



Senator Deadwood

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

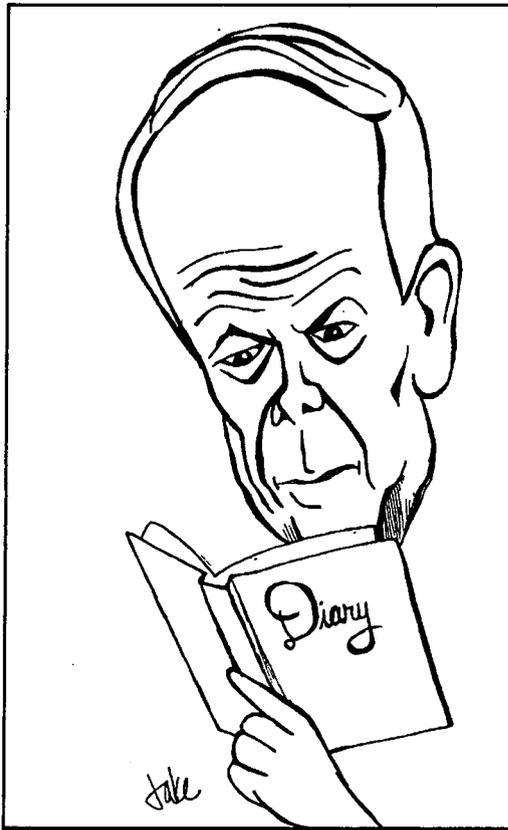
Senator Bob Packwood, the *Wall Street Journal* tells us, leads "a double life." He is one of the most powerful senators in this great city. His influence on health care and the North American free-trade pact is vast. Yet back home in progressive Oregon he travels by night to avoid the forces of moral and political uplift. Even in Washington he is scorned by those moral and intellectual colossi. On the historic night that President Bill Clinton delivered his health-care speech to Congress, Senator Packwood was a focus of awe, owing to his powerful position on the Senate Finance Committee. Yet a few blocks away, over at the Stewart Mott House, which is owned by "the wealthy liberal activist," other liberal activists gathered wearing "Goodbye Bob" buttons. And theirs was not a joyous bon voyage. They were really indignant, as these colossi usually are; but their indignation was directed at the kindly and progressive Bob.

Well, if we have seen it once we have seen it twice, and once was enough: the revolution devours its children. Senator Packwood in his long career has been a paragon of liberal Republicanism. He was for many years a Great Hope against Goldwaterism, Nixonism, and Reaganism. Women's issues have been a specialty with him, but also the whole Good Government agenda. He has been ardent on all the

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social issues, and he was a champion of legalized abortion back in the days when abortion was thought to be the work of Lucifer. The right-of-center American Conservative Union accords him a lowly rating of 33. And the progressive Americans for Democratic Action smiles on him with a 60. Now the senator's progressive past is screaming at him and flaunting those sour but-tons. His problem is that he took his liberal cohorts at their word.

Up until a few years ago a major



theme of the forward-lookers was sexual liberation, or at least a relaxation of America's squeamishness toward sex. Senator Packwood shared their hopes for, say, the Swedish approach to sexuality or maybe the Italian or perhaps the French. Well, at some point in the 1970s we got all three, and many Americans celebrated the sexual revolution with gusto. Senator Packwood was among the many celebrants, but times have changed. The liberal activists have placed other matters on their agenda and one is Senator Packwood's head. He should have recognized that Americans are not Europeans, or at least he should have had the good sense to have been a homosexual. More than two dozen women from the senator's past have complained that they were the recipients of unwanted attention from him. The complaints of some of these women come from many years ago.

In the days of the sexual revolution they would have been ignored or snickered at. Today the revolution is over, at least for heterosexuals, and the reaction has set in. That it is being led by "liberal activists" over at the Stewart Mott House should surprise no one. In this century there is no noble cause or liberal value that liberals have not gladly reversed themselves on, except for one. That one value is disturbing their neighbors. To disturb is to educate. It is the essence of art and maturity—so long as the disturber is a liberal. Other disturbers are viewed less favorably.

In the case of sex, the liberals

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applauded its spread. They were admirers of the free-speech movement. Soon salacious language was the mark of an enlightened mind. In art—or what passes for art—the notion of obscenity was hooted at. Sex for many liberals was until recently the highest form of recreation—even higher than chess. It was Therapy! Spirituality! Self-Awareness! Now it is Brutality. Ignominy. And Very Embarrassing. Well, Senator Packwood, consistency has not been a liberal value for a long time.

