

# AMERICAN STUDIES JOURNAL

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## U.S. ELECTIONS 1996

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Public Opinion Polls

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EDUCATION IN BALTIMORE  
SHOPPING CENTERS, SHOPPING MALLS  
FRANCHISING



Studying  
Black Studies

The Fiction  
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Dear Readers,

With the current issue of the magazine, we at USIS Germany are making a welcome transition. After ten years at the helm, Editor Jürgen Bodenstein is moving on to new challenges at the America House in Cologne, and turning over the editorship of the magazine to the German Association of American Studies (GAAS) for the production of future issues. USIS is turning over the reins of a universally-praised publication, read by more than 26,000 educators in 40 countries around the world. We at USIS Germany are confident the new editors will continue and expand upon the tradition of commitment to American Studies which this publication represents.

The magazine will continue to appear twice a year, as announced in the last issue, in the spring and fall. It will henceforth be produced, however, at the Department of American Studies at the University of Halle-Wittenberg. The new address for subscriptions and all inquiries about the magazine is:

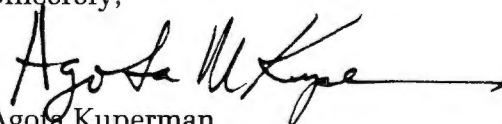
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The new title, "American Studies Journal," is symbolic of this evolution, reflecting not only the change of editorship, but also the success and popularity of a publication which, over the past ten years, has grown beyond the bounds of a newsletter to become a full-fledged magazine in its own right. As this evolution continues, the new editors will undoubtedly make changes of their own in the look and feel of the magazine.

What won't change, however, is the commitment to bringing you, the reader, a thoughtful and thought-provoking mix of articles and essays about the United States and its myriad facets and elements. On behalf of all of you, we thank Dr. Bodenstein for his work on the magazine and

wish the German Association of American Studies much success in the future.

Sincerely,

  
Agota Kuperman  
Cultural Attaché  
U.S. Embassy Bonn

### ASSET — The Green Catalog

The 1995/96 ASSET catalog is still available. ASSET teaching materials are offered for sale to individuals and institutions engaged in teaching English and American Studies. The catalog describes over 50 items ranging from situational dialogs to scholarly articles and anthologies of primary cultural readings. The program also offers audiocassettes and maps. Among the new titles in the 1995/96 program are:

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# Campaign '96

## Interview with Thomas E. Mann

*In the following interview, one of Washington's leading political analysts, Thomas E. Mann, sets the scene for America's 1996 election season. Mann discusses the attitudes of American voters, the state of U.S. political parties, and the key events of the upcoming campaign.*

*Mann is director of the Governmental Studies Program and the W. Averell Harriman Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C. think tank.*

*Before coming to Brookings in 1987, Mann was executive director of the American Political Science Association. Born in 1944, Mann earned his B.A. in political science at the University of Florida and his M.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Michigan. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He has published many works on such topics as U.S. elections and the Congress.*

**Q:** Mr. Mann, what about the 1996 election is historically significant or unique? How will this election be seen in history?

**A:** Well, of course, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and the historical significance of the 1996 elections will largely be determined after the fact. What we can say at this point, however, is that we appear to

be at a time of potentially profound change in our politics and policy. The 1994 midterm [congressional] elections signalled the possibility of a major partisan realignment, elevating the Republicans to a dominant position in our politics.

The potential for a long-term realignment is clearly present in the 1996 elections, but whether it happens depends very much on the ability of the Republican Party to consolidate its hold on the House and Senate,

to win the presidential election, and then to govern in a way that seems responsive to the underlying sources of insecurity and anxiety among Americans.

The second reason this election may be historically significant is the potentially far-reaching policy change. The 104th Congress — at least the first session following the 1994 elections — has signalled a sea change in policy

direction. Congress is no longer talking about whether governmental power will devolve from the federal government to the states and local governments or whether we will have more privatization or whether we will deregulate, but about the pace and extent of those changes.

I think the '96 election will determine how rapidly we move in this decentralizing direction. The election of a conservative Republican President would certainly accelerate the movement that we've seen initiated in the 104th Congress. The reelection of Bill Clinton would not change the direction, but would certainly slow



REPUBLICAN aspirants for presidency in the 1996 election.



the pace of change in that direction and produce a more moderate outcome.

Now the third factor that suggests the '96 U.S. elections may be historically significant has more to do with our political process. While Republicans think of themselves as the conservative party, when it comes to the U.S. constitutional system, their orientation is more radical. That is, they favor a host of constitutional amendments, from limiting the terms of members of Congress to requiring a balanced budget and providing the President with a line-item veto [a device that would make it possible for Presidents to veto individual parts of complex legislative packages passed by Congress] as well as an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would permit prayer in the public schools.

If the Republicans win the presidency and increase their majorities in the legislative branch of government, it's quite possible that we will see a number of major constitutional changes move forward.

**Q: What, in your view, are the major underlying issues that will shape the political debate in the coming year?**

A: I think it's important for those outside the United States seeking to understand our elections to distinguish between two kinds of issues — “position issues” and “valence issues.” A “position issue,” for example, is one where you favor more government or less government or where you favor allowing prayer in the schools or not allowing prayer in the schools or where you favor access to legal abortion or opposition to legal abortion — that is, people disagree on the positions.

A “valence issue” is an issue of enormous concern, but voters are on the same side of the issue and each party tries to identify with their concerns. So it may mean helping Americans cope with pressures from a global economy — that is, identifying with working peoples' concern about secure jobs at good wages. This is not an issue where there is great disagreement.

What you're going to find in the coming election campaign is that in some respects the differences on positional issues will be blurred because of the general sentiment that most Americans have lost faith in government. So that President Bill Clinton running for reelection will not simply position himself as diametrically opposed to the direction the Republicans want to take but rather will say, “We must do this more slowly, more reasonably, more pragmatically, less ideologically,

and do it in a way in which we don't harm the interests of working Americans.”

It's not so much that he's against devolution of power or privatization or deregulation; but he wants to do these things in a way that balances interests, that allows government to continue to play some role but calls upon individuals to assume more responsibility. So I think on a variety of issues, there's going to be a blurring of



the positions that the major party candidates take. For example, there is the issue of Medicare [a federal program that subsidizes medical care for elderly Americans]. Republicans are now proposing to reduce projected expenditures for Medicare over the next seven years by \$270 billion [thousand million]. They are presenting their reforms to the U.S. public as a way of saving Medicare, because the projected increases in program costs, they argue, are unsustainable over time.

The Democrats would like to make this a position issue, taking the stance, “They're against Medicare, and we're for it. We'll protect your Medicare and they'll take it away.” But the debate is probably going to blur with the Republicans also saying they're for Medicare and want to take the steps needed to preserve a healthy system into the next century.

So what I want to suggest to you is that the major issues of the campaign will turn on fundamental questions of the economic well-being of American citizens — the possibility of having a secure job and earning a decent wage. The key issues will also go to the conditions of our central cities, the rate of violent crime, the dramatic increase in illegitimacy rates [out-of-wedlock births], and efforts to grapple with the fraying of the

social fabric. And they will go to the role of the federal government in solving economic and social problems, and how best to slim down that federal government — that is, devolve power to state and local governments in ways that will allow us to grapple more effectively with these fundamental problems.

Republicans are going to argue that the best way to deal with many of these problems is to get the federal government out of the way. The Democrats and President Clinton are likely to argue that we have to make government smaller and more effective, but that it must continue to play a central role and that it must still make substantial investments in helping us deal with these problems.

Another issue I mentioned that will almost certainly be part of the backdrop, if not central, in the debates among the candidates will be the role of racial relations in America. The trial of O.J. Simpson, the Million Man March on Washington organized by Louis Farrakhan, the potential presidential candidacy of General Colin Powell — even though he chose not to run — have all brought race relations once again to the fore in American politics.

While America has made tremendous strides in eliminating or reducing the amount of overt discrimination against racial minorities, substantial problems remain. “Affirmative action” programs [preferences for racial minorities and women in hiring and university admissions] are a highly contentious issue on American campuses and workplaces and in government. There will no doubt be substantial debates about affirmative action and about how best to deal with racial polarization and remaining racial discrimination in America.

***Q: Specifically, what do the results of the '94 mid-term congressional elections — when the Republicans gained control of the House and Senate — suggest for the future of the Democratic party?***

A: The New Deal Democratic Party coalition, which really began with Franklin Roosevelt's election in 1932, and dominated American politics and government for a half-century, is in decline. This coalition set the agenda for the public sector and for political debates in this country. It's quite natural that it would not go on forever. Normal demographic replacement, with the aging of the electorate, with new people coming in, with underlying shifts in the economy, the weakening of labor unions, the declining work force in heavy manufacturing, the growth of the information age, the importance of verbal skills, computer training, and the like — all these changes have altered the underlying basis for party competition.

Now, what added significantly to this gradual decline in Democratic Party dominance was the success of the civil rights movement in the early 1960s. For many years, an uneasy coalition existed within the Democratic Party that included both blacks and Southern whites and working-class “ethnic” whites in the North who could agree on an economic agenda, but not really on a social agenda. Once civil rights became a primary concern of the federal government — after Lyndon Johnson's election as President in 1964 and with the passage of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act — we began to see much more racial polarization in the country and within the Democratic Party.

That gradually led to the decline of the “safe South” for the Democratic Party in elections, but it also began to create weaknesses for the Democratic Party within some of our large cities, in ethnic enclaves, in the suburban areas surrounding those central cities. Now, other factors certainly contributed to this decline. I think there has been a widespread loss of faith in government — in government's ability to solve problems — and the Democrats, as the established party of government, were particularly vulnerable to this loss of faith.

***Q: What factors lead to participation in the American political process by different demographic or ethnic groups? How do presidential elections affect participation?***

A: Many non-Americans are struck by the low voter turnout in American elections. In our most recent presidential election, that of 1992, 55 percent of the voting-age population turned out at the polls. In the most recent midterm election, approximately 37-38 percent turned out.

This contrasts with turnout rates of 80 and 90 percent in many other democracies around the world. There are many explanations for the relatively low turnout of Americans. One has to do with our system of voter registration. The burden is on Americans themselves to register for elections, and there is no penalty imposed for not voting, as there is in some other countries.

But perhaps the most important reason is embedded in the political culture of the United States. We are a fiercely individualistic people; we don't like to be told what to do by government; we don't have a strong degree of interest in government or public affairs; we don't make much of a psychological investment in government. We tend to participate more in our communities — in voluntary organizations and community groups — and withdraw when it comes to national politics and elections.

Now, it turns out that those Americans with higher levels of education are more likely to vote. Through the educational system they get the skills to participate in politics, and they get some information that makes it seem more worthwhile for them to do so, so there is substantial educational bias in the participation rates of Americans.

If you want to know who does not vote, it tends to be people with low levels of interest in politics who believe that the stakes aren't particularly high. That is to say, they believe their well-being will not be greatly influenced by which party or which candidate actually wins the election. Those who believe, for example, there's not much difference between the two major parties, are unlikely to vote.

One of the laws passed in Bill Clinton's first year in office was the "Motor Voter Bill," which now eases the burden of registration for Americans — when you renew your driver's license you can automatically get yourself registered or reregistered to vote. There are signs of increasing registration around the country, and with the stakes seemingly very high in the upcoming elections and the possibility of major independent or third-party candidacies, I think the odds of another increase in turnout are actually very high.

Working against that, however, and another factor that pervades this entire campaign season, is the public's

certainly reflects the perceived failure of government. But it's important to note that these same sentiments are evident in democracies around the world. I think the end of the Cold War, the communications revolution, the extent to which the media and political actors accentuate the negative, and the decline of authority in our societies more generally — all these factors have made people less and less confident in government, less respectful of it. There has been a real decline in civility in political discourse, and that's very much a feature of elections in America and works to depress turnout as well.

**Q: Why is the winter-spring period of each presidential election year — roughly the time between the New Hampshire primary and "Super Tuesday" group of primaries — so important?**

A: It's important to understand that before we have the general election in which the major party candidates and any independent or third-party candidates compete for election to the Presidency, we must first determine who the major party nominees will be.

President Clinton, for example, has had some difficult times in office, and he has not expanded his political base much beyond the 43 percent of the popular vote he won in the three-candidate election of 1992. Yet he has nonetheless succeeded in discouraging any competition for the Democratic nomination in '96 and therefore has been able to raise money early in preparation for the long campaign for reelection ahead. But as we go to press, the Republican nomination is very much up for grabs.

Nominations for the major parties are technically determined at party conventions in August by the delegates elected to participate in those conventions, and those delegates are selected in a series of primary elections and caucuses in the states. These events really begin with the Iowa caucuses on February 12, 1996, and conclude on June 4 with primaries in Alabama, New Jersey, and New Mexico.

What we've had during 1995, like the year preceding other recent presidential elections, is something you might call an "invisible primary." Before any formal events are held, candidates are out there trying to raise money, to

garner endorsements of other politicians, to build their political organizations, to test their "stump" speeches, to participate in informal straw polls and other gatherings of candidates. The reason they do this is: first, there has been a pattern that the candidate who is ahead



*DELEGATES cheer wildly on the floor of the Joe Louis Arena in Detroit during the Republican Party convention.*

cynicism about government and politics and its basic distrust of political elites. It's very discouraging to see the extent to which Americans have moved from healthy skepticism to corrosive cynicism about government and politics. I think it reflects tough economic times. It

in January of the election year in the popularity polls and in the fund-raising contest usually wins the nomination. So this "invisible primary" period is an important sorting-out of the candidates.

The second reason the candidates are so busy in the year preceding the primaries is that we have a very compressed primary process in which most delegates will be selected in what is really a five-week period between the New Hampshire primary on February 20 and the California primary on March 26.

During that period we're going to be electing the vast majority of delegates to the convention, and these primaries come in rapid succession. The so-called Super Tuesday primary, involving a number of Southern states, is on March 12 while a Midwestern-states regional primary follows on March 19.

Many states that used to schedule their primaries later in the year have decided to move them earlier because they fear late primaries will be less influential. Oftentimes, the party nominee is determined in the first set of primaries. The other candidates drop out — and by the time it comes around to the late primaries, the contest is largely over. Candidates will have to have the money in hand to make their media buys and schedule television advertising before they even know how they're going to do in the first primary, the New Hampshire primary. That's why we've seen so much activity during this year preceding the presidential election, that is to say during 1995.

Since about 70 percent of the delegates will be selected in that initial five-week period of the campaign, it is possible that a candidate will break out of the pack in the early events and go on to win such a large share of the delegates that it will be impossible for anyone to challenge his likely victory. One technical reason for this is that in many of the Republican state primaries a rule akin to winner-take-all obtains — that is to say, the candidate who wins either the statewide vote in California or the vote in a congressional district gets all of the delegates allocated in that jurisdiction, which means a front runner can amass a substantial lead in delegates and pretty much wrap up the nomination a matter of weeks after it all begins.

So you have this fascinating situation in which you have a whole year or more of the invisible primary with

candidates working hard to raise money and build support and garner endorsements and put together their organizations. It seems to go on interminably, and then suddenly you have this period of rapid-fire primaries in which the vast majority of delegates are selected and a nominee is chosen. The potential always exists for a surprise finish by a candidate in Iowa and New Hampshire, thus setting in motion a rush to that surprise winner. We could find ourselves with a nominee who was barely known to the country five weeks earlier.

*Q: What role do you expect foreign affairs issues to play in the 1996 presidential election?*



*Vice President George Bush approaches an enthusiastic crowd while campaigning in Charleston, South Carolina in 1988.*

A: Several points to be made here. President Clinton began his time in office spending relatively little energy and attention on foreign policy matters. His dominant focus was the U.S. economy, and his budget package, his legislative program, his health-care reform package. The President quickly found himself getting into some problems in Somalia, in the Balkans, even here in the Western hemisphere.

What has happened since the 1994 election [when the Republicans gained control of Congress] is that the President has made a substantially greater investment in foreign policy. He's discovered that with his ability to get legislation advancing his agenda through the Congress greatly limited if not eliminated by the results of the 1994 election, he's now pursuing those aspects of the Presidency that allow him to act on his own, and he's discovering that foreign policy offers some real possibilities in this regard.



I'm not arguing that President Clinton is pursuing foreign policy because there's nothing else to do, but I am suggesting that he's made a larger investment in foreign policy in recent months and it's beginning to show. We saw it before the '94 election with his leadership in Haiti, and while that situation remains very difficult, certainly U.S. policy there has been very constructive. We've seen it in the fruits of negotiations in the Middle East; we see it in new breakthroughs in Northern Ireland; we see it, I think, in improved relations, however guarded and incremental, with China, and in his attempts to deal with the problems of nuclear weapons' potential in North Korea.

But perhaps most important of all, we see it in the President's initiative in Bosnia, and the realization that Europe will not lead on its own and that for NATO to play a role the U.S. must once again become the dominant player. I think you're going to see the President touting his foreign policy leadership in the election campaign and making a strong argument that the U.S. must play an active role in international affairs if the security of our country is to be preserved.

Now, interestingly, back home, within the politics of the Republican nominating process, we see signs of a kind of resurgent nativism, isolationism, protectionism. These attitudes are given voice by several candidates on the conservative edge of the Republican presidential field, but there remains a more widespread reluctance on the part of Americans to reassume an active role in world affairs.

The end of the Cold War has led many Americans to believe that our active engagement in the affairs of other countries is no longer necessary, and they're reluctant to allocate resources for that purpose. They'd rather tend to the home front. And so one of the issues of this election is going to have to do with the appropriate role of the United States in world affairs — what kind of

foreign economic policy we should pursue and what kind of security policy, and the conditions under which the U.S. government will commit its military forces abroad. These are all difficult issues that will be given voice in the upcoming campaign.

**Q: How are the country's various regions significant in the election process?**

A: Regionalism is important in a modest sense in the nominating process, because certain candidates tend to attract support in their home regions. Phil Gramm of Texas is counting on doing very well in the Southern-state primaries, for example, but regionalism is important mainly when we start talking about the general election and the electoral college because, of course, Presidents are not elected by popular vote totals; they're elected by electoral votes. To win the election, a presidential candidate needs 270 electoral votes. One of the reasons that the upcoming election has to be considered uphill for President Clinton is because of the collapse of support for the Democratic Party in the South.

