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17-year-old James

Mokoena is one of millions of black South Africans who still live in townships built during the era of apartheid, nearly 15 years after it was abolished. His dream is to escape and become a pilot. (p. 8)

WRITE TO US

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As part of their graduation ceremony this spring, Iranian policewomen demonstrated their skills, rappelling down the side of a building in Tehran. To comply with Iran's strict Islamic dress code, policewomen must wear a *chador*, or head-to-toe black cloak, over black trousers. During the ceremony, the graduates also demonstrated their expertise in judo, arresting armed robbers, and dismantling bombs.



KING TUT'S burial mask (left), unearthed in 1922; a reconstruction of Tut's face based on CAT-scans of his mummy

MUMMIES

The Man Behind the Mask

Tutankhamen had just become Pharaoh of Egypt around 1322 B.C. when he died rather suddenly. The young king was in his late teens when his face was immortalized in a golden

burial mask. But the Pharaoh we know as "King Tut" might not have been quite as handsome as his mask suggests. CAT-scan images of his mummy have enabled artists and scientists to reconstruct his face as it might have looked in real life. They show King Tut with a long skull, a narrow face, and full lips. He

also had an overbite and a weak chin. But he was not lacking in wealth. Many of his treasures are now on display in "Tutankhamen and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs," at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art through Nov. 15. The exhibit will then go to Fort Lauderdale, Chicago, and Philadelphia.

TOP: JAVAD MONTAZERI / WORLDPICTURENEWS; LEFT: VANNI / ART RESOURCE; SUPREME COUNCIL OF ANTIQUITIES, EGYPT AND NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, JUNE 2005

NUMBERS IN THE NEWS

128 mph

Top speed of Kingda Ka, said to be the world's fastest roller coaster, at Six Flags Great Adventure, in Jackson, N.J.

SOURCE: ASSOCIATED PRESS

350 million

Number of people out of India's total population of 1.8 billion who live on less than a dollar a day.

SOURCE: THE NEW YORK TIMES

\$245,000

Top bid on German eBay for a Volkswagen once owned by Josef Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI.

SOURCE: REUTERS

760

Number of calories in a Burger King Enormous Omelet Sandwich: two cheese omelets, bacon, and sausage on a roll.

SOURCE: NEWSWEEK

\$635

Price of one pair of "limited edition" blue jeans by Evisu, a brand favored by Snoop Dogg and other hip-hop stars.

SOURCE: THE NEW YORK TIMES



SCIENCE

Killers That Also Cure

It's the ultimate *Fear Factor* nightmare: Chase down one of the world's deadliest snakes, grab it by the head, and squeeze the venom from its fangs. Bryan Fry, a biologist at the University of

VENOM from the red diamondback rattler—a native of the American Southwest—can kill, but it could also lead scientists to new drugs.

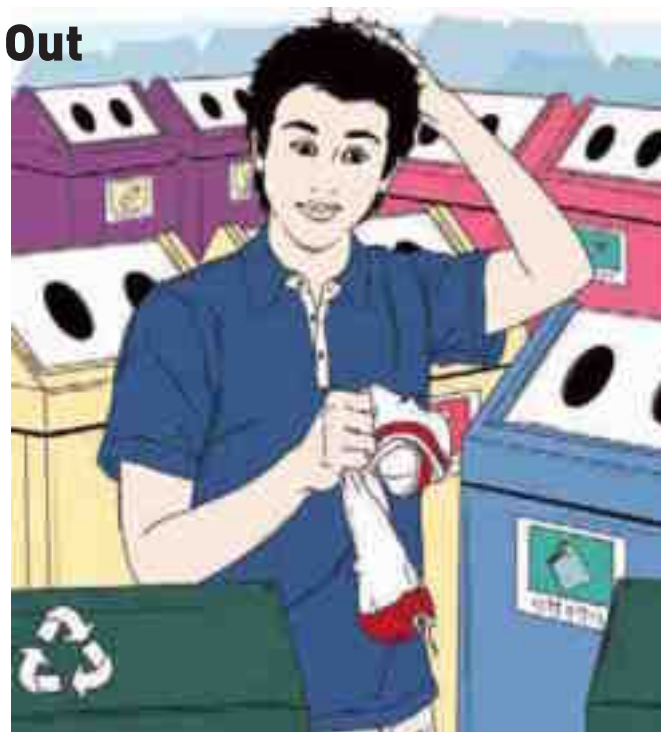
Melbourne in Australia, does just that with rattlesnakes, king cobras, death adders, sea snakes, and other reptiles most of us would rather avoid. "Working with some of these snakes is the biggest adrenaline rush you could ever do," says Fry. But that

rush is not what drives him to handle some 3,000 snakes a year. Fry's goal is to decipher the evolution of snake venoms over the past 60 million years. This research could lead to medical breakthroughs, he says. For the past 35 years, scientists have been turning snake venoms into drugs. The world's deadliest venom comes from Australia's inland taipan: Victims of this nine-foot-long snake collapse within seconds and die quickly. But Fry and his colleagues have found a molecule in its venom that may help treat congestive heart failure. Fry knows that most people don't share his affinity for deadly snakes, but he hopes the creatures will be protected. "If you kill off the snakes," he says, "you could be killing the next wonder drug."

