

SCAN

VIDEO VINDICATION

Sometimes our perspective on law enforcement gets turned around, and everyone stopped by the police seems to be a victim. The New Jersey State Police found that out two years ago, when a much-ballyhooed shooting launched a national crusade against "racial profiling." Now the troopers may have found a way to perch the public back on the shoulder of justice: by videotaping every traffic stop they make.

So far the cameras are working well. As of May, the troopers had received 40 complaints involving taped traffic stops. In every case the tapes showed the troopers acting properly. Thirty-eight of the complaints were resolved simply by rolling the video; the remaining two cases resulted in felony indictments—of the *accusers*, not the police. In one case, Thomas Golden was indicted for "falsely incriminating another." Golden claimed to be the victim of reverse racial profiling when, he said, Sergeant L. Gregan threatened him, used racial slurs, and pinned his hand against the car door with a holstered pistol. The tape shows this never happened; so Golden now faces up to 18 months in jail and a \$10,000 fine, if convicted.

The state police had wanted cameras in the cars for years, but at \$3,500 a pop, equipping all 961 patrol cars was too expensive. Now, in the wake of the racial profiling controversy, 745 patrol cars have cameras. The remaining cars are old and will be fitted with the new equipment when upgraded.

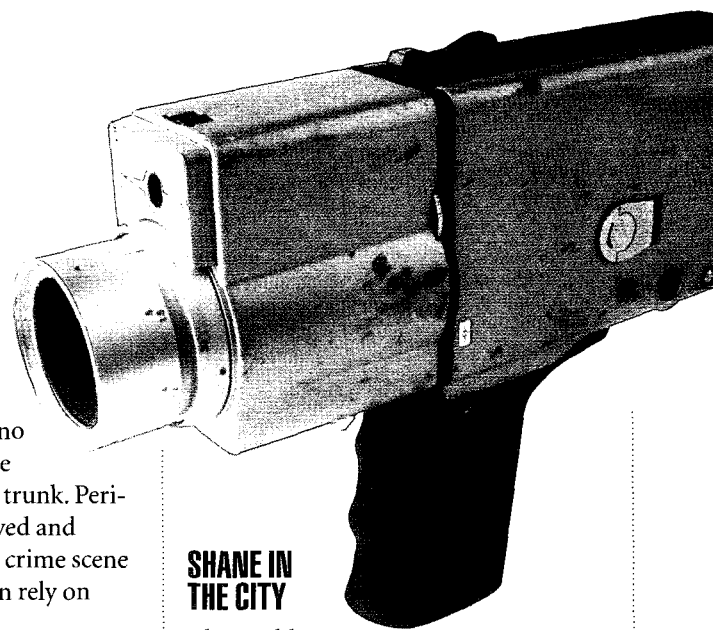
The cameras are mounted on the dash and each trooper wears a microphone; all conversations and actions are

recorded. The officers have no access to the tapes, which are locked in a metal box in the trunk. Periodically, the tapes are removed and stored. They are treated like crime scene evidence, so the troopers can rely on them in court.

For the state police, being exonerated in every incident is good news, and they hope it will repair their reputation. Since breaking the racial-profiling story in April 1998, the *New Jersey Star-Ledger* has published more than 200 stories on race profiling. The national media stepped up the pressure when it picked up the story, leading to the forced resignation of State Police Superintendent Carl Williams and new penalties for officers who use racial profiling of motorists to screen for likely lawbreakers.

Critics argue the troopers are behaving well only because they are on tape. But whatever the reason, this hard evidence shows that police work is difficult, that the vast majority of cops act professionally, and that few of those stopped by the police are victims.

—Brendan Miniter is an editor for the Commentary section of the Washington Times.



SHANE IN THE CITY

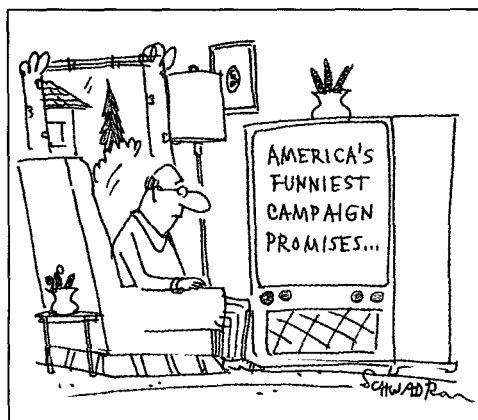
Alan Ladd was such a small man that he regularly stood on a box while filming the classic 1953 film *Shane*, but when he looks Jack Palance in the eye and doesn't twitch, Ladd is the perfect cross between James Dean and Harrison Ford.

