

100th
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CENTURY
2009

Elinor Nauen on Title IX

America

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The Soul of Sports

Big Money and the Games
Dave Anderson

Sports and the Spiritual Life
Patrick Kelly

GEORGE WEIGEL AND I appeared on the same platform together last week at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb.

Over the years we have sparred across think-tank seminar tables and in the pages of journals like **America**, especially over the interpretation of the just war tradition. The topic for our joint appearance in Omaha was "The Challenge of Peace: 25 Years Later," a look back at the U.S. bishops' 1983 peace pastoral and the subsequent development of Catholic teaching and advocacy on issues of peace and war.

Mr. Weigel's critique of the pastoral letter focused primarily on its formulation of issues in the narrow terms of arms control rather than in the broader geopolitical context of the struggle for liberty in eastern Europe, a contest he chronicled in his book *The Final Revolution*, an account of the nonviolent campaign for workers' rights and democracy in Poland. In the end, what had been booked as a debate turned out to be a conversation. For I had tried, in the opening of my

talk, to show the shift in Catholic social teaching away from just war and toward nonviolence. The church's official teaching now embraces what I call a composite position: nonviolence but when that fails, just war—the justified, limited and accountable use of force.

Mr. Weigel and I agreed even on the abolition of nuclear weapons as a goal of foreign military policy and nonproliferation as a challenge of the day, with Weigel citing the Kissinger-Nunn-Perry-Schultz proposal for a nuclear-free world and me, for my part, quoting the bishops' 1993 statement *The Harvest of Justice Is Sown in Peace*, which called for the abolition of nuclear weapons as a policy goal.

What tension there was in the auditorium came not from us speakers, as it turned out, but from the audience. I was repeatedly asked why the bishops are not more prophetic. George pointed out that in our individualistic, hedonistic culture, they are prophetic on issues relating to the beginning and end of life. In 1983, of course, *The Challenge of Peace* was viewed as prophetic, because it was an open challenge to the nuclear war-fighting policies of the Reagan administration. The bishops' 1986 pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All*, was also considered prophetic. But why do the bishops today not seem

prophetic on issues other than abortion, euthanasia and stem-cell research?

One major reason is the media. The drafting of *The Challenge of Peace* and *Economic Justice for All* was a public affair, with early texts disseminated for public input. Later public acceptance of those texts was due in large part to the wide public discussion they had received. In choosing to draft their statements in more controlled circumstances, with diverse but much smaller input from outside, the bishops have sacrificed the free publicity they received in the mid-80s. As a result, much of the good work the conference does on such issues as torture, peacemaking and the environment just does not get covered.

Furthermore, among many who would press the bishops to be "more prophetic," there are expectations about prophecy that are unrealistic, especially when directed to the conference of bishops. Bishops are primarily pastors, not prophets; and especially when they are gathered in large numbers, as the U.S. conference is, they

will tend to act pastorally, attending to the spiritual needs of a diverse community. Being prophetic, by contrast involves confrontation and risks producing division. A small bishops' conference, like Guatemala's, may be prophetic. Because there can be more cohesion and trust in a smaller group, it can be more deliberate and concerted in the policies it pursues.

Finally, expectations of prophecy assume that morality and even policy can be stated in absolute, black-and-white terms. A composite position on nonviolence and the just war, like that of the U.S. bishops and the Vatican, tends to disappoint radicals on both sides, pacifists and just warriors alike. *The Harvest of Justice Is Sown in Peace* made an important contribution by affirming that nonviolence should shape our public institutions, employing preventive diplomacy, threat reduction centers, conflict transformation measures and so on. But there has been little effort to institutionalize nonviolence this way. Romanticism about nonviolence as a lonely, personal vocation has blocked the Catholic social imagination from promoting new social inventions for peace. There are times when lonely prophecy is necessary; but at others a narrow prophetic style can impede the path to peace.

Drew Christiansen, S.J.

Of Many Things

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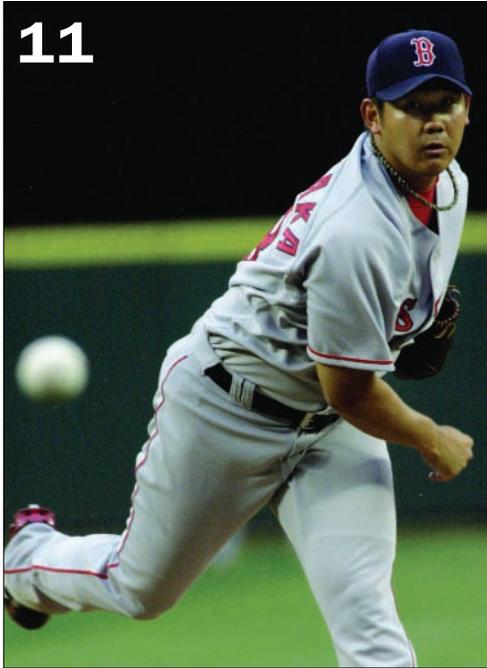
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Cover photo Marquette University and Notre Dame meet at N.C.A.A. Big East men's tournament in New York on March 13, 2008. Marquette defeated Notre Dame 89-79. Reuters/Ray Stubblebine.

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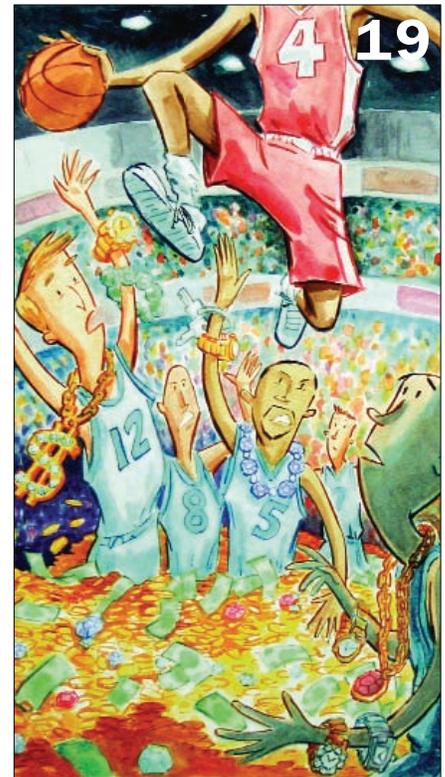
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This week @
America Connects

An audio interview with long-time sportswriter Dave Anderson; and James T. Keane, S.J., on the joys of sports without conflict. Plus, from the archives, the editors on violence in boxing and pigskin mania. All at americamagazine.org.

The Manhattan Crisis

Financial crises have been recurring around the globe over the past three decades. The 1980s saw the Latin American debt crisis and the U.S. savings and loan crisis; the early and mid-1990s brought the European monetary crisis (tied to German reunification); and the late 1990s produced the Mexican Tequila Crisis, the Asian Flu and the Russian Virus. Now we have the Manhattan Crisis.

Globalization is often blamed for these recurring situations, but such crises were also common in previous centuries. Dutch tulip bubbles and the collapse of Mississippi shares caused major crises in the 18th century, and banking panics were common under the 19th-century classical gold standard.

Each crisis is different, of course. Unlike Mexico's crisis, in the present case both the assets and the liabilities of the financial sector are denominated in U.S. dollars. There is no peso problem. The dollar will likely continue to adjust downward, but the movement will be more like a glider landing than a crash. This crisis will thus require a much more prolonged adjustment than the Mexican crisis.

WHAT THE CURRENT CRISIS has in common with past ones is uncertainty about its magnitude. To paraphrase the late Rudiger Dornbush of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, we have to step into a puddle to cross the street, but we will not know how deep it is until we step in it.

As always, doomsayers come forward. In the early 1980s, some economists talked openly about the end of the American century of progress. But the U.S. economy rebounded in the mid-80s, and the next decade was called the "roaring 90s" by Joseph Stiglitz of Columbia University. In one sense, Senator John McCain is correct: the fundamentals of the U.S. economy are sound. We have flexible labor markets relative to Europe, oil prices are not climbing as fast as we feared and the American economy has always benefited from innovation.

We should not underestimate, however, or forget the costs of financial crises. The 1980s are rightly known as the "lost decade" of growth and development in Latin America. Per capita living standards remained stagnant, resulting in lost educational opportunities for hundreds of millions of young people throughout the continent.

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Similarly, when the Indonesian government had to bail out the banking system in the late 1990s, the cost was borne by the poorer classes.

Whatever the final form of any federal intervention, it will also have budgetary consequences. Plans of the incoming administration for health care reform, educational or energy subsidies or tax breaks will have to be put on hold, or we will pay for this intervention through inflation. We must hope that the new administration and the new Congress will recognize that fiscally their hands will be tied for several years. Institutions that rely on charitable donations will also have to tighten belts for several years or more.

A UNIQUE FEATURE of the finance industry is that the collapse of one's competitor is bad news rather than good, because a competitor's failure can lead to a systemwide loss of confidence in the banking sector as a whole, with a major withdrawal of deposits and a collapse of credit and ripple (or tidal wave) effects throughout the whole economy. At times like these, central bankers earn their salary. One of the roles of a central bank is to be a lender of last resort as well as a guarantor of price stability. One central banker who emerged as a hero in the Asian financial crisis was Joseph Yam of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority. Many foreign investors assumed that the Asian meltdown would spill over into Hong Kong's stock market. Yam used the authority's dollar reserves to buy up shares in order to stabilize prices and calm the markets. Later, the authority was able to sell off these shares with little or no loss.

The hope is that a similar scenario will play out in the United States. This time, the Federal Bank and the U.S. Treasury are buying up nonperforming mortgage-backed securities. Because a growing population always needs housing, sooner or later real estate prices will return to fundamental values based on underlying demand and supply. But this adjustment will take time, and costs will have to be paid in the form of lost opportunities in health care, education and social development.

IS THERE A SILVER LINING? The widespread consumer habit of living on heavy extended credit, for everything from vacations to new cars to household improvements, will be curtailed by the credit crunch. With less easy credit and less demand, prices will fall from their inflated levels across a variety of goods and services. Perhaps one positive result will be that more Americans will exercise greater care in their spending.

Paul D. McNelis

The Sporting Life

CAGE FIGHTING: two warriors locked in a steel pen, at battle in a mixed-martial arts contest, seek to end the fight by a “guillotine choke” or a “crucifix hold.” Such combat has been hailed by one television reporter as “the dawn of a new era in American sports.” Nor is such violent competition simply for men: women too now engage not only in professional boxing, but in mixed-martial arts for all to see on television.

College softball: a stunned and cheering crowd watches as two women playing for Central Washington University cradle one of their injured opponents, Sara Tucholsky of Western Oregon, and carry her around the bases. They enable her to touch each base to score the home run that Tucholsky had earned by a hit over the fence moments before her knee gave out as she rounded first. As Mallory Holtman, the first baseman who carried Sara, explained, “She deserved it. Anybody would have done it.... Winning is not everything.”

In the wide world of sports, which way are we moving? Billions around the world enjoyed the Beijing Olympics; millions in the United States watch the baseball playoffs and prepare for what we still call the “World” Series. And Super Bowl Sunday will once again capture our attention come Feb. 1, 2009. Sports is always big news. More and more, it is also big business. How much of our television, newspaper and Internet coverage and conversation are taken up with sports? How many sports metaphors continue to color our language?

In this issue we explore a few aspects of sports, including a look back at how Title IX legislation began to level the playing field for women and an analysis of the way athletic contests are becoming more and more truly “world” competitions, in which the salaries of athletes are matched only by those of Wall Street executives (before the financial crisis). Finally, the topic of sports and the spiritual life gives an opportunity for reflection on the deeper, perennial values of sports.

There is no question that as a culture we are seeing sports in a more and more positive light, not just with regard to our physical health but also for our emotional and spiritual well-being. Health consciousness is at an all-time high and has led to greater sports activity like aerobics, jogging, in-line skating, walking, bicycling and much more.

