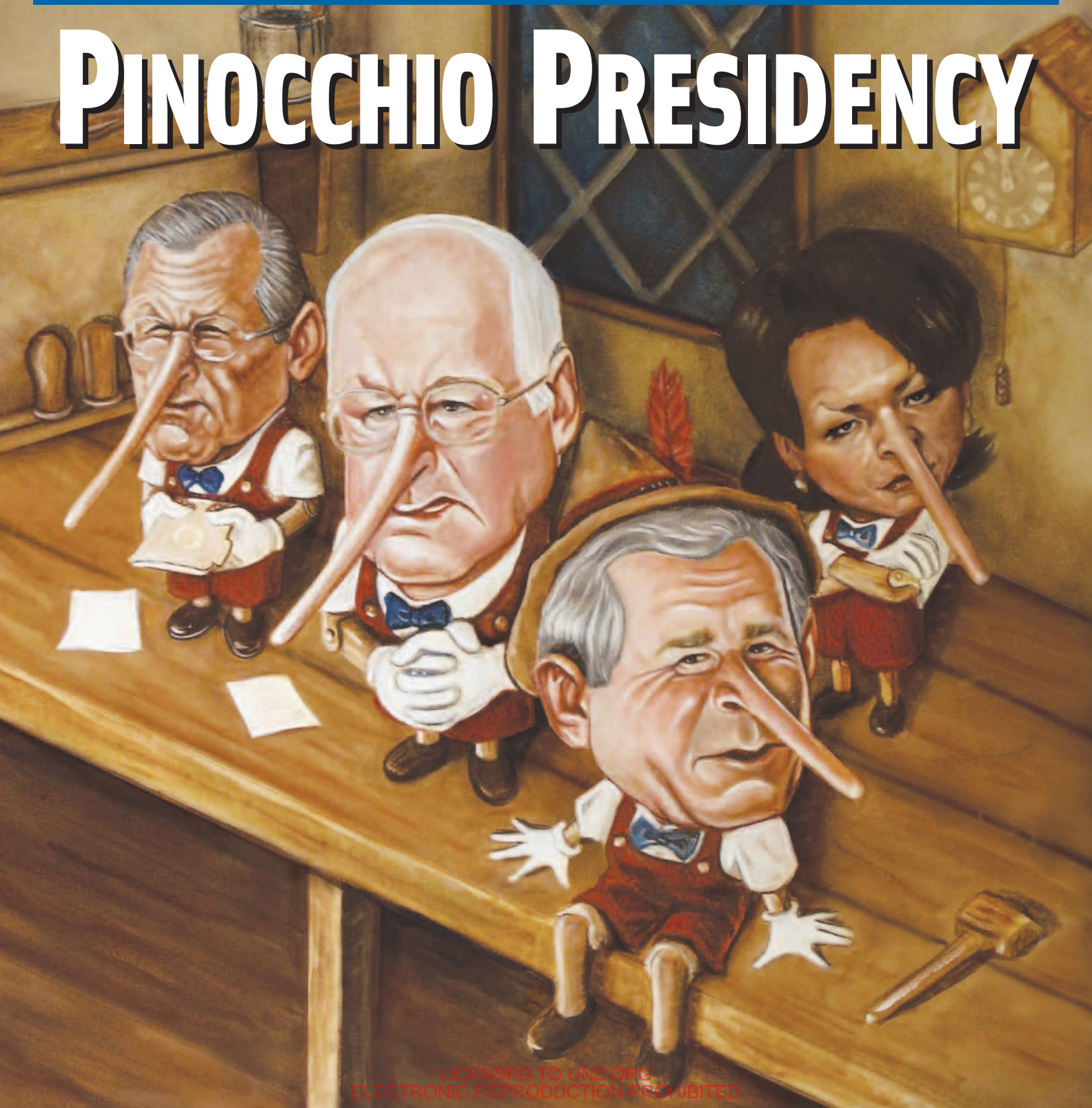


PATRICK J. BUCHANAN: THE PASSION AND ITS ENEMIES

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BAD FAITH

After reading the article "American Creed" (April 12), now I know what is wrong with America. Protestantism! Radical individualism! The rejection of community! Of course along with individualism ultimately come egalitarianism and relativism.

