

# Sidelights



Disney's new movie *Tall Tale* re-writes the story of **Paul Bunyan** for greener times: Bunyan's "been chased out by the clear-cut industry...he talks about borrowing from the land, rather than raping it.... In fact, during the whole movie he doesn't cut down a single tree," the director reports. ... Tell it to the sheep: **Anne Conrad-Antoville** quit her orchestra job rather than play *Peter and the Wolf* because, the cellist says, it "teaches children to hate and fear wolves and to applaud a hunter who kills wolves." An animal-rights activist added, "So many of these fairy tales make people think wolves are bloodthirsty killers and they are not." ❧ **Jann Wenner**, who founded *Rolling Stone* during his drugs-and-rock-and-roll phase, *US* magazine during his celebrity infatuation phase, and *Family Life* magazine during his (very brief) good-yuppie-dad-raising-kids phase, recently left his wife and three young children to live with a young male staffer at Calvin Klein. We can hardly wait to see the periodical that results. ❧ Ho Chi Minh City has seen its first Baskin-Robbins open. ... North Korea just bought its first shipment of U.S. corn and plans to buy rice too. ... China's official news agency reports soaring rates of juvenile crime. ❧ **Woody Allen** on his films: "What it boils down to, really, is that I hate reality...unfortunately, it's the only place where we can get a good steak dinner." ❧ Maybe it's an allergy: The *New York Times* tried to run a serious piece on federalism and decentralized government, but it badly misquoted the 28-word **10th Amendment** and had the national government "delegating" powers to the states, instead of vice versa. ... How, **Michael Kinsley** asked, can congressional Republicans say states should handle law enforcement and then turn around and set states' prison terms? Presidential candidate **Lamar Alexander** replied, "I agree with you there, Michael. If members of Con-

gress want to tell Tennessee how long its prison sentences should be, they should quit and run for governor or sheriff."

Writing from jail, **Jonathan Dawes Jones** told the *Washington Times* that he's been arrested 48 times over the past 20 years and has found the men in prison "increasingly violent, with little or no fear of reprisal. The young offenders, especially... juvenile offenders know their age is literally a license to commit murder—and get away with it." ... After his family endured numerous crimes, former presidential press secretary **Ron Nessen** started carrying illegal Mace, which police confiscated as he entered a House office building—"one week after a Capitol aide had been shot dead in a park a block away." ... Gun-control opponents are offering window stickers for houses that announce "Gun-free Zone." So far, they've had no takers. ❧ Miss America **Heather Whitestone**, who is deaf, is under attack from deaf activists for using her voice to communicate instead of just sign language. "A lot of us feel she shouldn't represent us to the mainstream world," said **Teresa Ezzell**, an official of Gallaudet University for the deaf. ❧ Asked by shock jock **Howard Stern** whether Congress should try to help out on the baseball strike, Sen. **Arlen Specter** (R-Pa.) replied, "You know what the Senate does best? Nothing." ... *The New Republic* on the "closet liberalism" of **Christine Todd Whitman**: "Whitman's fate will rest on whether the party's most conservative wing will be willing to have someone on the ticket who holds the same views on gays as **William Weld** does and the same views on welfare as **Ted Kennedy** ... On page three of this year's 1040 tax form, Commissioner **Margaret Milner Richardson** states that the IRS has been recognized as "a leader among government agencies in customer service." **Dave Barry** responds: "That is comparable to stating that 'cement is a leader among construction materials for

use as a dessert topping.'" ❧ After **Gertrude Himmelfarb's** Bradley Lecture on the declining state of American virtue (see p. 76), one baby-boomer was heard to mutter of her generation, "Nothing can be fixed until we all die off." ... More optimistic, House Speaker **Newt Gingrich** told an Acton Institute seminar that he thinks the boomers may be turning from their countercultural path; his evidence: *Forrest Gump* beat out *Pulp Fiction* for Best Picture.

