

Why Obama
Wants a Team
Of Rivals

Justin Fox
On How to
Save GM

Should You
Buy a
Windmill?

TIME

Ahhh...

Ohhh...

Annual Checkup

The Sorry State of American Health

Despite advances in medicine, Americans are less healthy than we used to be, and the next generation may be even worse off. How to reverse the trend—before it's too late

PLUS: The Year in Medicine A-Z

December 1, 2008 Vol. 172 No. 22

Annual Checkup: The Sorry State of American Health

GETTY IMAGES

COVER

America's Health Checkup

by Alice Park



Illustration by C.J. Burton for TIME

What is the measure of a country's health? How do you take the temperature of a population that sprawls across nine time zones, 50 states and a global rainbow of cultures and communities? One way is by taking a close look at yourself.

If you're like 67% of Americans, you're currently overweight or obese. If you're like 27%, your blood pressure is too high. If you're like a whopping 96% of the population, you may not be able to recall the last time you had a salad, since you're one of the hundreds of millions of Americans who rarely eat enough vegetables. And what you do eat, you don't burn off — assuming you're like the 40% of us who get

no exercise. Most troubling of all, if you're like any parent of any child anywhere in the world, you may be passing your health habits to your children, which explains why experts fear that this generation of American kids may be the first ever to have a shorter life span than their parents do.

By too many measures, America is a lot less healthy than a developed nation has any business being. But just how sick — or just how well — are we? Broad national averages are limited things — very good at telling you the what, but notoriously bad at telling you much more. Who are the one-third of Americans who don't have a weight problem, and how can the rest of us become like them? Why do some of us get our cancer screenings and make sure our kids are vaccinated while others don't? It's hard enough to get a thorough profile of any one person's health outlook. Now imagine putting 300 million of us on the examining table together. That's where TIME's inaugural national health checkup can help.

For this first annual feature, we've gone straight to the numbers to measure the vital signs of a 232-year-old nation that, let's be honest, has let itself go a little lately. The results of such a collective physical are something that should concern us all. If Americans get flabby and inactive together, we can also get fit and healthy together, and a look at the national fever chart is one way to learn not only where any one person needs to improve, but where any one family or entire region should too.

Even a cursory glance at the stats gives us reason for both hope and worry. Each decade since 1980, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has compiled what it calls its Healthy People report, a sort of prospective census in which it sets goals in 28 health areas, from weight and diabetes incidence to cholesterol levels and cancer screenings, and keeps track of how well those targets are met over the 10 years that follow. We are approaching the Healthy People 2010 report, and in an interim assessment, hhs revealed that 59% of its objectives had already been met or were on their way to being met. The goal of vaccinating 80% of babies under age 3 with a core series of shots was surpassed in 2005, with 81% of infants receiving the recommended doses. Half of adults ages 50 and older received a colon scan, meeting the target for colon-cancer screening. Yet at the same time, in 20% of the

tracked trends, we have actually retreated from the goals. Only 33% of adults in 2003-06 were at a healthy weight, half the number who ideally should be and 10% fewer than in 1988-94. The prevalence of diabetes, which health officials hope to cap at 25 cases per 1,000 people, is more than double that and has actually risen since 1997.

With a new Administration promising much needed reform in the way health care is accessed, delivered and reimbursed, legislators, health officials, doctors and patients see this as a rare opportunity, a sweet spot in which national need could meet national will and we could actually fix a system that seems to be costing us more and more but delivering less and less. The improvements can't come too soon. In spite of our gleaming hospitals and cutting-edge technology that can detect the tiniest tumors and repair the most complex organ, on some basic health measures the U.S. is starting to fall behind — far behind.

Fighting the Wrong War

The biggest problem with the U.S. health-care system is that it has long been designed to respond to illness rather than prevent it. According to an analysis by the Commonwealth Fund, a foundation that funds health-care research, half of American adults in 2005 did not receive recommended preventive care, which includes vaccinations, cancer screenings and blood-pressure checks. When we do get our cardiac health checked, too often it's because we've been rushed to the emergency room suffering from chest pains. When we do get a cancer evaluation, too often it's a diagnosis of advanced disease that has spread beyond the initial tumor site.

Not only is this a deadly way to practice medicine, but it's also a breathtakingly expensive one. In 2005 Americans paid out a record 16% of our gross domestic product for health care — a cool \$2 trillion — making us the world's top spender on health care per capita. You might think we'd be getting some bang for those bucks, but our leading killer remains what it has been every year since 1900 (with the exception of 1918, when influenza claimed more lives): heart disease, which kills nearly 650,000 of us each year. "The reason we rank so poorly is that we don't

provide a basic-wellness infrastructure," says Dr. Mehmet Oz, director of the cardiovascular institute at the Columbia University Medical Center and a host on the Discovery Health Channel.

There are a lot of ways to measure the effects of America's after-the-fact health-care philosophy, but the most telling might be what epidemiologists call preventable deaths. Certainly, plenty of deaths due to illness are not preventable, but there are many other conditions that a decent health-care system should be able to detect and fix well before they become life-threatening. Most of the leading killers in the U.S. — including pneumonia, diabetes and stroke — fall into this category. According to a Commonwealth Fund report issued this year, 101,000 deaths from 2002 to 2003 could have been avoided with access to timely and effective health care. This rate places the U.S. 19th — last — among industrialized nations.

President-elect Barack Obama's first challenge in improving the U.S.'s health scorecard will be to transform this entrenched symptom-centric mentality into a more proactive one, embedding prevention and wellness programs more aggressively into primary care and ensuring that every American takes advantage of these services by expanding insurance coverage to pay for them — beginning with mandated policies for children. (Read about Obama's health-care plan.) That's a good place to start, since by many measures, it's kids — particularly the very youngest — who most need help.

In 2005, the most recent year for which data are available, about 7 babies out of every 1,000 live births in the U.S. died before their first birthday. That rate represents a 2% reduction in deaths from the year before, which continues the steady improvement seen throughout the 20th century. But globally, it still places us 29th in the world, behind Cuba and Singapore and on a par with Poland and Slovakia.

It's not just the tragic nature of a dying baby that makes those numbers so terrible. It's also that infant-mortality rates can stand as a valuable proxy for many critical features of a health-care system — how accessible basic services such as prenatal

care and birthing are, as well as the quality and affordability of that care. And our rate exposes a familiar but ugly truth about our system — that those variables change depending on where you are and who you are. Non-Hispanic black women, for example, are three times as likely as Cuban-American women and twice as likely as non-Hispanic white women to suffer the loss of a baby — mostly because of a disparity in access to birthing and postnatal care. And infant-mortality rates along the two coasts tend to be lowest, where denser populations translate to greater availability of these services. The wedge that continues to widen these gaps is insurance; non-Hispanic blacks make up half our nation's uninsured, which leaves them without access to the regular health care that can educate mothers-to-be about proper nutrition and pregnancy care. Without such services, more babies are born in distress and are unable to survive their first few months.

Also driving the infant-mortality rate are women at the other end of the economic spectrum, who take advantage of reproductive technologies such as in vitro fertilization. Such procedures boost the chances of multiple births, which in turn increase the likelihood of premature birth and consequently put babies at risk. From 2000 to 2005, the number of preterm births increased 9%, and in 2005, about one-third of infant deaths were directly due to a gestation period of less than 37 weeks.

If deaths at the beginning of life are one critical measure of a nation's health, the number of years we get before the end of our life is another. Life expectancy in the U.S. has steadily increased since the early 1900s, from 46 years for men and 48 years for women to 75 years for men and 80 years for women in 2004.

Improvements in sanitation, innovations in vaccines and antibiotics, and control of infectious diseases account for much of the gain. But again, not everyone has equal access to these extra years.

African Americans increased their life expectancy nearly 1% between 2000 and 2002, compared with a 0.3% increase among whites, but blacks were starting from a lower figure, and are still expected to live 5.2 fewer years than whites. For all races, additional golden years aren't necessarily healthy years, with seniors increasingly burdened by such chronic illnesses as arthritis, cancer, diabetes, kidney disease and

heart disease. Part of that is simply because the more years you pile up, the more opportunity you have to develop diseases associated with aging. "We are living longer, but we are not living healthier," says Dr. Nancy Nielsen, president of the American Medical Association. "Many Medicare recipients now have five or more chronic conditions."

Doing It Right

If Americans have been slow to realize the worrisome state of our collective health, we have — as individuals and as a nation — at last begun to wake up. Take our long and almost always unhappy battle with weight. In recent years, the scale has been telling not just a distressing tale, but also a truly shocking one. Between 1980 and 2004, the prevalence of obesity in the U.S. doubled among adults, surging to 72 million, or one-third of people ages 20 and older. Worse, the percentage of overweight or obese kids rose to 17%. If all those numbers could be cut by even a third, the ripple effect would in turn slash rates of hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, cancer, joint damage and more, not to mention the myriad costs associated with fighting these illnesses.

And indeed, there may be flickers of hope. From 2005 to 2006, the percentage of women and children who are overweight appeared to stabilize, while the rate for men increased only slightly. "That's good, but it's not as if it's flattening at a good level," notes Cynthia Ogden, an epidemiologist at the National Center for Health Statistics, part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Still, the improvement is no accident, and for women and particularly children, it can be traced to aggressive nutrition and exercise messages promoted in schools, hospitals, community groups and churches — precisely the kind of low-cost, high-impact measures health experts love.

Similar preventive methods may help cap soaring cholesterol levels. Since the late 1960s, the average serum-cholesterol level of adults has continued to drop, from a high of 220 mg/dL down to 199 mg/dL in 2006. That cut the percentage of Americans with high cholesterol to 17%, precisely the goal set by the Healthy People

2010 targets — and it was reached four years ahead of schedule. Routine blood tests for low- and high-density lipoproteins, or bad and good cholesterol — as well as the use of cholesterol-lowering medications when needed — have played a major role in powering those improvements.

The same principles of education, prevention and early treatment can apply to mental health as well. One in 20 Americans over age 12 reported feeling depressed in 2006, with non-Hispanic blacks making up the largest percentage. Although 80% of Americans admitted that their symptoms interfered with their ability to work, only 29% had contacted a mental-health professional. Recent improvements in screening at primary-care facilities, one of the goals set by Healthy People 2010, may help address this problem: while 62% of primary-care facilities provided treatment for mental disorders in 2000, 74% do so now.

It took the U.S. health-care system a long time to get as broken as it is, and it will take a long time to set it right. A big, diverse land like ours may never be able to put up the glittering health numbers of smaller, more homogeneous countries. But we're not in the game to compete with the Swedens and Norways of the world. We're in the game to make America the healthiest place it can be. At the moment, we're nowhere near the goal, but slowly, we're edging closer.

Reform's Moment May Be Now

By JAMES CARNEY



Will Obama hurry health-care reform?
Doug Mills / The New York Times / Redux

The last time a democratic president tried to fulfill a campaign promise to overhaul the nation's health-care system, he stumbled into a buzz saw of opposition so brutally effective that it didn't just kill the effort, it rendered the issue politically toxic for 15 years.

Now it's Barack Obama's turn. With the economy staggering, the Federal Government spending billions to help prop it up and the nation still engaged in two costly overseas wars, the timing for health-care reform seems dreadful. And yet it could still happen. Obama ranks health-care reform third on his list of top priorities — behind addressing the financial crisis and passing an energy bill. Despite suffering from a malignant brain tumor, Senator Ted Kennedy has returned to Capitol Hill principally, he says, because he wants to orchestrate the passage of health-care

legislation. "There's real momentum behind getting something big done," says one adviser to the President-elect. "This could be the best chance we've ever had."

Three key developments over the past 15 years have made this moment possible. First, the number of uninsured Americans now tops 45 million. Meanwhile, all the proposals under serious consideration — starting with Obama's — would allow Americans to keep their current insurance coverage if they're happy with it. The specter of the feds ordering everyone into a mandatory government-managed plan is fading away. Most important, the cost of health insurance to both the employers who provide it and the employees who pay premiums has continued to soar. Because of that, companies of all sizes — from corporate behemoths to corner stores — have switched sides on the issue of comprehensive reform. Having fought to defeat Clinton's plan in 1993, they are now some of reform's loudest advocates. "This is the No. 1 priority for small businesses," says Todd Stottlemeyer, president of the National Federation of Independent Business. "We see it as a matter of national economic security."

Even the weak economy may be an impetus to reform. An expected spike in unemployment will increase the rolls of the uninsured, driving more of them into emergency rooms and boosting premiums on the insured. Struggling companies may be forced to cut or kill their employee coverage just to survive. And while the cost of Obama's reform is high — an estimated \$75 billion a year — a big price tag hasn't kept Congress from raiding the Treasury to fix the economy's many other ills.

One other advantage: Obama's plan is not as sweeping as Clinton's was. It does not mandate universal coverage except for children. It subsidizes low-income Americans who want to buy insurance and creates an exchange to give people access to health care at affordable prices — all reasonable and pragmatic steps. Still, a fight is inevitable. Health care represents 16% of the nation's economy, with vast and competing interests as stakeholders. Which is why the obstacles to systemic reform remain enormous. Says the adviser: "We know how hard this will be."

NATION

Why Obama Wants Hillary for His 'Team of Rivals'

By Karen Tumulty and Massimo Calabresi Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008



Paul J. Richards / AFP / Getty

To succeed at modern diplomacy, it helps to take the long view. As word trickled out that President-elect Barack Obama was considering Hillary Clinton for Secretary of State, Clinton was on the phone with the President of Pakistan. Asif Ali Zardari was calling with a long-overdue thank-you. Back in 1998, when Zardari's late wife Benazir Bhutto was powerless and out of favor with the United States, the then First Lady had received her at the White House, over the objections of both the State Department and the National Security Council. Bhutto eventually regained her influence, and before her assassination last December, became an important U.S.

ally. But she had never forgotten that act of graciousness, Zardari told Clinton on Nov. 14. "To be treated with such respect was very important."

As he wrapped up his second week as President-elect, it was clear that Obama was taking the long view in both diplomacy and politics. How else to explain the fact that he had all but offered the most prestigious job in his Cabinet to a woman whose foreign policy experience he once dismissed as consisting of having tea with ambassadors? Or that Clinton might accept an offer from a man whose national-security credentials, she once said, began and ended with "a speech he made in 2002"? Nowhere did Obama and Clinton attack each other more brutally last spring than on the question of who was best equipped to handle international relations in a dangerous world. That they could be on the brink of becoming partners in that endeavor is the most remarkable evidence yet that Obama is serious about his declared intention to follow another Illinois President's model in assembling a "team of rivals" to run his government, in what could be a sharp contrast with the past 40 years of American Presidents. "I've been spending a lot of time reading Lincoln," Obama told Steve Kroft on *60 Minutes*. "There is a wisdom there and a humility about his approach to government, even before he was President, that I just find very helpful."

And a shrewdness as well. The surprising proffer to Clinton came the same week that Obama sat down with John McCain in Chicago and helped engineer a commutation for Senator Joe Lieberman, who had backed McCain in the election and faced possibly being stripped of his committee chairmanship. The general amnesty campaign, part of a promise to change the way Washington works, impressed some longtime partisans. "It's brilliant," says a senior Republican Party official. "My hat is totally off to the guy." Viewed more cynically, bringing Clinton into the tent could co-opt a potential adversary in 2012 and put a leash on her globetrotting husband, who has a propensity for foreign policy freelancing. Which raises a question: Would this move, if it happens, be just the first manifestation of that new kind of politics that Obama was promising in his presidential campaign? Or proof that he understands the oldest kind all too well?