The best part of the movie is the relationship between Shane and little Joey Starrett. After learning life's lessons at the foot of the master, I always imagined a grown Joey becoming a heck of a sheriff.

Today's inner-city youths are not far away in spirit from the Starretts' Grand Teton home. It would take a Shane to stand up to the Crips and the Bloods. But if Shane could be sent in, would it make a difference?

One of my favorite econometric papers sheds light on that important question. In "The Company You Keep: The Effects of Family and Neighborhood on Disadvantaged Youths," Anne C. Case and Lawrence F. Katz sift through data on Boston inner-city youth in the late 1980s. They demonstrate that the two things that matter most to a kid are (1) his family and (2) the kids in his neighborhood.

Case and Katz use a large dataset to examine six behaviors: crime, drug use, becoming a single parent, being idle, dropping out of high school, and attending church. The data show that kids tend to be a lot like their parents. If a family member is in jail, a child is much more likely to commit a crime. If a family

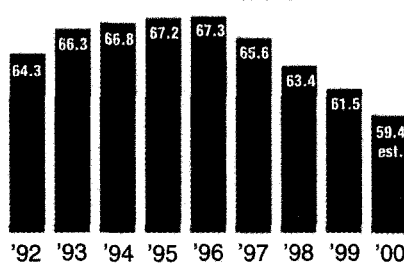


NOT-SO-DAUGHTERLY DEBT

With massive budget surpluses in Washington, some pols insist that a hefty portion of that money—your money—must be used to pay down the national debt. Yet without any help from those surplus funds, the debt has actually been shrinking in size compared to the economy (see chart).

Which suggests that if the economy continues to grow, the debt could easily be kept in control. And of course, one fine way to fuel an economy is to let productive Americans keep the rewards of their labor.

Federal Debt as % of GDP



Source: U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

member has a drug or alcohol problem, a child is much more likely to. If your mother was less than 20 when she had you, or your parents are not married, you are much more likely to have a child out of wedlock yourself.

Interestingly, the effects do not cross-fertilize much. If you have a family member in jail, it doesn't affect your probability of being a single parent. If your parents finished school, then you are much more likely to do so yourself, but that doesn't change your likelihood of committing a crime, doing drugs, or being a single parent. About the only factor that does affect unrelated behaviors is attending church: Kids of parents who attend church are much less likely to use illegal drugs.

The kids in your neighborhood are also important. Increase the number of children in your neighborhood who have committed a crime by 50 percent, and the odds of your kid's committing a crime increase about 5 percent. Increase the number of kids in your neighborhood who do drugs by 50 percent, and the odds of your child's doing drugs increase about 19 percent. There are good influences too. Increase the number of children in your

neighborhood who go to church by 50 percent, and the odds of your child's going increase about 25 percent.

Case and Katz lack the data to determine the effect of adults on other people's children, but their evidence is highly suggestive. Since parents have a large effect on their own children, and children have a large effect on each other, there clearly must be a link. If we could talk Shane into raising a family in the South Bronx, we could surely change some lives. The problem is, the linkage goes both ways: Shane's kids could end up gang members; so the good role models in the Bronx are behaving rationally if they head for the 'burbs.

Still, we should search for ways to stave off the flight of role models and encourage the immigration of new role models into bad areas. Many localities are already catching on. Washington, D.C., for example, gives first-time home buyers there a \$5,000 tax credit. That's a good incentive for Shane to come back

—Contributing writer **Kevin Hassett** is an American Enterprise Institute resident scholar.

THE BIBLE IS NO LAUGHING MATTER

"In Australia, we have a rather unkind joke," an acquaintance reported. "We say that in America, the kids are allowed to take their guns to school but not their Bibles."

This grim quip on school violence usually gets laughs with foreigners. Yet I wonder whether U.S. schools' treatment of religion will long continue to be a source of international humor. For while skirmishes over school prayer and posting the Ten Commandments have received much attention, a significant development has gone largely unnoticed.

