the victims. The department estimates that 800 people were purposely used as "nuclear guinea pigs" in an effort to study the effects of radiation. It is still not known how many of the subjects understood what was being done to them. Defense Secretary Les Aspin has ordered a review.
Clinton Begins Undoing the Reagan-Bush Judiciary

Hoping to give the federal courts a rightward tilt that would last a generation, Presidents Reagan and Bush appointed federal judges who were conservative, white, male and youngish. Nevertheless, President Clinton has a good chance of remaking much of the federal bench as he would like. There are some 850 federal judgeships; Clinton has already made nominations for 48 of them, and he still has close to 100 vacancies to fill, with more to come in the next three years. Clinton’s choices so far reflect a much greater interest in nonmaleness and nonwhiteness than was demonstrated by Bush, Reagan or even Carter.

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<th>CLINTON</th>
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<th>REAGAN</th>
<th>CARTER</th>
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<td>(88.7%)</td>
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<td>(6.3%)</td>
<td>(2.1%)</td>
<td>(14.3%)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(3.4%)</td>
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<td>ASIAN</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(1.4%)</td>
<td>(5%)</td>
<td>(8%)</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<td>(37.5%)</td>
<td>(17.2%)</td>
<td>(8.2%)</td>
<td>(15.5%)</td>
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</table>

Source: People for the American Way

First Suit for Disabilities Act

The Justice Department filed suit against the state of Illinois and the city of Aurora, charging that the state allows policemen and firefighters with certain medical conditions to be denied pension and disability coverage. Two men on the Aurora police department, one with diabetes and the other with back problems, were excluded from the group’s pension fund because they had failed medical tests. The suit is the first under the new Americans with Disabilities Act.

Huge HMO Damages

A California jury has determined that Health Net, the state’s second largest HMO, must pay $89.1 million in compensatory and punitive damages to the family of a now deceased cancer patient denied coverage for a bone-marrow transplant, a procedure that the HMO considers experimental. The company will appeal.

Bombs of Vengeance

Five people were killed and two wounded last week when a Rochester, New York, man, upset with members of his girlfriend’s family, sent bombs to their homes and workplaces across the state. Michael Stevens, 55, and his friend Earl Figley, 56, have been arrested.
Clinton's Winter Holiday
After a high-profile day of duck hunting in Maryland, President Clinton flew to Little Rock for a vacation that differed markedly from his celeb-studded retreat on Martha’s Vineyard last summer. The President’s average-guy holiday included bowling and sitting in on a University of Arkansas basketball game. Clinton then headed for Hilton Head, South Carolina, to spend New Year’s at the annual Renaissance Weekend, a social and policy retreat for caring, sensitive power brokers.

WORLD
Borders Bedevil Mideast Talks
The question of who will control the border passages to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank near the town of Jericho after the Palestinians begin self-rule in those areas continued to trouble Israeli and Palestinian negotiators. The size of the area around Jericho that the P.L.O. will administer has reportedly been resolved, but the border-control dispute was seen as more crucial since it so sharply reflects the negotiations’ essential conflict: Israel’s concern for security and the Palestinians’ desire for the trappings of statehood.

Israel, Vatican Announce Ties
Creating hope for greater tolerance and cooperation between Jews and Roman Catholics, Israel and the Vatican agreed to establish diplomatic relations. The Holy See will have its embassy in Tel Aviv rather than in the disputed city of Jerusalem, but Catholic officials clearly hope to participate in any negotiations on the future status of Jerusalem.

North Korean Nukes
U.S. and North Korean negotiators were closer to an agreement in their talks at the United Nations on international inspection of North Korea’s nuclear facilities. No one is certain whether the politically isolated state possesses a nuclear bomb, but a

INFORMED SOURCES
Aid to Former Soviet Union Called Mismanaged
Some Senators overseeing U.S. aid to the former Soviet Union say the program is so poorly managed it should be overhauled before it uses up any more money ($2.5 billion is to be spent in 1994). Senators Patrick Leahy, Democrat of Vermont, and Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky, are refusing to approve any new projects until oversight hearings take place on Jan. 24. McConnell has described the briefings the Clinton Administration has provided about the aid program as “contradictory, incomplete, and inaccurate.”

High-Tech Aid for Bosnia
Fearing that the Serbs may step up their assaults on Muslims, the Pentagon is rushing high-tech surveillance equipment to Bosnia. Several unmanned aerial vehicles—drones that can be used for reconnaissance over trouble spots without risking planes and crews—will be put at the disposal of U.N. forces.

The Roger Clinton Saga Continues
Begged by his mother, President Clinton invited his brother Roger to the White House for Christmas. For months, Clinton has urged Roger to marry his pregnant girlfriend Molly Martin, and to placate him Roger showed up with a marriage license, blood test and a wedding date—Dec. 27 in Dallas (Molly’s hometown). But then Roger wanted to fly back to Arkansas with his girlfriend on Air Force One. The wedding is now planned for next week—or it may be put off again.

BEST SHOT: The Mississippi? No, the Marne. Like many other towns in Northern Europe, Esbly, just east of Paris, has suffered from historic flooding in recent weeks.
Another Day of Peacekeeping

For 11 Canadian U.N. soldiers on a cold afternoon just before Christmas, it was bad enough to be on the thankless mission of patrolling a road in the thick of fighting between Serbs and Bosnian government troops. But if the past 20 months of warfare in the former Yugoslavia have proved anything, it is that things can always get worse.

Sergeant Jacques Beaulieu and 10 fellow Canadian blue berets were manning a checkpoint and bunker at a bridge on the recently opened road between Sarajevo and Visoko, 20 miles northwest of the Bosnian capital. Seven feet away was a Serbian checkpoint; across the valley, about 100 yards off, other Canadians were positioned near a similar post manned by Muslim troops of the Bosnian army. With minor variations, the arrangement is common along the battle lines throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There was nothing unique about the Muslim sniper’s bullet that seriously wounded a Serb or the U.N. soldiers’ response, a radioed request to their base in Visoko for medical evacuation of the injured man.

“At the operations center, we had three choices,” said Captain George Petrokilis, 34, assistant operations officer of the 12th Canadian Armored Regiment base in Visoko. “Bringing him across the line of confrontation to us wasn’t going to fly. We couldn’t send the vehicle on the bridge because that would leave our guys without one. So we cranked up an ambulance from our hospital here to take him to the Serb field station in Ilijas.”

By that time, almost 25 minutes had passed—and the Serb had died in a vehicle finally sent by his command. Angered by the loss and fueled by slivovitz, the plum brandy that is ubiquitous here, the remaining Serbs turned on the Canadians. “There were about four guys,” said Petrokilis. “They ordered two of our guys out of the checkpoint and the other nine out of the bunker. Everyone was taken outside in a group. None of our guys knew what the Serbs were saying, but their gestures were aggressive and angry. They fired to the left and to the right of our troops. I can’t in all good conscience say it was a mock execution—there wasn’t any system to it. They shot and killed a passing dog.”

A little less than an hour later, the episode ended when a Serb officer arrived to calm down his men, and the Canadians pulled out of the checkpoint. Back at their base, the 11 soldiers were given a “critical-incident-stress debriefing” and 48 hours off—all standard procedure, said Petrokilis.

The Canadians did not reoccupy the checkpoint, but the U.N. was determined to play down the ordeal. “This is a minor incident,” said Major Idesbald van Biesebroeck, spokesman for the United Nations Protection Force in Sarajevo. “Repetition creates a sense of ordinariness,” said Petrokilis. “Of course, what the Bosnian Serbs did here was inexcusable. But similar things happen all the time on all sides—just pick your belligerent.”
You can switch down to lower tar and still get satisfying taste.
A Review of the Play Shows Illegal Socks

Some fans were outraged when New York Giants quarterback Phil Simms, from the top of the shoe to no higher than the mid-point of the lower leg, and approved team color pants below the knee. Players are permitted to wear as many layers of stockings and tape on the exterior. Barefoot punters and place-kickers may omit the stocking of the kicking foot in preparation for and during kicking plays.

The Most Unusual Crowd Ever at a Bette Midler Concert

The latest fad in gun control is cop-condoned swaps of deadly weapons for more innocuous items. Here's what guns have been exchanged for in certain cities:

- **DALLAS**: Tickets to a preseason Cowboys game.
- **DENVER**: Tickets to Bronco games.
- **LOS ANGELES**: Tickets to Lakers games, a Janet Jackson concert and other events.
- **NEW YORK CITY**: Beginning during the holidays, $100 Toys R Us gift certificates. Launched by Fernando Mateo, at center in photo, a 35-year-old Dominican-born carpet merchant whose one-man crusade has sparked fresh enthusiasm for such gun-exchange programs and inspired inquiries around the world.
- **OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA**: Tickets to a Bette Midler concert, Disney on Ice or a Sharks hockey game.
- **SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH**: $25 cash for each gun in working order.
- **SAN FRANCISCO**: Tickets to sporting events and concerts.

The Bad News

- Clean living may not be enough to ensure long life. A study of 300 French men and women more than 100 years old has shown that at least part of the reason for their longevity may be the presence of two genes. One is called APOE: get the wrong version and you may be subject to high cholesterol and Alzheimer's disease. Centenarians tend to have the right version. They are also more likely than average to have a particular version of the ACE gene, which influences blood pressure.
- Blood tests that purport to detect immune-system reactions to silicone leaked from breast implants are unreliable, say critics. The tests do detect antibodies, but not necessarily ones related to silicone.
The theory that birds are the closest living relatives of dinosaurs has received more confirmation from some baby maiasaur bones found in Montana. As reported in Science, the evidence comes in the form of fossilized growth plates—disks of cartilage found at the ends of bones—which act as a sort of scaffolding around which new bone can grow. The plates are found in mammals, reptiles and birds—but the structure of the dinosaur plates was clearly birdlike.

Nessie Is a Sturgeon
Loch Ness contains at most 30 tons of fish, nowhere near enough to support the presumably voracious appetite of the legendary Loch Ness monster, according to a comprehensive study of Loch Ness to be published in an upcoming issue of the Scottish Naturalist. The most likely explanation for the spate of sightings of the beast that began in 1868, says the study, is the presence in the lake of a school of sturgeon. Sturgeon can weigh up to 500 lbs.; their long snouts might be mistaken for monstrous necks, and their dorsal fins could appear to be humps.

The Arts and Media

Haydn Sonatas Faked?
Only last month the discovery in Germany of six keyboard sonatas attributed to Franz Joseph Haydn was hailed as one of the greatest musicological finds in decades by one of its authenticators. But last week a consensus among experts began to emerge: the works may simply be fakes, although well-composed ones.

New Super Bowl Record
Advertisers will pay a record $900,000 for a 30-second spot during NBC's broadcast of the Super Bowl later this month.

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DIED. THOMAS WATSON JR., 79, computer executive: in Greenwich, Connecticut. The World War II pilot put aside his dream of a career in commercial aviation to join IBM, the company his father had founded. After young Watson became chief executive in 1956, he transformed the manufacturer of typewriters into the Big Blue behemoth of computing. In retirement, he served as U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union and kept up his hobby as the "oldest jet pilot in the world."

DIED. IRVING ("Swifty") LAZAR, 86, talent agent; in Beverly Hills, California. For decades a Hollywood cliché has been "Every good writer has two agents: his own and Swifty Lazar," and frequently the agent locked up five screen properties for Bogart on a single day in 1955. Lazar's darker side emerged when he led the anti-Catholic opposition to John F. Kennedy's run for the presidency. The involuntary sabbatical gave Shirer the time to produce his masterpiece, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, the part-journalistic, part-historical account of Europe's darkest hours. Published in 1960, the 1,000-page-plus best seller won the National Book Award. Among Shirer's later works were The Collapse of the Third Reich (1989), an account of the fall of France during World War II; and Gandhi: A Memoir (1980), a portrait of Gandhi based on Shirer's travels with him throughout India during the early '30s.

DIED. NORMAN VINCENT PEALE, 95, author and preacher; in Pawling, New York. Peale's 1952 blend of pop theology and self-help nostrums, The Power of Positive Thinking, remains one of the most popular books in history, despite—or perhaps because of—the simplicity of its message, summed up in such chapter titles as "Expect the Best and Get It" and "I Don't Believe in Defeat." Peale spread his philosophy in 46 books that achieved sales of 21 million in 41 languages. Peale's darker side emerged when he led the anti-Catholic opposition to John F. Kennedy's run for the presidency.

DIED. DAVE BECK, 99, labor leader; in Seattle. Beck was a laundry-truck driver when he joined the International Brotherhood of Teamsters in 1914. By 1952, he had become the organization's president, and in the five years he held that office he forged the 1.6 million Teamsters into the nation's most powerful union. Beck's tenure was marked by accusations of Mob ties and corruption charges that eventually led to his ouster and 30 months in prison for tax evasion and embezzlement.

New York Herald Tribune and a CBS commentator after the war, Shirer had difficulty finding a job in the '30s, when his political opinions put him on the wrong side of the McCarthy era. The involuntary sabbatical gave Shirer the time to produce his masterpiece, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, the part-journalistic, part-historical account of Europe's darkest hours. Published in 1960, the 1,000-page-plus best seller won the National Book Award. Among Shirer's later works were The Collapse of the Third Reich (1989), an account of the fall of France during World War II; and Gandhi: A Memoir (1980), a portrait of Gandhi based on Shirer's travels with him throughout India during the early '30s.

—Christopher John Farley, Sophfronia Scott Gregory, Michael D. Lemonick, Michael Quinn, Jeffery C. Rubin, Alain L. Sanders, Sidney Urquhart
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For a president whose term got off to a stumbling start, Bill Clinton is ending his first year in office on an economic hot streak. First he won come-from-behind victories on deficit reduction and the North American Free Trade Agreement. Then came a global trade agreement that may help boost U.S. exports in the long run. And last week the government reported that Americans were buying existing homes at a 4.21 million-unit annual rate in November, the fastest pace ever. Now Clinton is about to get a windfall: 1994 is likely to be the year in which the reluctant recovery finally kicks into gear. When Time gathered six leading economists to assess the 1994 outlook, there was not a Cassandra among them: they foresaw the strongest U.S. growth since the late 1980s combined with continued low inflation and gradually falling unemployment. "I describe my forecast as 'the best of all possible worlds,'" said a buoyant Edward Yardeni, chief economist for the investment firm C.J. Lawrence. Yardeni's point is that the predictions being made by most economists describe the sort of stable, healthy economy for which Americans have been longing for two decades or more. Few economists see the bogey of inflation or another recession returning anytime soon. In large part that's because of the widespread belief that Clinton will continue to push hard for healthcare reform and budget-deficit reduction. As long as he does, interest rates and consumer prices are likely to remain low. Yet lurking beneath these positive numbers is long-term economic turmoil created by global competition, most notably the now familiar chill of massive and continuing corporate downsizing. A record 600,000 announced layoffs took place last year, a process that shows little sign of abating in 1994. Partly because of such cutbacks, the economy has created only 3 million new jobs since the 1990-91 recession ended, or less than half the number produced in the typical post-war recovery. "This is a very tough-sell kind of economy, and it's going to continue to be so," said Laurence Meyer, an economic consultant based in St. Louis, Missouri, who was named the top forecaster in 1993 in a national survey. "There's a certain sense of struggle, even in this kind of prosperity, that I think makes it unique." That's because the recovery remains in the
throes of two distinct economic cycles, the TIME panel agreed. On the one hand, the U.S. has clearly rebounded from the 1990 slump as low interest rates and the release of pent-up consumer demand have set off a run on such big-ticket items as houses and cars. On the other hand, the payroll slashing that dates back to the 1980s remains in full force as U.S. corporations strive to compete in world markets. Even the boom in business investment, which has boosted economic growth, has gone largely for computers and other labor-saving devices rather than for job-creating new factories and machinery. "The fixation of the moment continues to be on downsizing and cost cutting, whether it's through machines or layoffs, and that fixation remains very intense," says Stephen Roach, co-director of global economic analysis for Morgan Stanley. "I don't think it's going to subside."

