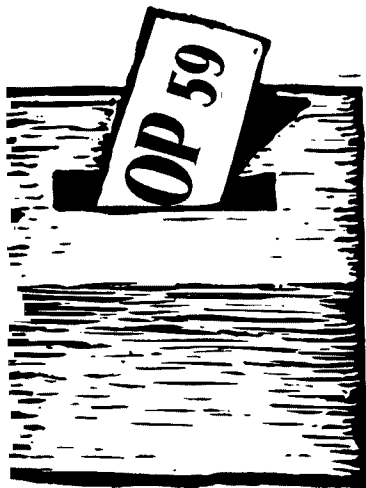


much that they passed legislation preventing the vote from being counted and certified. But now the vote has been properly tallied. The polls were right: Prop. 59 passed with a whopping 69 percent of the vote.

That's not to say Congress and the president will be bowing to the electorate's wishes any time soon. Because of the District's charter, the federal government retains the ability to overturn ballot initiatives and is expected to do so in this case. In fact, as of press time, the House of Representatives had already passed a bill to that effect.



Such an action would highlight the national government's indifference to voters' wishes and its conflict with state governments. California, Arizona, Washington, Oregon, and Alaska have already passed initiatives allowing marijuana or other controlled substances to be used in certain medical situations. This November, Maine will become the first state on the East Coast to vote on such an initiative; support for Question 2 there was hovering around 59 percent in early polls, and most observers assume it will pass easily. In 2000, Coloradans will vote on a medical marijuana initiative

SOUNDBITE

Witnessing Waco

By Michael W. Lynch

David Thibodeau lived at the Branch Davidians' Mount Carmel "compound," located just outside Waco, Texas, during the 1993 raids by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and the FBI—events that ultimately left 80 Davidians, including more than 20 children, and four federal agents dead. Thibodeau, one of nine Davidians to survive the raids—and one of four never charged with a crime—is co-author of *A Place Called Waco: A Survivor's Story* (Public Affairs). He recently talked via telephone with REASON Washington Editor Michael W. Lynch. For the full version of the interview, go to *Reason Online* (www.reason.com/bi/int-thib.html).



WYATT McSPADEN

Reason: How did you get involved with David Koresh?

David Thibodeau: I was a drummer living in Los Angeles in 1990. I went into Guitar Center, and David Koresh and Steven Schneider were looking at a drum set and they asked me to play it. I ended up giving Koresh a call and we started to play music together. I was invited to come out to Mount Carmel during Passover season. I started to really see that there was something there.

Reason: During the siege, did you ever have an agreement with the FBI to come out?

Thibodeau: The first one was in the first three days. This is where David lost a lot of credibility. We were set to come out and David said, "God has told me to wait." So we didn't come out.

Reason: Did you ever feel that the confrontation with the government was the fulfillment of prophecies?

Thibodeau: All the time. I'll give you an example. We were tearing down the small houses [in the compound], in preparation of building up the big house. I was up on the roof, and David said, "What are you people going to do when the tanks are surrounding this building? When there are hundreds of agents out there. When the people of Babylon come to get us? What are you going to do then? Are you going to believe this truth?"

Reason: Was the government's behavior simply incompetent?

Thibodeau: I think that they were perfectly brilliant in orchestrating the total destruction of the building. It hid a lot of the evidence.

It's like they followed the guidebook for what wouldn't work. I don't know why they wouldn't listen to their psychologists or why they wouldn't listen to their undercover agent [who had infiltrated the Davidians], or why they wouldn't listen to their own negotiators. There was no one that said, "Stop. We need to back off and think about this. There are kids here. What we are doing is wrong."

Reason: Do you think Janet Reno has lied or was just lied to about Waco?

Thibodeau: I think she was lied to and used as a pawn. I don't think she lied outright.

that has been held up by a court challenge. Also next year, Nevada will decide on a constitutional amendment legalizing medical marijuana (voters have already approved the measure once; under Nevada's constitution, amendments must be ratified twice).

On with the Show

By Ryan H. Sager

When budget constraints forced Citrus High School in Citrus County, Florida, to let an instructor go before this school year began, the principal decided to eliminate a drama teacher.

