

ual sodomy. The gay lobby's *raison d'être* involves neither skin color nor gender, nationality nor religion. It exists to promote a particular kind of sex act. Without it they are literally nothing in their own minds. In fact, homosexuals claim they would just as soon die without it. That is the pathology that the Weld Commission is asking the public to support.

Dozens of recent studies show that revising one's image of the family and the several roles to be played out within the family does not turn a grave situation bright. For decades liberal pundits and ideologues have attempted, and managed, to establish a new social conscience in which the liberation of the individual away from the family is exalted. Women were encouraged to leave small children in favor of a career, parents were encouraged to place their small children in daycare, divorce was given a liberating quality, and sexual prowess was elevated to new heights of acceptability. The traditional family was pronounced evil and detrimental to a progressive society. The opposite remains a proven truth.

Governor Weld's support of homosexuality detracts from the effectiveness of the traditional family—and the traditional family unit is the keystone to social, economic, and moral well-being.

As a part of "Empower America," Governor Weld has isolated the family from social conservatives. And no amount of water can be carried by Bill Bennett to assuage them. The true test of their loyalty is to denounce Governor Weld's support of the homosexual agenda as dangerous and foolhardy.

Martin Mawyer is the president of Christian Action Network.

Defending Gun Ownership

by Paul Kirchner

Gun owners are often asked by friends, and rhetorically by politicians and the media, "How can you stand having a gun in your home?" Sometimes we try to bridge the gap by speaking of our love of hunting or target shooting or of our appreciation of the history and craftsmanship of firearms. But this evades the issue. It is the gun's purpose as a weapon, as a killing machine, that provokes such questions and that also makes firearms so precious to their owners.

Of the two primal purposes of a gun, hunting may no longer be necessary for survival, but self-defense is increasing in importance. When we defend ourselves we are looking not to kill, but to stop, immediately, the actions of a deadly aggressor. To do so we may have to kill, or threaten to kill. The alternative is submission, and a man who submits to violence may or may not survive; if he does he becomes a victim, one whose fate has been controlled by his aggressor, who may continue to prey on others. A civilized order cannot survive if decent men are resigned to be victims.


Almost as basic as self-defense is the defense of the individual against the state itself. If, in a democracy, power is in the hands of the people, then surely guns, the tools of power, belong there as well. As the bumper sticker puts it, "The Second Amendment ain't about duck hunting." Americans have chosen never to be helpless before their own government, and the right to keep and bear arms defines our status as free citizens. If that upsets Janet Reno and the BATF, well, that only hardens our resolve.

The smile that springs to a man's face when he handles a fine weapon is triggered by the feeling of security and self-determination it imparts, but also by an excitement. In the Timid New World of the nanny state, it is bracing to leave the playpen at times and get ahold of something dangerous, to hear the bang and feel the kick. A man doesn't want to go through life constantly having sharp objects removed from his reach. That a gun is deadly is part of its attraction, and not, I believe, in any pathological sense. The gun puts great power at one's command, but at the same time it imposes an absolute and unforgiving discipline on the man who accepts it. Not only must he master the gun, he must master himself. Meeting this challenge is one of the gratifications of gun ownership.

As the ultimate power tool, the gun is an unusually satisfying possession. Its mechanism is complex yet reassuringly comprehensible. It is better made than most personal effects, intended to last a lifetime and to be reliable under almost any condition. To function it requires only ammunition, an unusually durable commodity with an indefinite shelf life. This heirloom quality of the firearm appeals to those of us of the conservative temperament. Many of the tools we use every day pass through our lives like so much Kleenex. Our computers, stereo equipment, and electronic gadgets barely outlast their warranties and then are too obsolete to be worth repairing. A gun is something we can hang on to.

The often symbolic aspect of guns adds to their appeal. A friend purchased an Uzi to protect his home, and in his case I understood the choice. The Uzi is the "Kentucky rifle" of the state of Israel, and as an observant Jew, he felt added security and confidence with this historically important weapon. Clearly, a gun picks up some of the honor or ignominy of the causes it has served. The M-1 Garand reminds us of World War II, just as the AK-47 is a more fitting symbol of world communism than the hammer and sickle. The gun also acquires a piece of its owner's soul through long association and use, especially dramatic use. That's the mystique of the personal weapons of famous gunmen, such as Jesse James, Billy the Kid, Theodore Roosevelt, Melvin Purvis, John Dillinger, and General Patton. There is a special feeling about father's hunting rifle or the handgun that has been the family's bulwark for a generation. As a child I oc-

LIBERAL ARTS



RAINBOW-COLORED ROSES

The Los Angeles City Council voted last November to end the city's 96-year sponsorship of a float in the annual New Year's Day Rose Parade unless the Tournament of Roses includes women and minorities on its executive committee. The nine members of the committee are currently white, male volunteers with at least a quarter-century of service.

asionally got into my father's army trunk and examined the pistol he had brought home from World War II. As a medical officer, he was not issued a weapon but commandeered one from a wounded German. He was glad to have it during the war, and years later the threat of it drove a burglar from our home. He had been in a world war and was prepared, as I saw it, to pick up his weapon again if necessary. Of all his possessions, it is the one I value most.