Even though he is a Southerner, and former governor of Arkansas, his support in the South was relatively modest to begin with — he won only a handful of Southern states in 1992 — and that support has diminished during the course of his Presidency. Republicans are also very strong in the Plains States [in the Midwest] and in the Rocky Mountain States [in the West]. So if you write off the South, the Plains States, and the Rocky

Mountain States to the Republicans, then President Clinton is forced to draw almost an "inside straight" [a near-perfect hand of cards] by winning the New England states, the Industrial Northeast and Midwest, and the Pacific West — California, Washington, Oregon.

That's a tall order. What it means is that when the general election begins to take shape, candidates will be devising strategies for putting together a majority of electoral votes, and that requires giving a lot of atten-



*AFTER THE ELECTION RACE, President-elect Bill Clinton and Vice President-elect Al Gore reach out to supporters in front of the Capitol after a visit with congressional leaders.*

tion to their regional strength. President Clinton, for example, understands that California is absolutely critical to his reelection, and he has made numerous trips West during the course of his Presidency. He's also launching a strategy to try to win back the state of Florida. Florida has trended Republican in recent years, but because of the Republican effort to cut spending and Medicare and Medicaid, the Democrats believe they have a shot at the state of Florida where there are a lot of retirees. These are some of the regional factors that come into play.

**Q: *Has the political equilibrium of the United States' historically stable two-party system begun to change?***

**A:** This is really a fascinating question. American politics has been rooted in two-party competition for most of our political history. Actually, we've had the same dominant two parties — the Democrats and the Republicans — since the Civil War.

The last major party to fade away was the Whig party in the late 1850s, and that was replaced by Abraham Lincoln's Republican Party by the time of the election of 1860. We've had third parties since that time — certainly the Progressive Party in the early 1900s played a very important role, and Theodore Roosevelt himself once ran as a third-party candidate. We've seen most recently Ross Perot's running as an independent candidate for President and garnering 19 percent of the vote in the 1992 election.

In the past, when third parties have emerged to highlight a particular problem, one of the two major parties has "moved over" ideologically and absorbed that third party, and preserved the basic structure of party competition in America. Let me say the rules of the national-elections game are biased to the advantage of the two major parties in terms of ballot access and the campaign-finance system, as well as the electoral system itself. When you have single-member legislative districts — that is, when a candidate who wins the plurality of votes wins that district's seat — and when in a presidential election you have an electoral college in which the plurality winner of the state gets all of the electoral votes from that state, then you really have a system with a majoritarian bias and it's a real disincentive for other parties to emerge as major contenders.

There are, however, some interesting developments in contemporary American politics that suggest that this could change. I think one of those factors is a disaffection with the two major parties — a belief that neither is serving the interest of the American people. Weaker

party attachments, antiparty sentiments, and expressed wishes for new parties, or even more importantly for independent candidacies, have opened the possibility of some major structural change in our politics.

But such changes often depend very much on decisions made by individuals. You could imagine a popular individual running as an independent candidate, winning the presidential election, and then seeking to build a new political party around him, perhaps eventually leading to the replacement of a minority Democratic party by a new party.

Those possibilities exist, but if you were betting, you'd probably bet on the continued persistence of the two-party system in American politics in its current form. Chances are that the parties will adapt — the Republican Party will figure out a way to have a "big umbrella" to absorb diverse groups within its majority coalition, and the Democratic Party will, after some period in the minority, begin to make adjustments and position itself to compete for the majority when the Republicans stumble.

But that conventional pattern is not ordained. We could see decisions of individuals set in motion forces that lead to much more dramatic change in the shape of our partisan competition.

As you know, Ross Perot ran as an independent candidate in 1992, and in spite of his somewhat bizarre behavior of entering, withdrawing, and entering again, he managed to garner 19 percent of the vote. Perot is now working with his supporters and trying to get a new independent party on the ballot in all of the 50 states. If he does that, that party's nominee could be its own candidate like Perot himself, or the party could choose to endorse the nominee of one of the two major parties and by doing that could play an important role in the election.

I think it's fair to say that President Clinton's chances of reelection increase to the extent that one or more major independent or third-party candidacies come forward. That is, he has a fairly substantial electoral base of 40-43 percent of the vote. If the total vote can be divided among three or more candidates, his chances of reelection increase accordingly.



# Public Opinion Polls in Election Campaigns

## *F. Christopher Arterton*

From the viewpoint of those running for public office, election campaigns involve little more than an extensive effort to communicate. Candidates must communicate with other party officials, party members, potential contributors, supporters, volunteers, journalists, and, of course, voters. Ultimately, all campaign activities are secondary to the candidate's effort to communicate with voters. Accordingly, it is not surprising to learn that the largest resources are poured into this communication: advertising to send persuasive messages to voters, and polling to learn the concerns that voters have and the opinions they hold.

Over the past three decades of American elections, polling has become the principal research tool for developing campaign strategy. The major elements of strategy consist of the answers to two simple questions: 1) what are the target audiences that a campaign must reach? and (2) what messages does it need to deliver to these audiences? Polling is essential for answering both of these questions.

By and large, the technique most frequently employed for these purposes is the "cross-sectional" survey in which the campaign's polling firm telephones a random sample of citizens and asks them an inventory of standard questions.

Sampling theory dictates that, if the citizens are selected at random and are sufficiently numerous, their answers to these questions will deviate only slightly from the answers that would have been given if every eligible voter had been asked.

Completing the survey before new, major events change the attitudes of voters is also very important, so most polls will be conducted over a three- or four-day period. That means that a large number of interviewers — either paid or volunteer — will have to be used to reach several hundred voters each evening, between the hours of 5:00 and 10:00 P.M. .

Surprisingly, most campaign pollsters do not base their sample upon the population of all citizens of voting age. As is widely known, in the United States substantial numbers of eligible voters do not actually cast their ballots on election day. Campaigns have learned through much hard experience that it is more efficient to concentrate their efforts on "likely voters" rather than to try to convince all eligible citizens that it is worth their while to vote. Accordingly, the first few ques-

tions on most survey instruments try to ascertain how likely it is that the citizen being questioned will actually vote. The interviewer will thank the unlikely voters and move on to other calls. As a result, campaign communications strategy is built around the interests of likely voters, and campaigns rarely make major efforts to attract votes among hard-core nonvoters.

This step having been accomplished, the first task of the survey is to divide likely voters into three groups: confirmed supporters of the candidate in question, confirmed supporters of the opponent, and undecideds. Then, the basic principle of American election campaigns can be reduced to three simple rules: (1) reinforce your base, (2) ignore the opponent's base, and (3) concentrate most attention upon the undecideds. That is, in the United States, most of the energy of election campaigns is directed at the approximately 20-30 percent of the voters who may change their votes from Democratic to Republican or vice versa.

Though most candidates are desperately interested in who is ahead, actually the usefulness of the cross-sectional survey goes way beyond simply measuring the closeness of the election contest. Campaigns need an accurate measurement of voter opinions, but they also need to know how to change (or preserve) these opinions. The term "cross-sectional" refers to the differences among groups of citizens; the survey technique is designed to record opinion among the various subsections that differentiate the pool of voters. If there are gender differences in the way voters look at the election, for example, the survey will be able to measure these distinctive attitudes. The campaign that discovers itself doing better with male voters, among all those who have already decided how they will vote, will begin to concentrate their efforts upon men who are still undecided, because those voters are likely to be easier to win over.

By asking many questions about voters' preferences for different public policies, the political poll will also provide candidates with insights about the messages they need to deliver to critical groups of voters. Late in an election race, for example, undecided voters may be those who are more cynical about election politics. This result may tempt the candidate to attack his opponent for a poor attendance record or some action that can be pictured as favoring a particular interest group over the general public. In the case of gender differences referred

to above, a campaign that is doing poorly among females may discover some special concerns held by women through polling and attempt to devise a message specifically for them.

Normally, the process of deciphering the messages that will move critical groups relies on statistical methods; the answers of supporters, opponents and the undecided are analyzed to determine the strength of association between candidate support and public-policy attitudes. A strong association is a pretty good indication that the policy area in question may be "driving" the choice of candidates.

Polling is both science and art. Constructing a random example, designing the questionnaire, fielding the survey instrument, and analyzing the results constitute the science of public-opinion research. All these aspects rely upon well-established, validated techniques. The art comes in writing the questions. Question wording can markedly affect the results obtained. Consider, for example, two different questions: "Do you support sending U.S. troops to Bosnia to enforce the recent peace accord?" versus "Do you support President Clinton's plan to send U.S. troops to Bosnia to enforce the recent peace accord?" Voters are likely to react differently to these questions; some opinions will be altered either in favor or against the proposal simply by the association with the president. Which of these wordings is most appropriate depends upon the judgment of the pollster and the purposes of the survey.

In general, when polls are to be used to develop strategy, the consultants labor to write questions that are fair and impartial, so they can achieve an accurate measurement of public opinion. Lately, however, campaigns have been resorting to so-called "push questions" to test possible campaign themes. In these questions, voters are asked to react to questions that have been deliberately worded in very strong language. Consider the following example: "If you knew that one of these candidates had voted to cut welfare payments to the poor, would that increase or decrease the chances that you would vote for him?" When the poll data reveal that many undecided voters back away from a candidate when confronted with this information, then the candidate sponsoring the poll is likely to use this approach in attacking his or her opponent.

Increasingly, political pollsters combine focus-group research with random sample surveys in order to develop campaign messages. In the typical focus group, between eight and fifteen voters will be telephoned at random and asked to participate in a collective discussion on a given evening. In these group sessions, pollsters are able to gather a qualitative, in-depth view of citizen thinking. Often focus groups provide a more complete interpretation of the survey results. Knowing how voters reach their conclusions can be just as

important as the qualitative distribution of opinion gathered by surveys. Focus groups can also provide pollsters with question wording that captures the thought processes of citizens, so that the influential messages they work into campaign advertising will have maximum impact.

Behind the scenes, most major political campaigns rely on polling from the beginning to the end of the election race. The typical candidacy will be formulated on the basis of a "benchmark" poll taken during the spring before the fall elections. This expensive survey may take as much as 30 minutes to complete over the phone and will include a large enough sample so that inferences can be drawn about important subgroups of voters. Once the campaign has begun and voters are being bombarded with competing campaign messages, the pollster will return to the field, often several times, using much shorter questionnaires in order to get an idea of how the opinions have changed from the original benchmark.

A number of well-funded campaigns — usually those for president or for senator or governor in larger states — have recently begun using "tracking surveys" to follow the impact of campaign events. The pollster will complete, say, 400 surveys on each of three nights. The resulting 1,200 voters constitute an adequate sample with an error rate of around 3 percent. On the fourth night, the pollster calls another 400 voters and adds that to the database, dropping off the answers of those voters reached on the first night. And, this process continues sometimes for the whole two months of the fall campaign, so that the sample rolls along at a constant 1,200 drawn from the previous three nights. Over time, the resulting database will allow the pollster to observe the effect of campaign events — such as televised debates or the start of a new advertising theme — upon voter attitudes and preferences. If, for example, the lines indicating support for two candidates are roughly parallel until the opponent starts attacking on the basis of character rather than policies, and at that point, the two lines start to diverge as the opponent's support increases, then the pollster had better figure out a way of countering the character message being used by the opponent or the race will be lost.

Figuring how to counter the opponent's attack may involve examining particular subgroups in the electorate or it may call for a new message from the injured campaign, but in either case, the response will be based on survey research. Polling, American politicians would agree, has become an essential ingredient of campaign strategy.



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# Immigration in Wausau

**Roy Beck**

It all began simply enough, when a few churches and individuals in Wausau, Wisconsin, decided to resettle some Southeast Asian refugees during the late 1970s. To most residents, it seemed like a nice thing to do. Nobody meant to plant the seeds for a social transformation. But this small and private charitable gesture inadvertently set into motion events that many residents today feel are spinning out of control. Wausau, the county seat of the nation's champion milk-producing county, has learned that once the influx starts, there's little chance to stop it. Regardless of how many newcomers failed to find jobs in this north-central Wisconsin city of 37,500, or how abraded the social fabric became, the immigrant population just kept growing.

In little more than a decade, the immigrant families' children have come to make up almost a quarter of the elementary schools' enrollment, crowding facilities past their limits, and there's no peak in sight. The majority of immigrant students are Southeast Asians, and most of these are from the nomadic Hmong mountain tribes of Laos, which unsuccessfully tried to prevent a Communist takeover of their homeland some 20 years ago. Seventy percent of the immigrants and their descendants are receiving public assistance, because the local labor market has not been able to accommodate them.

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Religious and other private agencies which, through federal agreements create most of the refugee streams into American communities, are pledged to care for the newcomers for only 30 days.

Native-born taxpayers must shoulder most of the rising costs of providing more infrastructure, public services, teachers and classrooms for the burgeoning community of immigrants, who make up relatively little of the tax base. In 1992 alone, the Wausau school district's property-tax rate rose 10.48 percent, three times as much as taxes in an adjoining school district with few immigrants.



**HMONG IMMIGRANTS IN WAUSAU.** *The north-central Wisconsin city has become home to the family of Song Pao and Mee Her from Laos. Wisconsin became a popular destination for immigrants from Southeast Asia.*

"At first, most saw the new residents as novel and neat; people felt good about it," Fred Prehn, a dentist and the father of two school-age

children, told me. At the time we spoke, he was the senior member of Wausau's school board. "Now we're beginning to see gang violence and guns in the schools. Immigration has inspired racism here that I never thought we had." Prehn accused religious agencies of swelling the immigrant population without regard to the city's capacity for assimilation. He said that the numbers and concentration of newcomers had forced the school board into a corner from which busing was the only escape. English was becoming the minority spoken language in several schools. Many native-born parents feared that their children's education was being compromised by the language-instruction confusion; many immigrant parents complained that their children

couldn't be assimilated properly in schools where the immigrant population was so high. For two years, citizens were polarized by the prospect of busing, which would have been inconceivable in 1980. Divisions deepened in September 1993, when the school board initiated the busing, and again in December, when voters recalled Prehn and four other board members, replacing them with a slate of anti-busing candidates. Community divisions are likely to persist, since busing supporters threaten lawsuits if the new board ends the busing.

Even more of a shock has been the emergence of organized gang activity. Wausau Detective Sergeant Paul Jicinsky told me that Asian gangs of thieves, centered in St. Paul and Milwaukee, have recruited immigrant youths in Wausau. Most small Wis-

consin cities started resettlement programs for Asian refugees at the prodding of government and religious leaders a decade or so ago, and most are now part of a Crime Information Exchange that, Jicinsky said, had been established almost exclusively to keep track of Asian gang activity in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Among parents, lamenting that their difficulty with English impedes their exercise of authority over their children, were at the forefront of those asking the police to combat gang activity. The cycle of community tensions spins round as native youths link up with outside white gangs to respond to Asian gangs. Compared with the urban core of many big cities, Wausau remains quite a peaceful place. But the comparison that matters for most residents is with the Wausau that used to be. "We don't want to become another California," a Wausau businessman told me. It's a fear often expressed as residents grapple with the problems familiar to America's congested coastal urban areas after nearly three decades of federally sponsored mass immigration and refugee resettlement.

At the same time, frustration grows among immigrants whose economic assimilation is dramatically incomplete. That frustration, in combination with resent-

ment among natives over taxes and busing, seems to be the cause of inter-ethnic violence among the young. The violence takes varied forms. A dance at Wausau East High School, for instance, had to be canceled just as it was starting because of a fight between immigrant and native girls which was serious enough that an ambulance had to be called. Mayor John D. Hess, in a newsletter to all residents, wrote, "Is there a problem

with gangs of school-age kids in Wausau? Emphatically, yes." The number of incidents involving group violence leads all of us to believe that groups of school age kids are organizing for whatever reasons.... Is there a problem relating to racial tensions in Wausau? Emphatically, yes."

The 1980 U.S. Census found Wausau to be the most ethnically ho-

mogeneous city in the nation, with less than one percent of the population other than white. "This was a very nice thriving community; now immigration problems have divided the town and changed it drastically," Sandy Edelman, a mother of preschoolers, told me. "Neighborhood is pitted against neighborhood. When we were moving here, a few years ago, I had this image of children walking to school. It was paradise, we thought. We never thought it was possible there ever could be busing in these schools."

### A Middle-Class Dream

Although Wausau is not marked by splashy displays of wealth, the word paradise crops up in wistful descriptions of the recent past by all types of residents, including immigrants. What they have in mind seems to be a kind of pragmatic middle-class American dream, in which labor produced a comfortable standard of living in a community that was under the control of its residents and where there existed a safe, predictable domestic tranquillity in which to rear children and nearby open spaces for north-country recreation. It was a way of life created by the descendants of German and



*SOUTHEAST ASIANS constitute 62% percent of the total student population at Lincoln Elementary School in Wausau.*

Polish immigrants and New England Yankee migrants, who by 1978 had spent roughly a century getting used to one another and creating a unified culture.

On my visit to Wausau, I found some anger. But the overwhelming emotion seemed to be sadness about a social revolution that the community as a whole had never requested or even discussed. While most residents spoke well of the immigrants as individuals, they thought that the volume of immigration had crossed some kind of social and economic threshold. Many sensed that their way of life is slipping away, overwhelmed by outside forces they are helpless to stop.

Wausau leaders describe their city prior to 1978 as one with no social tensions and only traces of crime. Residents enjoyed a long tradition of progressive politics, education, and business. A healthy match between the labor force and well-paying jobs was the result of a diverse economy heavily reliant on the Wausau Insurance Companies and the manufacture of windows, paper, cheese, electric motors and generators, fast-food-outlet exhaust fans, and garden tools.

In the eyes of some residents, this paradise may have been boring. "This was a rather sterile community, and we needed ethnic diversity," says Phyllis A. Birmingham, the director of the county department that administers the jobs program for welfare recipients. "I'm glad Wausau had major refugee resettlement. It has added so much variety." Sue Kettner, who is in charge of refugee services at a family-planning agency, says, "I have a dream that Wausau will become cosmopolitan and take advantage of its diversity." The until recently homogeneous Wausau schools now enroll students from Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, China, the Philippines, Korea, Japan, Norway, Albania, Egypt, the former East Germany, the former Yugoslavia, and the former Czechoslovakia.

The idea of a moratorium on immigration comes up often in discussions in Wausau. But many people told me that they don't raise the idea in public, because they believe that religious, media and government leaders would readily label any kind of criticism of immigration a manifestation of racism. From 1924 until 1965, the nation's immigration laws prevented foreign migration from reshaping the social landscape of American communities. The laws no longer do. Wausau is but one example of the results of radically modified laws, and many residents are astonished at the rapidity and relentlessness of change.