Despite such crosscurrents, the U.S. has been growing far faster than its industrial allies and promises to widen the gap in 1994 as both Japan and Europe remain mired in slumps. Yet that could set the stage for stronger U.S. growth in 1995 and 1996. "The problem for Bill Clinton is, we're going to have a good economy in 1994 and 1995. But look out, Bill, for 1996."

Meanwhile, millions of Americans have spent the early 1990s adjusting to constrained times and now feel they can afford to crack open their wallets and pocketbooks in 1994. Many consumers who still have their jobs see themselves as "survivors" of one of the worst upheavals ever seen in the work force, the TIME economists said. Moreover, "American workers have adapted to the idea that they're not going to have the same job forever," said labor economist Audrey Freedman, who runs a New York City–based management consulting firm. They have learned to accept the inevitable job shifts, Freedman noted, and are determined to get on with their lives as best they can. Work forces in Europe and Japan have shown no such mobility or adaptability.

Buoied by this new and cautious confidence, buyers are coming back into stores, showrooms and real estate offices to take advantage of sales and attractively low interest rates. With 30-year fixed mortgage rates now at about 7%, single-family housing starts have returned to the brisk pace of the mid-1980s. The resurgent real estate market has boosted demand for furniture, carpets, appliances and everything else that helps make a house a home. Many consumers have also taken the savings they realized from refinancing their mortgages and are buying new cars at a rate that has led some U.S. car and truckmakers to add third shifts to meet the demand.

The forecasters saw little risk that Clinton's $20 billion tax increase on the wealthy would slow the recovery this year. People whose tax rates jumped from 31% to 36% or 39.6% in 1993 will be able to pay the increase in three annual installments and thus lessen the bite. The economists also said the burden of higher taxes on the economy would be far outweighed by the benefits of falling oil prices and low interest rates. "The tax increase is easily absorbable and is not going to derail the economy," said Meyer. In spite of their new spending power, bargain-hunting consumers will continue to reshape the retailing industry by flocking to such discounters as Wal-Mart and Price Club at the expense of traditional de-

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**MONEY ANGLES**

By Andrew Tobias

**Beware the Plastic Loan Shark**

Before I tell you the two cardinal rules of plastic, I've got to tell you about this little gimmick. I'm a fan of AT&T, so I have mixed feelings about revealing it. But until they close the loophole, how can I resist? It wasn't my idea; it comes from Denny Cunningham, a sharp-eyed user of my computer program. And it's this simple: if you have an AT&T Universal MasterCard, as 11 million of us do, and if you pay your balance in full each month, there's no interest charge on cash advances. Just a 2.5% service charge, with a minimum of $2 and a maximum of $20.

At first blush, this may seem no bargain, and on normal transactions it's not. But here's the deal. The ATMs limit you to $400, but by going into a bank that honors MasterCard, as most do, you can grab a cash advance equal to your entire available credit. From a human teller (remember them?)? Because of the $20 cap, that 2.5% maxes out at $800. Borrow more, and the effective percentage you pay begins to fall. Say you borrow $2,000. The charge is still $20, which works out to 1%. Borrow $10,000, if your credit limit is that high, and you still pay just $20. (At least until someone at AT&T reads this and changes the rules.)

Now, to borrow $10,000 for a month for $20 is to be paying only two-twenths of 1%, or about 2.4% annualized. That's less than Uncle Sam pays to borrow. And if you take the advance the day after the previous billing cycle closes, you can wind up holding on to that $10,000 for nearly two months without incurring interest. All for $20. In that case, the effective annual rate you're paying is less than 1.5%. Switzerland can't borrow that cheaply!

Of course, in terms of actual dollars, this is no way to get rich. Especially when you factor in the time it takes to keep track of it and the risk that one day you'll fail to pay off your balance in time and start racking up interest charges. There is also the small matter of what to do with this cheap money once you've borrowed it. Hmmm. You could use it to pay down some higher-interest credit line, at least temporarily, and save a little money that way. You could invest it in whatever you plan to do with your tax refund, only a month early. Or maybe you'd just enjoy seeing the money in your checking account earning enough interest to cover the $20 service charge and impressing both the bank and AT&T with the size of the sum you can re-
partment stores. That in turn will help restrain price increases even as the economy expands.

The forum expected inflation to hover around a mild 3% in 1994, which will be reminiscent of the price-stable 1960s. The big reason: wage hikes, the main ingredient in most price increases, will stay low as employers continue to cut labor costs. However, Donald Batajczak, director of economic forecasting at Georgia State University, noted growing signs of labor unrest. “The American Airlines strike may have been a watershed,” he said, referring to the Thanksgiving-week walkout by flight attendants, which ended when Clinton prodded the company to seek binding arbitration. “This is the beginning of intensifying wage pressures, or at least demands for retribution in the labor markets.”

With inflation under control, long-term interest rates should also remain near their current low levels. For example, mortgage rates that now stand at about 7% might reach no more than 7.5% by the end of the year. But short-term rates, which affect consumer loans and business borrowings, could rise more sharply as the Federal Reserve tightens the money supply to keep the recovery from overheating. David Jones, chief economist for Aubrey G. Lanston & Co., predicted that the prime rate, which banks charge large corporate customers, could climb a percentage point, to 7%. He added that a surge in short-term rates could jolt the stock and bond markets and send small investors scurrying back to dull but safer certificates of deposit.

Panel members expected the quickening recovery to create jobs at an average rate of 170,000 a month in 1994, up from 160,000 last year. But Freedman, a consultant to employers, predicted that the job-growth rate would climb to a more robust 200,000 a month. As in 1993, much of the hiring will probably involve part-time positions and relatively low-wage, service-sector jobs like restaurant work. That should be enough to cut the unemployment rate, which stood at 6.4% in November, to 5.9% by the end of the year.

The economists warned that some Clinton policies could act as a damper on new jobs. Jones noted that many operators of medium-size companies, which have traditionally been job creators, are “close to seething with anger” over proposals the Administration is pushing. Among them: levies on business to finance such programs as job training and health-care reform. Roach called such schemes “nothing more than a thinly veiled hiring tax.”

Another important variable is whether recent improvements in U.S. productivity will continue in 1994. Productivity, which measures the hourly output of workers, had increased less than 1% a year for most of the 1980s, hurting U.S. competitiveness. But productivity grew a healthy 1.5% last year, after surging about 3% in 1992, as downsized companies ran their plants and offices with fewer workers.

For now, the economists agreed that the U.S. economy will continue to show solid growth over the next two years. Yet the timing of the economic cycle could cause trouble for Clinton if the aging recovery begins to fade in 1996 when he runs for a second term. “The problem for Bill Clinton is, we’re going to have a good 1994 and a good 1995,” Jones said. “But look out, Bill, for 1996.” However, for Americans who have endured three years of the leanest economic recovery on record, the prospect of two reasonably fat years looks just fine, thank you.

—Reported by Bernard Baumohi/New York

Citicorp, the nation’s largest card issuer, reports a surge of credit-card borrowing this holiday season. Maybe some of it was yours. But the first rule of personal finance (after Never Invest in Anything That Eats or Needs Repairing) is: Use Your Credit Card Only for Convenience, Never as a Plastic Loan Shark.

Rule No. 2: Don’t Pay to Use Your Credit Card—Let Them Pay You. Since from now on you will be paying off your balances in full each month, you won’t have to worry about the interest rate the card charges. Instead, you can worry about what goodies you get for using it. Frequent-flyer miles can be worth 2¢ to 5¢ each these days, so the cards that give you a mile for each dollar charged are actually giving you a 2% to 5% discount. Before, everything you bought was costing you 18% extra in credit-card interest. Now, because you’re paying off all balances in full at the end of each month (even if you had to sell 50 shares in United Gizmo to do it), everything’s 2% to 5% off!

Or if you tend to buy your cars new rather than used, get one of those GM or Ford cards that give you 5% credit toward your next purchase. Or a Discover Card that gives you a small but real cash rebate at the end of the year. They’re giving money away—get something. But remember: the key to it all is to pay your balance in full at the end of each month. If you can’t do that—and it ain’t easy—cut up the card.

Let this New Year’s revelation inspire a New Year’s resolution and, with it, your own small financial revolution.
In their Arkansas real estate venture, the Clintons depended on the buddy system—probably too much

By RICHARD BEHAR and JAY CARNEY

"ONE WEEKEND HERE and you'll never want to live anywhere else," proclaimed the sales brochure for the 42 lots of the Whitewater project near Flippin in northern Arkansas. However, despite the scenic snapshots and the homey-but-hokey handwritten spiel, no one was buying into the forested real estate development. To spur sales, Jim McDougal, a local savings and loan tycoon, thought he needed a model home—and the help of one of his Whitewater partners, Hillary Rodham, as she then called herself. In 1980 McDougal loaned her $30,000 to build, own and ultimately sell a three-bedroom ranch-style unit. When the buyer of the home later became insolvent, Hillary and her husband Bill Clinton bought the property out of bankruptcy and resold it in 1988 for $28,000 to its present owner. Last month the Justice Department began to subpoena documents pertaining to sales of Whitewater lots. But a well-placed real estate source in the region says investigators are unlikely to find records of the initial transfer of the Clintons' model home. "It was all done on unrecorded contracts," says the source, who suspects that the house changed hands several times before the Clintons bought it again in 1988. "Unrecorded contracts are a damn funny way of doing business."

People familiar with Arkansas will say local business is often funny that way. Furthermore, political and business intersections that would cause a ruckus elsewhere—say between a Governor and a man whose company is subject to state regulation—elicit few cries of conflict of interest. But the Clintons are in the White House—and getting snagged on Arkansas roots is now a national spectacle. Every transaction during their political sojourn in Little Rock will become a measure of their character, of their ability to organize, administer and decide. In the First Lady's case, the stories that emerge portray a woman maneuvering through a world of messy connections, clumsy finances and ethical minefields.

For example, in Arkansas the law firm of your enemy might just be your law firm. In early 1986, one of the largest savings and loans in Arkansas, Madison Guaranty, was sliding toward insolvency. Its chief lending officer, Harry Don Denton, was furious that a local S&L had sold Madison millions of dollars in bad loans. He wanted the deal undone and at the suggestion of his boss, Madison chairman (and Whitewater partner) McDougal, he turned for help to one of the state's top lawyers, Hillary Rodham Clinton. After meeting with her for several hours, Denton helped her carry the files to her car in preparation for a lawsuit.

The suit was never filed. In fact, despite a meeting on the matter between Hillary and an executive from the opposing S&L, McDougal, he turned for help to one of the state's top lawyers, Hillary Rodham Clinton. After meeting with her for several hours, Denton helped her carry the files to her car in preparation for a lawsuit.
FOR SALE: Despite the homey brochure and the model home the Clintons built, left, property sales were slow for Whitewater petition to try to raise capital for the failing thrift by selling stock.

Defenders of the Clintons would point out, however, that in a state like Arkansas, where the circle of influential people is small, the appearance of conflict is almost impossible to avoid. In one such case, the securities commissioner who would decide to grant Hillary's client a regulatory blessing—Beverly Bassett Schaffer—was appointed by Bill Clinton, the Governor. As state documents indicate, though, Schaffer was as tough on Madison as the federal regulators who had the real power to shut the thrift down. "I may not be Beverly's biggest fan, but she's getting a bad rap from the media," says Lee Thalheimer, her predecessor and a Republican appointee. "I don't think anyone can influence Beverly Bassett."

Hillary Clinton, however, clearly faced an ethical problem even by Little Rock standards. "While Rose Law Firm was already representing the opposing thrift in another case, the prestigious Rose Law Firm was already representing the opposing thrift in another case. "The conflict issue should have been resolved earlier," complains Denton. Bruce Lindsey, a senior adviser to the President and an old Arkansas friend, defends the action. "Assuming this happened, I don't see why this is important or unusual," he said.

In the case with Denton, the future First Lady recognized a conflict of interest. But in the Clintons' relationship with McDougal, Hillary and her husband did not. They remained partners with Denton's boss McDougal and McDougal's wife Susan, a pair of notorious wheeler-dealers who drove the thrift into the ground at a cost to taxpayers of roughly $50 million. Indeed, several months before bowing out of the S&L dispute over the bad loans, Hillary Clinton actually represented Madison before state regulators in a case. Why? She had discovered that her prestige prestigeful Rose Law Firm was already representing the opposing thrift in another case. "The conflict issue should have been resolved earlier," complains Denton. Bruce Lindsey, a senior adviser to the President and an old Arkansas friend, defends the action. "Assuming this happened, I don't see why this is important or unusual," he said.

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McDougal, acquitted on bank-fraud charges, is under investigation again. Hale will stand trial sometime this year. Congressional Republicans, meanwhile, have called for hearings on the Madison collapse as a prerequisite for considering Clinton's bank reforms. In Whitewater only six homes have been constructed. As for the house that Hillary built, its current owner, John Lauramoore, half expects tourists to start lining up outside. "Maybe I can cut up the carpet and sell pieces and say that Bill Clinton walked on it," he says. "Even though he didn't, they wouldn't know it."
Death on Delivery

On the third day of Christmas, a spurned lover sends lethal gifts to a family that did not want him

By DAVID VAN BIEMA

CHRIS SANTELLA WAS FEEDING HIS INFANT daughter last Tuesday evening in the living room of his town house in Rochester, New York, when he heard the boom. "It was like someone slammed a door hard enough so that it shook the house," he explained. At first he thought it was his water heater blowing up. When no gushers of water followed, he waited until the child was asleep before looking out his door and catching sight of the blasted-out window in a town house 25 ft. away, the one rented by a woman named Pamela Lazore-Lanza. A bomb had gone off, killing Lazore-Lanza and her friend; she was Eleanor Fowler's daughter from an earlier marriage. And on the St. Regis Indian Reservation near the state's northern tip, an exploding package lacerated the legs of Lazore-Lanza's uncle, William Lazore. Identical parcels were sent to the Fowlers' daughter Lu- 

eille and her boyfriend but were detonated safely by au-

thorities. All four explosions occurred within 90 minutes. It was as if someone was tracing the Fowler family tree—in fire and blood.

At first some New Yorkers feared terrorism or a ran-
dom killer. But by Wednesday evening, when police arrested Michael Stevens, 53, and Earl Figley, 56, the grudge began to seem very specific. Stevens' girlfriend is a woman named Brenda Lazore Chevere. The injured William Lazore is her uncle; the dead included her moth-
er, her stepfather and her sister—all apparently victims of a man they seem to have ostracized.

Chevere met Stevens and moved in with him soon after he got out of jail in 1989. He had served 20 months for overselling ads in store coupon books under the alias David Creditford—"a con man who thought he was smarter than anyone else," a defense attorney recalled to New York Newsday. Stevens reputedly suffered from emotional instability—at his 1987 trial he launched into a speech about Jimmy Cagney. More seriously, in 1992 local mer-

chants Susan Katz and John Spinelli filed a police complaint when, they say, after nine months of harassment that included cruising their block and stealing their garbage, Stevens threatened to burn their business down.

Stevens and Chevere, 31, have a two-year-old son. Recently, howev-
er, Chevere seems to have soured on Ste-
vons, for which he apparently blamed her family. Local newspapers said last week that his relations with them, especially her mother, had nose-dived. He was reportedly resentful of being excluded from Thanksgiving and Christmas festivities.

Figley, the older suspect, had boarded at Stevens' house, drunk with him at a bar called McGhan's, and was regarded local-

ly as a harmless layabout under his youn-
ger friend's sway. Last June, Stevens sent Figley on a deadly errand to Mount Ver-
nom, Kentucky, police say. There, under the name Leslie V. Milbury, Figley bought 55 lbs. of Power Prime dynamite. (Gov-
ernment officials later noted pointedly that explosives can be sold over the counter as easily as guns could be-

fore the Brady Bill.) Back in New York, the two used around 48 sticks' worth to draft last week's bombs, ac-
cording to the federal com-

plaint charging both men with transportation of explo-

sives across state lines with intent to kill or maim, an of-
fense punishable by death.

Had Stevens been plan-
ning the murders for half a year? Or were the fatal pack-
eges originally intended for some other purpose? One person who would doubtless add many questions of her own was, understandably, quiet. Reached by reporters at the house she shared with Stevens, Brenda Chevere excused herself from talk-

ing. "I've had a day," she said. "I've lost most of my family."