But our obsession with sports has a darker side. The greed that has brought Wall Street to its knees has also

made deep inroads into sports at every level. Professional athletes increasingly earn salaries that are several orders of magnitude greater than those of the fans who foot the bill. On the amateur level, one commentator notes that “college sports is awash in money.” Indeed, many collegiate head coaches earn million-dollar salaries, far more than the best professors at their universities.

Is there a link between this desire for money and the fatal attraction to see brutality and violence in sports? Boxing (with 500 killed in the past 100 years) and football (1,000 football-related deaths since 1931) are two prime offenders. Now we also can find such carnage in extreme sports, the X Games and the Ultimate Fighting Championship.

Mike Tyson attacks not with his fists, but by biting the ear of his opponent. A knife-wielding fan rushes onto the tennis court to put Monica Seles out of action. Angry parents attack an umpire at a Little League game. Drug abuse multiplies too as part of the drive to win at any cost, as younger and younger players start juicing up with steroids to compete on the track, the gridiron or the diamond. The incentive to cheat also increases as sports becomes more and more commercialized.

WHAT IS THE WAY FORWARD? Many groups and individuals must participate in the move, in the words of Pope John Paul II, to enable “sports to be at the service of humanity, and not the human person at the service of sports.” The pope expressed the desire that sports “be a factor of emancipation for poorer countries and help to eradicate intolerance and build a more fraternal and united world.” Legal authorities can work to curb drug abuse and stem the tide of violence. N.C.A.A. officials need to redouble efforts at oversight of college athletics. Various groups, including religious organizations, can lobby for sports that help to develop such values as loyalty, perseverance, friendship, sharing and solidarity.

Marshall McLuhan wrote many years ago that we “know a culture by how it plays its games.” Indeed, sports reflect the society we live in, and our world is both violent and, as the past few weeks have shown, greedy. We would like to think, however, that sports can and should be the exception and the model. We believe deep down that we are much better than the violence, the cheating, the greed or the win-at-any-cost attitude. In the words of Mallory Holtman, “winning is not everything.”

Almost 10,000 Refugees in Orissa State



Missionaries of Charity feed displaced children at the order's center in Janla, India, Oct. 1.

The superior general of the Missionaries of Charity said the situation in India's troubled Orissa State is a call for Christians to be witnesses to the faith. "Disciples cannot be greater than their master," said Nirmala Joshi, M.C., the successor of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who founded the Missionaries of Charity. "God will strengthen his people to face this tough situation," Sister Nirmala said on Oct. 1 after meeting with bishops and leaders of religious congregations in Orissa. The church

leaders met to develop a plan to take care of the tens of thousands of Christian refugees who have been fleeing attacks by Hindu extremists since August. More than 30 people have died in the violence. Nearly 10,000 refugees have fled to Bhubaneswar and government-managed refugee camps in the Kandhamal district. At the meeting, the church leaders decided to shift 800 teenagers to church institutions outside Orissa's Kandhamal district so they could continue their education.

Lithuanian Bishops Urge Voter Responsibility

Lithuania's Catholic bishops have called for Lithuanians to search their souls before voting in the upcoming parliamentary elections on Oct. 12. Responsibility for the future of the country "is a more complex and significant duty than just going to the polls," the bishops wrote in a pastoral letter released on Sept. 22. "Disappointment [and] rightful indignation at the behavior of many of the elected politicians make us realize that these things happen due also

to the fault of us voters: our indifference, lack of better understanding and responsibility," they said. The bishops urged Lithuanians to consider whether their political decisions "are motivated by truth and justice, solidarity with the weakest and responsibility for the spiritual heritage of our ancestors."

Rabbi Cohen Speaks at Synod on the Word of God

Israeli Rabbi Shear-Yashuv Cohen, the chief rabbi of Haifa, Israel, asked Pope

Benedict XVI and other high-level Catholic leaders to continue learning to appreciate the Jewish people and to speak out in defense of Israel. "I thank God who has kept us alive to be together and work for a future of peace and coexistence the world over," the 80-year-old rabbi told the Synod of Bishops meeting in Rome. With Pope Benedict sitting nearby, Rabbi Cohen addressed synod members on Oct. 6, telling them of the centrality of the word of God in Jewish life and prayer and its continuing relevance in responding to modern concerns, including promoting the dignity of human life, fighting promiscuity and secularism and encouraging tolerance and peace. But Rabbi Cohen also asked Catholic leaders to speak out against anti-Semitism and attacks on the State of Israel. Without mentioning Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad by name, he spoke of "deep shock at the terrible and vicious words of the president of a certain state in the Middle East in his speech last month at the United Nations General Assembly."

Bishops Stress Bible-Related Priorities

Translating the Bible, making copies affordable, helping people understand it and, especially, helping people live its message are important tasks for the Catholic Church, although the priorities differ from continent to continent. Before individuals began addressing the Synod of Bishops, synod organizers chose five bishops to report Oct. 6 on "The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church" in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania. The Vatican released four of the reports early on Oct. 7; the report on the Americas was not immediately available. Archbishop John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan of Abuja, Nigeria said most African Catholics were thirsting for the word of God. While the archbishop praised the remarkable work done by mainline Protestant churches and organizations to translate, print and distribute Bibles in Africa, he also said there were many anti-Catholic, funda-

mentalist groups using the Bible to try to lead Catholics away from the church.

Suicide Initiative Reaches Washington Ballot

The governance board of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability is urging rejection of Washington State's Initiative 1000, saying the so-called Death With Dignity Act "substitutes lethal prescriptions and illusory safeguards for compassionate care." The proposal before the state's voters on Nov. 4 would allow physicians to prescribe lethal doses of narcotics to terminally ill patients, who would then self-administer the drugs. The resulting deaths would not be listed as suicides, and death certificates would list the underlying illness as the cause of death, according to the initiative language. "Legalizing assisted suicide is abandoning the higher goal of truly compassionate care for the dying," the board statement said. "We urge you to vote 'no' on Initiative 1000 because, rather than providing patients death with dignity, it presumes that they are only dignified when dead."

Priests and Lawyers Are in 'Related Vocations'



Supreme Court Justices Anthony M. Kennedy, second from left, and Antonin Scalia, talk with Cardinal John P. Foley, left, and Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl outside the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle following the Red Mass Oct. 5 in Washington, D.C.

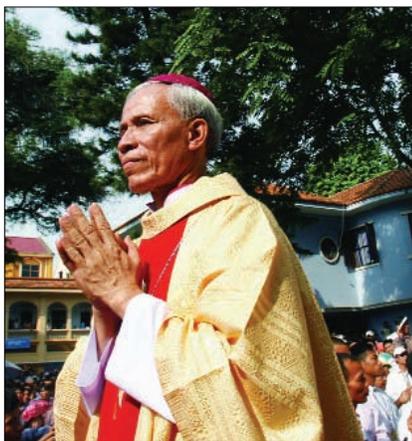
Priests and those who work in the field of law "are in related vocations," said Cardinal John P. Foley at the Red Mass on Oct. 5 at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in Washington, D.C. "We both seek to challenge people to recognize their dignity and to live according to it," said Cardinal Foley. The U.S. cardi-

nal who headed the Pontifical Council for Social Communications for 23 years, said both priests and those who work in civil law try to establish "mutual respect and love" as they carry out their vocations.

"We both consider law as a guide to a well-ordered society. We both see law

as a means in which people can be educated to perceive what is good and to strive for it," the cardinal said. Five justices of the U.S. Supreme Court attended the 55th annual Red Mass in the nation's capital. The Mass is traditionally held the Sunday before the first Monday in October, when the Supreme Court opens its annual term.

New Bishop Ordained in Vietnam



Cosme Hoang Van Dat, S.J., arrives for his episcopal ordination ceremony in Bac Ninh, Vietnam, Oct. 7. Bishop Hoang Van Dat became the first Jesuit bishop in Vietnam more than 400 years after Portuguese Jesuit missionaries set foot in the country. Vietnam, with eight million Catholics, is the second largest Catholic community in Asia after the Philippines.

New Poll Finds Generational Divide Among Catholics

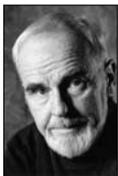
A major new survey released on Oct. 8 by the progressive organization Faith in Public Life revealed that younger Catholics more strongly support Senator Barack Obama, access to abortion, same-sex marriage and a more active government than do older Catholics. While Catholics age 35 and older were split between the presidential candidates (46 percent for Senator John McCain and 44 percent for Obama), Obama held a 15-point lead over McCain among younger Catholic voters (55 percent to 40 percent), according to the survey.

The poll also found a generational divide among Catholics on other issues. Sixty percent of younger Catholics surveyed said abortion should be legal in all or most cases, compared to half of older Catholics. Younger Catholics, the survey found, are also more likely than older Catholics to support a larger government providing more services rather than a

smaller government providing fewer services (67 percent to 41 percent), indicating that younger Catholics are more pro-government than any other religious group. Forty-four percent of younger Catholics said they supported same-sex marriage compared with 30 percent of all Catholics surveyed.

The poll is the most comprehensive assessment of the faith and political views of young people thus far in the 2008 election cycle. The results were based on telephone interviews with a representative sample of 2,000 American adults and a large over-sample of younger adults (age 18 to 34), including both land line and cell phone interviews. The margin of error is plus or minus 2.5 percent to 3 percent. The poll can be accessed online at <http://www.faithinpubliclife.org>.

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.



Money Mania

‘It was only appropriate that resistance to the bailout was bipartisan.’

The derivatives market has exploded in recent years, with investment banks selling billions of dollars worth of these investments to clients as a way to off-load or manage market risk.

But Mr. Buffett argues that such highly complex financial instruments are time bombs and "financial weapons of mass destruction" that could harm not only their buyers and sellers, but the whole economic system.

—BBC News, March 4, 2003

THE FULL PARADOX of our recent financial turbulence hits you when you realize that at the very time China is becoming the home of capitalism for socialists, the United States has become the home of socialism for capitalists. Paradoxical indeed. Advocates of unregulated and unconstrained capitalism were expert at demonizing government because it regulates and constrains economic exploitation. Government is the problem. Get it off our backs. Let us alone.

But now that deregulated and unconstrained money and debt managers have worked the unregulated system to implode on itself, to whom do they turn? The government. The last thing the big money people wanted in September was to be left alone to their own devices. They wanted help, to the tune of 700 billion dollars, but not with much oversight or constraint—all to be managed by someone who thrived in the old broken system. We were told that it was not a bailout for Wall Street, but Main Street; and that is true, but only because Main Street has been hostage to Wall Street.

A second paradox is this: When, in the past, voices have been raised in favor of

universal health care, of revamped infrastructure, of enhanced education or of raising the minimum wage, a chorus of alarmists have chanted, “Where will the money come from?” But give us a trillion-dollar war or a trillion-dollar bailout of a failed system and, presto, the money is there for the taking.

Politicians have won elections promising an unfettered free market and a reduction of taxes. We have all heard the mantra: “Who knows better how to spend the money in your pocket, the federal government or you? You, of course, except when Wall Street’s boondoggle and collapse requires 700 billion from their detested government. Provision will be made, not from the coffers of fat cats, but from your pockets and from your children and grandchildren. No wonder there was an initial rejection of the Wall Street bailout by the House of Representatives, Republican and Democratic alike. It just did not compute.

It was only appropriate that resistance to the bailout was bipartisan. For the failure was bipartisan as well. Despite the default rhetoric of ideological politicians and commentators blaming the other side, this mess was brought about by Democrats and Republicans alike. Presidents Ronald Reagan (“Government is the problem”) and Bill Clinton (“The era of big government is over”) were high priests of deregulation, and everyone from Barney Frank to John McCain were acolytes. Politicians of all stripes, including Barack Obama, were wooed by high-finance vested interests.

Now we are in the midst of a billion-dollar election. Money is king. And it is sedition to question the king. Thus we will hear little questioning of the disordered priorities of profit and reckless expansionism from our candidates. Joe Biden tried it when he suggested that the willingness of

the rich to pay more taxes might be a question of patriotism. He was derided for saying so (another gaffe from that loud-mouth, some chortled). But Biden was right.

