

on three occasions for developing the Physical Quality of Life Indexes that Morris David Morris actually developed and that Kerr merely uses. But in those areas where my own knowledge was sufficient to permit an assessment, I was impressed by the depth of McCord's understanding.

It is testimony to the quality of his analysis that he could send to the publisher in 1988 a manuscript containing sizable sections on the "Marxist utopias" of Hungary and China for which he does not have to apologize today. Were he writing those chapters now, he would want to update them, but there is very little he would have to rewrite. While McCord did not predict the dramatic changes that occurred in these countries in 1989, his analysis points clearly to the problems that precipitated them.

REASON readers will be especially curious about the "capitalist utopias" McCord discusses. The only utopia with which the author seems to have no sympathy whatsoever is La Jolla, a wealthy and exclusive enclave near San Diego. But La Jolla also doesn't fit the criteria he claims in the first chapter to have used in selecting utopias to examine. The residents of La Jolla surely did not move there with any intention "to better the condition of all mankind."

Denmark follows La Jolla, and after reading well into the chapter on Denmark I began to suspect that McCord had set up La Jolla as a horrible example of superficiality and selfishness in order to reveal Denmark's "social democracy" as the best alternative around. But my suspicions were unfounded. He does not find the answer in Denmark, either. McCord shows how the rights to welfare that the state has created for its citizens have begun to undermine creativity and personal responsibility, with consequences that now alarm many Danes.

Those who wish to argue with the author will find ample opportunity in the concluding chapter, "Some Cautious Reflections." It's clear McCord has not adequately understood some of the differences between bureaucracies and markets. He caricatures Adam Smith and fails fully to appreciate F.A. Hayek. But

these are relatively minor quibbles.

The book contains valuable counsel for those who forget that social visions must find institutions capable of receiving them, and even more valuable counsel for those who will not read this book or any like it because they are too busy trying to create such institutions by force. But McCord also reminds libertarians of the great variety of yearnings and temperaments that must be satisfied in any enduring society.

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The Good, the Bad and the Famous, by Len Sherman, New York: Lyle Stuart, 218 pages, \$18.95. Is this any way to run a country? That's the question Len Sherman asks in *The Good, the Bad and the Famous*. His implicit answer is no.

Sherman looks at the growing attempts by celebrities to influence public policy. Hollywood long has been an important source of money for politicians, particularly those on the far left of the Democratic party. But in recent years, movie stars have begun to place conditions on the money they grant. They want to be heard. Groups such as the Hollywood Women's Political Committee have formed to shape the political agenda. In return for star-studded fundraisers, the HWPC demands that politicians listen to its views on which issues are important and which positions are correct.

The problem with all of this isn't just that all of these celebrities are somewhere to the left of Mao. No, the real problem is that they are all a bunch of ninnies.

Sherman has spent considerable time with some of the most active celebrities, and he recounts some of the lengthy conversations he had. A few stars—most notably Ed Asner, John Randolph, and Charlton Heston—ably explain and defend their ideas. But the statements of most of Sherman's celebrities could lead one to believe that the L.A. smog destroys brain cells.

Consider Jane Fonda's speech at a HWPC benefit for pro-choice candidates: "It's been very special. And it's special to

be from a town, Hollywood, in which some very prophetic words were said by Joan Crawford: 'No more wire hangers!' " Or Morgan Fairchild's explanation of why she was qualified to appear before a Senate committee and discuss an environmental bill: "As an actress, I have spent most of my professional life in dramatic situations which imitate real life. I have become increasingly sensitive to human interaction in a world that is increasingly crowded."

But both of those women appear to be geniuses when compared to Brat Packer Judd Nelson. Asked if people still believe in the traditional institutions of American society, Nelson responds, "It seems that to protect the status quo as opposed to the tremendous gains in public participation in what's considered a democracy, the threat to those in charge of the status quo then pushed into a 'Me Generation' in the 1970s, which, in effect, destroyed every institution that we had. People don't believe in the Supreme Court. Now it's up to Sandra Day O'Connor; she's going to be the deciding vote. The eight men are split, right, so she's going to cast the deciding vote because she's a woman. She has lots of kids, so she's like a great, great mother of the nation. You know. We don't believe in family. More than fifty percent of marriages fail. We don't believe in government anymore. We had a President on the verge of being impeached. He got a pardon by the next joker, who lowered the speed limit." The man not only acts with his nostrils, he apparently thinks with them as well.

The one real weakness with Sherman's book is that it never gets beyond the anecdotes. Ultimately, he never answers the important questions: Why is Hollywood so left-wing? Why does America continue to give a soapbox to bimbos with a cause? And did Jane Fonda really have a boob job? Inquiring minds want to know.