However smart it might ultimately prove to be, the Clinton offer is likely to induce grumbling among some Obama loyalists. The job Obama dangled in front of Clinton has excited a frenzy of speculation and leaking — exactly the kind of thing the no-drama Obama operation did not tolerate during the presidential campaign. And coming amid word that Obama is eyeing an array of former Clinton officials — including former Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder for the top job at Justice — even Democrats began to ask how much change Obama really represents. "What were the last two years all about?" asks one exasperated party strategist. "The restoration of the Clintons?"

But as with everything involving the Clintons, restoration is complicated. Negotiating Bill Clinton's portfolio has been one sticking point. The conundrum was on display on Nov. 16 even as Bill hailed his wife's potential to be "really great as a Secretary of State." He made that comment while giving a paid speech for the National Bank of Kuwait, which is the kind of thing for which he earned more than \$10 million last year alone. Beyond his six-figure speaking fees, there are also a myriad of undisclosed contributions to the former President's far-flung charitable endeavors and to his presidential library, many of which have come from foreign interests that his wife would be dealing with as Secretary of State.

Team Clinton dismissed suggestions that there was anything in his donor files that could get in the way of her confirmation. As Bill told the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* in September, "The only reason I didn't want to [disclose] the library donors is that no previous President had. I suppose if Hillary were elected President, or maybe even if she had been nominated, we would have had to go back to the donors and at least disclose everyone that didn't object to it. But I wouldn't have any objection to it."

In negotiations with the Obama transition team, the *Wall Street Journal* first reported, the Clintons have offered to disclose the identities of all future donors to Bill's charitable activities, as well as givers of major past contributions. (What constitutes "major" is still under discussion, though a source involved in the conversation tells TIME that the figure is likely to be \$1 million or more.) Trickier to manage is the role the former President would play going forward. Should his wife

become the country's top diplomat, President No. 42 would probably be required to get clearance from both the White House counsel's office and the State Department's ethics boss before accepting future donations or giving paid speeches.

But just as worrisome as any financial arrangements would be Bill Clinton's ongoing relationships with world leaders and his predilection for offering advice — as he did in 2006, when Dubai sought help in a controversial attempt to acquire six terminals in U.S. ports. (Hillary, a leader in the effort to block the deal that she called an "unacceptable risk" to national security, later said she was unaware that Bill had been coaching the other side.) Ex-Presidents always have that potential; Jimmy Carter has complicated life for every President since he left office. But should Hillary get the job, it might prove difficult to distinguish whether her husband was speaking on the Obama Administration's behalf.

What's in it for Hillary? Her allies point out that the move would not be without its negatives. Friends like New York Congresswoman Louise Slaughter are counseling her not to take the job. They say she would be giving up important work in the Senate, particularly on the health-care-reform cause that is her passion. Others warn that her job description at Foggy Bottom would mean she'd lose her own voice. Against that, enthusiasts for the move point out, Clinton is smart, a fast and thorough study, and tough as nails. And with Obama focused on the economy, she could have a big role in repairing the U.S.'s image overseas. Says an Obama adviser who has not always been a Clinton fan: "She's a great team player."

And the harder truth is that Clinton's options as a Senator are limited, at least in the immediate future. In that chamber, she is just one of many presidential also-rans and a relatively junior member of an institution where power and advancement require seniority. Shortly after the election, she lobbied Health Committee chairman Edward Kennedy and majority leader Harry Reid to create a health-reform subcommittee for her to chair and was turned down. Her consolation prize — to head one of three ad hoc task forces that Kennedy has created — would not allow her to put much of a stamp of her own on any final legislation that emerges. And if there's

anything a First Lady who became a Senator would understand, it's that opportunities don't always come to those who wait for them.

— *With reporting by James Carney, Michael Duffy and Michael Weiskopf / Washington*

After the Election, Rebooting the Right

By Ramesh Ponnuru Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008

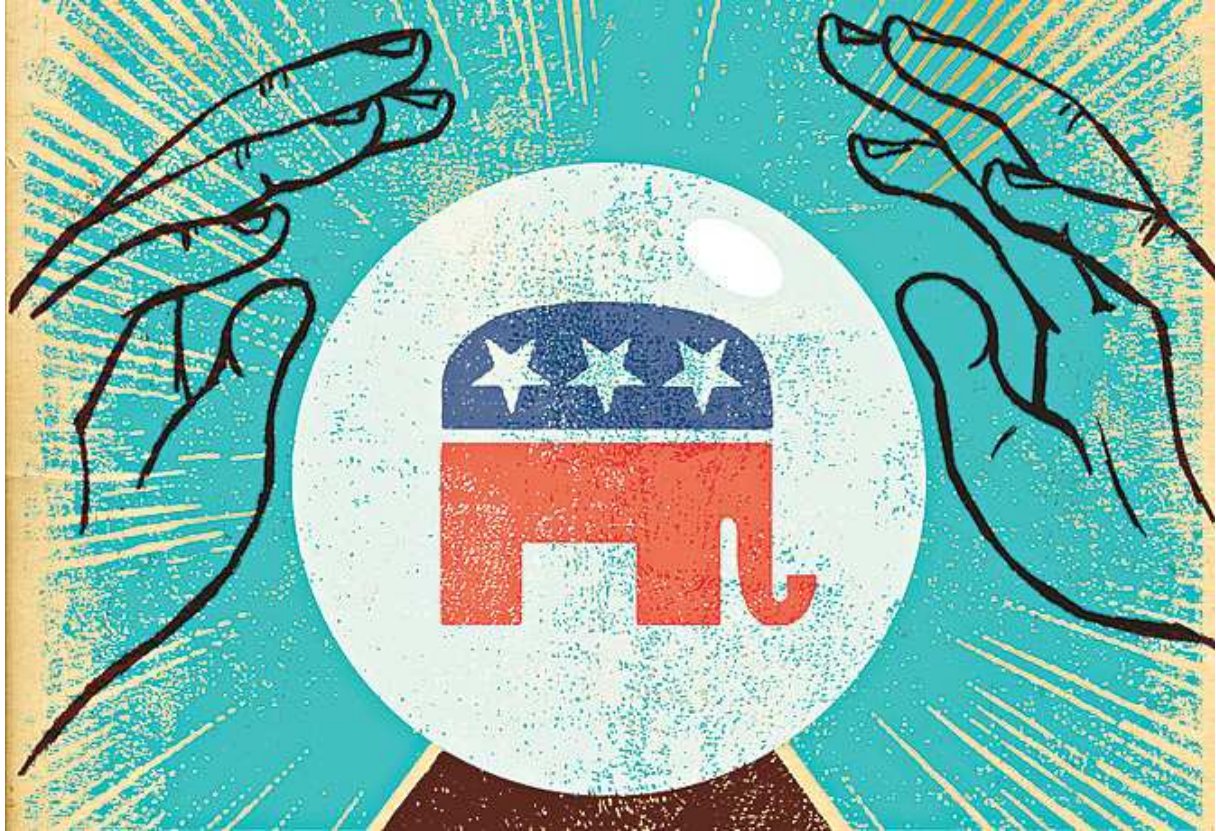


Illustration by Edel Rodriguez for TIME

Republicans are feuding in the wake of the November election. But they are not descending into civil war. That would be too tidy. What is unfolding instead is an overlapping series of Republican civil wars, each with its own theme.

The war that will get the most attention will center on social conservatives. Some Republicans believe that their reputation for intolerance is costing the party the votes of the next generation of Americans. But that argument got harder to make when California, one of the most liberal states in the country, passed a ballot initiative banning same-sex marriage. The party is unlikely to change its positions on social issues, but it will see a lot of back and forth on how much emphasis to give them.

Next in the dock will be the neoconservatives. Republicans were doing fine, critics will say, until the neocons pushed the country into the Iraq war. The neocons will

defend themselves by noting that while they had plenty of company in supporting the war, they are not responsible for its botched execution and that Iraq ended up not being a major issue this fall.

Not long after, expect a range war over legal and illegal immigration. Supporters of looser rules will say the party's anti-immigrant tone has alienated Hispanics and given part of the Mountain West to the Democrats, with Texas to follow. Opponents will point out that John McCain co-sponsored an amnesty bill and Hispanics still shunned him.

The party's small-government purists, meanwhile, will insist that voters punished Republicans for going on a spending spree and that what the party most needs to do is re-establish an image of tightfistedness. The problem with this theory is while spending restraint is popular in general, so is nearly every specific spending program.

Other clashes will turn on personality and style. Conservatives will say McCain's moderate record cost him votes. Moderates will say he ran too far to the right--and erred by picking Governor Sarah Palin as his running mate. Palin has vocal defenders who think that she helped the ticket and should run for President herself in 2012. In Congress, some Republicans will want to cooperate with President-elect Barack Obama, heeding the voters' desire for bipartisanship. Others will seek to draw a clear contrast between their ideas and his.

My guess is that the winning side in these Republican debates will be tough on illegal immigration, federal spending and Obama. But all these arguments will also largely miss the point. When a party suffers the kind of beating the Republicans have taken in the past two elections, the public has not rejected one of its factions. It has rejected the party as a whole. Voters have turned on pro-choice as well as pro-life Republicans, on Senators who favored amnesty and ones who fought it. Evidently voters did not believe that Republicans of any stripe offered solutions to the challenges America faces now.

Daniel Finkelstein, a British Conservative, recently wrote that his party went through a similar period of internal strife after Tony Blair kicked it out of office in 1997. More

painful than all the mutual recriminations, he wrote, was the slow realization that nobody outside a small circle cared about any of these arguments. More than a decade later, Conservatives are still out of power in Britain.

Republicans are counting on the natural tides of politics to lift their numbers in Congress in 2010. The Democrats may overreach, or their supporters may get complacent. But to get back in the driver's seat, to become relevant again, Republicans will have to devise an agenda that speaks to a country where more people feel the bite of payroll taxes than income taxes, where health-care costs eat up raises even in good times, where the length of the daily commute is a bigger irritant than are earmarks and where whites are a declining proportion of the electorate.

At the GOP governors' meeting this month, Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota argued that Republicans need to stay conservative but also modernize. A revitalized conservatism would push for tax reform with an eye on middle-class families, not hedge-fund operators. It would seek solutions to global warming rather than deny that it exists. It would place a higher priority on making health care affordable than on slashing pork programs. It would promote the assimilation of Hispanics rather than regard them as a menace or a source of cheap labor.

The refurbishing of conservatism is unlikely to take place in the next three years. That will probably take a presidential candidate who seeks to lead a reformed party in 2012--and a party that is desperate enough to permit it.

Can Ray Odierno Make Iraq Safe for the US to Leave?

By Brian Bennett / Baghdad Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008



General Ray Odierno
Yuri Kozyrev / Noor for TIME

Correction Appended: Nov. 24, 2008

When Ray Odierno took over the top military post in Iraq from General David Petraeus in September, there was a lot of hand-wringing among folk at defense think tanks in Washington worried that he was the wrong man for the job. They pointed to Odierno's reputation from his first tour in Iraq, in 2003, as a heavy-handed division commander who had neither a grasp of the subtleties of fighting an insurgency nor the political acumen to sell his ideas back home. Some correspondents who covered Iraq in the months after the fall of Saddam Hussein also came away with that

opinion; in his best-selling 2006 book, *Fiasco*, Washington Post correspondent Thomas E. Ricks suggested that Odierno's tough tactics in the Sunni Triangle had helped fuel the insurgency. Odierno's 4th Infantry Division, while hunting down Saddam and fighting off the remnants of his irregular fedayeen forces, flattened houses said to have been used by fighters and launched artillery volleys at insurgents hiding amid the civilian population.

Odierno's physique and personality contributed to his image as a military bull in a china shop. The general is 6 ft. 5 in. (2 m) and 245 lb. (111 kg); he played tight end at West Point. A native of Rockaway, N.J. (pop. 6,000), he speaks with the occasional New Jersey grumble, and bluntly. Odierno usually suffers in comparisons with the suave, diplomatic Petraeus. As a senior commander in Iraq told *TIME* in 2006, "If Dave is polish, Ray is spit."

But the doubters didn't take into account the evolution of Odierno's thinking during his second tour in Iraq, in 2006, when he helped develop the military's surge strategy--which contributed hugely to the reduction of violence in much of the country. Petraeus sold Washington on the surge, but it was Odierno who gave him something to sell. "It is clear that by late 2006, he was as important as Petraeus, if not more important, because he was the guy on the ground," says Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution.

The success of the surge has led to a reassessment of Odierno, 54. Retired General Jack Keane, who consulted closely with Odierno on the surge in late 2006, was so impressed that he later used his powerful connections in the Administration to push for promoting Odierno to Petraeus' job. "He went through a complete metamorphosis," says Keane. "He educated himself and became the pre-eminent operational commander we have in conducting irregular warfare."

Odierno concedes that his thinking has evolved. "I'd be wrong if I said I didn't learn," he says. He studied up on tribal relationships, Iraqi politics and microeconomics. But he rejects as "grossly exaggerated" the idea that he had some revelation and suddenly embraced counterinsurgency doctrine. He points out that some of the

tactics he employed in 2003 have made a comeback. As commander of the 4th Infantry Division, despite orders to pull back, he kept small outposts in neighborhoods among the residents, ensuring better surveillance and quick response to insurgent attacks, which helped him shut down the fedayeen on Saddam's home turf. The outposts have become one of the cornerstones of the surge strategy.

In implementing the surge, Odierno pushed five new brigades into Baghdad's neighborhoods and gave them surveillance equipment like aerial drones, ground sensors and blimps with closed-circuit cameras, allowing each small outpost to watch over many city blocks. He also worked with the Iraqi forces to bring National Police and Iraqi army soldiers into Baghdad from all over the country. Displaying political dexterity, he persuaded a nervous Iraqi government to sign on to the Sons of Iraq program, which turned thousands of insurgents into neighborhood-watch groups. If Petraeus gets credit for ushering in the surge, it was Odierno who "made it work," says Lieut. General Nasier Abadi, deputy chief of staff of the Iraqi joint forces.

These days, Odierno and his staff are brainstorming over what the next phase of U.S. military presence in Iraq will look like. A tough battle is still being fought in Mosul and Diyala province against al-Qaeda in Iraq. Iran continues to wage a hot and cold war for influence over the future of Iraq. Militant groups are trying to regain footholds around Baghdad. And Odierno's political skills have been put to the test in negotiations over a status-of-forces agreement with the Iraqi government, which the Iraqi Cabinet endorsed on Nov. 16. Under the terms of the agreement, all U.S. forces will leave Iraq by the end of 2011. (During the presidential campaign, Barack Obama called for pulling out all combat brigades by May 2010.)

The agreement reflects a consensus in Baghdad and Washington that the U.S. footprint must be greatly reduced. Abadi, the Iraqi general, would like to have U.S. forces backstopping his men. But he believes the worst is over. Odierno, for his part, is determined that troop withdrawals be done in a "deliberate way" so as not to give up the gains of the past year.

He knows what's at stake and has seen firsthand the personal toll of the war. Odierno's son Tony lost his left arm when a rocket-propelled grenade blew up his humvee in Baghdad in 2004. The general says his son's injury has given him a bond with other parents who have had a child injured in combat. "I understand," he says, "what the costs of this fight are."

*The original version of the story had General Odierno's weight at 285 lb. (130 kg).
The general weighs 245 lb.*

ESSAY

TV's Fall Ratings Hit: Meet the Obamas

By James Poniewozik Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008



Illustration by Francisco Caceres for TIME; Obamas: Stan Honda / AFP / Getty (2); Sasha & Malia: Jae C. Hong / AP

Barack Obama may or may not save the auto industry or the banking system. But he's already a one-man stimulus package for the media (present publication included). Magazines with his face on the cover fly off shelves by the millions. Publishers hawk instant dvds and books. An MSNBC ad invites viewers to "experience the power of change." For one glorious day, Nov. 5, Americans actually wanted to buy a newspaper.