There is such a thing as the common good, not only of a nation but also of a world. With respect to the world, concern for the common good suggests that we have a duty to preserve the planet God has given us and to attend to the sufferings of our brothers and sisters made in the image of God. If we think we are the only nation in the world that we should care about, we are a narcissistic nation. In the context of our nation, the common good requires that we look beyond our own self-interest, that we realize our own livelihood and flourishing depends upon the kindness and labors of others, and that our successes, especially our financial gains, should move us to contribute proportionately to the civic community. If we fail to see this, then we are not only a narcissistic nation. We are a nation of narcissists.

Biden was appealing to the common good, not narcissism, when he said that paying taxes was patriotic. He was deemed a fool only because we are foolish narcissists. We are an “exceptional” nation that can behave in ways that other nations cannot. And so we have a war with no end in sight. As individual citizens, we are becoming a populace of “exceptional” people who have a selective view of ethics: that moral imperatives and principles of justice apply to others but not to ourselves.

We have witnessed a desperate infusion of many hundreds of billions into businesses run by the very people who failed us. Let us hope that it somehow stabilizes our economy before we face our next calamity. But let us hope also that there are some wise ones among us who ask whether we could have gone about it in a way more fitting to the common good.

Could we have given mortgage assistance directly to those who are serious about their debts (as opposed to some Wall Street firms) and are working to pay them? Could we have insured pension funds for those who have labored all their lives to get a little nest egg? Well, maybe. But we might be laughed at to propose such a patriotic thing.

John F. Kavanaugh

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Where big money is taking sports

The Games of Tomorrow

— BY DAVE ANDERSON —

FOR ANYBODY WHO WONDERS where sports in the United States is going in the next decade or two, one answer has been obvious: it's going to the highest bidder. Another answer should be just as obvious: it's going to the Internet.

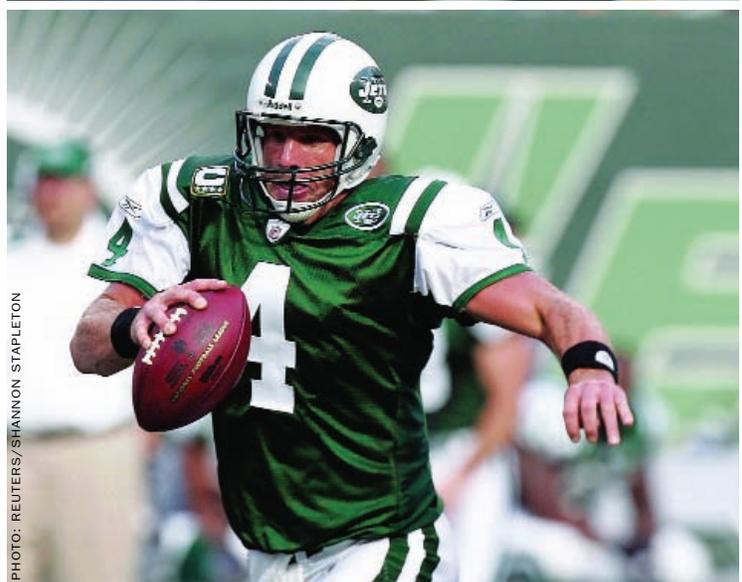
Hour by hour, sports in the United States is more and more about more and more money. It is not about the games or the athletes, and certainly not about the fans, except when they have to come up with more and more money to go to the ballpark or pay their cable bill.

It has always been about the money, of course, but it has never been about this much money. Once it was only about thousands of dollars: Joe DiMaggio was the first \$100,000 baseball player, Joe Namath the first \$400,000 football player. Then it was about millions, especially Michael Jordan's basketball millions that he made and Mike Tyson's pay-per-view boxing millions that he blew. But now it's about billions.

The pro football Giants and Jets are building a \$1.6 billion co-op playground. The price tag on baseball's new Yankee Stadium will be more than \$1 billion. Tiger Woods is only a putt or two from being the first billionaire athlete.

Do not be surprised when, sooner or later, the worldwide Olympic television contracts rise to, yes, trillions of dollars after sports television contracts will be connected to the Internet. You will still be able to watch the Super Bowl or the World Series at home (on a flat-screen TV the size of the far wall in your family room, if you can afford it), although those premier events might cost you a pay-per-view fee. You also will be able to click your laptop and watch almost any game in any sport wherever you happen to be, as long as you pay for the privilege.

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All that prompts the real questions: What will sports be like then? More athletic? Or more performance-enhanced by drugs? More artistic? Or more violent? With the shameful price of tickets in some new stadiums, will attendance at games only be for a privileged few? Here is what one longtime observer of sports saw when he peeked into his crystal ball:

As baseball evolves into more of a world game, a real World Series could be created. The influx of successful Japanese and other Asian players into Major League Baseball's two leagues, notably the Seattle Mariners outfielder Ichiro Suzuki and the Boston Red Sox pitcher Daisuke Matsuzaka, should convince Japanese club owners to pay to keep their best players instead of selling them to big-league clubs, thereby strengthening Japanese baseball instead of weakening it. If a United States-Japan World Series were to happen, think what its television rights would be worth.

Considering the increasing number of Latin American hitters and pitchers in the big leagues, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Mexico (and a free Cuba) have enough homegrown talent to form a major Caribbean League someday. To do that, those nations need a much better economy to afford the salaries necessary to keep all that talent, build bigger modern stadiums, charge higher ticket prices and, more important, demand millions for television rights. It probably will not happen, but imagine a three-way World Series with Japan and the Caribbean.

Looking beyond the steroid clouds hovering over Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens, quiet chemists in quiet laboratories are developing new drugs, new masking agents (and new tests) that will create new performance-enhancing scandals and disclosures. Of equal importance to baseball's future in the United States will be the supply of quality American talent. Instead of playing baseball, too many kids today are playing video baseball games or fantasy baseball. That's not baseball. That's not how kids learn to play baseball, not even how kids dream of making the big leagues.

Football and Soccer

For football, basketball, ice hockey, golf, tennis, soccer, track and field, boxing, automobile racing (which is really licensed road rage), horse racing, cycling (where the Tour de France has been riddled by drugs) and most other sports,

the future will mostly involve how to make more millions, how to avert more unsanctioned drugs, how to create more sanctioned violence.

For all the National Football League's popularity, its worldwide future appears to be minimal. It tried what it called N.F.L. Europe, but its developmental league folded. Instead, there was a well-attended Giants-Dolphins game in London last year, and a Saints-Chargers game there this season. But unlike baseball in Japan, a serious pro football league does not exist in England or anywhere else. College football has a rowdy regional appeal that resembles that of N.F.L. franchises, but with all the television and bowl-game money, a championship playoff system is inevitable. Also inevitable are academic and criminal scandals involving the so-called student athletes, too many of

Hour by hour, sports in the United States is more and more about more and more money.

whom are hardly students.

Football is expensive: all those helmets and all those shoulder pads for at least 11 youngsters, if not 22 or 33, and the constant threat of a serious knee or shoulder injury. Not much of the rest of the world can afford football.

Around the world, of course, football means what Americans call soccer, truly a world game. To play it, all you need is a ball that you can kick or steer with your head and healthy legs that let you run. And it is cheap. You don't even need soccer shoes. Kids in impoverished nations play barefoot. It's the world's most popular team sport, especially in Europe, South America, Africa and Asia. The World Cup is the world's most popular sports tournament. Despite the occasional stadium riots or gambling scandals, soccer will continue its worldwide reign. But until the United States team wins the World Cup, or at least gets to the final or a semifinal, soccer will not inspire enough American youngsters to play soccer rather than baseball, football or basketball.

Basketball and Track and Field

Another truly world game is basketball. Like soccer, it's cheap. All you need is a ball and a pair of sneakers. Like soccer, you can play it by yourself if you have a ball and a basket on a backboard in a playground, a backyard or a driveway. Of all our games, basketball is the only one invented in the United States, by Dr. James Naismith in 1891 when he nailed a peach basket to the wall at each end of a Young Men's Christian Association gymnasium in Springfield, Mass. For decades, many American coaches have been off-season missionaries spreading Dr. Naismith's gospel to

Photos previous page, top to bottom: Tiger Woods, Brett Favre and Daisuke Matsuzaka

aspiring coaches in countries all over the world, especially Europe, Africa and South America.

Some players from those continents, notably the Nigerian center Hakeem Olajuwon, polished their skills at American colleges and with N.B.A. teams, while other youngsters developed into world-class players in the Olympics and their home nations before they were eventually scouted, drafted and signed by N.B.A. teams. Now, with pro basketball leagues flourishing in Europe, the talent tide has started to turn. The exchange rate for euros recently convinced Josh Childress, from Stanford University, to join an Athens, Greece, team for \$32.5 million over three years rather than re-sign with the Atlanta Hawks. With that much money available, more Americans are sure to follow. So, eventually, is an N.B.A.-Europe playoff series for the world title.

Track and field is another world sport, but as with swimming, gymnastics, skiing, speedskating and figure skating, many people do not pay much attention to it except during an Olympics. Sadly, track and field's integrity has been undermined by the use of performance-enhancing drugs and the damage done to the sport's image by highly publicized bans imposed as punishment, notably the one on sprinter Marion Jones. Restoring that integrity will require the eventual emergence of a male or female, but not necessarily an American, who breaks world records, is a multi-gold-medal winner and not only tests clean but continues to live clean. Ever since the Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson tested positive for steroids and was stripped of his gold medal after winning the 100-meter sprint in the 1988 Summer Games in Seoul, South Korea, failed drug tests in several sports have tarnished, if not shattered, the five Olympic rings in the minds of Olympic devotees who remember when the Games were about *citius altius fortius* (faster higher stronger) instead of steroids and syringes.

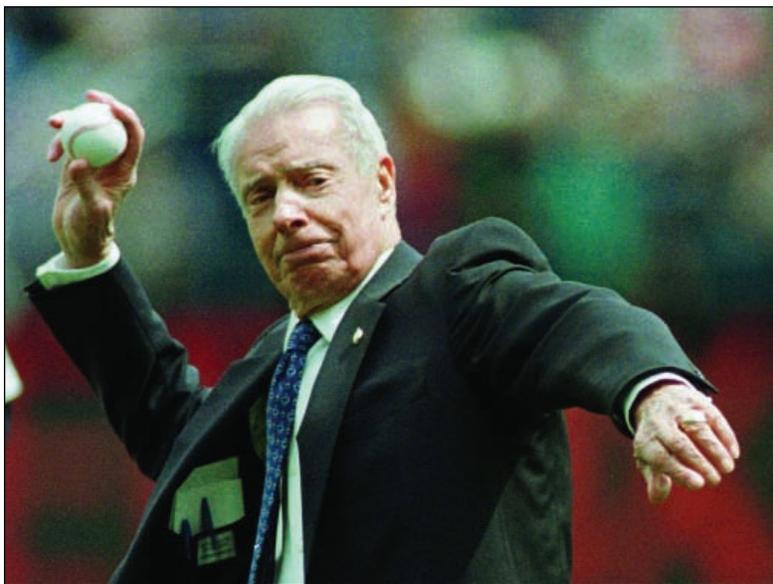
Intercontinental Hockey

Of all the team sports, ice hockey might be the closest to an intercontinental playoff: the National Hockey League champion against a European Hockey League champion in what could honestly be billed as the World Hockey Series.

For more than two decades the N.H.L. teams in the United States and Canada have imported many of Europe's best players, at first from the Czech Republic, Sweden and Finland and later from Russia after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Now some of that European talent is beginning to return home. Jaromir Jagr, the Czech winger who scored a total of 646 regular-season goals in his 17 seasons with the Pittsburgh Penguins, the Washington Capitals and the New York Rangers, recently joined Avangard Omsk of the Russian League, a team he played for during the N.H.L.'s lockout season of 2004-5. And the Rangers

opened their N.H.L. season in October with two league games against the Tampa Bay Lightning in Prague.

The N.H.L. once was stocked by Canadians who as youngsters grew up mostly on frozen ponds or backyard rinks; an American was a rarity. But after the U.S. Olympic team upset the mighty Soviets and then defeated Finland for the gold medal at the 1980 Winter Games in



Joe DiMaggio, 84, at Yankee stadium April 10, 1998.