Senator Packwood has, of course, apologized for his past. American public figures are very good at public apologies. After all, in their lives words

mean so little. He has spent two days testifying in private before the Senate ethics committee where, doubtless, more words were wasted. Soon we should hear whether his colleagues intend to hold public hearings. That is what “liberal activists” want. I do, too, but for a different reason. The activists believe that Senator Packwood will be revealed as a cad and—who knows—perhaps worse. I believe the activists will be revealed as public nuisances and a threat to the very liberal tradition they claim to espouse. That is for the good. America’s liberal tradition was of value when it was under the stewardship of liberals. □

similar controversies rumbling through American universities today, and all are taken with the utmost seriousness. What does it tell us?

For one thing it tells us that protest and demonstration have become major themes of American life. Truth be known, most of the old injustices are defunct. There is no more government-sanctioned segregation, though some minority members wish to segregate themselves. There are no controversial wars. We have been through our sexual revolution, personal liberations, and the drug experience, most of which came out unhappily. But the role model of the protester and reformer have gained eminence in American legend; and so now many vicarious Martin Luther Kings and Eleanor Roosevelts lust for their moment in history.

At our universities, neither professors nor administrators apparently possess the discernment to distinguish between a harmless mascot and, say, a flaming cross on a hill. They have filled their campuses with intellectually lazy people who are bored by books and always ready for some soul-searching debate or gaudy march. They would all be better off guzzling beer and cheering the local mud wrestlers.

There is today on campus—and for that matter throughout much of American life—an innocent assumption that any protester must have a point. We have quite forgotten that familiar figure of the past, the malcontent. Past generations recognized these odious cranks when they commenced to bawl and took them *cum grano salis*. If by accident the malcontent had come upon a legitimate grievance, fine—the Republic initiated a reform and passed on. Today the country is at the mercy of these disturbed people, and actually raises many to lifelong prominence. Think of Jesse Jackson or Ralph Nader. Is there any legitimate reform associated with Jackson’s name that Martin Luther King did not set in motion years before? Nader may have done slightly better for the commonweal, but surely a review of his decades of gripes reveals little that has been constructive. Worse, these grumblers have inspired thousands of common malcontents to take up a noble cause. Vexed debate over the campus mascot is but one of the unhappy consequences. □

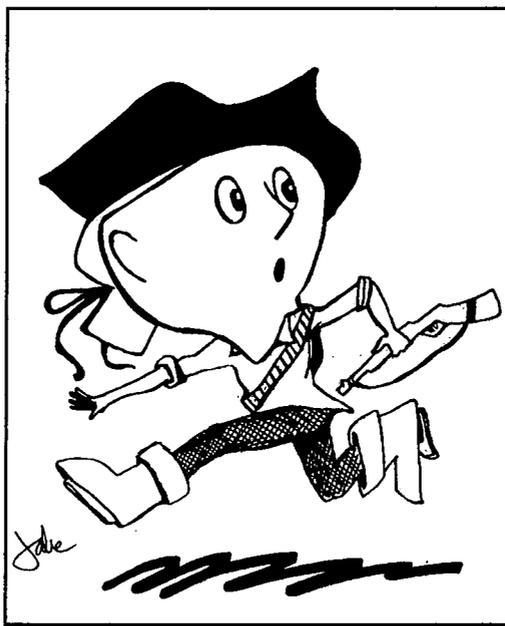
Mascot Studies

The American university is not a happy place. It is supposed to be an incubator of higher learning, abundant with frisky young people and cultured profs. Actually many of the young people are quite grim. Both profs and students live in fear of the thought patrols. And the entire institution is at the mercy of malcontents and quacks. The chief business of a university is supposed to embrace study and, among select professors, research. Nowadays, these pursuits are frequently disrupted by the ongoing campaigns of so-called feminists and other axe-grinders. Learning is subordinated to reform.

Consider this. At Auburn University, the Politically Correct have waged a campaign to replace the school’s “Senator” mascot, because it struck the moron element as racist and sexist and resembled to them—a “white plantation owner.” At the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the Politically Correct succeeded in banishing that school’s mascot, too. It was a distinctly comic Norseman, but again the morons triumphed, objecting that the Norseman was “too masculine to represent female students.” University officials had spent two years and \$20,000 to develop it, but according to the university’s sports information director, “he (the Norseman) was—I hate to use the word—too Aryan—some people

objected—because it was too white, or too male, or too violent or scared little children.”