The Freedom Forum (an educational foundation dedicated to promoting First Amendment freedoms) recently issued a report, "The Bible and Public Schools," which encourages educators to teach students about the influence of biblical stories and concepts in subjects like literature, history, music, art, and social studies.

An amazingly diverse coalition has endorsed the report, including the National Education Association, the National Bible Association, the American Jewish Congress, the National Association of Evangelicals, the American Federation of

Teachers, the Christian Educators Association, and People for the American Way.

The Freedom Forum is *not* calling for public schools to engage in religious indoctrination. Indeed, its report carefully states that any teacher-led study of religion must be educational, not devotional, since formation in faith is the responsibility of parents and religious communities, not public schools. But the report also makes clear that a certain amount of biblical literacy is necessary for Americans to understand the role religion has played and continues to play in Western civilization. As Supreme Court Justice and civil libertarian William Brennan once observed, "It would be impossible to teach meaningfully many subjects in the social sciences or the humanities without some mention of religion."

Authors Charles Haynes and Chuck Stetson explain that teaching students about the Bible is one way public educators can cultivate respect for the role religion plays in public life, without promoting a particular sect or group. And integrating the Bible in the curriculum complements character education programs that seek to teach students morality in a manner that neither invokes nor discredits religious authority.

In addition, teaching about the Bible helps students understand why so many Americans responded when Abraham Lincoln quoted Matthew 12:25, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." And it gives them a better understanding of everyday language, including "by the skin of my teeth" (Job 19:20), a "fly in the ointment" (Ecclesiastes 10:1), a "drop in the bucket" (Isaiah 40:15), "see eye to eye" (Isaiah 52:8), the "eleventh hour" (Matthew 20:6), the "kiss of death" (Matthew 26:49), "washed his hands of it" (Matthew 27:29), and the "grapes of wrath" (Revelation 17:4).

The Freedom Forum recognizes that teaching public high school students about the Bible carries with it as many risks as teaching drivers' ed, shop, or chemistry. But the Forum also insists that ignoring the Bible in the classroom is an even riskier proposition. As that Australian acquaintance told me, schools that ignore the Bible are something of a joke.

—**William R. Mattox Jr.** is a member of USA Today's Board of Contributors.



AN HONORABLE PATRIOT

The Patriot, an honestly brutal film set during the American Revolution, has a virtue beyond its fervent love of country: Above all, this big summer movie honors military sacrifice without resorting to Hollywood's usual glorification of violence.

The Patriot is violent, to be sure, but not since *Saving Private Ryan* has a film painted such a balanced picture of bloodshed's necessity and cost. Because Robert Rodat wrote the screenplays for both historical epics, one is tempted to credit him. Yet other hands were involved here, notably those of star Mel Gibson, whose family-oriented, Catholic background makes him somewhat of a Hollywood oddball, and director Roland Emmerich, the German filmmaker who ironically brought a flag-waving enthusiasm to the alien-invasion hit *Independence Day*.

Yet unlike *Independence Day*, *The Patriot* isn't just a communal massage of the American ego. This is a movie full of flawed and desperate characters, some of whom make flawed decisions in the most desperate of times. Gibson's Benjamin Martin, a pacific farmer who forms a militia against the British to avenge an attack on his family, is a veteran of the French and Indian War. One question haunting the movie is whether he committed atrocities during a similar mission of vengeance in that conflict. This is an American hero capable of great rage and violence, and *The Patriot* is at its best when contemplating whether or not that violence is just.

Such questions arise during the first action set piece, in which Martin leads

two of his young boys on an ambush of a British unit holding his oldest son hostage. As Martin gruesomely chops his way through the British soldiers with his Cherokee axe, his children watch in stunned horror; they see their father less as some sort of Schwarzenegger action hero and more as a crazed killer. When Martin looks up at his sons after bludgeoning his last victim, his face is both victorious and riddled with shame.

There's also a stunning fight sequence in which another character defeats a sadistic British colonel. But rather than take his foe prisoner, this patriot seeks revenge by attempting the same sort of mutilation that Martin has been accused of committing during the French and Indian War. The would-be avenger, however, receives an ugly reward.

When a similar situation arises during the movie's climactic battle, *The Patriot* has an opportunity to make a truly staggering statement about sacrificing personal vengeance—and even yourself—for the greater good. Alas, this being a Hollywood blockbuster, Martin ultimately gets to take down the bad guy and still live to enjoy the glory.