After that remarkable Grant Park tableau introducing America to its black First Family, Barack had to share Obamamania with the wife and kids. Us Weekly ran a cover story on BARACK OBAMA'S GIRLS. Michelle, Malia and Sasha graced the cover

of New York magazine's gift guide. And half of the Obamas' 60 Minutes--the highest-rated episode of any TV show this season--covered the kids' school prospects, the puppy issue and Obama's diplomatic relations with his mother-in-law.

Kids, dogs and mother-in-law humor: it's as if the Obamas are launching an early '60s sitcom before our eyes. With good reason: the First Family--elect may represent a big social shift, but their retro, TV Land ordinariness helped get America comfortable with Dad. Quipping with 60 Minutes' Steve Kroft, Barack and Michelle echoed not J.F.K. and Jackie but rather Rob and Laura Petrie--she, the amiably needling supporter; he, the self-deprecatingly put-upon hubby joking about Michelle's asking him to take the girls to school the morning after the election. This fall, on every channel, it's Meet the Obamas! (Or: At Least 52.7% of Everybody Loves Barack.)

The fascination with the First-in-More-Than-One-Way Family is not just about race. A young family in the White House symbolizes change more vividly than any Cabinet appointment. Whitney Houston was corny but right: children are the future and a potent symbol thereof. Also, there will be a puppy! Did I mention the puppy?

But this is America: of course it's about race too. After Obama won, there was talk of a "Huxtable effect"--the idea that pop-cultural portrayals of African Americans from The Cosby Show to 24's David Palmer readied white America for a black President. But maybe there's an opposite factor at work here too--the 50 Cent effect. The impact of the Obamas comes partly from the unspoken contrast to a decades-old media archive of images of black people as problems or threats, from news to cop shows to hip-hop. Broken families, perp walks, AKs and Cristal.

Suddenly the most photographed black man in America was giving speeches and calling world leaders. Suddenly the most discussed black women in America were two adorable kids and their lawyer mom. Suddenly you had a news story involving a black man and dogs, and it wasn't Michael Vick.

Yes, it's all image. But images matter, not least to African Americans after years of O.J. Simpson and R. Kelly media frenzies. On Comedy Central's Chocolate News,

David Alan Grier chided Obama for wearing a tracksuit the day after the election: "Barack, people voted for you because you're not Al Sharpton! Don't start dressing like him!"

There's the chance that all the well-meaning Obamamania can turn into Look Who's Coming to Washington fetishization. A New York Times article about the Obamas' school search described "little girls ... swooning over the prospect of White House sleepovers with the daughters of the nation's first black President," as if kids care about the race of the dad handing out the invites. There's a gaping tone to some of the coverage: Wow, just look at them.

On the other hand ... well, just look at them, on every channel and newsstand. And consider the context. This year the networks announced a schedule of new fall series without a single black lead character. Now America's biggest television show--a family comedy, a West Wing--style drama and true reality TV--has an African-American cast.

Yet part of the Obamas' appeal is their refusal to harp on their exceptionalism, their emphasis (repeated to Kroft like a mantra) on giving their daughters a "normal" life. It's only fitting that Malia and Sasha are big fans of Hannah Montana (on which they were offered but haven't accepted a cameo): the Miley Cyrus show is a fantasy about a girl celebrity with a secret life as an ordinary kid.

Now the Obamas are bigger than the Cyruses, and the ironies are plenty. That fashion glossies, which once rarely had cover models of color, would be jockeying for photo shoots with Michelle. That a TV business with long-standing diversity issues would be fascinated with this family's values. And that a still white-dominated press would look to a black man to boost its bottom line, fix the economy and save the planet. But will he still have time to take the kids to school when he's done? Tune in next week and find out.

How Many Blogs Does the World Need?

By Michael Kinsley Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008

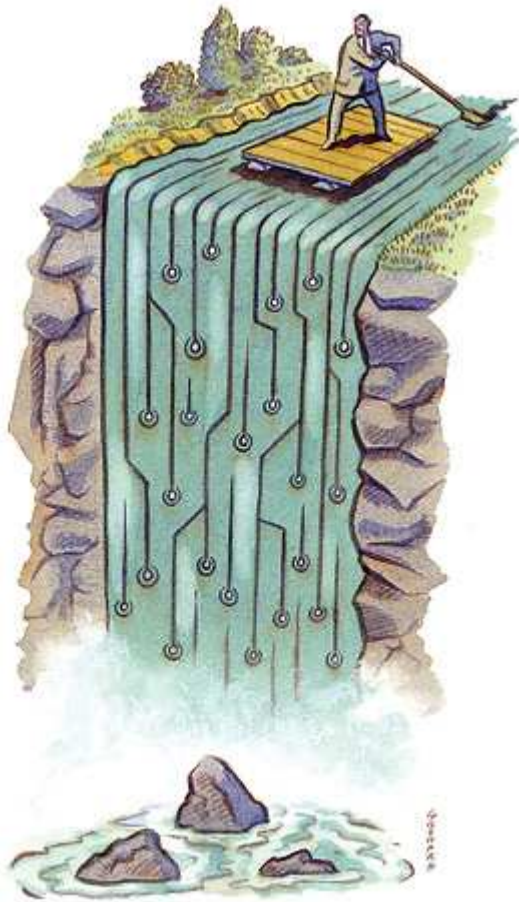


Illustration by David Gothard for TIME

People had been predicting it for years, and in 2008, it finally happened. This was the first presidential election dominated by the Internet. Those ancient debates about whether the Internet lowers journalistic standards and drags the Mainstream Media into the slime have become irrelevant. For a large chunk of the electorate--the young chunk--the Internet has become the major source of information.

But while the chin pullers can hold their symposiums about the quality of that information, it's the quantity that's truly remarkable--and oppressive. Way back in 2004, when we last held an election, no one was complaining that there wasn't enough to see or read on the Internet. And that was before YouTube, Politico, Huffington Post, Twitter and Facebook became daily or hourly necessities for

millions. In 2004 newspaper websites were still mostly "shovelware"--the paper edition reproduced. They weren't bloated with blogs and video and interviews with the reporters who wrote the story. But now everyone has a blog. The opportunity for us all to express an opinion is wonderful. Having to read all those opinions isn't. In 2004 there were probably still more people reading blogs than writing them. Not so now, or so it seems. And even if most blogs are skippable, there are one or two or maybe two dozen worth checking out a couple of times--or maybe three or four times--a day just to be sure you're not missing anything.

Then there are the sites that are supposed to help you sort the wheat from the chaff on all the other sites. They filter out the stories you can ignore, and they aggregate the ones they think you should read. Some have computer algorithms to do their sorting, while others induce readers themselves to do the heavy lifting. Sixty-three percent of those who enjoyed a story about cannibalism in suburban Paris, it turns out, recommend another story about werewolves in Rio de Janeiro. Hey, better check it out.

Fine. But aggregation has become a hall of mirrors. "Did you see Romenesko this morning? Yeah, very interesting. He's got a link to a piece in LA Observed that links to a column on the London Times website where this guy says that a Russian blogger is saying that Obama will make Sarah Palin Secretary of State."

"Wow. Sounds true. Where did the Russian guy get it?"

"He says it was in Romenesko."

And if readers are suffering from information overload, imagine the new life of political writers. First, they have to be totally up to speed to make sure that some blogger or newspaper competitor hasn't already made the point or reported the factlet that they intend to write about. Second, they have to be fast, fast, fast to beat that other fellow to the punch. This has always been true in journalism and used to be considered part of the fun. But it's less fun when half the people in the world could now be that other fellow.

Third, while an article a day used to be a typical reporter's quota (or in the leisurely precincts of newsmagazines, an article a week), reporters are now expected to blog 24/7 as well. Not only that, they must perpetually update their stories, as in the old days of multiple newspaper editions. And they may well be handed a voice recorder and/or webcam and told to file audio and video too. Meanwhile, they are glancing over their shoulder and awaiting the Grim Reaper from HR with word of the latest round of layoffs.

How many blogs does the world need? There is already blog gridlock. When the Washington Post editorial page started a blog before this year's conventions, participants (I was one) were told: Don't forget that the Post political staff also has a complete set of blogs. It wasn't clear what we were supposed to do about this, but the implication was that there are only so many aperçus to go around, so don't be greedy.

The great thing about blogs, in my view, is that they share the voice of e-mail. It's a genuinely new literary form, which, at its best, combines the immediacy of talking with the reflectiveness of writing. But many readers may be reaching the point with blogs and websites that I reached long ago with the Sunday New York Times Magazine--actively hoping there isn't anything interesting in there because then I'll have to take the time to read it.

WORLD

Fayetteville: America's Most Pro-Military Town

By Nathan Thornburgh Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008



Attendees at Fayetteville's mass baby shower for military wives.
D.L. Anderson for TIME

At the world's largest military baby shower, there was no doubting the sincerity of Fayetteville's convictions. The North Carolina city that is home to both Fort Bragg and the Pope Air Force Base threw a party on Nov. 15 for a thousand new and expectant military moms--a baby boomlet prompted by the return since October 2007 of some 22,000 members of the 82nd Airborne from active duty in Iraq. The event was held in Fayetteville's Crown Exposition Center, complete with a buffet, a cupcake table, plenty of bottled water and raffle prizes ranging from a 2009 Chevy Malibu to a Fisher-Price Take-Along Swing for infants.

But Fayetteville's support for the troops is about a lot more than cupcakes. In September, the city and surrounding Cumberland County adopted the new slogan "World's first sanctuary for soldiers." It's a curious rebranding that seems to imply that life for service members elsewhere can be miserable. As one city document puts it, military families need a sanctuary because some American communities are telling soldiers they're not welcome, "through protests, legislation and sometimes violence."

That's a dubious claim, at best. But it's a clever move by this city of 210,000 along the Cape Fear River. In a time of long deployments, the city is stepping up to take care of the families left behind. It boasts, for starters, an "Army's Army" of 900 civilian volunteers who help families with everything from flat tires to job placement. Sergeant Daniel Gobbel, who recently moved here from Fort Bliss, Texas, with his wife and daughters, says he appreciates the support the troops decals in storefronts and the way people thank him on the street. He doesn't get that everywhere. "I don't expect to be thanked," he says, "but it sure is nice to hear."

The campaign is being driven by both patriotism and economics. Base realignments will bring 20,000 new soldiers (on top of the almost 50,000 already stationed) by 2011, and the military's economic impact in the area will go from \$5 billion to \$6.5 billion in the process, says Breeden Blackwell, the county commission chairman. "You can see why we take care of our investment," he says.

Realignment also creates a country where some towns really do understand military life better than others do. Smaller bases will close and consolidate into megabases like Fort Bragg, and large swaths of the U.S. will have even less contact with the all-volunteer military than they do now.

The sanctuary concept is jarring after an election in which pandering to "pro-America" parts of the country--to use Sarah Palin's clumsy word choice--failed. But being promilitary in Fayetteville is not a red-vs.-blue issue. The entire county commission and Mayor Tony Chavonne are all Democrats. The mayor says, "War is not a political word here."

It's not the first time Fayetteville has marketed its love of country. In 2005 it declared itself America's most patriotic city, and even floated the idea of writing fake tickets to drivers of foreign cars. Behind the bluster is an insecurity that dates back to the days when Fort Bragg was a staging ground for Vietnam-bound troops. While the base was training draftees for combat, Fayetteville's sudden glut of strip clubs and bars seemed to be training them for a debauched night out in Saigon. People called the town Fayetteenam, a slur that hasn't lost its sting. "I despise that term," Blackwell says. "Whoever says that needs to come see how much this town has changed."

He is right. While there are still strip clubs and tattoo parlors on Bragg Boulevard, the town largely reflects the values of today's Army--professional, family-oriented. The community is bearing the hardships of war with admirable grace and a sense of shared sacrifice. "I get taken care of here better than other places," says Millie Ferris, 26, an expectant mother whose husband is in Iraq. She went to the baby shower with half a dozen other pregnant Army wives and says more of her friends are deciding to stay in Fayetteville when their husbands deploy instead of returning to their hometowns. That's a story that doesn't need slogans to sell itself.

Rising From the Rubble of the Sichuan Quake

Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008



A survivor from the May quake walks near Guangyuan Handicapped Hospital, where the injured receive physical therapy.
Ian Teh for TIME

Piles of red bricks clutter the roadsides. Stacks of concrete drainage pipes fill parking lots, while stores do a brisk trade in paint and window frames. Like countless other places in China, this corner of central Sichuan province is undergoing a building boom. But this is no typical growth story. When I was here six months ago, bodies jutted from the pancaked floors of collapsed buildings and lined rubble-strewn streets. Tens of thousands of homeless crowded into sports stadiums, and millions more slept in tents. The surface of the Zipingba Reservoir was covered with a brackish film from the tons of boulders and soil loosed into it.

Now the water has returned to its normal milky jade hue. Even some of the gashes caused by landslides have begun to green over as nature struggles to match man's furious pace of recovery. The reconstruction campaign following the May 12 earthquake, which killed 87,000 people and left 10 million homeless, rates as one of China's most astonishing endeavors. Even for a country that likes to think big, the numbers are staggering: Beijing has pledged to spend \$176 billion on rebuilding over the next three years. By early July, three-quarters of the Sichuan homeless had been moved into prefabricated shelters, with all the displaced promised permanent housing by 2010. Much of the recovery effort is expressed in the vocabulary of Chinese socialism; a popular government slogan printed on giant red banners reads SWEAT TODAY FOR A BEAUTIFUL HOME TOMORROW. The exhortation echoes China's long economic expansion, which lifted millions out of poverty. But it also carries with it a coda: earthquake survivors can expect a better future, as long as they don't delve too deeply into the mistakes of the past. "I think Sichuan is very much like China as a whole right now," says Russell Leigh Moses, a Beijing-based scholar. "You can't help but be impressed at how far it's come, and you can't help but be worried about how far it has to go."

If there is a theme to the reconstruction effort, it is "Don't look back." Despite pledges to punish those responsible for the substandard construction of dozens of schools that crumbled during the earthquake, no one has been prosecuted for the deaths of thousands of students. After nearly four months of investigation, the central government announced what any parent could have told you on May 13: that an act of God may have triggered the schools' collapse but shoddy construction and dangerous locations near fault lines left them vulnerable. Parents of dead students, who once promised to take vengeance if justice wasn't served, have largely been silenced by intimidation and payoffs.

In the wake of disaster, the need to move on is natural. But in the mountains of Sichuan, the impulse to look forward is also a political decision. Too open an examination of the collapsed schools would expose deep flaws in regional governance and could unleash a flood of popular discontent. Yet even among those

who are pushing ahead, the memories of the horror are unshakable. Here are four survivors' stories.

The Official

Zhang Kangqi lives in his office. Five feet from his desk sit a single bed, a small table and a television. The focal point of the room is a pencil drawing of the family he lost on May 12. An art student drew it from the ID cards of Zhang's wife Wu Shanshan, 33, and their daughter Zhang Duo, 6. All other photos were lost in the rubble of Beichuan, a mountain town where 15,000 perished. An 8-ft.-tall (2.5 m) fence now surrounds the town to keep people out, lest they be harmed by still frequent landslides. Former residents gather on the hills, lighting incense and firecrackers for their kin entombed in the collapsed buildings and mud below.