JAPAN

When in Doubt, Sort It Out

When residents of Yokohama recently received a 27-page booklet on how to sort their trash into 10 categories, they found detailed instructions on 518 items. Socks? If only one, it goes in the burnables bin; a pair goes into the used-cloth bin, but only if the socks "are not torn and the left and right sock match." Lipstick goes with the burnables, but empty lipstick tubes go in the small-metals or plastics bin. Land-scarce Japan incinerates about 80 percent of its garbage; the push to recycle aims to reduce that percentage. Yokohama, a city of 3.5 million people, has set a goal of reducing incineration by 30 percent over five years. A volunteer army of "garbage police" helps nudge nonsorting slackers onto the right path. Mitsuharu Taniyama drives around his area twice a day, looking for missorted trash. When he finds an offending bag, he leaves a note for the culprit: "Your practice of sorting garbage is wrong. Please correct it."



SOUNDBITES

Noted & Quoted

'My advice is: Don't eat the cherry tomatoes.'

→ Douglas Ricci, who teaches dining etiquette at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J. Lessons on formal dining are on the rise at universities to help prepare students for the corporate world and conducting business socially. *(Associated Press, April 26)*

'It is difficult but you get used to it. It has become part of our daily lives. Just like eating, sleeping, there is bombing.'

→ Naba S. Hamid, a professor at Baghdad University, on living in Iraq amid car bombs and kidnappings. In reaction to the violence, many Iraqis have modified their daily routines. *(The New York Times, May 6)*

'I have no problem with people quietly sending an e-mail or surfing the Internet in church, as long as they respect the church.'

→ Reverend Keith Kimber of St. John's Rectory in Cardiff, Wales, where congregants now have Internet access during church services. *(Reuters, May 31)*

IMMIGRATION

Hard-Spell Advertising



THE MENU on a lunch cart in New York includes a few misspelled entrées.

Even in this age of Internet pop-ups and text-message marketing, many small businesses still advertise with low-tech, hand-lettered signs. And these often come with fractured grammar and creative spelling that provide insights into new immigrant communities taking root in U.S.

cities. Elyse B. Rudolph, director of the Literacy Assistance Center, which helps newcomers learn English, says that many immigrants, though smart and ambitious, are not literate in English or their native language. Overlapping of nationalities often compounds the language problem: With Mexicans working in pizzerias and Afghans running hot-dog stands, even ethnic words get misspelled. One New York pizzeria offers "spaguetti" and the sign on a lunch cart lists an Eastern European potato pie as a "kanish" instead of a knish. Even when stores change hands and signs are repainted, some messages linger. A "Convinient Store" in Brooklyn still bears a sign from the days when pagers were all the rage: "Beerpers."



DANICA PATRICK'S performance at the Indy 500 in May has thrust her into the national spotlight and boosted public interest in the Indy Racing League.

Q&A

The New Face of Indy Racing

When Danica Patrick was 13, she raced go-carts and dreamed of being a race-car driver. Now 23, she's made history, finishing fourth at the Indianapolis 500 in May and becoming the first woman to hold a lead in the race. Patrick, who grew up in Roscoe, Ill., and now lives in Phoenix, spoke to *Upfront* and other media during a teleconference after the race.

What have you found most surprising about your newfound fame?

People want to give you things. . . . [But] the best part of it is not necessarily materialistic. It's receiving compliments from such legends and such people that I would have never thought to be compared to.

Being a female in a male-dominated field, what kind of resistance, if any, have you felt?

When I was young, boys were all scared of me. I didn't feel any [resistance] then. As soon as they turned like 16, 17, 18 . . . it was more difficult. . . . I had to gain everyone's respect and show them that I'm here and I'm not just a go-cart driver. . . . So you have to put in the time, you have to put in the effort . . . and hope you get all the way.

What did you learn from racing in the Indy 500?

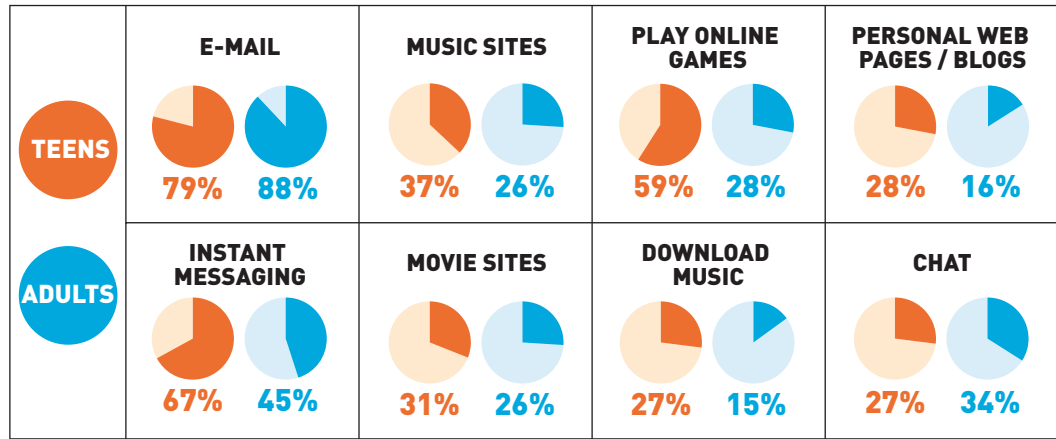
I learned how patience can be beneficial. I learned how mistakes can be very detrimental. . . . You have to stay calm, you have to take everything as it comes, and take a deep breath.

BOTTOM LEFT: YONI BROOK/THE NEW YORK TIMES

THE WEB

How You Use the Internet

Internet users 13 to 17 are more likely than adults to use instant messaging, download music, play online games, and visit movie and music sites.



SOURCE: JUPITER RESEARCH

FOOD

Should Soda & Snacks Be Suspended?