That crowd-pleasing finale keeps the film from greatness, but at least it's smartly sobered by all that has come before. Just as the graphic nature of *Saving Private Ryan* made World War II real by giving it a life beyond monuments and days off school, so too does *The Patriot* lift the sacrifices made during the Revolutionary War out of our dusty textbooks. That these sacrifices were made by men who struggled with the repercussions of violence makes this a summer movie with surprising resonance.

—Josh Larsen is a contributing writer to TAE.

SCAPEGOATS

A while back, TV screens filled with live coverage of a botched bank robbery that was unusually violent even for Los Angeles. Two masked men shot it out with police until, hours later, both criminals lay dead, with 11 officers and at least five bystanders injured.

The blood had not yet been washed from the sidewalks when commentary began. A state senator called for closing loopholes in weapons laws. The chair of the public safety committee of the Los Angeles City Council called for stricter gun-control laws. A law professor blamed the gun lobby.

The criminals used automatic weapons (which fire repeatedly with just one pull of the trigger)—weapons that have been virtually banned by federal law since 1934, with mere possession good for ten years in prison. Clearly the crooks got their weapons on the illegal market, where most criminals get their guns. Perhaps the guns arrived from our "strategic partner" China, a major source of such weapons; perhaps they came across the Mexican border; perhaps they were imported by the arms dealer who visited the White House and made large contributions to the Democratic Party. Those who blamed lax gun laws never raised these possibilities.

Placing blame where it doesn't belong means not having to discover where it does belong, which might be embarrassing. It is easier to blame the gun lobby, which we are led to believe represents gun manufacturers and is composed of militia types running around in camouflage fatigues and hatching nefarious plots. Instead of trying to solve complex problems like what to do about a revolving-

MISERY SELLS

What's easier to sell: misery or money? The answer, for the military, turns out to be misery.

Of the four services, only the Marines have no trouble making their recruiting goals, and they do so while spending far less on ads, according to a new Defense Department report. While the other services try to lure the young with cash for college—up to \$50,000—the Corps offers nothing but hard challenges: "Running Won't Kill You," a magazine ad taunts, "You'll Pass Out First."

The Defense report concludes that patriotism, discipline, and pride appeal far more to kids than money. We hope parents as well as recruiters are listening.

door justice system, violent gangs, or fatherless boys, it's easier to respond to violent crimes by reflexively repeating, "We need more gun-control laws, and it's the gun lobby's fault we don't have them."

Such mindless repetition could be performed by parrots—which are cheaper to maintain and prettier to look at than politicians and pundits.

—David Stolinsky practices medicine in Los Angeles.

THE BACKSTABBER

New York Governor George Pataki, you must remember, got his start in statewide politics by stabbing a former friend in the back. In 1992 he defeated State Senator Mary Goodhue, for whom he had once worked, in a bitter primary. Two years later, Pataki vanquished Governor Mario Cuomo, largely due to an overwhelming anti-Cuomo turnout in rural upstate New York. A significant part of the anti-Cuomo animus owed to the governor's oft-expressed contempt for gun owners.

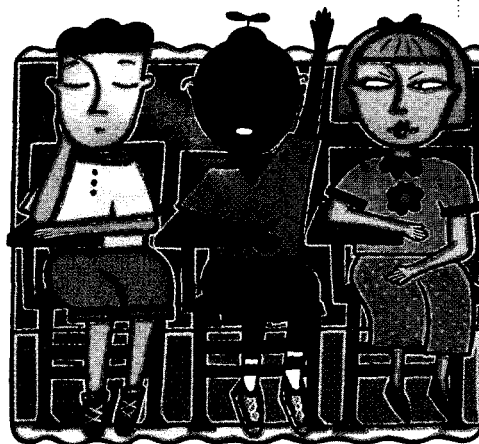
Rural New Yorkers now know the same hard truth about George Pataki that Senator Goodhue learned. Governor Pataki has pushed through the state legislature a set of new gun controls that are among the harshest in the nation. "It really puts New York in the forefront among the states," sighed Barbara Hohlt of New Yorkers Against Gun Violence. Among other focus-group-tested provisions, the Pataki package raises the age for gun permits from 18 to 21, requires trigger locks on new handguns, and requires background checks at gun shows.

