

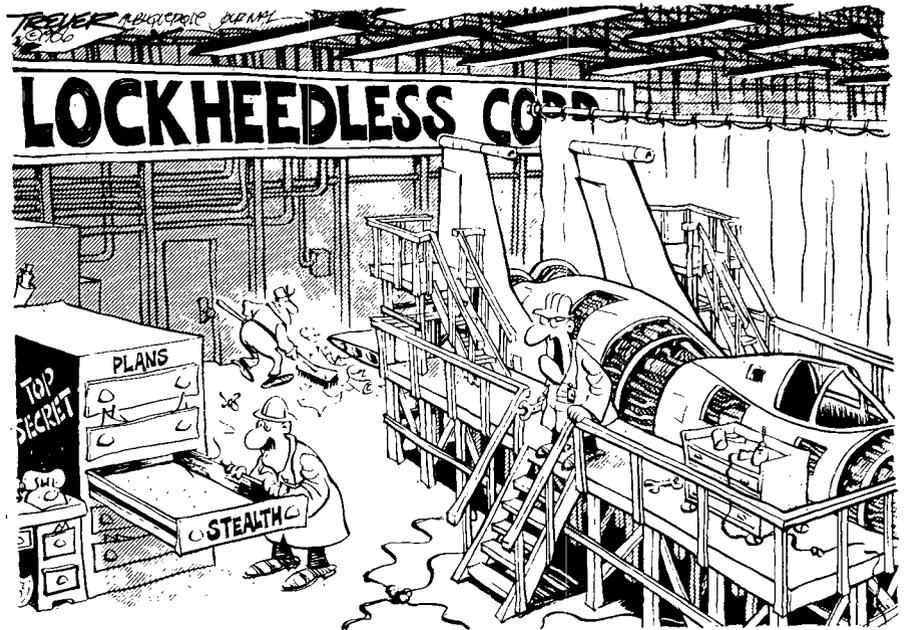
# brickbats

**T**he aesthetic sensibilities of Lakeside Park, Kentucky, residents were apparently deeply offended by 13-year-old Jeffrey Kisor's tree house. The city council voted that it must be torn down because an ordinance prohibits such detached structures. "I think the city is weird to say I have to get rid of it," says the young anarchist. "It's in my own yard and my own tree." Jeffrey's father hasn't given up yet. He says he might run wooden beams from the tree house to his house—a distance of 50 feet—thus technically attaching the structure to the house. It won't look very pretty, but it will meet the letter of the law.

**T**wo Atlantic City casinos in the middle of an advertising war over which offers the best odds to gamblers have been told by New Jersey officials to cease the promotional campaigns. Harrah's Marina Hotel claims that its slot machines paid out the most overall in recent months, while Trump's Castle counters that Harrah's players lost more overall. Neither claim is in dispute, apparently because Harrah's overall slot-machine volume is greater than that of other casinos. So what's the problem? The casinos violated a law that prohibits advertising the odds of games. Hmm—maybe the state doesn't want people to know casinos offer better odds than its lottery.

**Y**ou know the old dean's tale, misery loves company? It's now the University of California's official policy that students display sympathy for the have-nots. Every undergraduate student is now required to participate in the Human Corps, a program to promote "the ethics of public service" by foisting 19-year-olds on the populace to fight illiteracy, environmental contamination, inadequate housing, etc. The student whose heart bleeds the most gets an A?

**T**ake pity on Joseph Mauri, an unemployed outcast and victim of cruel American capitalism. At least that's what Mauri and the Soviets would like us to believe. Mauri, the subject of a Soviet propaganda film on America's poor and homeless, claims



"LOST?! WELL, DON'T JUST STAND THERE! RUN DOWN TO A TOY STORE!"

he was evicted from his New York apartment last year by a heartless landlady who wanted a sewing room. The poor lad says he supports himself by doing odd jobs and now lives in a hotel room paid for by friends. But the Soviets got caught red-faced on this one. "Homeless" Mauri in fact has two homes in New York, one a rent-stabilized apartment and the other a hotel room subsidized by the taxpayers. And Mauri has a job as a substitute mailroom worker at the *New York Times* that could pay him over \$35,000 a year. But Mauri doesn't bother to show up. No doubt he'll consider all offers of employment once he returns from his expense-paid tour of Mother Russia.

**I**s little Niels Hoven white or Oriental? In our quota-conscious age, it makes a big difference. Or does it? When John and Sue Hoven decided that their son needed special reading, math, and science classes, they asked their Maryland school board for permission to transfer him to another elementary school. Because John is white and Sue is Asian, Niels is classified as a minority student. Good? No, bad. There were already

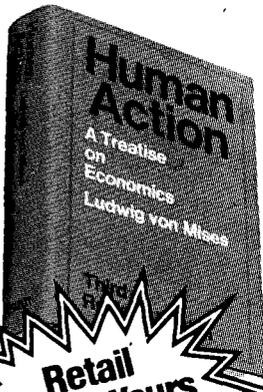
too many minorities at the school he wanted to go to. Yet being "white" wouldn't have helped, either. That would have prevented Niels from transferring out of his current school. Why? There are too few white students there.