In recent years, the concern with self-defense has created a market for military-style semiautomatics, or assault weapons. Military-style semiautomatics have been available on the surplus market since the end of World War II, but the market for them did not explode until the 1970's with the advent of survivalism. Survivalism is an extreme vision of self-defense, but if you think this attitude is rare, confined to the likes of David Koresh, then you travel in different circles than I do. Many who don't consider themselves survivalists witness the impotence of authorities in the face of crime and rioting and find that they too require powerful reassurance. As weaponry, these guns range from the excellent to the preposterous, but all convey a deadly seriousness. Their black plastic stocks, pistol-grips, ventilated barrel sleeves, bayonet lugs, and flash hiders flaunt their status as killing machines. These accoutrements are more cosmetic than functional, but they provide the desired look of menace, like war paint. And it is their brazen appearance that makes them an easy target for antigun forces, who assert, "They're not for hunting or target-shooting; they're designed only to kill!" Few on my side have the temerity to respond that, yes, indeed, that is their legitimate function.

Along with the handgun, the assault weapon draws the sharpest line between the differing views of gun ownership and raises the most basic questions. Is force a constant in our world? Can we evade it, deny it, rise above it? Are we helpless in the face of it, our safety best entrusted to others, or to fate? Or do we accept the reality of force, master it, and resolve to use it if need be?

Some of us recoil from the gun, thinking, "With this, how easily life can be taken." Others pick it up and say, "With this, my life will not be taken easily."

Paul Kirchner writes from Hamden, Connecticut.

Canadian Populism

by Donald I. Warren

Alive and Well

"October Revolution" is probably an apt description of Canada's 1993 parliamentary elections, as the month marked the enthronement of a left-oriented political establishment and the ejection of the ruling Conservatives. The Liberal Party's sweep to an absolute majority meant the relegation of the Tory Progressive Conservative Party to virtual extinction (it now holds only two parliamentary seats). Also noteworthy was the emergence of the separatist *Bloc Québécois*, although its overall vote total was only 12 percent. While given scant attention in the American media, the remarkable second-place finish of the Reform Party, with an impressive 19 percent slice of the electorate, calls for a closer look at what is brewing in our continental backyard.

Founded a mere five years ago, the Reform Party (in this—its second—national election) has grown from one to 52 seats, coming within a hair's breadth of being named the formal opposition, a position now occupied by the *Bloc Québécois* with its 53 seats. The winds of middle-class anger that swept from Canada's western provinces embody a rejection of establishment political elites on both the right and the left. Specifically, the Reform Party is heir to a lost sense of Canadian radical conservatism, more accurately described as an anti-big government populism seeking to restore a cultural identity to Canada's middle class. Based in the oil-rich province of Alberta, its tax-reductionism, anti-multiculturalism, and anti-welfare statism echo the "new politics" now found on both sides of the Atlantic, and its success in last year's election came as no surprise to those familiar with Canada's declining economic health. A 1991 report on public discontent had spoken of a "fury in the land."

Anchored in Calgary, the Reform Party is rooted in the Depression-era Social Credit movement headed by a media-savvy monetary reformer named William Aberhart. This talented clergyman had founded a Bible school prior to becoming the charismatic exponent of the ideas of Major C.H. Douglas, the

British military officer-turned-social thinker. In a startling victory, Aberhart led the newly created party to power in 1935. After five years of governing, Social Credit lost its popular support but persisted as a doctrine of populist agitation from British Columbia to Quebec.

Six decades later, the seemingly quiescent ghost of western Canadian populism has been resurrected in a party led by Preston Manning, son of one of the original organizers of Social Credit. Hardly a figure of captivating charm, the man with the visage of a mild-mannered "Clark Kent" has a fierce reputation as the "Superman" of the forgotten Canadian middle class. As one biographer matter-of-factly observes, "It is unusual in Canada for a political figure or a political party to arrive quickly and decisively on the national stage"; in fact, Preston Manning quickly trained for two decades before following in his father's footsteps. (Achieving much but never gaining any national prominence, Ernest Manning had staked out a career as premier of Alberta for 25 years and was revered by many as a virtual saint.) What drew the younger Manning from the political wilderness to assume aggressively his father's commitment to the major political realignment of Canada was the Movement for National Political Change that began in 1978. Central to this enterprise was the idea that Canada's major parties were headed toward the destruction of the nation and its key economic and social values.

By the early 1980's, a discernible prairie wildfire of populist anger began sweeping the land. In its wake lay an initially fragile coalition of rural and urban splinter groups organized under the rather prosaic title of the Alberta Political Alliance. With Preston Manning's skillful nurturance, this entity formed, in 1987, the nucleus of a second wave of Canadian political populism known as the Reform Association of Canada. While other Reform Association members restricted themselves to thinking in terms of provincial power, Manning set his sights on Ottawa and national politics from the organization's inception.

In a speech delivered during the party's first national electoral campaign in 1988, Manning declared the historic mission of the Reform Party to be the replacement of the Conservative Party, which he described as hampered by its "congenital inability to govern." With its free-trade and low-tax platform, the