Connecticut's Legislature has been rocked by a food fight—over a bill that would have banned soda and candy from public-school cafeterias and vending machines in an effort to fight childhood obesity. But some school officials feared the loss of vending-machine revenues, and beverage companies said their products were unfairly singled out while schools still served foods like pizza and chicken nuggets. The bill was vetoed in June by the Governor. Meanwhile, students in New Haven have adjusted to a soda-and-candy ban enacted by their school system in 2003. It was “hard at first,” says one senior, who now washes down those nuggets with fruit juice.

News & Trends was reported by John Noble Wilford, Carl Zimmer, Elisabeth Bumiller, Anthony DePalma, Alison Leigh Cowan, and Norimitsu Onishi of The New York Times, and Elizabeth Mayer.

BOTTOM RIGHT: APPLE CORPORATION; SODA: ISCALI

MUSIC

Presidential 'Pod

When President Bush sets out on one of his 18-mile mountain-bike rides, he takes along a familiar motivator: an iPod loaded with country and rock tunes. What kind of music gets the presidential heart rate up to a chest-pounding 170 beats per minute? The “First iPod” is heavy with traditional country singers like George Jones, Alan Jackson, and Kenny Chesney. Bush also has selections from Van Morrison, whose “Brown Eyed Girl” is one of his favorites. Another is John Fogerty’s ballpark standard “Centerfield” (*Oh, put me in coach / I’m ready to play today*). The President has had his iPod since July 2004, when he

received it as a birthday gift from his daughters. He has around 250 songs on it—a fraction of the 10,000 it can hold. Bush doesn’t have time to download

the music himself. That job falls to Blake Gottesman, the President’s personal aide, who buys individual songs and albums from the iTunes music store.



THE PLAYLISTS on Bush’s iPod are designed to motivate him during his bike rides.

Reaching for the

H

He lives in a part of the world where so many young people never get off the ground, but 17-year-old James Mokoena wants to be a pilot. He will fly a fighter jet, but not just to wage aerial battles. Africa is full of hungry people and people sick with malaria, he says, and many of them need a James Mokoena to bring them food and medicine.

“I haven’t been in a plane,” he says. “I want to be in a plane for four, five years, and to know that I am in that plane—me. That I, James, am driving it.”

He is standing outside his cement-stuccoed house, a four-room box on a dirt road in Masjaing (*mush-a-ENG*), a township of about 30,000 in central South Africa, near the Lesotho border. Inside is a single bed for him, three brothers, and a sister. His mother is ill. His father never got past the sixth grade. Everything here seems to shout that James’s dream is folly.

WALKING A MILE

Except James himself. Two years ago, having completed his elementary years at the township primary school, he walked the mile from Masjaing to Fouriesburg, the far-wealthier town on the other side of the highway. There, he announced that he wanted a better education than he could get at Masjaing’s uninspiring high school, from which few students ever graduate, and that he wished to enroll in the eighth grade.

“I asked him whether he realized there were school fees to be paid, and he said his father would pay them,” says Irina Grice, the principal at Fouriesburg Intermediate School.

By Michael Wines in South Africa

“His father came, but oh, his clothes were torn, and he was very, very poor. But the father said, ‘The child chose, and he wants to be in this school.’ ”

One in three of South Africa’s 37 million blacks live in townships like Masjaing, slums built during the apartheid era to keep them away from white people when they were not mining their coal or cleaning their houses.

Apartheid, the government’s policy of rigid racial segregation, was abolished in 1991. Today, nearly 15 years later, well over half of those township dwellers over age 15 are jobless. Of those with jobs, about 6 in 10 earn less than \$250 a month. The townships are economic and social sinkholes, poverty traps in a nation where the rich-poor gap is among the widest on earth.

ESCAPING MASJAING

Jeremane Mokoena—he calls himself James, he says, because he dislikes his first name—wants out of Masjaing. He wants out of the underclass that apartheid created and into the world of opportunity that apartheid’s demise has opened up for other, luckier youths.

Few of his friends here—boys idling on the dusty soccer field and clustered on gravel street corners—have the pluck



the challenges and aspirations of teenagers around the world.
COMING of AGE
the first in a series

LORI WASELCHUK/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Sky

17-year-old James Mokoena dreams of being a pilot. But the daily struggle of trying to rise up from poverty in a black township in South Africa often gets in the way.

JAMES MOKOENA in front of his home in Masjaing, a black township near the border with Lesotho

for the journey James so clearly craves. For those who do try to make it out, success is rare.

Slim, with a shy, if broad smile, James resembles anything but a pioneer. But nobody should underestimate his grit or determination. "My father, he works," James says. "He keeps on telling me that life is very strong, like a rock. You have to push it forward."

His father, Petrus Mokoena, 44, is James's unlikely inspiration. A gaunt man in threadbare blue coveralls and a fluorescent red jacket, he works a split shift for the Masjaing

Michael Wines is Johannesburg bureau chief for The New York Times.





SHANTYTOWNS sprang up during apartheid, due to severe shortages of housing for the poor.



A SEGREGATED park in 1988, before apartheid's abolition

South Africa at a Glance

POPULATION 46.9 million

ETHNICITY*

Black	75%
White	14%
Coloured [mixed race]	9%
Indian	3%

PER CAPITA GDP
\$11,100
[U.S. \$40,100]

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH 43.3 years
[U.S. 77.7 years]

LITERACY RATE
(over age 15) 86%
[U.S. 97%]

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE*

Overall	26%
Black	31%
Coloured	22%
Indian/Asian	13%
White	5%

*ETHNICITY AND UNEMPLOYMENT NUMBERS ARE ROUNDED.
SOURCES: THE WORLD FACTBOOK 2004 (CIA); STATS SA

sanitation department, collecting trash in the predawn hours, catching some sleep, then collecting more trash in the afternoon.