—Reported by

Barbara Burke/New York
Unraveling the Safety Net

The paradox of welfare reform is that saving money can be very expensive

By RICHARD LACAYO

fter her divorce in 1984, Jo-anne Brooking discovered that her real problems were just starting. For a newly single mother with three young sons, finding and keeping a full-time job was a challenge in Montpelier, Vermont, a state where unemployment hovers around 4.8%. As it turned out, too much of a challenge. Brooking, 43, has been on and off welfare ever since. There wasn't much incentive to work anyway. When stints as a substitute teacher and an Amway saleswoman brought in some money, her welfare check was cut. Her best hope for the future might be the sociology degree that she is 30 credits shy of getting from nearby Goddard College. But she can't afford day care for her six-year-old—or transportation to get to school.

Given all that, Brooking should be happy that this month Vermont's legislature is expected to adopt a $700,000 reform package to help people like her get back into the job market. But she's not exactly thrilled. While the plan would provide educational assistance and child-care support, Vermont is following the lead of several other state plans by imposing a two-year limit on benefits for many recipients. That is, get a job or get off the dole. "It isn't that people don't want to work," Brooking insists. "It's that there are no jobs out there."

Or maybe it's some combination of the two. Whichever is true, welfare reform is back on the agenda in state capitals and in Washington, meaning that a good many of those collecting checks all around the U.S. may eventually find themselves tossed into the job market. Last month a task force appointed by Bill Clinton completed draft recommendations for legislation aimed at a nationwide revamping of the system. At the center of any comprehensive plan, which the White House expects to send to Congress some time this year, will be the goal of ending most support payments after two years. After that, recipients would have to enroll in a work program.

But to achieve that aim, the presiden-
tial task force envisions significant increases in child-care support and job training—and beyond that, the prospect that if the market doesn't provide enough work, government will be obliged to create jobs or to subsidize employers to take on the new hires. All of which means that reforming the system could cost more than not reforming it, at least in the short term.

Is welfare really so out of control? The recent recession helped swell the number of households getting Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the largest component of welfare, by 33% since 1989, to nearly 5 million. And most people's reliance on welfare is transitional. If patterns hold, half of today's recipients will be off the rolls within two years. Just 2% collect checks for more than a decade.

Even so, welfare's flaws are under scrutiny. For a fraction of recipients, the checks create a culture of dependency in which children grow up without seeing members of their family go to work. Also, because half of all children on welfare were born out of wedlock, compared with just...
10% for American children generally, critics accuse the system of creating financial incentives for single motherhood. Add to those sentiments an enduring voter discontent over taxes and pressure on the President to keep up his image as “new Democrat.” All have combined to make welfare reform a White House priority. “It has gone from a subject for think tanks to a grass-roots issue,” says one top Administration official. “It has a big head of steam.”

The most impressive thing about Clinton’s campaign pledge to “end welfare as we have known it” is that it came from a man who understands something about the complexities of welfare reform as we have known it. As head of the National Governors Association, he helped draft the last major piece of federal legislation to deal with the issue, the 1988 Family Support Act, which requires most recipients to take part in job-training programs. The 1998 act has been only modestly effective so far, which is one reason Clinton is likely to proceed warily. In his Jan. 25 State of the Union address, the President is expected to outline proposals drawn up by a 32-member interagency task force that he formed last June. But White House insiders say he will put off sending the proposals to Congress until his healthcare legislation has moved through committee—the same committees that would handle welfare reform. That could be six to 10 months from now. To do otherwise, argues one high Administration official, could put potential allies in a bind. “If some members of Congress feel they would be tugged to the left in health-care reform, they might want to go to the right in welfare reform, to the detriment of our program.”

What the White House fears most, however, is not a major ideological battle like the one over NAFTA. “You will have more agreement on policy than people expect,” says Andrew Cuomo, assistant secretary of Housing and Urban Development and a member of Clinton’s task force. “Nobody likes welfare. Nobody thinks it works.” Many of the ideas that the White House is likely to endorse are also to be found in a Republican proposal put forward in the House. Among the features: a national campaign of persuasion to reduce teenage pregnancy, two-year benefit caps, penalties for mothers who bear children on welfare, a greater effort to track down deadbeat dads for child support and rules that allow welfare recipients to take jobs without losing all their benefits.

While the policy gap between Republicans and Democrats is bridgeable, the question of how to pay for any new system remains. The big challenge of welfare reform is not the relatively small percentage of recipients who refuse to work but the much larger number who would love to. When the cost of finding or providing them jobs is added up, the present system may look like a bargain. All welfare programs, including AFDC, food stamps, housing subsidies and supplemental income for the disabled elderly, cost a total of $53.4 billion to the Federal Government—about 4% of the federal budget. (The states kick in another $15.3 billion.) By some estimates, reform could push 1.5 million people into a job market where 8.3 million are already out of work. That could add $10 billion annually to the budget for training, transportation, child-care subsidies, incentives for private employers to hire recipients and the creation of community-service jobs for those who don’t find other work. Strict budgetary caps will mean that the money will have to come from cuts in other programs.

How much would be saved through declining welfare rolls? States that have been experimenting with their own reforms have generally seen a mere 5% reduction...
in the number of recipients. But they continue to look for ways to squeeze harder. In November the Clinton Administration approved a Wisconsin pilot program to take effect in 1995, which will require welfare recipients in two counties to find full-time work or a job-training program within 30 days after they enter the welfare rolls. Cash benefits will end entirely after two years. Georgia has just adopted a more gradual measure that refuses benefits to anyone able-bodied recipients who turn down a minimum-wage job. But since its exemptions include anyone caring for a child under 14, among many others, it will end up applying to less than about 6% of the roughly 120,000 adult Georgians on welfare.

While it’s too soon to tell how these measures will work, some preliminary results are already available for programs in other states. California, as home to one-sixth of America’s welfare recipients, had little to lose eight years ago when it launched Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN), a program that will cost $288 million this year to provide job training to about 200,000 welfare recipients. A recent study by the Manpower Demonstration and Research Corp., a New York-based nonprofit group, found that two years after entering the program, single parents earned an average of 20% more than those who had not taken part.

Even so, job training has a bad reputation among conservatives, who see it as a boondoggle for the trainers that does little to improve the earning potential of the trainees. Better to subsidize them in low-skill jobs, the argument goes, like ringing registers at 7-Eleven, where they can get on-the-job experience in regular working habits that will help them move up. (However, labor unions complain that when government pays private employers to hire from the welfare roles, it puts nonwelfare job applicants at a disadvantage.)

For mothers on welfare, New Jersey currently provides health insurance, food stamps and $64 a month for each child. But as part of a larger revamping of the welfare system, the state is now denying increased child support to women who have more children while they are already on welfare. Georgia and Wisconsin have adopted similar penalties. “Even if you work at poverty level there’s nobody that gives raises if you have children,” says New Jersey Assemblyman Wayne Bryant, chief author of the welfare-reform plan. Early numbers indicate that the penalties may be having some effect. From August through October the number of babies conceived by mothers already on welfare was 2,396, down 462 from the same months in the previous year.

However, last month the National Organization for Women, the American Civil Liberties Union and Legal Services of New Jersey sued the state and Federal Government on the grounds that the policy violates constitutional guarantees of privacy, equal protection and due process. “There is no constitutional right to welfare,” protests Bryant. “Therefore the state can make conditions.” True, says New Jersey’s president Myra Terry: “We have Roe v. Wade that says women have the right to choose, not some women based on their economic capacity.”

The questions being asked in the states will be heard before long in the halls of Congress. Whatever the complications, the consensus in Washington is that welfare reform is a problem that will have to be faced this year. Which means that eventually even a cautious President will have to solve the central problem: how to fashion a safety net that doesn’t also double as a hammock.

—Reported by Ann Blackman/ Washington, Jordan Bonfante/Los Angeles and John F. Dickerson/New York
By BRUCE W. NELAN

WHEN NORTH KOREAN AND American diplomats emerged after an hour of secret negotiations in a basement room at U.N. headquarters last week, Pyongyang's ambassador Ho Jong stopped to talk briefly with reporters. North Korea, he declared with satisfaction, had made some unspecified proposals aimed at resolving the dispute over his country's nuclear program.

The next day, a Foreign Ministry official in Pyongyang announced that the meeting at the U.N. had "removed a series of stumbling blocks" and produced a "breakthrough." Officials in Washington said that more details would have to be worked out before they could speak of a breakthrough but that the U.S. has "moved closer" to its goals. They expect to close a deal soon under which the U.S. would call off its annual "Team Spirit" military exercises in South Korea, whereafter the North Koreans would allow inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency to resume routine inspections of their seven declared facilities—but not the two sites they are trying to keep secret. At the same time, the North would begin talks with the South on denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

America is negotiating with deadly seriousness. President Clinton has vowed, publicly and unequivocally, that the U.S. will not allow the North Koreans to acquire atomic weapons. Whether they do or do not already have them profoundly affects how the U.S. and all of North Korea's neighbors can and should respond. Pyongyang is playing a dangerous form of nuclear roulette. A new study by U.S. intelligence agencies has concluded that North Korea probably has already built one or two atomic bombs.

If that finding is true, Clinton is on the edge of a major, long-term foreign crisis that could make Somalia and Haiti look like the small skirmishes they really were. He will have to decide how to make good his pledge—not only to keep the North Koreans from producing nuclear weapons but also to take away any they might have built and hidden. The solutions are neither easy nor obvious. Proposals for U.N. economic sanctions probably would be blocked in the Security Council by China, Korea's next-door neighbor, which considers such pressure unacceptable. Clinton might be tempted to use American military power as a last resort, but air strikes, for example, could trigger another full-scale Korean war, and if the North has a bomb, it is probably hidden. That leaves direct, bilateral diplomacy, the course Washington intends to keep pursuing.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali tried to help the process along by visiting Pyongyang and Beijing over the past two weeks but found North Korean President Kim II Sung and Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen unreceptive to a role for the U.N.

But is the new intelligence finding correct? To begin with, most recent accounts have made the conclusion sound more certain than it really is. The U.S. intelligence community knows very little for sure about secretive, Stalinist North Korea. Specifically, the U.S. has no hard evidence that Pyongyang's elaborate nuclear facilities have produced any bombs. U.S. spy satellites provide photographs, infrared images...
clear Roulette deepens as the U.S. presses for answers

and other reports from space that allow Washington to track the general course of Pyongyang's nuclear and military programs. Other forms of solid information are difficult to come by.

What Washington does know is that the North Koreans have extracted some plutonium—the raw material for weapons—from its 5-megawatt nuclear power plant at Yongbyon, but the U.S. does not know exactly how much. Experts think it could be as much as 12 kg (26 lbs.), which would be enough for one or two bombs—if Pyongyang's engineers are able to build them.

Given the uncertainties, the CIA's new, classified Special National Intelligence Estimate does not actually say the North Koreans have a couple of bombs. Rather, the report concludes there is a "somewhat better than even" chance that they have one or two. Even so, the North Koreans' arsenal is not growing now. In order to obtain more plutonium for bombs, the North Koreans would have to turn off and cool down the reactor so its fuel rods could be removed. Infrared sensors aboard satellites would detect any such action. So far, close scrutiny has not revealed any recent shutdown.

This is familiar terrain for the experts in Washington, who say the main focus of the new intelligence estimate is considerably broader: an attempt by the U.S. Government to decide whether Pyongyang might ever be persuaded to give up its bomb program. The Defense Intelligence Agency took the most pessimistic view in the interagency study. Pentagon analysts think the North Koreans already have a bomb and are using the negotiations in order to buy time to advance their nuclear program.

At the State Department, which leads the U.S. negotiating team, the position is that diplomacy might work because North Korea has much to gain. State believes Pyongyang might allow inspection of their seven declared facilities but not the two undeclared ones. The reason, the agency said in the report, was that Pyongyang would want to retain what it already has, whether that is plutonium, a couple of bombs or only the nervous uncertainty of its neighbors.

Bargaining on these central issues is still only prospective. The U.S.-North Korean talks at the U.N. are just a hopeful prelude to yet another round of high-level negotiations. The agreement Pyongyang and Washington were talking about last week is simply a reprise of one made last summer, when Pyongyang told the U.S. it would permit routine inspections and resume talks with South Korea. The North never fulfilled those promises, and it must do so in order to get to the next, third, substantive round of talks with the U.S. That is where the key issues are to be discussed: diplomatic recognition, trade and aid for North Korea in return for ending its atomic weapons program. "This has all been shadowboxing," says an official in Washington. "They want to hold back as many concessions as they can for the third round, and so do we."

None of the players on the U.S. side of the game knows for sure whether Pyongyang will make the big concession and halt its drive for nuclear weapons. And if it does, the Clinton Administration is demanding more: the surrender by the North Koreans of any nuclear weapons they have hidden away. Even then the U.S. might not offer recognition in return unless Pyongyang is receptive to complaints about its human-rights abuses and sales of missiles to the Middle East. No matter how the intelligence estimates may vary, all the experts agree this is an agenda that will be under negotiation for years. —Reported by Jay Peterzell/Washington
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Borderline Breakthrough

Israel and the P.L.O. make progress in Cairo, but a deal is unsealed

By MARGUERITE MICHAELS

For 2½ days last week, exhausted negotiators pored over maps and drafts of a proposed agreement in smoke-filled Cairo hotel rooms, until the morning of the third day, when Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres proclaimed that the two sides had "reached a meeting of the minds." Breakthrough!

Not quite. In a predawn meeting at the Cairo airport, Palestine Liberation Organization negotiator Mahmoud Abbas had briefed P.L.O. Chairman Yasser Arafat on the details. Arafat had then flown to Tunis to convene a meeting of the organization's executive committee. That night Arafat flew back to Cairo for a crucial meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

No breakthrough. But neither had anything collapsed. "There is no crisis," insisted a senior Egyptian diplomat, "but there are complications."

Nearly three weeks past the scheduled date for the beginning of the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho, Israeli negotiators and representatives of the Palestinian people are clearly still at odds over the interpretation of the Declaration of Principles that was signed with such fanfare on the White House lawn last September. There has been progress, to be sure, and more significantly there remains among the participants a willingness to move from a meeting of the minds to the sealing of a deal. Just not yet.

The Cairo meetings last week were the third round of talks since the Dec. 13 deadline passed. A fourth round is planned for this week. At issue are three main points: the boundaries around Jericho, protection for Jewish settlers in the Gaza Strip and control of the borders. Negotiators on both sides say that a compromise has been reached on the size of Jericho, with Israel agreeing to 23 sq. mi. of Palestinian-controlled territory surrounding the West Bank town—less than the 80 sq. mi. the P.L.O. wanted but double Israel's original proposal. To protect Jewish settlers, Israel has reportedly agreed to security positions inside Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip. Protection of settlers outside the perimeters of the settlements would be shared by Israeli and Palestinian security forces.

The major unresolved issue is border control. Israel regards retention of control as critical to its security; the P.L.O. sees the presence of Palestinian policemen at border crossings as symbolic of the sovereignty they seek in Gaza and the West Bank. Under the occupation, crossing into the West Bank or Gaza Strip into Israel can be a humiliating experience for Palestinians, who are often subjected to interrogations and body searches by Israeli soldiers. The Israelis feel Palestinian control over the crossings would risk making the borders porous to exiles, terrorists and weapons.

Underlying the difficulty in resolving this issue is the more daunting disagreement between Israel and the P.L.O.: what Israel sees as limited self-rule for the Palestinians in some of the occupied areas, the P.L.O. sees as a step toward its goal of a Palestinian state. Negotiators recognize that some form of shared responsibility for security on the borders will have to be reached to preserve Arafat's credibility as leader of the P.L.O. While Rabin's government has thus far fended off no-confidence motions in the Knesset sponsored by the right-wing opposition, Arafat has been shaken by a recent spate of resignations from his own Fatah movement. According to Ghassan Khatib, a West Bank-based official with the People's Party, a constituent party of the P.L.O., the continuing delay in implementing the agreement has only further weakened Palestinian confidence in Arafat. Popular support for the Declaration of Principles ran at 65% in the territories just after the September signing; last week it was down to 40%.