From a few dozen refugees in 1978, Wausau's immigrant community grew to 200 by 1980, doubled by 1982, and doubled again

by 1984. Since then it has reached roughly 4,200. Even if the influx slows, Southeast Asians may become the majority population in Wausau well within the present residents' lifetimes. In this, Wausau is not unique but only an indicator of the demographic effects of current immigrant streams in the nation as a whole.

### First Stream: Refugee Resettlement

When they agreed to become local resettlement sponsors, in the late 1970s, Wausau congregations did not simply provide refuge for a few Hmong, Lao and Vietnamese families; they also inadvertently created a channel through which the federal government could send a continuing stream of refugees. "In the beginning, we had no concept of what this would turn into," says Jean Russell, a county official who helps administer public assistance to some 2,900 local immigrants.

Wausau residents discovered that the refugees invited to stay in their home town soon began issuing their own invitations and serving as local sponsors for their relatives. Around the same time, the congregations ceased serving as formal sponsors. The cost of inviting was low, since government agencies paid nearly all the new arrivals' expenses. Thus, the lack of jobs was no deterrent to invitations. The first wave of refugees thus sent for more.

The resettlement stream shows no sign of drying up. The main source of Hmong immigrants is refugee camps in Thailand that were set up two decades ago, after the long Indochina wars. But there are still roughly 20,000 Hmong in the Thai camps today. Thailand insists that it should not have to continue to provide refuge.

United Nations workers continue to move people out of the camps. Inasmuch as there are already more than 40 million refugees and displaced persons worldwide, the primary UN solution has to be repatriation to



the refugees' original home country. UN officials consider permanent resettlement in another country to be a last resort. And they and others say that it is now safe for the Hmong to return home. According to a State Department spokeswoman, "The United States believes the Hmong can go back to Laos. We have been watching [repatriations] all along. Our people investigate. There never has been one verifiable story of anybody being persecuted for having been repatriated."

But that does not mean that the Hmong resettlement into the United States will stop. The spokeswoman explains that current U.S. policy leaves the decision up to the Hmong in the camps. If they decide they don't want to go back home to Laos, they will be put into a pool for American resettlement, even though there is no reasonable suspicion that they face the threat of persecution in Laos. This is not unusual; the majority of refugees coming into the United States do not meet a "last resort" criterion for resettlement. If most of the Hmong decide against returning to Laos, one U.S. official estimates, 19,000 may be put into U.S. resettlement channels. That may not sound like much when compared with the number of immigrants in the United States as a whole, but for a community like Wausau, where refugees have already settled and where future refugees will surely go, the potential impact of 19,000 is great.

### **Second Stream: Secondary Migration**

Cities where refugees have resettled tend to receive a secondary migration of refugees who have first settled elsewhere in the United States. "They heard how good it was here and moved from big cities, mostly from California, because of the crime, unemployment and overcrowding," Yi Vang, who was first settled in Memphis and moved to Wausau in 1983, told me. Jean Russell, of the county welfare department, emphasized in our conversation that "they are really nice people," but nonetheless shook her head in consternation at the additional burden that secondary migration puts on the social service system. "Why do so many come here?" she asked, and answered her own question: "This is sort of the right-sized city. It is a wonderful place to live." Wisconsin's generous welfare system is a big draw. A study by the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute found that when the federal government began to cut back its relief benefits to refugees in 1982, large numbers of refugees sought out the states that provided the best Aid to Families with Dependent Children payments. Wisconsin became a popular destination.

One branch of the secondary-migration stream that provides just a trickle now will potentially add a con-

siderable flow. As the refugees become citizens, the 1965 Immigration Act and its successors give them the right to bring in members of their extended families through regular immigration channels. A continuous chain of immigration can ensue, as it already has among many nationalities, particularly in several coastal states.

### **Third Stream: High Immigrant Fertility**

Natives in Wausau complain about the size of Hmong families. John Weeks, the director of the International Population Center, at San Diego State University, and a colleague have studied the Hmong and believe that their birth rate in this country may be one of the highest of any ethnic group in the world.

Unremarkable in Wausau would be a twenty-two-year-old Hmong woman with five kids who comes to Family Planning Health Services for a pregnancy test and contraceptive advice, Sue Kettner says. She says that part of the reason for the big families is the terrible misery and high death rate the Hmong suffered during their long fight with the Communists. "I talked to one man whose parents and four brothers and sisters were dead," Kettner told me. "He was having ten children. He wasn't willing to use contraceptives."

Life in America boosts Hmong infant-survival rates beyond what they were in Asia, Weeks says, and the Hmong have lower infant mortality rates than African-American natives because they have better access to social services and their culture encourages positive prenatal behavior. "They don't smoke, drink, or get fat during pregnancy," he says.

"We find the girls' periods start as early as the third grade," says Lynell Anderson, the coordinator of the Wausau schools' English as a Second Language program. "We've had pregnant sixth graders." Pregnancies in junior high school are not uncommon. Although such cultural patterns would not be so noticeable in Los Angeles or New York City, they are conspicuous and jarring to many Wausau parents concerned about the future of the Hmong girls and about the effects on their own children. Marilyn Fox, an ESL teacher, was quoted in the local newspaper in 1992 lamenting pregnancies in her junior high. The article pointed out that such pregnancies conflict directly with Wisconsin law, which invalidates the consent to intercourse given by anyone under sixteen. And anyone sixteen or older who impregnates an underage girl is guilty of a felony. Fox and a colleague complained that none of the Hmong men or boys impregnating the girls were being prosecuted. But many communities find it difficult to impose American standards of behavior on people who claim membership in another culture.



At one point, Anderson sat down with some other teachers to take an informal look at the list of Hmong girls in high school. They calculated that 35 percent were pregnant or already had children. That, of course, didn't include the Hmong mothers who had dropped out of school. Few kids marry without having children immediately, and the Hmong culture of arranged marriages ensures that pregnant girls get married to some-



THAI YANG of the Wausau Oriental Food Store with a sack of rice.

body. Single-parent families, which some officials identify as a growing social problem among Wausau natives, are virtually nonexistent among the Hmong. The availability of infant formula may also contribute to the high fertility. "We've heard the Hmong in Laos have kids three years apart, because of breast-feeding. But here it is every one or one-and-a-half years, because women have moved to formula to be more modern," Kettner says. All the various factors add up to substantial population growth. The Wausau Daily Herald cited a striking statistic from the 1990 Census which illustrates the widely disparate fertility rates: 7.7 percent of European-American natives in Wausau were under the

age of six, compared with 30 percent of residents of Southeast Asian origin.

Both Weeks and Kettner see signs that the fertility rate is likely to come down. "The Hmong Association has a very positive view of family planning," Kettner says, "because it sees the economic need for women to work." Tou Yang, a young case manager for the county program that finds jobs for people on welfare, says that high fertility forces some people to stay on public assistance because a low-wage job won't replace lost welfare benefits, which can be sizable for large families. Total public assistance, that is aid to families with dependent children, food stamps, Medicaid, housing and energy subsidies for a Hmong family, can be worth more than \$20,000 a year, according to local officials. The use of welfare by immigrants in the county is 16 times as high as it is for natives.

Yang says that some of the Hmong talk about having small families, but their idea of small is generally four children. That is a bit higher than what the demographer Leon Bouvier, in his book *Fifty Million Californians?*, says is the Latino fertility rate, which is such an important contributor to that state's rapid population growth. At four, the population will still soar. A couple with four children has eight times as many great grandchildren as a couple with two children.

### Population and Taxes

In 1978, Wausau taxpayers were beginning to enjoy the fruits of the replacement-level fertility that Americans had adopted during the emergence of environmentalism and feminism early in the decade. Gone were the days of the Baby Boom and a perpetual need to build lots more schools, sewers and streets. Government could direct its energy toward maintaining and improving the quality of existing institutions. The student population had stabilized and even declined some.

But in 1994, the Wausau public school system is struggling to handle an increase of more than 1,500 students in less than a decade, nearly all of them children of immigrants. Although some schools were closed in the late 1970s, according to Berland Meyer, the assistant superintendent of schools, everything available is in use now, and classrooms are bursting at their proverbial seams. Taxpayers at first refused to get back on the building treadmill, rejecting tax increases in 1990. But they later approved one that led to the opening of a \$15 million middle school last fall. A \$4.5 million addition to the old middle school has just been completed as well. Meyer says that taxpayers still need to provide another \$3.5 to \$4.5 million for a new elemen-

tary school. Unfortunately, all this construction will handle only immediate population growth.

Wausau's experience, although relatively uncommon in the Midwest, is quite common among American communities of the 1980s and 1990s. The majority of U.S. population growth since 1970 has come from immigrants and their descendants. They will probably contribute two thirds of the growth during this decade and nearly all of it after the turn of the century if federal policies remain the same.

### False Promises

On a main road into downtown, an ALL-AMERICAN CITY sign reminds residents and visitors that Wausau rose to the challenge of assimilating new residents. It was doing a fine job in 1994, when it won the award commemorated by the sign.

Nearby is another sign. WELCOME HOME TO WAUSAU this one says, in the homespun way of small cities. It is more than a cliché to say that many natives no longer feel at home here, even as newcomers feel less than welcome. It is noteworthy that when natives told me longingly of a lost home, most seemed to refer not to the Wausau of 1978, before the refugee influx, but to the Wausau of 1984, when the influx was at a level that still constituted a delightful spice and community relations were harmonious.

John Robinson, who was the mayor of Wausau from 1988 to 1992 acknowledges that no government entity

east Asian evolution in Wausau was not a planned process," Robinson told me. "It was sort of a happening. Could the city have planned differently? Yes. But until there is a real need staring you in the face, you don't always reach out and address it." Robinson, who was a young city councilman from 1974 to 1981 and a member of the legislature from 1981 to 1988, says he isn't sure the city could have changed anything even if officials had spoken out against continuing federal refugee resettlement.

In 1984, Wausau's welcome of Southeast Asians was still bighearted enough, and its relations between cultures congenial enough, for Wausau to be designated an All-American City. Youa Her, an educated, articulate leader of the early wave of Hmong settlers, made one of Wausau's presentations to the national panel of judges. The thirty-four-year-old woman's description of Wausau's generosity reportedly left the panelists with tears in their eyes.

Nobody is exactly sure when and how everything started to go sour. But it was probably around the time of the award, certainly before Youa Her's death in January of 1986. Newspapers from those years reveal a community increasingly sobered by the realization that what had appeared to be a short-term, private charitable act had no apparent end and was starting to entail a lot of local public costs. Many natives resent that nobody ever leveled with them about costs or where trends would lead, and they feel they were misled by the local media and by federal, state and religious leaders.



*SOUTHEAST ASIANS may become the majority population within the present residents' lifetimes.*

at any stage of Wausau's transformation talked to residents about immigration rates or community planning for projecting future changes or deciding whether current trends should be allowed to continue. "The South-

During the late 1970s, residents had assumed that the congregations would cover any costs of caring for the refugees they were sponsoring, for it was their project. But the churches' financial commitment was actually rather shallow and short-lived, as Jean Russell, of the county welfare department, explains it. "At the beginning it was good Christian people wanting to do something for somebody. What they did was pick the refugees up at the airport and drive them to our office. The churches did help some, but the Hmong couldn't make it without social services." The Hmong are not unusual in this regard. A 1991 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services study indicated that nationwide about two-thirds of all Southeast Asian refugees who have arrived since 1986 remain on public assistance.

Wausau residents were assured, though, that they had no reason to worry about increased welfare costs. In 1979, Susan G. Levy, the coordinator for the state's resettlement assistance office, explained that local tax-

payers would not be adversely affected by private sponsors' generosity in inviting refugees, because the federal government would pick up the welfare tab.

As long as the flow was meager, Wausau's economy did fairly well at providing jobs to keep the immigrants off the welfare rolls. "REFUGEES ARE VERY ADAPTABLE, STATE OFFICIALS SAY" was one 1979 headline in the local paper. In June of 1980, the paper reported that 80 percent of the city's refugees became self-supporting within about three years: "WAUSAU'S 200 ASIAN REFUGEES DOING WELL, MORE SPONSORS NEEDED."

Promoters seemed certain that anything that was good and worked on one scale would be even better on a larger scale. Milton Lorinan, a state representative from Fort Atkinson, urged Wisconsin to speed the flow of refugees. "The Statue of Liberty symbolizes the historic support of this country for immigrant rights," he said. "Wisconsin as a state settled by immigrants proves that this dream works."

But by May of 1982, an important threshold of danger had been crossed. One headline read, "MOST REFUGEES NOW RECEIVING AFDC, RELIEF AID." The immigrant population in Wausau had doubled since 1980, and the nation was in recession. That spring, the federal government cut back its welfare assistance to new refugees. In the years that followed, federal and state governments, having enticed communities to take in immigrants, withdrew more and more support, leaving local taxpayers to bear most of the cost. "The federal government was a silent partner and then became a nonexistent partner," John Robinson laments.

Youa Her in late 1984 accepted the idea of economic limitations. "Anybody that calls," she said, "we'll tell them to think it over and not to be so hurried [to move to Wausau]." Choj Hawj, who was the elected leader of the Hmong Association at the time said, "When I look to the economy and the population of Wausau city, we don't want any more to come until things look up."

The former school board member Fred Prehn recalls that Youa Her was also concerned about proportionality and the effect of continued immigration on social relationships. He says she thanked city leaders for how well Wausau had provided for her people. But she warned them not to let the Hmong become more than five percent of the population. If their numbers went much higher, the natives might start to resent the immigrants, and hostility would begin to replace hospitality.

A month after Her's death, Robert Nakamaru, a college professor, addressed the proportionality issue at an event that was intended in part to soothe emerging eth-

nic tensions. "When there are just a handful, they are seen as quaint," Nakamaru said of the immigrants. "But there is a point where a minority reaches a critical mass in the perception of the majority. Wausau is getting close to that point." Since then the city's immigrant population has quadrupled.

### Who Is Responsible?

Nobody involved has the authority to stop the resettlement of refugees if it becomes harmful to a community. Once a week representatives of 12 voluntary agencies meet in New York and divide up some 2,000 refugees' names. The Administration has determined the number in consultation with Congress. The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service has determined the eligibility of each refugee, and the refugees wait in other countries until a voluntary agency picks up their names at the weekly meeting and begins the process of resettlement.

Federal officials say that refugees cannot be brought into the country unless a voluntary agency is willing to settle them. The agencies voluntarily sign an agreement with the U.S. State Department to resettle everybody the government wants to bring in. At the time of the annual agreement, could the agencies pledge smaller numbers than the government wants to bring in? "That is hypothetical; it never occurs," a State Department spokeswoman says. Actually, the voluntary agencies tend to lobby the government to bring in many more refugees nationwide than it chooses to each year. They receive compensation for each refugee.

Critics in Wausau say that the national Lutheran and Catholic refugee agencies should refuse to help place anybody else in Wausau. Back when problems got serious there, says Jack Griswold of the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, the LIRS stopped sending refugees who were not joining relatives. But 80 percent of refugees entering the United States today are joining relatives. And that, Griswold says, is why the LIRS continues to settle refugees in Wausau. "If we insisted on settling them somewhere else, then they'd be on the bus for Wausau the next day." The message to communities considering sponsoring refugees for the first time is that once they create the channel, voluntary agency and federal officials have no way to restrict the flow unless all the agencies refuse to sign the agreement.

One remedy might be to take the decisions away from the voluntary agencies and federal officials and put them in the hands of the local and regional entities that pay most of the bills. A variation might be for Congress to poll cities every year about how many im-

migrants and refugees they wanted and, then offer various incentives and controls to ensure that new arrivals settled in the cities doing the inviting. This would democratize the process, allowing communities to decide much of their own demographic fate.

Nothing in the recent past suggests that Congress, the president or federal bureaucrats take American communities into consideration at all when setting immigration numbers and policies. The U.S. Bureau of the Census has issued a report projecting that given current immigration patterns, another 134 million people will be added to the United States by 2050. Yet not a single congressional committee or presidential task force has shown any interest in considering whether the nation should become what the Census Bureau projects it will become given current policies. The outcome of those policies, however, has been more accidental than deliberate. Eugene McCarthy recently said that he and other Senate sponsors of the 1965 law that set mass immigration into motion never intended to open the floodgates. The quadrupling of annual immigration numbers has been an inadvertent and harmful result. Yet over the past two decades, the federal government has made no attempt to assess the environmental, social and economic consequences to communities of such rapid federally induced population growth.

### A Cooling-off Period

For 28 years, Billy Moy's One World Inn served Chinese food in a former train depot on an island in the Wisconsin River. Bridges connecting the western half of Wausau to its downtown on the east side route traffic past the depot. Before his retirement in 1993, Billy Moy, who arrived in Wausau as a Chinese refugee, told me the kind of colorful escape and success story that has evoked warmhearted responses from Americans. As a teenager, he fled the Chinese Communists in 1951 and arrived in Wausau in 1952. After years of hard work, perseverance, saving, and six years in the U.S. Army reserves, Moy bought the island depot and turned it into his restaurant in 1965.

"I didn't know a word of English when I arrived," Moy told me. In that he was like many of the refugees arriving today. But his reception and his freedom to move into the economic mainstream were far different. Why? One explanation may be that Moy had more education than the Hmong, whose people didn't even have a written language until recent decades. More important, he was a novelty in Wausau, rather than a member

of a mass of newcomers which natives may find threatening. "I started with first-grade English and high-school math," Moy said. "People were very nice, especially the teachers. Kids never harassed me. Never a bad word. I guess it was because I was the only one." Fred Prehn went to school with Moy's son during the 1960s and 1970s and recalls that the young Moy was the only minority student. That son now has an M.B.A. and is a business analyst in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

But today's economy has not offered as many opportunities to the large number of refugees of the eighties and nineties, Mary C. Roberts of the Marathon County Development Corporation told me. "The

Southeast Asian unemployment rate is high," Roberts said. "I think it is kind of irresponsible for churches to bring more in without at least the equivalent of one job pledged per family. Churches look at this from the humanitarian angles and not the practical."

Various Wausau residents told me they favor a cooling-off period before more refugees are resettled in their city. Such a period played a major role in creating the homogeneous Wausau they now consider the norm. After the turn of the century, immigration caused a social upheaval in Wausau. Back then, the Germans and the Yankees were distinct ethnic groups, neither of which



*UNTIL RECENTLY HOMOGENEOUS, Wausau now enroll students from Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Korea, Japan, Norway, Egypt, or the former East Germany.*



found strength in diversity. From 1880 to the start of the First World War, Germans streamed into Wausau, eventually overwhelming its New England Yankee founders. Jim Lorence, a local historian, says that the Germans became the predominant ethnic group around 1910. By the end of the decade, the immigrants had turned the once conservative Republican town into a Socialist powerhouse. After the November 1918 elections nearly every county office and both of the county's seats in the state assembly were filled by German-elected Socialists, Lorence says. Amid the political turmoil, natives felt like foreigners in their own hometown. Around the nation, this period was a time of sweatshops, worsening inner-city squalor and ethnic hatred that propelled the Ku Klux Klan to its greatest popularity ever. The KKK, however, never got a strong foothold in Wausau, Lorence says.