**S**chizophrenia is alive and well in New Jersey. A task force to eliminate paperwork in state government has been trashed because it wasn't submitting enough reports. The paperwork management task force saved the state \$5.5 million in two years by reducing the number of forms in various departments. For example, the group found there were 30 different forms and 15 different publications for new employees explaining benefits, lunch hours, ethics, etc. The task force designed one brochure and one form for all state employees. But the group was "too independent," says budget director Richard B. Standiford. "We needed reports from them... to make sure there is no duplication." Was the team disbanded because they didn't produce enough paper? "Well, I wouldn't put it quite that way," he demurs.

—Mark Edward Crane

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## Will Life in the Fast Lane Soon Be Legal?

**T**here's nothing like enforcing a stupid law to speed up its repeal.

That champion of statism Elizabeth Dole may have done more to kill the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit than any of its opponents. She said she'd enforce the law and told Vermont and Arizona to wave their share of federal highway funds good-bye. These rural states, it seems, let more than half their drivers break the double-nickel limit.

Now politicians are racing to support repeal. Dole's boss, Ronald Reagan, recently told Sen. Steven D. Symms (R-Idaho) that he wants to scrap the law and once again let state and local governments set their own speed limits. A bill that would do just that is pending in Congress; another would modify the law to allow higher speeds on rural interstates.

Nearly a dozen states, mostly in the West, have reduced driving at 65 or 70 to a minor infraction punishable by a mere \$5 or \$10 fine, with no records kept.

Out West, where a driver is more likely to crash out of boredom than from speeding, the legislatures keep trying to convince Washington to let them do it their way.

Meanwhile, a group of Colorado investors has a plan to circumvent the speed limit—and Denver traffic—by building a private toll road from Ft. Collins to Pueblo, a distance of about 200 miles. The highway would compete with Interstate 25, which runs smack through Denver and Colorado Springs, forcing travelers to fight city traffic. Since the road wouldn't use any federal highway funds, developers can set the speed where they want to with impunity—and their target is 80 miles per hour.

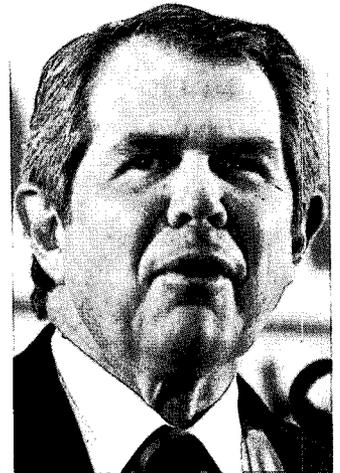
The higher speed limit would require a special exemption from the state law, but the legislature is likely to cooperate, the group's attorney, Tom Grimshaw, told REASON. After all, Colorado lawmakers have been among those trying to persuade the feds to lift the double-nickel limit.

Construction of the toll road would begin in about two years, says Grimshaw, and the project would cost about \$800 million to complete. To foot the bill, the group plans to float bonds and to raise seed money from railroads, power companies, and water-transmission companies

that would use rights of way along the highway.

Colorado hasn't had any private roads since pioneer days. Although a century-old state law does grant private road developers eminent-domain powers to condemn property they need, these road entrepreneurs hope not to resort to it.

Legal questions remain, however. "What do you do about police power? Who patrols?" asks Grimshaw. "If somebody's driving too slow, who gives them a ticket?" With the anti-55 rebellion picking up speed, public highway cops may soon be asking that question too.



Television evangelist Pat Robertson—driving away younger voters?

"annoying...intru[sion] into the private lives of citizens" rather than a noble effort to "protect activities that flout traditional family values."

The poll contained particularly bad news for Robertson, whose campaign has a strong religious flavor. Political candidates "who bring in their own religious beliefs when they discuss issues facing the nation" were disapproved of by 2½ to 1. By the same margin, they said they would be "less likely" and not "more likely" to vote for "a political candidate who described himself as an evangelical Christian."

Robertson's political ambitions have also discomfited some party leaders, who fear that a candidate urging the government to step up regulation of our personal lives might drive away younger voters (See "Making Republicanism Cool," June). Republican National Committee chairman Frank Fahrenkopf admitted to the *Wall Street Journal*: "We face the problem right now that the great strength of our party is among young voters, and on some of the social issues they are less conservative" than Robertson.

Robertson, it should be noted,

## Voters Say No to Preaching Politicians

**T**he nascent presidential candidacy of television evangelist Pat Robertson has triggered fears that a new wave of moral regulation is approaching, primed to swamp our civil liberties in a deluge of sanctimony and Meese Commission reports. But it seems that the American people are in fact less than enthusiastic about a new moral crusade.

According to a recent *Los Angeles Times* poll, most Americans retain their traditional distrust of government meddling in personal affairs, even while 9 out of 10 consider religion "important" in their lives. Among the findings:

- A minority—38 percent—support laws against the distribution of pornography to adults.
- A smaller number—35 percent—support laws forbidding homosexual acts between consenting adults.
- By a 5-to-3 margin, Americans see moral regulation as an



"OLIVER T. BOGGIE, YOU HAVE SINNED. YOU ARE CONDEMNED TO DRIVE BETWEEN AMARILLO AND BARSTOW AT THE NATIONAL SPEED LIMIT...."