Egyptian officials, who are playing an increasingly prominent role as mediators, are trying to persuade Arafat to accept Israel's offer. Mubarak, facing his own troubles with Muslim fundamentalist terrorists, is known to fear a surge in Palestinian support for the extremist Hamas movement in the occupied territories if the P.L.O. fails to reach agreement with Israel. President Clinton's mid-January summit with Syrian President Hafez Assad in Geneva is sure to bring renewed pressure on Arafat as well. Optimists assume that, in the end, the Israelis and the P.L.O. will agree on a formula that allows Palestinian self-rule to proceed, if only because the alternative—increased violence—is unacceptable.

Pessimists are worried that Israel may come to see as pointless further concessions to an organization that is increasingly fractious. Arafat's task, as usual, will be to prove the pessimists wrong.

—Reported by Lisa Beyer/Jerusalem and Dean Fischer/Cairo
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RUSSIA

Hello, I Must Be Going

On a swing through Europe, Vladimir Zhirinovsky offends just about everyone

By KEVIN FEDARKO

JUST TWO WEEKS AFTER HIS SPECTACULAR transformation from obscure buffoon to Russia's most notorious politician, Vladimir Zhirinovsky decided to take a little vacation. His idea of a good time: a riotous road trip through Central Europe, hobnobbing with a German right-wing firebrand, skiing in the company of an Austrian Waffen-SS veteran and, in virtually every place on his itinerary, behaving in ways that tend to get ordinary people thrown out of bars. But in Zhirinovsky's case, he was given the bum's rush from entire countries. Back in Russia at week's end, the nationalist demagogue was able to regale friends with how he was booted from Bulgaria, barred from Germany and booed in Romania without even paying a visit. In fact, he returned to Moscow only after it became clear that nobody else wanted him around.

As a rule of thumb, such loutishness should be enough to torpedo any politician's career. It is a testament to Zhirinovsky's perverse appeal, however, that these public-relations debacles had almost no effect on his stature at home, where media coverage of his blundering antics was virtually nonexistent. Abroad, however, his bullying and bigotry have prompted Western governments to consider easing their pressure on President Boris Yeltsin to push through his economic reforms or risk a backlash by the likes of Mr. Z. All of which is a fairly impressive accomplishment for a man who, up to last month when his spectacularly liberal won 23% of the popular vote, was universally dismissed as a clown.

First stop on Zhirinovsky's 10-day tour de farce was the Munich airport, where he met with a leader of Germany's radical right and publicly reaffirmed his desire that Germany and Russia carve up Poland between them. While the German press denounced him as "Russia's Hitler," Zhirinovsky blissfully continued his holiday in a remote village in the Austrian Alps, where he paid a call on his friend Edwin Neuwirth, an industrialist who has denied that the Nazis used gas chambers to kill Jews during World War II and has told reporters he was "proud" to have served in Hitler's military corps, the Waffen-SS.

Zhirinovsky's friendship with the Nazi veteran became all the more incongruous when Israeli officials disclosed that in 1983 the Russian politician sought and was granted permission to immigrate to Israel—an invitation that normally requires evidence of a Jewish background. The disclosure created further puzzlement over his widely publicized anti-Semitic remarks and fanned long-standing rumors that his father was Jewish (Zhirinovsky has responded only by saying his mother is Russian, his father "a lawyer").

During a brief respite from public front, Zhirinovsky kept benignly busy—skiing, basking in health spas and perusing telegrams, including one he received from an Austrian animal-rights group urging him to protect the "flora and fauna" of Alaska—after he fulfills his campaign promise...
TOUR DE FARCE

On vacation, Russia's bad boy basked in health spas in Austria, hobnobbed in the Alps with a veteran of Hitler's Waffen-SS and finally got himself booted out of Bulgaria, right back in Bulgaria with “Baba Vanga,” an octogenarian grandmother who is Bulgaria’s most famous clairvoyant. She later assured him by phone that he would have “a very good January.”

Then it was on to Bulgaria, at the invitation of his “European economic adviser,” Svetoslav Stoilov, a friend whose qualifications include working as a magician’s assistant at home in Bulgaria, as a circus technician in Czechoslovakia and as a dance-bar proprietor in Vienna. Following a night’s rest in Stoilov’s hometown of Sandanska, the Russian politician traveled to the village of Melnik to accept a painting from a local artist who shares Zhirinovsky’s conviction that Bulgaria should expand its territory by annexing the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia. To make sure the message got across, he restated this theory for a Sofia newspaper.

Having thus tossed a lighted match onto one of the most combustible political issues in all of Greece, Zhirinovsky could hardly have been surprised when he was detained by Greek border police on Monday while attempting to pay a cross-border visit without benefit of his passport. The ensuing delay cost him an appointment with “Baba Vanga,” an octogenarian grandmother who is Bulgaria’s most famous clairvoyant. She later assured him by phone that he would have “a very good January.”

BY TUESDAY, HE HAD BULLDOZED HIS WAY to Bulgaria’s capital, Sofia, arriving in sunglasses, a fisherman’s hat and a white trenchcoat. There, the visiting Russian announced that neighboring Romania was, in his view, an artificial state created by Italian gypsies who seized territory from Russia, Bulgaria and Hungary. Outraged, the Romanian Foreign Minister summoned Russia’s ambassador in Bucharest to protest “the most insulting statement ever made about Romania,” no mean achievement. Turning his attention to his host country, Zhirinovsky went on to declare that Zhelyu Zhelev, Bulgaria’s first democratically elected President, should be replaced and that if it were up to Zhirinovsky, Zhelev would be sent to Siberia. As an alternative, he introduced his own choice as “the best person to lead Bulgaria”—none other than his good friend Stoilov.

That proved too much for Zhelev, who retorted that the Russian government should consider conducting mental-health tests before allowing future candidates to run for parliament. By late afternoon, Zhirinovsky was told he had 24 hours to leave the country. He complied—but not before promising to someday “return as President,” presumably of Russia. His intended holiday finale was to have been an 18-day stay in Berlin. But the Zhirinovsky grand tour ground to a premature halt when German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel turned down his request for a visa, informing him that he was no longer welcome.

Running short on both patience and options, he returned to Moscow, where vote tallies revealed that his Liberal Democrats will control nearly 15% of the seats in the lower house of the new parliament, enough to make them a constant thorn in the side of Yeltsin’s democratic supporters. While the international rebuffs may be a sign that Zhirinovsky may find it difficult to use other countries as soapboxes for airing his incendiary views, the most his trip seems to have provoked at home is a hilarious set of lampoons by Moscow’s most popular comedian, Gennadi Khazanov, who draws great guffaws with his impersonations of “Vladimir Volfovich.”

Zhirinovsky, however, shows no sense of humor. Indeed, he is so enraged by Khazanov’s mocking send-ups that he has vowed that his first act as President would be to throw the Jewish comic in jail. Ever the jester, Khazanov has taken the threat as inspiration to cavort around town in a prisoner’s striped suit with the number 001 stenciled on his back. But most everyone else now agrees that inside as well as outside Russia, Vladimir Zhirinovsky is no laughing matter.

—Reported by Sally B. Donnelly/Moscow and James L. Graff/Vienna

TIME, JANUARY 10, 1994
The Case for a Bigger NATO

"There are two ways you can tell when a man is lying," said Charles Bohlen, a respected former U.S. Ambassador to Moscow. "One is when he says he can drink champagne all night and not get drunk. The other is when he says he understands Russians."

Today's Russian specialists are too modest to claim an expertise Bohlen knew is impossible, but that hasn't stopped the Clinton Administration from crafting a Russia-centric foreign policy that seriously shortchanges other vital interests. To Secretary of State Warren Christopher, it's all perfectly clear: "Helping democracy prevail in Russia," he says, "remains the wisest and least expensive investment that we can make in American security." At the same time, however, almost everyone involved with America's Russia policy, including Christopher, admits the West can affect events there only at the margin. That being so, one would expect the Administration to pay greater attention to Central Europe, an area the West can influence far more than Moscow. But it isn't. Central Europe's fledgling democracies are suffering from the U.S. obsession with Russia—as will become abundantly clear next week when the President attends his first NATO summit in Brussels.

Normally, NATO gatherings put people to sleep. This one is different. In the wake of communism's collapse, the question on the table for the first time is whether to expand eastward to embrace those former Soviet satellites finally in a position to join the free world's premier defense alliance. "It would be a historic sin to miss this opportunity to bind in the East Europeans," says NATO Secretary-General Manfred Wörner. But the West, led by the U.S., is about to commit that very sin. The 16 nations that already enjoy NATO's protection are on the verge of effectively denying it to others.

The thinking behind exclusion has a distinct cold war slant, reflecting the 40-year period during which U.S. geostrategy ignored events and concerns outside the life-and-death struggle between the West and Moscow. In the past it was Russia's strength that drove U.S. policy; today it is Boris Yeltsin's weakness. The primary reason offered by U.S. officials for keeping the East Europeans out of NATO is the fear of provoking Russia's nationalists at Yeltsin's expense. Yeltsin endorsed NATO expansion last August, but Russia's military, to which he is clearly beholden, forced a retreat. It is unclear whether Moscow's generals are seriously worried about Western encirclement or want to preserve the option of reclaiming the nations Mikhail Gorbachev set free five years ago. But the effect is the same: Yeltsin now says enlarging NATO would be a hostile act. "We haven't a clue what that means exactly," says a senior Clinton Administration official, constructed an elaborate mechanism called the "Partnership for Peace," a scheme its inventors claim substitutes "maybe" for "no." Yet stripped of its sweet-sounding provisions, the partnership is anything but satisfactory to those it is designed to pacify. According to the draft scheduled for formal adoption in Brussels next week, those nations that sign on as partners (and every country is eligible, including Russia) will "over time develop the habits and patterns of cooperation that NATO membership entails." That sounds encouraging and prudent: few would fault a plan that claims simply to be "getting them ready." But the fatal flaw is that membership isn't ensured even if the wannabes demonstrate their worthiness. It's a "buzz-off project," complains Polish Foreign Minister Andrzej Olechowski. "They ask us to divert scarce resources and go through all kinds of exercises to prove ourselves. They ask us to talk and walk and act like a duck. That's O.K. And we agree that letting us in right away could upset Yeltsin at a difficult time. What's not O.K. is that after we've done all that's asked of us, NATO reserves the right to say: 'Well, now we want you to be a chicken instead.'"

Embarrassed by such criticism, the Administration has...
It would be a historic sin to miss this opportunity to bind in the East Europeans.

—MANNFRED WÖRNER
NATO Secretary-General

Nationalism and ethnic conflict "have already led to two world wars in Europe," says Stephen Larrabee, a former National Security Council staff member now at the Rand Corp. "The time to act is now, and not with hollow promises." What Larrabee and others know is that NATO has always been more than a security alliance. "We understood this at the beginning," says Larrabee. "West Germany wasn't a stable democracy before it was allowed into NATO. Belonging to the alliance helped it become one. It's silly to insist that the Central Europeans must be functioning democrats before they can join up. NATO can help them on that road, as it also helped stem authoritarian backsliding in Portugal, Spain, Greece and Turkey."

Oddly, this rationale appears to have largely escaped notice by the Administration players most responsible for promulgating the partnership. When asked about the Central European argument that NATO membership is more important for internal stability than as a military shield against Russia, a senior Administration official responded, "It's pretty compelling stuff when you think about it. I guess we've just been too fixated on Russia to give enough thought to this aspect." Clinton's Russia-first emphasis is understandable but needs to be moderated. "We resisted blackmail when Russia was strong," says Henry Kissinger. "Does it make sense to permit Moscow to blackmail us now with its domestic weakness?" The problem, says Council on Foreign Relations president Leslie Gelb, in an insight several Administration aides agree is "right on," is that Clinton "is determined to avoid being tagged with having lost Russia. Yet it should be obvious that democracy in Russia will be won or lost almost exclusively by the Russians themselves." And if reform fails in Russia, says James Baker, an enlarged NATO would at least "protect democracy" where it is showing signs of taking "firm root—in Warsaw, Prague and Budapest."

To be sure, the expansion of NATO is no trifling matter. Extending the free world's nuclear umbrella should never be undertaken idly. But leaving Central Europe in the cold would be an inexcusable folly. Refusing to help these democracies could eventually raise a question as real as the question of losing Russia is phony: Who lost Central Europe?
“WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?”

When Jesus posed this question to his disciples in Matthew’s Gospel, Peter emphatically and faithfully replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And what might the answer be today? Three newly published scholarly books put forward a startlingly revisionist reply. While Jesus may have been a carpenter, that probably meant he was illiterate and belonged to a low caste of artisans. He did not preach salvation from sin through sacrifice; he never said “Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called sons of God”; neither did he say “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” For that matter, he probably never delivered the Sermon on the Mount. As for the question posed to Peter and the disciples, Jesus never asked it. And he never cured any diseases. As for the other miracles? No loaves and fishes, no water into wine, no raising of Lazarus. And certainly no resurrection. What happened to his body then? Most likely it was consumed by wild dogs.

Until now, this sort of Bah, humbug! approach to the Scriptures was in full display largely in the rarified and theologically correct atmosphere of seminaries and elite universities. John Dominic Crossan, a Bible scholar at DePaul University, notes that there was an “implicit deal—you scholars can go off to the universities and write in the journals and say anything you want.” Now, he says, “the scholars are coming out of the closet,” demanding public attention for the way they think. Among the latest such works are Crossan’s Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography (HarperSanFrancisco; $18), Burton Mack’s The Lost Gospel (HarperSanFrancisco; $22) and The Five Gospels (Macmillan; $30).

For Crossan, Jesus’ deification was akin to the worship of Augustus Caesar—a mixture of myth, propaganda and social convention. It was simply a thing that was done in the ancient Mediterranean world. Christ’s pedigree—his virgin birth in Bethlehem of Judea, home of his reputed ancestor King David—is retrospective mythmaking by writers who had “already decided on the transcendental importance of the adult Jesus,” Crossan says. The journey to Bethlehem from Nazareth, he adds, is “pure fiction, a creation of Luke’s own imagination.”

He speculates that Jesus may not even have been Mary’s firstborn and that the man the Bible calls his brother James was the eldest child. Crossan argues that Jesus did not cure anyone but that he did “heal” people by refusing to ostracize them because of their illnesses.

While Jesus may have had some ability to use trancelike therapies to “exorcise” demons, Crossan says, he used the incidents themselves chiefly to characterize “Roman imperialism as demonic possession.” Both Crossan and Mack say Jesus’ ideas are similar to those of the Cynics of the age. These were men who believed not in nothing, as the word now implies, but in the rejection...
ain and Simple

traditional Gospel accounts of the man from Nazareth

of the standard beliefs and values of society. And so, contrary to the times, Jesus taught radical egalitarianism. He also demanded itinerancy of his disciples. Believing that such wanderlust subtly spread subversion, the Romans had him crucified. Jesus—a peasant nobody—was never buried, never taken by his friends to a rich man's sepulcher. Rather, says Crossan, the tales of entombment and resurrection were latter-day wishful thinking. Instead, Jesus' corpse went the way of all abandoned criminals' bodies: it was probably barely covered with dirt, vulnerable to the wild dogs that roamed the wasteland of the execution grounds.

Mack agrees with most of Crossan's reconception of Jesus' life. But the main purpose of The Lost Gospel is to propagate The Book of Q, a back-to-basics teaching of the original Christians that was teased out of ancient texts by scholars who believe that it predates the Gospels. (Q stands for the German Quell, which means "source.") The Book of Q has no narrative; rather it is a collection of sayings and aphorisms. Mack says the "Jesus people" were attracted to his teachings because he preached the holiness of the simple life. Thus verses like "Turn the other cheek," "Love your enemies" and "Rejoice when reproached," all part of Q, embody the practices of a community of charity, hope and neighborliness. Mack writes, "The narrative Gospels have no claim as historical accounts. The Gospels are imaginative creations."