The federal government in 1924 responded to the problems in a way that had a profound effect on the future development of Wausau and the nation. Congress lowered immigrant admissions to a level more palatable to local labor markets, according to the labor economist Vernon Briggs, of Cornell University. In his recent book, *Mass Immigration and the National Interest*, he describes how the 1924 law gave the country 40 years to assimilate the new immigrants. The KKK's power receded nationally, and cultural wounds began to heal. Labor markets gradually tightened. That helped stimulate improvements in technology and productivity which supported the middle-class wage economy that Americans took for granted until the 1970s when the labor supply ballooned owing to renewed mass immigration, the entry of the Baby Boomers into the job market, and a radical increase in the number of married women in the workplace. Since then, wages have declined and disparities of wealth have widened.

After publishing his book, Briggs called for a moratorium on most immigration until the federal government figures out how to tie the immigration rate to the

national interest. Among others independently urging a temporary halt to immigration are the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR); the National Hispanic Alliance; an Orange County, California grand jury; the University of California ecology professor Garrett Hardin; Harold Gilliam, the environment columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle*; and the environmental group Population-Environment Balance. A 1992 Roper poll commissioned by FAIR found that a majority of Americans support the idea of a moratorium. It and other polls have found that a majority of every substantial ethnic group in the United States desires reduced immigration.

Congress began to take part in the discussion about a cooling-off period in late 1993, when Senator Harry Reid and Representative James Bilbray, both Democrats from Nevada, introduced comprehensive immigration-reform bills that would cut the number of legal immigrants by roughly two thirds, to 300,000 and 350,000 a year. In February 1994, Representative Bob Stump, an Arizona Republican, introduced a bill that

would reduce immigration even further. The last time Congress cut the flow of immigrants, in the 1920s, Wausau began to experience social healing, Jim Lorence says. Though it took another 30 years for the major divisions between the German immigrants and the native Yankees to disappear, the disparate ethnic groups slowly began to achieve a unified and harmonious culture which is the paradigm of a recoverable paradise.



PRAYERS at First Hmong Missionary Alliance Church.

gog to achieve a unified and harmonious culture which is the paradigm of a recoverable paradise.



Roy Beck is the Washington editor of the journal *The Social Contract*. His latest book is *Re-Charting America's Future: Responses to Arguments Against Stabilizing U.S. Population and Limiting Immigration*.

# Education in Baltimore

## *Interview with Mayor Kurt Schmoke*

Most leaders in school reform are well-educated and deeply committed to the notions that young people need to be challenged academically and need to be in schools in which staff members make critical decisions and are held accountable for them. This is certainly the case with such noted reformers as TheodoreSizer, John Goodlad and Deborah Meier. However, it is not necessarily the case with elected officials, who may not have education at the top of their agenda, who may focus quite narrowly on what schools should be like or who may not have had a sterling education themselves.

Mayor Kurt Schmoke, who was elected to his third term as Baltimore's chief executive in November 1995, has made education his top priority. He strongly supports serious and autonomous schools, insists on accountability and has personal educational credentials at least equal to those of the President of the United States: an undergraduate degree from Yale University, a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford and a law degree from Harvard.

When he took office in 1987, Mayor Schmoke recognized that in Baltimore there was a "crisis in our public schools," and he moved with enthusiasm and resolve first to save the system from further deterioration and then to open it to responsible reform.

Since Schmoke became mayor — and particularly since Walter Amprey became the superintendent of schools four years ago — educational innovations in Baltimore have included privatizing some schools, adopting a private-school curriculum in one school, bringing in a for-profit company to tutor students in need of such services and moving more and more responsibility from the central office to the individual school. "Baltimore is now viewed as a testing place for major innovations in privatization and other strategies to turn around urban schools," the Mayor states proudly.

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This concern and respect for education grew out of his own experiences as a boy and young man.

High standards and strong encouragement run like a leitmotif through Kurt Schmoke's formative years. Born in Baltimore on December 1, 1949, Schmoke grew up as an only child of college-educated parents. "Dad went to Morehouse College, and my mother went to Spelman and eventually graduated from Morgan State University." His parents separated when Schmoke was 10 and were divorced when he was 12. But both parents remained close to him, encouraged him strongly in his studies, emphasized college and let him know that their expectations were high.

From his early school years, a sixth-grade teacher named Sarah Taylor stands out in Schmoke's memory. "It was the year of the Kennedy/Nixon election, so we spent a lot of time debating issues. She encouraged me to go to a junior high [intermediate] school with a very strong academic program. She also made it clear that she wouldn't accept mediocre performance, and she felt I could achieve more than I thought."

The excellent junior high program led to acceptance into an "advanced academic program at the Baltimore City College High [secondary] School," where Schmoke played football and lacrosse "as well as studied from time to time." Actually, he studied a good deal and came under the influence of other encouraging teachers, such as John Pentz, who gave him "the sense that I was brighter than I thought I was."

While an adolescent, Schmoke had another important experience as a member of a group called the Lancers Boys Club, founded by a local circuit judge named Robert Hammerman. This club encouraged bright youngsters to get involved in a wide range of activities. "We would meet every week. The club had 80 young men in it, representing a real cross-section of the city. We would have speakers, some nationally recognized, others local folks, talking about a wide variety of issues, and that just opened the world to us."

Mayor Schmoke reflects that throughout the years of his public education, he had "quite a support network": two involved and supportive parents, teachers who cared about him, the Lancers Boys Club and the minister of his church, Marion Bascom, "who encouraged all of the students in the church to think about higher education." It is no wonder that he has made education in all of its forms — schools, libraries, support groups and literacy programs — his chief priority. Indeed, he notes with pride that he has "overseen the passage of the largest increases ever in the city's education budget." The Mayor would like his academic experience to become common for young black men, rather than the exception that it was for him. But he would also like the curriculum to include more material to bolster the self-esteem of an African-American adolescent. Unfortunately, despite a growing and eventually predominantly black student body, the Baltimore public schools in the 1950s and 1960s did not emphasize African-American studies or even recognize such an occasion as Negro History Week.

The Mayor's years at Yale were a time of great turbulence because of the Vietnam War, but, just as significant for Schmoke, "they were a time when black or African-American studies were becoming important on campuses other than historically black colleges." This highly motivated African American steeped himself in the history of his people, while also taking a broad range of courses to prepare himself for graduate school. As early as his freshman year, Schmoke was "thinking of law school and the possibility of a Rhodes scholarship and the opportunities the Rhodes provided for travel and getting into other cultures."

After completing his education in 1976, the young attorney worked briefly in private practice, joined the administration of President Jimmy Carter as a member of the domestic policy staff, and then returned to Baltimore in 1978 as an assistant United States attorney. In November 1982, Kurt Schmoke was elected state's attorney for Baltimore City, a job he held until he was elected mayor on November 3, 1987.

During his tenure as assistant U.S. attorney and particularly during the years as state's attorney, he saw more clearly the importance of education. "The thing that struck me as state's attorney is that we didn't prosecute that many college graduates. In fact, we didn't prosecute that many high school graduates. It was the kids who didn't finish school, who had academic problems or undetected problems, that we prosecuted," Schmoke says. "That experience reinforced for me the importance of good education. I set as a goal on becoming

mayor that I wanted Baltimore to become known as 'The City That Reads.'"

In the Baltimore political system, unlike the system in New York and several other large cities, the Mayor has ample opportunity to influence the education system. Under the city charter, the mayor appoints all nine members of the board of education. "By law, the school board selects the superintendent, but obviously the members consult with me — but that's an informal relationship," Schmoke says. The Mayor works very closely with Superintendent Amprey. They both acknowledge that many of the schools were not meeting the personal or academic needs of youngsters and that "many of Baltimore's public schools failed to meet state standards in almost every category." They also recognized that the economy in Baltimore and in the nation had changed quite dramatically. "Where 20 years ago, the largest private employer in Baltimore was a steel company, today the largest private employers are the university and the medical system," says the Mayor. Changing the system in a city of 736,000 people, with 178 schools and 113,000 students, the majority of whom live in disadvantaged neighborhoods, was going to be a daunting task.

After some initial attempts at reforming the district using only the existing techniques and resources, the Mayor, the Superintendent and the school board decided to try more radical methods and ideas. Bringing in private firms, adopting the curriculum of a highly successful private school and turning much of the decision-making power over to the schools have yielded some good results, but the Mayor says quite candidly, "While the good news has outweighed the bad news, there have been real bumps along the way."

Perhaps the most unqualified success has been the Calvert-Barclay experiment. The public Barclay School adopted the curriculum of the private Calvert School. The local Abell Foundation has paid the cost of maintaining one Calvert School teacher on site at Barclay to train the teachers and to make sure the curriculum is followed. "At the end of three years, children at Barclay showed major improvements in achievement and attendance, with particular improvements in reading and writing skills," Schmoke reports. The fact that this happened in one of the most disadvantaged neighborhoods in Baltimore adds to the impressiveness of the achievement.

The measurable success of this program in one elementary school has meant that the program will be expanded to other Baltimore elementary schools and will use Baltimore public school teachers as trainers as soon as they are ready. This program has the advan-

tages of yielding discernible results in just three years, placing Baltimore's teachers and principals at its center, and costing relatively little compared to most other educational experiments. In addition, the curricular emphasis on basic skills benefits youngsters who are deficient in such areas as reading, writing and mathematics, yet are young enough to catch up and go on to richer forms of instruction.

Another success has been the Dunbar Project, an effort to form alliances among public schools, city agencies and community groups in order to provide health-care information, conflict mediation, family services and recreational programs to desperately poor areas. To get at some previously intractable learning problems, the city in 1993 entered into a contract with Sylvan Learning Systems, a private firm, "to provide remedial services in reading and math at six of our schools. Sylvan places emphasis on computer technology and a three-to-one student/teacher ratio," according to Schmoke. This program has not yet been formally evaluated, but early indications are that test scores have improved. If these results hold up, the Sylvan program will be expanded. Sylvan's contract includes a performance guarantee, so its tutoring programs can be evaluated against the promise made in the contract, but the project will also be measured against the success of the Calvert-Barclay experiment, which is rapidly becoming the template for achievement in Baltimore's elementary schools.

To keep the Mayor's promise to transfer power back to the schools and the neighborhoods, he and his superintendent have instituted the "Enterprise School" concept. Each Enterprise School has its own "board," called a School Improvement Team (SIT), comprising parents, other residents from the neighborhood, the neighborhood representative from the school's partner (a business or nonprofit agency), the principal and some teachers. The principal chairs this group, which sets education policy in the school and makes many of the important educational decisions that affect school life for the staff and students. "The Enterprise concept requires having a very strong manager, the principal, in each school if it's going to work well," Schmoke says. The principals who lead are doing well; those who are autocratic or weak are not having much success.

The Enterprise system allows local leadership to develop programs structured to the precise needs of individual schools and the talents of their staff members. Under this concept, a SIT could even contract out for certain services without going through the central office bureaucracy. In fact, the central office has been reduced in size to make it the second most economical

in the state of Maryland and, as the reduction in both size and power continues, the importance of local school authority will increase.

Under the Enterprise system, the school is held accountable for the outcomes that the staff and the SIT have devised. It is no longer possible to blame the central office. "Most people send their children to a school rather than a school system, and they ought to be able to find out what's going on there and hold people accountable at the school level," Schmoke maintains.

The idea of forming partnerships with businesses has been an important component of the Enterprise concept. More than 300 corporations and agencies are now working with Baltimore schools, and the synergy has been impressive. One partner, RESCO, was of great help when there was a fire in the school it had chosen as a partner. Other companies, such as W. R. Grace, the University of Maryland Medical System, AT&T, and SCM Chemicals, have provided everything from tutoring to equipment and apprenticeships, not to mention the undergirding spirit of the program's motto, "This is one city." There is no doubt but that the "enterprising" of schools will continue until all the schools in the city are included.

Without question, the most controversial new program has been the contract with Education Alternatives, Inc. (EAI), a for-profit company, to manage nine of the city's schools. EAI has agreed to improve student attendance and achievement within the average per-pupil cost for the city and within five years. EAI places an instructional intern in every classroom, installs computers, uses individualized techniques, conducts staff development, repairs the buildings and streamlines the budgeting process. It is not clear that EAI is achieving academic results, and the program has run into trouble with the teacher union.

No one seriously disputes the nonacademic value of EAI. "The buildings look more inviting, the educational environment has improved because there are more computers, the buildings are cleaner, the food service is better and all the support services are running more efficiently," says the Mayor. However, the scores in math and reading may not have moved much at all. EAI says that math scores are up a bit and that reading scores have stabilized, but the teacher union, which did its own assessment, disagrees. "We are waiting for the results of a third-party evaluation," Schmoke says. In light of the noteworthy results of the Calvert-Barclay experiment, if the third-party assessment does not reveal significant improvement in EAI-run schools, the city might decide not to renew the contract.



The fact that the teacher union is upset and has brought a lawsuit over a perceived contractual violation plays some role in EAI's probationary status, but the Mayor is committed to continuing any program that works. He emphasizes that the union is generally a force for good in Baltimore and that it was union leaders, in fact, who initially brought EAI to his attention.

"Our teacher union has really been in the forefront of education reform. The union talked about the need for systemic change, the need for teachers to become more involved. It argued that teachers should be the ones most responsible for the academic mission, so it's not as though we have a recalcitrant union," Schmoke says. "What happened was that, when EAI came in, it implemented a model that excluded the paraprofessionals from work with the students, and the paraprofessionals in Baltimore are a very strong part of the union. The union has become increasingly hostile to the program. The teachers who are in the nine schools are generally supportive of it."

While the Mayor's enthusiasm "to get more resources into the schools, to encourage innovation and to demand more accountability" remains undiminished, he is impatient with programs that do not yield results in three years. "If you're going to have private management, [the managers] have to show some results beyond cleaner schools."

The several innovative programs have directly affected only a minority of Baltimore's schools. However, shaking up the bureaucracy, introducing competition into the schools, moving resources back to the control of principals and demanding more accountability have had a salutary effect on the entire system. In the past three years, both attendance and academic performance have improved in Baltimore, moving up at least one percent each year — a measurable gain and one that begins to be impressive as it is sustained. Since 1989, 27 percent more students have taken the Scholastic Aptitude Test [an examination usually required for college admission], and 69 percent more young people have applied for admission to college.

There are many ways to evaluate the progress of a large and complex school system, and the Mayor is acutely aware of the limitations of standardized testing. While there is some controversy over just how much math and reading scores have moved in Baltimore, there is little question about better teacher morale in many of the schools or about such other effects as increased use of libraries, greater use of computers or renewed attention to staff development for teachers and principals. However, the legislature in Maryland

responds primarily to suburban districts, and the reaction to "soft" evidence is usually "That's nice, but compared to my district, how are you doing?"

Although the Mayor and his educational staff will continue to operate on all fronts and will seek measures of success that are ethnographic, impressionistic and indirect, the Mayor understands the central importance of standardized measures. He must appeal to the federal and state governments as well as to various granting agencies for resources. "In a perfect world, I'd rather have broader criteria for evaluation, particularly when you're comparing an urban system with two-thirds of its children below the poverty line to a wealthier system in another Maryland county where there are mostly middle-class families. There's a basic unfairness in it," he contends, "but I have to deal with the reality that the funding sources want measurable results."

Kurt Schmoke has a great deal on his plate in Baltimore, from concern about jobs and housing to fighting crime and developing more minority business opportunities, and dozens of other issues. Yet, education is always at the top of his agenda. When I asked him to talk about his hopes and dreams for Baltimore's schools and to comment on why education is so important to him, the Mayor paused, looked away for a moment, and then delivered an impassioned speech.

"I'm going to reduce my class sizes, so I can have a more reasonable teacher/pupil ratio. I'm going to reduce the size of the central office, so the office is a support to the school system, not a domineering force in the day-to-day lives of our schools. I'm going to make sure that our children are exposed to computers and technology at the earliest possible age, and I'm also going to expand our health services and day-care programs in the schools. My buildings are now going to be open from 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., and they will be the pivotal institutions in the neighborhood.

"The school is the place where we as the government have the greatest opportunity of impacting the lives of young people and making a difference in the quality of life for our city in the future. I think the things that have been done by our superintendent, Walter Amprey, have benefited not only the school system but this city."



Mark F. Goldberg recently retired as a public school administrator and is now an education writer and consultant who lives in East Setauket, New York.

# Shopping Centers, Shopping Malls

*Witold Rybczynski*

Every two or three weeks I go to the mall, leaving my car in the large lot. Inside the mall the atmosphere is enlivened by families eating lunch in the food court, excited teenagers swarming at the video arcade, young parents trailing children on the way to the movie theater. I am encouraged by this scene. People are walking, they are rubbing shoulders, they are in a shared space.

Among urban sophisticates, references to malls are invariably accompanied by a smirk or a sigh, but for most Americans, shopping malls are an accepted part of everyday life, just like freeway commuting, fast food, garage sales and backyard barbecues. Like these institutions, malls are resolutely middlebrow. Although there are plenty of upscale malls that cater to the rich, the classic mall is not an effete oasis of luxury — nor is it the utilitarian strip of the poor neighborhood. It's the so-called regional mall, generally defined as having more than 37,000 square meters of retail space and at least one department store — the equivalent of a fair-sized downtown shopping area. According to the National Research Bureau, at the end of 1992, the United States had 38,966 shopping centers, of which 1,835 were large regional malls.

Critics of shopping malls talk about the "mall of America" as if it were a sudden phenomenon, but it has taken almost a hundred years for the mall to become a feature of both the urban and the suburban landscape. Harvey Rabinowitz, who teaches in the school of architecture and urban planning of the University of Wisconsin, in Milwaukee, cites the shopping mall in explaining how changes often occur in building. According to Rabinowitz, in free-market societies new ideas about how to organize the urban environment are frequently introduced not by city planners or architects but by individual businessmen in the private sector. If

these ideas are popular with the public, they become what he calls exemplary models and go on to be widely imitated. In the past, such urban models have included the English housing terrace, popularized in the 18th



*SHOPPING MALL in the Washington, D.C., area. The retail marketplace will undergo many changes in the next 10 to 20 years, shaped by changing consumer attitudes and new communications technologies.*

century; the department store, originated by Parisian entrepreneurs in the 1860s and spread throughout Europe and America after millions of foreigners visited Paris for the great exhibitions of the late 1800s; and the

Reprinted from *The Atlantic Monthly*. Copyright © 1993 Witold Rybczynski.

high-rise business district. This last model began to appear in the 1880s in Chicago, the product of technological invention (steel-frame construction, the elevator), land speculation and the desire for architectural splendor. So powerful was the image of the downtown skyline that it was quickly reproduced across America and finally around the world.