Lake Placid, N.Y., several members of the U.S. team went on to respectable N.H.L. careers. More important, they inspired young American hockey players to dream of an N.H.L. career. Many made that dream come true, notably Brian Leetch, the New York Rangers defenseman who was voted the Conn Smythe Trophy as the most valuable player of the Stanley Cup playoffs when the Rangers won in 1994. If more and more European players return to their roots, more Americans (and more Canadians) figure to be on N.H.L. teams—all of which would only add to the fun, if not the ferocity, of an intercontinental playoff showdown for world supremacy against the best European team, stocked by European players.

Golf, Tennis and Boxing

Golf and tennis are world sports too, but in many nations the cost and the absence of courses or courts prevent young and old from playing, although both sports continue to outgrow their country-club images. Golf's best player now, if not golf's best player ever, Tiger Woods, grew up on public and military courses in California under his father's tutelage, developed into a teenage sensation as an amateur and has

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dominated professional golf for more than a decade. With 14 major titles as a pro, he is on his way to surpassing Jack Nicklaus's record 18 pro majors, a total once thought to be unapproachable.

But as in tennis, where the reign of Switzerland's Roger Federer is threatened by Spain's Rafael Nadal, golf is now a truly international game; many of the best men's players are from Australia, South Africa, Ireland and Spain. On the women's tour, Sweden's Annika Sorenstam is retiring, while Mexico's Lorena Ochoa tries to hold off the approach of several young South Korean and Japanese golfers.

Of all the sports, boxing faces the most uncertain future. Heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali once was arguably the world's most recognizable person. But only the most fervent boxing buffs can name the three current no-name heavyweight champions, as proclaimed by the various governing bodies. Several boxers in the other weight classes honor their trade, like Floyd Meriweather Jr., Bernard Hopkins and Oscar de la Hoya; but during the heavyweight confusion, the no-holds-barred violence of mixed martial arts has attracted a pay-per-view audience. Maybe this is what some people want, just as a gladiator against a lion was what Nero wanted in Rome's coliseum. But for all its vicious knockouts and controlled violence, boxing at its best has always been an art too. There is no art in mixed martial arts, only thuggery. It's not something that responsible parents would want any of their kids to aspire to.

Sadly, mixed martial arts was there in my crystal ball along with all the other trends in a sports world that, dollar for dollar, keeps changing almost daily—not always for the better. **A**



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A Sporting Chance

Title IX and the seismic shift in women's sports

BY ELINOR NAUEN

IMAGINE: IF ONLY THE BOYS at your school could play on the football, track, wrestling, basketball and baseball teams, and the girls had...synchronized swimming. Or imagine a coach saying, "There's a place for women's athletics: after 7 p.m. and before 6 a.m." Or a judge remarking, as he legally barred girls from competing on a boys' high school cross-country team even though there was no girls' team: "Athletic competition builds character in our boys. We do not need that kind of character in our girls." Imagine that people believed women runners would be unable to bear children, would grow a mustache or wanted to be men.

Actually, you do not have to imagine any of this. These are true examples from the world before 1972. Marj Snyder, chief program officer of the Women's Sports Foundation, remembers those days. She also remembers two boys being admitted to a college that had rejected her, even though her test scores and grades were better. But they had team experience, an option that did not exist for her. As Dolly Brumfield White, who played in the 1940s All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, recalls: "We weren't

ELINOR NAUEN is editor of *Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend: Women Writers on Baseball* and has written about sports, mostly baseball, for many publications.

allowed in the weight room—it was as bad as going to a pool hall."

Then as now, sports were a microcosm of society. The lack of teams, facilities and encouragement went hand in hand with narrower opportunities in other areas; women became teachers and nurses, not principals and doctors. Without coaches or practice times and subject to being teased or hassled when they tried or even wanted to play sports, is it any wonder that so many girls did not see themselves as strong, vigorous, talented, capable beings?

Then Things Changed

What jumpstarted a seismic shift in American life was a law Congress passed in 1972 known as Title IX. Its text read: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." In essence, Title IX

prohibits any and every institution that receives government money from practicing gender discrimination. That was and is nearly all of them.

The statistics illustrate an important part of the transformation since the law went into effect. In 1971, fewer than 300,000 high school girls participated in athletics. Today that number is close to three million, with almost half of all female high school students on a team. In 1972



Notre Dame and Tennessee meet at the 2008 N.C.A.A. women's regional semifinal. Tennessee defeated Notre Dame 74-64.

PHOTO: REUTERS/MIKE STONE

about 16,000 young women participated in college athletics, a number that has grown to over 180,000. The number of women's teams per campus has increased from an average of 2.5 before 1972 to 8.5 in 2006.

"Title IX built a base for sports that led to the 1999 World Cup and women's professional basketball—so many things that go beyond the traditional women's sports of figure skating, tennis and golf," notes Snyder of the Women's Sports Foundation. "Once schools realized they had to open their doors to women and let them onto the playing fields, they added sports like softball, track, field hockey and soccer, sports with high participation numbers." The Summer Olympics have also witnessed a sharp increase in the number of women athletes that began two decades ago. In 1972, 1,058 (or 16 percent) of 7,123 athletes in total were women. In the 2008 games in China, that number rose to 4,746 (or 42 percent) of the total of 11,196 athletes.

The Benefits

Numbers are only part of the story, of course. Consider the benefits to the athletes. "We've always said sports are opportunities for boys and men to benefit from fun, to build character and confidence, to become physically fit and healthy. And to network—your teammates are your future colleagues," says Snyder. "Lots of evidence demonstrates that girls also benefit. Girls who participate in sports have less osteoporosis, less obesity and better heart health. Psychologically, they have a better body image, higher self-confidence and self-esteem, and they do better in business. They are less likely to get pregnant, more likely to delay sexual activity till later, more likely to have fewer sexual partners and less likely to use drugs and smoke." Snyder concludes: "If you don't play on a team, where do you learn risk-taking in a safe environment? Now girls have access to that training ground."

An analysis from the Department of Education backs this up. Its 1997 report *Title IX: 25 Years of Progress* noted that "the critical values learned from sports participation—including teamwork, standards, leadership, discipline, self-sacrifice and pride in accomplishment—are being brought to the workplace as women enter employment in greater numbers, and at higher levels than ever before. For example, 80 percent of female managers of Fortune 500 companies have a sports background."

Note too that Title IX was not meant to apply exclu-

sively to sports but was also intended to combat quotas that kept women out of law, medical and engineering programs. It has worked there too. Before Title IX, more than a quarter of men but less than a fifth of women completed college; that gap has disappeared. Five times as many women receive medical degrees now as 35 years ago, six times as many earn law degrees and almost twice as many are awarded doctoral degrees.

The Mighty Macs

The first three women's national basketball titles—1972 to '74—were won by the Mighty Macs from Immaculata College, a Catholic school near Philadelphia with an enrollment of just 800 women. (Immaculata is now coed.) It was just past the days of bloomers and "women's rules," which limited players to three dribbles and half the court. Macs' coach Cathy Rush used strategies from the men's games, like traps and the zone defense. The film, "Our Lady of Victory," starring Ellen Burstyn (not yet released) recreates the story.

By Title IX's 25th anniversary in 1997, Richard W. Riley, the U.S. Secretary of Education, could say that "America is a more equal, more educated and more prosperous nation because of the far-reaching effects of this legislation.... What strikes me the most about the progress that has been achieved since Title IX was passed in 1972 is that there has been a sea change in our expectations of what women can achieve. More important, women have shown skeptics again and again that females are fully capable of being involved as successful and active participants in every realm of

American life."

Many coaches are well aware of this. Bruce Rasmussen graduated from college in 1971 and began teaching in a small town in southern Iowa. "I was low on the totem pole, so when the women's coach left, I took that on," he recalls. "What I found was that the girls were much more receptive to coaching. The boys thought they knew it before they knew it, but the girls were appreciative of any commitment and attention. It was 'we *get* to practice' versus 'we *have* to practice.' It was an eye-opener." Now director of athletics at Creighton University in Omaha, Rasmussen says: "I see our female athletes have embraced and grown and learned from values such as attention to detail, playing a role on a team and discipline just as much as males, if not more. For years people believed in the value of athletics for what men can achieve. If we believe athletics has a value beyond wins and losses, then that value is there for female athletes as much as male. There are benefits at home, on the job—everywhere."

Jean Hastings Ardell, author of *Breaking Into Baseball: Women and the National Pastime*, puts it this way: "Title IX blew apart the old limitations for half the population of this country."

Enforcement and Challenges

Not surprisingly, implementing such sweeping legislation caused plenty of confusion, foot-dragging and challenges. Courts have upheld Title IX at every turn, in cases of school

athletics and also in regard to sexual harassment, standardized tests, pregnant students and much more. In 1997 a Supreme Court ruling sent a clear message that just offering women's sports was not enough. Educational institutions had to provide facilities, equipment, practice and game times, as well as encouragement.

"I don't think the men who wrote the law envisioned that this is how it would turn out," Snyder says. One of the three ways the law is enforced is by proportionality—you must demonstrate that sports programs are offered to men and women in percentages equivalent to their enrollment. "The men probably thought they would always have a big advantage, because in 1972 only 35 percent of college undergrads were women. Today, it's 57 percent." (Compliance is also gauged by whether opportunities for women are increasing and whether the school satisfies the athletic interests and abilities of its female students. Schools need to meet only one of the three criteria.)

Despite what some critics claim, Title IX does not require any college to eliminate men's teams in order to be compliant. Adding women's opportunities is not supposed to be done by taking them away from men, but by expanding them for everybody. In fact, last year more college participation opportunities were added for men than for women. Schools drop or add sports for many reasons, not only because of Title IX. Money is a key factor. The cost of insurance, equipment, facilities or team travel may determine what can be offered.

Rasmussen came to Creighton as the women's basketball coach in 1980. "We had a team but there were no scholarships, no budget, no assistance," he recalls. "Now there's a full complement of coaches, we're fully funded the same as the men, we play a national schedule, and we get just as much priority in workout times." Creighton is currently building a \$40 million facility for women's basketball and volleyball.

Before Title IX, only a handful of women got athletic scholarships. Donna de Varona may have won two gold medals in the 1964 Olympics, but that did not mean she

could garner a college swimming scholarship. Today, college women receive about 42 percent of college athletic scholarship dollars. Much less is spent on women's operating expenses, recruiting costs and head coaching salaries, according to the 2000-01 Gender Equality Study. Full equality still lies ahead.

Tim Wiles, director of research for the Baseball Hall of Fame, served on the Title IX Compliance Committee at the

University of Northern Iowa when he was librarian there in 1994. When the committee circulated a draft report, he says he was visited by one assistant athletic director who "tried to pressure us to write something different. This was 22 years after IX passed, and they still didn't know what to do with it. They still were trying to keep the status quo."

"I was born in 1964," Wiles added. "There were girls in Little League and Bidly Basketball but there was no prohibition against denigrating the skills or participation of females in sports. It was very socially acceptable to consider women participants second-class. It was expected that if you were a boy you'd get better times and fields. I'm

sorry to say I was one of those kids who had the general idea that sports were for boys and 'you girls should go away and do your own thing.' No one would go to a girls' game in high school."

How that has changed! One anecdote from Marj Snyder illustrates the shift in attitude. "When my sister was coaching her older daughter in basketball, she took both girls to high school basketball games and taped women's basketball. One day her five-year-old daughter asked, 'Do boys play basketball too?'"

"If there's something you want to do, you should have the opportunity. Thank goodness, we mostly have the opportunities today. That's what Title IX did: It put pressure on schools to offer facilities and opportunities for girls," concludes Dolly White, who played, then taught and coached from the 1940s through the 1990s. "How do you know what you can do until you try?" **A**

What About Women's Schools?

