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CULTUREWATCH JULY-DECEMBER 1995
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CultureWatch

A MONTHLY ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON CULTURE, ART, AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1996 #29

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DISPATCHES FROM THE RIGHT-WING "REVOLUTION"

USHERING IN THE NEW YEAR with a shovel-full of tabloid-esque tidbits from America's winter landscape:

- Sen. Bob Dole wants and gets his MTV! Dole, looking typically irritated, dodged questions from MTV's Tabitha Soren!
- Candace Gingrich, whose brother Newt's dirty laundry aired on PBS' "Frontline," made her acting debut ministering wedding vows to a lesbian couple on NBC's "Friends," and condemned discrimination against gays and lesbians on TV-talk with Leeza.
- Hillary Clinton appeared before a federal grand jury as the pillory Hillary movement proceeded unabated (see Arianna Huffington's *Hillary Clinton: The Arrogance of an Ideologue*, *San Francisco Examiner*, January 23).
- Sen. Al D'Amato's "hip deep in the big muddy" eternal Whitewater hearings continued.
- Steve Forbes' massive inheritance dominated Republican Party primary politics as he moved up in the polls promoting his flat-tax ("If there's a flat tax I do well, If there's no flat tax I still do well"), while *Fortune* magazine claims "certain companies have been said to be 'untouchable'—exempt from tough editorial criticism—because of the amount of advertising they place in *Forbes*."

Winter also brings stuffed mailboxes. Here's a sampling of dispatches from the right-wing "revolution":

- Rev. Donald Wildmon's American Family Association *Action! Page* declares "It is time to shut down the TV trash talk shows" and passes along sponsors' names and addresses for instant action.
- Gary DeMar's Atlanta-based American Vision is seeking support for its new American history curriculum, "targeted for the junior high and high school level," which is only \$150,000 short of its \$250,000 goal.
- Judie Brown's American Life League encloses a photo of her recent visit with Pope John Paul II—"I hope you will frame it and display it proudly"—and focuses on ALL's "1996 '\$10,000,000 for Life'" campaign.
- William A. Donohue's Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights lists 1995's accomplishments including: getting the Madonna stamp reinstated; chastening Disney and their Miramax "lackeys" to move the opening date of 'Priest' from Good Friday; and getting Mayor Giuliani "to agree not to march with gays in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral" and requests funds to "expand our staff" and take on more cases.

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ARTS AND CENSORSHIP

994. **Arts Leaders Meet on Ways to Offset NEA Budget Cuts** by Julia Duin, *Washington Times*, December 11, 1995.

• Many of the country's foremost arts consultants met last month to figure out ways to develop alternative strategies for funding the arts and to reexamine the role of the National Endowment for the Arts. The latter is particularly significant given the 40 percent funding cut, from \$162.4 million to \$99.5 million, the NEA suffered at the hands of Congress.

995. **NEH Cuts 'PC' Project's Funding** by Carol Innerst, *Washington Times*, December 19, 1996.

• Despite congressional funding cuts and the sharp criticism the National Endowment for the Humanities received last year from the right over its funding of the "National Standards for United States History" (CW, 11/95, #954), the NEH promises to continue with another controversial program, Chairman Sheldon Hackney's "National Conversation on American Pluralism." Hackney answered critics' objections that the project promotes "political correctness" by saying that "each

project is a focused, text-based opportunity for individuals to discuss frankly with other Americans of diverse backgrounds the nature of the differences among us as a people but also the common threads that knit us together as Americans."

996. **AFA Calls for Boycott** by David Elliot, *The Texas Triangle*, January 5, 1996.

• Rev. Donald Wildmon's American Family Association is no stranger to threatening and initiating boycotts against corporations (CW, 10/95, #924), as well as independent alternative newspapers (CW, 11/94, #630). Recently the AFA of Texas,

under the leadership of executive director Wyatt Roberts, has attempted to coerce "advertisers to withdraw their support from *The Texas Triangle*" a gay and lesbian newspaper located in Austin. Just before Christmas Roberts sent a letter to 50 Triangle advertisers, in Austin and Houston, asking them to "please let me know within 10 days

if (name of advertiser) intends to continue advertising in *The Triangle*" and warning them that the AFA "regularly broadcasts the names of *Triangle* advertisers during our Saturday radio program..." Kay Longcope, *Triangle* editor and publisher, commenting on the apparent failure of the AFA's campaign, said that extensive media coverage

which included several television reports, a front-page story and supportive editorial in the *Austin American-Statesman*, "along with the overwhelming response of support from straight and gay alike" caused the campaign to backfire.