For this, Petrus Mokoena earns less than \$300 a month. Fouriesburg Intermediate School wanted \$40 for James's tuition, and he paid it. Apartheid, he says, kept him an indentured and ignorant laborer on a white-owned farm for his entire youth.

"I want James to see that not to go to school is a bad thing," Petrus Mokoena says, speaking in Sotho, his only language. "I want him to speak English and to write English."

NO CANDLES

Forty dollars is no small sacrifice. Grice, the intermediate school principal, says she once asked James why he was doing poorly in one subject. "He said, 'I can't finish off the work before it's dark, and we don't have electricity,'" Grice says. "So I said to him, 'It's possible to study by candlelight.' And

he said, 'We don't have any candles.'"

James also lacks the support of a well-functioning family. Petrus Mokoena passes many evenings drinking Lesotho beer. His wife, MaDibeo, is silent and vacant-eyed in her mysterious illness, leaving James to do much of the cooking and cleaning and to help raise 7-year-old Mampho and her 9-year-old brother Thabiso.

James's other two brothers are Dibeo, a handsome 19-year-old who spent four straight years in the ninth grade at Ypokaleng High, the school James escaped; and Joseph, 13, who is James's closest companion.

TRYING TO FIT IN

James himself is in transit between two worlds, and is not really comfortable in either.

"My father told me that since I was in this school, I was beginning to lose my culture," James says. "That I am becoming a white person. That I don't eat with my hand; I eat with a fork."

Still, father and son engaged in the same ritual for the last two years to allow James to pursue his education. Each weekday night, when his father left on his trash-collecting run, he took a pen with him to mark his time sheet. And when he returned home about 6 a.m., just as James began to stir in his crowded bed, he gave his son the pen to use that day at school. Then James donned his Fouriesburg uniform and walked the mile to his school.



ONCE IT GETS DARK, James puts away his school work because his home lacks electricity and candles.

All-white under apartheid, the Fouriesburg school has since become almost all black. Most of the Afrikaner (whites of Dutch descent) students transferred to prep schools when apartheid was abolished; the current student body consists mostly of better-off black students and a few white students who cannot afford the cost of private-school tuition.

James fits into neither category. “The children tend to look down on him and see him as really poor,” says Mick Andrew, a 67-year-old English literature teacher at the Fouriesburg school and the closest thing James has to a mentor.

ON TO THE 10TH GRADE

At home, James studied. When he first came to the school, in January 2003, his grades were abysmal, in part because of his poor English. In his first term, he failed five subjects. In his second, he failed only English.

Fouriesburg classes end at the ninth grade. As the end of

the term loomed last December, James made elaborate plans to enroll in the 10th grade at a private school in Tweeling, 75 miles to the north. “I chose this school because I wanted to be far away,” he says.

But his dream exceeded his grasp: What James really needed was a scholarship, and his grades were not good enough to merit one.

When the new term began in January, James attended Breda High School, which is about 10 miles from Fouriesburg. It was the only school he and his family could afford that would take him in.

Ismail, another Masjaing ninth-grader who was James’s best friend at the Fouriesburg school, urged his friend to try to improve his grades in the future. He reminded James of his dream to soar among the clouds.

“I told him,” Ismail says, “‘If you’re going to be a pilot, you’re going to have to study harder.’”

‘My father, he works,’ James says. ‘He keeps on telling me, life is very strong, like a rock. You have to push it forward.’

Globali



CHINA GRADUATES
FIVE TIMES MORE
ENGINEERS
THAN THE U.S.

When your computer

crashes in the middle of a late-night homework session and you call a help line, there's a good

chance in this era of globalization that the friendly person assisting you is on the other side of the world, possibly in Bangalore, India's high-tech capital.

Bangalore is home to not only Indian firms, but also to outposts of American companies like Dell, IBM, and Delta Airlines, which in recent years have been hiring Indians to handle jobs outsourced from the U.S. Well-educated, ambitious, and fluent in English, young Indians cost a lot less than their American counterparts: A call-center employee in Bangalore makes around \$5,000 a year, compared with about \$25,000 in the U.S.

Today, there are 160,000 people in high-tech jobs in Bangalore, and they're doing a lot more than answering help-line calls. Someone in India (or China, South Korea, or elsewhere) may be preparing your parents' tax returns, reading your X-rays, or writing software you'll soon be using. Globalization has entered a new phase, with critical implications for all Americans, especially young people. *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist Thomas L. Friedman wonders if the U.S. is ready for the challenge.

For so many years, America's economy was so dominant on the world stage, so out front in so many key areas, that we fell into the habit of thinking we were competing largely against ourselves. If we fell behind in one area or another—whether it was math and science skills, broadband capacity, or wireless infrastructure—we took the view that: "Oh well, we'll fix that problem when we get to it. After all, we're just competing against ourselves."

In recent years, though, with the leveling of the global playing field, it should be apparent that we are not just competing against ourselves. The opening up of countries like India, China, and Russia means that their young people can plug and play—connect, collaborate, and compete—more easily and cheaply than ever before. And they are. We, alas, are still coasting along as if we have all the time in the world.

