

THE ONLY TIME I saw Bill Clinton in the flesh was four years ago in the London Ritz. I was having lunch with Leopold and Debbie Bismarck and the mother of my children, as I call Princess Alexandra Schoenburg-Hartenstein, my wife. There were Krauts galore plus some English friends, and we were celebrating Alexandra's birthday, which falls on September 26. Men were in dinner jackets, ladies in long dresses. Then in came Clinton, wearing a sleeveless sort of jumper over a T-shirt, with two black guys in jeans and outrageously gaudy windbreakers. The only ones properly dressed were the myriad of Secret Service personnel, all paid by yours truly, the American taxpayer.

Once they ensconced themselves at a table, I asked to speak to the maitre d', whom I know well, and demanded he throw the bums out. He refused because of Clinton's position as ex-president. I don't think I've ever felt as helpless as I did that day, especially after my wife told me that she would leave if I insulted Clinton, which I was ready to do. Manners, like courage on the battlefield, are not something Clinton is familiar with, and forelock-tugging maitre d's are not making it any easier for those of us who still believe in old-fashioned values.

Let's face it. Coarseness, violence, dishonesty, and lawlessness threaten to spread into every corner of life. To give one example: Spitting in public in all civilized societies has traditionally been an almost imprisonable offense. Nowadays, it is common. Black people and Hispanics, I have noticed, spit more than whites, New York City being the spit capital of the Western world. Another brutality is dress. Just as familiarity breeds contempt, informality generates disrespect. Can you imagine Calvin Coolidge or Herbert Hoover answering questions about what type of underwear they wore? The slob Clinton did, and some people even thought it cute. Can you imagine Churchill in a track suit, or even the criminal FDR in Bermuda shorts

saying, "Call me Frank"?

It's the eagerness to play slob by people who should know better that gets me. As if we didn't have enough sloppiness already. Airports nowadays resemble locker rooms, with grotesquely overweight people waddling in their track suits and disgusting sneakers. When I first flew across the Atlantic in 1948, we had beds in first class, and everyone was dressed to the nines. In fact, I don't think they would have allowed anyone dressed in a sweatsuit to board. This went on until well into the 70's. Then came the peanut farmer, the first American president to address the people wearing a sweater and jeans. Carter was a disaster sartorially, but he was a far better president than Clinton, Bush, and Obama could ever hope to be.

Bill Clinton was the first slob president, a terrible dresser who favored sneakers and sweat clothes when he played golf. He and his ghastly cronies view elegance as a villain, an antipopulist conspiracy of those born to privilege. Popular culture teaches us that fashion should be liberating. It is a clumsy argument made by philistines who possess the sensibilities of a Stalinist bureaucrat. High glamour once ruled Hollywood during its golden age. Now stars look like garage mechanics, which many of them probably were. Once upon a time actors spoke wonderful English with contrived upper-class accents. The old Central European Jews who controlled Hollywood insisted on it. The younger generation of Jews who control it now think that there's

more money to be made by dumbing down and dressing down. It is the age of the common man, after all.

Well, yes and no. The shabbiness of the modern male and female comes at the expense of a society unashamed of its vices. The arrogant disdain shown by the phony hippie movement of the 60's was matched only by the hippies' selfishness and greed. Sleaziness like Madonna's may be in vogue today, but look what her ilk has done to civility and common courtesy. I knew the game was up when about 15 years ago I arrived at the Athens tennis club and asked a young man working as a porter at the front desk the time of my scheduled match. (It was a veterans' tournament.) I addressed him in the formal plural. He answered in the informal singular—and rather rudely, too. So I put my racket down on his desk, reminded him of my name, past championships I had won, and my age, and demanded to be addressed in the same way I had addressed him or else. He was dumbfounded. "What's the big deal?" he asked, or something to that effect.

People are now taught that informality makes us equal. Well, some will always be more equal than others, but for the record, smart dress and good manners have nothing to do with class. They have to do with pride and a sense of achievement. The great Charles Lindbergh wore a bow tie on his first Atlantic crossing. The grotesque Bill Clinton did not wear a tie at the Ritz. ♦



Common Slobbery

THE AGE OF AUGUSTUS

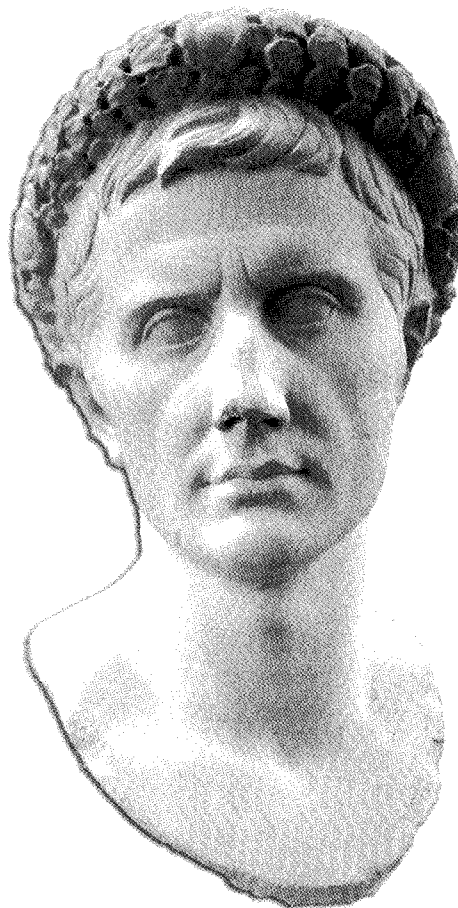
ROME • JANUARY 12-19, 2011

Join *Chronicles* editor Thomas Fleming, his wife, Gail, and Rockford Institute vice president Christopher Check for daily guided walks to Rome's churches, museums, and archeological sites.

