

important topics: the facts about gun accidents, the harmful effects of the Brady Act (a statistically significant increase in rape and in assaults against women), the shameless dishonesty of the gun prohibition lobby, and more. Along the way, he teaches the reader multivariate statistical analysis—although you don't need a calculator to enjoy the book.

I edited and wrote part of *Guns: Who Should Have Them?* (1995), so of course I'm biased. But the book really does have the best analysis of such important topics as women and guns (by Skidmore women's studies professor Mary Stange), the racist roots of gun control (by Rutgers law professor Robert Cottrol), and the fraud that permeates the "public health" case against guns (by constitutional lawyer Don Kates and several medical professors), "assault weapons," and issues regarding children and guns.

Walter Edmonds' novel *The Matchlock Gun* won the Newberry Medal way back in 1942 as that year's best contribution to children's literature. It's based on a true story that took place in upstate New York in 1756. With his father gone to help the militia fight in the French and Indian War, a 10-year-old boy has to defend his family from Indian attack using an old Spanish matchlock gun, which is twice as large as he is. Will he be able to master the gun and protect his family? Thanks to the Newberry award, even the most politically correct librarians will have trouble refusing a donation of this book.

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## Global Views

By Brink Lindsey

Globalization, defined both as increasing international economic integration and, more broadly, as the contested advance of market forces in the world economy, is a defining fact of our era. Figuring out what it means and whether it's a good thing or a bad thing is the central challenge of international economic policy, and our next president will face that challenge in everything from his dealings with other nations' economic policies to coping with demonstrators in the street opposed to what they

think globalization means. He won't be able to get away from it. These books will help him understand the historical context of the current debate and guide him to a proper understanding of the issue.

A good place to begin would be Edward Bellamy's 1888 utopian novel, *Looking Backward*, which was set in the fall of 2000. It describes a future that never could come to pass—one based on the illusory promise of central planning, a world where all social problems are dispensed with by the supposed glories of top-down central management of all economic production. It was under this delusion that many of the

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**—Jonathan Rauch**

world's economic structures were built, particularly ones that prevented the growth of the international division of labor in the communist bloc and most parts of the developing world. The discovery that Bellamy's, and their, vision was a hoax has led to the tottering and collapse of many of those structures, thereby allowing the reconnection of one part of the world to another through trade and investment. Globalization is really the aftermath of the collapse of the dream of central planning, an aftermath made messy and complicated by the wreckage left behind.

The story of how we got from that false dream to our current hangover is told in *The Road From Serfdom: The Economic and Political Consequences of the End of Communism* (1996), by Robert Skidelsky. He chronicles in a compact and readable but still analytically sophisticated way the rise and fall of the collectivist experiment.

More specifically illuminating on where we should go from here, and simple enough for even a politician to understand, is *The Choice: A Fable of Free Trade and Protectionism*, by Russell D. Roberts (1993). The fundamental choice today, as when Roberts' book first appeared, is between open markets and a return to closed and state-dominated economies. This book sets up that choice as a dialogue between the 19th century economist David Ricardo, best known for promulgating the theory of comparative advantage to explain how all nations can benefit from free international trade, and an industrialist drawn to protectionism. Ricardo must save his soul by returning to Earth and converting the industrialist to the cause of free trade. A wacky premise, yes, but in the book's digestible, easy-to-read way, it walks the reader through all of the major arguments in favor of protectionism and against open markets, and nicely demolishes the fallacies behind the protectionist temptation.

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## Legal Help

By Walter Olson

Is the American legal system one that doesn't need any major overhaul? Or has it, among its many strengths, some serious flaws crying out for reform? One of George W. Bush's campaign themes has been that the civil litigation system is broken and needs fixing; and as supporters of capital punishment, both Bush and Gore have had to respond to mounting concerns about the reliability of the criminal justice system. Even if a president wanted to duck these issues, there'd still be the matter of what kind of attorney general to pick, whom to appoint to the bench, and whether to veto any legal reform bills Congress might pass.

On the continuing hot topic of lawsuit reform, Peter Huber's *Liability: The Legal Revolution and Its Consequences* (1988) is still the best book on how the American legal system invented the field of product liability more or less from scratch, what the predictable consequences were, and why we continue to suffer a hangover from it.

Because it's historical and philosophical in its approach, it wears well.