Although single-sex schools are not bound by the provisions of Title IX, they have been greatly affected. "Title IX was and is a great, great piece of legislation to protect women's rights," says Patricia McGuire, who is in her 20th year as president of Trinity College, a women's school in Washington, D.C. But, she adds, Title IX is "one of the forces that contributed to decline in enrollment in women's colleges." Before Title IX, only women's colleges had gyms readily available to women. Title IX equalized resources, "but because we were a single-sex college, we didn't have to equalize our facilities."

Eventually, McGuire says, "We saw it was hurting us—it was an excuse not to keep up. A college that says it stands for women's rights and advancements can't take a pass. We have to do the same as big universities to give equal opportunities." In Trinity's case, that meant building its Center for Women and Girls in Sports, which opened in 2002—the first new building on campus in 40 years.

"Whether we like it or not, sports in higher education drives perceptions of institutional liveliness and attractiveness," McGuire adds. "Being able to offer high-class sports has turned our enrollment around. Women expect to have that and Title IX created that expectation."

Experiencing Life's Flow

Sports and the spiritual life

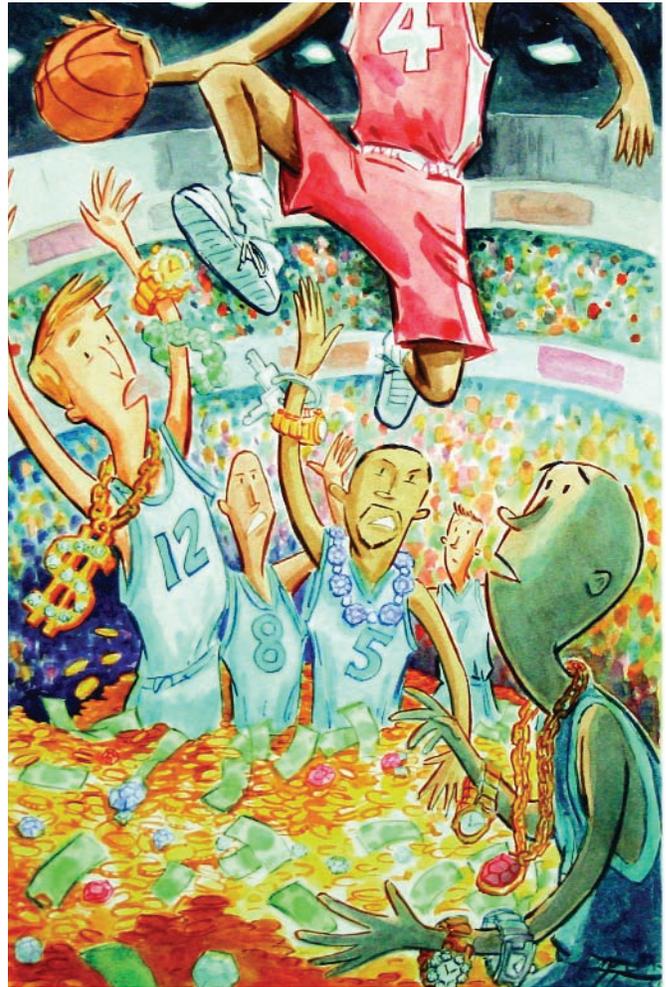
BY PATRICK KELLY

MANY PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES are beginning to think about and discuss sports in relationship to the spiritual life. Catholic school coaches and administrators have started to gather at regional and national meetings for this purpose. Universities offer courses and have founded centers that deal with the topic. Several books have been written and more are on deck. Even the Holy See has an Office of the Church and Sport. Scholars have gathered for international conferences and have launched a new International Journal of Religion and Sport. Of course, academicians and educators are not the only people interested in sports and the spiritual life.

Many practitioners at the highest levels of sport are recognizing that they cannot find personal satisfaction in earning buckets of money or even in the fame that comes with winning championships. The legendary N.B.A. coach Phil Jackson writes in his book *Sacred Hoops: Spiritual Lessons of a Hardwood Warrior* that the narrow-minded pursuit of money and fame distracts players from those aspects of participation that are most important from a human perspective. When first offered a coaching job with the Chicago Bulls, Jackson hesitated to take it because, as he writes, "Over the years I'd grown disenchanted with the way power, money, and self-glorification had tainted the game I love."

Jackson had learned from his days as a champion player with the New York Knicks that "winning is ephemeral." He writes about the Knicks winning the N.B.A. championship against the Los Angeles Lakers in the 1971-72 season. Two days after the victory, the team was in New York for a celebration with families and friends, where movie stars like Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman had also gathered. Jackson felt it should have been the happiest day of his life. "But the intense feeling of connection with my teammates I had experienced in L.A. seemed like a distant memory. Instead of being overwhelmed with joy, I felt empty and

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confused. Was this it? I kept saying to myself. Is this what was supposed to bring me happiness? Clearly the answer lay somewhere else."

The Road to Happiness

While the pursuit of extrinsic goods like money and fame can leave a person with a feeling of emptiness, dynamics internal to playing sports can lead to the flourishing of persons. These dynamics are described in the research of Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, a psychologist and author of numerous books, including *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. Csíkszentmihályi agrees with Jackson's assessment of the relationship of wealth and fame to happiness. For Csíkszentmihályi, while such extrinsic goods are powerful symbols of happiness, it is illusory to think that possession of them will make one happy. Rather, happiness depends on the quality of experience in our lives.

Csíkszentmihályi criticized the discipline of psychology for attending too exclusively to the negative or dysfunctional aspects of human experience. His goal was to understand the phenomenology of human development and well-being in general. In the course of his research, he discovered a "common experiential state" that people described during

ART BY DAN SALAMIDA

their participation in sports and other activities. He refers to this as “flow” because the respondents themselves often used the word when asked about their experience. Flow, as he uses that word, “denotes the wholistic sensation present when we act with total involvement. It is the kind of feeling after which one nostalgically says: ‘That was fun,’ or ‘That was enjoyable.’”

Enjoyment is central to the experience of flow. Enjoyment is different from mere pleasure, such as comes with a stiff drink or a sexual experience isolated from a loving relationship. These activities may be pleasurable, but not enjoyable, in Csíkszentmihályi’s sense, because they do not challenge a person to grow or increase the complexity of experience. The flow experience, on the other hand, is characterized by a forward movement, which occurs when people engage in activities like playing a close game of tennis or growing in a loving relationship, both of which call them to move beyond their comfort zone.

Elements of Flow

One of the first indications that a person is in flow is found in an intense absorption in the activity or experience. Csíkszentmihályi refers to this with the Buddhist term “one-pointedness of mind,” or “merging of action and awareness.” If a person is in flow while shooting a free throw during a basketball game, her mind is completely focused on what she is doing. Her body and mind are united; her action and awareness are one. If a person is playing a musical instrument or a game of Ping Pong, she needs to attend fully to the next note or the next volley. If she begins to wonder whether her performance will make her wealthy or popular, she will be pulled out of the present moment, where she needs to be in order to play well.

Flow is most likely to occur in an activity that has clear demands for action and provides immediate feedback on one’s performance. When a person plays tennis, she knows that she wants to return the ball over the net, and she knows immediately whether she has achieved her goal or not. According to Billie Jean King, her focus while playing is not on the competition, but entirely on the task at hand: “I concentrate only on the ball in relationship to the face of my racket, which is a full-time job anyway, since no two balls ever come over the net the same way.”

Flow experiences typically require a great output of energy and discipline. After prolonged periods of effort and discipline, one experiences an ease or an effortlessness to one’s action and a sense of being carried along by a current. At

these times, “action follows upon action” seemingly without the need for conscious intervention on our part.

During flow experiences, because of the enjoyment and the intense absorption in the activity, the person forgets about himself temporarily, or experiences an “egolessness.” This does not mean that the self disappears, but that explicit reflection on the self stops for the time being. The game requires all of the person’s attention. Consequently, he does not have the psychic energy required to wonder, How am I doing? or What do they think of me? It is

enjoyable to forget about oneself in this way temporarily. Yet when the activity is over and the person reflects on himself anew, the self he is reflecting on has changed and grown.

Flow experiences are not individualistic. On the contrary, what is deeply satisfying is letting go of ego concerns and experiencing oneself as a part of something larger. Participation in team sports leads readily to such experiences, because all the team members need to play together in order to be successful. Even the most gifted players must learn how to be a part of something larger than themselves. Phil Jackson notes that even though Michael Jordan put on virtuoso performances repeatedly in his early years with the Chicago Bulls, the team could not win consistently. When other teams noticed that Jordan’s teammates were not involved in the offense, they would simply focus on stopping him. Only when Jordan was willing to step back so that his teammates could grow as players and everyone could be involved in the offense was the team able to win its championships.

One of the most characteristic features of flow activities is that they are or become autotelic activities. The word autotelic is derived from the Greek words *auto*, self, and *telos*, goal, and suggests that the goal is within the activity itself. In terms of sports, the games would be played for their own sake. This emphasis differs from what is usually set forth as a rationale for the value of sports for young people: that participation in sports will build character or help prepare them for life or for competition in the business world. Some parents and young people also view sports as a way of gaining upward mobility. Usually the emphasis is on some goal outside the activity of sport; little attention, however, is given to the enjoyment of the activity itself.

Sport and Christian Spirituality

On several points Christian spirituality correlates with and complements the insights of Csíkszentmihályi and practitioners like Phil Jackson. The first is the recognition that we get off track in a spiritual sense when we become too attached to money and status. Jesus repeatedly reminds his

One indication that a person is in flow is an intense absorption in the activity or experience.

listeners of this point, insisting that “no one can serve both God and mammon.” St. Ignatius Loyola points to the same dynamic in the “Two Standards” meditation of the Spiritual Exercises, writing that the tactic of the enemy of our humanity is to ensnare people in the desire for riches, honor and pride.

When a person is living in the Spirit, on the other hand, the experience is often described in terms analogous to flow. St. Thomas Aquinas, writing in the 13th century, pointed out that contemplation was enjoyable and done for its own sake; because of these two features he observed that contemplation was very similar to play.

In another place, Thomas comments on a text from Ecclesiastes: “Run home to your house and there withdraw yourself, play and do what you have a mind to” (Eccl 32:15-16). In contemplation, he writes, “it is...necessary that we ourselves should be fully present there, concentrating in such a way that our aim is not diverted to other matters.”

Accordingly the text goes on, “And gather yourself there,” that is, draw together your whole intention. When our interior house is entirely emptied like this and we are fully present there in our intention, the text tells us what we should do: “And play there.”

If, in the view of St. Ignatius, we get off track when we are ensnared by riches, honor and pride, then experiences of

consolation (his word for the felt experience of being led and guided by the Spirit of God) are an indication we are moving in the right direction. And Ignatius describes such experiences in terms similar to flow: Consolation is an experience of “genuine happiness and spiritual joy,” for example. Consolation is associated with effortlessness; the experience is gentle and easy, like water falling into a sponge or like coming into one’s own house through an open door. It feels as if obstacles are being removed so the person can move forward in doing good. This effortlessness usually comes after much disciplined attention and practice. Finally, consolation is related to the growth and development of the person, helping one move from good to better.

Of course, consolation has a broader reach than flow. The genuine happiness and spiritual joy associated with consolation can be experienced in the forgiveness of sins or during times of profound suffering. But this does not make the experiences of flow in sports and in other activities unimportant for the spiritual life. Such experiences are enjoyable and rewarding in themselves; they too are “signals of transcendence.” They point out to us what we are made for and help us to understand how, as Thomas said, “Grace perfects nature.” 



From the archives, the editors on violence in boxing and pignskin mania, at americamagazine.org/pages.



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Book Reviews

The Charms of the Plutocracy

The Wrecking Crew

How Conservatives Rule

By Thomas Frank

Metropolitan Books. 384p \$25

ISBN 9780805079883

In a survey course on the Bible that I have taught for over 35 years, I inevitably have to explain the bloody episode of the shibboleth in Judges 12 (the slaughter of the Ephraimites by the Gileadites). Looking for an obvious example of a modern American shibboleth, I used to cite the timeless Republican mantra, “fiscal responsibility.” These days, of course, that phrase sounds like a laughable paradox. When Ronald Reagan arrived in Washington, the annual deficit was \$59 billion and the national debt was \$914 billion. When his acolyte George H. W. Bush left 12 years later, the deficit was three times bigger; and the national debt was \$4 trillion. When George W. Bush leaves office in 2009, the deficit will top \$482 billion, and the national debt will be pushing \$10 trillion. What happened to conservative frugality?

