

The Ear

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Bernadette Castro, left-liberal Castro Convertible sofabed heiress, was the sacrificial lamb the Republicans put up against centrist Democratic Senator Pat Moynihan in New York. As predicted, she was swamped by Moynihan. Senator Al D'Amato, while denouncing Giuliani and Ralph Marino as Backstabbers against his man Pataki for governor, himself made sure that no Republican money would be sent Bernadette's way.

In the new Pataki administration, George rewarded Bernadette by appointing her to the post of New York Commissioner of Parks and Recreation. She will probably coast through confirmation by the Republican-run State Senate. But there is a possible problem for Bernadette. One of the Castro family (headed by Bernadette's father, Bernard) is a close personal and business associate of Ettore Zappi, alleged pornography kingpin of New York's top Mafia family, the Gambinos. For over a decade of Bernadette's being No. 3 in Castro Convertibles, Zappi was the company's chief supplier of mattresses.

It almost makes you believe in "stereotypes."

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Two weeks before Newt asked his wife to sign divorce papers while she was still grog-

gy from a cancer operation, he told his campaign treasurer: "Jackie isn't young enough or pretty enough to be the wife of the president of the United States."

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Bill Buckley likes to trash his friends in their obituaries. Recent examples: Henry Hazlitt and Neil McCaffrey, both his moral and intellectual superiors.

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Nelson Mandela's fondness for young blondes was outed in a *Washington Post* photo. He was shown pressing himself against a visiting Miss Germany and leering at her.

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Newt Gingrich says: "I am against having sex police in the men's room and I'm against teaching *Heather Has Two Mom-mies* in kindergarten or the first grade." Oh, I get it. It's okay for them to have sex in public restrooms, but we don't have to teach our children about it until the second grade. ■

Random Gripes

by M.N.R.

The Apology Gavotte: Is anyone else as fed up as I am with the orgies of phony "apologies" and demands for apology that seem to have taken over the American culture? The latest: the Japanese government is forced to "apologize," for the

28th time, to the U.S. for Pearl Harbor, to China for the occupations of the 1930s, and Lord knows what else. Speaker Gingrich makes it one of his first acts to "apologize" to the Democrat party for Republican opposition to the New Deal, to entry into World War II, to its opposition to "civil rights" despotism, etc.

Or else: someone makes a statement that someone else doesn't like. The someone else [SE] demands that the someone [S] apologize either to SE or to SE's "group" [womankind, Jews, blacks, the disabled, the human race, or whatever]; S makes the apology, and then SE "decides whether to accept the apology or not." What is this nonsense? What happens, for example, if SE *doesn't* "accept" the apology? Is S drawn and quartered on national TV? Or what?

In my view, in contrast, apologies must be deeply felt, and proffered by the sinner; for the alleged victim to "demand" an apology is absurd and violates the very nature of sincere contrition. And above all, apologies should be *personal*, for the actions of the sinner himself; it is both too easy and idiotic for A to "apologize" for the actions of *other* people, let alone people long dead and gone.

For example, suppose that I solemnly announced [and of course *the point* of all this nonsense is public posturing and not heartfelt personal regret] that I hereby apologize for the (truly despicable) act of

Alexander Hamilton and George Washington in their court-martial frameup of the true military and ideological hero of the American Revolution, General Charles Lee. The imbecility of such an action should be obvious. In addition to the fact that Lee is no longer around to receive it, who in blazes am I to speak for, let alone apologize for, the sins of Washington and Hamilton?

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I was *wondering* when the legions of those who aim to outlaw risk would get around to mountain-climbing. It seems that the authorities in Nepal have recently discovered that one can get killed mountain-climbing, and are talking about a government crackdown.

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Chung-Gingrich: In the light of the above guidelines, how do we approach the latest apology flap: the despicable act of Connie Chung in promising the elderly Ma Gingrich that this is "just between us" and thereby getting her to reveal that her son Newt thought of Hillary as a "bitch," and the equally despicable act of CBS News airing the segment? Apologies, of course, have been demanded all around. First, there is no need for Gingrich to apologize to Hillary or Willie; obviously, Hillary is a bitch. But also it is absurd for Gingrich or his partisans to demand apologies from Connie Chung or CBS. Instead, the public should stop watching Connie

Chung and CBS News, or else openly boycott watching CBS until La Chung is booted out.

Instead of empty rhetoric, in short: concrete acts of punishment, which would also make a good start in ridding us altogether of the corrupt liberal media elite. By withdrawing our custom, and making sure that the media moguls know why.

★

Not being a techie, I've been on the sidelines over the years while the techno-optimists (computers, etc. will bring full freedom and end government intervention—George Gilder, et al.) have been battling with the techno-pessimists (computers will bring about Big Brother—Orwell). Apparently, the legions of the semi-official Hate Thought Police, those professional haters of "hate," are getting very worried about freedom of speech over the various computer networks and the now legendary "information superhighway." They have been trying to suppress hate expression, with only partial success. Since I'm skeptical about techno-determinism, I *hope* that the hate police/Big Brother forces lose, but it doesn't seem that victory for freedom is foreordained.

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I see that soon the government will be able to send us emergency disaster warnings by automatically turning on our radio and TV sets. That's high-tech progress, I guess.

But I'm interested in some-

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thing else: when, in blazes, are they going to stop sending out those blankety-blank "emergency test" signals on radio and TV? For fifty years now, it seems that every time I have radio or TV on, the Emergency Broadcasting Service cuts in with the annoying 60-second or whatever noise, announcing "this is a test." Look, the whole thing was designed to announce a nuclear bomb alert, so we could take "shelter" somewhere and listen to this standby EBS. But the Cold War is long over; when can we save taxpayers some money and cut out officious annoyance by shutting down this operation? Are you listening, Newt? ■