Zhang, 36, has little time for such expressions of grief. As a Communist Party cadre from Beichuan, he was working in a village nearby when the tremors hit. The hamlet's 2,000 survivors were cut off from the outside world. Finally Zhang learned that his hometown had been flattened. "Everybody cried, but I couldn't cry," he says. "What would people think?" The next day Zhang trekked six hours to get help. It would be more than a month until he was able to visit the remains of his home. His wife's and daughter's bodies were never found. "Now I put all of myself into my work," he says. "The dead, there's nothing you can do for them. All we can do is make Beichuan better."

The local government tentatively plans to turn the remains of the city into a memorial park. Zhang now heads the Beichuan department of commerce, working to attract new businesses and industrial development. But the strain on him and other local bureaucrats is severe. A quarter of government officials died in the quake. Zhang says his job keeps him from remembering what happened to his wife and daughter. "When I'm buried in my work, I think they are still alive," he says. "But when I look up and see that drawing, I remember they are not."

The Father

While Zhang works to rebuild Beichuan, Lu Shihua toils to figure out why the town collapsed. The single father, 40, lost his only child when the Beichuan No. 1 Middle School crumbled. His wife had died 16 years earlier giving birth to their daughter Lu Fang, and Lu had resolved to raise her on his own. It is with a similar determination that Lu now fights for an answer to why the school caved in, crushing his daughter. Lu had just had lunch with her in town an hour before the quake struck. He felt the earth move, and then rocks tumbled down from a nearby peak. As soon as the tremors eased, he ran to the school. "The five-story building was completely flattened, and young, broken bodies were everywhere," he says. "I cried and cried, dug and dug, until the police stopped us."

Four days later, Lu found his daughter's body in the rubble. He recognized her by a pair of cloth shoes, which had been handmade by her grandmother. A few days after identifying his child's corpse, Lu posted petitions calling for an investigation into the school deaths.

At the time, grieving parents seemed like an immovable political force. But local authorities began blocking access to the sites of demolished schools where parents and journalists would gather. The government offered compensation to parents--hush money in exchange for a promise to keep quiet. Those that didn't acquiesce faced official intimidation. Lu says police frequently questioned him; the only shop with a fax in his village has been told not to let him send documents. Nevertheless, Lu continues. In late October, he received a statement from Beichuan officials denying any flaws in the building. Lu isn't satisfied. "As long as I am breathing, I will seek an answer to my question: Why did the classroom building of Beichuan No. 1 Middle School completely collapse?" he asks. "I just want to have an answer so all those who passed away in Beichuan can rest in peace."

The Shopkeeper

A short walk from where Lu's daughter died, a temporary town has sprouted. Nearly 4,000 residents from the mountainside village of Tangjiashan, which was destroyed in a landslide, now live in makeshift houses, among which Luo Xiqun, 22, runs a tiny

shop selling soft drinks, beer, hot sauce, instant noodles, cooking oil and toothpaste. She and her boyfriend Yang Yong had planned to marry this year. Then the earthquake struck, flattening their house and burying their wedding nest egg. At the time, money was the last thing on Luo's mind. "I wanted to live," she says. "No one else in the same building made it out, but somehow I survived." Luo walked five days with an injured foot and no shoes to make it to safety.

That survival instinct remains. Luo and her family put aside nearly every cent they earn. Her fiancé leaves each morning to find work on reconstruction projects. Although unemployment is as high as 80% in some areas of the Sichuan disaster zone, Yang says he doesn't have much difficulty finding jobs. Indeed, his 50-year-old father works with him, but the family wonders how much longer the father can handle manual labor. So Luo runs her small shop to save money for the future. "We don't have plans," she says. "We don't know where we will go. Right now the most important thing is money."

The Son

On May 14, Deng Zhuyuan sat with his family outside a foot-massage parlor in the devastated town of Hanwang, resigned to the fact that he would soon find his mother's corpse. As rescuers moved debris with a crane, Deng, 18, told me in nearly flawless English about life in his mountain town, about how he was preparing for his college-entrance exams before the quake struck. Eventually I left to walk through the wreckage of Hanwang. When I returned to where Deng was waiting, two covered corpses were lying outside the massage parlor. A family member identified Deng's mother. Deng called me over. In a voice cracking with emotion, he offered me a final few words. "You must cherish life," he said. "You must cherish every moment you are alive."

Deng has done just that. When we met six months later, it was at the new campus of Sichuan University, where he studies electrical engineering. The head of the university had asked him to give a speech commemorating the new school year. "If you're still alive, then there is no reason to despair," he told his classmates and teachers. "I am living, and my life is hopeful." Of the 36 students in his junior high

school class, four died in the earthquake. "When we get together, we talk about those four," he says. "But we look to the future, not to the past."

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

***Twilight* Review: Swooningly True to the Book**

By Richard Corliss Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008



Edward (Pattinson) moves on Bella (Stewart) for the kill — sorry, the kiss
Everett

You needn't read *Twilight*, Stephenie Meyer's best seller, to know where its secret pulses reside. Just see the movie version and listen to the reactions of the girls in the theater (TIME surveys the fangirls behind the *Twilight* phenomenon). There's an audible shiver as they first spy the teen vampire Edward Cullen (Robert Pattinson), his impossibly gorgeous face caked in a mime's pallor, sitting in biology class next to young Bella Swan (Kristen Stewart). When he holds an apple in his hands to present to her — the novel's cover image — the girls emit an awestruck sigh, as if they'd just

seen Zac Efron in the flesh or a puppy on YouTube. And when he tells Bella, "So the lion fell in love with the lamb," you hear applause, the imprimatur of Meyer's young connoisseurs. To judge from a preview screening, *Twilight* the movie is their dream of the book projected 30 feet high.

Kids have already made this love saga a multimedia sensation, with 17 million copies of the *Twilight* tetralogy in print and with the CD of the movie sound track at No. 1 on *Billboard's* chart. Could this be a Harry Potter–like pancultural behemoth?

Maybe not; the Potter films are superproductions costing in the hundred millions, while the much more intimate *Twilight*, directed by Catherine Hardwicke from Melissa Rosenberg's script, has a low-medium budget (less than \$40 million) and an artless indie vibe. But just as J.K. Rowling cannily fed tween readers' innocent lust for adventure, so Meyer smites their slightly older sisters with the adventure of innocent lust. And when the teen witches and wizards of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, the sixth film in the series, vacated the prime slot of the weekend before Thanksgiving for a July 2009 opening, the vampires of *Twilight* moved in. It sounds like kismet, Hollywood-style.

Vamping till Ready

Is it destiny that links Bella to Edward? That's what she feels shortly after she leaves desert-dry Phoenix, where her mother has just married a semipro baseball player, to spend time with her police-chief father (Billy Burke) in rainy, misty Forks, Wash. Bella calls herself "the suffering-in-silence type," but instantly all the nice kids in her junior class are clamoring to be her BFF. Not so Edward. His pained, brooding, utterly irresistible gaze says, *I have depths you don't want to dive in*. After sitting next to Bella once, he has to take some sick days. It's soon evident that he is fighting his fascination for her with all the strength that she is applying to getting close to him.

The word among the local Native Americans (who in movies like this are never wrong) is that Edward and his family are vampires. That doesn't stop Bella from falling into a love whose toxicity is its lure, just as Edward is risking being with someone he's severely tempted to devour. Her nearness is like vampire heroin; his

love for her has become his religion and his sin. Edward knows he should just say no, but, as he tells her, "I don't have the strength to stay away from you anymore."

For any author of imaginist fiction, from J.R.R. Tolkien to George Lucas, from Rowling to Meyer, the fun is in creating the laws, folkways and architecture of the alternative universe that its more fanciful characters inhabit. The Cullens are a fastidious family of vampires; in their tennis whites, with their regal airs, they resemble the aristocratic Flyte brood in *Brideshead Revisited*. They call themselves vegetarians because they drink the blood of animals, not people. They can fly, move with lightning speed, scale trees in a trice. They also play baseball, which in the Cullen clan is a lot like Rowling's Quidditch. Their ball-playing, and the scent of human snack food, will attract the notice of a trio of rogue vampires, whose leader, James (Cam Gigandet), is a demon simulacrum of the angelic Edward.

Falling in Love with Love, Again

Twilight also observes movie laws as aged as Edward, who was initiated into the realm of the undead in 1918. Defiantly old-fashioned, the film wants viewers to believe not so much in vampires as in the existence of an anachronistic movie notion: a love that is convulsive and ennobling. Bella could be any Hollywood heroine in love with a good boy whom society callously misunderstands. She's Natalie Wood to Edward's James Dean (in *Rebel Without a Cause*) or Richard Beymer (in *West Side Story*). Cathy, meet Heathcliff. Juliet, Romeo.

This brand of fervid romance packed 'em in for the first 60 years of feature films, then went nearly extinct, replaced by the young-male fetishes of space toys and body-function humor. *Twilight* says to heck with that. It jettisons facetiousness for a liturgical solemnity, and hardware for soft lips. It revives the precept that there's nothing more cinematic than a close-up of two beautiful people about to kiss. The movie's core demographic is so young, its members may not know how uncool this tendency has become. But for them, uncool is hot. And seeing *Twilight* is less a trip to the multiplex than a pilgrimage to the Lourdes of puberty. It's the girls' first blast of movie estrogen.

Hardwicke, who directed the teen outsider films *Thirteen*, *Lords of Dogtown* and *The Nativity Story* (another fable about a special girl with a condition that's hard to explain), is no great shakes as an auteur. She dawdles in sketching Bella's high school chums, and her direction of the dialogue will often bore those who aren't mouthing it from memory as the actors speak it. But she chose her leads wisely: the pretty Stewart is a questioning, questing presence; the Brit Pattinson, a sensitive-stud dreamboat. And Hardwicke is faithful to the book's chaste eroticism. The couple must put off having sex because, well, it could kill Bella. (AIDS metaphors are unavoidable here.) Yet waiting has its own delicious tension.

So *Twilight* isn't a masterpiece — no matter. It rekindles the warmth of great Hollywood romances, where foreplay was the climax and a kiss was never just a kiss.

Twilight: The Fangirls Cometh, with Cash

By Rebecca Winters Keegan Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2008



A crowd cheers for the cast of *Twilight* at the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minn. Glen Stubbe / Star Tribune / Zuma

One dark, rainy night last spring, a young woman brought an offering to the rural Oregon movie set of *Twilight*. "She gave her infant to a vampire," director Catherine Hardwicke marvels. Actually, the Twilighter — as the mostly female devotees of Stephenie Meyer's vampire romances call themselves — had driven hours to get pictures of her baby with the cast. Even before *Twilight* hits theaters Nov. 21, the series' readers have exhibited enough excitement — if not hysteria — to persuade the studio, Summit Entertainment, to get screenwriter Melissa Rosenberg cracking on adaptations of the next two books.

Twilight is just one of a wave of movies challenging the conventional wisdom that the taste of young men is what drives the box office. This year female fans helped make monster hits of *High School Musical 3* (\$84 million), *Mamma Mia!* (\$144 million) and *Sex and the City* (\$152 million). "[Female-centric films] used to be counterprogramming to something extremely male in the marketplace," says Chuck Viane, Disney's president of distribution. "Now they've become the gorilla in the marketplace."

As they learned to do with their macho comic-book movies, studios making films from more female-skewing properties have begun assiduously courting the alpha fans, the diehards who get the buzz started through their blogs and podcasts. "From the beginning, we were very focused on signaling to the fan base that this film would be everything they wanted," says Summit CEO Rob Friedman. That meant keeping Meyer involved in script and casting decisions as a custodian of her original girl-meets-vampire vision. Early on, for instance, the author put her foot down to preserve certain details that were important to her — that in her stories, for instance, vampires have no fangs and their skin sparkles in the sunlight.

Summit stoked the anticipation by doling out trailers, photos and sound-track news to hungry fans via websites like *Twilighters.org*, *BellaAndEdward.com* and *TwilightMoms.com*. In July, the studio brought the cast to Comic-Con in San Diego, where, for once, shrieking fangirls outdid hooting fanboys in the audience — in number, ardor and decibel level. In recent weeks, the studio sent *Twilight's* 22-year-old British star Robert Pattinson on a tour of appearances at the mall-based clothing store Hot Topic, where he was greeted by Beatlemania-caliber crowds. Pattinson's San Francisco appearance was canceled after a crush of fans left one girl with a broken nose.

Along the way, the escalating fervor of the *Twilight* audience — a group that bought 17 million books — helped Hardwicke make the movie she wanted to make. "I used that as a tool to convince the studio to give me more money," the director says. "I said, 'Let's do it right for the fans.' "

If early ticket sales are any indication, surrendering to the Twi-hards is working. Twenty-four hours before the film opened, some 2,000 shows were already sold out, many of them midnight Thursday-night screenings. And in a survey Fandango conducted of early ticket buyers, 85% said they plan to see *Twilight* more than once. It wouldn't be the first time young women paid to see a movie over and over again; the same demographic helped *Titanic* become the highest-grossing film of all time.

It's not just young women clearing their calendars this weekend, either. Half of the respondents to another Fandango survey of *Twilight* ticket buyers are over 25, including many *Twilight* moms. About a quarter of respondents are mothers and daughters planning to see the movie together.

Twilight seems sure to mint a new femme franchise. But to become Hollywood's holy grail — a movie that studios consider a "four-quadrant" hit, appealing to young and old, male and female — it will need to reel in some Y chromosomes. *Iron Man*, for instance, won over mostly male comic-book fans first but rode their approval to an opening-weekend audience that was more evenly split by gender.

Hardwicke says she was told by the studio not to worry about appealing to guys — with a production budget of only \$37 million, *Twilight* will be profitable with or without them. But men who are dragged by their ears to see this movie may be surprised; besides the romance, there's a trio of bad vamps who wreak havoc, and a fast-moving game of vampire baseball. "The teenage girls are the early adapters, but that doesn't mean the train will stop," says Hardwicke. "Besides, young guys are smart enough to go where there are a lot of hot young girls." After all, a love affair with a fictional vampire will have to end someday.

Guns N' Roses' *Chinese Democracy*, at Last

By Josh Tyrangiel Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008



At 46, Rose still has a rock star's snarl.
George Chin

How long have we been waiting for Guns N' Roses' *Chinese Democracy*? After a decade passed without sight or sound of the thing, music fans started cracking the obvious joke: the Chinese will have democracy before record stores get *Chinese Democracy*. That joke is itself now an antique — record stores! — but we finally have an answer. On Nov. 23, Guns N' Roses will release its fifth album of original material, 17 years after its last. Put another way, Miley Cyrus will soon get to hear the first new Guns N' Roses record of her lifetime.

So what's the band been doing? Breaking up mostly. The current lineup has just one original member, Axl Rose. The rest, including guitar savant Slash, departed years

ago, presumably too intrigued by the Internet and other human advances to stay locked up in a recording studio with their famously controlling singer. Rose, once as blond and lithe as a stalk of wheat, has suffered the pudgification of middle age and burned through a reported \$14 million in production costs, making *Chinese Democracy* the most expensive record in history. But given the cruelty with which pop culture devours its celebrity eccentrics, he's had a pretty easy ride. A surprising number of people actually want to hear this record, and for that, you can credit curiosity — What does \$14 million sound like? — and the power of rock stardom. In his prime, Rose may have been an angry, misogynistic homophobe — the proto-Eminem — but he was also a riveting physical and vocal presence. And real rock stars remain scarce enough that they tend to get the benefit of even extreme doubt.