POLITICS & CULTURE

997. **The Transcendent Dimension: To Purge the Public Square of Religion is to Cut the Roots of the Values That Nourish Us** by Harvey Cox, *The Nation*, January 1, 1996.

998. **Why We Need a Religious Left** by Amy Waldman, *The Washington Monthly*, December 1995.

999. **No God, No Master** by Katha Pollitt, *The Nation*, January 22, 1996.

• The religious right's political victories have motivated many to reexamine the role religion plays in politics. Cox, a theology professor at Harvard (CW, 12/95, #988), writes that "one of the many historic coalitions that have fallen into disrepair in recent years is the one that united religious and secular progressives. Today, fear of the 'religious right' has pushed many secular liberals into opposing virtually any religiously motivated effort to influence public debate simply because it is religious." This plays into the hands of groups like the Christian Coalition who "know they represent only a fraction of the church, synagogue, and mosque-goers of America." Cox welcomes religious conservatives "into the sphere of political discourse," saying that "given that most of their arguments are flimsy and theologically ill-grounded, religious right-wingers could be easily refuted if secular liberals would stop attacking them simply because they are (allegedly) religious." Waldman acknowledges that "as conservatives have successfully used religion to make political inroads, liberals have become increasingly antagonistic to mixing religion and politics." Citing the budget debate she writes that "as Republicans claim the halo of Christianity and religious virtue, liberal religious and political leaders have been slow to respond in kind, to show how the Judeo-Christian tradition cannot condone a conservative agenda that rewards the affluent at the expense of the disadvantaged, that takes money from plowshares to forge more swords, and that demands personal responsibility from the poor while excusing the well-off from their social responsibility." For Pollitt "the left has...no trouble making common cause with religion," and in response to Cox, Pollitt asks "but what is it, exactly, that the secular, or semisecular, left could fruitfully discuss with the Christian Coalition, as Cox suggests?...Given that there are no common goals, the fact that there is also no common agreement about what constitutes a relevant argument becomes important. If you're not a Christian, it doesn't matter whether Ralph Reed or Harvey Cox has the better grasp of biblical morality."

1000. **CEE's New Strategy Benefits You in '96** [re Citizens for Excellence in Education] by Bob Simonds, *Education Newsline*, Winter 1996.

1001. **Focus on the Family Announces Education Goals**, *Freedom Watch*, January 1996.

• Dr. Bob Simonds' Citizens for Excellence in Education (CW, 3/95, #755) and Dr. James Dobson's Focus on the Family (CW, 3/95, #886-887) are two key organizations shaping the nation's education debate. Simonds sums up 1995 by noting that "with CEE's compelling research in hand, conservative leaders from the national, to the state and even local school board level have the solid facts they need to turn back the tide of liberalism invading our schools." CEE plans for 1996 include: complete EBBE (Enhanced Basics-Based Education) curriculum models "for parents to offer to public schools as an alternative to objectionable curricula"; establish school policies that "assure SAFE PASSAGE (spiritually, psychologically, politically and physically) and support parental rights"; well-researched information on public school reform effort, parents' rights and hot-button education issues; printed materials and training videos to "walk you through the system step-by-step when you encounter problems in your child's curricula"; carrying "the Christian/conservative message into all our major national educational conventions." FOF's list of goals includes: 1) "meaningful parental involvement and genuine decision-making authority in curriculum, instructional materials, and teaching strategies"; 2) "religious freedom in schools...including voluntary school prayer"; 3) "the teaching of our country's Judeo-Christian religious heritage as part of the history of our country"; 4) "sex-education programs based on pre-marital 'abstinence only' and moral responsibility"; 5) "multiculturalism as the study of other cultures and ethnic groups which acknowledges their genuine contributions without opening the door to acceptance and promotion of immoral social diversity such as homosexuality"; 6) "the teaching of intelligent design theory of origin presented in science classes on an equal footing with the theory of evolution"; 7) "abolition of the U.S. Department of Education and the favored status currently enjoyed by the National Education Association (NEA) teachers' union"; and 8) "parental choice in education through vouchers or tuition tax credits."

1002. **Our Day in Court: The First Time Gay Rights have Been Before the Supreme Court in a Decade** by Elise Harris, *Out*, February 1996.

• Harris takes us through the oral arguments before the Supreme Court, in *Romer vs. Evans*, Colorado's appeal of a ruling that struck down

the state's antigay Amendment 2.

1003. **The Wild Bunch** [re Republican presidential candidates' (plus Clinton's) record on gay/lesbian issues] *Out*, February 1996.

