



Political Mourning

Washington Republicans are mourning the loss of a great conservative, Sen. Paul Coverdell, who died



on July 18. Personal considerations aside, one reason for their grief is that he was the sole conservative to have the ear of Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott. "Lott listened to Coverdell," a member of the Senate leadership told the Prowler. "He rarely took his advice, but Paul was always there trying to guide him literally down the right path." Now Senate conservatives wonder if there's anyone they can turn to for help in swaying Lott. "If we don't hold the Senate in November, it won't matter," says the Senate leader.

The Morals of a Poll Cat

In mid-June, as part of a poll it took on Medicare prescription drug plans, the White House threw in a couple of questions to gauge what people thought about polls in general. The numbers apparently weren't good. How do we know? Because Bill Clinton is now ridiculing poll

users. As part of his anti-Republican stump speech, Clinton has been telling crowds, "They're so afraid of this prescription drug issue

they have hired pollsters to tell them what words and phrases they should use to convince you that they're for giving affordable prescription drugs to our seniors." He terms it "bizarre" that Republicans should poll to determine where

to stand on an issue. This from the bizarre man who polled Americans on where he should take his vacations, what they think of his gray hair, and whether he should come clean on Monica Lewinsky.

The Durbin of History

Illinois loudmouth Senator Dick Durbin insisted for months that he wasn't interested in becoming Al Gore's running mate. If so, then why did he call Gore campaign chief and fellow Illinoisan Bill Daley to tell him to watch him "really take it to the enemy" in a recent spate of Sunday morning talk shows? "Durbin wants on the ticket," a Gore campaign source said in July, "if only to show up Bill Daley's brother." That would be current Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, who's been a rival of his for years. The rivalry turned decidedly ugly when the mayor rejected Durbin's attempts to lobby

him and instead endorsed former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin as Gore's number two.

Solon Newt

The day after a memorial service for Sen. Paul Coverdell in Georgia, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich



placed a courtesy call to Trent Lott, passing along condolences and then offering to help the party any way he could to hold the seat—including running for it himself in the special election to be held November 7. "Trent laughed at first, and Newt got huffy about it," says a Gingrich associate. "Lott didn't think Newt would be seriously interested." Even if Gingrich were a viable candidate, he would have little chance of winning. With the appointment of former Democratic Gov. Zell Miller as Coverdell's replacement, and a run by Miller in the fall, Republicans are given no better than a 25 percent chance of regaining the seat. "For all Gingrich's talk of strengthening the bench, he left his state's bench incredibly

weak," says a House leadership source. "We have nothing to offer in way of a replacement for Coverdell." Lott is said to favor House Rep. Saxby Chambliss for the Senate run, which would leave his predominantly Democratic district up for grabs. "We don't want to lose that House seat, and we will if he runs for the Senate." Maybe a Gingrich candidacy wouldn't be a bad idea.

Lazio Days

If Republicans lose the U.S. House of Representatives, blame should go, in part, to Rick Lazio, since it appears



the GOP sacrificed his House seat in getting him to run for the U.S. Senate seat. Democrats stand poised to win the seat now that Republicans have failed to woo any of five local GOP leaders to take a run. With Lazio siphoning off much of Suffolk County's money in an effort to keep pace with Hillary Clinton's fundraising, even the Republican National Committee appears to have surrendered the seat. Not only did the RNC not help recruit a candidate, it has so far declined to

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provide financial aid to the local campaign.

Bouncer Bonior

Just as **George W. Bush** held Sen. **John McCain** to his



word that he did not want to be vice president, so Al Gore chose to believe House Minority Leader **Dick Gephardt** when Gephardt insisted he doesn't want to be Gore's number two. That didn't stop Democratic Whip **David Bonior** of Michigan, number two in the House behind Gephardt, from pushing his colleague's candidacy to the press and to fellow House members. In early 2000, Gephardt pleaded with House Democrats not to seek gubernatorial or U.S. Senate seats since that would hurt efforts to win back the House. With the exception of a few members like Michigan's **Debbie Stabenow**, who decided to run against Sen. **Spencer Abraham**, the Democratic caucus has remained largely intact and united behind Gephardt's goal of becoming the next speaker of the House. But Bonior, it seems, has had other plans for his colleague. His office single-handedly fanned the flames of Gephardt-for-Veep talk in front-page stories in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. This is more than a

simple power grab by Bonior. Some might say he's fighting for his survival. "The minority leader has minimized Bonior's role to almost nothing," a Bonior staffer complained. "Gephardt pushes for solo TV time, won't let the whip run caucus or leadership meetings, nothing." Ultimately, though, the caper appears to center on money. Bonior took it as a personal affront that Gephardt's leadership PAC declined to give money to a list of

ten Democratic House candidates that Bonior was backing.

He's Grown, All Right

When the fiscally conservative Club for Growth invited Virginia Republican Senate candidate **George Allen** to speak at one of their Washington meetings in late July, members expected to hear a strong, Reaganesque economic speech from one of the Republican Party's rising stars. During his four years as governor of Virginia, Allen built up such strong conservative credentials it was assumed that he'd beat incumbent Democratic Sen. **Chuck Robb** in a



walk. But hold on. "Allen was terrible. He was running away from every conservative issue you could think of," says a

Club member who heard his remarks. "He ran away from pushing tax cuts, including estate and marriage penalty cuts. He seemed to waffle on a ban on the Internet tax. I could not believe this was the man some of our members were comparing to a young Ronald Reagan." Although at least one Club member scrambled to reassure his colleagues that Allen hadn't strayed from the reservation, they weren't convinced. "Allen thought he was going to win Virginia in a landslide, but it looks like he underestimated Robb. Now he's in a dogfight and trying to cover his rear," says the Club member. "Just what we need—another weak-kneed Republican."