Democrats will likely blame Republican incompetence (citing President Clinton’s balanced budgets), tax breaks for millionaires and the war in Iraq, while Republicans will mutter darkly about losing touch with time-honored principles or insist that it is time to bleed the intractable beast of big government. Enter Thomas Frank, who ably analyzed conservative populism in *What’s the Matter With Kansas?* (2004), and who now offers a bold, brisk, solidly researched account of what the rightwingers are up to, not in his home state but in Washington, D.C., and all across the country. And as he convincingly shows, that stunning gap between present-day conservative rhetoric and performance is no accident.

The Republican ideologues (Newt Gingrich, David Stockman, Richard Viguerie, Howard Phillips, Grover Norquist et al.) and their hired guns

(Tom DeLay, Michael Scanlon, Jack Abramoff and the like), who have flourished until now in the post-liberal era, were, and are, just like their elected patrons, actually bent on sabotaging government. They do not mind if they end up making it stink in the nostrils of uncritical citizens: That will only promote more popular cynicism toward *everything* government does and ultimately lead to the privatizing, outsourcing and downsizing of federal programs. If anything goes wrong, blame it on the Beltway.

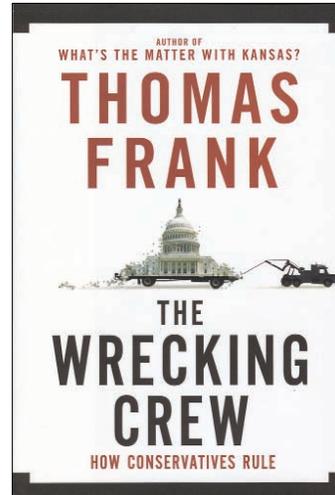
One of the best documented ways of undermining government is to appoint people to departments of whose operations they are either ignorant or to which they are down-right hostile. A few notable instances of this method at work would be making James Watt Secretary of the Interior (he had worked for an anti-conservation legal foundation), Anne Gorsuch head of the E.P.A. (she abolished its office of enforcement), the never-to-be-forgotten Michael Brown, Undersecretary of Emergency Preparedness at FEMA, or D. Mark Wilson, author of “How to Close Down the Department of Labor,” head of the Employment Standards Administration at...the Department of Labor. Such absurdities—which can be matched at the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Mine Safety and Health Administration, the Consumer Product Safety Administration, you name it—are not just nepotism or politicization run wild (though there is a lot of that: look under Elaine Chao, Alberto Gonzales, Monica Goodling or the astonishing crew of incompetents and plunderers hired by Paul Bremer after announcing that “Iraq is open for business”). Badmouth and handcuff the Washington bureaucracy—and then watch it fail.

There is, in fact, a widely held belief among conservatives and libertarians that much, if not most, of government activity is in principle pernicious; and so, in Grover Norquist’s oft-cited formula, it

needs to be shrunk to the size where it can be dragged into the bathtub and drowned. That may be—actually it is—insane; but it is not an idea limited to some Birchite lunatic fringe: recall the ongoing attempt to privatize (that is, gut) Social Security.

More to the point, in 1975 government employees made roughly 90 percent of what their civilian counterparts were earning. By 1990 this had dipped to about 60 percent—the perfect scheme for driving serious professionals out of public service. There really is a powerful segment of our population that dreams of reversing the New Deal.

In other words, (relative) democracy has been giving way to plutocracy. And this is not just leftist paranoia. The gap between the rich and the poor has been steadily increasing. The rich themselves have been growing ever more affluent and self-assertive (see *Richistan*, reviewed in these pages on 12/03/07). And government has been retrofitted to serve their needs and “defund” (the term of choice) liberal initiatives. Everybody has heard the Halliburton story, but what about New Orleans, where the Feds contracted, and sub-sub-contracted out to the tune of over \$100 billion—only to leave major portions of the city as desolate as before? Lobbyism has triumphed (almost half the 1994 Republican freshmen, of the Contract With America fame, have left Congress and moved to K Street, where salaries start at around \$300,000). Meanwhile, Loudoun County in northern



The Reviewers

Peter Heinegg is a professor of English at Union College, Schenectady, N.Y.

Elaine MacKinnon is professor of history at the University of West Georgia, Carrollton, Ga.

Tom Deignan, the author of *Coming to America: Irish Americans*, is the books columnist for Irish America magazine and a contributor to the forthcoming book *The Irish American Chronicle* (Publications International Ltd.).

Virginia, home to lobbyists and other profiteers, is now the richest county in the nation.

None of this is exactly new; there has always been greed in high places. America had an earlier Gilded Age; and today's muckrakers have been shining an occasional light on the most glaring sorts of malfeasance, such as conditions on the island of Saipan, which Abramoff, DeLay and others helped turn into a laissez-faire plantation for grossly exploited garment workers. But most Americans are still unaware of all this; and nobody has told the story with more verve and informed outrage than Thomas Frank.

Not that he is predicting any imminent collapse of government services. Americans expect and demand too much of the system to let it simply fail (which is also why regulatory agencies have to be sapped from within rather than pole-axed from without by free-market vigilantes). Some of the more notorious betrayers of the public interest have been sent to the slammer, and more probably will be in the future. The administration of George W. Bush ("Government should be market-based") is now generally viewed as an enormous failure, in large part because of the ills Frank exposes.

But the damage done is deep and chronic. (And, yes, the Democrats have gone along with the new plutocracy almost as much as they have fought it—although the worst sellouts, from supporting apartheid South Africa to burying the truth about global warming have borne the stamp of the Republican Party) The only remedies Frank can propose are the usual ones of reformist politics, in the name of that embarrassing old ideal, the common good. Fortunately, Frank writes very well. He is as lively, unpretentious and fair as he is indignant. When his book comes with a (fairly) positive blurb from George Will, of all people, you know he must be on to something. *The Wrecking Crew* is a major contribution not just to the 2008 campaign, but to any serious conversation about where the country is headed.

Peter Heinegg



James T. Keane, S.J., discovers sports without conflict, at americamagazine.org/connects.



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Father of the New Russia

Yeltsin

A Life

By Timothy J. Colton

Basic Books. 640p \$35

ISBN 9780465012718

Few leaders have made as indelible a mark upon the history of their country as Boris Yeltsin. He left, though, a complex legacy, first as the maverick iconoclast standing up to the monolithic power of the Communist Party, and then as Russia's first democratically elected president. By the time he resigned as president in 1999, the image of Yeltsin was no longer that of the hero standing tall and defiant on a tank, inspiring his people to resist the August Coup; now it was that of a doddering drunk with a damaged heart, who had sold Russia out and was a mere puppet in the hands of "the Family," the allegedly corrupt coterie of officials, oligarchs and relatives working behind the scenes.

As Timothy J. Colton argues in his new biography, *Yeltsin: A Life*, Yeltsin did more than any other leader to point Russia toward democracy. The accusations of corruption and drunkenness were often exaggerated and, in Colton's view, have unduly tarnished Yeltsin's accomplishments. In response, the author, a renowned political scientist and specialist in Russian studies, has produced an authoritative, impeccably researched and richly contextualized study of Yeltsin. He explores the factors that shaped Yeltsin and turned Yeltsin into a political maverick, and evaluates his strengths and weaknesses as the architect of the new Russian democracy. Colton defends Yeltsin's legacy as a reformer, and seeks to distance him from the policies of his handpicked successor, Vladimir Putin.

First and foremost, this is a political biography. In the case of Yeltsin it could hardly be otherwise, for this was a man who lived and breathed politics. Chapter divisions primarily reflect the contours of his evolving career, from the construction industry in Sverdlovsk to the Communist Party apparatus and then as head of the Russian state. The first three chapters cover the formative years and provide use-

ful insight into the roots of Yeltsin's later metamorphosis into an anti-Communist, populist-style leader. Like Gorbachev, Yeltsin came from rural stock, but his peasant forebears were fiercely independent, entrepreneurial types for whom collectivization was a catastrophe. The conditions of his boyhood, marked by extreme poverty and his father's three-year stint in forced labor camps, made him a fighter and a survivor. Colton sees Yeltsin developing during his school years patterns of behavior and attitudes that would resurface throughout his life. Yeltsin was a risk-taker who liked to push the envelope and test himself as well as those around him. He was smart and pragmatic rather than intellectual or ideological, and entered the party only when it served his political goals. By the time Gorbachev launched perestroika, Yeltsin was an eager ally. His years as a regional party boss left him frustrated with the Soviet command economy and its bureaucracy, chronic shortages and low productivity.

Yeltsin, though, had little patience with Gorbachev's gradualism, and what should have been a natural partnership soon turned sour. Colton reveals the top-level wranglings that led to Yeltsin's ouster from the Politburo when he began speaking out against what he saw as the snail's pace of reform. The author recounts for the reader the verbal lashings administered to Yeltsin by fellow party leaders in the fall of 1987 as they lambasted him for impertinence, negativity and an authoritarian style. Colton sees this as a critical turning point. Gorbachev chose to sacrifice Yeltsin rather than retain him as an ally, thereby creating what became a permanent breach between them.

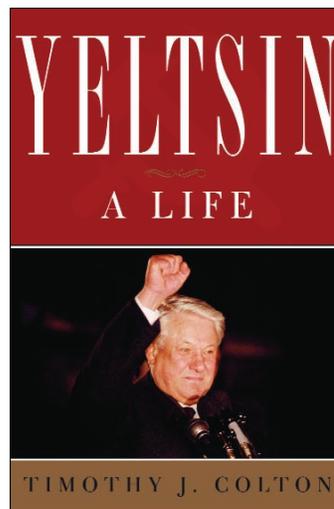
What then unfolds is a remarkable tale of political resurrection. Colton shows how Yeltsin became the true "comeback kid," who reinvented himself in the new political environment created by Gorbachev. He quickly mastered electoral politics, casting himself as a champion of the people against the party apparatus. He

forged a path to power through election as chairman of the newly formed Russian legislature, a position he adeptly transformed in 1991 to that of a democratically elected president. His heroic role in the aborted August Coup and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union enabled him to present himself as the de facto successor to Gorbachev.

The remaining chapters, which comprise over half of the volume, present an in-depth analysis of Yeltsin's eight-year presidency—including the economic reforms; the

Chechen war; the political challenges, particularly during the critical years of 1993 and 1996, when Yeltsin battled first a recalcitrant parliament and then a strong Communist Party challenger for the presidency; and his own personal demons of drink, lethargy and ill health.

This biography represents years of research. In addition to combing archives, newspapers, television and memoirs, Colton conducted interviews with over 150 people, including several with Yeltsin himself. He makes ample use of Yeltsin's published memoirs, but he also submits these to critical review and points out intriguing inaccuracies and omissions. Colton is a masterful political historian; he weaves the story of Yeltsin's life into the fabric of Soviet and Russian history, at every stage offering insightful descriptions of the time, the place and the people. His deep understanding of Soviet and Russian politics informs his thorough analysis of Yeltsin's career. The detailed narrative, however, at times becomes ponderous and a casual reader may get bogged down in somewhat tedious recounting of names and cabinet reshufflings. The book is also less than objective, in that the author makes no bones about his determination to defend Yeltsin's record. Colton lays bare the weaknesses and flawed decisions, but downplays their consequences. For Colton, Yeltsin is a hero because he brought an end to Soviet Communism, and prevented its resurgence in 1996. Yet, more time should be spent considering the



impact of Yeltsin bombing his own parliament or the controversial “loans for shares” arrangement through which Yeltsin financed his 1996 re-election campaign.