Then we have the controversy at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. There the Politically Correct have insisted that the school’s mascot is “racist, sexist, and promoted violence.” They might also object that the mascot is treasonous, anti-monarch, and anti-British, for the shocking mascot is the Minuteman, the colonial militiaman standing ready to resist the Redcoats at a minute’s notice. There are hundreds of



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Exporting Famine

by Tom Bethell

Several months ago, the *Village Voice* carried an unusual story about Somalia on its cover: "The Famine Food Created," by Michael Maren. In October he spoke at the Cato Institute, his talk billed as "Good Intentions Gone Awry." I decided to find out what he had to say.

He turned out to be a quietly spoken man of 37 who over the years has worked for the Peace Corps, Catholic Relief Services, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. He has spent time in India, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia, and to say that he had become disillusioned about food aid would be putting it mildly.

His message was shocking and newsworthy, but almost wholly neglected by the U.S. news media: the free food that year after year is dumped in these African countries undermines the local agriculture and so causes famines when rainfall is below normal. The famine in Somalia was caused by the food that for years had been unloaded at the docks of Mogadishu. "Food is killing people, and that must stop," Maren said.

Somalia has enough arable land to feed itself even in the worst drought, he said. Briefly, in 1987, Somalia actually exported food. The country has no "population problem." It has a total of 6 million people in a country the size of Texas. The problem is that free food undermines the market for locally grown food.

On January 13 there was an article on the subject by Alison Mitchell in the *New York Times*, but I think it was the only one they published this year. Here is how it began:

GENALE, SOMALIA—In this country of hunger, Faadumi Abdi Arush is cursed with corn. She has corn stored away in

barrels, corn stacked in sacks, corn to be tossed away as chicken feed. Mrs. Arush survived Somalia's civil war, and she and the farm hands on her large holding even managed to tend her fields, producing a bountiful harvest of corn four months ago.

But when she took her crop to the market, she found that the infusion of food from relief agencies was cutting demand. With food prices falling in a bottomless tumble, no merchant wanted to risk buying her corn and then see the prices tumble still lower, she said. "Nobody is interested," said the slender 52-year-old farmer, pointing in exasperation to the piles of corn already gone bad that had been thrown on a tarpaulin for chicken feed. "Everybody has his own relief supply."

This is the paradox of famine and famine relief. The international charity that stopped starvation eventually can become a problem in itself, threatening to destroy what little remains of the local farm economy.

Mitchell went on to note that the price of rice in Somalia was said to be the lowest in the world, having fallen to \$5 for a 110-lb. bag—less than half the price in the U.S. She added that "some relief agencies are starting to fear that the relief food will now cause another cycle of dependency by depressing the food market and making it unprofitable for farmers to farm." The principal relief agencies are CARE, Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, and Save the Children. Says Willet Weeks of Save the Children: "Prolonging free food distribution as the need is diminishing is a sure recipe for prolonging the famine."

To understand the problem that food creates, it is necessary to go back in time before the emergency arises. Most food aid—about 90 percent of it—is distributed in places where there is no famine and, of course, where there are no reporters or TV cameras. This is the invisible part of the

exercise, and the crucial part. It is here that native self-sufficiency is undermined, day by day. This is happening in many countries in Africa right now: for example, Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi, Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Togo, and Ghana.

And no doubt many more. These are simply the countries that Maren reeled off when I asked him to name the countries where free, non-emergency food is being distributed. In any given country, Maren told me, CARE or Catholic Relief Services or World Vision have routine programs: "School feeding programs, where they give food to children; mother-child health programs, where they give food to women with kids at clinics; and food-for-work programs, where they dump food on people for digging holes, things like that: digging wells, building roads." These projects tend to be make-work. Maren identifies one going on in Mogadishu right now: "Food-for-work consists of giving people empty garbage bags and then trading a bag of food for a bag of trash." This is doomed to turn into a scavenging exercise, he says, "with people looting garbage trucks as they once looted food convoys."

Meanwhile, in Somalia, as in other countries not yet known to the media or "the international community," local agriculture and self-sufficiency is undermined, sack by free sack. Once there is a drought or a civil war in which the normal channels of food distribution are disrupted, there is likely to be a famine. Then the relief organizations will telephone their friends in the news media and show up with more food—this time in a true emergency. The television crews will get the starving-children footage they need to make the evening news. And the relief organizations will be depicted in a very favorable light, alleviating on camera the starvation

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator's Washington correspondent.