If Jesus amounts to only his words in The Lost Gospel, he barely holds on to them in The Five Gospels. The book is the product of the 74 biblical scholars (including Crossan) who belong to the Jesus Seminar. Meeting twice a year, the group votes with purposeful theatricality on the authenticity of each gospel saying, casting colored-coded beads into a box to indicate which lines of Christ were holier than others. The latest round appears in The Five Gospels, which, parodying the red-letter Bibles that display the words of Jesus in red type, prints the supposedly authentic words in red and prints the rest in descending order of credibility, in other colors. The text is a breezy new colloquial translation (see box). Precisely 82% of Jesus' words are judged inauthentic.

And what is the fifth gospel? It is the Gospel of Thomas, which church fathers deemed unacceptable because it contained ideas of the heretical Gnostic sects. Indeed, the book ends with Jesus rebuking Peter for trying to oust a woman named Mary from the company of disciples. "Females are not worthy of life," says Peter. Jesus replies, "Look, I shall guide her to make her a male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself male will enter heaven's kingdom." Three sentences in Thomas survive the seminar's judgment as likely statements of Jesus. (The members of the seminar voted down the Mary passage.)

Not surprisingly, the new books are controversial. Jacob Neusner, professor of religious studies at the University of South Florida, calls the Jesus Seminar "either the greatest scholarly hoax since the Piltdown Man or the utter bankruptcy of New Testament studies—I hope the former." Other scholars question the use of the Thomas and the hypothetical Q. The effect is like looking through the wrong end of a telescope at a vanishing Jesus. In his forthcoming The Gospel of Jesus (Westminster), William R. Farmer, professor emeritus of the New Testament at Southern Methodist University, decries the latest Q theory because it leads to the bizarre conclusion that "the death and resurrection of Jesus was...of little or no importance" to his disciples. Meanwhile, N.T. Wright, an Oxford University teacher and newly named cathedral dean in Lichfield, England, says it is a "freshman mistake" to suppose that the Gospels do not refer to actual events simply because the writers of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John have clear points of view. One of the most formidable of traditionalist Bible scholars, Wright, whose conservative rejoinder Jesus and the Victory of God (Fortress) is forthcoming, says the skeptical theories also fail to provide any credible explanation for how a faith founded by their pared-down Jesus could spread so rapidly after his Crucifixion. Wright's explanation: the resurrection.

As Wright sees it, playing the game of deconstructing the New Testament nowadays "is like finding yourself in the middle of a rugby field with five teams and 10 balls. There is all kinds of excitement: everybody is tackling everybody, and everyone thinks he's on the winning team." For the moment, it is impossible for ordinary churchgoers to follow the action, much less determine which of the competing Jesuses will win.
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Old Enough To Be Your Mother

Two women stir up the question of when is it too late to bear children

By MARGARET CARLSON

On Christmas Day, a 59-year-old British woman gave birth, making her the world's oldest known mother of twins. Two days later in Italy, an even older woman, Rossana Dalla Corte, 63, announced she too would give birth to a baby in June. Both women had pursued their pregnancies for the most tender of reasons. Dalla Corte and her 65-year-old husband lost their only child, then 18, in a motorcycle accident three years ago. Jennifer F., as the British press dubbed her, a successful businesswoman and a millionaire, decided belatedly that she had missed the fulfillment of having a child. By slipping the physical coils of menopause, these women have inspired not just wonder but an intense debate over the question of when a woman is too old to become a mother.

Britain gave its answer in the case of Jennifer F. denying her fertility treatments on the basis of age. She went to Italy, where gynecologist Dr. Severino Antinori says he has helped 47 women over the age of 50 give birth at his Rome clinic. In the U.S. most doctors and clinics have already answered the question by parceling out the limited space in in-vitro fertilization programs to women under 45 on the grounds that younger women are more likely to succeed in the program and would be less prone to complications.

Indeed, the health risks of being pregnant at 50 are greater than those at 30, but careful monitoring minimizes those risks. Older mothers using donated eggs give birth to babies that do just as well as those born to younger women, according to Dr. Mark Sauer, a fertility expert at the University of Southern California.

Those who oppose such treatment appear to have reasons other than medical for denying motherhood to older women. When doctors in London refused to treat Jennifer F., they told her that they believed she was too old to face the stress of being a mother. In defending the decision, the British Secretary of Health said, "There are deep ethical considerations, and the child's welfare must be considered. A child has a right to a suitable home."

Dr. Arthur Caplan of the University of Minnesota argues that children have a right to a mother who won't be heading to a nursing home just as they are heading for high school. But what about men on Metamucil and pacemakers who become fathers? Senator Strom Thurmond, who had four children in his 60s and 70s, and Charlie Chaplin, who was 73 when he fathered his last child, did not have to seek approval when they sired their offspring. By the thousands, men over 45 exercise their perpetual rights to fatherhood, marrying and remarrying, having first and second families, without challenge to their right to do so. When it is a man having the baby, few seem to question whether the stress will be too much for the old geezer. One could contend that the assertion that a child is worse off with a mother who may die before the child is grown than with a father who might is an argument for more-equal parenting.

Those who cheer for Jennifer F. point out that society is not always kind to women as they age. A young woman might be discriminated against; an older woman is often seen as irrelevant. Actresses have complained for years that their male counterparts don't run into the same career roadblocks they do once they reach 40, but the dilemma is more serious than whether Meryl Streep is in as much demand as Jack Nicholson. Lauren Hutton and stories about older women and younger men notwithstanding, the woman who can no longer give birth may sometimes feel as used up in modern America as she was in preindustrial times, when bearing children was a key to economic survival.

The capacity to bear a child is one of the most powerful forces shaping male-female relationships. Certainly the biggest difference between men and women in their late 30s is that women see a deadline for procreating creeping up and men don't. This difference affects the way women approach work—their peak childbearing years usually coincide with their make-or-break career years—as well as the dating game. Instead of looking at men casually, with that insouciance so valued by the Letterman generation, panicky women for whom the biological clock is tolling evaluate each prospect for his potential as a father. This one-sided pressure to mate alters the social firmament. The very act of needing to be married and to have a child before it is too late may keep a woman from reaching her goal; a woman for whom time is running out may send out the wrong signals.

One argument against older women having children is that both parents will be too old to do the job right or to see their kids grow up. But that presumes that older women will always marry men their age or older. Once it is more acceptable for women over 45 to have children, the pool of men open to them expands. Then younger men who want to start families may feel freer to fall in love with older women. For those couples, there indeed could be better living through chemistry.
Las Vegas

Booming with three new mega-hotels-
But that’s only because the rest of

By KURT ANDERSEN

HOW CAN A LARGE-SPRITED AMERICAN NOT LIKE LAS VEGAS, OR at least smile at the notion of it? On the other hand, how can any civilized person not loathe Las Vegas, or at least recoil at its relentlessness?

How can you not love and hate a city so crazily go-go that three different, colossally theme-park-like casino-hotels (the $375 million Luxor, Steve Wynn’s $475 million Treasure Island and now the $1 billion MGM Grand, the largest hotel on earth and the venue last weekend for Barbra Streisand’s multimillion-dollar return to live, paid performing) have opened on the Strip in just the past three months? How can you not love and hate a city so freakishly democratic that at a hotel called the Mirage, futuristic-looking infomercial star Susan Powter and a premodern Mennonite family can pass in a corridor, neither taking note of the other? How can you not love and hate a city where the $100,000 paintings for sale at an art gallery appended to Caesars Palace?
casinos, the city now seems mainstream. America has become more like Vegas.

sars Palace (Patron: "He's a genius." Gallery employee: "Yes, he's so creative." Patron: "It gives me goose bumps") are the work of Anthony Quinn?

In no other peacetime locale are the metaphors and ironies so impossibly juicy, so ripe for the plucking. And there are always new crops of redolent, suggestive Vegas facts, of which any several—for instance: the Mirage has a $500-a-pull slot-machine salon; the lung-cancer death rate here is the second highest in the country; the suicide rate and cellular-phone usage are the highest—constitute a vivid, up-to-date sketch of the place.

But it used to be that while Las Vegas was unfailingly piquant and over the top, it was sui generis, its own highly peculiar self. Vegas in none of its various phases (ersatz Old West outpost in the 1930s and '40s, gangsters-meet-Hollywood high-life oasis in the '50s and '60s, uncool polyester dump in the '70s and early '80s) was really an accurate prism through which to regard the nation as a whole.

Now, however, as the city ricochets through its biggest boom since—

William Mercer McLeod
the Frank-and-Dino Rat Pack days of the '50s and '60s—the tourist inflow has nearly doubled over the past decade, and the area remains among America's fastest growing—the hypereclectic 24-hour-a-day fantasy-themed party machine no longer seems so exotic or extreme. High-tech spectacle, convenience, classlessness, loose money, a Nikes-and-T-shirt dress code: that's why immigrants flock to the U.S.; that's why some 20 million Americans (and 2 million foreigners) went to Vegas in 1992. "Las Vegas exists because it is a perfect reflection of America," says Steve Wynn, the city's most important and interesting resident. "You say 'Las Vegas' in Osaka or Johannesburg, anywhere in the world, and people smile, they understand. It represents all the things people in every city in America like. Here they can get it in one gulp." There is a Jorge Luis Borges story called The Aleph that describes the magical point where all places are seen from every angle. Las Vegas has become that place in America, less because of its own transformation in the past decade than because of the transformation of the nation. Las Vegas has become Americanized, and, even more, America has become Las Vegasized.

With its ecologically pious displays of white tigers and dolphins—and no topless show girls—the almost tasteful Mirage has profoundly enlarged and updated the notion of Vegas amusement since it opened in 1989. The general Las Vegas marketing spin today is that the city is fun for the whole family. It seems to be an effective p.r. line, but it's an idea that the owners of the new Luxor and MGM Grand may have taken too much to heart.

Inside the Luxor is a fake river and barges, plus several huge "participatory adventure" areas, an ersatz archaeological ride, as well as a two-story Sega virtual-reality video-game arcade. The joint has acres of casino space—but the slots and blackjack tables are, astoundingly, quite separate from and mostly concealed by the Disneyesque fun and games. The bells and whistles are more prominent and accessible than the casino itself, and are not merely a cute, quick way to divert people as they proceed into the fleecing pen. The MGM Grand has gone further: it spent hundreds of millions of dollars extra to build an adjacent but entirely separate amusement park, cramming seven rides (three involving fake rivers) and eight "themed areas" onto 33 acres, less than a 10th the size of Disney World.

The smart operators, such as Wynn, understand the proper Vegas meaning of family fun: people who won't take vacations without their children now have places to stick the kids while Mom and Dad pursue the essentially unwholesome act of squandering the family savings on cards and dice. "It's one thing for the place to be user-friendly to the whole family because the family travels together," Wynn says. "It's quite a different thing to sit down and dedicate creative design energy to build for children. I'm not, ain't gonna, not interested. I'm after Mom and Dad." Wynn's dolphins are just a '90s form of free Scotch and sodas, a cheap, subtler means of inducing people to leave their room and lose money.

But even if Vegas is not squeaky clean, even if its raison d'être remains something other than provoking a childlike sense of wonder, the place is no longer considered racy or naughty by most people. It seems incredible today that a book in the '60s about the city was called Las Vegas, City of Sin? The change in perception is mainly because Americans' collective tolerance for vulgarity has gone way, way up. Just a decade ago, "hell" and "damn" were the most offensive words permitted on broadcast TV; today the colloquialisms "butt" and "sucks" are in daily currency on all major networks. Characters on Fox sitcoms and MTV cartoon shows snicker about their erections, and the stars of NYPD Blue can call each other "asshole." Look at Montel Williams and Geraldo. Listen to Howard Stern.
THE LATEST MARKETING SPIN: DESPITE THE BABES, BOOZE AND BLACKJACK, THESE DAYS IT'S O.K. TO BRING THE KIDS

In Vegas, Wynn actually gets a little defensive about his nudity-free shows ("Hey, I'm not afraid of boobies"), the streets are hookerless, and the best-known Vegas strip club, the Palomino, lies discreetly beyond the city limits. Meanwhile, at 116 Hooters restaurants in 30 states, the whole point is the battalion of bosomy young waitresses in tight-fitting tank tops who exist as fantasy objects for a clientele of high-testosterone frat boys and young bubbas. No wonder middle Americans find the idea of bringing kids along to Vegas perfectly appropriate. How ironic that two decades after Hunter Thompson's book Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas, countercultural ripple effects have so raised the American prudishness threshold that Las Vegas is considered no more unseemly than any other big city.

Sixteen years ago, Nevada was the only place in America where one could legally go to a casino, and there were just fourteen state lotteries. As recently as 1990, there were just three states with casinos, not counting those on Indian reservations; now there are nine. Lotteries have spread to 37 states. Indiana and five Mississippi River states have talked themselves into allowing gambling on riverboats—hey, it's not immoral, it's, you know, historical—and such floating casinos may soon be moored off Boston and in Philadelphia as well. Sensible, upright Minnesota, of all places, now has more casinos than Atlantic City. With only one state, Hawaii, retaining a ban on gambling, and with cable-TV oligarch John Malone interested in offering gambling on the information superhighway, Vegas doesn't seem sinful, just more entertaining and shameless.

And fortunate, especially in this age of taxophobia and budget freezes. The state of Nevada now derives half its public funds from gaming-related revenues—from voluntary consumption taxes, nearly all paid by out-of-staters. Nevadans pay no state income or inheritance tax. To craven political leaders elsewhere, this looks pretty irresistible: no pain, all gain, vigorish as fiscal policy. A new report from the Center for the Study of the States concluded, however, that "gambling cannot generally produce enough tax revenue to significantly reduce reliance on other taxes or to solve a serious state fiscal problem."

One of the defining features of Las Vegas has been its 24-hour commercial culture, which arose as a corollary to 24-hour casinos. Along with the University of Nevada's basketball team, it is the great source of civic pride. It is the salient urban feature first mentioned by Harvard-educated physician Mindy Shapiro about her adopted city: "You can buy a Cuisinart or drop off your dry cleaning at 4 in the morning!"

But Las Vegas's retail ceaselessness is no longer singular. These days around-the-clock restaurants and supermarkets are unremarkable in hyperconvenient America, and the information superhighway, even in its current embryonic state, permits people everywhere to consume saucy entertainment—whether pay-per-view pornography or dating by modem with strangers—at any time of the day or night.

Las Vegas was created as the world's first experiential duty-free zone, a place dedicated to the anti-Puritan pursuit of instant gratification—no waiting, no muss, no fuss. In the '30s, Nevada was famous for its uniquely quick and easy marriage (and divorce) laws. And although a certain kind of demented Barbie and Ken still make it a point to stage their weddings in Las Vegas (158,470 people married there in 1992, a majority of them out-of-staters), it is now an atavistic impulse, since the marriage and divorce laws in the rest of the U.S. have long since caught up with Nevada's pioneering looseness.

When instant gratification becomes a
supreme virtue, pop culture follows. Siegfried and Roy, the ur-Vegas magicians (imagine, if you dare, a hybrid of Liberace, Arnold Schwarzenegger, David Copperfield and Marlin Perkins) who perform 480 shows a year in their own theater at the Mirage, don't seem satisfied unless every trick is a show-stopper and every moment has the feel of a finale. In front of the new Treasure Island is a Caribbean-cum-Mediterranean faux village fronting a 65-ft.-deep "lagoon" in which a full-scale British man-of-war and pirate vessel every 90 minutes stage a battle with serious fires, major explosions, 22 actors, stirring music, a sinking ship. It is very impressive, completely satisfying—and gives spectators pretty much everything in 15 minutes, for free, that they go to certain two-hour, $65-a-seat Broadway musicals for.

In the '50s and '60s Vegas impresarios took a dying strain of vaudeville and turned it into a highly particular Vegas style. Gamblers from Duluth and Atlanta came to see only-in-Vegas entertainments: Sinatra, Streisand, stand-up comedians, the trash rococo of Liberace, both flaunting and denying his gayness; hot-ticket singer-dancers like Ann-Margret; and with whiffy themes that existed as mere pretexts for bringing out brigades of suggestively costumed young women jiggling through clouds of pastel-colored smoke as over-amped pop tunes blared. It was cheesy glamour, to be sure, but it was rare and one of a kind.