The volunteer fire departments and sportsmen's groups that sponsor gun shows—which are essentially rural swap meets (see "The Shocking Truth About Gun Shows," September/October 1999)—may be devastated by the new gun-show regulations, which discourage the sort of unlicensed buying, selling, and trading that

is part of the folksy charm of the gun show.

The New York Times is pleased; the people to whom Pataki owes his 1994 elevation from obscurity are not. The governor is up for re-election in 2002. He may find, as his Hudson Valley brother Benedict Arnold did all those years ago, that sometimes turncoats get punished.

—Associate editor **Bill Kauffman** lives in his native Genesee County, New York, and is the author of *Country Towns of New York*.



OPEN UP THE SCHOOLS

The Republican Party has a problem with education. Polls show education is the public's highest concern, yet Republicans believe schools are best kept under local control. So the Republicans' national education proposals strike voters as negative or trivial.

The current party agenda consists of small-bore proposals for federally assisted merit pay for teachers; private school vouchers (at least for students in failing schools); and consolidating existing federal grant programs. None of these policies has much of a constituency. Worse, they nibble around the central problem: The public schools are a closed shop. Their teachers are restricted to education school graduates, whose unions are the most powerful American lobby and whose philosophy favors uniformity and "leveling down."

A Republican program for education should have one central objective: demolishing the closed shop. Here are a few particular suggestions, each of which has a constituency.

- All federal aid that comes with mandates should go to districts—not state departments of education—with the

greatest need. Districts surrendering funds can be compensated by being relieved of onerous mandates.

- Launch a high-profile crusade to repeal federal restrictions on school discipline, as Senator Slade Gorton (R-Wash.) has urged. This will have the support of unionized teachers, if not of their unions.

- "Special education" programs are a major drain on inner-city systems, where "special" students now make up to 20-25 percent of the school population. If federal aid to special education is continued, as some Republicans propose, it should be restricted to students with true learning disabilities and the most seriously disruptive students, and it should be given directly to parents as vouchers. Unions have already accepted state and local programs that transfer the most difficult students to state-aided private schools, frequently at costs exceeding \$40,000 per student. This is where vouchers should begin.

- Any general federal aid that is given should go directly to each school and be administered by the principal, subject to correction by a board for each school composed of parents, teachers, and community leaders, and subject to independent financial audit. That's how Britain wrested schools from union control: Elaborate grievance procedures that make it hard to remove unfit teachers disappear when each school makes its own hiring decisions.

- Passing a federal law that allows teachers certified in one state to teach in all states (subject to any local tests imposed on all teachers) would let states require teacher competence but demolish ed-school monopolies: Non-education majors could become certified in states that do not require ed school credentials, then teach elsewhere.

- Break up the single-salary schedule for teachers using a program that resembles the Eisenhower-era National Defense Education Act, which provided bonuses to qualified secondary-school science and math teachers.

A convincing Republican program needs several initiatives like these, put not in unread platform planks or occasional speeches, but in a formal document, endorsed by the congressional leadership and presented as the Con-

KID CAPITALISM

How young are the new high-tech moguls? asks P.J. O'Rourke: "There's a sign on the door at most New York investment banks: No Shirt, No Shoes, No IPO."

GEORGE BURNS WAS RIGHT

Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services, celebrated the thirty-fifth anniversary of Medicare at a gala featuring 102-year-old recipient Mark Powell—who told the *Washington Post* he smokes five or six cigars a day.

tract with America was—on the front steps of the Capitol, by a unified congressional delegation, joined by leading Republican governors.

A party without a serious education program, and a convincing determination to implement it, will not deserve to win an election.

—Attorney **George Liebmann** is a TAE contributing writer.

THE RACE OF HEROES

The world is populated by heroes. Every man or woman who lives a full life has to be a hero at some time. If you're middle aged, you have to face the death of your parents. If you're a mother, you have to go through the pain of childbirth. If you're in the military, you have to do dangerous acts, even in peacetime, and far more so in war.

If you get old, or even if you don't, you have to die. Almost always, the circumstances are painful, frequently lonely and frightening. I spent six weeks visiting an intensive care ward last year, surrounded by men, women, and children whose prognosis was dismal, who were in horrible discomfort, and who were often alone.