"Today, the most profound thing to me is the fact that a 14-year-old in Romania or Bangalore or the [former] Soviet

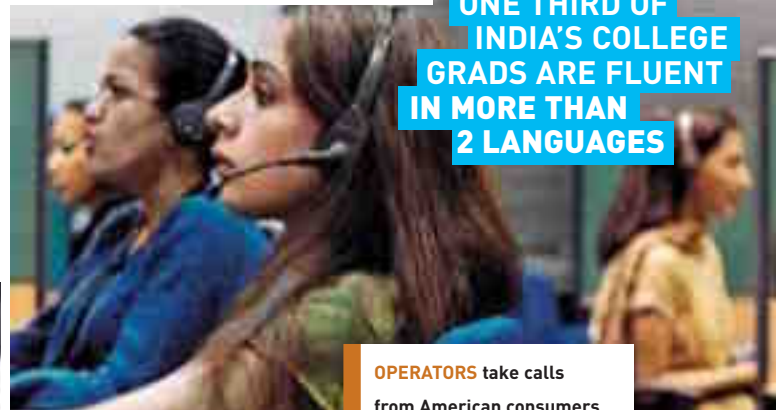
zation!

COVER STORY

The Challenge to America

By Thomas L. Friedman

Computers and the Internet have made the world a much smaller place—and brought foreign competition right to America's doorstep



ONE THIRD OF INDIA'S COLLEGE GRADS ARE FLUENT IN MORE THAN 2 LANGUAGES

OPERATORS take calls from American consumers at a call center in Bombay.



INDIA ACCOUNTS FOR 44% OF GLOBAL OUTSOURCING

THIS COMPUTER-CHIP designer is one of 1,600 employees at Texas Instruments' Bangalore facility.



FIBER OPTIC CABLE

How did it all happen so fast? Several key events and forces came together during the 1990s and converged around the year 2000. First, on Nov. 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall came down, allowing us to envision a more global future. Coincidentally, Microsoft's Windows 3.0, which helped create a global computer interface, shipped six months later.

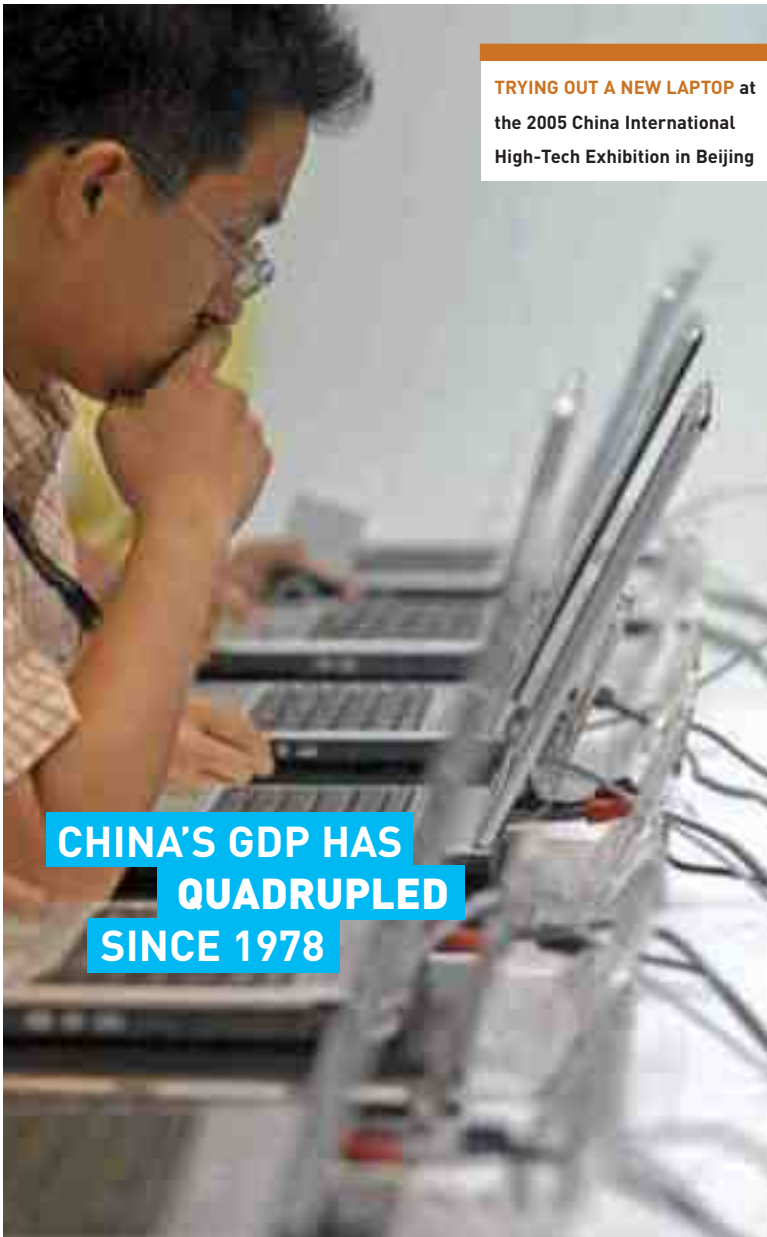
THE INTERNET COMES TO LIFE

Another key date was Aug. 9, 1995—the day Netscape went public. Netscape brought the Internet to life by making an easy-to-use Web browser widely available. Its stock offering also triggered the dot-com boom, prompting American companies to invest billions of dollars in fiber-optic telecommunications cable. And when undersea and underground fiber networks drove down the cost of transmitting voices, data, and images, Boston, Bangalore, and Beijing became next-door neighbors overnight.