Exemplary models originate in response to economic and social forces in the marketplace, but their success is also due to refinement and modification during their later evolution. The history of the shopping mall is replete with experimentation and a host of small inventions. The shopping cart, for example, introduced in the 1930s, greatly facilitated the operation of supermarkets, which were a prominent feature of early shopping centers. The eating area is the convivial focus of many contemporary malls; its successful introduction in the early 1970s was a milestone of shopping-center design.

The shopping center emerged in the early 1900s in the suburbs that encircled American cities. Suburbs of the time tended to be chiefly residential and to depend on the traditional city centers for shopping. The first suburban commercial centers had three identifiable features: they consisted of a number of stores built and leased by a single developer; they were usually situated at an important intersection; and they provided plenty of free, off-street parking. These "shopping villages" consciously recalled small-town shopping districts, both in their architecture, which was carefully traditional, and in their layout, which integrated them into the surrounding neighborhood (the stores faced the street and the parking lots were usually in the rear).

The Farmers Market shopping villages in California were the 1930s equivalents of today's discount warehouses, and to keep prices low they were built on cheap land at the edges of cities; since most people drove to go shopping, the peripheral location was not an inconvenience. This did not escape the attention of developers, who understood that with almost universal car ownership the pool of potential customers for any single shopping center — those who lived within a five-minute drive, say, rather than within a five-minute walk — had grown very large.

The spread of shopping centers was slowed by the Depression and World War II. According to Kenneth T. Jackson, a Columbia University professor and author of *Crabgrass Frontier* (1985), a history of American suburbanization, in 1946 there were still only eight shopping centers in the entire United States. What was needed was an exemplary model, and it arrived in the

form of the regional shopping center. It is generally agreed that the first such shopping center was Northgate, which opened on the outskirts of Seattle in 1950. The architect devised a long, open-air pedestrian way that was a sort of carless street, lined with a department store and a number of smaller stores. The idea was that the



*WHITE FLINT MALL in Rockville, Maryland, a suburb of Washington, D.C. America's suburbs — not its central cities — are the areas of greatest expansion and development today.*

department store, called an anchor, would attract customers, who would then walk — and shop — along the way.

The convenience of "one-stop shopping" appealed to many people, and during the 1950s, the construction of shopping centers, in tandem with the expansion of suburbs, began in earnest. The total went from about 100 centers nationwide in 1950 to about 3,700 a decade later. Not only were there more centers but they were also bigger. One of the largest was Northland, in Detroit, which opened in 1954 and provided nearly 100,000 square meters of rentable space and parking for 7,400 cars. The area around the center was planned to ac-

commodate a host of nonretail buildings, including offices, research laboratories, apartments, a hospital and a hotel. This made Northland probably the first example of what *Washington Post* writer Joel Garreau later called an "edge city," in his 1992 book of that name.

The rapid proliferation of shopping centers was not just a function of suburban growth. It also signified a change in the shopping habits of Americans. These new shopping places were competing directly with the traditional downtown shopping district, and in most cases they were winning. According to professors of urban studies Bernard Frieden and Lynne Sagalyn, from 1948 to 1954, in the midst of a nationwide economic boom, the downtown share of retailing fell by one-fourth in 13 of the largest metropolitan areas, and the profit margins of downtown department stores sank lower than they had been even in the Depression.

In 1960, futurist Buckminster Fuller proposed the construction of a huge dome that would cover a 50-block area in midtown Manhattan. Fuller pointed out that such a dome would prevent snow and rain from falling on the protected area, and would control the quality of the air. Most people dismissed the outlandish idea — like many of Fuller's inventions, it was part sincere, part publicity stunt. Perhaps they shouldn't have.

Indeed, Fuller's vision of urban life taking place in an artificially controlled environment had been realized several years before. In 1956, a shopping center that would become the exemplary model for the next three decades opened in Edina, a suburb of Minneapolis. Southdale (the early centers all seem to have been named after compass points) was not particularly large, and it followed the usual pattern of buildings surrounded by parking lots. But it included a striking innovation: the public walking areas were not outdoors but indoors, air-conditioned in the summer and heated in the winter. The architect, Victor Gruen, a transplanted Viennese and prolific designer of shopping centers (he had been the architect of Northland), cited the glass-roofed, 19th-century gallerias of Milan and Naples as his inspiration, even if the bland, modernistic interior of Southdale did not much resemble its Italian antecedents.

Indoor shopping streets are attractive anywhere the climate is marked by hot, humid summers or harsh winters or both, and enclosed shopping malls began to appear in the cold Midwest and Northeast, in the steamy South and Southwest, in hot southern California, and in the wet Northwest — that is, everywhere. From 1960 to 1970, more than 8,000 new shopping centers opened

in the United States — twice as many as in the previous decade. From 1970 to 1990, about 25,000 were built.

The great majority of the regional centers followed the example of Southdale and provided enclosed walking areas. To optimize this extra investment, the new centers were built on two or even three levels (this idea, too, had been introduced at Southdale), which meant that walking distances were reduced and shopping centers could house even more stores. During the 1980s, malls got even larger and were not only a suburban phenomenon. They became a key ingredient of the urban revitalization that was taking place. Many large and mid-sized cities were sites of downtown malls. In Boston, Baltimore and New York City, the Rouse Company, a major shopping-center developer, built so-called festival marketplaces, which were really shopping malls in waterfront settings — often shoehorned into rehabilitated dockside buildings.

The Galleria, in Houston, whose centerpiece was a year-round ice-skating rink, added yet another ingredient to the exemplary model. The developer incorporated a variety of nonretail uses — not in separate buildings, as had been done before, but within the mall. The lobbies of a hotel and office buildings, for example, could be entered directly from the enclosed space. This was not as dramatic as roofing over public spaces, but its effect on the environment was just as great. Both developers and the public began to think of malls not merely as shopping conveniences but as urban places in which someone could enjoy spending several hours. Although retail functions continued to dominate, mall developers added health clubs, banks, brokerage houses and medical centers. It has become increasingly common for malls to fulfill civic functions with public libraries (Tucson, Arizona), a city-hall branch (Everett, Washington) and federal (U.S. Government) and state offices. The Sports Museum of New England, in East Cambridge, Massachusetts, is housed in a mall, and so is a children's museum in Ogden, Utah. Just as non-commercial spaces are showing up in shopping malls, malls are popping up in unexpected places: a new airport in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, includes a mall with more than 100 stores, three food courts and a chiropractor. The appearance of noncommercial tenants in shopping malls has made them even more like traditional downtowns, but it has also raised the issue of public access. Are malls private property, as many mall owners have maintained, or have they become, as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has argued, public places that should be obliged to observe the principles of free speech — to allow unlimited access to com-



munity groups, including petitioners and political demonstrators? Understandably, mall owners have not been keen on the idea of having abortion groups, for instance, arguing their cases in the food court. Such altercations are just the sort of thing that mall shoppers want to get away from. It is disingenuous, however, for developers to argue that they are merely merchants. They have become city builders, and as such should be prepared to take the bad — or at least the awkward — with the good.

If large regional malls want to be a part of the community and attract a broad cross section of the population, it is in their interest to allow access to local non-profit groups. Although not legally required to do so, a small number of mall owners are beginning to do exactly that. The Rouse Company provides a booth for community activities in its mall in Columbia, Maryland, and encourages its property managers elsewhere to make similar accommodations; so does the Edward J. DeBartolo Corporation, of Youngstown, Ohio, the nation's largest shopping-center developer and manager.

Another reason that mall owners may eventually support the idea of public use is that California's broader access requirements have proved to be neither troublesome nor expensive, despite the fears of some developers. In 1991, the Hahn Company, which owns and operates 30 malls in California, signed an agreement with the ACLU which permits leafleting and canvassing in designated locations in most of its malls. Robert L. Sorensen, vice-president of Hahn, told *Shopping Centers Today*, an industry monthly: "We haven't seen expenses rise because of it, and I don't think it's costing us shoppers."

Work and play, shopping and recreation, community promotion and public protest — the mall now houses more and more of the activities of the traditional downtown, including that newest of urban industries, tourism. With its skating rink and glass-roofed promenade, Houston's Galleria quickly became a tourist attraction. The builders of the West Edmonton Mall in Alberta, Canada, provided not only a skating rink but also an amusement park, an aviary, a dolphin pool, an artificial lagoon with a submarine ride, a floating replica of Columbus's *Santa Maria* and the world's largest indoor water park, complete with an artificial beach and rolling surf — all calculated to draw vacationers in addition to shoppers.

"We expect that a third of our visitors will be tourists coming from more than 250 kilometers away," says Michael Dorsey, a spokesman for the Mall of America, the recently opened megamall in Bloomington, Minne-

sota, outside Minneapolis. The Mall of America expects to attract an average of about 100,000 people a day when it is fully operational. Indeed, according to the owners, the mall is expected to draw more visitors than Disney World or the Grand Canyon.

The Mall of America is extremely large — four department stores, about 360 specialty stores to date, more than 40 restaurants and food outlets — but the three-level retail area is not particularly remarkable, only bigger than most. What is unusual is the fact that the stores are grouped around a huge glass-roofed courtyard containing an amusement park with 23 rides, two theaters and dozens of smaller attractions. At night the sparkling lights, hurdy-gurdy music of the merry-go-round, excited children and screams of the riders on the roller coaster that races overhead recall the gaiety of a carnival midway at a county fair.

The layout of the Mall of America is reminiscent of what was probably the world's first building to combine shopping and recreation — the 18th-century incarnation of the Palais Royal, in Paris. In its own homespun way, the Mall of America too aspires to be a "place for fun in your life," as its theme song puts it. This ambition is evident in the nightclub area, which shares the fourth level of the mall with a 14-screen movie complex that includes a 4,000-seat theater. Although the stores in the mall close at 10 o'clock each night, the nightclubs stay open until one in the morning. Combine neon, nighttime, loud music and alcohol, and the resulting atmosphere is not what one usually associates with shopping malls.

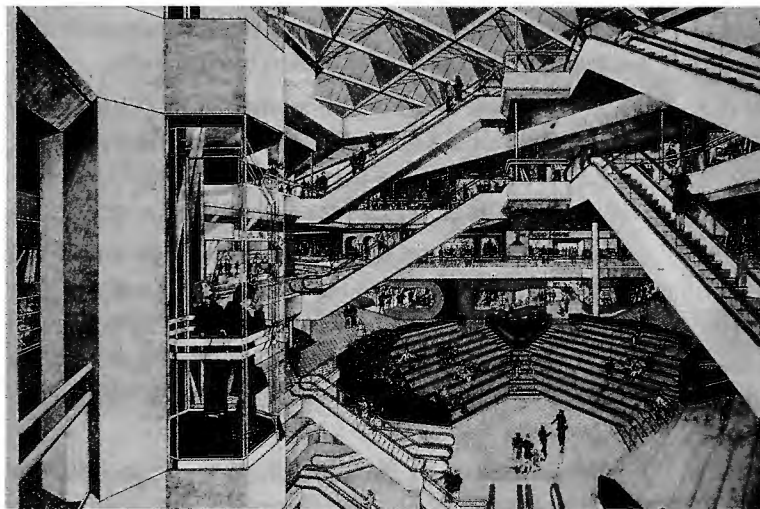
Not everyone agrees that malls could become a new version of the old Main Street. Kenneth Jackson observes in *Crabgrass Frontier* that, because they are so self-contained and so uniform, shopping malls in fact represent almost the opposite of downtown areas. "They cater exclusively to middle-class tastes and contain no litter, no rain and no excessive heat or cold," he notes.

Actually, large malls do cater to a variety of tastes — they have to. The Mall of America has the usual array of fast-food outlets arranged around two food courts, several "family" restaurants, inexpensive steakhouses, several mainstream Italian eateries and two upscale restaurants. Admittedly, that is less than could be found in a comparable area of New York City, but it does represent greater diversity than one would encounter in most small cities. There are also both high-priced and discount shops.

Downtown areas themselves are made up of open as well as enclosed public spaces, and most developers, in their rush to enclose malls completely, may have missed

an important opportunity to provide a greater diversity of experience. At least one major mall offers an alternative exemplary model: Horton Plaza, opened in downtown San Diego in 1985. The architect, Jon Jerde, turned the tables on the now-traditional enclosed mall and put all the public areas outdoors. Horton Plaza is unorthodox in other ways: it is a *tour de force* that includes bits and pieces of almost every stylistic period in history -- Egyptian, Renaissance, Moorish, Art Deco, Victorian, Mediterranean. The result resembles a movie studio landscape. It is, needless to say, a popular success.

Horton Plaza is in southern California, but the example of waterfront festival marketplaces like Boston's Faneuil Hall and Baltimore's Harborplace demonstrates



**THE FUTURE SHOPPING CENTER** — *what will it look like? The Taubman company, a major developer, is betting on a high-rise concept. As more people move into cities and land costs rise, the vertical shopping center may be the answer.*

that the use of outdoor spaces is a good idea. It makes shopping malls more stimulating, more pleasurable and more traditionally urban.

One thing that is required to make malls more truly urban is the introduction of some form of permanent housing, which would provide a resident population in addition to shoppers. Housing for the elderly would seem particularly appropriate, not only because of the proximity to shops and indoor promenades but also because malls in many cities are well served by mass transportation.

In the past, developers resisted the use of malls for noncommercial purposes, including housing. Today, this has changed. Increasingly, large urban malls are being built with the co-sponsorship of city governments. In half of the 39 downtown shopping-mall projects stud-

ied by Frieden and Sagalyn, the public share was between 20 and 50 percent of total development cost. As cities become active partners in mall development, social considerations come into play. Cities have already negotiated with mall developers for mass-transit facilities and civic spaces such as theaters. Housing should be next.

The chief obstacle to the further socializing of the shopping mall may be what developers call the power center. It is usually moderate in size; instead of an assortment of small shops anchored by a department store, it includes only two or three deep-discount, or "category-killer," stores with large inventories and low prices. But bargains are not the only attraction. These streamlined centers reflect the desire of many consumers to devote less time to shopping. According to Keith Foxe, of the International Council of Shopping Centers, the average visitor to a power center spends only 45 to 50 minutes there, as compared with an average of three hours in a regional mall.

The same desire accounts for the popularity of huge general-merchandise warehouses, which resemble department stores with shopping carts and are designed to shorten, not prolong, shopping time. Not surprisingly, power centers and discount warehouses, unlike malls, don't have extensive public spaces for strolling. Indeed, in many, the only public domain is the parking lot. Although some power centers include nonretail businesses, such as day-care centers, they do not seem likely to develop the same semipublic character as the regional mall, or at least not soon.

The power center is a poor substitute for the shopping mall, which is poised to become a real urban place. The mall is beginning to integrate a variety of commercial and noncommercial functions, to deal with the thorny issue of public access, and to find an architectural balance between enclosed and open public space. In many cases, part-public ownership is also changing its character. And it remains, for many Americans, the chief place to meet fellow citizens in a noncombative environment — not behind the wheel of a car but on foot, malling about.

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# Franchising: An American Phenomenon

**Lester David**

The franchise system has become one of the most remarkable, and successful, ways of doing business in the 20th century.

A uniquely American concept, originated and developed in the United States, this method of selling goods and services has become a powerful force in the nation's economy. As Andrew Kostecka, franchise specialist for the U.S. Department of Commerce, an executive department of the U.S. Government, says, "Franchising is one of the hottest subjects in the business world today."

What, exactly, is a franchise? How, specifically, does the system work?

Franchising is nothing more or less than a way of doing business. For example, an entrepreneur may create a product or devise an uncommon type of service, then launch an enterprise to sell it to the public.

It may fail, of course, as many do. But if it proves successful, the originator may choose to offer permissions — or franchises — to other independent individuals.

The *franchisee*, the one who wants to market the product or service, enters into an agreement with the *franchisor* under which he or she agrees to pay a fee and a percentage of the profits, or royalty, to the parent business.

When the contracts are signed, the new businessman or businesswoman is then free to manage and direct the enterprise thus obtained, using the trade name of the franchisor.

But — and this is crucial to understand — the new business person is not cut off to sink or swim once license is obtained. An intimate business relationship is maintained between the franchisor and franchisee under which the latter receives a wealth of advice, counsel and direct assistance if needed.

The growth of the technique has been truly phenomenal. By the time you finish reading this article, two

more such businesses will have opened in America. For, according to the International Franchise Association (IFA), a trade organization for the industry headquartered in Washington, D.C., a new franchise opens every six and one-half minutes of each business day.

The method currently accounts for one-third of all retail sales in the United States. At the start of 1994, the IFA reports, there were more than 600,000 such establishments employing some eight million people.

Originally looked upon as something of an oddity, the method has won over the skeptics. Says the highly regarded publication *Business America*, "It is viewed as a dynamic, growing business activity, increasingly accepted and respected by the public, all levels of government and the business community."

Organizations of franchisors, along with business analysts, are predicting that this method of doing business will lead all other segments of the American economy in the recovery now under way from the long recession.

Although homegrown, it is not confined to the United States. Indeed, one of the distinctive features of franchising is that it is being exported aggressively to countries all over the world. Twirl a globe on its axis and you will find American franchise companies operating in most major countries. Here is just a short list:

Australia, Belgium, Hong Kong, Mexico, The Netherlands, Hungary, Japan, Nigeria, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and Russia, as well as most nations of Latin America. The method also has traveled to some of the emerging nations of the Third World.

International markets for franchises are expected to increase because rising disposable incomes in many countries are creating growing demands for consumer goods and services.

"The population in many foreign countries is young, and they like to try new products and concepts," says *Business America*. "In addition, more and more women

everywhere are going to work. This not only increases the family's disposable income, which is good for franchisors in the service and consumer products business, but it also reduces the amount of time spent in the kitchen and increases the demand for food purchased away from home."

One of the most widespread misconceptions about franchise businesses is that they are confined to fast-food restaurants such as McDonald's, Burger King, KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken), Pizza Hut and other familiar outlets.

Hardly.