Though some may say they had no choice, they were still heroic in that they rarely cried out in pain or fear or loneliness. They gritted their teeth and bore their plight. To be a human is to face terrible problems, at least at the end, and this makes almost everyone a hero eventually. Indeed, everyone who is aware knows he must die and has no certainty of what comes afterwards. To carry on, to make families, to try to help others, to create great science and art in the face of certain death—that's heroism. The whole human race is the premier race of heroes, since we are the only species who know we are going to die.

For me, some heroes rank high: Men at war who throw themselves into desperate situations to save their comrades. I think of men who hurl themselves on top of grenades to save their squad; men who held on at Korea's Chosin Reservoir to cover a retreat; men who fought in the Pacific against hopeless odds until reinforcements could be brought up.

I often think of the men who—by the millions—went over the top in World War I to face certain death by machine gun fire on the Western front, and the men of the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia who threw themselves into Confederate trenches at Fredericksburg or Union fortifications at Malvern Hill, facing a horrible slow death if hit.

I think of my fellow Jews who were rounded up and had to face death, torture, humiliation, and pain, often working for long periods in illness and starvation, fighting to stay alive so they could see their children again. Then I think of those who fought back with guns in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and a hundred smaller actions with hopeless odds. These are the precursors of the Israeli fighting heroes, who laid down their lives so a state could be found for the wretched of the earth and then the state protected.

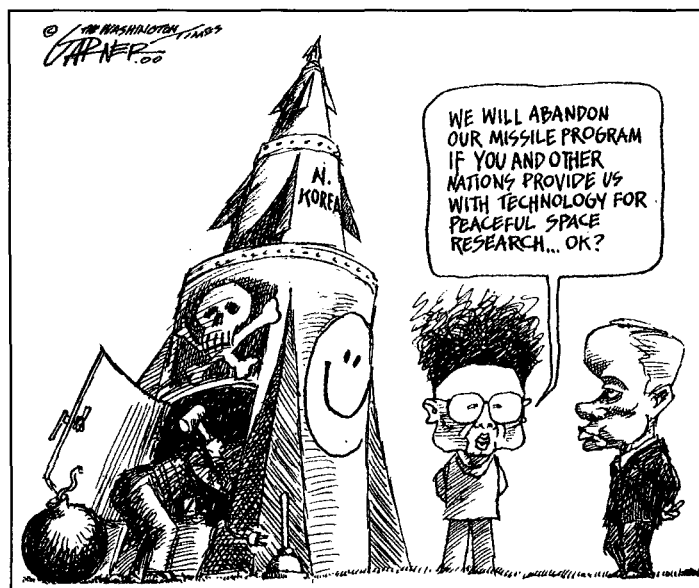
I often think with confusion about the bravery of the German and Soviet fighters in World War II. Despite being led by evil dictators, they displayed staggering courage in desperate situations. There were German units fighting with élan and ingenuity against the Russians until the last few moments of the war. You can hate what these people were fighting for, and even hate them, but their courage is undeniable. Still, to me, a hero has to be fighting for something at least somewhat decent. The German fighters were brave beyond words, but were they heroes? Not to me.

I've been privileged to know a number of heroes. My father-in-law, Colonel Dale Denman Jr., won two Silver Stars, one in Germany in World War II and one in Vietnam when he was middle aged, fighting against the North Vietnamese in brutal circumstances. My wife's uncle Bob Denman won the Silver Star for his heroism in Korea fighting off a Chinese advance. My law school classmate John Keker was a brave Marine gravely wounded in Vietnam. My financier pal Larry Lissitzyn also fought and was wounded in Vietnam. Both could easily have deferred military service. My high school classmate Tommy Norris won the Medal of Honor in Vietnam for going behind North Vietnamese borders to rescue downed U.S. fliers, even fighting and swimming with a bullet in his face. He is a hero beyond words.

And I think of a hero at home: my father, Herbert Stein. He was in combat against mortality for his last six brutal weeks, with every kind of pain and bodily breakdown, in imminent fear of death. Yet he kept his kindness and generosity of spirit to the end. The last thing he did before his heart stopped was to kiss the hand of a woman he loved who had come to visit him—with so many tubes in his mouth he could not even get the hand close.

But there are many others. Our race has deep flaws, but it is a race of heroes.