Listen to lectures and participate in discussions on Vergil, Horace, Livy, and Ovid, and on the emperor who labored nobly to restore the glory of republican Rome.

Enjoy four-star lodging at, and magnificent views from, the Grand Hotel Gianicolo.

Gather with other *Chronicles* readers for four group meals and spirited conversation.



THE PRICE FOR THE WINTER SCHOOL INCLUDES:

- seven nights' (arrive Jan. 12; checkout on Jan. 19) lodging at the Grand Hotel Gianicolo (grandhotelgianicolo.it/english.html);
- daily breakfast; four group meals (either dinner or lunch);
- all lectures, discussions, and walking tours;
- and selected entrance fees to museums.



Winter School faculty:
Thomas and Gail Fleming, Christopher Check, and James Patrick

PRICES*

SINGLE	\$1,895. ⁰⁰ EA	<input type="checkbox"/>
COUPLE	\$2,795. ⁰⁰ EA	<input type="checkbox"/>
SHARED DOUBLE	\$1,595. ⁰⁰ EA	<input type="checkbox"/>

Registration is limited. Previous Winter Schools have sold out. Registration fees are based on current exchange rates; the Institute reserves the right to assess a fee, should rates change significantly at the dollar's expense. The Institute will make every effort to help find roommates for students who wish to take advantage of the shared-double rate. If no roommate is available, the difference between the shared-double rate and the single-occupancy rate will be assessed.

NAME(s) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE/FAX _____

E-MAIL _____

☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ AMEx ☐ DISCOVER ☐ CHECK ENCL.

CARD NO. _____ Exp. _____

☐ PLEASE ADD MY ADDRESS TO THE INSTITUTE'S E-MAIL LIST

To register, clip and mail this form along with a check or credit-card information to

THE ROCKFORD INSTITUTE/WINTER SCHOOL 2011
928 NORTH MAIN STREET
ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS 61103

Full-time undergraduate and graduate students interested in scholarships, anyone interested in supporting the Institute's Scholarship Fund, and anyone desiring more information should contact: Christopher Check, executive vice president, at (815) 964-5811 or visit www.rockfordinstitute.org/events.

Give *Chronicles* as your Christmas gift this year.

Looking for a unique Christmas gift for your son, daughter, clergyman, teacher, library, or best fishing pal? Consider giving *Chronicles* a gift that will be appreciated throughout the year.

Take advantage of *Chronicles* special Christmas Gift Offer. Your first gift subscription is only \$25 for 12 issues, a savings of \$19.99 off the basic rate. Additional gifts are only \$20.

Gift-announcement cards will be sent to each recipient.

Thank you, and Merry Christmas to you and your family from the *Chronicles* staff!

Three Simple Ways To Order:

- ▶ Mail this form, or a photocopy, to the address below
- ▶ Call (800) 877-5459
- ▶ Go to <http://www.chroniclesmagazine.org/Christmas>

My Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

GF1012X

\$25 for the first gift; \$20 for additional gifts. Total \$ _____
Add \$15 for surface mail for each gift outside the United States.
Offer valid only for new subscribers.

☐ Check enclosed ☐ Bill me later

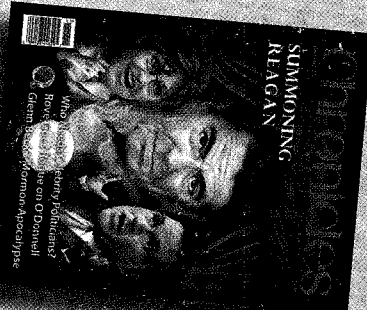
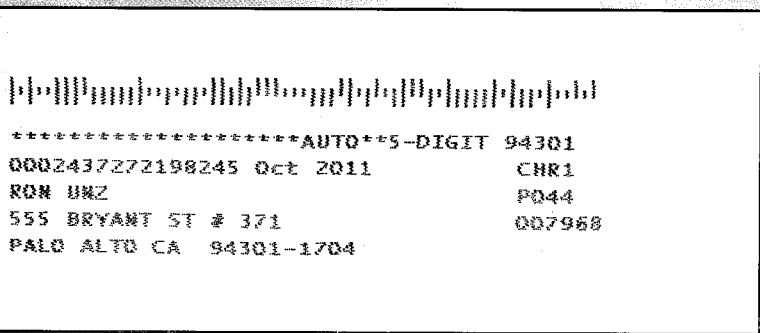
☐ Please bill my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ AmEx ☐ Discover

Account Number _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Mail to: *Chronicles*, Subscription Department, P.O. Box 0567, Selmer, TN 38375



Please send a *Chronicles* Christmas gift subscription to:

1. Gift for _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

2. Gift for _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

3. Gift for _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

4. Gift for _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Please use a separate sheet of paper for additional gifts.