What's clear within the first moments of *Chinese Democracy* is that Rose still has his snarl. His voice always was a power tool with endless precision settings, and on "Better" he opens by speak-singing in a tender falsetto before the guitars kick in and he sandblasts away at the melody. What Rose has to say — "A twist of fate, the change of heart kills my infatuation" etc. — is a bland list of romantic gripes that fail to diminish the song's impact one bit because it's how Rose sings that matters. Repeating the word better in the bridge, he spits the b's and drags his vocal cords across the r's until, out of meaninglessness, his meaning is unmistakable. Whether the anger is authentic is impossible to know, but it certainly is compelling.

Throughout, Rose sounds as strong as ever and maybe even more flexible. On the "November Rain"-ish ballad "Street of Dreams," he emotes with a previously unheard Elton John — like pop softness, and "There Was a Time" has him scampering flawlessly up the vocal ladder from low growls to meticulous high notes. Most of the tracks clock in at about five minutes, with solid melodies and abundant pace and instrument changes. Choirs show up sometimes, as do a mellotron and a Spanish guitar. It's almost enough to keep things interesting. Almost.

Noting that *Chinese Democracy* is a tad overproduced is like pointing out that *The Dark Knight* is a little gloomy. It doesn't require a lot of critical expertise. But nearly every arrangement has been manipulated and fussed with until the music feels

encased in Lucite. *Appetite for Destruction*, Guns N' Roses' 1987 debut, had a brutish confidence — it sounded like five sharpened instruments and lots of open space. That Guns N' Roses was a band; this incarnation is a whole zip code. On some tracks, Rose has five guitarists soloing and jamming to fill every cranny, but the result isn't chaos so much as needlepoint. "Madagascar" has a string section, horns, samples of the "I have a dream" speech and dialogue from *Cool Hand Luke*, but everything is so dully controlled that it might as well have been programmed on a synthesizer.

That means the burden of surprise rests solely on Rose's voice. Perhaps that's how he wanted it, but even his quaver isn't good enough to carry a 71-min. album that was 17 years in the making. "If I thought that I was crazy/ Well I guess I'd have more fun," Rose sings in "The Catcher in the Rye," and he may be on to something. *Chinese Democracy* is as obsessive as you'd expect, but it's not nearly crazy enough.

Billy Elliot: A London Musical Hit on Broadway

By Richard Zoglin Friday, Nov. 14, 2008



Billy Elliot (David Alvarez) and Mrs. Wilkinson (Haydn Gwynne), in a scene from the musical, now on Broadway
David Scheinmann / Barlow Hartman Public Relations / AP

Britain and America, to paraphrase the old saw, often seem like two countries divided by a common theater. Big hits on the London stage are just as likely to fizzle as they are to thrive when they immigrate to the U.S. On the one hand, the low-key Brits seem far more wowed than Americans by a certain brand of over-the-top, kitschy production — from *Saturday Night Fever* (hit in London, flop on Broadway) to *We Will Rock You*, the daft Queen musical from London that couldn't get any farther than Las Vegas in the States. At the same time, the specific social milieu and topical political references of so many current British plays frequently make them bad bets for any producer looking to cash in across the pond.

And so *Billy Elliot: The Musical* might seem to be one British blockbuster with a precarious future. Though a monstrous hit in London for the past 3 1/2 years, it is as intractably British as musicals come. Based on the 2000 movie about a boy from the coal country of northern England who discovers his talent for dance, the musical is

rooted in a time and place that have little resonance for Americans: the coal miners' strike of 1984-85, provoked by the Conservative Thatcher government's efforts to dismantle the country's nationalized coal industry. For an American theatergoer in London, the accents are tough, the palette dark and the inspirational story grounded in a glum, and very English, working-class setting.

The version that just opened on Broadway — directed, as it was in London, by Stephen Daldry — has lost a little of the power it displayed on its home turf. But if Prime Minister Gordon Brown's bank-rescue plan can become the model for the rest of the world's finance ministers, there's no reason why *Billy Elliot* — the best musical to come out of Britain since *Miss Saigon* — can't bridge the cultural chasm too.

For American musicals these days, the path to success falls into one of three categories: camp (*Hairspray*), hip (*Spring Awakening*) or kid-friendly (*Wicked*). *Billy Elliot* takes the old-fashioned route and makes an honest, emotional connection. Billy's motherless household is a grubby, oppressive place, and when his father and brother join their fellow miners in walking off the job, it becomes a tension-filled one. The story unfolds at a carefully unhurried pace: after a disastrous boxing lesson, Billy accidentally finds himself in a girls' ballet class. The teacher recognizes his talent, begins tutoring him in private and persuades him to try out for the Royal Ballet — all of which he must hide from his family and neighbors, who are in any case more consumed by a strike that has grown violent and increasingly doomed.

Oh, and there are songs too — good ones by Elton John, with lyrics by Lee Hall, who wrote the original film — but they are so tightly woven into the action that you almost hate to single them out. There are anthem-like chorus numbers and vaudeville throwbacks, political drinking songs ("Merry Christmas, Maggie Thatcher") and those with simple, John Lennon-like lyricism. But all of them seem utterly fresh and inseparable from the story they enliven and enhance. The show's centerpiece, of course, is Billy's dancing, which ranges from tap numbers to classical ballet, as well as a striking Act I finale in which Billy, his chance at an audition thwarted, erupts into an emotional, free-form paroxysm of frustration and anger. But Peter Darling's choreography is perhaps most impressive in the intricately staged group numbers

like "Solidarity," which brings together lines of cops, strikers and Billy's dance class for a pas de trois that both propels the story and stops the show.

In telling its uplifting tale, *Billy Elliot* does an amazing job of not pandering. Billy's road to self-discovery is hard fought, and it comes at a painful price. His father, once over the shock and the shame of learning his boy's ambitions, crosses the picket line to earn money for Billy's audition. Issues of sexuality and gender-stereotyping are faced head-on but not pressed. He's no "poof," Billy insists, but that doesn't stop him from a joyful number in which he dons women's dresses with his (less poof-averse) friend Michael. The big emotional moments are manfully underplayed. When Billy must say goodbye to his teacher and leave for London, there are no hugs or tears. "I'll miss you," says Billy, from across the room. "No, you won't," she replies. "You'll spend five years unlearning everything I taught you. It's all right. It's the way it is."

In truth, the British still got a little better of the deal in this transatlantic transaction. With mostly American actors taking a stab at northern England accents, the home scenes don't have the authenticity or grit they do in London. The dance-class ensemble includes a few too many mugging little girls trying out for *Annie*. The show is not quite as well sung as it was in London, and the Billy I saw (David Alvarez, one of three boys who are alternating in the role) turns out to be, unsurprisingly, a better dancer than actor. Still, *Billy Elliot* does almost everything a musical should do, and more. It's a diplomatic triumph.

Sol LeWitt's Dazzling Line Drawings

By Richard Lacayo Monday, Nov. 17, 2008



Sol LeWitt's *Wall Drawing 340*
Kevin Kennefick

Sol LeWitt was the man who made conceptual art an appealing concept. For almost four decades, LeWitt, who died last year at 78, made immense abstract wall drawings that he conceived but almost never executed himself. His method was to devise a set of instructions — for instance, draw 10,000 ten-inch lines, covering the wall evenly — that could be carried out by assistants or, for that matter, by anyone. Often he never even saw the finished work, much less touched it.

This cerebral formula turned out to be a recipe for irresistible eye candy. Draw 10,000 ten-inch lines, and you end up with a dynamic pattern of vector formations. A great LeWitt wall drawing may start like an algebra lesson, but it ends like a Renaissance fresco. Now you can see 105 of his drawings unfold themselves gorgeously across three floors of Mass MoCA, the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, in North Adams, Mass. In a very unusual arrangement, "Sol LeWitt: A Wall Drawing Retrospective" will remain on view there for at least 25 years. In effect, it's a quasi-permanent LeWitt museum. You should hurry to North Adams anyway. Life is brief, and this is something you don't want to miss.

The LeWitt retrospective grew out of conversations that began five years ago between the artist and Jock Reynolds, director of the Yale University Art Gallery. Thinking over ways to preserve LeWitt's work, Reynolds suggested a long-term

installation of his wall drawings at Mass MoCA, which had opened in 1996 in a complex of almost two dozen derelict industrial buildings, most of them still unused by the museum. "I think Jock described me to Sol as a poor dirt farmer of a museum director," says mass moca director Joe Thompson. "Cash poor but rich in buildings and land."

In 2004, LeWitt visited Mass MoCA, where he settled on Building Seven. Though he never returned to the site, he designed the installation himself, working with a scale model at his studio in Grafton, Conn. Mass MoCA engaged the architecture firm Bruner/Cott & Associates to produce a clean-lined renovation. Then the drawings were painstakingly executed over a six-month period by a combination of veteran LeWitt studio assistants, college students and local artists, about 70 people in all. The entire project, which also involves the nearby Williams College Museum of Art, cost \$7.3 million.

The roughly chronological installation shows how LeWitt's work evolved over the years. Some drawings from the late '60s and early '70s are black pencil lines transecting penciled grids, things so delicate they seem to weigh little more than the thoughts they began as. Again and again, LeWitt introduced a human factor into what could otherwise have been a mechanical process. His instructions might call for one person to draw an irregular line and for others to attempt to imitate it. Early on, he brought color into the mix to produce agitated chromatic force fields. And in the '80s, after he moved for a few years from Manhattan to Spoleto, Italy, LeWitt began using big, broad phalanxes of colors so bright they play havoc with your retinas.

But the installation ends with a return to black, densely scribbled drawings in which pulsing fields of darkness engage in feathery interactions with white walls. Conceived by LeWitt toward the end of his life, they have the look of misty thresholds. "I thought he was heading into the light," says Reynolds. "There's something very moving about those last drawings."

Moving? Conceptual art? You don't ordinarily think of it that way, but with LeWitt, it's true. He took a dry working method and humanized it. Now there's a beautiful concept.

Monty Python's Holy Trinity

Available Now



Latest item in the endless cloning of the Brit comedy troupe's oeuvre is this six-disc set of Python films: the hystorical *Holy Grail*, the sacridiculous *Life of Brian* and the meandering *Meaning of Life*. Fans who already own the films could go DIY and weld the three boxes together.

BUSINESS

Black Friday Is Looking Blue

By Kristina Dell Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008



Jon Lowenstein / Noor for TIME

Here's how worried consumers are this year: retailers have already started promoting what would have usually been their best holiday deals--and have been greeted with collective indifference. The response: Is that all you've got? "The deals aren't that amazing, and the Best Buy circular in particular was so disappointing," says Jon Vincent, founder of BlackFriday.info, an online deal site. "Shoppers expected a lot more with the economy hurting."

Oh, they'll get it, as retailers cave in to the pressure to attract sales dollars. But price alone might not get shoppers in the door, so this could be the season of extreme retailing, with stores offering even more carrots to drive sales in this dreary economic climate. As of Nov. 11, 72% of consumers had completed less than 10% of their

shopping, according to the National Retail Federation's (NRF) 2008 survey by BigResearch of holiday consumer intentions and actions. "They know the longer they wait, the better off they are, so there's no reason to rush," says Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst at the NPD Group, a market-research firm.

So expect a little bit of everything. Sears has quadrupled the number of items in its sales flyer to 677 this year, from 165 last year. Power discounter Wal-Mart launched Operation Main Street, presenting a new round of markdowns every week until Christmas. Mattel will give a \$50 Visa card to those who spend \$100 on select Barbie toys. Sears and Radio Shack are urging eco-conscious consumers to dump their power-sucking old equipment, offering gift certificates for the trade-in value. Likewise, Staples offers \$30 toward the purchase of a new camera or laptop for buyers who recycle an old one.

Layaway programs--plans with roots in the Great Depression--are back at Sears, Kmart and TJ Maxx. Merchandise stays at the store as people pay it off little by little, interest-free. No credit card required. Tired of dry-cleaning bills? Ann Taylor Loft promotes the fact that most of its clothes are now washable. And if you suffer buyer's remorse, more than half of retailers say their holiday return policies will be more lenient than usual, up from 35% who said so last year, according to NRF's return-fraud survey.

Adding to the pressure on retailers is a shorter window to shop and a suddenly thrift-minded shopper. Black Friday--when the holiday shopping season traditionally begins, the day after Thanksgiving--falls on Nov. 28, far later than usual. Compared with last year, stores now have five fewer shopping days and one less weekend between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Looming layoffs and tightening credit have crushed consumer confidence, making shoppers more discerning than ever. Before buying a gift, 71% of shoppers ask themselves, Is this a smart use of my money? according to an October survey on how America shops, conducted by WSL Strategic Retail, a New York City consultancy. Deloitte's annual holiday survey showed that almost 60% of consumers expect to reduce their spending and that people are planning on buying fewer gifts--21.5 on average, compared with 23 in 2007.

Stores have to figure out how to tap into this recalibrated value system--one based on caution rather than the branded excess of Christmas past. "The American consumer is trading downward in the most dramatic fashion ever seen," says Howard Davidowitz, chairman of Davidowitz & Associates, a retail-consulting firm. What's more, the thrift mind-set has seeped into all income levels. Saks Fifth Avenue, for instance, had a 16.6% drop in sales in October. "Saving is cool right now," says Candace Corlett, president of WSL. "Conspicuous consumption is out, and people have lost their passion to buy."

That's bad news for retailers, which traditionally get up to 40% of their annual revenue from holiday shopping. Still, there are some bright spots. The Internet should outdo the sidewalk: online retail sales this holiday season are expected to grow 12% over last year, to \$44 billion, predicts Forrester Research. And discount chains like TJ Maxx, Wal-Mart, Costco and BJ's Wholesale Club should see strong sales as they hammer away at prices. BJ's third-quarter merchandise comparable sales were up 7% vs. 2007's. "Our position is serving us well in this economic environment," says Laura Sen, BJ's president.

The key to success for most retailers will be managing inventory and staff levels smartly--these are the few areas where stores can make significant adjustments. Because of the steady sales decline over the year, most shops had trimmed inventory levels at least 10%, conserving cash. Many stores have gone further, lowering inventory levels as much as 18%, says Cohen. That's nearing the danger zone. "If they cut any more, they won't have enough to even come close to making their number," he says. "They have to sell enough to pay the electric bill." Likewise, retailers are ratcheting down staffing. College kids might have to look for jobs outside the retail sector to generate extra Christmas cash. Best Buy is bringing in 16,000 to 20,000 holiday hires this season, down from 26,000 in 2007. (The good news for hopeful or clueless males: Victoria's Secret and Toys "R" Us say they'll keep last year's levels to ensure top-notch service.)

Yes, there is going to be a Christmas. Americans buy gifts even in trying times. How much they'll spend remains the big question. Says Bill Martin, a co-founder of

ShopperTrak, a retail-information company: "Consumers are going to want to have their Christmas this year with all the bad news they've had."