• A handy guide to where President Clinton and GOP candidates Sen. Phil Gramm, Sen. Bob Dole, Lamar Alexander, Sen. Arlen Specter, Alan Keyes, Malcolm "Steve" Forbes Jr., Sen. Richard Lugar, Rep. Bob Dornan and Pat Buchanan stand on the lifting the military ban, the Antidiscrimination Bill for Sexual Orientation, full funding of Ryan White, welfare reform, affirmative action, abortion, crime/gun control, size of government/balanced budget, taxes, and U.S. involvement in Bosnia.

1004. **Beyond the Pale: Should Jews Embrace the Right?** by Alisa Solomon, *Village Voice*, December 12, 1995.

1005. **Slaying the Christ Killers: Ralph Reed Woos Jews in Jersey** by Matthew Fleischer, *Village Voice*, December 26, 1995.

• Will prominent Jewish organizations be rendered mute by the Christian right's promises to tone down the "Christian nation" rhetoric? Can the Jewish right, who as Solomon says "is basking in a prominence that far exceeds its support," successfully drive a "wedge between liberalism and Jewishness in America?" Will the right's efforts to woo Jewish voters, 78 percent to 82 percent of whom voted Democratic in 1994, pay off for the GOP this November? Fleischer samples Ralph Reed's newly minted ecumenical rhetoric during a speech at a liberal Jewish community center in New Jersey. Reed, executive director of the Christian Coalition, "mourned Yitzhak Rabin, recounted his recent trip to Israel, decried the desecration of his hometown synagogue with swastikas, and quoted Freud and socialist Jewish scholar Irving Howe," and seemed to win over more than a just a few in the audience.

1006. **When God is No Longer Welcome in the Workplace** by Martin Mawyer, *Washington Times*, December 25, 1995.

• Mawyer, president of Christian Action Network—last seen lobbying against congressional funding for the arts—finds that the controlling of "religious expression [in the workplace] is reaching an unprecedented level." Advocating a constitutional amendment to protect religious liberties Mawyer says that "in their effort to keep federal offices free of religion, officials there have established precisely what is forbidden by the First Amendment. They have created a state religion—atheism."

ORGANIZATIONS & INDIVIDUALS

1007. **Shelley Shannon: A Soldier in the Army of God** by Anne Bower, *The Body Politic*, December 1995.

1008. **Army of God: Still Marching** by Anne Bower, *The Body Politic*, December 1995.

- The Army of God, a "loosely structured group of domestic terrorists whose mission is to stop abortion" quite active in the mid-1980s, still asserts a strong influence within the violent wing of the anti-abortion movement. Bower looks at the case of Shelley Shannon, an anti-abortion activist who attempted to kill Dr. George Tiller at a health clinic in Wichita, Kan. in 1993. By examining the sentencing report and Shannon's writings Bower portrays "the descent of a woman from dedicated activism to advocating and attempting murder—all in a religious/political cause." The Army of God's highly influential manual, 3 copies of which were found buried in Shannon's backyard and whose authorship can probably be attributed to "Mad Gluer", is a "terrorist's bible" which claims that "this is a manual for those who have come to understand that the battle against abortion is a battle not against flesh and blood, but against the devil and all the evil he can muster among flesh and blood to fight at his side. It is a How-to Manual of means to disrupt and ultimately destroy Satan's power to kill our children, God's children."

1009. **Exploring the Summit**, *Freedom Watch*, December 1995.

1010. **Summit Ministries**, *Human Events*, December 22, 1995.

- Summit Ministries, located in Manitou Springs, Colo., was founded in 1962 by evangelist preacher Billy James Hargis of the anti-communist Christian Crusade, and is currently headed by author and educator Dr. David Noebel. "Understanding the Times," writes *Freedom Watch*, is Summit's "sophisticated training manual for religious right thought and activism. Its purpose: teach teenagers that orthodox 'Biblical' Christianity is the only valid worldview, and all others are enemies to be actively countered." Summit's summer youth training programs have grown rapidly during the past several years, some 1,500 students participated last summer, and the 900-page "Understanding" text is currently used in more than 600 Christian schools. *Freedom Watch* provides significant quotes from Summit's high school materials on such issues as other religions, God and country, multiculturalism, evolution, creationism, military policy, rock music, traditional families, economic systems, the environment, and our laws.

1011. **Standard Claims Success on Arrival, but Doubts Remain** by Sean Piccoli, *Washington Times*, December 26, 1995.

1012. **What is Bill Kristol Up To?** [re the *Weekly Standard*], *Human Events*, December 29, 1995.