Union or Vietnam has all the information, all the tools, all the software easily available to apply knowledge however they want," says Marc Andreessen, a co-founder of Netscape and creator of the first commercial Internet browser. "That is why I am sure the next Napster is going to come out of left field."

This article is adapted from Friedman's book, "The World is Flat: A Brief History of the 21st Century," and his recent columns.

TOP: VERMA SANTOSH/GAMMA; BOTTOM: SAVITA KIRLOSKAR/REUTERS/NEWS.COM



TRYING OUT A NEW LAPTOP at the 2005 China International High-Tech Exhibition in Beijing

CHINA'S GDP HAS QUADRUPLED SINCE 1978



CHINA NOW PRODUCES AS MUCH AS 70% OF THE MERCHANDISE SOLD BY WAL-MART

SEN. BYRON DORGAN (D-N.D.) at a protest in Washington, D.C., against the outsourcing of U.S. jobs

These developments produced even more ways in which individuals and companies around the world could collaborate. Among them were “outsourcing” and “offshoring,” in which all kinds of work—even entire factories and research facilities—could be shifted from the United States and Western Europe to places like China and India, where the work could be done cheaper, and in some cases, better.

INNOVATION WITHOUT EMIGRATION

Yet another major change occurred during the 1990s: Some 3 billion people who had been out of the global economic game came onto the playing field—the people of China, India, Russia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Central Asia. As their economies and political systems opened up, they were able to join the free market.

No country has benefited more from these changes, including America’s massive investment in technology, than India. “India had no resources and no infrastructure,” says Dinakar Singh, a Wall Street executive whose parents earned doctorates in India before emigrating to America. “For decades, you had to leave India to be a professional. Now, you can plug into the world from India.”

‘Americans whining—we have never seen that before.’

—Rajesh Rao

This convergence of new players on a new playing field may be the most important force shaping global economics and politics in the early 21st century. China now supplies as much as 70 percent of the merchandise sold by Arkansas-based Wal-Mart, America’s biggest private employer. But what China really wants is that the next generation of products not just be “made in China” but also “designed in China,” and eventually “dreamed up in China.” The same goes for India.

According to Craig Barrett, the CEO of Intel, “You don’t bring 3 billion people into the world economy overnight without huge consequences, especially from three societies [India, China, and Russia] with rich educational heritages.” That is why there is no guarantee that America and Western Europe will be leading the way as the 21st century unfolds.

If this moment has any parallel in recent history, it is the height of the Cold War, in 1957, when the Soviet Union



‘In the international competition to have the biggest and best supply of knowledge workers, America is falling behind.’

—Bill Gates



MANY COUNTRIES IN ASIA are creating new competition for the U.S.

leaped ahead of America in the space race by launching the *Sputnik* satellite. The main challenge then was from those practicing extreme Communism—Russia, China, and North Korea. The main challenge today is from those practicing extreme capitalism—China, India, and South Korea.

Rajesh Rao, a video-game entrepreneur from Bangalore, suggests that instead of complaining about outsourcing, Americans and Western Europeans “would be better off thinking about how you can . . . raise yourself into doing something better.” Says Rao: “Americans whining—we have never seen that before.”

Shirley Ann Jackson, president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y., says that a “quiet crisis” is eroding America’s scientific and engineering base. “If left unchecked,” says Jackson, the first black woman to earn a Ph.D. in physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, “this could challenge our pre-eminence and capacity to innovate.”

TOMORROW’S WORK FORCE

Three gaps now plague America. The first is an “ambition gap.” Compared with young Indians and Chinese, too many Americans have become lazy. We also have a “numbers gap”—we are not producing enough engineers and scientists. And finally, we are developing an “education gap.”

Bill Gates, Microsoft’s chairman, is concerned about high school education in America. “When I compare our high schools to what I see when I’m traveling abroad, I am

INDIA’S COLLEGES GRADUATE MORE THAN 3 MILLION STUDENTS EVERY YEAR



A MICROSOFT BILLBOARD provides a high-tech backdrop to a more traditional Indian scene, an open-air market in Bangalore.

terrified for our work force of tomorrow,” says Gates. “By 12th grade, U.S. students are scoring near the bottom of all industrialized nations [in math and science] . . . In the international competition to have the biggest and best supply of knowledge workers, America is falling behind.”

Everyone is going to have to run a little faster to advance his or her standard of living. When I was growing up, my parents used to say to me, “Tom, finish your dinner—people in China are starving.” I am now telling my own daughters, “Girls, finish your homework—people in China and India are starving for your jobs.”

Soldiers, But Not Citizens

For the thousands of Mexicans in the U.S. military, serving can be a fast track to citizenship—if they survive



AMERICAN SOLDIERS carry the coffin of Pfc. Jesus Fonseca (*left*), at his funeral in his hometown of Degollado, Mexico.

**By James C. McKinley Jr.
in Mexico**

The shrine in the corner would be familiar to many American military families. The flag is folded neatly in a triangle, encased in wood and glass. A couple of medals lie in boxes. A stern young man in his United States Army dress uniform peers out from a small photograph. His dog tags hang beside the photo.

These are the relics of a life cut short in the name of honor, liberty, and country.

What seems odd is that the mementos are not in a living room in New Jersey or Nebraska, but in a house with concrete floors in a dusty town in central Mexico. And the soldier, Private First Class Jesus Fonseca, 19, was not an

American citizen, but one of at least 25 Mexican citizens who have died fighting for the U.S. in two years of war.

About 28,000 permanent resident aliens were in the U.S. armed forces as of April—3,485 of them from Mexico. The Mexicans are the largest group among the 79 immigrants who have been killed in Iraq, the Pentagon says.