Don't Call It Bankruptcy

By Justin Fox Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008

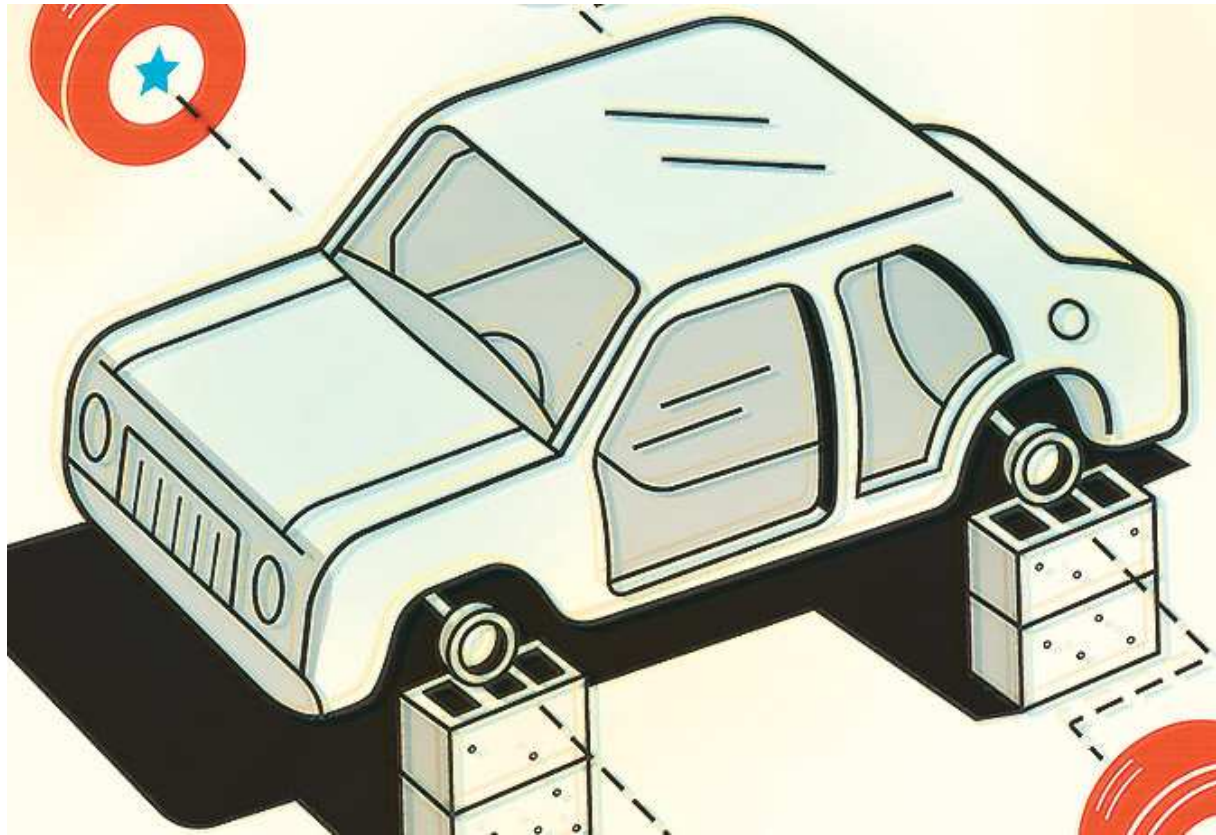


Illustration by Harry Campbell for TIME

The phenomenon we now know as Chapter 11 bankruptcy was born during the financial panics that regularly pummeled the U.S. economy in the 1800s. Railroads had emerged as the country's first large industrial corporations, and every time the markets crashed and the economy slumped, many found themselves unable to pay their bills.

These railroads were worth more alive than dead, so inventive people figured out ways to reorganize them rather than shut them down. "The investment banks and lawyers and managers would negotiate a deal and get the courts to bless it," says David Skeel, a law professor at the University of Pennsylvania and author of *Debt's Dominion: A History of Bankruptcy Law in America*. "It was a very flexible

reorganization process." It was also a uniquely American answer to business failure. The private sector took the lead. Reinvention--and rebirth--was the goal.

The reorganization option faded after William O. Douglas (then SEC chairman, later a Supreme Court Justice) persuaded Congress in 1938 to approve more punitive bankruptcy laws, but it was resurrected by Congress in 1978 as Chapter 11 of the bankruptcy code. Since then Chapter 11 has been used to reorganize airlines, steelmakers and countless other companies in trouble.

Now, though, something curious is happening. We've been hit by a financial crisis eerily reminiscent of those 19th century panics. But instead of going to bankruptcy court, troubled firms are lining up at the Federal Reserve, the Treasury Department and Congress.

First came the financial sector. Bankruptcy has never really worked for banks, because mere rumors that a bank is headed for failure can drive it under. That's why Congress long ago created a separate regulatory system and reorganization process for banks, with the Fed and the fdic at the center. Over the past quarter-century, though, a "shadow banking system" of investment firms, hedge funds and derivatives dealers grew up that was subject to the same risks as banks but not the same rules. In September, Lehman Brothers, a major cog in this system, filed for Chapter 11. In one sense the process worked as designed--much of Lehman lives on under the names Barclays and Nomura. But the resulting run on the financial system sent Ben Bernanke and Hank Paulson scurrying in panic to Capitol Hill to ask for a \$700 billion bailout.

That was why, when the CEOs of the Detroit Three auto companies showed up on Capitol Hill in mid-November to beg for \$25 billion in emergency loans, the committees they went to were Senate Banking and House Financial Services--which have jurisdiction over the financial-bailout pot.

Rick Wagoner, CEO of General Motors, the automaker in most imminent danger of failure, gave lawmakers three reasons Chapter 11 isn't an option. First, the special financing that usually tides companies over through reorganization is so scarce right

now that GM might not be able to get enough to keep functioning. Second, the stigma of bankruptcy would deter consumers from buying GM cars. Third, GM is already in the midst of a dramatic reorganization that will pave the way to a profitable future.

The first two are good reasons for Congress to take the carmakers' pleas seriously--a shutdown of GM is not what anybody wants now. The third argument is more problematic. Yes, GM and the other automakers have cut costs sharply, especially since 2005, and the United Auto Workers union has made historic concessions. But GM could accomplish even more along those lines, plus reduce the big debts it has incurred trying to settle pension and retiree health-care obligations, under Chapter 11 protection.

There's a third option, between a no-strings bailout and Chapter 11--what some call conservatorship. It's bankruptcy-by-another-name, in which the government loans money to the automakers in return for equity stakes and concessions from creditors and workers. It's been done before--the 1979 Chrysler bailout followed such lines--but getting it right could be hard. "You're not very good at reworking companies," University of Maryland business professor Peter Morici told members of the Senate Banking Committee. "That's why we have bankruptcy courts."

Then again, Congress can do things that a bankruptcy judge couldn't--such as revamp health care and retirement policy so the costs don't weigh so heavily on big old companies trying to reinvent themselves. That won't happen overnight. But this particular economic crisis is so wrapped up in past government decisions--about financial regulation, about budgets, about housing policy, about pensions and health care--that the private solution of Chapter 11 just may not be enough. Bankruptcy-by-another-name it is, then.

Battle of the Fake Bands

Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008



Illustration by John Ueland

In the beginning--that is, November 2005--there was a video game called *Guitar Hero*, in which players jammed on a fake plastic guitar along with real rock songs. And it was good. But not good enough. A year ago, the rival *Rock Band* added drums, bass and vocals. Now there are two improved versions that feature the full instrumental lineup: *Rock Band 2* and *Guitar Hero World Tour*.

These games are hands down the two best party games ever made. Both cost about \$190 and are available for all the major game consoles. The only problem with them is that it's practically impossible to figure out which one to buy. But we are about to solve that problem for you. We are the Recessionists.

That's the name--ripped from the headlines!--of the virtual band I formed with three other TIME staffers, whom I will not name because, unlike me, some of them are still hoping for a career in management. We spent a hard day's night pitting *Rock Band 2* and *Guitar Hero World Tour* against each other in a titanic battle of the fake-band video games. We came to play, and we brought a lot of beer and some tequila, if it came to that. Fortunately, it didn't come to that.

You don't need musical talent to play these games. What you need is a weird combination of vanity and lack thereof: vanity in that you have to really believe, somewhere in your lizard brain, that you are a rock star; lack of vanity in that your human brain still knows you look like an idiot. But when it works, you experience music in a completely new way. Never before have I actually enjoyed Megadeth. Conversely, never before have I hated Dylan's "Tangled Up in Blue." But it's really long, and the drum part is really boring.

So which game is better? We preferred, slightly, the instruments that came with Guitar Hero. The pint-size guitars feel realer and more substantial, and the toy drum set comes with a pair of fake cymbals that make pounding it that much more satisfying. But--and it's a big one--the Recessionists vastly, overwhelmingly preferred the way Rock Band looked onscreen. While you're playing the game, you're watching notes stream toward you--plus lyrics if you're the singer--and at the same time, you're checking how well you and your bandmates are doing. That's a lot of information to monitor, and it has to be displayed absolutely clearly and cleanly for the game to work. With Guitar Hero, we spent too much time having no idea who was screwing up my glorious rendition of Blondie's "One Way or Another" (it was probably me). That might be what rock stars really feel like a lot of the time. But it's not much fun in a video game.

One last note: the two games have different song lists, so go online to make sure the one you buy has the music you like. That's as important as anything else. If you're still not sure, you can always buy both. But if you have that much money to spend on video games, you're probably a rock star already.

SCIENCE

Got Wind? Turbines for the Green Home

Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008



Morrell has a 33-ft. turbine in his yard in Michigan
Saverio Truglia for TIME

Doug Morrell had already installed solar panels on his house in Coopersville, Mich., but he was eager to get a little bit greener. So the 52-year-old Navy veteran bought something that might seem more at home in the Dutch countryside than in a small town in western Michigan: a personal wind turbine. The 33-ft.-high (10 m) machine, whose blades span 7 ft. (2 m) in diameter, sits next to the pole barn 100 yd. (90 m) from Morrell's home. (Turbines like Morrell's convert the energy of the wind to electricity, while old windmills are geared for mechanical power, like pulling water from a well.) On days with decent wind — which occur frequently enough, since he can feel the breeze from Lake Michigan — the \$16,000 Swift wind turbine can generate 1.5 kilowatts (kW) an hour, i.e., enough to power the average lightbulb for 15 hours. Together with his solar array, that's enough to take care of much of his electricity bill. "It's clean energy we don't have to dig for. It just comes right to us," says Morrell. And best of all, he says, "it's fun watching our meter run backward instead of forward."

Thanks in part to a new tax credit put into place by Congress in October, owning your own wind turbine could be the next green trend. While it's true that wind power has taken off in the U.S. — adding more in new capacity to the electrical grid last year than any other power source — most of that increase comes from utility wind farms, vast fields of turbines more than 300 ft. (90 m) tall. For homeowners seeking renewable-energy sources, however, better-known solar power has always dominated. Home solar power currently generates 12 times as much energy as small wind power, which is defined as turbines that have a capacity of 100 kW or less (though most household turbines will produce 10 kW at most). That's partly because residential wind turbines require space and sky — at least half an acre of open land — to get access to consistent winds. Still, according to the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), some 15 million homes in the U.S. fit that definition — and small turbines, unlike large wind farms, can be productive in weaker breezes, which puts more of the country into play, though the best areas are still windy spots like the Midwest or West Texas.

What's really held back residential wind power has been the lack of federal subsidies, which have fed the growth of other renewables like solar and large-scale wind. "We've had zero federal assistance," says Ron Stimmel, AWEA's small-wind expert.

But when Congress passed the bailout bill this fall, it added a 30% tax credit for small-wind projects, which Stimmel believes will enable the industry to grow 40% next year, even in a down market.

In other words, small wind may not be small potatoes for much longer. And that could be a boost for domestic green businesses as well: U.S. firms control 98% of the small-wind market, in contrast to large-scale wind and solar, in which foreign manufacturers dominate. "Since the tax credit, our phone has been ringing off the hook," says Andy Kruse, a co-founder of Southwest Windpower, a major small-scale-turbine producer in Flagstaff, Ariz. "It's really exciting to see the market coming to us."

More than 20 states offer separate subsidies, including ever green California and Vermont. "The federal and state subsidies can make it feasible to get a quicker payback," says Mike Bergey, president of Bergey Windpower, a small-wind producer in Norman, Okla.

Even so, buying your own windmill isn't cheap. A turbine that could produce most of your family's electricity might cost as much as \$80,000 and take as long as two decades to pay back, depending on wind strength and state subsidies. (The 30% federal tax credit is currently capped at \$4,000.)

Then there's the height factor. Residential wind turbines are tall enough to potentially irritate neighbors and require reams of paperwork, especially for the 60 million Americans who belong to a community association. And even though many of the assumptions about small wind turbines aren't true — they don't make much noise, and the AWEA notes that sliding glass doors are a bigger risk to birds than residential wind turbines are — not everyone wants to fight the bureaucratic battles. "It can take a lot of court cases for a turbine owner just to be sure he can put one in," says Stimmel.

But watt for watt, small wind is cheaper than residential solar, and for those willing to make the up-front investment, it can provide freedom from the electrical grid. Plus, in the eyes of some, there's nothing more beautiful than a wind turbine spinning in the backyard. "It looks like a giant pinwheel and sounds like a plane off in the distance," says Morrell. "I'd definitely recommend it."

SPECIAL SECTION

Who Will Be Person of the Year 2008?

By DEPARTMENT Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008

Curtis Sittenfeld Author of three novels, including the recent *American Wife*, loosely based on the life of Laura Bush

In September, conservative columnist Kathleen Parker wrote of her gradual realization that Sarah Palin wasn't qualified to be John McCain's running mate and should step aside. A former Palin supporter, Parker incurred the wrath of right-wing readers, but her remarks were brave, and her willingness to repudiate spin, even at personal cost, won her admirers of all political persuasions.

Bill O'Reilly Host of *The O'Reilly Factor*, Fox News anchor and author of the memoir *A Bold Fresh Piece of Humanity*

I nominate the U.S. military serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Against tremendous odds in Iraq, American forces have achieved a measure of success in bringing Iraqis a chance at freedom, and in the Afghan theater they lead the way in combatting the worst terrorists on the planet. For their sacrifice and patriotism, our troops on the front lines are worthy of Person of the Year.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali Author of *Infidel*, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a former member of the Dutch parliament

The eloquence, colorful origins and poise of Barack Obama won him the trust of a majority of voters and a decisive victory as America's first black President, capturing the imagination of non-Americans across the globe. After he won, he said that America's greatness lies not in its wealth or military might but in its ideals. As he promotes those ideals, I wish him all the best.

Oliver Stone Academy Award--winning director whose most recent work is the biopic *W.*

Sarah Palin became a reflective postscript to the Bush presidency. W.'s compassionate conservatism segued into Palin's hockey-momism--both deceptive shrouds for a disinterested, narrow-minded belief system and jingoistic worldview. She emerged as the standard bearer of empty-vessel politics, which, following our next era of national complacency, may triumphantly return.

PEOPLE

10 Questions for Magic Johnson

By Magic Johnson Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008



Earvin Magic Johnson
Dennis Kleiman for TIME

**What is the most important business lesson you've learned? Chris Aultman
BELLEVUE, WASH.**

Always make your business about the customer and never about yourself. I learned that when I invested in a sports-paraphernalia store. I was also the buyer, so I bought everything I liked and didn't buy anything that the customers liked. I ended up losing a lot of money because of that.

**If current NBA players were to issue their own IPOs, whose stock would
you invest in? Lucas Lu, WATERLOO, ONT.**

Probably LeBron James'. He's very, very successful on and off the court. His brand is huge. And right now, off the court, LeBron is performing probably better than anybody, so I'm definitely going to go with the No. 1 brand.

**Do you think you would be the same successful person had you not
contracted HIV and retired from basketball early? Steven Barrios, LOS
ANGELES**

It has made no difference in my being successful. My having HIV has no bearing on my business. HIV is about educating people about it, raising the awareness level. That's what I do every single day.

How is it that you're still alive? Ferdinand M. Parin, MANILA

Great question. Well, taking my meds and working out every day. Having a positive attitude. And early detection--we caught it early on and jumped on the medicine right away. That's why we're always encouraging young people to go get tested. Because the earlier you find out anything--it's not just HIV and AIDS, it's cancer, whatever it is--those doctors can jump on it right away and help save your life.

Do you do anything different from what is usually recommended for HIV patients? Connie Roder SHOREWOOD, ILL.