- With \$3 million provided by Australian media

SHORTS • SHORTS • SHORTS • SHORTS

By Bill Berkowitz and Holly Sharp

- The Parents' Television Council (PTC), a division of L. Brent Bozell's Media Research Center, has opened its doors in Los Angeles and aims to bring "responsibility to television through the private sector." PTC publishes *Family Guide to Prime Time Television*. (Call [310] 277-6951 or write PTC, 333 South Grand Ave., 29th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90071) (*Human Events*, December 29, 1995)

- The National Review Institute and David Horowitz' Center for the Study of Popular Culture will co-host "Images of Ourselves: A Dialogue Between Washington and Hollywood," supported by Eastman Kodak and the Miller Brewing Company and scheduled for February 24 at Paramount Studios. (Call Wendi Lehman at [1-800] 752-6562 x216.) (*National Review*, December 31, 1995)

- Dr. James Dobson's Focus on the Family and Zondervan Publishing are producing a "historically accurate and authentically reliable" series of animated videos, called *The Story Keepers*, which shows "how the early church kept the story of Christ alive during its time of persecution." (*Focus on the Family*, January 1996)

- With the help of Silicon Media Inc., Oliver North has put his radio show on the World Wide Web at <http://www.northamerican.com>. North's slogan is "Bringing Common Sense to the Internet," and his site has links to the National Rifle Association, the Christian Coalition and the CIA. (*San Francisco Chronicle*, December 28, 1995)

- Conservative rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, founder and president of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews has started, along with several religious right leaders, the Center for Judeo-Christian Values, an organization promoting "the value of human life" and bring Christians and Jews together "in support of a common agenda to build a more moral society in America." Advisory board members include the Christian Coalition's Ralph Reed and cultural maven William Bennett. (*Church and State*, January 1996)

- Led by chairman Lynne Cheney, the National Alumni Forum was formed last year by a group of scholars, editors, businessmen and policy makers to "defend academic freedom on college campuses" and to "spur concerned alumni to exert more influence over university policies." (Call [202] 467-6787 or e-mail to 76544.1367@compuserve.com) (*Policy Review*, January/February 1996)

- The National Right to Life Committee's campaign to boycott RU486 (Keep the Death Pill Out of the United States) has produced a set of boycott RU486 postcards addressed to Hoechst-Roussel Pharmaceuticals and Copley Pharmaceutical; included is a list of their consumer products. (Call [202] 626-8000 x225) (*National Right to Life News*, November 30, 1995)

- A creationism conference was held in Russia at the Tourism Center in Moscow, October 3-4 and was regarded as a "very important initial effort to place the teaching of creation science and alternative views into the Russian educational system." Jointly sponsored by the Dept. of Extracurricular and Alternative Education of the Russian Ministry of Education and the Origins Research Association (ORA) International of Canada, an evangelical organization with an "extensive ministry in Russia," speakers included Duane Gish of the Institute of Creation Research. (*Acts and Facts*, December 1995)

- While the Christian Coalition continues to advocate the use of LifeLine, the Christian long distance phone service managed by AmeriVision Communications, which provides 10% of a customer's bill to their ministry of choice, the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights has dropped their service and is encouraging other Catholics to do the same. LifeLine denied Catholic Answers, the largest Catholic apologetic and evangelization organization in North America, an account because they "spread and defend the Roman Catholic Faith." (*California Christian*, January-February 1996; *Catalyst*, December 1995)

- The Collegiate Network of conservative, independent campus newspapers, founded in 1979, will soon be housed at the Intercollegiate Studies Institute's new 23-acre campus in Greenville, Del. ISI's \$4.7 million budget will continue to "provide financial support for qualifying newspapers and training for student editors and writers." (*Washington Times*, December 3, 1995)

- Parents, Families and Friends of Gays and Lesbians has launched an extensive ad campaign, Project Open Mind, which is "designed to identify and combat the self-serving rhetoric of fear and hate being used by the radical right that is causing violence" in gay and lesbian communities. TV Evangelist and Christian Coalition founder Pat Robertson has threatened to sue any TV station that runs the PFLAG ads, which use words and images of Robertson, Jesse Helms and Jerry Falwell and others and "relate them to acts of violence, intolerance and bigotry" and the dangers of hate speech. (*Ground Zero News*, December 1995)