—Contributing writer **Ben Stein** is an actor, lawyer, and author in Los Angeles.



Forward Observer

JAMES GLASSMAN

High-tech Politics

As the “inventor” of the Internet, Vice President Al Gore would seem to deserve the broad support of Silicon Valley. Actually, of course, Gore didn’t invent the Internet and shouldn’t have the support of Silicon Valley if he had. Yet he does.

Kim Polese, CEO of Marimba, Inc., was quoted in the *Washington Post* recently as saying, “It’s not a Republican valley or a Democratic valley.” But that’s nonsense. While there are no surveys providing empirical evidence, anyone who has traveled to Silicon Valley and other tech hot spots around the country cannot doubt that Democrats rule and that Gore is ahead in the presidential election.

In a Field poll taken in mid-June, Gore led Bush 46 percent to 35 percent in California overall, with 7 percent for Ralph Nader, the Green Party candidate. But in the San Francisco Bay area, ground zero for high technology, Gore led 58 percent to 23 percent, with 8 percent for Nader.

Here are the reasons why Gore shouldn’t be leading: First, on issues of substance to techies, the Clinton administration has been, at best, an unenthusiastic supporter. Take, for example, what at mid-year was probably the single most important issue for Internet companies: increasing the number of H1-B visas the U.S. will issue to skilled workers from other countries (many from India) who fill the gaping ranks of high-tech firms. Finding good scientists is the biggest problem many of these companies face. After all, the number of computer and information sciences degrees granted in the United States in 1999 was actually below the figure nine years earlier.

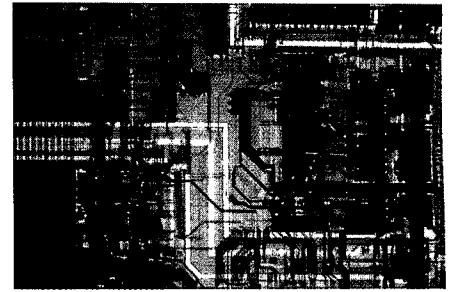
So we have to import talent. There’s nothing wrong with that. But unions—

stalwart supporters of Democrats—object, since as they see it, more supply reduces (or at least deters the rapid rise of) the price of homegrown labor. And so the Clinton administration, including Gore, has been unenthusiastic about H1-B visas, according to Representative David Dreier (R-Calif.), the chief sponsor.

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Another issue on which Democrats have been lukewarm—and indeed, openly hostile—is extending the moratorium on new taxes on the Internet, including sales taxes on purchases across state borders. In addition, the Democrats, looking out for their wealthy trial-lawyer friends, opposed sensible waivers of liability for Y2K glitches in software and hardware, which would have helped tech companies fend off frivolous lawsuits.

But far more important than specific issues is a party’s overall outlook on government intervention in technology: The Democrats, including the Clinton administration, like it. Many tech firms supported, indeed encouraged, the Justice Department’s successful attempt to have a legal judgment break up Microsoft. But it’s indisputable that tech stocks, as reflected by the Nasdaq index, began taking a terrible fall in March, after



it became clear that the break-up had a good chance of becoming reality. Now the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission are pursuing other tech firms, including eBay and America Online. The economic boom that began in 1981 with a key symbolic and substantive event—the firing of the air traffic controllers by Ronald Reagan—could end in 2000 with another key symbolic and substantive event—the suit against Microsoft.

Technology has thrived as a kind of “enterprise zone” of low taxes, low regulation, and very little rent-seeking among the big players. Now, like Old Economy companies, tech firms are whining to politicians, trying to have government give them an edge or punish their competitors. As Dan Balz wrote in the *Washington Post*, “Government’s involvement in the business of technology is rapidly growing.”

Yes. And this is where Republican presidential hopeful George W. Bush comes in. He can steal a play from Gore’s own book and say simply, “From Microsoft to Internet taxes, this administration, with Al Gore’s help, has been pursuing risky policies that put our economic growth in jeopardy. Bill Clinton and Tony Blair cast doubt on the property rights of biotech companies, and their stocks crash. The Microsoft suit has led to a depletion in capital values of about \$2 trillion. Technology is the engine of this economic boom. Alan Greenspan says it. We all know it. We need to allow Americans the freedom to innovate—without government interference.”