These numbers point to Mexico's ambivalent yet deeply intertwined relationship with the United States. Since 2000, more than 2.4 million Mexicans have migrated to the U.S. seeking jobs and a better life. Some of them, and now their children, are willing to fight and die for their new country.

For many, service in the armed forces is seen as a fast track to citizenship. During wartime, citizenship is all but guaranteed for foreigners who serve honorably in the American military, immigration officials say. In a cruel twist, soldiers like Fonseca, who died in Iraq on January 17 after taking a sniper's bullet in Ramadi, are accorded citizenship after death.

TWO WORLDS

Like Fonseca, most Mexicans in the armed forces straddle two worlds. Some join for the usual reasons: a desire for adventure, love for their adopted country, escaping poverty, a subsidized education, and the urge to prove themselves.

"The recruitment system really goes after the Hispanic community," says Fernando Suarez del Solar, whose son, Jesus, joined the Marines just out of high school. "A lot of Hispanics are born in Mexico but live in the United States and don't have citizenship. They see a good option in the Army to get papers, to get citizenship more quickly, and one thing the recruiters say often is that military service will make it easier for them to become accepted in society."

Jesus, 20, a lance corporal, was killed in March 2003 near Nasiriya, in the initial offensive in Iraq. He left behind a wife and infant son in Escondido, Calif.

For some, citizenship is less important than economic opportunity. Sergio Diaz Sr. says his son, Specialist Sergio Diaz Varela, 21, had few prospects when he graduated from

Narbonne High School in Lomita, Calif. The father made a meager living doing odd jobs and fixing cars. They lived in a trailer park. "There weren't many other options, so he enlisted," Sergio Diaz Sr. says.

A DREAM DENIED

His son told relatives that someday he hoped to have a well-paid job in the States, as a full-fledged citizen. Then, he said, he wanted to buy his mother a house in Mexico. That dream ended last Thanksgiving in Iraq, when a roadside bomb in Ramadi killed him.

In December, he was buried in Mexico, outside Guadalajara. At first, his mother did not want the American flag draped over the coffin, but she relented under pressure from relatives.

Fonseca, too, had deep roots in Mexico, returning every summer. His father says his son had good grades in high school and could have gone to college but chose a



FERNANDO SUAREZ del Solar holds a picture of his son, Jesus, who was killed in Iraq in 2003.

28,000 permanent resident aliens are in the U.S. armed forces

3,485 are from Mexico

military career instead. His goal was to become an intelligence officer.

"I'm proud of my son," his father says, "because even though he did not accomplish everything he want-

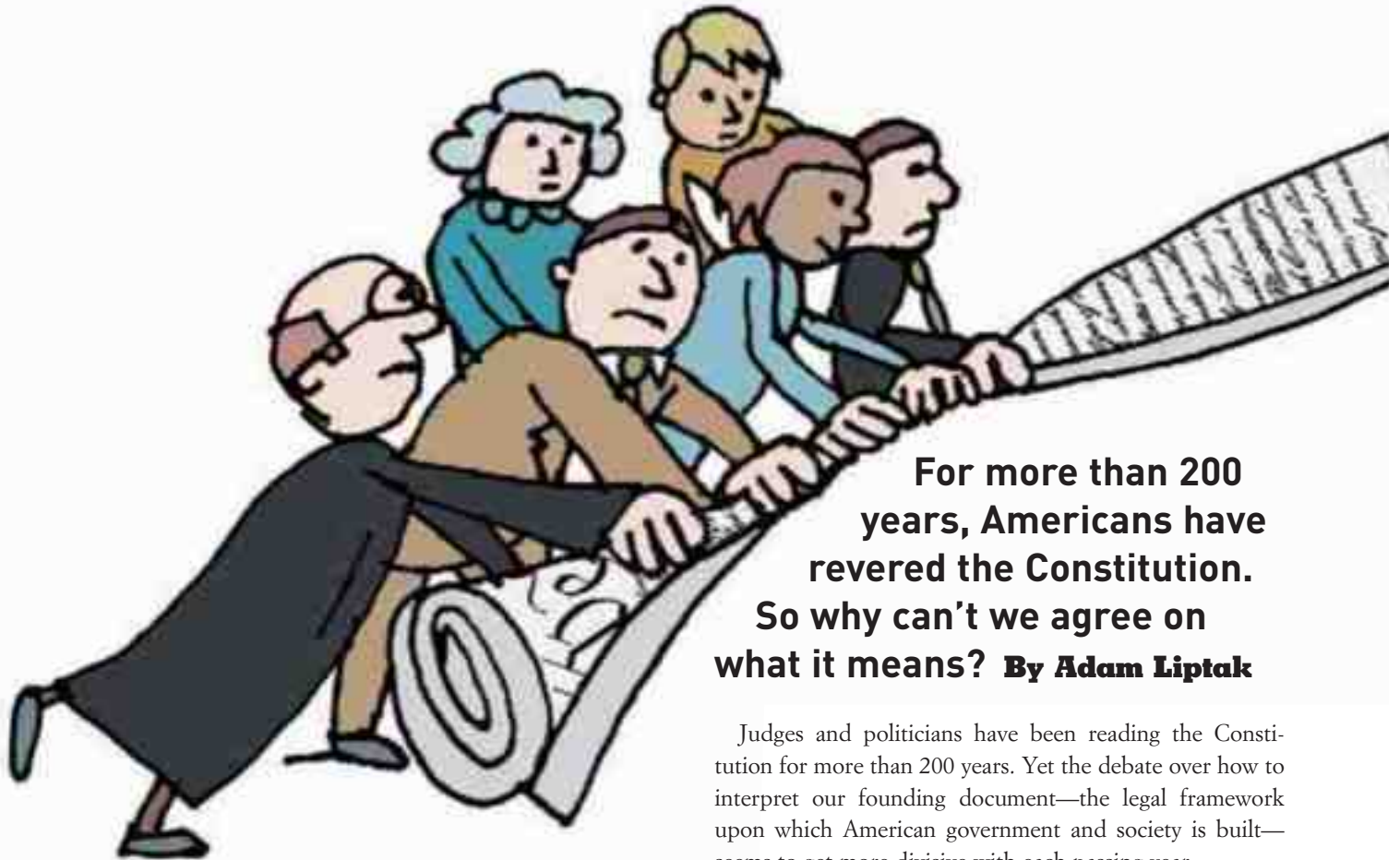
ed, it was still one of his dreams to belong to the Army."

