

Love's Labour's Relocated

Is the man in this *Shakespeare In Love* poster supposed to be the Bard of Avon? The usual bloodless likeness—a stoic old head wrapped in a tight Elizabethan collar—has long been iconic, but this piece of Hollywood marketing suggests not only that Shakespeare was once young but that he was human. Is nothing sacred?

Shakespeare has spent a century as cultural spinach; some cultists have even thought his works too sacred to be performed. Yet he was once American pop. In the 19th century, Lawrence W. Levine points out in *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, the plays appealed to all classes for their melodrama and oratory. Singers, dancers, and comics even appeared between the (often edited) acts. Shakespeare's later capture by the polite classes was a turning point in establishing class-based cultural authority.

The reappearance of a living, breathing Shakespeare suggests the waning of gatekeeper authority. Better, the film—nominated for 13 Oscars—revives a popular view of the man. There was actually a 19th-century melodrama by Robert Penn Smith called *Shakespeare In Love*. Like the film, it was about a lovestruck youth, and it too invited audiences to perceive him not as an awesome icon but as fully human. After all, love, first learned in a lady's eyes, lives not alone immured in the brain.

—Charles Paul Freund

drug detected after fatal crashes but emphasized that it does not necessarily cause those accidents.

As Gieringer noted in the November issue of *California NORML Reports*, a 1990–91 study by NHTSA found that 52 percent of drivers in fatal crashes had alcohol in their blood, compared to 7 percent with traces of marijuana. In analyzing the role that drugs played in the crashes, NHTSA found “no indication that marijuana by itself was a cause of fatal accidents.”

Perhaps this distinction is too subtle for a bureaucrat to grasp. But anyone who keeps track of a \$17 billion annual budget should understand the difference between one-quarter and two. “The murder rate in Holland is double that in the United States,” McCaffrey said in July 1998, attributing the difference to Dutch tolerance of drug use. In fact, as the Dutch government was quick to point out,

the U.S. murder rate is about four times as high as Holland's.

Well, numbers are tricky. A drug czar has to focus on

$$2 + 2 = 5$$



the big picture and avoid getting bogged down in the details. Of course, sweeping statements can also be hazardous. “There is not a shred of scientific evidence that shows that smoked marijuana is useful or needed,” McCaffrey has said, criticizing the medical marijuana movement. To anyone familiar with the substantial body

of literature on the therapeutic uses of cannabis, such a claim signifies either appalling ignorance or bald-faced mendacity. Given McCaffrey's other misstatements, it's a hard to call to make.

Renaming History

By Mariel Garza

Mt. Reagan, Alaska? Reagansburg, Poland? Planet Reagan? These places don't exist—not yet, anyway. But if the folks heading the Ronald Reagan Legacy Project get their way, every state in the country—and even some other countries—will eventually have some landmark named after the president who attacked govern-

ment as “the problem.”

Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform, dreamed up the naming plan in 1997 as a way to instill appreciation for the Gipper. The country isn't quite sure how it feels about the Reagan years, says Norquist, who worries that the former actor's presidency is doing a slow fade in the public imagination. “That must not happen to the legacy of Ronald Reagan,” declares Norquist.

The legacy project had its first big success early in 1998 with the renaming of the Washington (D.C.) National

Airport to include Reagan's name. A few months later, Florida state officials agreed to rename the Florida Turnpike (I-75) after Reagan. And there will likely ▶