Precisely when did Vegas values start leaking deep into the American entertainment mainstream? Was it when Sammy Davis Jr. got his own prime-time variety show on NBC in 1966, or a year later, when both Jerry Lewis and Joey Bishop had network shows running? Or in the summer of 1969, when Elvis Presley staged his famous 14-show-a-week comeback gig in Vegas? Whenever the change began, American show business is today so pervasively Vegas that we hardly notice anymore. The arty, sexy French-Canadian circus Cirque du Soleil had its breakthrough run in Manhattan before decamping this year to Las Vegas, and neither venue seemed unnatural. Big rock-'n'-roll concerts nowadays are often as much about wowie-kazowie production values—giant video walls, neon, fireworks, suggestively costumed young men and women, clouds of pastel-colored smoke—as music. Michael Jackson's highly stylized shiek—the cosmetics, the wardrobe, the not-quite-dirty bumps and grinds, the Liberace-like gender-preference coyness—is so Vegas that the city embraced him at every turn: a Jackson impersonator is a star of the Riviera's long-running show Splash; Jackson plays a spaceship commander in one of Sega's new virtual-reality video games at the Luxor; and Siegfried and Roy got the real Jackson to compose and sing their show-closing theme song, Mind Is the Magic. And Madonna? Her just finished Girlie Show world tour, with its Vegas-style dancers and meretricious Vegas-style lighting, is precisely as pseudosexual in 1993 as shows at the Flamingo were in 1963—decadence lite.

Back when the Rat Pack ruled, Jackie Mason played Vegas and Edward Albee was on Broadway. Today essentially idea-free spectacle—The Phantom of the Opera, Cats—dominates New York City's so-called legitimate theater, and stand-up comedy is ubiquitous. In the '90s, Friars Club comedians like Mason have hit Broadway shows, and Andrew Lloyd Webber's Broadway musical Starlight Express has been permanently installed in the showroom of the Las Vegas Hilton. The crossbreeding seems complete.

Penn and Teller are ultra-show-biz-savvy New York intellectuals whose act is an ironic deconstruction of magic shows in addition to being a very impressive magic show (see box). They first played Vegas a year ago. Penn Jillette's fondness for Vegas, like every hip baby boomer's, is sweet-and-sour, simulta-
neously bemused and fond. Of a traditional Vegas variety show at Bally's called Jubilee, he rants, "In the first five minutes they destroy temples and sink a giant model of the Titanic—there are 80 topless dancing women while the Titanic sinks, blast furnaces spewing fire. You look around you, and every single person in the crowd perceives it ironically. Every single person in the show perceives it ironically. It seems like everybody in Vegas nowadays is too hip to be in Vegas."

Serious connoisseurs of the surrealistically kitschy visit Graceland Wedding Chapel, where Norm Jones, the Elvis impersonator in residence, is both pleased and bewildered by the sudden popularity of the wedding ceremonies he performs for $250. Heavy-metal star Jon Bon Jovi got married there in 1989; Phil Joanou, director of the U2's concert film Rattle and Hum, was not only married at the Graceland Chapel but played a tape of his wedding on stage every night of the band's last American tour. In December 1992 three members of Def Leppard showed up at the door, one to get married and two to renew their vows.

Last year 8 million of the city's 22 million visitors were under 40, and nearly half of those were under 30. When Soul Asylum, as part of the MTV-sponsored 1993 Alternative Nation tour, landed at its last U.S. stop in Las Vegas, the band deviated from its song list to belt out Vegasy tunes like Mandy and Rhinestone Cowboy. Luke Perry and Jason Priestley of Beverly Hills, 90210, huge Tom Jones fans, recently flew to Vegas to see their hero sing, and members of the Red Hot Chili Peppers went to Las Vegas to see and meet Julio Iglesias. "Suddenly the same things I was doing five years ago that were considered pure corn are now perceived to be hip," says Wayne Newton. "It's a wonderful satisfaction to finally be hip."

Long before this generation of young hipsters started reveling in the Vegas gestalt, certain intellectuals were taking seriously the city's no-holds-barred urban style. It was 25 years ago that a little-known architect and professor, Robert Venturi, returned to Yale with his two dozen student acolytes after a remarkable 10-day expedition to Las Vegas, where they stayed at the Stardust. His influential 1972 book, Learning from Las Vegas, immediately made Venturi famous as a heretical high-culture proponent for the ad hoc, populist design of the Strip—the giant neon signs, the kitschy architectural allusions to ancient Rome and the Old West, any zany kind of skin-deep picturesqueness. And a decade later, the fringe tendency became a fully-fledged movement: Post-Modernism.

Today almost every big-city downtown has new skyscrapers that endeavor to look like old skyscrapers. Almost every suburb has a shopping center decorated with phony arches, phony pediments, phony columns. Two decades after Venturi proposed, with the intellectual's standard perverse quasi-affection, that Vegas could be a beacon for the nation's architecture, his manifesto had transformed America. Forget the Bauhaus and your house—it is the Vegas aesthetic, architecture as grandioso cartoon, that has become the American Establishment style. And so the splendidly pyramidal new Luxor and cubist new MGM Grand (both the work of local architect Veldon Simpson) do not seem so weird, since equally odd buildings now exist all over the place.

As it was being created in the '50s, Vegas' Strip was a mutant kind of American main drag, an absurdly overscaled Main Street for cars instead of people. Everywhere else in the country the shopping mall was replacing the traditional downtown. But now the Strip in Las Vegas has come full circle, its vacant stretches filling in with so many new hotels and casinos that what had been the ultimate expression of car culture has masses of tourists walking from Bally's to Caesars to Treasure Island, and from the Luxor to the Excalibur to the MGM Grand. The Strip is virtually an old-fashioned Main Street.

Meanwhile malls, the fin-de-siècle...
scourge of genuine Main Streets, have become preposterous Vegasy extravaganzas themselves—themed, entertainment-driven, all-inclusive, overwhelming. The West Edmonton Mall in Alberta, with its 119 acres of stores and restaurants and the world's largest indoor amusement park, pulled in 22 million people in 1992, as many as visited Las Vegas; and the 16-month-old Mall of America outside Minneapolis, with only 96 acres of money-spending opportunity and America's largest indoor amusement park, claimed 40 million visitors in its first year.

Yet even as the rest of America has become more and more like Las Vegas, life for Vegas residents as well as visitors is more thoroughly sugar-frosted with fantasy than anywhere else. "Our customers want a passive experience," says Wynn, "but romantic." Such as his ersatz South Seas restaurant, Kokomos ("Kokomos—this is better than Hawaii. There's no place in the South Pacific where the light is so perfect, so beautiful"). At the Mediterranean-themed resort Wynn envisions for the new Dunes site down the Strip, he has talked of creating a kind of raflish virtual Nazism: at a casino-restaurant modeled on Rick's casino-restaurant in Casablanca, scenes from the movie would seamlessly blend with live actors playing Bogart and the movie's other

Tonight! Miracles, Live!

By PENN JILLETTE

With Siegfried and Roy pulling down eight figures a year, David Copperfield levitating on the cover of Forbes (I'm guessing camera trick), and Vegas competing with Anaheim for the family-vacation market (if Treasure Island = Pirates of the Caribbean, and Excalibur = Cinderella's Castle, Mr. Toad's Wild Hotel and Casino must be next), magic is running a close third to Elvis spin-offs and female breasts as entertainments in Vegas.

According to December's Magic magazine, there are nine major shows in Vegas that are either full-till-magic acts or feature magicians big. But that's an underestimate, because it doesn't count Vegas regulars like the Pendragons (husband and wife magicians and body builders—it had to happen). Nor does it count the acts that play the celebrity rooms several weeks a year, such as Harry Blackstone Jr., David Copperfield and, yes, Penn & Teller. Then there are the close-up guys who sit at your table and do tricks and jokes right in your and your date's collective face—like the amazing Mike Skinner. Throw in all the comics making condom jokes while sticking needles through balloons at the brick-wall comedy clubs, and you probably have two or three dozen magic acts working Vegas as I type.

What you need to know: Siegfried and Roy, two nuts from Germany, are out of their wealthy little minds. They live in a mansion whose ceiling is painted like the Sistine Chapel, with either Siegfried or Roy (who can remember?) in place of Adam. Roy has a
"meditation chamber" (the rest of us have dressing rooms) furnished with a mystic rug and cages for his tigers. They wow the crowd with heavy machinery and endangered-species eugenics. I love S&R. They march to the beat of a different drum machine.

Speaking of selective breeding, Lance Burton, who does one of the finest dove acts in the history of the bulging vest, has actually married Melinda, "the First Lady of Magic." They have joined their hearts and lives but still have separate, competing shows in Vegas. Melinda, who has the best hair in magic next to mine, floats in the air while talking about Jesus. (If it really were Jesus holding her above the stage, would it have to be lighted so carefully?)

There's more coming. Caesars Palace plans to open Caesars Magical Empire, with no fewer than three theaters. What's going on? Elvis died, and it takes a platoon of rabbit tuggers to fill his jumpsuit? I think the answer is pretty simple. People go to Vegas to see something they can't see back home. They can see comedians at the mall, celebrities on TV, singers doing hit songs repeatedly in whatever-vi-1-is videos.

But magic doesn't really work on TV. Miracles have to be seen live. You can't bet on things that are in the can: horse races, boxing, keno—they all happen in real time. And in a city where getting 97¢ back for every dollar invested is advertised as a good return, you're going to want willing-suspension-of-disbelief by the truckload. The casino oligarchs figure you will start by believing you saw a hanky transformed into a pigeon, and be on the road to believing it really is your lucky day. If that nut can turn into a white tiger, I should be able to roll another seven, easy. If you don't believe in a little bit of magic, you don't gamble. And if you don't like magic and you don't gamble, you're better off in Branson.

characters among the paying customers.

The new Las Vegas has even fabricated a bit of ersatz old Las Vegas: along with its Oriental- and Bahamian-themed suites, the MGM offers rooms themed according to a decorator's Vegas ideal. The Sands, one of the last intact artifacts of the Rat Pack golden era, is being remodeled to within an inch of its life. "We're going to theme, definitely," the hotel's p.r. spokeswoman said as work was beginning late last year. "But we don't know what the themes are yet."

VEN CIVILIANS MUST THEME. AT the Lakes, an upscale housing complex, the developer has built a whole tract of Gothic minicastles, one next to the other. Mountain Spa, a high-end resort and corporate retreat now being plotted on 640 acres in the city's northwest, will have a "Mediterranean feel—more of a St. Tropez feel than a Mexican-American feel," says developer Jack Sommer. "I have no trouble deviating from the established regional architecture. This is Las Vegas."

The standard Las Vegas development is, like so many others throughout the country, fenced and gated—and each freestanding middle-class house is in most cases walled off from its neighbors. Such fortress domesticity, says University of Nevada at Las Vegas political scientist Bill
IN THE FORUM OF THE POSH CAESARS PALACE MALL, THE KITSCHY PAINTED SKY IS, IN FACT, GORGEOUS

Thompson, “makes it hard to see your neighbors. You don’t even see your neighbors to say hi. A lot of people came here to start over, to change, and they don’t want people attachments. Or rather they want to make their own people attachments, not to be thrown in with people just because their house is next door.”

The problem with immersing so completely into one’s own virtual reality is solipsism, a kind of holistic selfishness; other people don’t matter unless they are players in one’s own themed fantasy. It costs $150 a month just to keep a third of an acre green, and so the per capita water usage in Las Vegas is a gluttonous 343 gal. per day, compared with 200 in Los Angeles. The 702 area code has a higher proportion of unlisted numbers than any other. And although the per capita income is the 12th highest in the U.S., the electorate last year voted against building and improving parks. Officials say they need to build 12 new schools a year through the end of the century to accommodate the projected population influx, but they fear voters will decline to pay for them. Such civic disengagement is now a national phenomenon, but Las Vegas is at the cutting edge—and always has been. Back during the city’s first spurt of urban hypertrophy in the ’50s, when other new cities were grandly and confidently expanding their schools and social-welfare systems, Las Vegas was pointedly stingy.

Today’s casino-driven prosperity is a somewhat self-contained bubble. The state’s welfare case load has risen 54% just since 1981. “We currently have 10,500 new jobs coming online,” says welfare administrator Mila Florence, referring to the staffing of the Luxor, Treasure Island and MGM Grand. “The number of persons coming into the state seeking those jobs far exceeds the number of jobs available, so our agency becomes the safety net.”

OR IS IT JUST SOCIAL PROGRAMS the locals are disinclined to fund. Last year voters defeated a series of bond issues that would have paid for 300 new police officers, seven new police substations, 500 new jail beds and improved security in the schools. Is the crime problem bad? Yes and no. Yes in the sense that the rates for murder and other violent crimes are somewhat higher than for the nation generally. But then they always have been—as is typical of resort areas, where tourists skew the figures. What’s interesting is how even in its level of violence the rest of America has come to resemble Las Vegas. The city’s homicide rate was 128% higher than the nation’s as recently as 1982; today the Las Vegas homicide figure is only 56% higher than the national rate. In 1982 the local rate of violent crime—rapes, robberies, assaults, as well as homicides—was 90% higher than the national figure; today it is only 17% higher.

The theming; Liberace and Michael Jackson and Siegfried and Roy; the water gluttony; the refusal to build schools and police stations. It is fair to say that Las Vegas is in denial, which probably explains the local predilection for smarmy euphemism. From Wayne Newton on down, every man in Vegas calls every woman a lady. One of the local abortion clinics is called A Lady’s Needs. Signs all over McCarran Airport declare it a nonsmoking building, yet just as noticeable as the banks of slot machines is the reek of old cigarettes. It strikes almost no one as ironic that the patron of the M.B. Dalitz Religious School is the late Moe Dalitz, the celebrated gangster.

It is understandable that the citizens are a bit embarrassed by their criminal founding fathers (Steve Wynn calls the Dunes “the original home of tinhorns and scumbags”), but the mixed feelings go beyond the mob. Last year Davy-O Thompson got zoning-board approvals to establish his haircutting salon, A Little Off the Top, where the female stylists were dressed in frilly teddies or paste-on breast caps and panties. But the board of cosmetology de-
HISTORY OF AN IDEAL: FROM AN ACCOUNT RAILROAD STOP TO THE NATION'S MOST HYPER-AMERICAN MEGACITY

in ed him a license an hour before he was set to open, citing concerns over "safety" and "hygiene." (He was eventually allowed to operate.) A similar protest contributed to the demise recently of a car wash featuring women in thong bikinis.

"We Las Vegas have been living under the stigma of Sin City for so long that we are desperate to prove that this is a very conservative, God-fearing, average American community that just happens to have gambling," explains Under Sheriff Eric Cooper, who along with his boss, Sheriff John Moran, has been waging a 10-year antivice campaign. "The best thing that ever happened was when the Baptists had their convention here four years ago." The category of "Escort Services" is no longer listed in the local Yellow Pages.

It isn't just sex. Las Vegas are even ambivalent about gambling. Political discourse often revolves around keeping casinos away from decent people's homes. The promotional video produced by the Nevada Development Authority makes no mention at all of casinos. Even when a casino is a part of a new development, it is described as something else. Jack Sommer's Mountain Spa, the posh pseudo-Mediterranean resort about to start construction, will have a small "European-style" casino. But, says Sommer, "it's not really a casino. I call it a gaming amenity."

Semantic nuance, it turns out, is important. "They don't see themselves as gamblers," says Steve Wynn of the new tourists he is attracting. "They think of themselves as folks who are on vacation, and while they are there—hey, let's put some money in the slot machine." Wynn hired screenwriter Jim Hart (Hook, Bram Stoker's Dracula) to write a one-hour family-adventure TV movie (NBC, Jan. 23) set at Treasure Island, and while Hart says the movie reaffirms family values and he flew his children out during production, he understands the place has an intrinsically dark edge. "You can come out for 24 hours and lose the tuition," he says. "There are a lot of desperate characters here."

OR WHILE THE CITY IS NO LONGER the "Genet vision of hell" that John Gregory Dunne described in his book Vegas: A Memoir of a Dark Season 20 years ago, it is still, for the moment, a stranger place than Omaha or Sacramento or Worcester or even Atlantic City, if only because there are so many cheerfully offered temptations to lose the tuition and so many normal-looking people flirting feverishly with that risk. The mobs on the casino floors are in a kind of murmuring trance, each middle-aged housewife or young lawyer at the slots or the poker tables mentally grappling with a nonstop flow of insane hunches and wishful superstitions, continuously driven to unworthy leaps of faith that result in unwarranted bursts of self-esteem (Blackjack) or self-loathing (Craps).