- Contributions to Coral Ridge Ministries' Faith Partners Program will support CRM media projects that "bring the Gospel and biblical instruction to America via TV and radio" and will help restore our "nation's moral and spiritual sanity." (*Impact*, January 1996)

tycoon Rupert Murdoch, the *Weekly Standard*, a new conservative political weekly is owned by Murdoch's News America Publishing Inc., a subsidiary of News Corp., and headed by Washington insiders. Bill Kristol, Fred Barnes, and John Podhoretz (CW, 10/95, #940). Despite its 90,000 circulation (paid and unpaid) Piccoli reports that "conversations with casual and committed readers indicate many are underwhelmed by the *Standard's* text-heavy inside analysis and disappointed that the dream has not produced something electrifying." In an unsigned article, *Human Events* criticizes the *Standard* "as sort of a neo-conservative Trojan Horse. Wrapped in conservative bunting, of course, it nonetheless is perceived as a vehicle for moving the party leftward especially in the family values area." Several recent stories come under attack including Noemie Emery's essay that focused on scrapping the Republican Party's "supposedly controversial platform plank on abortion" and the *Standard's* pushing of Ret. Army Gen. Colin Powell's candidacy, "a man whose public and private utterances showed that he thoroughly rejected the family values agenda of the GOP."

1013. **Laying the Right Foundations** [re Paul Weyrich] by Susanna Monroney, *Rutherford*, December 1995.

1014. **The World According to Weyrich** Interviewed by Nisha Mohammed and Tanya Stanciu, *Rutherford*, December 1995.

• Paul Weyrich's (CW, 3/95, #756 & 757) organizing expertise has helped take the "New Right" from out-of-the-loop wannabes to near the top of the political mountain. Monroney writes that "Weyrich's years of coalition building have resulted in the founding of the Heritage Foundation (Washington's most effective conservative think-tank), the Free Congress Foundation, the American Legislative Exchange Council, NET Television-Political Newstalk Television (the first conservative cable news channel) and numerous other conservative organizations and strategy groups." In Mohammed and Stanciu's interview

Weyrich comments on his political career, downsizing of the federal government and the work of his Kriebel Institute, which trains people in the former Soviet Union.

1015. **Fright Show** [re Pat Robertson's '700 Club'] by David Mizner, *Church & State*, January 1996.

• Mizner has watched more than 600 broadcasts of the "700 Club," (first aired in 1966 and named "700 Club" because Robertson asked 700 people to pledge \$10 a month to support the television ministry—Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network reported donations in excess of \$110 million last year) and provides us with a comprehensive profile of the operation. Ralph Reed, executive director of Robertson's Christian Coalition, has "led a relentless public relations campaign to reinvent the religious right as a main-

stream movement...he has tried to conceal much of what happens on the "700 Club"....Reed soft-pedals, distorts or disavows many of Robertson's views." Lacking mainstream media scrutiny Robertson uses the "Club" as a platform for his worldview which is "based on the belief that the United States was founded on Christianity but has been hijacked by anti-Christian forces." According to Robertson these anti-Christian forces "hold the seats of power [to whom] we are in subjection. The time has come for God's people to be where He intended them—on the top, not on the bottom."

Many of the issues, organizations, and individuals cited in this issue of CultureWatch have been discussed in previous issues. Please see subscription information box for details on ordering.

Highlights *continued from page 1*

• Beverly LaHaye's Concerned Women for America "Express Memorandum" declares that "by Sunday, December 31, CWA needs \$571,250 to end the year in the black" (last year's appeal asked for only \$563,000).

• Joseph W. DeBolt, Jr., the Conservative Media Commission's media director is collecting funds to "Stop the 'Hush Rush' Presidential Order"—President Clinton's imposition of the "Fairness Doctrine"—which could silence the voices of Limbaugh, G. Gordon Liddy, Pat Buchanan, Beverly LaHaye and even Paul Harvey. Good day!

• Gary Bauer's Family Research Council hopes to distribute 1 million copies of his new book, *Our Hopes, Our Dreams*, published by Focus on the Family, which "describe[s] what our country would be like if the pro-family movement won the battle for America's future."

• Paul Cameron's Family Research Institute, Inc. is warning readers "about an ominous

new trend designed to weaken marriage and fragment the family—that is, allowing homosexuals to have or to adopt children."

• John Whiteside, president of the Rutherford Institute, lists the cases they are working on that "will show you the breadth of discrimination against religious people." In another letter Whiteside complains that the American Civil Liberties Union "is once again doing its best to take Christ out of Christmas" in the public schools.

• Rev. Lou Sheldon's Traditional Values Coalition trumpets the hearings he helped organize "on the advocacy of the homosexual agenda in our nation's schools" in early December in the House Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the House Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee. Another letter, asks for \$150,000 to research and print 1 million California Voter's Guides for the March 1996 primary election.

Bill Berkowitz
Editor

DATACENTER INFORMATION SERVICES

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