No, I don't do anything different. I think it's important that you get a regimen that is good for you. Seek out your doctor and see what's best for you, and stay on that. Also, again, you've got to get yourself some exercise. And then just as important as the drugs is your mind-set and your attitude.

What are your plans for the future? David Seok, AUCKLAND

To continue to do what I do--grow my businesses. Our equity fund is at about \$500 million. I want to take it to \$10 billion one day. I think that there are always goals for me to try to achieve, and I'm going to work toward those goals.

How can the black community capitalize on role models such as Barack Obama and yourself? Jason Robinson MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

I think you've gotta look at President-elect Obama and say, Wow, if he can go from being this kid from Hawaii to the highest office in the land, then kids should say, I want to be like President Obama, and I'm going to focus on my education, because now I know I can definitely be the President. That's how you gotta look at it. Every kid, every minority kid can be so successful if they focus on their education.

**What do you feel is your greatest achievement? Charmaine Robinson
OKLAHOMA CITY**

Putting over 40,000 minorities to work, without a doubt. Bringing back Harlem and South Central; those communities had been down, and now they're thriving, based on the businesses that I brought. There will always be players winning championships. But there won't be people who can make a difference in somebody else's life.

**What was the best one-on-one game you've ever had? Adam Speakman,
BOSTON**

On the playground. Those were legendary back in the day. We didn't have uniforms. It was just shirts and skins, and we just went at it all day in the 90° heat. It wasn't about money. It wasn't about fame. It was just your love and passion for the game. Those were guys that nobody would ever know, but those were the best one-on-one games I ever had in my life.

What would have happened if Larry Bird had played for the Lakers and you were a Celtic? Albert McKeon, NASHUA, N.H.

The Celtics would've won [Laughs].

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

São Paulo Sells Itself

By ANDREW DOWNIE / SAO PAULO



The Clean City law abolishes billboards and imposes strict rules on the size and placement of storefront signs. Violators face large fines.

CIA DE FOTO

To the undiscerning eye of a visitor, there is nothing too unusual about Florêncio de Abreu Street in downtown São Paulo. The buildings, many of them noble structures with brightly painted façades and stone balconies, reflect the city's rich history, and the constant noise of commercial bustle and angry traffic are the classic sounds of a major modern metropolis.

But until last year, much of that eye-catching architecture went unseen. São Paulo is a supremely intense city whose futuristic mix of skyscrapers, helicopters, advertising and rain has earned it comparisons with the urban imagery of the sci-fi film *Blade Runner*. But for the longest time, the nice bits, like the buildings along Florêncio de Abreu Street, were hidden behind billboards, electronic ads, shop signs and street banners.

That was until two years ago, when Mayor Gilberto Kassab decided that urgent cosmetic surgery was required. In a bold effort to rid the city of what he called "visual pollution," Kassab ordered the downsizing or removal of all public forms of advertising. Almost overnight, the billboards, gaudy shop signs and big led displays disappeared. The city was transformed. "Of all the different kinds of pollution, visual

pollution is the most obvious," Kassab says. "It is also the one that allows for short-term results — immediate, even — if the legislation to combat it is good. Our law was radical and very simple. All major publicity in São Paulo was prohibited as of a predetermined date. The first thing that happened was that people felt a great sense of relief."

Visual pollution, much of it in the form of advertising, is an issue in all the world's large cities. But what is pollution to some is a vibrant part of a city's fabric to others. New York City without Times Square's huge digital billboards or Tokyo without the Ginza's commercial panorama is unthinkable. Piccadilly Circus would be just a London roundabout without its signage. Still, other cities, like Moscow, have reached their limit and have begun to crack down on over-the-top outdoor advertising.

Big, edgy and complicated, São Paulo has always been the ugly sister to the delicate, tanned and seductive Rio de Janeiro. But the success of the Clean City law has given South America's largest city (pop. 11 million) a new sense of confidence. The law not only made São Paulo a more pleasant place to live but also showed that relatively straightforward acts, when well planned and rigidly enforced, can transform the environment. "The great thing about the Clean City law is that it didn't involve much more than political will," says Regina Monteiro, the city's director of environment and urban landscaping and the woman charged with enforcement. "If you have political will and a little investment, then you can make a big difference."

The law focused on two main targets: publicity and commerce. As the industrial and business capital of Brazil, São Paulo is a major retail hub and home to some of the world's most creative ad agencies. Those agencies had eagerly bought up every available space to hawk their products, hanging huge banners on the sides of apartment buildings and erecting billboards along main streets and ring roads. Everywhere you looked, there was an ad — for underwear, for cellular phones, for cold meats, for cars. The panorama was colorful but chaotic.

Under the Clean City law, those signs had to go. Advertisers estimate that they removed 15,000 billboards and that more than 1,600 signs and 1,300 towering metal panels were dismantled by authorities.

Commerce was similarly affected, since businesses with storefronts longer than 100 m were obliged to take down any offending sign and replace it with two smaller ones covering an area no greater than 10 sq m. Smaller shop fronts are permitted one sign no bigger than 4 sq m. All signs must be above the entrance and cannot extend into the street. Those contravening the laws are first warned, and if they do not take action, they face a minimum fine of about \$5,000 and then possible closure.

Although many Brazilian laws are applied only halfheartedly, Kassab, an assistant mayor who took power after his boss resigned to run for higher office, staked his credibility on the law and made a point of enforcing it. The upshot is that the once hidden city is visible again.

Nowhere is that more evident than along Florêncio de Abreu Street. Since about 1900, this narrow road has been one of the main routes into the city center, and coffee merchants and other rich businessmen built homes and shops there in the Art Nouveau or Art Deco style of the time.

Today it seems every second building has been refurbished or spruced up, and the façades with dates etched into the stonework, the narrow verandas with their greenery and the unmistakable Art Deco porticoes and windows are visible again. Intricate stonework, engraved and stained-glass windows and wrought-iron balconies that were destroyed or became dilapidated through years of neglect are newly resplendent. "This building is 100 years old, and we did it up so it was as it was meant to be," Adeilson Souza, the owner of a store selling gardening equipment, says of the restored Art Nouveau fronting. "You can see the details that were once covered by signs and wires and all sorts of mess. We even left the color the same as the original. This street used to be so ugly, but it is much, much nicer now. There's no comparison with before."

Many of Souza's fellow citizens still have work to do. A large number of the oversize signs — as well as the huge ads draped over buildings — were there not only to attract customers but also to hide pipes, ducts, haphazard wiring, broken windows and grubby air-conditioning units.

In a bid to stimulate renewal, the city offers exemptions from property taxes to offset the cost of renovations. Souza, for example, said he got back the \$300 he spent on fixing up his place. That decision helped dampen criticisms from small-business owners who complained they had spent money on signs and could not afford to produce new ones, let alone carry out expensive renovations.

Perhaps most surprising, the measure has won — albeit belatedly — support among advertisers, the sector hit hardest by the changes. Brazilian advertisers spent more than \$100 million on outdoor ads in 2006, and they fought bitterly to block the law. When the challenge failed, they set their minds to finding alternatives and quickly came up with creative new ways to get their messages across.

Some of the available ad money went to the city's free newspapers. The largest portion, however, was invested in the digital out-of-home industry that puts televised and electronic ads in commercial locations and public transport. Almost overnight, investment in digital advertising soared. It is expected to exceed \$40 million in 2008, says Angelo de Sá Jr., vice president of Indoormidia, one of the sector's leading firms. "The impact of the Clean City law was huge because you had few alternatives in the city other than outdoors," de Sá says. "But from crises come opportunities, and out-of-home advertising is now in bars, in airports, on the metro, on buses, and that has all happened in just 16 months. One industry died and another one was born."

Advertisers are still hoping legislation will be relaxed, and they have some grounds for optimism. The city plans to launch a tender for advertising on the digital clocks that dot many Brazilian cities and is also keen to offer temporary space on buildings to companies that pay for them to be restored.

The measures are small-scale compared with those of the past, and authorities are quick to stress that there will be no retreat. Instead, Kassab, who was re-elected in October thanks in large part to the law's success, promises that more bold measures will follow. "One of the big impacts is that it provides a stimulus for other similar measures," he says. "If success is possible fighting visual pollution, then solutions are viable for other types of pollution and for problems such as health, education, transport, sewage treatment and housing.

LETTERS

Inbox

By DEPARTMENT Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008

Capturing the Moment

As a man, I know I'm not supposed to shed tears except for deaths in the family, but I've got to admit that reading Nancy Gibbs' article on Barack Obama in this week's commemorative issue made my eyes misty [Nov. 17]. These were tears not of sorrow but of sheer appreciation for a wonderfully expressed essay about this transcendent moment in American history. Hervie Haufler, SHELBURNE, VT.

Heartland Heartache

I am a libertarian and don't abide free government handouts, so I agree to an extent with Michael Grunwald's argument for farm-bill revision [Nov. 17]. However, I must contest some of his findings. He states, "The median farmer's net worth is five times the median American's." Of course it is--farmers own tons of acres; but let's see you try to operate your business when all that net worth is tied up in land. In addition, he claims, "the biofuel boom is also jacking up the price of grain." Yet the price of corn has fallen at least 50% since its peak. Revising the bill is a good idea, but in doing so, we must realize that we will make food more expensive, since some farms will go broke. Sometimes these issues aren't so black and white. Matthew Bernhardt, LINCOLN, NEB.

Ladies in the House

You missed a very important "thing" in your article "10 Things That Never Happened Before" [Nov. 17]. For the first time in U.S. history, women make up a majority of one of the nation's state senates--New Hampshire's. The Granite State makes me very proud. Lisa Groux, PORTSMOUTH, N.H.

Hey, Rudy: Organize This!

Joe Klein's "Passing the Torch" was a tonic for me [Nov. 17]. During the Republican National Convention, when Rudy Giuliani sneered that he didn't even know what a community organizer is and Sarah Palin--with sarcasm that made my skin crawl--remarked that she guessed that a "small-town mayor is sort of like a community organizer, except that you have actual responsibilities," the insult was personal and deep. For the first time in my life, I donated financially to a political campaign--Obama's. My mother, a beloved longtime community organizer, has been gone for 10 years, yet her accomplishments in the communities she loved are still lauded and taught to a new generation. Klein's comment--"This is who [community organizers] are: they are the people who won this election"--was a balm. Julie Yugend-Green, OAK PARK, ILL.

The Race Factor

I was incredulous at T.D. Jakes' statement that "most blacks have not been blinded by race" [Nov. 17]. Virtually every black man, woman and child who has been interviewed has plainly stated the positive impact a black candidate had on mobilizing the black community to vote and become involved. I am a middle-aged white woman who voted for Obama because I believe him to be the best candidate. I do not pretend to empathize with the pain of racism, but to tell whites that Obama's race didn't have that much to do with why blacks voted the way they did is what is really "disingenuous." Am I not allowed to also hope for an end to racism and its effects? I may not have suffered from them directly, but my country has and does. Jennifer Mather, FLINT, MICH.

Proud to Be ... You and Me

Pico Iyer's Essay in which he says the U.S. needs to be "in tune" with the rest of the world was quite apt [Nov. 17]. A little over a month ago, while my family and I were having dinner in Coullier, France, and discussing the upcoming election, a British woman overheard us, and very seriously she told us, "The whole world is watching." I regarded the statement as a little overdramatic until I saw how the international community reacted when Obama was elected. I now look back on that night in

France and on the night of Nov. 4 and realize that this country has demonstrated to itself and to the rest of the world that it has taken another step toward fulfilling its great potential on a global stage. Charles Dunn, BEACON, N.Y.

Iyer arrives at one incorrect conclusion. I have traveled to more than 90 nations. The global disapproval has not been aimed at Americans as individuals but, rightly, at the U.S. government. Roland Bunch, PALO ALTO, CALIF.

The Sole of the Man

TIME photographer Callie Shell defined the American ethos with her poignant photograph of the soles of Obama's shoes [Nov. 17]. Lots of us have many pairs that look just like his, whether because of pounding the pavement looking for a job or simply walking to one's place of employment because gas is unaffordable. The photograph also defined what Obama stands for: hard work, determination and never giving up. Melissa Clarke, BEAR, DEL.

NOTEBOOK

The Moment

By Michael Elliott Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008

Say this for pirates: we wouldn't have St. Patrick's Day without them. Ireland's patron saint first set foot on the Emerald Isle after being captured by corsairs, so we can at least thank the skull-and-crossbones crowd for green beer.

On the credit side of the ledger, that's about it. Piracy is nasty, brutish--and old. As long as richly laden ships have sailed within reach of dirt-poor land, piracy has been part of our heritage. That has long been true in the Mediterranean, the South China Sea, the Caribbean--and is true now in the waters off the Horn of Africa. This year alone, pirates based in Somalia, where any semblance of a functioning state broke down years ago, are thought to have attacked more than 90 ships. In a recent 48-hour period, they apprehended vessels from Greece, Thailand and Hong Kong, and on Nov. 15 took the biggest prize of all, the Saudi supertanker *Sirius Star*, laden with an estimated \$100 million in crude.

A variety of nations' warships now patrol the waters off Somalia. Vessels of the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet are there, together with the British, the French and others. (The Indians destroyed a pirate ship the other day; good for them.) Such action honors a long tradition, which includes a march of U.S. Marines against the Barbary corsairs on the shores of Tripoli in 1804.

International law has prohibited some practices of the past. It would sadly be considered bad form today to leave the bodies of pirate captains hanging in chains from a gibbet at the Mogadishu dock until the maggots ate out their eyes--as was done in the Caribbean long ago. But we might as well be honest: if we are to combat the scourge of modern piracy, then force must be used against force. When Tripoli demanded tribute from the U.S. in return for not capturing Americans at sea, Thomas Jefferson noted, "The style of the demand admitted but one answer. I sent a small squadron of frigates into the Mediterranean." Right then; right now.

The World

By Harriet Barovick Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008

1 | Barcelona Stem Cell-cebration European physicians have announced the success of a breakthrough procedure in which a woman's windpipe was rebuilt using her own stem cells. The operation, performed on 30-year-old Claudia Castillo this past June, seeded a stripped-down segment of a donor's trachea with stem cells from Castillo's bone marrow, ensuring a perfect tissue match and reducing the likelihood of transplant rejection. The procedure has been championed as a milestone that could pave the way for radical improvements in organ transplants and the treatment of serious diseases.

2 | Managua Mayoral Vote Causes Chaos The contested outcome of Nov. 9's mayoral elections has sparked violent clashes in Nicaragua's capital, with supporters of President Daniel Ortega's victorious Sandinista Party hurling rocks, blocking roads and firing homemade mortars at demonstrators gathered to denounce alleged voter fraud. The opposition, led by Ortega's 2006 election rival, Eduardo Montealegre, vowed to continue its protests while appealing to international observers. The U.S. State Department and a U.S.-based election-monitoring group have expressed concern over reports of voting irregularities.

3 | Boston Finally, Gulf War Illness Recognized A congressionally mandated panel of scientists and veterans has validated in a Nov. 17 report the mysterious condition known as Gulf War illness (GWI). According to the study, the symptoms--which include memory loss, chronic muscle pain, fatigue, digestive problems and skin lesions--were likely caused by pills given to troops to protect against nerve gas and by the overuse of pesticides to ward off sand flies. Other factors include exposure to depleted uranium munitions, oil-well fires, nerve agents and vaccines. Nearly 25% of the 700,000 soldiers who fought in Operation Desert Storm are affected by GWI, and many of them have reported that their symptoms have worsened over time. The panel also noted unusually high rates of Lou Gehrig's disease and brain cancer

among Gulf War veterans, arguing that more funding is needed to study GWI, for which there is no known cure.