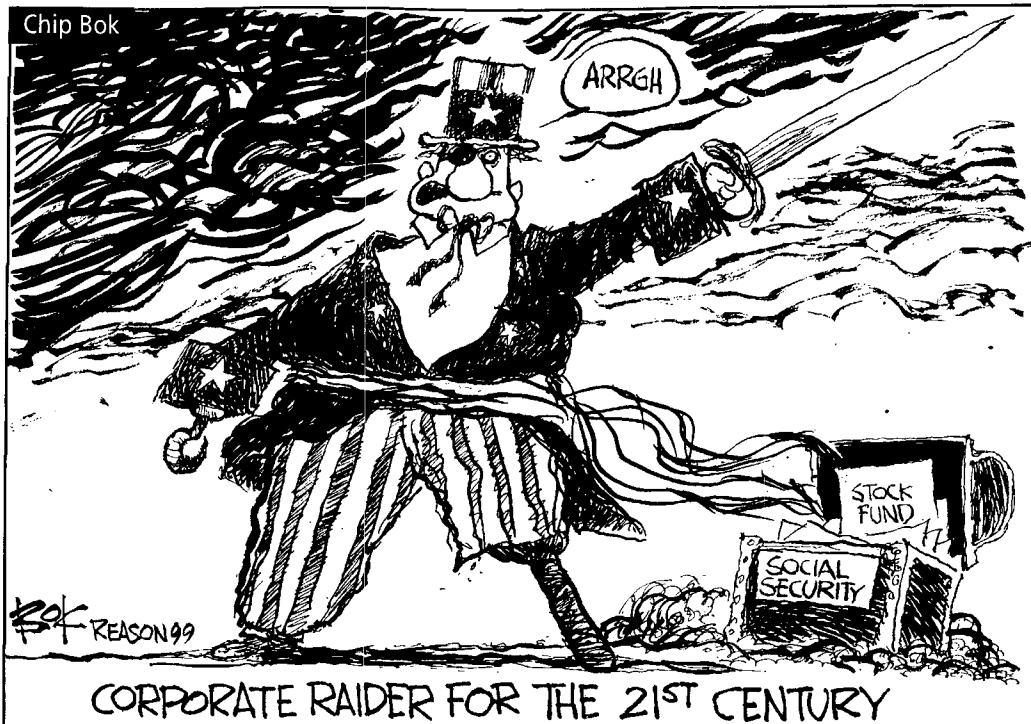
BRICKBATS

◆ Rosie Nelson is dead, and she's not too happy about it. Her problem started with a phone call from her bank. The Treasury Department had called the bank asking it to return the Social Security check she deposited. The feds said she was dead. Nelson disputed the claim. It was the third time in four months that the U.S. government had declared Nelson dead and tried to stop her Social Security benefits.

◆ Indian authorities have banned a play that depicts the late prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru as a lovesick man pining for the wife of Lord Mountbatten. Hindu nationalists, who wanted to stage the play, blame Nehru for the partition of India. But the government said the play might spark violent protests.

● Meanwhile, in Pakistan, the country split off from India, the national assembly approved a constitutional amendment obliging the federal government to enforce prayers five times daily and to collect religious tithes.

◆ Actor Christopher Reeve, paralyzed in a horse accident, wants to walk again, and he's become an advocate of spinal cord research. That has made him an enemy to many animal rights activists. Even some in the Hollywood community have turned on Reeve. "The sad thing about this is just because it's Christopher who is injured, researchers are breaking animals' spines by the thousands in order to find out how to get nerve regrowth," said actress Linda Blair.



be a Mt. Reagan designated sometime this year by a group of climbers who plan to claim an anonymous Alaska peak in the statesman's name.

The effort is also stretching to Eastern Europe, where Reagan's role in destroying the Soviet Union makes the project an easy sell. "Most of the people there are pretty fond of Reagan, even more so than some people here in America," says Michael Kamburowski, executive director of the legacy project.

To be sure, there's more than a little irony in naming public facilities after a president who campaigned on reducing federal expenditures. The inconsistency is one reason the renaming of the D.C. airport caused a controversy. But Kamburowski says his group is seeking only "appropriate" targets for the Reagan brand. Changing the airport name made sense, he says, because Reagan was instrumental in turning the airport's federal control over to a local authority.

Papal Beef

By Charles Paul Freund

Having successfully dispensed with both communism and liberation theology, Pope John Paul II has targeted the Church's two remaining major problems in the Western Hemisphere: Protestantism and capitalism.

In what might be termed his Max Weber tour, the pope visited Mexico City and St. Louis in January to energize the faithful on the eve of a Jubilee and to articulate the Vatican's post-Cold War message. The papal entourage's Mexican costs were picked up by two dozen multina-

tional corporations, who in return became "official sponsors" of His Holiness.

John Paul's remarks about Protestant missionaries and their alleged coercion of converts received little U.S. attention. His anti-capitalism, however, made headlines.

The pontiff decried surging "neoliberalism," a system "based on a purely economic conception of man" that holds "profit and law of the markets as its only parameters." In such a world, said the pope, "the powerful predominate, setting aside and even eliminating the powerless."

Given that this message was underwritten by, among oth-