Colton’s portrait is nonetheless substantive and compelling. Yeltsin did want a better future for Russia, one that provided individual freedom of thought and action; if he floundered in this, it was not entirely his fault, for he was up against centuries-old patterns of bureaucratism and authoritarianism. No matter how fundamentally he may have rejected Communism, he was nonetheless its product, and even he could not break entirely from its methods and mindset. Only time will tell whether Yeltsin will stand as the father of Russian democracy, or of a reconfigured, more modernized Russian autocracy. What is certain, though, is that he changed history by stepping forward when he did, by being the right man at the right time to respond to newly emerging social forces. Now we must watch and see what his heirs do with the foundation he laid and with his own complicated legacy.

Elaine MacKinnon

Hans and the City

Netherland

A Novel

By Joseph O’Neill
Pantheon. 272p \$23.95
 ISBN 9780307377043

Before bringing out this book, Joseph O’Neill published two rather obscure novels and a well-received “family history” entitled *Blood-Dark Track*, which explored the mysterious political behavior of his grandfathers—one Turkish, one Irish. Toss in O’Neill’s insightful criticism for *The Atlantic Monthly* and his résumé is certainly admirable. Still, few could have predicted O’Neill would produce one of the year’s best-reviewed literary novels. “It has more life inside it than 10 very good novels,” raved a coveted front-page notice in *The New York Times Book Review*. *Netherland* is a wonderful 21st-century New York story, but such lusty applause

may say more about the desperate state of fiction than the actual merits of O’Neill’s compelling yet understated novel.

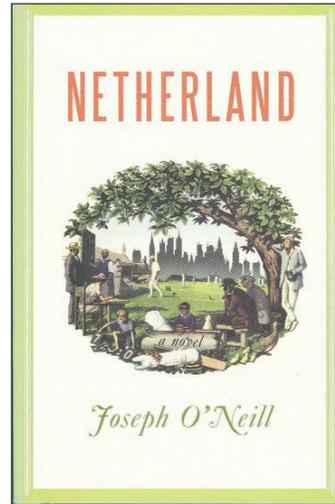
It is heartening that *Netherland* is not another razzle-dazzle, postmodern novel of, by and for 23-year-old M.F.A.’s. Instead, it explores themes that at times have been brushed aside by literary tastemakers as dated: family, history, America and the kind of ambition with which Icarus (not to mention Jay Gatsby) would be familiar. A sense of gravitas also surrounds *Netherland*, presumably because it is yet another “9/11 novel.” O’Neill all but welcomes this description in his epigraph, citing Walt Whitman’s elegy to “a city invincible to the attacks of the whole of the rest of the earth.”

Ultimately, however, *Netherland* feels like a vibrant story about a crumbling marriage and star-crossed friendship that

happens to unfold in post-9/11 New York (and post-7/7 London). To argue that O’Neill’s devastated main character, a

Dutchman named Hans, is somehow a product or reflection of these devastated cities is tempting. But this ignores aspects of the human condition that we endure long before and after cataclysmic public moments. The attacks of September 2001 do drive Hans and his wife apart. Fearing another attack (as well as an “ideologically diseased” country such as America), she takes their son and flees to London.

Before outlining what is brilliant in the novel, we must deal with the book’s single serious flaw, and that is Hans’s wife. Perhaps O’Neill means to portray her as a symbol of smug anti-Americanism or a product of therapeutic jargon. (She laments the failures in “the narrative of their marriage.”) But none of this explains why a wounded yet



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decent fellow like Hans would want this loathsome person back in his life. Either way, it is the breakdown of Hans's marriage that sets him adrift in New York, a city O'Neill constructs as both a fun house and insane asylum. Most impressive is O'Neill's willingness—no, zeal—to cross the bridges and tunnels and explore the cricket fields and ferry terminals, graveyards and parakeet colonies of Staten Island, Queens and Brooklyn.

Staying at the Chelsea Hotel (where a guest dressed as an angel makes occasional appearances), Hans wanders the city and befriends a fellow immigrant, Chuck

Ramkissoon, who introduces Hans to the hidden world of New York cricket—as well as unbridled immigrant optimism. “I love this country,” Chuck says. “Dog eat dog. No holds barred.” This may be naïve, even a fatal flaw, but Chuck's outlook is also a tonic for the brooding Hans. At one point, Hans visits Chuck after a nightmarish trip to a Department of Motor Vehicles office in Manhattan. The infamously poor service has only worsened now that the Department of Homeland Security is in on the D.M.V. act. Hans is suddenly thrust into “a state of fuming helplessness” and is “seized for

the first time by a nauseating sense of America, my gleaming adopted country, under the secret actuation of unjust, indifferent powers.” (Of course, most New Yorkers feel the D.M.V. has been “nauseating” folks roughly since the days of Henry Ford.) As part of his driving lessons, Hans becomes Chuck's chauffeur, and is given a peek into Chuck's hectic, occasionally dangerous life. Chuck's grandest scheme is to erect an international cricket stadium (to be named, with patriotic grandiosity, Bald Eagle Field) atop the marshlands of Brooklyn's Floyd Bennett Field. But this scheme, it turns out, has been made possible by dabbling in the underworld—which begins to explain why, when we meet Chuck on the first pages of *Netherworld*, he is floating in the Gowanus Canal.

O'Neill's style is generally wry and understated, but his prose flourishes when his eye turns to New York's vast landscape. In Queens, “a shabbily crowded graveyard with the monuments and tombs rising” is a “necropolitan replica of the Manhattan skyline in the background.” Such moments indeed make New York seem a city of death in the wake of 9/11. But the impression *Netherland* ultimately leaves with the reader is that despite the tragic global events, most of us will still be left to wrestle with family and friends, rather than historical forces. Really, would Hans's marriage have been better had the attacks not occurred? True, the attacks play a role in Chuck's idea for the cricket arena. But he is such a force of nature, it is clear he would have dreamed grandly no matter what.

In the wake of the catastrophic Lisbon earthquake of 1755, Voltaire's *Candide* surveyed the world and unearthed diverse conflicts both pathetic and profound. As the Black Death roiled, Boccaccio unspooled *The Decameron*. Like it or not, life goes on following apocalyptic events—a clichéd bit of wisdom O'Neill portrays unsentimentally yet still elegantly. “It is truly a terrible thing,” Hans laments at one point, “when questions of love and family and home are no longer answerable.” It is to O'Neill's great credit that though historical and political questions darken the air of his novel like floating ash, he renders the more mundane struggles of life with no less heat, emotion or poetry.

Tom Deignan

Two Weeks In

Today was better,
less consumed
with pain and terror.

When I awoke, still in bed,
for a little while I wished for
tender and unhurried sex.

Weariness didn't sow fear like
yesterday's curse; it had become
a foreign cousin, here to stay the year.

I got up, shuffled through a little
housework, paid some bills. Opened
the blinds to let the sun into my heart.

Today I kept down lunch, on a hunch
chose tomorrow's menu. Let myself
want to live again.

Bonnie Manion

BONNIE MANION is a long-practicing poet, published in *Pegasus*, *Limestone*, *Karamu* and other journals.

Classifieds

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POSITIONS IN WORLD CATHOLICISM AND INTERCULTURAL THEOLOGY. In order to broaden and deepen its commitment to Catholic scholarship and teaching, DePaul University intends to make two hires beginning in fall 2009. These appointments will be made in the university's interdisciplinary program in Catholic Studies with an affiliate membership (and an appropriate course reduction) in the new Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology. Rank is open, but applicants should have a record of publications that explore global Catholicism and the dialogue of cultures from a historical and/or theological perspective. A successful applicant will be expected to be able to teach courses in Catholic studies at the undergraduate level as well as contribute to the research programs and collaborative initiatives sponsored by the Center.

DePaul is the largest Catholic university in the United States, noted for its diverse student body and commitment to community engagement. DePaul is committed to recruiting a diverse faculty to complement the diversity of its student body and Chicago area communities. We encourage members of underrepresented groups to apply.

Applicants should send a formal letter of application describing their present and future research agendas, a curriculum vitae, evidence of

teaching effectiveness, a sample of scholarly work and names and full contact information for three academic references. The committee began reviewing applications on Oct. 13, 2008. Preliminary interviews will take place at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion on Nov. 1-3, 2008. Please do not send applications by e-mail.

Application materials and queries should be directed to the Chair of the Search Committee: Prof. Peter Casarella, Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology, DePaul University, 2400 N. Sheffield, Chicago, IL 60614; e-mail: pcasarel@depaul.edu.

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Retreats

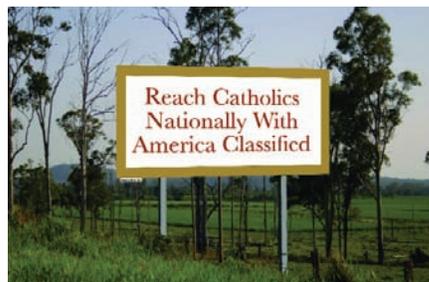
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Letters

Au Contraire

Thanks to William Thompson-Uberuaga for his insightful look at the very important priest John-Jacques Olier in "Christians Who Can Breathe and Laugh" (9/15). As a priest trained by the Sulpicians, I learned much about Olier's spirituality and the enormous influence his ministry has had over the diocesan priests of the world through the education and scholarship of the Sulpicians. Not enough people are aware that Raymond Brown, S.S., a pre-eminent Catholic biblical scholar of his age, was a Sulpician.

The article suggests, however, that it has been almost two centuries since a Sulpician was made a U.S. bishop. This is not quite true. Augustin Verot, S.S., was the bishop of Savannah, Ga., during the First Vatican Council, and was one of the *enfants terribles* of that council; he was sent packing.

(Rev.) Timothy C. Donahue
Augusta, Ga.

Bread and Circuses

After reading Terry Golway's "National Civics Lesson" (9/8), I feel compelled to

comment on his premise that "despite what you'll be reading, political conventions still matter." His statements and admissions of facts seem to contradict this.

To spend millions of dollars to foster a "cable-television cult" does not offer us the opportunity to think about and become engaged by politics, because it offers neither truth nor any worthwhile issues to be considered.

At a time when there are so many needs in this country and in the world, the millions of dollars spent on these "rallies" could be much better spent. I pray and hope that the Holy Spirit will inspire those intelligent men and women among us to change the course of this tide of folly. It can be done.

Marie Lorraine Bruno, I.H.M.
Immaculata, Pa.

Pearl of Great Price

The Rev. J. Daniel Dymski's excellent article, "The Coming Crisis" (9/22), correctly points out two of the three legs of diocesan priests' retirement income: Social Security and some kind of diocese-sponsored retirement funds.

The third leg is a diocesan priest's personal savings. While it is true that priests' salaries differ from diocese to diocese, personal savings over a period of years can play a significant role in a priest's retirement. The problem is that many priests are unaware of the important financial instruments that are available for them. Part of the reason for this is that a number of priests, as one might expect, have little interest in personal wealth, or they are content to turn over any disposable income to someone else, who often sets them up with a financial instrument that comes with high fees.

It is past time that all dioceses do for their priests what so many do for their lay employees: educate them about their finances for retirement. More seminaries also need to devote some time in the curriculum to helping seminarians, especially those coming from foreign countries, to make good decisions about the stewardship of their resources in the future. That would not only help them as priests; it would also help dioceses.

(Rev.) Paul F. Peri
St. Benedict, Ore.

