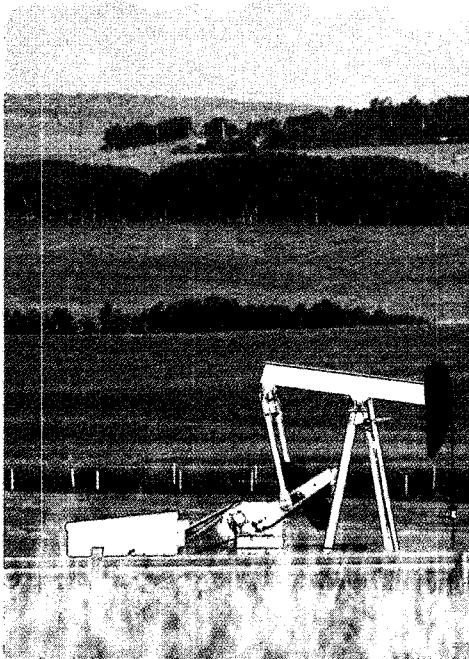


Oil Change

Michael W. Lynch

As the media exposed our Saudi Arabian allies as double-dealing despots, attention has turned to the practical: Can the United States live without Saudi oil, which, at 1.6 million barrels a day, accounts for 14 percent of our imports? The answers are mixed. *The Wall Street Journal's* Susan Lee says we can, since other countries will simply sell more oil. *Newsweek* reached a similar conclusion. On the other hand, writing in *The Weekly Standard*, Hudson Institute economist Irwin Stelzer says "not a chance"—at least not for many years.

The most useless contribution came from *The New York Times'* Paul Krugman, who said that "intelligent policies could break" the oil price surge-and-bust cycle. His only concrete suggestion: increase mileage standards on SUVs to those of cars. Unfortunately for Krugman, Stelzer disposed of this hoary idea, pointing out that even a 25 percent increase in mileage standards would take a decade to decrease oil consumption by barely more than 1 million barrels a day. That's less than we buy from the Saudis today.



U.S. Oil Supply 2000

Source	Millions of Barrels Per Day	
Domestic Production	9.39	45.8%
Canada	1.69	8.2%
Mexico	1.36	6.6%
South & Central America	2.58	12.6%
Western Europe	0.89	4.3%
Former Soviet Union	0.07	0.3%
Middle East	2.50	12.2%
North Africa	0.23	1.1%
West Africa	1.40	6.8%
Australasia	0.05	0.2%
China	0.04	0.2%
Japan	0.01	0.1%
Other Asia Pacific	0.18	0.9%
Unidentified	0.11	0.5%
TOTAL	20.50	100.0%*

*numbers do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Source: Energy Information Administration and BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2001

› authors argue that despite almost four decades of American opprobrium, Cuba has managed to make solid economic ties with close U.S. allies such as Canada and the United Kingdom.

They also show how Castro has failed to harness those lucrative connections by squandering resources on bankrupt socialist schemes. For instance, the report notes that while housing is "virtually free," it is also in extremely short supply, with extended families often packed into cramped quarters. Wages are also a prob-

lem, with the average state employee bringing in about \$12 a month. According to Clarke and Ratliff, "an attractive lady can earn more in two nights than a state-paid neurosurgeon does in a month."

The report recommends engagement through free trade and allowing private citizens to travel freely between the two countries. (The latter is already happening despite continued restrictions, according to the report. Americans who can't get into Cuba legally through

cultural, journalistic, or educational exceptions can easily slip in through a third country.) It also suggests dropping U.S. government support of anti-regime activities within Cuba, especially a proposed Senate bill that would deliver \$100 million to Cuban political and human rights activists. Castro's policies are bad enough to fail on their own, say the authors. Removing punitive American policies would rob him of the one thing he needs most—a scapegoat. ☐

The abortion pill Weak Choice

Sara Rimensnyder

ONE YEAR AFTER the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the abortion pill Mifeprex, better known as RU-486, the Kaiser Family Foundation has released numbers regarding its actual availability to American women.

In a national survey sample, only 6 percent of gynecologists and a mere 1 percent of general practice physicians offer Mifeprex abortions. The largest group of those doctors—roughly 40 percent—say it's because they don't approve of abortion. Others cite lack of demand, fear of violent reprisal, political controversy, logistical problems, and a lack of interest in providing abortions of any kind.

While that's no crisis for reproductive rights, it does mean that abortion clinics currently remain the primary locale for the procedure—and high-profile targets for pro-life activists. (Fifty percent of clinics are now offering the pill, a number likely to increase rapidly.) Mifeprex, when used in conjunction with a contraction-inducing drug, has proven 96 to 98 percent effective in various trials.

Advocates had hoped that the pill, which can terminate a pregnancy up to seven weeks in, would defuse the abortion wars by making the procedure more private, available to a woman at her regular doctor's office. Though availability will likely increase, the chances of that outcome were all but eliminated early on, when the FDA placed stringent rules on how the drug would be prescribed and administered. ☐

NASA watch

Space Pork

Jeremy Lott

FACED WITH A coming budget crunch, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is toying



with a controversial solution: Sell off the space shuttles.