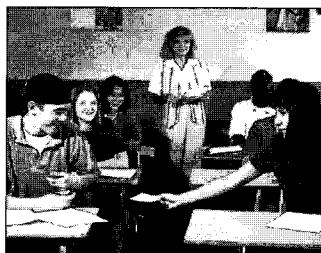
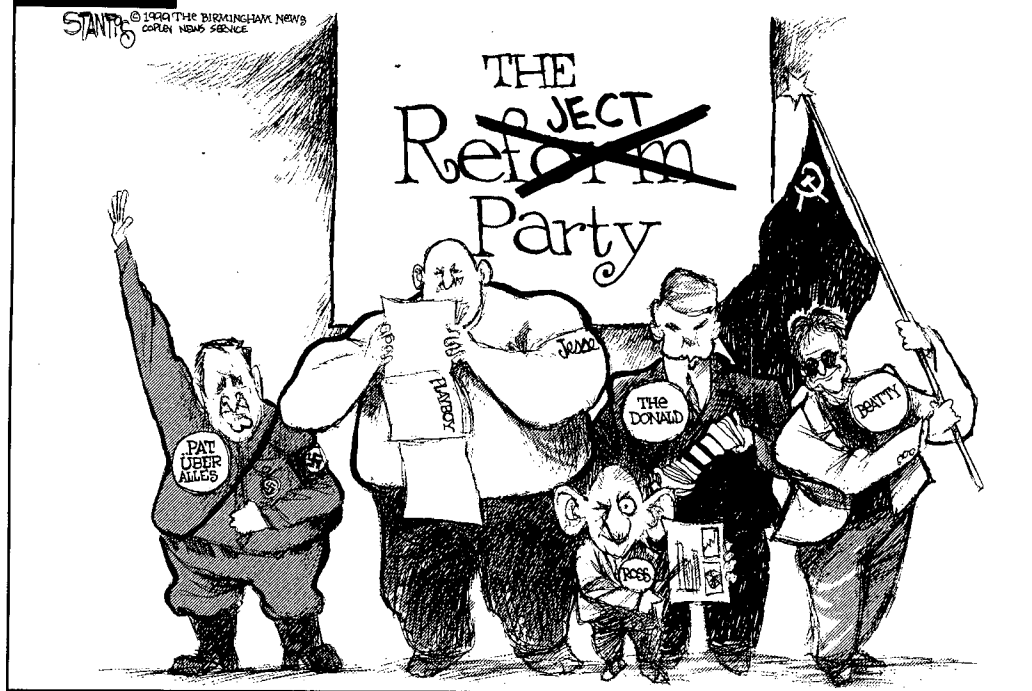
So parents and students alike were extremely happy when Judy Poplawski volunteered to teach drama classes at the school for free. Not only was the price right, but Poplawski had directed the local Playhouse 19 Community Theater for years. She also ran popular summer acting ►

♦ Australia is setting up for the 2000 Summer Olympics, which will be held in Sydney. ASIO, the nation's domestic intelligence agency, is going for the gold in its own way. It has requested sweeping new powers to deal with any potential terrorism. It wants to be able to break encryption codes, place tracking devices on people and cars, and intercept courier packages. ASIO also wants to be able to get search warrants more easily. And it wants to be able to use the databases of the Australian Tax Office and Austrac, the agency that monitors financial transactions, all without a warrant.

♦ Apparently, Bill Clinton is not the only president who has been charged with exposing himself. In Cobb County, Georgia, school officials are busy ripping out reproductions of the famous 1851 painting *Washington Crossing the Delaware* from a fifth-grade history text. As a school principal explained it, a watch fob resting on the general's thigh looks suspiciously like "George Washington's private part." Officials from the Peach State's Muscogee County opted for less drastic measures. Taking a page from the Soviets, they merely painted over the offending detail. "We said some kids will never even notice it, but there's always going to be the one or two who are going to get everything started," explained an administrator.

—Charles Oliver

Scott Stantis



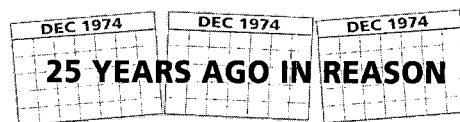
camps and had created several internship and scholarship programs. Several of her students have even gone on to Broadway.

One group affiliated with the school, however, was disturbed by the seemingly perfect arrangement: the local teachers union. The union argued that Poplawski should not be allowed to teach the classes. She's not state-certified, said the union, and those summer camps create a conflict of interest (exactly why that's so went unexplored).

Despite the union's opposition, Poplawski has been allowed to teach the classes and is apparently doing a fine job. But the incident suggests that student education is a low priority for the union. It also created a little morality

play with the union filling the role of villain, and provided journalists with easy metaphors. "The union's concerns do not seem to me to be those of well-meaning people

working for the benefit of students," wrote a columnist for the *St. Petersburg Times*. "It's time to fetch the hook and yank this thinly plotted sham from the stage." ♦



☛ "I start...from a belief in individual freedom, and that derives fundamentally from a belief in the limitations of our knowledge—from a belief in the idea that nobody can be sure that what he believes is right, is *really* right."

"The case for free enterprise, for competition, is that it's the only system that will keep the capitalists from having too much power....The virtue of free enterprise capitalism is that it sets one businessman against another, and it's a most effective device for control."

—"An Interview with Milton Friedman"

☛ "It is well to remember that there is no such thing as a free statistic."

—Ronald H. Coase, "Economists and Public Policy"

☛ "[Gandhi's] philosophy was an odd mixture of libertarian and socialistic views. On one hand he concurred with Thomas Jefferson in pronouncing that the best government was one that governed least. On the other hand he hoped for a classless society which would grant a doctor and a street-sweeper equal remuneration."

—Prakash Aswani, "Indian Politics"