Wynn understands the shadowy core of Las Vegas. "There will never come a day when [potential visitors] say, 'Should it be Orlando or should it be Las Vegas?' Those are two different moods. We think of our vacation in more romantic, personal terms. We're looking for sensual, extended gratification." In other words, Disney World is about tightly scripted smile-button fun for the kids; Las Vegas, despite the new theme-park accessories, remains the epicenter of the American id, still desperate to overpay schmaltzy superstars like Barbra Streisand, still focused on the darker stirrings of chance and liquor and sex.

If it is now acceptable for the whole family to come along to Las Vegas, that's because the values of America have changed, not those of Las Vegas. Deviancy really has been defined down. The new hang-loose all-American embrace of Las Vegas is either a sign that Americans have liberated themselves from troublesome old repressions and moralist hypocrisies, or else one more symptom of the decline of Western civilization. Or maybe both. —With reporting by Priscilla Painton/Las Vegas

TIME, JANUARY 10, 1994

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Pop Fiction’s Prime Provocateur

By GREGORY JAYNES

In a blue-gray bungalow on a lamp-post-lined street in an unremarkable American neighborhood, squirms a man of sudden celebrity, Michael Crichton. The year just done was “pretty amazing,” he says. The reason is that one book of his, Jurassic Park, became the biggest hit in movie history, and another, Rising Sun, was no slouch, and together they vaulted old writings even he had dismissed back onto bookshop shelves, where they became the stuff of authors’ dreams: they were bought, not remaindered. There are 100 million copies of Crichton’s books now in print.

“I’m still not accustomed to being recognized the way I am,” he says. “It’s nice, but I’m accustomed to not being noticed—except by people who notice that I’m tall.” Indeed, he has to duck to get under his own door. He is 6 ft. 9 in. You fear that if he fell down he would be out of town.

This week Crichton, 51, is publishing his 24th book, Disclosure (Knopf; $24; first printing: 750,000 copies). It is about sexual harassment; a female executive virtually manhandles a subordinate. The woman, scorned, ignores the facts and charges the man with stepping over the line. He fights back. Crichton says he got the idea from a friend, presumably male, who told him about an incident in the workplace. That was the seed, and then Crichton cogitated, watered it as you would a Ficus, which seems to be his method. The result is provocative, which seems to be his pattern. To read it in this charged climate makes a man want to holler, “Slap leather, boys, and head for that line of trees!” Acknowledges Crichton: “It has been suggested that now is the time for that long-postponed trip to the Australian outback.” Instead he is bracing for the criticism that trails his books like gulls after a trawler.

The new novel was written in the tidy bungalow in Santa Monica, California. Crichton uses the place as an office; his home, his wife (the fourth) and his child (the first) are a mile and a half away. In his office sits the author, a student, a thinker, possessed of restless intelligence. He is the only person this person has ever interviewed whose answer to a question was “I don’t know.” That’s inspired.

To catch a sense of Crichton, one must summon other failed physicians who turned to fiction, though failed, perhaps, is the wrong word. Conan Doyle. More recently, Walker Percy. In The Moviegoer, Percy wrote of “the search.” What’s the search? Well, you poke about the neighborhood and don’t miss a trick. Somehow, it all has to do with novelists trained in the field of science, men like Crichton who found science too unimaginative.

In the ’60s he went to Harvard Medical School and swiftly became disillusioned. “I hated it, he says. “I’d go to the shrink, and he’d tell me that everybody hated it. Why? Well, you went through it to get your license. There was nothing to discuss. You went through the hazing to join the fraternity—it was male-dominated in those days.”

Regrets?

“No regrets. Early on, it gave me something to write about, an area of expertise that I could draw upon, a fund of experience and a sense of pace. Things happen fast. I still think it’s true that any sense of narrative pacing on my part comes out of the emergency room. We don’t get to know anybody well, and it’s time to move on.” He laughs at himself; he has been criticized for characters who have the depth of dust-bowl topsoil. The discipline of medicine fit his perception of himself, but the politics—a collegial judgment call by his superiors for what he felt was a needless series of operations, say, or, in those days, the rigid abortion restrictions—drew him up cold. He had a tetchy stomach that gave him the tendency to faint.

So he concluded, Physician, wheel thyself. And drove away from such a future, in 1970. “To quit medicine to become a writer struck most people like quitting the Supreme Court to become a bail bondsman,” he wrote. But this was disingenuous. He had already published 10 thrillers. By the time The Andromeda Strain reached the screen in 1972, he was writing screenplays and other novels, and about to start a career as a film director (Coma, The Great Train Robbery, Runaway). It was natural for him, Crichton says. He knew the works of Hitchcock before he knew the works of Dickens.

John Michael Crichton grew up in a suburb of New York City, on Long Island. one of four children of an advertising-
magazine executive and a homemaker. The parents encouraged the children to find nothing intellectually daunting. The theater, movies and museums were a large part of their lives. Crichton sold his first story, a travel piece, to the New York Times when he was 14.

He entered Harvard as an English major, intending to become a writer, but after his compositions were adjudged underwhelming, he switched to anthropology. "The English department was not the place for an aspiring writer," he says. "It was the place for an aspiring English professor."

After graduating with honors in 1964, ever precocious, he lectured on anthropology for a year at Cambridge University in England. Then came medical school and the incredible events that followed. In the past 18 months, in just the U.S., Crichton has sold 30 million books. His popularity seems to spring from his ability to marry his vast appetite for science and its frontiers to humans caught in perilous situations—all told in a driving narrative that fairly whispers, "... and then ... and then . . ."

Yet, as seems to be the way of it with many people of protean interests (his passions range from computers, about which he wrote a book, to Jasper Johns, about whom he wrote a book) and prodigious success, personal happiness does not always attend. There was a period, in the late '70s and early '80s, when Crichton was blocked. "Writing was very difficult for me," he leans toward his interlocutor conspiratorially. "You know, Olivier got stage fright when he was 65. It lasted about five years and then vanished. I did everything I could think of to do. Nothing seemed to much matter."

For years Crichton responded by traveling like a tramp, the anthropologist in him exploring exotic cultures hard to reach. From Malaysia to Pakistan to an ascent of Kilimanjaro to a descent with South Pacific sharks, literally, he roamed. Along the way he was a spiritual pilgrim as well, exploring psychic phenomena the scientist within him assessed carefully but many times failed to discredit. He says he bent spoons, visited a past gladiatorial life, found himself in the desert conversing with a cactus, which he thought it means something, but it's nothing but a lot of hippie-dippy-airy-fairy baloney. New Age Garbage, Aquarian Abracadabra, Karmic Crap. Get out of that metaphorical room having written it, Crichton is out of that metaphorical room instantly.

Skeptical? So was Crichton. "Sometimes I thought, 'You've been in California too long, and you've gone from a perfectly O.K. doctor to a guy who lies on a couch while somebody puts crystals on him and you actually think it means something, but it's nothing but a lot of hippie-dippy-airy-fairy baloney. New Age Garbage, Aquarian Abracadabra, Karmic Crap. Get out now, Michael, before you start to believe this stuff.' But the thing is, I was having a really interesting time."

He explored the landscape of the mind, or consciousness, as he explored the physical landscape of the planet. And then . . .

for whatever reason, by 1985 Crichton was back working; by 1987 he was into his most solidly satisfying marriage (to Anne-Marie Martin); by 1988 he was a deliriously happy father (her name is Taylor); and by 1993 the money he was earning by his wits rolled up in 18-wheelers (the film rights to Disclosure went for $3.5 million).

The new book may turn out to be his most provocative yet. Asked if provocation is his intent, he laughs. "I don't really enjoy it. I feel I am caught up in something, and I am made to do it." He knows he will be attacked and will find it extremely unpleasant, as he did with Rising Sun, and he will come away feeling that an honest attempt to educate and entertain on a complicated topic has been given a simplistic reading. He still picks at the abrasions from the Japan-bashing charges Rising Sun raised.

"I'm a clean look in any given area, and I'm a single look," he says. "I won't be making the issue my life's work. I'm not going to be making future sources of funding angry. I can walk in the door and say what I see in the room and walk out. That's what I do. I tell the truth. I believe very strongly in equality for women, and there's only one way to get it. Egalitarian feminism is the only way. That's the story. Egalitarian feminism says equality of opportunity and pay, period. That's it. People say women have special problems. Well, men have special problems. I'm very tall. That's a special problem." Here Crichton is arguing, as his book does, against any "special protection" for women. "Equality is clear. No favoritism is clear. If you say, 'No favoritism except here,' then it's not clear. I think everybody understands equal. It's relatively easy to measure, as in exactly how far we've gotten and exactly how far we have to go. Protectionism is not clear. It's possible to imagine there's something even anti-American in it. Limiting free speech..." Crichton drops it for a moment with some sort of back-of-the-throat sound of exasperation.

He's not talking about physical invasion. He's talking about, one gathers from his book and his discourse, the folly of trying to redesign gender relations in the workplace by defining harassment, in the subtle, gray areas, so specifically that litigation or incarceration will eventually do away with every offense, make the office a perfect world. This may be the anthropologist at work (or a too casual interpretation). Beyond that, if a certain perfume or cologne is intoxicating, everyone should know by now to remain silent or, in close quarters, stop breathing, Crichton's book examines, at a sensationalistic but provocative yet. Asked if provocation is his intent, he laughs. "I don't really enjoy it. I feel I am caught up in something, and I am made to do it." He knows he will be attacked and will find it extremely unpleasant, as he did with Rising Sun, and he will come away feeling that an honest attempt to educate and entertain on a complicated topic has been given a simplistic reading. He still picks at the abrasions from the Japan-bashing charges Rising Sun raised.

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Swaying the Home Jury

The Menendez trial has been a long-running soap opera—and a high-profile attraction—for cable's Court TV

By MASSIMO CALABRESI NEW YORK

A

T LUKE'S HAIR DESIGN IN Somers, New York, the main topic of TV conversation these days is not Jessica Fletcher's latest murder mystery or Roseanne Connor's most recent family crisis. It is the fate of Lyle and Erik Menendez, the Beverly Hills, California, brothers awaiting a verdict on charges of murdering their parents. "One way or another, every day it comes up in conversation," says Rosalie Mignano, 29, a nail technician at the salon. "I've really come to care about them as people."

Stanley Orlen, a former New York City policeman now living in suburban Long Island, was so involved in the trial in late November that he was reluctant to go into surgery because he might miss the final arguments to the jury. "The surgery wasn't important; missing the summation of the trial was more important," he says. "Do you call that being hooked?" Holly Hunter, at least according to her "Tonight Show" testimony, is an addict. So are hundreds of lawyers, journalists and armchair judiciaries of ordinary viewers who have abandoned Luke and Laura on General Hospital for the really hot soap opera of the new TV season: the Menendez trial, covered live and virtually gavel-to-gavel on Court TV.

Since it was launched in July 1991 by legal journalist and editor Steven Brill, the Courtroom Television Network (of which Time Warner is part owner) has immersed cable viewers in the slow, sometimes tedious, often mesmerizing workings of the American judicial system. With 47 states now allowing cameras in the courtroom, the channel has broadcast such high-profile proceedings as the William Kennedy Smith rape trial, the insanity defense of serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer and the parole hearings of Charles Manson and his followers. But nothing has brought it quite so much attention as the Menendez case. Says senior vice president Merrill Brown: "It has sustained viewer interest in a way that we didn't believe previously a trial of this length could."

For a relatively small cable network (currently seen in 14.1 million homes), Court TV has surprisingly strong ratings. In the first Nielsen survey of its viewership in October, the channel ranked No. 4 during the day among cable viewers who receive it. Yet Court TV executives are reluctant to credit the Menendez trial with boosting viewership; they would rather have advertisers and cable systems believe the network's audience is stable and continuous, not simply tuning in for the big trials. There are evidently still some doubts: the channel is not yet making money, though Brill says it is slightly ahead of its business plan.

Court TV has embarked on an effort to broaden its programming beyond its staple of live trial coverage. The network runs hourly judicial-news updates all day and weekly prime-time segments on consumer law, small-claims courts, and parole and death-penalty issues. This month it will introduce The System, a weekly show that Brill describes as a "nonfiction Law & Order," tracking cases from arrest to judgment. On-air personalities like Cynthia McFadden (who has just been hired away by ABC News) and Terry Moran (who is covering the Menendez trial) have gained a devoted following.

Critics of Court TV charge that it focuses excessively on the most sensational and salacious cases in an effort to boost ratings. "Coverage of trials is a good idea," says Alan Dershowitz, the attorney and Harvard Law professor. "The way Court TV does it is a bad idea. Virtually all they cover is sex, gore and pornography." Far better, suggests Dershowitz, would be a nonprofit, C-SPAN-style channel, which would give viewers access to a broader range of cases.

Brill rejects such criticism, arguing that Court TV spends most of its time on unspectacular cases, from medical malpractice suits to the legal battle last month in the Delaware Supreme Court between QVC and Viacom over Paramount. "We could do a rape and grisly murder trial every minute of our 24 hours if we wanted to," says Brill. "That's not what I want to do for a living."

Nevertheless, the channel is hardly shying away from the big cases. It has already won approval to cover the trial of Lorena Bobbitt, charged with cutting off her husband's penis, and it hopes to air the trials of Hollywood madam Heidi Fleiss and alleged serial killer Joel Rifkin. Brill insists that Court TV's just-the-facts approach is a healthy antidote to the fictionalized treatment such cases routinely get in network TV movies. "There'll probably be 36 docudramas about the Menendez brothers' trial," he says. "But [the producers] will probably be a little more honest because they know so many people have watched the real thing."
Less Than Fair
Tinkering with a beloved musical is risky business
By WILLIAM A. HENRY III

Before the revisionist My Fair Lady opened on Broadway, Richard Chamberlain went on the warpath, trying to get his co-star sacked in favor of her understudy. Without having seen the understudy—but having endured Melissa Errico's hapless Eliza Doolittle—one can be sure Chamberlain was right about her. Rarely has a plum Broadway role been so ineptly handled. While Errico sings gloriously if unimaginatively, she is an unconvincing Cockney whose linguistic foibles wobble from syllable to syllable, quite a handicap in a show about the social importance of accents. She is plausible only in two feminist-flavored moments, denouncing Chamberlain's Henry Higgins as heartless in the first act and reviling him as a sexist pig at the end.

In a version also saddled with Julian Holloway's cutesy capering as Eliza's debauched father, Dolores Sutton's vampirizing as Higgins' mother and sets that make the Covent Garden flower market look like a Florida condo in mid-construction and render Higgins' study fit for a Vincent Price horror flick, Chamberlain shows calculated charm and wit. He sings better than Rex Harrison and looks terrific. His best scenes are with the normally bland Pickering, whom Paxton Whitehead makes droll.

The schizoid staging reflects director Howard Davies' determination to do something new vs. the insistence of the estate of librettist-lyricist Alan Jay Lerner on replicating the 1956 staging. Most impiously, Davies hints that Eliza leaves Higgins forever, as in Shaw's Pygmalion. That idea fights the musical's text and, indeed, its boy-meets-girl form. The text and form win the brawl. But nothing in this show is close to a knockout.
Codgers, Shticky and Sticky
A pair of movies contrasts the fate of four un-dirty old men

By RICHARD SCHICKEL

O LD GUYS. THEY FILL THEIR long, fixed-income days and their TV-dinner nights wistfully recalling past potencies. If we are to believe two new movies, they also spend a fair amount of time plotting new conquests—and not necessarily of age-appropriate ladies either. The rest of their long hours they pass bickering, and their long, fixed-income days and their TV-dinner nights wistfully recalling past potencies. If we are to believe two new movies, they also spend a fair amount of time plotting new conquests—and not necessarily of age-appropriate ladies either. The rest of their long hours they pass bickering.