An October BBC report explains why the Bush administration is leaning toward this proposal. In keeping with recent elephantine overruns that render the Space Station Alpha a useless floating boondoggle in the sky, each NASA shuttle launch costs over \$400 million. The fleet would be purchased by companies that would, in turn, be paid to launch the rockets at much lower costs.

Not everyone is happy. Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), whose Web site proudly describes him as hailing from the Sunshine State's "Space Coast," has criticized the privatization plan on the grounds that it might hurt the national interest in a time of war. But even those without aerospace constituents doubt that the savings will be nearly as grand as projected.

Glenn Reynolds, former CEO and policy chair of the National Space Society, applauds the plan to get NASA out of the business of "running a space trucking company." But he says the real problem is the space shuttle itself.

According to Reynolds, the design shorted upfront costs "at the expense of much higher operational costs and somewhat lower reliability." He also charges that it was made much larger than necessary in order to secure military support.

Rather than building the next wave of shuttles, says Reynolds, "The government should purchase launch services—not vehicles—from private industry." ☐

Why high school sucks Club Anarchy

Jesse Walker

THEY DON'T CARE much for anarchy at Sissonville High. Late in 2001, the West Virginia school barred 15-year-old Katie Sierra from starting an Anarchy Club, then suspended her for three days when she leafleted students to join the club anyway. It also scolded her for wearing a T-shirt bearing this handwritten comment: "When I saw the dead and

Dismal Humanists

Nick Gillespie



David M. Levy

The eminent Victorian Thomas Carlyle famously castigated economics as "the dismal science." The epithet first appeared in his 1849 screed, "Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question"—in which the "humanist" attacked free-market economists for their role in the anti-slavery movement. For Carlyle and "progressives" such as John Ruskin and Charles Dickens, economics was dismal because it sought to replace hierarchy with democracy.

In *How the Dismal Science Got Its Name: Classical Economics and the Ur-Text of Racial Politics*, David M. Levy revisits the debate between the pro-slavery Victorians and classical liberal abolitionists such as John Stuart Mill. He discusses the notorious case of Jamaica's Gov. John Eyre, who in the 1860s oversaw the beating deaths of hundreds of blacks. The controversy split British intelligentsia, with Carlyle, Ruskin, and Dickens defending Eyre in starkly racist and anti-market terms, while Mill, T.B. Macaulay, and John Bright pushed for prosecution. Levy, an associate professor of

economics at George Mason University, spoke with *reason* Editor-in-Chief Nick Gillespie.

Q: Explain the significance of your "Ur-text."

A: In his "Occasional Discourse," Carlyle goes after market economists for joining forces with religious types in the anti-slavery movement. Carlyle defended slavery on the grounds that blacks weren't fully human and that slavery could make them more so. If you weren't really a person, he argued, you could be exterminated. Fifteen years later, in the Eyre controversy, blacks were beaten to death with wire whips—and Eyre was defended by many of the leading lights of Victorian society, who also hated markets.

Q: What were the connections between the contempt for markets and defense of slavery?

A: Markets bust hierarchy. Carlyle also coined the term "consumer sovereignty" in 1833. It was a sneering reference to political economist Richard Whately's exchange theory of government, in which policy is viewed as a trade between something like equals. Carlyle's view of the world was that it should be ruled by hierarchy and the worship of heroes. Obedience to the demands of your superiors was everything. The exchange inherent in markets—rather than the command of hierarchy—was anarchy.

Q: Your next project deals with paternalism.

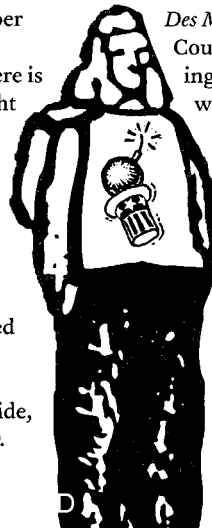
A: My next book, which I'm writing with Sandra J. Peart, explains the link between paternalism and bias against markets. Economists characteristically think people can take care of themselves. But paternalism is very attractive—it's all about warmhearted compassion, right? We're linking paternalism to fears of parasitism: Why is it that wherever you find the belief in a persistent class that paternalists see as victimizers, you find talk about parasites and extermination?

dying Afghani children on TV, I felt a newly recovered sense of national security. God Bless America." In November, the Kanawha County Circuit Court upheld the school's right to do all of the above.

The local *Charleston Daily Mail* praised the decision, arguing that "Americans cherish the freedoms guaranteed them under the Constitution, but the thoroughly egocentric exercise of those rights becomes tiresome." For those worried that tiresomeness might not be a

legal doctrine, the paper added that while free speech is "sacred," there is no "constitutional right to force everybody else in society to listen during school hours."

Sierra tried to appeal the decision, but the West Virginia Supreme Court refused the case. That's odd, because settled law appears to be on her side, to judge from *Tinker v.*



Des Moines, the U.S. Supreme Court's 1969 decision allowing high school students to wear black armbands to protest the Vietnam War.

Katie doesn't plan to give up on anarchy anytime soon, but she won't be doing it at school. In November, tired of harassment by fellow students, the girl opted to telecommute to school, avoiding bullies and fashion police altogether. ☐