Still, Sherman has performed a valuable service just by retelling his stories. Lest we ever forget, he reminds us that these people may be young, and they may be beautiful, but collectively they don't have the brains God gave a chipmunk.

—Charles Oliver

CHILD'S PLAY

BY THOMAS W. HAZLETT

Direct mail hucksters boast that a helpless child's picture is worth a thousand bucks. Nothing jump-starts an adult's protective rush like "the children." For "the children," adults will sacrifice more than money—even sacred liberties protected by the U.S. Constitution.

Congress has just enacted a measure directing the Federal Communications Commission to assess the effect of a television station's programming upon *the children* before renewing its broadcast license. The law also caps the amount of advertising on kids' shows at 10.5 minutes per hour on weekends and 12 minutes per hour on weekdays.

President Bush allowed the bill to become law without his signature. Of course, Bush has no principles—on principle. His own press statement on the legislation solemnly warned, "The First Amendment...does not contemplate that Government will dictate the quality or quantity of what Americans should hear. Rather, it leaves this to be decided by free media responding to the free choices of individual consumers." Voilà! Having castigated the law as detrimental to the very freedoms we Americans hold dear, the president vacated his oath of office and allowed this assault on the Constitution to become the law of the land.

The Washington-swell for the law was bodysurfed by teachers' unions, religious orders, and health-care professionals—along with the National Association of Broadcasters. The designated spokesperson was Peggy Charren, of a lobbying group called Action for Children's Television, who so adroitly summed up the *realpolitik*: "There was no constituency for a veto." Mr. Madison a nobody, Ms. Charren?

Just moments before the vote, cocktail-hour freedom fighters were beefing about David Souter's ostensible softness regarding individual protections im-

plicit in the Bill of Rights. But these limousine libertarians drew a huge collective blank while the Congress voted explicitly to regulate the content of electronic publishers.

"I'm just appalled at the way Judge Souter refuses to reassure Americans about his firm commitment to an American's right to privacy, found right there if you read between the lines in that Fourth Amendment. Oh, yes, wouldn't it be swell to give federal regulators more discretion over what television producers tell our impressionable young people." Congress shall make no law...abridging freedom of speech, or of the press? (Between those lines: Except, of course, where creep "the children"!)

The Lucifer lurking in this censorship coalition is the NAB. Even Beltway bubbleheads with the gollygee-whiz gullibility of a Jimmy Carter could ID this mischief. The legislation limits the amount of commercial time that stations can sell. If the broadcast competitors ran this pooling arrangement on their own, they'd bump into quite another body of law: Sherman Antitrust, Section 1. Indeed, just a decade ago the Justice Department's Antitrust Division knocked out a previous NAB collusion: the networks' Family Hour agreement not to start the T and/or A until 8 P.M. (when adults, presumably, stood a better chance of enjoying it in peace). But get the feds to police the conspiracy themselves, as the Good Government activists have done for the NAB, and your cartel is (a) legal; and (b) a hero to America's youth!

While broadcasters regulated according to "public convenience, interest, or necessity" quiver when making this rudimentary point, the reason for having a Bill of Rights that cuts government off at the pass is that lots of well-meaning PTAers, not to mention political ruffians

on the order of a Lyndon Johnson or a Richard Nixon, will want to shave the prerogatives of those possessing "no constituency for a veto." The slick skids this censorship legislation coasted upon reveal the delicate nature of fundamental freedoms that fail to make the interest group Top 40.

There is no trade-off of repression of choice for quality of output. Federal supervision of television has proceeded since the very first yawn to a test pattern, yet all the equal-time, fairness-doctrine, and public-interest licensing rigmarole has secured are artificially imposed scarcity of media, mediocrity in product of Gerald-esque proportions, timidity in news gathering, hack favoritism in awards, and political whack-a-rounds at license-renewal time. Even the classic fairness-doctrine legal precedent, *Red Lion v. FCC* (1969), turns out (unbeknownst to the High Court that decided it erroneously) to have sanctioned Kennedy-Johnson harassment of right-wing radio broadcasters—via expensive fairness-doctrine license challenges—in a calculated campaign to shut up political dissenters.

Tots plugged into Saturday TV will be no more protected from flaky 'toons by FCC monitoring than adults have been shielded from Sam Donaldson in prime time. But don't expect to see exclusive footage of regulatory failures and abuses on "Live at Five," so long as federal marshals keep their fingers on the "off" switch. Which is precisely why all speech—printed, beamed, wired, or uttered—merits protection by the First Amendment's remote control.

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