Walter Matthau and Jack Lemmon are awfully good at this sort of thing. You might say they've been practicing since they were kids. By this time they instinctively know how to bring out the comic best in each other—Matthau's bullying misanthropy, Lemmon's melancholic good cheer. It follows that they invest Grumpy Old Men, in which they play querulous neighbors, with an appeal that is nostalgic and, if you are a devotee of well-practiced shtick, technically seamless.

Maybe it's the fact that the pair are working in the frozen north—the film is set in a small Minnesota town—that ensures that the comedy is fairly crisp. Or maybe it's the script by Mark Steven Johnson and the direction by Donald Petrie (both young shavers) keep sentiment within reasonable bonds. Or maybe, God love them, it's that the filmmakers allow one of their leads to be something more than a dreamer, sexually speaking. It helps too that the object of his successful affections is Ann-Margret, all peaches and cream, playing a free-spirited new neighbor. In a movie about old age, the gambit is virtually unprecedented. By contrast, Wrestling Ernest Hemingway takes place in hot, muggy Miami. The old gentlemen here are Richard Harris as Frank, a sometime seafarer who once-brawled with Papa, and Robert Duvall as Walt, a fastidious Cuban barber, now retired. Harris has fun overacting, Duvall has fun underacting, but nobody has any fun with the opposite sex. Frank has a snappish relationship with his landlady, played by Shirley MacLaine, and is too raffish for Piper Laurie, who is excellent as a dignified lady he meets at senior-citizen matinees. Meanwhile Walt moons over a young waitress (Sandra Bullock). Also written by a sprout, Steve Conrad, and directed by Marshall Brickman (Children of a Lesser God, The Doctor), who specializes in the woes of isolation, Wrestling Ernest Hemingway aspires to be serious about its subject. Yet in a curious way this sobriety works against it. Frank and Walt turn into schematically contrasting case studies, and the movie's sympathy for them eventually becomes patronizing.

Grumpy Old Men avoids both quiescence and boredom by throwing only sharp, sidelong glances at old-age like strained circumstances and the death of friends. And the fact that Matthau and Lemmon are playing men of their own ages (73 and 68), which Harris and Duvall (61 and 63) are not, adds authenticity and an element of gallantry to the movie. It also suggests a solution to the problem of old age: if you're healthy, keep working.
Date with an Angel, Take Two

In a wondrous mess of a sequel to Wings of Desire, Wim Wenders brings his heavenly spirits to earth in chaotic Berlin

By RICHARD CORLISS

The Three Rules of movie sequels:
1) If the original movie is really special to you, the filmmaker, don't make it over. A sequel is essentially a commercial venture, designed to extend a product's shelf life. Not wanting to taint the memory of their most personal films, Steven Spielberg left E.T. alone, and Frank Capra refrained from making Son of a Wonderful Life. But Wim Wenders felt no such scruples about redoing Wings of Desire, the 1987 philosophic fantasy that is his masterpiece. This try-everything director correctly saw Wings as an open-ended excuse for considering the changing state of his native Germany. So here, with no apologies, is the fascinating sequel: Faraway, So Close!, or Wings 2

2) Bring back the old stars and add a big new one. Bruno Ganz and Otto Sander are back as Damiel and Cassiel, the angels come to Earth. Peter Falk returns as an ex-angel, and Solveig Dommartin as the trapeze artist who'll meet any heavenly body halfway. But here's a casting coup: Mikhail Gorbachev as himself. He sits at a desk, pondering the meaning of life and the purpose of the universe. "I'm sure that a secure world can't be built on blood, only on harmony," opines the former Soviet leader, now available for smaller roles. "If we can only agree on this, we will solve the rest."

3) Don't elaborate on the original film's story; instead, remake it. Rocky always fought a guy; Indiana Jones saved yet another buried treasure; the Lethal Weapon lads kept blowing stuff up. Here Cassiel, the second angel, follows Damiel's lead and becomes human, a brand-new Candide. But Wenders actually has a new idea, courtesy of recent history. In Wings of Desire, two angels hovered over divided Berlin, invisibly consoling its citizens. In the sequel, writ-

ten by Wenders, Ulrich Zieger and Richard Reitinger, angels patrol a Berlin that is politically united but even more fractious—a city of gangsters and gun runners, of the homeless and spiritually helpless. Wayne's World 2 this ain't.

What is the same in both Wenders films is the notion of angels as bestowers of grace on a secular landscape. Wenders' view is traditional and strangely powerful. He sees angels as invisible consolers, gentle kibitzers in the monologues that run endlessly through our mind. They are the eternal observers, God's night watchmen, holy voyeurs. Wenders would probably say they are moviegoers, eavesdropping for a few privileged hours on a world more perilous and beautiful than our own. In a lovely scene, Cassiel comforts an old chauffeur (Heinz Rühmann, a German movie star since 1926) with memories of his childhood. The angel's knowledge validates these reveries, brings the faraway into reassuring emotional close-up.

Angel for hire: Gorbachev has a cameo role

Angel on the rocks: Having trouble being mortal, Cassiel (Sander) gets fatal advice from Time Itself (Dafoe)

There is folly aplenty here: klutzy drug lords, nattering detectives, angels on bungee cords. Oh, and Willem Dafoe as a death figure named Emit Flesti—which makes sense only when spelled backward, and then not nearly enough. But Wenders has always worked on the wild side; even his previous film, the botched Until the End of the World, was a misstep so grand and elaborate it was like a clown's juggling act. In Faraway, So Close! the dance lasts almost until the end of the film. And for those two hours it seems almost seraphic.

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Background music: the accompanist (Bohringer) meets her leading lady (Safonova)

CINEMA

In the Shadow Of Stardom
A tender tale of love and loss in World War II France

BY RICHARD CORLISS

Sophie Vasseur (Romane Bohringer) has eyes made for adoration. They are large, dark, serious, so very intense; they might belong to a puppy just saved from the city pound. Sophie’s eyes have found their love object in Irène Brice (Elena Safonova), a concert singer in occupied Paris during World War II. Talented and high-spirited, apparently gliding through life, Irène can juggle the affections of a businessman husband (Richard Bohringer) and a lover (Samuel Labarthe) who is in the Resistance. Sophie, a promising pianist, is pleased to be Irène’s accompanist and maid; she serves tea, irons, watches, tries to keep secrets. Servant and mistress, darkness and light—why, the two women might be in different movies.

We all have supporting roles in the movies that are other people’s lives. Sometimes we are so enthralled with someone else that we barely star in our own. Denial of self becomes a silent declaration of love—especially a first love like Sophie’s. She could be a sister to Willa Cather’s Lucy Gayheart or a daughter to Stevens the butler in The Remains of the Day. This implosive sort of devotion is found often enough in life but rarely in films. That The Accompanist exists at all is the first reason to cherish it.

The main reason is the performances: this film is a gift to its actors from director Claude Miller (who, with Luc Béraud, adapted Nina Berberova’s novel) and from the actors to the receptive viewer. Safonova is a blond vision of grace under all kinds of pressure. But the fresh revelation is Romane Bohringer, daughter of co-star Richard Bohringer. A solemn beguiler, she perfectly embodies pent-up passivity as if longs for the golden chains of an enslaving passion.
The Finest Orchestra? (Surprise!) Cleveland

Under conductor Christoph von Dohnányi, the Ohioans have risen to the forefront of American ensembles

By MICHAEL WALSH CLEVELAND

W hen Christoph von Dohnányi’s appointment as the sixth music director in the history of the Cleveland Orchestra was announced in 1982, the reaction was nearly unanimous: Christoph von Who? The Berlin-born Dohnányi, 53—grandson of the urbane composer Ernő Dohnányi, nephew of the martyred Nazi-era theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer and husband of the glamorous dramatic soprano Anja Silja—was nearly unknown in the U.S. Among the few who were aware of him, he was regarded as a workmanlike German kapellmeister with a suspicious fondness for 20th century music, and certainly an odd choice to lead an orchestra whose past conductors played for him as if one is likely to hear outside Bayreuth or the Metropolitan Opera.

Dohnányi modestly ascribes the orchestra’s excellence to the diligent work habits and pride instilled under Szell, the Hungarian-born terror who became music director in 1946 and transformed Cleveland from a cultural backwater into one of the orchestral world’s powerhouses. Szell’s ironfisted discipline brooked no contradiction, and the musicians played for him as if their livelihoods—if not their lives—depended on it. “Under Szell they had to be the best,” notes Dohnányi. “With me, they want to be the best.”

With 42 players remaining from the Szell era, the orchestra has lost none of its famous precision. Yet as buffed by Pierre Boulez, who became musical adviser after Szell’s death in 1970; by Lorin Maazel, music director from 1972 to 1982; and now by Dohnányi, it has added a voluptuousness that sets it above its stiffest American competition—primarily, Daniel Barenboim’s Chicago Symphony, Leonard Slatkin’s St. Louis Symphony and Kurt Masur’s New York Philharmonic.

The orchestra remains a proud exception to the age of clock-watching union stewards, pettifogging management and perils-of-Pauline finances. Players routinely take their parts home to practice, and they sometimes request extra rehearsal time in particularly difficult or unfamiliar works. Morale is buoyed by the support of the city, which treats the musicians as local celebrities; the death last November of longtime concertmaster Daniel Majeske occasioned editorial eulogies like those of which would be rare elsewhere. Under executive director Thomas W. Morris, the orchestra sits atop an impressive $73 million endowment, operates in the black and is retiring a $6.2 million accumulated deficit incurred during some lean years in the 1980s.

Yet Cleveland would not have achieved its current prestige without Dohnányi, who arrived in 1984 after having worked his way up the traditional German opera-house ladder. Beginning with the Frankfurt Opera, where he was Georg Solti’s assistant, Dohnányi spent time in Lübeck, Cologne and finally his adopted hometown of Hamburg before heading to the shores of Lake Erie. He has ended any doubts about his abilities as a symphonic conductor with performances that combine Szell’s rigor, Boulez’s uncaring ear and a controlled interpretative fire.

What finally explains Cleveland’s eminence is the happy intangibles that previously elevated Stokowski and Philadelphia, Karajan and Berlin, and Solti and Chicago to musical supremacy: leadership, talent, discipline and desire, perhaps especially the last. “For musicians there’s not much else to do here,” Dohnányi points out. “There’s no opera, there’s no freelancing; you don’t come to Cleveland to enjoy the weather. You come here to play in the Cleveland Orchestra.” And they do play, better than anybody.

“Under Szell,” Dohnányi says of his musicians, “they had to be the best. With me, they want to be the best.”
There are a few questions you should ask about any health system reform plan. Will you and your doctor still be able to make medical decisions that are in your best interest? Will the treatment you receive be based on what's best for you? Or will it be based mostly on dollars and cents?

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New Role, Old Flame
Perhaps Anjelica Huston and Jack Nicholson did not realize it at the time, but their less-than-placid 17-year love affair was actually an elaborate Method-acting exercise. The pair, who split unamicably four years ago when he fathered the child of actress Rebecca Broussard, will confront each other on the set of The Crossing Guard, a film to be directed by the pugnacious Sean Penn in which Nicholson and his ex will play a divorced couple.

A Real Model, a Real Actress
Models who want to be model-actresses do not lead easy lives, and most never graduate from made-for-Italian-TV movies about Rollerblading. But Liv Tyler, the 16-year-old model daughter of Aerosmith's Steven Tyler, already has a real part in a real film. She makes her acting debut as the lead in Silent Fall, a thriller by director Bruce Beresford. But a successful career in front of both still and movie cameras isn't all Liv aspires to. "I want to study aroma therapy, massage and art," says the teenager. "I want to be a jack-of-all-trades."

Avast, Me Mateys, A Comedy at Sea!
For too long, moviegoers have been deprived of works in one of film's most delightful genres: the absurd maritime adventure. But thanks to Jerry Lewis-like funnyman Chris Elliott, the form will now be given new life. A one-time writer for Late Night with David Letterman and star of the woefully short-lived surrealist sitcom Get a Life, Elliott is heading the cast of a ridiculous sea tale called Cabin Boy. Elliott conceived the story, which involves a rich kid headed for a cruise who inadvertently boards a rickety fishing trawler and winds up a menial deckhand. "I was thinking Thor Heyerdahl adventure," says Elliott, referring to the author, ethnologist and heroic navigator who sailed a balsa-wood raft from Peru to Polynesia.

SEEN & HEARD
Unlike most of her Euroroyal peers, Princess Diana did not spend the holiday week skiing in Gstaad or sipping Camparis in Anguilla. Instead this troubled wife of Windsor chose our East Coast as her vacation spot. Di spent time in New York City and Washington visiting old friends and the National Gallery and even budget-shopping. She went to a Banana Republic and purchased a pair of size-6 jeans—after a shamefaced saleswoman first suggested she try on a pair of size 8s.

It sometimes seems as if every lawyer in the world must be either suing or defending Michael Jackson. His latest legal battle pits him against the promoters of his abandoned world-concert tour. They are suing him for $20 million, arguing that Jackson's addiction impaired his ability to perform and claiming that he concealed his condition from them when he agreed to the tour.

Song-and-dance woman turned perky spiritualist Shirley MacLaine has had to abandon her dream of constructing a New Age commune on a 34-acre, $1.5 million mountaintop site she bought in Santa Fe, New Mexico. A Native American friend of MacLaine's named Two Moons had indicated that if anyone should live on the land, it should be MacLaine. But locals protested that the site was too environmentally fragile to accommodate the star's building plans. After a bitter dispute, she agreed to sell the property.
EVER SINCE IT WAS FIRST OUTLINED, PRESIDENT CLINTON’S health plan has been wonk heaven: a field day for number crunchers, policy analysts and all the other types who use hand-held computers even though they know the figures anyway. Matthew Arnold wrote of ignorant armies clashing by night; the health-care discussion has been conducted by highly knowledgeable armies clashing on the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour.

As with all big issues, there is another side to it: the level of passionate beliefs and impulses. We call them irrational only because they resist rationalizing away; they are as important as anything that can be put on a bar graph or a spreadsheet. In the interests of truth in labeling, opponents of the health plan, like me, and supporters should explore these motives. I’ll show mine, if they’ll show me theirs. Better yet, I’ll show both sets.

The unspoken motives of proponents of the President’s health-care plan are power-lust, arrogance and resentment of doctors. (Each of these has a more emollient name, but we’ll get farther if we keep the bark on.) The lust for power, or at very least the conviction that increased state power is the solution to all ills, simply has to be present in any proposal to boost regulation over one-seventh of the nation’s economy. Two years after the collapse of communism, and at a time when even the mild-mannered Euro-socialists are considering a four-day workweek in order to boost their stagnant employment statistics, faith in the efficacy of state management remains surprisingly strong here. The reason is that the potential problem solvers look for—this is an attractive vision. But honesty compels me to say that my wonks claim that their system would act as a brake on the rise of the man whose season comes around every December, Ebenezer Scrooge. Every time I hear it said, in accents of panic, that 37 million of my fellow citizens lack health insurance, I find myself thinking, as that keen economist said when he was approached by professional do-gooders, “Are there no workhouses?”

Let me be more specific. About one-sixth of the number of uninsured are twentysomethings who have not bothered to incur the expense because they think they are immortal. For them there is little reason to be concerned. Most will manage to avoid major health catastrophes until they learn the facts of life. Those who don’t, run the risk with their eyes open.

That leaves the large remainder of those between jobs, those working in part-time jobs and those who simply aren’t working. The cost of helping them by means of either the Clinton plan or a single-payer system such as the Canadians use would be rationing of care and a general lowering of the level of quality, as talented and self-motivated potential doctors refuse to become paper pushers in white coats.

To avoid these grim alternatives, the wonks on my side have proposed schemes that would make health insurance a portable benefit. Individuals, instead of employers, would buy health insurance and would receive the tax benefits for doing so. My wonks claim that their system would act as a brake on costs, since insurers would have to deal with consumers directly. The poor would be treated as they are now, through Medicaid, or with means-tested tax credits.

This is an attractive vision. But honesty compels me to say that if the choice is between the status quo and Clinton or Canada, I take the status quo. The American health system is the best in the world. It has saved the life of people I know, more and more of them as I grow older. I’m not going to dilute it to please some power-tripping bureaucrat who got his law degree when Abbey Road was released.
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