You may be surprised to learn that almost 100 different types of businesses are being franchised, and the number is increasing constantly.

Among them are such diverse enterprises as pet-sitting services and agencies that buy and sell houses, exercise studios and computer classes for children and adults, travel agencies and establishments that clean homes, offices and factories.

Wigs are being sold, tools and equipment rented, soft drinks bottled, cars leased, lawns tended and hotels and inns run under franchise agreements. Even a dating service now has outlets in the United States and Mexico, Canada, Japan, Germany, France, Australia and Taiwan.

The franchise system offers a number of important advantages over starting a business from scratch:

- Entrepreneur-owners can reap the benefit of the franchisor's methods of doing business that have proven to be successful.

- The franchisee will be using a business name which in many cases is widely known to the public. Obviously, this is a giant step ahead of any business that must start from scratch to build its own name and reputation.

- It follows, then, that franchising enables a small businessperson to compete effectively against large corporations that are engaged in competitive enterprises.

- The franchisor often provides some financing along with initial advice and counsel in the difficult early weeks and months. A franchisor is all too aware that his business would be dealt a severe blow if too many fledglings failed. Therefore, he is willing, even anxious, to go an extra mile to help a new enterprise.

Scores of men and women have made fortunes by developing and franchising their businesses. Consider a few dramatic illustrations:

In Quincy, Massachusetts, a young man named William Rosenberg outfitted a truck and began selling coffee and sandwiches to factory and mill workers. Bright and aggressive, he soon had a fleet of trucks that were doing a brisk business. Doughnuts, Rosenberg noted, accounted for 40 percent of his total sales.

Why not open a doughnut shop? he thought, and in 1950 he did. Rosenberg soon discovered that doughnuts were fast becoming popular around the country. Another idea struck: Why not a chain of doughnut shops? The result was Dunkin' Donuts, one of the most successful international franchise companies.

David Thomas opened a hamburger restaurant in Chicago in 1969, despite the fact that McDonald's and Burger King were already well established. Dave, who named his place Wendy's after his daughter, forged ahead and found there was always room for a bright newcomer.

"Wendy's found its niche by targeting young adults, a key segment of an otherwise crowded marketplace," assert Donald D. and Patrick J. Boroian in their book *The Franchise Advantage*. "It did it by offering a larger hamburger made of high-quality beef, by adding chili to its menu to appeal to adult palates, by offering a pleasing 'old-fashioned decor,' and by offering a level of service aimed to please the older customer, with help clearing off tables rather than customers disposing of their own debris."

By the end of 1993, Wendy's, based in Columbus, Ohio, had more than 4,000 domestic and foreign outlets.

But no success story can equal that of a short, somewhat cocky salesman named Ray Kroc, the brains behind the enormously popular McDonald's restaurants. Kroc was hardly the originator of the franchise system, but was responsible for refining the technique to a degree that no one else has done.

He was already 52 and moderately successful selling paper cups, when he went into partnership in 1954 with Dick and Mac McDonald, who were selling franchises for a hamburger business they had started. Kroc took over the franchising operation and built the company to where it is now. By the start of 1994, there were about 9,300 establishments sporting the golden arch and about 4,700 restaurants in 64 foreign countries. Two stores are being opened overseas for every one in America.

Ray Kroc instituted assembly-line techniques to keep labor costs at a minimum. He kept prices low and service fast. He insisted on a clean, wholesome look with



well-groomed employees and immaculate rest rooms to attract families and, after considerable experimentation, offered products that were simple to make and appealed to most people.

Perhaps Kroc's most significant innovation was a philosophy. Until he came along, franchisees were generally left to handle their own establishments once agreements were signed. Kroc realized that the success of the parent business was inextricably linked to the success of its satellites.

Said the Boroians: "His idea was to provide the franchisees with support, training and the general business know-how to succeed. And he correctly surmised that as each franchise prospered, the entire chain would grow stronger." So, not only did the parent company provide plans and manuals to owners, but it kept in constant touch with them to offer advice and counsel on problems as they arose. This approach is now common practice in many types of franchise operations.

Obviously, then, franchising is lucrative for franchisors. Is it equally profitable for the men and women who enter into agreements to operate franchises?

The IFA reports that for the latest year for which figures are available, the average gross income -- that is, money earned before payment of income taxes -- was \$124,290. Half of the franchisees reported they earned gross incomes of less than \$100,000, but nearly four in ten said they made more than \$100,000.

Some franchisees go out of business, but far fewer than non-franchise operations. A recent study of 366 franchise companies in 60 industries showed that nearly nine out of ten were still active and showing profits five years after they opened. In contrast, a study by the U.S. Small Business Administration disclosed that three out of five new businesses were dissolved within the first six years, mostly because of failure and bankruptcy.

Is this type of business an all-male preserve? Not at all. According to the International Franchising Association, women own about 20 percent of all franchises in the United States and husband-wife teams operate another 42 percent.

Annabel Gertner is just one outstanding example. She has invested about \$700,000 in two franchises of the Kenny Rogers Roasters restaurants, a new arrival among the roast-chicken eating places. She opened her first one in 1991 and her second in mid-1993, both in the Miami, Florida, area. And each is doing just fine, thank you.

Kaayden Schatten of Toronto, Canada, noticed that ceilings in factories and commercial buildings were

coated with grime and layers of grease built up over the years. As an amateur chemist, Schatten developed a special blend of materials that could clean the ceilings by blasting them with a mist under high pressure. Begun in 1984, her company, Ceiling Doctor International, is being successfully franchised in North America and overseas.

In addition to encouraging women to enter into the system, the IFA has launched a social program, called the Alliance for Minority Opportunities in Franchising, to encourage the participation of minority entrepreneurs. The Alliance is studying programs to help reduce capital requirements to African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, Native Americans and others.

In the fall of 1993, Burger King, in a bold corporate initiative, provided \$100 million over five years to qualified ethnic franchisees. The money would be offered as loans or as loan guarantees.

How do franchisees feel about their businesses? In 1991, the Gallup Organization, Inc., of Princeton, New Jersey, one of America's leading poll takers, interviewed a national sampling of individual owners to find out. Here are some of the findings:

— Almost 94 percent said their franchise operations were successful.

— Seven out of 10 said their businesses had either exceeded or met their expectations.

— Three out of four reported that, if given the same opportunity again, they would purchase or invest in the franchise business again.

It wasn't all roses, however. More than 80 percent admitted they had to work longer hours and more days than they had expected.

What does it cost to buy a franchise? A little or a lot, depending on the star quality of the business or service.

A baby-sitting service can be bought for about \$8,000, a travel agency, \$1,000, a cabinet refacing and remodeling enterprise for \$12,500. But anyone interested in a McDonald's franchise must pay more than \$500,000 before the first hamburger is flipped. Quite obviously, the big ones offer the best chance to earn big profits.

In 1993, the magazine *Good Housekeeping* listed franchises that could be bought for less than \$20,000. Among them were: Computertots, computer classes for children, \$18,800; Kinderdance, gymnastic classes for children, \$3,000; Pressed4Time, a dry-cleaning, pick-up and delivery service, \$13,000; and a computer-

ized tax preparation service called Jackson Hewitt Tax Service, \$16,700.

While franchises are indeed surging in economic popularity, it would be a serious mistake to assume that they guarantee everyone a royal road to prosperity. Nobody should jump blindly into any kind of business without a sound idea of what it is all about. It is crucial, then, says the IFA, for any prospective franchisee to know the following:

- Exactly what the business is all about and the type of experience necessary to operate it.

- The hours and personal commitment necessary to run the business.

- Who the franchisor is, what his track record has been, and the business experience of officers and directors of the company.

- How other franchisees in the same system are doing.

- How much it will cost to acquire the franchise.

- How much it will cost for the continuing right to operate the business.

- If there are any products or services that must be bought from the franchisor and how and by whom they are supplied.

- The terms and conditions under which the franchise relationship can be terminated or renewed, and how many have left the system during the past few years.

- The financial conduct of the company and its system.

In addition to understanding the business, a prospective franchisee should also measure his or her own personal qualifications. Key questions to ask are whether you have had a sufficient amount of experience in the area involved. For example, have you worked in and around the restaurant business, or in retailing, electronics, travel, real estate? A man who has spent 20 years as an office manager could have a difficult time running a pizza restaurant; or a woman who has never worked in a store of any kind should not consider a retail shoe business.

Moreover, the question of suitability must be considered. Says the IFA: "Important questions to ask yourself include: Am I suited to the industry physically and by experience, education, learning capacity, temperament and financial ability? What type of work is most appealing to me — for example, do I enjoy working with food, mechanical things, people, real estate, books and recordings, sporting goods, and so on? Am

I prepared to work hard and take financial risk? Do my advisors, family and friends think I am adaptable and trainable? How do I react to controls? Am I a loner, resenting authority and restraints, or can I accept guidance and direction happily?

If I prefer to act as a passive investor in the franchise, will the company accept this? How do I personally feel about the company's image and products or services? The right answers to these questions help determine your potential success as a franchisee."

What, then, is the "bottom line," that favorite phrase of business analysts? Just this:

It has become increasingly evident that a global economy is emerging and, in many areas, is already here. Franchising, the success story of the 1990s, is going to be an ever-increasing part of that economy.



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Lester David, an author and journalist based in New York City, is the author of more than 1,000 major magazine articles and 14 books.

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# Studying Black Studies

**E. R. Shipp**

In the late '60s and early '70s, African Americans discovered they were not only black but proud. This emerging self-identification gave rise to a protest on university campuses that demanded programs and resources that would give voice to the contributions of Blacks to the world and to their connectedness to Africa. The Afro-American Studies movement was born.

Twenty-five years later, blacks are still proud, but the notion of what is black and how it should be studied is a growing debate among African-American scholars and experts. The discourse is wide-ranging:

— Not all blacks who are intellectuals are “black intellectuals,” as defined by Columbia University’s Manning Marable. “You get a curious phenomenon of people who are racially black and who are identified in terms of actual social relations as a black person because of phenotype, but who culturally and politically do not identify at all with basic problems in the black community.”

— Not all blacks teaching black courses in literature, history, sociology, anthropology, political science and economics identify with Black Studies. “A lot of people falsely claim to be in Afro-American Studies, but they have never been to a conference or published in the *Journal of Black Studies* or the *Western Journal of Black Studies*, and do not have a dialogue with people in their field,” says Molefi Kete Asante, professor and chairman of the department of African-American Studies at Temple University.

— Not all Black Studies programs are that: Some are called African-American, some are Afro-American, some are Africana, some are Pan-African. Some are interdisciplinary programs, some are research institutes, some are cultural centers, some are traditional academic departments. And there is little agreement on which is the best approach.

— Not all Black Studies programs — the word “programs” being used here as laypersons would use it, not

as the scholars do — meet the standards set by the National Council for Black Studies. According to Jacqueline Wade, past executive director of the 20-year-old organization, authentic Black Studies programs must take a “holistic approach to studying the experience and history of people of African descent . . . the whole diasporic experience, as well as the African experience.” And these Africana programs, as she calls them, must do so from an Afrocentric perspective. “It’s not a matter of taking a Eurocentric perspective and coloring it up.”

— Not much of what obsesses these scholars seems all that relevant to the everyday concerns of African-American people approaching a 21st century that, like the 20th, will doubtless revolve around the color line.

It is estimated that there are more than 200 Black Studies programs of varying quality. “The state of Black Studies is often correlated with the state of black people in the United States to the extent there is a constant struggle for affirmation and respect,” Wade explains. “Some programs are floundering, suffering great cut-backs; others are being fed very, very well.”

As for which are the best, 100 scholars would probably come up with 100 different lists. Asante, for example, names his own university (Temple), as well as Cornell, Ohio State, California State University at Long Beach and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Edmund W. Gordon of the City University of New York (CUNY) lists Yale, the University of California—Los Angeles (UCLA) and Temple. Wade lists Temple, Ohio State and Kent State. Marable lists Temple and Harvard. Henry Louis “Skip” Gates, Jr., of Harvard, names Princeton, Yale and Harvard, with expectations that New York University will soon join their rank. Others cite the University of Michigan and the University of California at Berkeley.

Clearly, not all of the stellar Black Studies programs are located east of the Mississippi River, but it does seem that the stars are shining especially bright in the East these days. Since his arrival at Harvard four years ago (by way of Yale, Cornell and Duke), Gates has brought renown to a humanities-oriented department that had long been adrift.

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He has recently been joined by Cornel West, author of the popular *Race Matters*. West was lured away from Princeton, where he headed an Afro-American Studies department whose faculty includes Arnold Rampersad, the biographer of Langston Hughes and now director of the program; Toni Morrison, the 1993 Nobel laureate; and Nell Painter, the historian.

"Gates is building a formidable group around himself," observes Gordon, a former chairman of Yale's program. In addition to Gates and West, another highly regarded scholar at Harvard is K. Anthony Appiah, whose field, like Gates's, is literature. "These are three of the most able people in the field," Gordon continues.

Gordon came out of retirement in 1992 and was appointed chairperson of the Black Studies department at City College, a unit of CUNY, during the university's prolonged attempt to oust Leonard Jeffries as department chair. Jeffries had gotten into trouble because of his Afrocentric black supremacy teachings and insistence that Jews played an important role in the slave trade. After federal courts first ordered Jeffries reinstated and then, this spring, reversed that decision, Jeffries vowed to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

But in a surprise move in late June, he announced that he would step down as department chairman. The Black Studies faculty promptly named a replacement: Moyibi J. Amoda, an expert on political theory and economic development, who has been a member of the department since 1971. Jeffries is expected to remain on the faculty, where he still holds a tenured position.

Before a federal court ordered Jeffries' reinstatement in the summer of 1993, Gordon created the Institute for Research on the African Diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean in Spring 1993. It was designated a CUNY institute in 1994. As Gordon builds his institute, he has attracted several respected scholars, including the feminist author Bell Hooks, Colin Palmer and David Levering Lewis.

While Gordon weathered criticism from Asante and others who said he was being used by CUNY to undermine Jeffries, Gordon has insisted that he and Jeffries are not in competition.

"There is a place for advocacy and political activism," Gordon says, alluding to Jeffries' primary focus, "but there also has to be a place for more serious, or more traditional, research. I am here to do the more traditional research and will not interfere with — and will help all I can — Len with his more advocacy work. We will be complementary in the struggle in much the same way that Malcolm [X] and Roy Wilkins were: committed to the same ends but taking different ways to try to achieve them."

A different approach is under way at New York University (NYU), which hopes to become the kind of center of Pan-African intellectual life that existed in London and Paris in the early decades of this century. The university has brought in three noted scholars to accomplish that goal: Manthia Diawara, a film scholar from Mali; Kamau Braithwaite, a poet from Barbados; and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a novelist, essayist and dramatist from Kenya. Rather than focusing on either the African-American or the African experience, NYU is focusing on the study of blacks in the African diaspora in the modern era, with an emphasis on urban ethnography and migration.

NYU's focus comes at a time when European academics — the majority of them white — have turned their attention to the contributions of blacks to life and culture in the United States. A new association of European academics, the Collegium for African American Research, earlier this year convened in the Spanish Canary Islands to share information. Another effort, headed by Marvin Lewis, a professor of Spanish-American literature at the University of Missouri at Columbia, is organizing a Black Studies association for Latin American scholars who study black cultures in countries such as Ecuador, Colombia, Peru and Uruguay. In addition, Gates has called for making Black Studies an international pursuit.

Columbia University, which on paper has had a Black Studies program since 1969, hired someone of academic stature — Marable — to coordinate it and to create an Institute for Research in African-American Studies in the fall of 1993. Rather than an autonomous Black Studies department, Columbia, like most schools, offers an interdisciplinary program that is largely dependent upon academic departments — history and comparative literature, for instance — to provide the faculty and the courses. Marable will devote much of his time to raising money for and directing the institute, which he views as "a structure that advocates policy and fights for power."

According to Marable, he is building upon a black intellectual tradition represented by W.E.B. Du Bois at Atlanta University from 1897 to 1913 and Charles S. Johnson at Fisk University from the mid-1940s to the late '60s. Du Bois convened annual conferences on critical issues pertaining to black life that became "the hallmark of scholarship on the black community for the first half of the 20th century."

In Marable's view, Johnson's Institute for Race Relations created "an environment where whites and blacks could sit down at the table together and talk on the basis of equality. That simply did not exist in the deep South at that time." Marable tried to revive that insti-



tute while on the Fisk faculty during the 1982-83 academic year. From Du Bois and Johnson, Marable has developed a credo: academic excellence and social responsibility.

"Or, as I tell my students: study and struggle. You cannot struggle without solid ideas and without research; and research is meaningless unless you seek not just to interpret, but to change the world."

At Temple, Asante, known as "the father of Afrocentricity," is less than impressed by Marable's efforts at Columbia, largely because he believes institutes that are not linked to academic departments are powerless within the university. Asante heads the nation's largest African-American Studies department, with 15 faculty members, 97 graduate students and 45 undergraduates majoring in the discipline. The department, founded in 1971, offers courses that attract more than 1,000 students each semester. It also has four institutes and four journals. Based on this record, Asante is not shy about calling Temple's "the premier center for graduate training in African-American Studies in the world." Since the inception of its doctorate program in 1988 — the only one in the country — Temple has awarded 23 doctorates, including eight last year.

A number of scholars have criticized Afrocentrism, particularly its proponents' fixation with ancient Egypt as the source of culture and with African-Americans as the special beneficiaries of that heritage. Marable chides those whose work consists of proving "whether the pharaohs were black." And NYU's Diawara has noted: "Most black Americans come from the Congo basin and West African coast, not Egypt." Critics of Afrocentrism insist that the Black Studies field is wide enough to accommodate a variety of philosophies and that Afrocentrism, while it has some attractive aspects, should not become a litmus test. Gates has warned against "succumbing to the temptation to resurrect our own version of the 'thought police,' who would determine who, and what, is 'black.'"

Most universities offer no Black Studies courses, and very few require students to take them. Yet, there suddenly seems to be more activity in the field than there has been at any time since the late 1960s and early '70s, when, usually as a result of student protest and occasional violent confrontation, campus after campus — starting with San Francisco State — began adding Black Studies courses. From there, some of them developed interdisciplinary programs, research or policy institutes and more traditional departments.

But few colleges and universities had a real commitment to Black Studies. "They kind of ghettoized it, isolated it, and let [the programs] run as sideshows with no concern for the quality of them," Gordon explains.