Collect Call

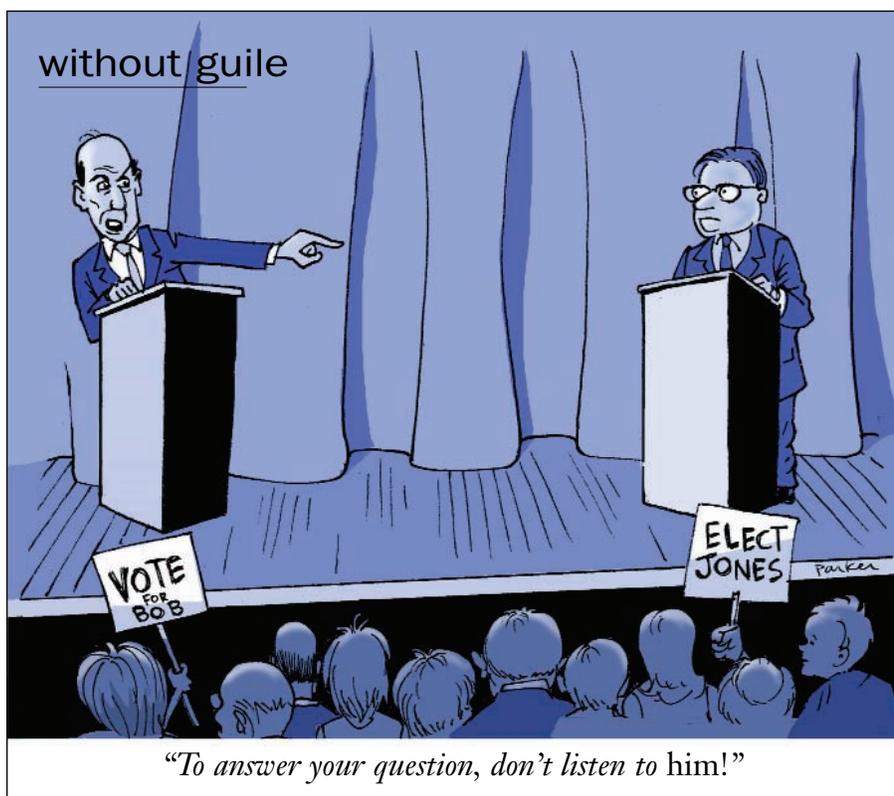
Reading the articles on the "Synod on the Word" (9/29) increased my understanding of the importance of Scripture, but also prompted me to suggest that the spiritual life is not nourished exclusively by the Bible. The theological reflections that are also a part of the liturgy can also be of great assistance in the advancement of the love of God and neighbor.

Formerly known as collects, the opening prayers of the Mass are a rich source of devotion. All of the prayers of petition and thanksgiving contained in these prayers are made in the name of Jesus. If given proper attention, they can deepen and develop our understanding of the word of God while remaining valuable in themselves.

Cornelius F. Murphy Jr.
Pittsburgh, Pa.

On the One Hand...

In "Conscience and the Catholic Voter," by Mary Ann Walsh, R.S.M. (10/6),



Letters

Walsh uses a nuanced approach in referring to life issues as “absolutely critical” and “paramount.” But the bishops refer to these life issues as ones involving “intrinsically evil actions” with priority implications for our conscience. They go on to state these actions “must always be rejected and opposed and must never be supported or condoned.”

Walsh also lists, as if in some sort of offsetting way, a variety of other important social issues: poverty, health care, housing, immigration and more. The bishops point out that the determination of the best approach on these issues is subject to debate, opinion formation and resolution through the democratic process. They are, in effect, negotiable issues. The life issues are not.

John J. Van Beckum
Brookfield, Wis.

On the Other Hand...

Thank you for “Conscience and the Catholic Voter” by Mary Ann Walsh, R.S.M. (10/6), which provides us with a thoughtful article to help in choosing a candidate who is best suited to address the needs of our country, without the banter of the pundits. Too often, Catholics get stuck on one-issue politics and fail to see the issues of life that come after birth: a universal right to health care, jobs to support a family, fair housing, non-discrimination, fair immigration policies and an end to the death penalty.

(Deacon) Martin Beckman
Albany, N.Y.

Beyond the Body

Reading “Conscientious Election,” by J. Brian Bransfield (10/13), I noticed his interests in moral theology seem confined to sexuality and the body. I see no theology of poverty, peace or social justice.

Amor vincit omnia?

Richard Salvucci
San Antonio, Tex.

Money Talks

Re your editorial on “Bailout and Equity” (10/6): Robert Rubin was certainly right to state that most people do not understand the risks inherent in complex financial instruments. But one can be certain

that when the government implicitly guarantees a bailout for such government-sponsored enterprises as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the taxpayer will eventually have to pay.

You call for more regulation? Regulations are already too complex to comprehend, and can never compensate for the moral hazard of free money that seduces all of us, whether homeowners or bankers, to live irresponsibly as well as to explore loopholes and self-serving legislation.

Ernest Martinson
Hayward, Wis.

Pay It Forward

One point of the current financial bailout proposal that is not mentioned in your editorial “Bailout and Equity” (10/6) is

the point I find most important: Our government does not have the money for this proposal. Every penny of the estimated \$700 billion cost will be added to our debt, for a leveraged speculation in assets that will be chosen precisely because they are performing poorly!

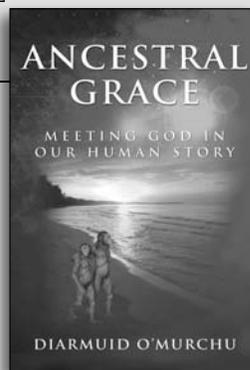
I cannot believe there is any possibility of this plan succeeding in the long run. What it will do, if it works at all, is postpone a financial crash until its effects fall on our children rather than on us. Can anyone explain to me how such a plan can be justified morally?

Michael McDermott
Missouri City, Tex.

Caring for the Caretakers

Linda Rooney’s description of anticipatory grief in “You’re Not My Daughter”

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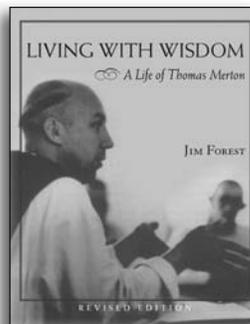
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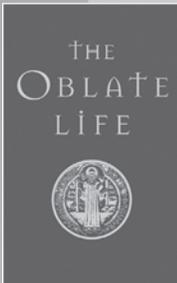
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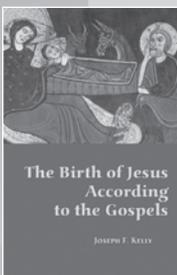
Gervase Holdaway, OSB, Editor

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Letters

(10/13) applies not only to those who care for Alzheimer's patients, but also to those who care for others with chronic, terminal diseases. These gentle healers and supporters—husbands, wives, parents, sons and daughters—need our prayers and comfort. Often their smiles hide fears of an unknown future that can be difficult burdens to carry alone. Recognizing this and letting them know we pray for them invites them to be sustained in their loving efforts with God's grace and blessing.

(Deacon) Jim Grogan
Mount Laurel, N.J.

New Offerings

I read with interest "A Space for Inquiry," by Rev. Terrance W. Klein (9/15). Historically, it may be true that (as Klein writes) Newman Centers stand at the "periphery of intellectual life on secular campuses." But this is not the future of Catholic campus ministry at public universities. For all the reasons Klein hailed theological education as good and right and necessary, Newman Centers are rethinking Catholic higher education. We are concluding that the theologian belongs not only at Catholic colleges and universities, but in Newman Centers as well. Many today are offering theology courses for academic credit, funding chairs in Catholic thought and hiring theologically trained staff to provide ministry and education rooted in the Catholic intellectual tradition.

As this vision evolves, we will surely look to our Catholic colleges and universities as partners in our shared endeavor to create the kinds of spaces where theological education and inquiry can flourish.

Anne K. Ellsworth
Director of Catholic Studies
All Saints Catholic Newman Center
Arizona State University
Tempe, Ariz.

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The Greatest Commandments

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A), Oct. 26, 2008

Readings: Ex 22:20-26; Ps 18:2-4, 47, 51; 1 Thes 1:5-10; Mt 22:34-40

“The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments” (Mt 22:40)

IF YOU LOOK UP the word “love” in a dictionary, you will find something like this: Love means having an interest in and a warm regard for another, and wishing good for the other. That definition is satisfactory, though a bit flat and dull. This Sunday’s Scripture readings can help us fill out the dictionary definition and deepen our understanding of the biblical concept of love.

In today’s reading from Matthew 22, Jesus is challenged to choose the greatest among the 613 commandments in the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament). He names two: love of God (Dt 6:4-5) and love of neighbor (Lv 19:18). These commandments cover two dimensions of the biblical concept of love. The third dimension—God’s love for us—is even more basic.

God’s love for us is the fundamental presupposition of the entire Bible. God has loved us first, and so we can and should love God in return. God’s love has been made manifest in God’s gift of creation, in the choice of Israel as God’s people, in sending Jesus to us and in giving us life and the promise of eternal life. The theological virtue of love has its origin in God. Those who have experienced God’s love can love God and others in return.

The excerpts from Psalm 18, today’s responsorial psalm, express dramatically the experience of someone who has encountered God’s love and loves God in return. The psalmist proclaims, “I love you, O Lord” and describes the experience of God as the ultimate source of security and hope with a long list of images: strength, rock, fortress, deliverer, rock of

DANIEL J. HARRINGTON, S.J., is professor of New Testament at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry in Chestnut Hill, Mass.

refuge, shield, horn of salvation and stronghold. The key to keeping the two commandments to love God and to love one’s neighbor is the recognition that God has loved us first.

The commandment to love God, which is known as the Shema (“Hear, O Israel”) and is a quotation of Dt 6:4-5, was (and is) part of Jewish daily prayer. The text suggests that our love for God must be total, involving all aspects (heart, soul and mind) of our person. The theological

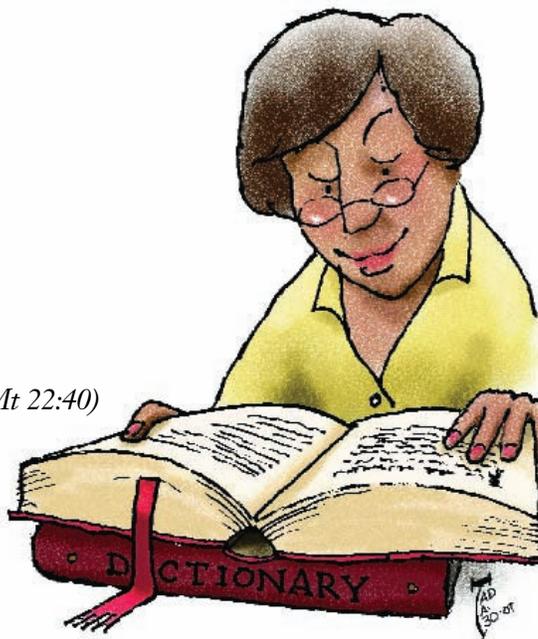
Praying With Scripture

- How do you define love? How do you explain love to others?
- In what moments in your life have you experienced God’s love for you?
- Why should you love your neighbor? Where does faith come in?

virtue of love has God as its object.

The commandment to love one’s neighbor (Lv 19:18) is part of what is known as the biblical Holiness Code. It challenges us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. While lack of self-esteem is a serious problem for some today, most of us are pretty good at taking care of ourselves (or at least we think we are). The challenge of the second love commandment is for us to take something of the care and concern that we instinctively show for ourselves, and to apply it to others.

Whom should we love? Who is our neighbor? Today’s reading from Exodus 22 provides us with some examples. The neighbor includes not only family members and friends but also aliens or strangers, widows, orphans, the poor and the very neediest in society. In the New



ART BY TAD DUNNE

Testament parable of the Good Samaritan and other texts, Jesus pushes the definition of neighbor to include even enemies. In this framework the neighbor is not necessarily someone who can offer us repayment or provide some advantage for us. Love of neighbor is not simply enlightened self-interest. Rather, we should love our neighbor because God has loved us first, and in loving our neighbor we respond to God’s love for us and repay that love.

Jesus ends the conversation with the Pharisees by claiming that the whole Law and the prophets depend on these two commandments. The idea is that if we truly observe the two love commandments, to love God and love the neighbor, all the other commandments will be carried out naturally, as it were.

In addressing the Thessalonians, Paul notes that these recent converts from paganism to worship of “the living and true God” have become famous for their faith wherever the Gospel is preached. They had come to believe in Jesus as the Son of God, in the saving power of his death and resurrection and in his glorious second coming. As his letter proceeds, Paul urges the Thessalonian Christians to express their faith through even greater displays of love for God and for one another. Observing the biblical love commandments is in the final analysis an expression of faith. The biblical concept of love is far richer and deeper than any dictionary definition can supply.

Daniel J. Harrington