The civil and criminal cases recounted in Richard Ofshe and Ethan Watters' *Making Monsters: False Memories, Psychotherapy, and Sexual Hysteria* (1994) will be examined for a very long time by those seeking to understand how bad therapy and bad law fed on each other to inflict on the courts the recovered-memory and daycare-abuse hysterias of the early 1990s. Future generations will marvel at the credulity and sentimentality that paralyzed the normal operations of skepticism, so that the most outlandish accusations were enough to send people to prison or put them through terrible ordeals.

A work of fiction that ought to be better known than it is, Heinrich von Kleist's 1810 novella "Michael Kohlhaas" (available in *The Marquise of O—and Other Stories*) is the story of a man who suffers an injustice and appeals to a series of authorities for a remedy without getting the satisfaction he deserves. By the end, people are being slaughtered, towns burned, and regimes threatened with collapse, and Kohlhaas still doesn't have his justice. An inspiration for E.L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* (1975), the work raises such questions as whether rectifying old injustices is worth the risk of creating new ones, whether having a just cause entitles you to require third parties to help you attain it, and to what extent it's the system's fault that it can drive people to such extremities.

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## Leading Edge

By John J. Pitney Jr.

As this year's presidential campaign wound down, a casual TV viewer might think the presidency's main qualification is looking good on *Oprah*. It's about more than that, most specifically leadership, which comes not from being mediagenic but from thinking hard about the consequences of actions.

So I think our new president needs to read the most recent edition of *Army Field Manual 22-100*, issued in August 1999. It's titled *Army Leadership*. You might not

think an army field manual would be terribly deep or profound reading for a political leader, but this one is. It makes the point that leadership extends far beyond the battlefield. It reminds us that leadership consists of what leaders must be, know, and do—that leadership is a matter of character, competence, and conduct.

Our next president would also do well to understand *The Godfather*, both the 1972 movie and the 1969 novel by Mario Puzo. One of its central themes is what a leader has to do to maintain the loyalty of followers. One reason Vito Corleone was so successful is that he took care of his

**"The president  
is not supposed to  
be superintendent of  
schools, but he should  
know what makes  
good schools good and  
why education reforms  
so seldom work."**

**—Diane Ravitch**

people. *The Godfather* is also useful in reminding us how pervasive betrayal and disloyalty can be. More broadly, it's a healthy, subtle reminder of the unanticipated results of government regulation. Government made Vito Corleone possible through Prohibition and various other regulations.

But our president also needs to understand that government is not simply a matter of putting in a coin and getting what you want. *The Mild Voice of Reason: Deliberative Democracy in American National Government* by Joseph M. Bessette (1994) reminds us that government is a matter of deliberative reasoning on the merits of public policy. It doesn't work that way as often as it should, but it can and does happen. Ideally, a president should help ensure it happens more often.

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## Old Insights

By Jonathan Rauch

A president needs to know two things. The first is that we have a lot of new problems. The second is that most of our new problems are at least 100 years old. There's nothing like a bit of history and a bit of theory to temper a politician's natural tendency toward urgency and haste.

The first thing a new president should read is Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* (1853). The novel not only contains some of the most sonorous prose in the English language and some of Dickens' most imaginative feats, but also describes how lawyers prolong a lawsuit until they are rich and everyone else is bankrupt. "This scarecrow of a suit has, in the course of time, become so complicated that no man alive knows what it means," Dickens writes. "Scores of persons have deliriously found themselves made parties in *Jarndyce and Jarndyce* without knowing how or why." Or, if you prefer, read Dickens' 1857 masterpiece *Little Dorrit*, whose Circumlocution Office ("Its finger was in the largest public pie, and in the smallest public tart") and senior Circumlocution official (Mr. Tite Barnacle) are creatures that any modern government reinventor would do well to study and understand.

The second book is Mancur Olson's *The Rise and Decline of Nations* (1982). There's nothing new about interest groups or about the depredations they cause. Any president who hopes to deal with them needs to understand why shallow, short-term measures like campaign finance reform only scratch the surface. Olson's masterly book explains the dynamic of interest groups more powerfully and broadly than anything else to date.

The third book is Ron Chernow's *Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr.* (1998). Rockefeller was ruthless, self-righteous, brilliant, innovative, and completely ignorant of politics—not a good combination. Reading Chernow's excellent biography shows how there's nothing new about politicians attacking business and that, somehow, both politics and