Oddly enough, few historically black colleges and universities offer Black Studies programs. The reason for this can be gleaned from an anecdote Asante tells. "I remember I was once on Julian Bond's show and he said, 'Malefi, what do you think of black colleges?' I said, 'I've never seen one.' He was puzzled, but I explained that these colleges are basically white colleges. They are trying to out-white the white people." Their view is, as Wade sees it: "We do not need to study us because we are 'us.' [But] students are now demanding more than a white-based education."

Perhaps a harbinger of a trend, Tennessee State University launched a Black Studies program in 1994.

As they continue to evolve, Black Studies programs are expected to focus on culture, public policy, class relations and gender. And an increasing number of scholars are urging their colleagues to come out of their ivy-covered cocoons to develop direct ties with their communities, including cultural organizations, policy institutes such as the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, civil rights organizations, elected officials, and churches. To that end, Temple offers G.E.D. (a secondary-school diploma for those who did not formally graduate) tutoring through PASCEP, its Pan-African Studies Community Education Program. The university has "adopted" three public schools in North Philadelphia and has begun to publish a series of textbooks for primary-school students. At Columbia, Marable is researching projects linked with civil-rights, social and political organizations. He also intends to convene on a regular basis "the best minds of the black world" to address critical issues, starting with what he calls "the crisis of black youth."

As Marable sees the challenge: "Our generation — and I mean the women and the men who came out of the Black Power Movement — have not successfully developed new institutions that reflect our ideological sojourn. We have a political and ethical obligation to do so."

A new generation of scholars is coming into its own. As Gates said at a Black Studies conference at the University of Wisconsin several years ago: "We are the generation of leaders in African-American Studies, and it is with our generation of scholars that our field, our discipline, shall rise or fall."



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# The Fiction of Tim O'Brien

*Philip Gerard*

Tim O'Brien sits onstage in a University of North Carolina lecture hall in Wilmington packed with students, professors, writers, U.S. Marines from Camp Lejeune, people from town. He's wearing his trademark baseball cap, jeans, and a golf shirt — a wiry, strong guy in his early 40s. He leans forward, getting revved up.

"This is one story I've never told before, not to anyone," he confides. His voice carries an intensity, an urgency, that captures the room. Listen up, his tone says, this is important stuff.

It is the story of how he became a writer, which is the same story as how he went to the Vietnam War as a foot soldier in 1968. He spins it out, piece by piece: He was a college graduate, an activist against the war, who suddenly found himself in his hometown of Worthington, Minnesota, with a draft notice in his pocket.

That summer, he got a job on the "disassembly" line at a meat packing plant, blasting clots of blood and tissue out of eviscerated hog carcasses with a high-pressure water gun. All summer long, he smelled of pigs and worried about going to the war.

When he just couldn't face another day at that awful job — such a literal metaphor for what lay ahead — he ran away. He drove north as far as a fishing camp on the Rainy River, at the Canadian border. There he paused to lie low for a few days and get the nerve to cross the border to political asylum. The elderly proprietor of the Tip Top Lodge, Elroy Berdahl, took him in, no questions asked. But Berdahl sensed immediately what was going on. He let O'Brien hang around the place, work-

ing through his decision. They didn't talk much. O'Brien just needed to be left alone.

On the sixth and last day, Berdahl took O'Brien out on the river in his skiff. They fished and talked about nothing in particular. By and by, the boat drifted toward the Canadian side of the river, so close that O'Brien could have stepped ashore. Berdahl did it on purpose.

But at that moment, O'Brien had a vision of all the people who were counting on him — family, friends, relatives, his town, his country: "I did try. It just wasn't possible. All those eyes on me — the town, the whole universe — and I couldn't risk the embarrassment. It was as if there were an audience to my life....Traitor! they yelled. Turncoat!" He couldn't make himself get out of the boat. With Canada literally within reach, he cried his eyes out. Berdahl let him. The next day, O'Brien went home.

"I survived the war," he says, "but it's not a happy ending."

The audience sits in stunned, respectful silence, the silence of men and women who have been moved to the verge of tears. It's an extraordinary moment — you can feel the emotion hanging in the air. O'Brien lets it linger for a few beats.

Then he says: "What I just told you...none of it is true. None of it happened. I went to war, that part is true. But the rest...I made it up."

The audience takes that in. There is murmuring, the creak of chairs, the release of held breath. Somebody at length asks, "Then why did you tell us all that if it isn't true?"

But it is true, O'Brien insists, in the way that stories must be true. "What really happened that summer was, I played a lot of golf and worried about the war. But, if I told it to you that way, you wouldn't understand. You wouldn't get what it *felt* like."

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The story is called "On the Rainy River," and O'Brien has told it before, a lot of times, trying to get it right. He finally wrote it down and put it in his book, *The Things They Carried* — a book of true war stories that never happened.

Tim O'Brien's first fictional treatment of the Vietnam War, the novel *Going After Cacciato*, which won the 1979 National Book Award, is masterfully simple in its design: Paul Berlin, a young foot soldier, passes one long night on guard duty in a lookout post on the South China Sea by telling himself the story of a buddy — Cacciato — who walked away from the war. The story evolves into a fantastical chase that takes Berlin and his squad (in Berlin's imagination) to Paris, far from the war, where Berlin confronts the moral and ethical dilemma that has preoccupied him all along, during his "real" combat tour: duty or conscience?

That same question haunts nearly all of O'Brien's fiction: what is courage? Is courage fighting an unjust war for the sake of family and country, or is courage refusing to fight the war because of higher principles?

Berlin is so entranced by his own act of creation that he doesn't wake up the relief guard, preferring instead to continue his tale, to follow the renegade Cacciato through Cambodian tunnels and the secret corridors of the Shah of Iran's palace to the gates of Paris, where the issue will be decided.

Partly, Berlin — like O'Brien — is infatuated with the act of storytelling. Partly he is driven by the urgency of answering the citizen-soldier's primary question: Am I acting with courage?

Like Joseph Conrad's Marlow, who spins his *Heart of Darkness* yarn while waiting for a flood tide on the Thames as a sinister twilight descends on the London waterfront, O'Brien's narrator tells his story for the most basic reason of all — to pass time, to get through the night. And for O'Brien, as for Conrad, the story is a natural vehicle for grappling with the issues that trouble our consciences.

O'Brien followed *Cacciato* with *The Nuclear Age*, in which the main character, William Cowling, is obsessed with the threat of thermonuclear apocalypse. More significantly, Cowling is disoriented by the way hope and community have degenerated into fatalism and paranoia. In the atomic age, the "nuclear" family is the first casualty, and civilization is not far behind.

"Am I crazy?" Cowling asks. "If you hold your breath, if you have the courage, you'll hear the soft drip of a meltdown, the ping-ping-ping of submarine sonar, the half-life of your own heart . . . It means no children. No genetic pool. No memory."

Typical of the irony of the book, Cowling, a pacifist, flees the draft only to wind up as the bagman for a cadre of terrorists in Key West, Florida. By middle age, in 1995, we find him digging a hole — a fallout shelter for his family. He locks his wife and daughter in the house, prisoners, until he can assure their safety. At one point, in the kind of absurd logic that recalls the Vietnam War — he contemplates destroying them to save them. He can't assure their safety — in the face of monumental threat, he can only retrench, literally.

Until *The Things They Carried*, O'Brien considered *The Nuclear Age* his best work. Many critics disagreed — and wondered in print when O'Brien would get

back to writing about what he "knew": Vietnam.

Such critics missed the point. Like the war stories, *The Nuclear Age* is a love story.

*The Things They Carried* aptly enough won the *Chicago Tribune's* Heartland Award. Various styled a novel and a collection of short stories, the book continues some of the themes of *Cacciato* and an earlier memoir, *If I Die in a Combat Zone*. But it does so with a twist that may make it the most significant book to emerge in years: O'Brien creates an alter-ego Tim O'Brien, character-narrator of the collection of tales that make up the book.

"There's just something about using my own name/Tim O'Brien, as the narrator of these stories, and also a



U.S. WRITER TIM O'BRIEN has created some of the most provocative fiction to emerge out of the Vietnam experience.

participant in many of these stories, that gives them a sense of immediacy and also a sense of authenticity — when in fact most of the material in the book is invented,” he explained in a recent interview.

Like the author O’Brien, the narrator O’Brien continually insists on the necessity for artistic honesty — for getting the story “right.” Inhabiting the no-man’s-land between heroism and cowardice, he is likable but not always admirable and admits to human flaws: egoism, timidity, uncertainty, and fear of embarrassment.

He lives in stories that take place long after Vietnam, as a 43-year-old writer looking backward, haunted by characters out of earlier stories and novels, who appear on his doorstep or send him long letters critiquing what he has written. As critics, his characters are not always kind: Norman Bowker, a character from an earlier story, which O’Brien sent for his approval, writes back, “It’s not terrible, but you left out Vietnam.” And the narrator O’Brien struggles once again to get it right.

Of course, what was written was real, including *Combat Zone*, which O’Brien is quick to call “nonfiction,” his infantry war as it really happened to him.

It is all very confusing — at first. The reader may feel he has fallen into an endless identity crisis: authorial personalities bouncing back and forth between mirrors. Each layer unpeeled leaves the reader not *closer* but *further* from the “actual truth,” though closer to the “story truth” — what he can use, what he will take away from the story, what will matter long after the literal truth of events ceases to matter.

The character O’Brien is *not* the author O’Brien. The author is careful to make him fictional: unlike the real O’Brien, he has a daughter; he has revisited the sites of battle; he once worked in a meat factory declothing pig carcasses with a water gun. He has an imaginary past.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, O’Brien does not teach on any university faculty. He came to writing as a soldier, a Harvard University graduate student in political science, then a reporter for *The Washington Post*. But when he does his yearly stint at the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference, one of several he is invited to each season, he conducts his workshops with professional expertise and unabashed enthusiasm for writing. When a student remarks of a story opening, “It’s got potential,” O’Brien replies: “*Everything’s* got potential — that’s not the point. The point is, what do you do with it?”

Like his former Bread Loaf colleague, the late John Gardner (*On Moral Fiction*, *The Sunlight Dialogues*), he is passionate about craft, relentless in preaching to

young writers the absolute necessity of mastering nuances of sentence structure, dialogue, point of view, and signature detail. Even apparently static scenes, he maintains, must show movement. His favorite example is the scene in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* in which Nick Carraway meets Daisy Buchanan and Jordan Baker at the Buchanans’ mansion: “The curtains are billowing, the sofa is floating like a big balloon, everything in the scene is in motion, even though nothing seems to be happening.”

Mastering craft requires an acute sense of audience. Many of O’Brien’s best stories began as anecdotes recounted to a live audience to make an impression about the way stories work. Though *The Things They Carried* was already set to go to the printer, after reading from it at Bread Loaf he made extensive revisions in the galleys.

Read aloud, his stories awaken powerful emotions. For audience and reader alike, the experience can seem almost physical.

“When Tim reads his stories,” says poet Sue Ellen Thompson, a staff member at Bread Loaf, “he reads with his whole body.” After a session at his writing desk, he routinely lifts weights to break the tension. You get the uncanny feeling, listening to him read, that somehow those bench-presses and forearm curls have worked their way into the prose, hardening and toning it.

Hunched over the podium, hands clenching the rails, eyes darting from the page to the audience, O’Brien seems firmly in the grip of his own story.

As an amateur magician, O’Brien has always been acutely aware of the need to get and hold an audience, then, while they are paying complete attention, to create a convincing illusion. “Magicians have a thing called the ‘pull,’ ” he explained to the audience who had just heard his fictional biography. “You do something with your left hand for the audience to watch. Then, while they’re distracted, your right hand performs the trick. A writer does exactly the same thing.”

At Bread Loaf, senior staff present a lecture and a reading, both scheduled separately. During his lecture slot a couple of years ago, O’Brien read “How to Tell a True War Story,” one of the fictions that make up *The Things They Carried*. Mimicking the form of the “how-to” essay, the story’s narrator weaves several tales of personal atrocity with general observations about the horror of war.

Any experienced reader knows enough not to assume that the narrator’s words, attitudes, and actions are the author’s — a fundamental convention of fiction



that allows for irony, for the taking on of vicarious personalities, not all of them nice. We hold an author to a different standard of truth from one we hold a narrator to. The narrator is, after all, just a fictional persona, an artistic masquerade. The *narrator* can speak and act “in character”; the *author* must somehow meet our approval in the real world. The interests of the two may coincide, but we as readers are not allowed to assume so.

O’Brien’s tactic in *The Things They Carried* invites that assumption, then confounds it. Some readers — like the college audience that found out O’Brien’s “true” beginnings as a writer were a convincing truth that never happened — will undoubtedly feel tricked. Like any good magician, though, O’Brien doesn’t aspire to do tricks but to make magic. He risks the trick to capture his readers’ imaginations, counting on them to forgive the manipulation in their astonishment at the outcome. For this reader — as for that college audience — the tactic works beautifully.

Ultimately, after the clamor of battle recedes and Vietnam itself has vaporized into metaphor, *The Things They Carried* is about making stories — but not in the bloodless, metafictional style of a Donald Barthelme or a Robert Coover. Rather, it is about how “memory and imagination combine in the head to make stories.” O’Brien’s fiction is charged with difficult emotions and includes the reader in its driving passion for the truth. “They used a hard vocabulary to contain the terrible softness,” O’Brien writes. “‘Greased,’ they’d say. ‘Offed,’ ‘lit up,’ ‘zapped while zipping.’ It wasn’t cruelty, just stage presence.” The dialogue is rough and fast, the voices of real soldiers talking away fear.

The stories are full of ideas, philosophy even, but are not cerebral. Action comes in furious, clipped outbursts — bang-bang sentences that Hemingway would have admired. Then reflection seeps in — longer, deceptive sentences circling back on themselves, sneaking up on the truth. The reader does not so much read the stories as experience them coming true, like real memories.

O’Brien the narrator roams through the stories, losing himself in the past and soaring into the future, searching out the moments that matter, the actions, images, and gestures that give us a glimpse of those eternal verities that William Faulkner celebrated in his Nobel speech. Like Faulkner, O’Brien is keen to engage the greatest subject of all, “the human heart in conflict with itself.”

As the narrator of “How to Tell a True War Story” concludes, what both the real and the invented O’Brien are telling is not a *war* story, but a *love* story.

O’Brien the author echoes that sentiment. He maintains, rightly, that he is not merely writing about Vietnam — a subject he realizes can put readers off. “People are tired of Vietnam,” he has said. “But they’re not tired of good stories — stories that really grab them and squeeze their hearts a little bit. ...There’s a tendency on the part of the American critical establishment to view the literature of Vietnam as a kind of tributary to the American Experience.” Like the writers of war stories he most admires from the previous generation — Norman Mailer, Kurt Vonnegut, James Jones, Joseph Heller — O’Brien refuses to concede any literary territory.

*The Things They Carried* is a riveting and disturbing book, and with it O’Brien changes our idea of fiction in two crucial ways: He has erased the comforting line between narrator and author, altering all our expectations of reliability; and he has given us something that is neither novel nor short-story collection. There is no single overriding plot; some of the “stories” would be obscure out of context, while others are changed drastically once informed by other stories that treat the same incidents from a different perspective.

*The Things They Carried* is something unique in American fiction. At the same time, it hearkens back to the oldest, most traditional fictions of all, cycles of tales organized around the predicament of a daring narrator and pumped full of the urgency of things going on outside the stories, as in *The Thousand and One Arabian Nights*.



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### Books by Tim O’Brien

*If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Ship Me Home* (anecdotes, 1973)

*Northern Lights* (novel, 1975)

*Going After Cacciato* (novel, 1978)

*The Nuclear Age* (1981)

*The Things They Carried* (1990)

*In The Lake of the Woods* (1994)

Ed., *American Fiction: The Best Unpublished Short Stories*, vol. 7 (1995)

# A National Forum for Native American Art

*Joseph Bruchac*

"It all comes back to the grandfathers, the people who were here at the beginning."

That was Linda Poolaw's reply when asked what words came to her when she thought of New York City, the site of the George Gustav Heye Center, part of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI).

Poolaw is Grand Chief of the Delaware Grand Council of North America, and her Lenape (Delaware) ancestors were living on Manhattan Island (they called the tip of lower Manhattan hay-la-py-ee chen-quay-hee-laas, "the place where the sun is born") when the first Europeans arrived.

For her, the opening of the Heye Center in October 1994 represented the start of a return, the partial reconnection of a circle that was broken. As one who helped select the Native works of art being shown in the opening, Poolaw made her own personal contribution to reconnecting that circle.

There are good reasons why the opening of the Heye Center may be seen as representing a kind of homecoming. For many years, many generations, the Native peoples of North America have seen parts of their cultures — material, intellectual, and even spiritual — taken from them. Taken as gifts or by purchase, borrowed or stolen, the material objects, valued for their

beauty or their uniqueness, have long added to the richness of what we know as contemporary American culture and to the diversity of museums and private collections all over the world. But seldom has there been the kind of acknowledgment that Native peoples deserve,



*THE HEYE CENTER of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian stands near the foot of New York's Broadway — the southern end of a former Algonquian trade route.*

an acknowledgment not only of the intellectual and spiritual depth of their many cultures, but also of the continuance of those cultures into the present day. Seldom, too, has there been full involvement of Native peoples in the interpretation and presentation of their cultures in the worlds of art and museums. And rarely has there been a giving back to Native peoples themselves.

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The Heye Center is the first of three state-of-the-art NMAI sites to be built around a collection brought together between 1903 and 1954 by George Gustav Heye, possibly the most intensely driven and acquisitive collector of the material artifacts of Native culture who has ever lived. When Heye, an independently wealthy New York banker, descended upon a Native community, he bought everything in sight, sending boxcars full of artifacts back to New York. Contemporary Native people, whose parents remember his visits, have said, "If he left us with our underclothes we were lucky!" Heye — a man of whom my own Abenaki people might have used the phrase *gedacowaldam mziwi*, "He wants it all" — collected so extensively that almost every aspect of the material culture of countless Native communities is represented in the museum's holdings. Over the years, he supplemented his own collecting trips by sending out scholars to collect, and by sponsoring archaeological digs and ethnographic studies.

Heye's collection was originally housed in the Heye Foundation Museum of the American Indian. Before this collection was relocated to the new NMAI site, I wandered through the old museum's storage rooms,

beaded moccasins, while yet another held one of the largest collections of buffalo robes in the world. As a resource for students of Native art, the NMAI offers objects that have been studied worldwide and reproduced innumerable times, as well as equally significant works that have never been seen by most specialists or the public. For Native people, it offers windows into the lives and visions of their own ancestors. Contemporary American-Indian artists, historians and keepers of tradition can find objects here that were separated from them by a European-American culture that, all too often, saw Indians as vanishing and exotic primitives, people to be "civilized," people with no right to a voice in their own lives.