Comeback Crane

On July 27 the American Conservative Union organized a breakfast fundraiser for **Phil Crane**, who made it



very obvious to everyone in the room that he has the chairmanship of Ways and Means locked up—assuming the GOP holds on to the House this fall. He's gearing up, hiring new staff, and looked to be in good shape and humor, better than he has in years, according to people at the breakfast. This might be the best news Reagan Republicans have had in a long time,

given that Crane wants to ram through elimination of the death tax and marriage penalty, as well as proceed with serious cuts in basic tax rates. **Bill Thomas** is no longer in the running to replace **Bill Archer**—again, assuming the GOP holds on to the House.

Florida Gripes

Republican consultants and the RNC's **Jim Nicholson** are miffed at Florida Gov. **Jeb Bush** for insuring that current Rep. **Bill McCollum** won the Republican nod for the state's open Senate race. While McCollum raised \$2 million, more than any of his primary competitors, his favorability numbers as of late July were terrible—it appears less than 40 percent of likely voters like him. Nicholson had asked Bush not to insert himself into the process and to let the state party come up with the strongest candidate. While Republicans don't expect **Jeb Bush** to run for president for at least another four years, his support of McCollum may come back to haunt him two years from now when he faces re-election.

Locker Roomies

It's become a beautiful friendship. On several occasions in the past few months, former rivals **Bob Dole** and **Bill Clinton** have made joint appearances at fundraisers and charity events in Washington. At one recent event at the Mayflower Hotel, Dole introduced Clinton, telling the audience that he's been told by his doctor that taking too much Viagra makes your hair turn gray. Clinton thought that was funny, but said that unlike Dole he didn't need Viagra to help him. Another Clinton lie? ❧

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

The Clinton Legacy: A Scherzo



As the great political parties of the Republic excite the faithful and tempt the dubious to make world history this November, it is fitting that this monthly intellectual review take

the longer view. Let us turn from the two proffered presidential messiahs and assess what in contemporary parlance is called Bill Clinton's Legacy, while bearing in mind that only the present narcissistic generation of politicians would think in such terms. No past president would so publicly fondle his "legacy," and the only journalist who might muse over a passing president's "legacy" would be one comfortably situated in said president's back pocket.

Strictly speaking, this president leaves no legacy, or at least not much of one. A legacy is an inheritance, almost always considered beneficent. What Boy Clinton is leaving is not a beneficence but what the computer-savvy might call a series of corrupt files, possibly even a computer virus. Rather than appraise a legacy from the forty-second president we might more appropriately evaluate the contamination he leaves.

The contamination appears to be lavish. Political scientists tell us that a president's impact on the country is intimate and far-reaching. I, after serving for over seven years as the Boy President's unflinching presidential biographer and daily polygraphist, have come to the conclusion that

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the political scientists do not know the half of it. The impact of a presidency is felt everywhere, bearing upon tastes, styles, normative standards, humors, even the average citizen's use of language—as when said citizen appears in a court of law to defend himself against yet another charge of indecent exposure. Since Roosevelt II gathered such vast power and prominence around the modern presidency, each of his successors has cast a particular glow on the land; in Roosevelt's regime, sanguinity mixed with energetic government; in Eisenhower's, welcome reassurance, steady-as-she-goes, and golf; in Kennedy's the glow was boldness, heedlessness, and hatlessness. Once a modern president bids the citizenry adieu, the glow passes; sometimes abruptly, as with President George Bush, sometimes slowly, as with President Ronald Reagan. So what about the Boy President's glow? Well, as aforementioned, the Clinton glow is more the glow of contamination than anything else, and it could, in some areas, last a long time.

I say that it could last a long time because this president and his servitors have contaminated the rule of law, a fundamental element in the American polity. To be sure he has contaminated other areas of the polity, as I—biographer and polygraphist—will relate below. He trivialized foreign policy and domestic policy. Policy, however, is but policy, and bad policy can be replaced by good policy. Reaganism rectified Carterism: Morning in America following insomnia. Yet corruption of the rule of law is more damaging than implementation of bad policy. America prides itself in being a "nation of laws." Our rule of law radiates throughout society, wherever contending parties seek redress. Its strength has been its integrity, its insulation from finagling or from partisan politics, in sum, its hold on the people's trust. With that integrity fractured, the judiciary and the

Justice Department open to political pressure, the rule of law is seriously impaired. Once lost, the people's trust is difficult to regain. When the president tampered with the rule of law he threatened the ethics of the country and contorted fundamental principles of discourse. The contamination of the public discourse is one of the most obvious consequences of the Clinton Administration. Political discussion as heard on television or read on the nation's op-ed pages now needs a translator, preferably a linguist who has taken the vow of no-politics.

The Boy President's energetic mendacity has rendered the public discourse mostly incomprehensible. Imagine taking issue with the meaning of "is" as he did in sworn testimony? It worked for him but at a cost to us. Sure, people laughed; but months later his understudy, Al Gore, during an interview with federal investigators about his fundraising, made a similar issue over the meaning of "raising." Now almost no one laughed. Under the glow of the Clinton presidency the public discourse has descended to the domain of the naughty adolescent caught *flagrante delicto*. That key figures in the public discourse—editors, writers, and news directors—have come to accept this sort of pettifoggery as merely amusing bodes ill for future political discourse and for all the sensible liberal principles associated with it.

Not surprisingly the Clinton critics whom I have enlisted elsewhere in this issue to comment on the Clinton "legacy" for our nation of laws, Theodore Olson and Congressman Bob Barr, are already infamous within the public discourse. They come to us besmeared as "Clinton-haters" and spooks in a "Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy." Here we see another example of how the Clintons have contaminated political debate.



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