Protestantism is a transitional phase between Christianity and secularism. Mainline Protestantism has rejected orthodoxy in favor of a subjective relationship and understanding of God. Ultimately the rest of Protestantism will give way to abortion and sodomy as it has given way to birth control and divorce. How did this Harvard professor come to write an article in *The American Conservative*?

HAROLD CREWS
Walkertown, N.C.

PARTY LIFE LINES

Tim Carney presents many good and oft-ignored facts regarding the bonds of single-issue abortion politics to each political party (March 29). Yet there is a critical point that is implied but not fully expressed: namely that the bonds between the pro-choice movement and the Democratic Party are much stronger and more indissoluble than the bonds between the pro-life movement and the Republican Party.

One can see this in the Senate, where only Democrats Ben Nelson (Neb.), soon-to-be retired John Breaux (La.), and Zell Miller (Ga.) have voting records that can be considered pro-life, and all three still voted against various components of the Mexico City policy during their tenure. If Rep. Chris John is elected to replace Breaux, he will become the only Democrat to enter the Senate with a 100 percent career vote rating on pro-life issues.

In contrast, there are several proudly pro-choice senators on the Republican side of the aisle. Last year, nine GOP Senators voted to affirm *Roe v. Wade*—including prominent committee chairmen and members of leadership such as

Ted Stevens (Alaska), John Warner (Va.), Kay Bailey Hutchison (Texas), and the man next in line to chair the Judiciary Committee, Arlen Specter (Penn.). Such clear ideological heresy is consistently tolerated by party leadership, despite its conflict with the "sanctity of every life" doctrine that has guided the Republican Party from its inception.

In the Democratic Party, pro-life opinions are not even acknowledged as legitimate; the treatment Bob Casey Sr. endured is only the most obvious example. But in the GOP, the pro-life movement continues to be powerless to stop pro-choice politicians from attaining leadership roles—and unfortunately, there are no signs that this status will change.

BEN DOMENECH
McLean, Va.

KERRY'S BRAIN

I was shocked to read the following sentence in Christopher Layne's "The Next Emperor" (March 29): "Of the serious Democratic contenders, only John Kerry made foreign policy a major focus of his campaign." Has Mr. Layne heard of Howard Dean? Perhaps Layne doesn't think that Dean was a "serious" contender, but everyone else thought so. Go back and review the early days of the campaign in the fall of 2003 (the New Mexico debate, for example). Dean was forcefully making a case against the Iraq War while John Kerry sat on the fence. Kerry only began seriously opposing the war when he noticed Dean's growing popularity. He then stole Dean's ideas, and his campaign took off. The Democratic nominee is thus a bionic candidate: Howard Dean's ideas in John Kerry's body.

BRUCE HAYMAN
Cleveland, Ohio

The editors respond:

TAC not only recognized Howard Dean as a contender, we credited him for igniting the Democratic antiwar debate. By the time this piece printed, he was no longer

running, and the point was the similarity of Bush and Kerry's imperial agendas. That said, we could have been clearer.

SHAKEN NOT STIRRED

With regard to Pat Buchanan's "Free-Market Molotov" (March 29), the cocktail of democracy and free markets requires a healthy dollop of constitutional prerequisite before it can produce the heady admixture of a stable free society for parched postwar Iraq. Unfortunately, in that sad country there are no Thomas Jeffersons to tend bar. Unless minority rights are protected in law and enshrined as a bedrock principle, it is easy to foresee the possibility of a Shi'ite mullah invoking a majoritarian mandate and imposing a Potemkin village democracy on a fractured and sectarian population. An untried Bill of Rights might not prevent such a catastrophe, but to hold elections without a firm expectation of constitutional safeguard and redress is to invite chaos and leave an inchoate republic foundering.

DAVID LEWIS
New York, N.Y.

MISSING OPIATES

Please convey my appreciation for "In Praise of Laudanum" (March 29) to its author. I am one of those who self-medicated with opiates and did so for many years. During that time, I was at ease in the world and with myself as well as being a highly successful, wealthy entrepreneur and a warm, loving father whose adult children remember those years with joy and still love their father. Since abstaining from opiates, I have become an impoverished, reclusive, aimless ex-convict. For some of us opiates are the only possible balance.

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The American Conservative welcomes letters to the editor. Submit by e-mail to letters@amconmag.com, by fax to 703-875-3350, or by mail to 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA 22209.