## A Sensitive Repatriation Program

The NMAI acknowledges the fact that many objects in its collection were removed from various Native communities under controversial circumstances, and that human remains are among those objects. A sensitive repatriation program, mandated in the legislation that est-

ablished the museum, is an integral part of the NMAI philosophy. As Clara Sue Kidwell (Choctaw/Chippewa), the museum's assistant director for cultural resources, explained, the repatriation program includes "not only human remains — of which the museum has relatively little compared to major ethnographic and natural history museums in the country — and funerary objects, but also sacred and ceremonial objects necessary to the practices or revitalization of Native religions,



*NATIVE-AMERICAN dancing was among many activities and events that welcomed visitors to the opening of the Heye Center of the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City.*

where floor-to-ceiling shelves held countless priceless objects. One room contained Mimbres pots from the Southwest, which have inspired a new generation of Pueblo potters. Another room sheltered hundreds of

communally-owned property which could not have been legally disposed of by any individual member of a tribe, and abundant objects of which the museum has multiple examples."

The historic landmark building which houses the new Heye Center was once a custom house. There are ironies about the collection. Containing more than 1 million objects — one of the finest and most comprehensive collections of the arts of indigenous peoples of the western hemisphere — it was kept for years in circumstances that were, at best, inadequate. Less than 2



*MUNSEE Delaware pouch, made in Ontario, was selected for "All Roads are Good," an exhibit of more than 300 objects chosen by 23 American-Indian "selectors" to help inaugurate the opening of the Heye Center of the National Museum of the American Indian.*

percent of the collection was exhibited, while objects in storage were threatened by humidity and insects. In recent years, few visitors ventured to the museum's less than desirable site at 155th Street and Broadway in New York City.

In the 1980s, wealthy businessman and political gadfly Ross Perot made a serious offer to build a new home in Texas for the collection. The city of New York was shocked at the thought of losing the collection,

and its American Museum of Natural History offered space in that facility.

In the end, it was decided that the Heye museum collection would become part of the Smithsonian Institution, and the core of a new National Museum of the American Indian. The establishing legislation was signed in 1989.

NMAI has three sites. The major museum will occupy a site in Washington, D.C., near the National Air and Space Museum. A Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, Maryland, will store the bulk of the collection and accommodate activities including research, exhibit support, collection conservation and outreach. The third site is the Heye Center, funded through the city of New York, the state of New York and U.S. government support.

Although the Smithsonian is funding construction of the Maryland facility, the completion of the NMAI site in Washington, D.C., is contingent upon fund raising. Congress will provide funds for two-thirds of the museum's projected \$110 million in construction costs — but only if the NMAI succeeds in raising the first one-third of that amount before September 30, 1996. That crucial effort is continuing, with the hope of finding support not only for completion of the Washington museum by the year 2001 but also for important outreach and education programs.

The Heye Center's new home at the southern tip of Manhattan is not far from the site of Fort Amsterdam, an early European stronghold built in 1626. Before the fort or the custom house existed, Lenape people stood on this island they called Menatay and watched — perhaps with some foreboding — those first tall ships sail into New York Harbor. This site is also near Wall Street (New York's financial center), a street named for the wall built here to defend European settlers from attacks by "northern Indians."

The three major exhibitions that inaugurated the Heye Center opening are exemplary of the tearing down of walls — those between Native people and their works of art, and those between Native people and non-Native people. The first, "Creation's Journey: Masterworks of Native-American Identity and Belief," is an astonishing testament to the diversity of the collection. The 164 objects come from a multiplicity of groups from North, Central and South America, and their dates of origin range from 3000 B.C. to the present. A wooden Chilkat bear-clan hat, a Nez Percé shirt, a Karajá feathered head-dress from Brazil, a King Island Eskimo kayak, a Mayan ceramic vessel portraying a nobleman smoking tobacco — I came upon a grouping of them during a visit to the



museum. At that time, the exhibit spaces were still under construction, so they were in the preparation area. Standing in their presence, I was moved by the idea of their being described as “masterworks.”

However, as I would discover in my conversations with many of the Native people involved in bringing this new museum to life, the purpose of this exhibition — and of the other two — is, to quote Clara Sue Kidwell, “not necessarily to elevate Native objects to the same category as European art objects.” Instead, these shows ask the question “What is a masterwork?” and lead us into a consideration of whose standards of beauty and esthetics are being used to judge. As the first truly national forum for the Native arts of the Americas, the NMAI is attempting to see the many worlds of the first peoples of the hemisphere through Indian eyes.

Rick West, the NMAI’s director, is Southern Cheyenne and, as the son of a Native artist, has kept that mission clearly in focus. “Indian material can be looked at very differently depending upon who is looking at it,” he said. “Because museums are the chief public interpreters of Indian cultures and peoples, those of us in the museum community have a tremendous responsibility to do it right and to think it through very carefully. ‘Creation’s Journey’ has been approached in that spirit.”

The second exhibit, “All Roads Are Good: Native Voices on Life and Culture,” goes to the heart of the interpretation issue. As West put it, “One of the missing perspectives for many, many years — almost from the beginning of museums — has been the voice of Native peoples themselves.”

“All Roads Are Good” is made up of more than 300 objects chosen by 23 American Indian “selectors” — religious elders, tribal leaders, artists and other highly respected people who were nominated by members

of their communities for this role. The wall labels for the objects have been written by the selectors themselves. In addition, for the exhibit catalog, they wrote thoughtful essays on how they approached the task of selection.

Pomo basket-maker Susan Billy, one of the selectors for “All Roads Are Good,” chose Pomo baskets for the show. Billy learned basket-weaving from her great-aunt, Elsie Allen, a woman she saw “standing in the doorway of changing times.” Raised in Virginia, far from her people in California, Billy was fascinated by



*SEMINOLE costumes and figures are an important part of the collection of the Heye Center of the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City.*

the baskets in her home. But her father could not answer her many questions about them, telling her, “Some-day you can look up Elsie Allen.”

### **Learning with her Grandmother’s Tools**

Years later, Billy showed up on Allen’s doorstep in Mendocino County, California. “I am here to learn about the Pomo baskets,” she told the stranger who answered the door. The next morning, Billy got her first lesson. Handing her an awl and a knife, Elsie Allen told her, “These are the only tools you will need as a basket-weaver. They belonged to your grandmother, and I realized last night that I was just taking care of them for you.” Allen taught her for the next 16 years.

One of the objects that Billy chose for the exhibit, a coiled basket with shell beads and feathers, was a style of basket used for the ritual washing of a newborn baby or a young girl passing into adulthood. "When I hold this basket," she said, "it feels almost overwhelming and vibrant to me." Billy explained that the Pomo people used baskets for just about everything — cooking, storage, gathering — and that usually women made the coiled, twined and feathered baskets, while men made all the fishing weirs, bird traps and baby baskets (a baby basket would be woven by the uncle of a newborn child during the three days immediately following its birth, while relatives brought him food).

Poolaw, another selector, is the daughter of a Kiowa father and Delaware mother; among her choices were pouches made by both tribes. According to Poolaw, the geometrical designs on the Kiowa pouch reflect the people's nomadic life; while the more realistic design on the Delaware pouch reflects the more sedentary woodlands life, in which people had time to sit and observe nature.

Poolaw believes that her background gives her insight into both cultures. She says in the exhibition catalog:

*There was a lot of teasing at home as a result of having parents from two Native cultures, and with two brothers who are enrolled Kiowa. For example, the Kiowa once ate turtles, while my Delaware mother's family belongs to the turtle clan. It was unique growing in that situation — my father's family ate turtles and my mother's family did not, and there was always a lot of teasing about it. That's how I was taught to deal with the hardships of life — through laughter, humor, teasing. That's how you get along and survive.*

Billy, Poolaw and the other selectors were deeply moved by their participation in "All Roads Are Good." In Santa Fe, New Mexico, I talked with selector Rina Swentzell. We talked about how she had felt when she visited the storage area of the old museum to make her selections. Swentzell, who is Tewa/Santa Clara Pueblo and comes from a family of potters, holds a master's degree in architecture and a doctorate in American Studies. But, more than any of her academic achievements, her careful words reflect her relationship to the ancient traditions. "There's so much to be learned from the things my ancestors made," she said. "It was important to me to approach them with care and respect."

Among the objects Swentzell chose are two Mimbres pottery bowls; for her, they express the idea of Po-wa-ha. "I feel very strongly that Indian people forget — all

people forget — those deeper places these objects can remind us of," she said. "As a human race we have moments of incredible greatness, not power and control over things, but power to connect with Po-wa-ha, 'water -wind-breath,' the creative energy of the world, the breath that makes the wind blow and the waters flow...."

That idea of connection — and inspired collaboration — defines the third and final opening exhibit, "This Path We Travel: Celebrations of Contemporary Native-American Creativity." Unlike the first two shows, which are made up of already existing works of art, "This Path We Travel," which includes the work of 15 Native-American artists, is a collaborative installation. Its intention is to immerse visitors in the sights, sounds, textures and spiritual philosophies of Native peoples.

The artists represent the spectrum from painting, photography and sculpture, to music, dance and storytelling, and span a range of tribal traditions from Aleut and Ojibwe to Aymara and native Hawaiian. Over the course of several years, they met at four different locations — symbolizing the cardinal directions — to plan a large and intricate installation. It would immerse the visitor in a spiral of Native words and works, passing from creation through the sacred and the profane into a vision of what the future might hold.

Douglas Coffin, a Potawatomi sculptor who lives in Abiquiu, New Mexico, was one of the 15 planners. At first, he told me, the group was uncertain how to proceed. But gradually, as they worked with other Native people who were trying to preserve traditional ways and traditional lands, they experienced moments of shared understanding.

One such moment came on the island of Hawaii. "One of our group, Pualani, is a traditional chanter — she and her sister," Coffin said. "They had arranged for their dance group to meet us toward sunset at the edge of the volcano. It was dark; the steam was rising up in the background, and there was a soft, drizzling rain as they started chanting and playing gourds. Then they started the dance movements around the volcano. We felt the beauty of their old traditions as they came alive before our eyes."

Expressing those moments of unified vision was the artists' challenge in creating "This Path We Travel." The installation, says Rick West, makes another fundamental point about the American Indian, "namely, that these are contemporary peoples, too." Native Americans, he says, possess a brilliant sense of adaptation.

"This is not to be confused with assimilation; this is dynamic change — always taking into account what is in front of us, but using our own past and our own set of values and traditions to deal with that present."

Reaching that place where one can put forward Native values and traditions has been, for many Native artists, a long and difficult journey. The Tuscarora an-



*TO MARK THE OPENING of the Heye Center, José Montaña participates in "This Path We Travel," an inaugural exhibition involving 15 Native-American visual artists and performers. Montaña, who founded Bolivia's premier folk-music ensemble, demonstrates a wind instrument of the Mohoseño family.*

cestors of Rick Hill, special assistant to the NMAI director, made many difficult journeys themselves after being forced from their homelands in North Carolina. Hill worked on all three opening exhibits and helped supervise production of the catalogs and audiovisual material. On the day I spoke with him, he was at his home on the Tuscarora Reservation near Niagara Falls, New

York, with his children; they are frequent subjects in his paintings, which hang on his walls. It is important, he told me, that people realize that the NMAI is "doing business differently than it has been done in the past."

He shook his head as he remembered his first visit to the Heye collection in 1976. "I was stunned," he said, "to see so much material so poorly maintained. Of course, the big issue then was over the wampum belts — and when I walked into the museum the wampum belts and the medicine masks were openly displayed. I felt insulted. Growing up as an Indian in New York, involved in the arts and the museum field, I was never given an opportunity to work with this collection, as much as I tried over the years. Now, to come back as a person not only responsible for developing exhibits but having total access to the collection itself, demonstrates why the new museum was necessary and how it is different."

Before the new Heye Center opened, I visited the maze of unfinished galleries in the custom house, it's soon-to-be home. "Creation's Journey" would be here. "All Roads Are Good" would begin 50 yards (45 m) farther on. Around another corner was the entrance to the chambered nautilus shape of "This Path We Travel." As I watched carpenters finishing walls and floors that would soon come alive with the many colors and living shapes of Native art, I felt myself flow through time, moving in a circle that was not broken, one that begins again with each new birth and yet does not end with death. I heard West's words again, which summed up for me the meaning and promise of this new museum. "It is," he said, "in the end, a national institution of living culture. It is about a group of peoples and cultures that continue to exist right now and draw upon a lengthy and deep cultural past to maintain a present and to build a cultural future."



Writer and storyteller Joseph Bruchac is a member of the Abenaki Nation of Vermont.

## The New Providers

*Michelle Ingrassia and Pat Wingert*

Even with a biology degree from MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts), the last thing Cheryl Jones wanted was to be the family breadwinner. Unlike many "baby boomers" (children born to new couples formed in the aftermath of World War II), driven to prove they could juggle a full-time career and motherhood, Jones, 37, made relationships her priority. She got married the day before graduation 15 years ago. And while her husband, Bobby, built his contracting business, she headed into software engineering, fully expecting, she says, that "my income would be secondary to his." At first, it was. Cheryl worked part time, taking off a few months when each of their first three children was born. Her income paid for day care, for "extras." But five years ago, the couple got caught in the New England recession: Bobby's business went bust, Cheryl was laid off. When she found work, she had no choice but to go back full time. Now, as Bobby struggles to launch a financial-planning business out of their Medfield, Massachusetts, home, he brings in less than \$10,000 a year. And the family — five children, ages 11, 9, 7, 5 and 3 — counts on every cent of Cheryl's \$60,000-a-year paycheck. "My kids eat," she says, "because I go to work."

It is no secret that American women work because they have to. Over the last decade, studies have repeatedly shown that without two incomes, many families would not make it from one mortgage payment to the next. These days, working for ego gratification alone seems as outmoded as Gloria Steinem's aviator glasses. A recent report offered the most striking evidence yet that women are not just contributing to their families, they are fast approaching economic parity with their mates. In 45 percent of dual-earner households, women earn about half or more of the income, according to the

report "Women: The New Providers" released in the spring by the Families and Work Institute, a New York nonprofit research group. Factor in the growing number of separated and divorced women and single-parent households, and the numbers are even more dramatic: 55 percent of all working women make about half or more of the household income.

As with men, most women are not getting rich at their jobs. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the vast majority of working women still make less than \$25,000 a year. Jobs in the growing service sector have gone mostly to women. And that — coupled with the facts that more women are entering the job market with college educations and more are refusing to drop out to rear children — has helped narrow the gap between men's and women's wages. In 1965, women earned 59.9 cents for every dollar men earned; by 1990, the gap had shrunk to 71.6 cents. Among young, educated workers, the gulf is close to disappearing, according to an analysis by economist June Ellenoff O'Neill, director of the Congressional Budget Office. Among those at the age of 27 to 33 who have never had a child, women's earnings are close to 98 percent of men's.

There was a time when such dramatic numbers might have shriveled a generation of American men. Now, many seem grateful, even relieved. "Blue-collar men used to think it reflected badly on them if their wife was working," says Johns Hopkins University sociologist Andrew Cherlin. "But with their incomes dropping and housing prices going up, they are much more accepting of the fact that their wife is contributing a large share of the family income."

Even as women made gains in the workplace, their work at home has not diminished. In a 1995 study of income and housework, University of Washington sociologist Julie Brines found that wives do the overwhelming amount of chores, no matter what percentage of the income they bring home. Women's work is greatest, not surprisingly, in traditional families, and it

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decreases as their incomes increase. Yet, when women's earnings skyrocket past their mates', Brines found, men retreat to their La-Z-Boys (reclining rocking chairs).

"It's not a zero-sum game," says Dana Friedman, co-president of the Families and Work Institute. "Being more committed to work does not mean you are less committed to family." In the "New Providers" survey, conducted by Louis Harris and Associates, women overwhelmingly defined success in terms of family. Many sound like Jones, who is as serious about getting up early to make Rice Krispies treats with her son before school as she is about her breadwinner status. "My house is a zoo," she says. "But it's worth the trade-off."

The new household order can strain a marriage, sometimes to the breaking point. Gail Duncan-Campagne is the president of the Ford dealership her father started in Sterling Heights, Michigan, with annual sales of \$118 million. Her husband, Paul, works in his family's business, too — a jewelry shop with revenues of about \$175,000 a year. Though the couple would not discuss salaries, the obvious disparity has been a wedge in their 10-year marriage; they separated two months ago. Gail, 44, sounds as frustrated with Paul's failure to build his business as she is with what she describes as his reluctance to run the house. She ticks off how she has paid bills, bought stock, booked vacations, hired cleaning women, all the while working 80 hours a week to his 40. "He was not the house manager. The place would have to be a certain standard. Please, I didn't want to come in and do two to three hours of cleanup." Paul, 39, insists his ego never got in the way, but he concedes he should have taken on more work around the house, if only to have felt like an equal partner. "It's hard to surprise your wife with something when she's the breadwinner. How do you say, 'Honey, I need \$3,500 to take the family on a ski trip'?"

In the land of the two-earner family, mutual respect is more important than mutual funds. Seattle oceanographer Tom Mueller and his wife, Heidi Stamm, a highway consultant, think they divide things pretty fairly, though they doubt it is because her \$70,000-a-year salary is \$20,000 more than his. "It's a teamwork approach," says Mueller, 46. Mostly, though, they agree that housework is simply incidental to their real goal — to save enough money to retire early. "That's the carrot in front of us," says Stamm, 39. "The more we make, the quicker we both get there."

Now that women are closing in on a financial partnership with men, does it feel like nirvana? Well, not exactly. Although 79 percent of women in a study last

year by the Labor Department's Women's Bureau said they "love" or "like" their jobs, many would be just as happy not to have to work so hard. Just 15 percent of those in the "New Providers" survey said they would work full time if they had enough money to live comfortably. Instead, 33 percent would work part time, 31 percent would care for their families, and 20 percent would do volunteer work. Like many women, Lisa Hutchins, a Los Angeles real-estate agent, feels pulled by the inevitable tug-of-war between money and time. "Am I really truthful to myself when I say that the money doesn't make me feel valuable?" says Lisa, 33, who earns twice as much as her husband, Mark, a senior manager at an accounting firm. "When I'm among my working female peers, I feel satisfied." But when she's with women who aren't putting in 70- or 80-hour weeks at the office, she feels "a tiny bit of envy." Having it all, it seems, isn't the same as having enough.



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