Although many United We Stand America activists support a roll-back of affirmation action, **Ross Perot** says that "historically," the programs have "served well. The only question... is if you still need them. I wouldn't be surprised if we found that pretty significant problems still exist because of old biases." ... Rep. **J. C. Watts** (R-Okla.) says he won't join the Congressional Black Caucus: "My father didn't raise me to be a black man, but a man. I want to lead all the people." ❧ **Curtis Yates**, a student of Washington's **Malcolm X** Elementary School, told reporters that he and many classmates who receive free school lunches could be fed at home, and that many uneaten meals are discarded. "I feel like we're taking advantage of it," he said. ❧ Arguing that abortion is "as vital for our time as abolitionism was" for nineteenth-century America, author/actor **Ben Stein** attacked the GOP for casting right-to-life voters aside. ❧ Turning back the clock? The popularity of medieval Gregorian chant continues: record stores now sell hooded T-shirts that look like a monk's brown robe; the counter-display reads, "Chill to the Chant."

—SW

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# SCAN

## DISCRIMINATING MULTICULTURALISM

Nona Brazier is an exciting candidate for governor in Washington State who enjoys broad backing from the business, minority, and religious communities alike (she is a prominent entrepreneur, a black woman, a serious Christian, and chair of the King County Republican Party). Recently she described to one of your editors an interesting example of the selective toleration practiced by liberal "multiculturalists."

Last year, Seattle's mayor Norm Rice issued an order forbidding city police officers from marching in a parade organized by ecumenical Christian groups, claiming it would be a violation of "church-state separation" if any of them were present. (The very next day, though, the police chief himself marched in a city gay pride parade—and gave orders that none of the men and women who bared their private parts during the event were to be arrested for indecent exposure.)

With their mayor's extreme aversion to religious expression fresh in their minds, Brazier and other Seattle-area residents were startled when the city opened a new publicly funded community center that featured in its main lobby a large mural of a Yoruba

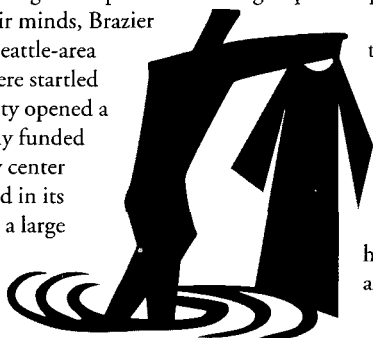
river god. Brazier was even more disturbed when she realized that this was the same animist deity that was giving her environmental-services company fits in Nigeria as it tried to carry out a contract to clean up the Ishasi River.

It seems Yoruban folk practice holds that the river god dyes his clothing in the river, and so finds multi-colored contaminants pleasing to him. This made it very hard to convince villagers that they should not dump their various waste products into the waterway. Having encountered this cult as a major obstacle to environmental progress and improved human health in Nigeria, Brazier now found that poorly informed multiculturalists were putting it on a pedestal back home.

At about the same time, a second example of multicultural hypocrisy was unfolding on America's other coast. Acting again on claims that "separation of church and state" was at risk, politically correct administrators in public schools in New York forbade student choirs and instrumental groups from performing music

with any religious tint—placing off limits a vast sweep of material from Christmas carols to Bach chorales.

Even where this ban went into effect, however, black spirituals and hymns like "We



## THE BAMBI LOBBY

In coordinated demonstrations across New York State last fall, members of the Fund for Animals dressed up in squirrel suits and picketed public buildings to protest "the orphaning of 100,000 dependent baby squirrels" as a result of hunting during New York's six-month squirrel season. The state Department of Environmental Conservation estimates there are between 8 million and 10 million squirrels in New York; so this is not exactly an endangered species controversy. But spokesmen for the Fund for Animals insist that squirrels "are an animal that people can relate to." And nobody likes the idea of an orphan. So compassionate state officials duly launched an Orphaned Squirrel Study to mollify rodent advocates. State employees examined 376 squirrels taken by hunters last fall to see how many of them were lactating females. (Talk about specialized work.) The findings: Only five of the plugged creatures were mothers with fuzzy pre-squirrels back home in the nest.

**One less national injustice to worry about.**

Shall Overcome" continued to be performed in public schools. Asked to account for the double standard, multiculturalists explained that "you can't understand the civil rights movement without that mu-

sic." Heartily agreeing, music teachers and other critics of the religious-music ban suggested that there might also be some valuable understanding to be gained from exposure to a piece like Handel's