4 | France Rwandan Assassination Arrest A week after German police arrested her, Rose Kabuye, chief protocol officer to Rwandan President Paul Kagame, was extradited to France under a warrant claiming she was complicit in the downing of a plane that killed Rwanda's then President and two French pilots. The attack helped spark the 1994 Rwandan genocide in which some 800,000 people perished. Kagame denounced the arrest, calling it "total contempt" for his nation.

5 | Washington Running on Empty Stomachs Even before 2008's economic turmoil, more American children had been going hungry in 2007 than at any other time in the past 10 years. A new Department of Agriculture report says money woes caused 323,000 households to cut back on food for children in 2007, up from 221,000 in 2006. Federal officials expect this year's data to paint an even worse picture.

In 2007: 1 in 25 U.S. households reduced their food intake owing to a lack of money
1 in 14 households filled out their diet by eating a smaller variety or by using federal food programs, food pantries or other coping strategies
1 in 6 households with children couldn't afford to buy enough food to adequately feed all its members

6 | California INTO THE INFERNO Wildfires burned at least 42,000 acres (17,000 hectares) of land in Southern California before gentler winds allowed firefighters to gain control of the blazes. A total of 800 homes were destroyed in the counties surrounding Los Angeles, and thousands of residents were forced to evacuate. This year the drought-plagued region has faced an almost relentless fire season, with 9,603 fires so far, up from 5,961 in 2007. Just over a year ago, the state endured a rash of immense wildfires that destroyed 2,000 homes and displaced 640,000 people.

7 | Washington G-20 Gluttony Delegates at the summit on the world financial crisis are drawing fire for their luxurious banquet, which included quail, lamb and bottles of 2003 Shafer Cabernet Hillside Select that can cost up to \$499.

8 | Somalia Pirates Aim Higher With their capture of a colossal Saudi oil tanker on Nov. 15, Somali pirates seized their largest vessel yet amid a torrent of other hijackings in the Gulf of Aden, where there have been at least eight attacks in just the past two weeks. Pirates currently hold an estimated 17 vessels and some 300 crew for ransom. Some shipping firms are resorting to the long, costly route around Africa to avoid the gulf's dangerous waters.

Boeing 747 231 ft. Cargo ship, captured Sept. 25, 2008 529 ft. Oil tanker, captured Nov. 15, 2008 1,090 ft.

(SOURCES: BOEING; VESSELTRACKER.COM)

9 | India After the Dalai Lama Tibetan leaders assembled in Dharamsala to recalibrate their strategy for gaining autonomy from China after the Dalai Lama recently vented his frustration with Beijing and suggested he had "given up" the fight for independence. The spiritual leader has been absent from the discussions, which experts took as a sign that he did not want to influence the movement's direction.

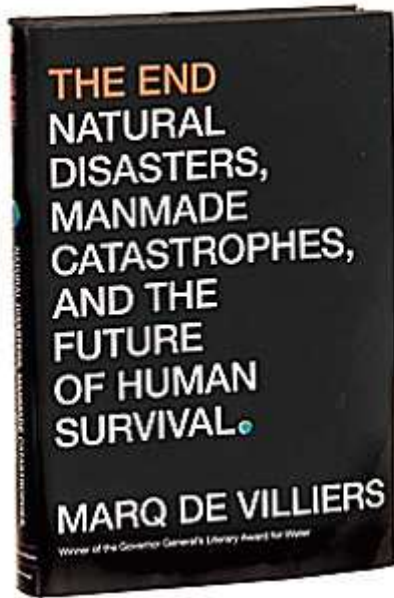
10 | Germany Lagging on Kyoto Goals A U.N. report has given industrialized nations mixed reviews on reducing greenhouse-gas emissions. While overall emissions have dropped 5% below 1990 levels, they have grown 2.3% since 2000. Authors attribute much of the upswing to the recovery of post-Soviet economies in Eastern and central Europe. Among the nations studied, 19 are falling behind on their emissions goals for 2012 under the Kyoto Protocol. The findings were released ahead of next month's climate conference in Poznan, Poland.

On Track Not on Track Full Data Not Yet Available Bulgaria Czech Republic Austria
Australia Estonia Belgium Belarus France Canada Croatia Greece Denmark Hungary
Finland Latvia Germany Lithuania Iceland Monaco Ireland Poland Italy
Romania Japan Russian Fed. Liechtenstein Slovakia Luxembourg Sweden The
Netherlands Ukraine New Zealand United Kingdom Norway Portugal Slovenia
Spain Switzerland

* | What They're Prescribing in Mexico City: In the name of "happiness and a better quality of life," Mayor Marcelo Ebrard plans to give out free erectile-dysfunction pills to men over 70. As many as 100,000 are eligible for the program, which could cost more than \$4 million. It's the latest of Ebrard's "happiness" initiatives--in 2007 he spent millions on an ice-skating rink and artificial beaches--that critics say are distracting citizens from the capital's crime, pollution and transportation problems.

The Skimmer

By Kate Pickert Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008



The End

By Marq de Villiers

Thomas Dunne Books; 368 pages

We're doomed. No matter what we do, something is going to get us eventually--a comet already whizzing toward Earth, maybe, or exploding methane gas unleashed by global warming. De Villiers takes a virtual flight around the globe to examine the natural threats to our existence, from earthquakes to tornadoes to plagues. It's a mix of sobering facts enlivened by historical anecdotes. Take, for example, the Portuguese king who became morbidly afraid of buildings after the 1755 Lisbon earthquake or the poisonous red ants which descended on a Caribbean town during a 1902 volcanic eruption. More worrisome is the realization that mankind's existence is, according to the laws of probability, fleeting. Writes de Villiers: "The period of calm in which the human species was formed is only a brief drawing of the breath before the cosmic assault begins once more." So how do we maximize our time in what de Villiers calls a "perilously thin habitable layer on a vulnerable and unstable

planet in a hostile neighborhood"? Plan for the worst. As he says, "Good information is the best antidote."

Verbatim

By DEPARTMENT Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008

'I nearly had a heart attack.' PAUL KALAS, of the University of California, Berkeley, whose team of scientists snapped one of the first photographs of a planet outside our solar system

'Is Kashkari a chump?' REPRESENTATIVE ELIJAH CUMMINGS, questioning Neel Kashkari, manager of the Treasury Department's \$700 billion rescue plan, after bailout recipient AIG spent \$503 million on executive bonuses

'Today the school is open, but there are no girls.' MEHMOOD QADERI, principal of the Mirwais Mena girls' school in Kandahar, Afghanistan, after a group of men attacked 15 girls and teachers with acid

'You know, they're not expecting miracles.' BARACK OBAMA, President-elect, when asked during an interview on CBS's 60 Minutes what voters expect of him when he takes office

'It may have started online, but it existed entirely in the real world, and it hurts just as much.' AMY TAYLOR, an Englishwoman who filed for divorce after she discovered that her husband had been having an affair in the online role-playing game Second Life

'Well, now I'm screwed. I can't sell.' MARK CUBAN, Dallas Mavericks owner, in a 2004 call with the CEO of Mamma.com about the company's shares; Cuban faces charges of insider trading for selling his stock after the conversation to avoid a \$750,000 loss

'If President-elect Barack Obama can forgive, so can we.' THOMAS R. CARPER, Democratic Senator from Delaware, on allowing Senator Joe Lieberman of Connecticut to serve in the Democratic caucus despite Lieberman's campaigning for John McCain

Back & Forth:

Iraq

'We are a professional army, and professional units don't conceal their identity by wearing masks.'

Lieut. Colonel STEVE STOVER, U.S. military spokesman, on the decision to bar Iraqi interpreters from wearing ski masks to disguise themselves, citing security improvements

'Why risk the lives of those who work with us?'

Staff Sergeant JEREMY ZIEGLER, stationed in Baghdad. More than 300 Iraqi translators have been killed for working with U.S. troops

Drilling

'They added 51,000 acres of tracts near Arches, Dinosaur and Canyonlands without telling us about it.' CORDELL ROY, Utah's chief park-service administrator, blasting the Bureau of Land Management for its plans to auction land near the iconic Arches National Park for oil and gas exploration

'There are already many parcels leased around the parks.'

BLM state director SELMA SIERRA, denying that her agency failed to notify the state's park service about the December auction

LEXICON

meh adj.--Signifying boredom or indifference; a term first popularized by The Simpsons

USAGE: "There is nothing meh about the journey of the latest entry in the Collins English Dictionary. Rather, it illustrates how e-mail and the internet are creating language."

--TIMES OF LONDON, NOV. 17, 2008

Sources: New York Times; Bloomberg; AP; CBS; TIME.com AP; CNN

A Brief History Of: The Secret Service

By Alex Altman Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008



An agent looks on as John McCain concedes the presidency to Barack Obama in Phoenix. Christopher Morris / VII for TIME

Abraham Lincoln left to Barack Obama not only an example to emulate but also the sentinels who will safeguard his life. In 1865, on the very day he was assassinated at Ford's Theatre, Lincoln green-lighted what would become the U.S. Secret Service, which has been guarding Obama (code-named "Renegade") since May 2007--longer than any other presidential candidate in U.S. history.

The agency's mission has evolved dramatically since its inception under the Treasury Dept. While today more than 3,200 Secret Service members stand ready to sacrifice their lives for the safety of the leader of the free world, the agency's job originally was to stamp out counterfeiting in an era when one out of every three bills in circulation was fake. Though the Secret Service was tasked with guarding President Grover Cleveland's family in the 1890s, presidential security became a formal objective only after the assassination of President William McKinley in 1901. It wasn't until 1951--after a failed attempt on President Harry Truman's life--that Congress codified the agency's permanent protection of the First Family. Its duties also now include candidates for high office and visiting dignitaries.

Scanning crowds while the President walks a rope line is a given. But agents have also had to respond to unique security challenges--from rigging traffic lights while

Truman strolled through Washington to shielding President Jimmy Carter's daughter, Amy, from a charging elephant at a pet show on Ethel Kennedy's Virginia estate. While the demeanor (sunglasses, earpieces, constant vigilance) and the danger are what captivate the public, monitoring for fiscal malfeasance is still half the job. In August, the Secret Service helped crack what was heralded as the largest identity-theft ring in U.S. history.

Pop Chart

By DEPARTMENT Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008

SHOCKING

SARAH PALIN to get \$7 million book deal. Copy editors to demand half

SARKOZY and BUSH share terrorist fist jab

Tweens mob Times Square for final episode of MTV's TRL

MICHAEL JACKSON sued for \$7 million for failing to release album

TYRA BANKS to give away sex-change operation. Oprah still has the better gifts

PAUL MCCARTNEY plans release of lost 14-minute Beatles track. It was 28 minutes, but Heather Mills got half

PREDICTABLE

SNL hires two new women. Maybe one can do a decent Obama imitation

Showtime mulls series of GAY SUPERHERO. As if there were any other kind

Nativity scene: BRITNEY SPEARS to headline Rockefeller Center Xmas-tree lighting

SACHA BARON COHEN infiltrates set of television's Medium. Best publicity ever for television's Medium

MILEY CYRUS not dead

PREGNANT MAN pregnant again

To show his range, SETH ROGEN to make porn-themed TV series

Spitzer call girl ASHLEY DUPRE says she's "just a normal girl," hopes Julia Roberts will play her in the movie

SNOOP DOGG appears on Martha Stewart. Hip-hop officially dead. But wait ...

... THE ROOTS named Jimmy Fallon's Late Night house band. Now it's dead

SHOCKINGLY PREDICTABLE

Mitch Mitchell

By Frances Romero Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008

The last surviving member of the Jimi Hendrix Experience, drummer Mitch Mitchell, who died on Nov. 12 at 61, carried on as keeper of Hendrix's legacy long after the guitarist's death in 1970. Indeed, he had just completed a 19-city U.S. tour-- Experience Hendrix--with blues star Buddy Guy and Aerosmith guitarist Brad Whitford when he was found dead in a hotel room in Oregon.

Born in Ealing in west London and self-taught on the drums, Mitchell was 18 when he met Hendrix and bass player Noel Redding (who died in 2003). In 1967, the three put out their first album, *Are You Experienced?* Driven by Jimi's incendiary guitar-playing and a heady mix of blues and psychedelic rock 'n' roll, the band soon skyrocketed to fame. But turmoil brought on by unending touring and drug binges unraveled the trio after just three years.

Not a stick-breaking powerhouse like contemporaries Keith Moon and John Bonham, Mitchell nevertheless helped revolutionize rock drumming with his finesse. As journalist and musician Felix Contreras noted, Mitchell held his sticks like a jazz player, lightly between his thumb and two fingers, sometimes losing them during performances, to little negative effect. Still, he could propel a song: on tracks like "Fire" and "Manic Depression" he proved a perfect match for Hendrix's guitar. Even after the band split, the two performed together at Woodstock in 1969.

Mitchell was leery of being labeled a rock star. While he didn't resent it, he wanted audiences to focus on the group. Still, he accepted his place in music history. Being a part of the Jimi Hendrix Experience, as he said in 1968, had "given me freedom."

Pete Newell

Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008

Pete, the genius Basketball coach and teacher who died on Nov. 17 at 93, was the most lovable man I've ever met. In 1959 his University of California, Berkeley, team beat my West Virginia squad by a single point in the national championship game. The following year, I had the honor of playing for Pete in the Olympics. We won gold, and I realized how special he was. He just had a way of lifting everyone around him.

Pete later started his legendary camp for big men, which helped many great pro and collegiate players, like Bill Walton and Shaquille O'Neal, truly learn the game. He would share his knowledge with absolutely anyone.

I was supposed to see Pete the day he died. But five minutes before I arrived, he passed away. I missed my chance to say goodbye. I went over to the wheelchair where he was resting and said some final words. It was the most surreal experience of my life. I'm not a very demonstrative guy, but I couldn't control my emotions that day. I lost a father figure. Basketball lost a dear friend.

West, a Hall of Fame basketball player, led the L.A. Lakers to four titles as general manager

Milestones

By DEPARTMENT Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008

DIED Herb Score, 75, a hard-throwing left-handed pitcher for the Cleveland Indians, suffered a career-ending line drive to the face in 1957. He went on to spend nearly 30 years as a radio sports broadcaster.

- Clive Barnes, 81, knew in his teens that he wanted to be a critic and worked his way into the ballet scene at Oxford University, eventually becoming an authoritative drama critic for both the New York Times and New York Post. "Inside most dance critics," he once said, "is a drama critic struggling to get out."

- Rosetta Reitz, 84, borrowed \$10,000 in 1979 and created Rosetta Records to resurrect blues and jazz music from long-forgotten female artists such as Bessie Smith, Ida Cox and Ma Rainey, producing 17 albums and returning their work to renown.

- Adrian Kantrowitz, 90, performed the first human-heart transplant in the U.S., in 1967. The patient, an infant, received a heart from another child but lived only 6 1/2 hours after the surgery. Despite the loss, Kantrowitz's work ushered in a new era in approaches to heart illness.

RESIGNED Jerry Yang, 40, the Yahoo! co-founder who took over as CEO a year ago, said he would step down Nov. 17. Beset by criticism after Yang rejected a buyout bid from Microsoft, the ailing search company saw its shares jump 8% the day after his announcement.

LOST Ted Stevens, 85, celebrated two milestones Nov. 18: his birthday and a goodbye to the Alaska Senate seat he held for 40 years, longer than any other Republican in history. Two weeks after the election, a tally of the remaining ballots in the close race gave his opponent, Democrat Mark Begich, a nearly 4,000-vote lead.