Having gone to the U.S. as a toddler, Jesus Fonseca felt as much a part of the community in Marietta, Ga., where his family had settled, as he did part of Degollado, their hometown in Mexico. But it was during one of his summers in Degollado that he met his 18-year-old wife. After the war, they hoped to get citizenship and settle in Colorado.

Fonseca's Mexican grandmother fought back tears when asked whether she supported the war that had taken her grandson's life. "I don't know about politics," she says. "I can only say that it's a sad thing to see so many dead." ❏

James C. McKinley is a correspondent in The Times's Mexico City bureau.

War of Words



For more than 200 years, Americans have revered the Constitution. So why can't we agree on what it means? **By Adam Liptak**

Judges and politicians have been reading the Constitution for more than 200 years. Yet the debate over how to interpret our founding document—the legal framework upon which American government and society is built—seems to get more divisive with each passing year.

It is the question at the heart of the fight over President Bush's appointments to the federal courts, sparking increasingly emotional debates in the Senate, which must confirm or reject the President's nominees. And all of that is just a warm-up for the real battle: filling the first vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court in more than a decade, following the resignation of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor in July.

TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

To follow the action in Washington, you need to understand the two broad schools of thought on how to interpret the Constitution: originalism (sometimes called strict constructionism) and the "living Constitution" school.

The Constitution is a brisk little document, a mere 8,000 words, including its 27 Amendments. You can read it in half an hour, and some of its language flows like poetry: "We the people of the United States," it starts, "in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."



People who favor a “living Constitution” say that it is a special kind of legal document, purposefully studded by the Founding Fathers with ambiguities and meant to adapt to changing times and the changing views of the nation.

“The drafters were using general terms,” says Mark V. Tushnet, a constitutional scholar at Georgetown University in Washington. “They weren’t spelling it out, and they knew it. That was either because they wanted future generations to resolve it or because they couldn’t agree.”

Originalists, on the other hand, including President Bush, look to the meaning the Constitution had in 1789. It is, they believe, a legal document like any other—no different from a contract or a statute. Its words are plain and its meaning should not change over time, no matter what the views of a modern-day judge are.

Originalists say the idea of a “living Constitution” invites what they call “judicial activism” and “legislating from the bench”—judges creating rights that are not explicitly spelled out in the Constitution and getting involved in areas

that should be handled by Congress and state legislatures.

“The big lie of the ‘living Constitution’ is that it helps adapt the country to changing times,” says M. Edward Whelan III, a former official

in the Justice Department and law clerk to Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. “What the ‘living Constitution’ does is lock in place for all Americans the policy preferences of five Justices.”

“Five Justices” constitute a majority on the nine-member Supreme Court. Ever since *Marbury v. Madison*, the 1803 case in which Chief Justice John Marshall declared that “it is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is,” judges have decided which laws are consistent with the Constitution, and which are not.

That power is known as judicial review and it means that federal judges, who are appointed and serve for life, can

strike down laws passed by elected representatives in Congress and the states if they find the laws unconstitutional.

Much of the debate over the President’s judicial nominees centers on how aggressively judges should use that power. Politically conservative judges, who tend to favor

Adam Liptak is national legal correspondent for The New York Times.



the first in a series

THE CONSTITUTION TODAY



JUVENILE executions, common in 1789, were ruled unconstitutional in March.



PRESIDENT Bush favors a strict interpretation of the Constitution.



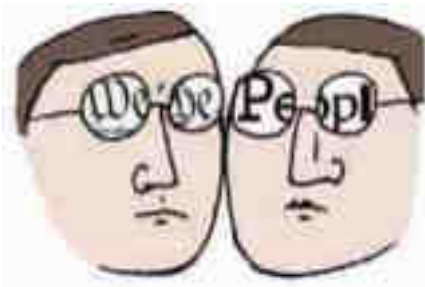
HOW SHOULD today's judges interpret what the Framers meant 200 years ago?

originalism, and liberal judges, who tend to favor the “living Constitution” idea, can reach very different conclusions when deciding cases involving contentious issues like free speech, religion, abortion, race, and the death penalty.

SPECIFIC & ABSTRACT

Not all cases are so hard to decide, since some parts of the Constitution are quite specific. Only people over 35, for example, can be President, plain and simple. But many of the Constitution’s key provisions—like “freedom of speech,” “due process,” and “equal protection”—are a lot more abstract.

The Founding Fathers, of course, could not have envisioned every possible development in modern American



say about electronic wiretaps?

And while the Constitution gives Congress the power to grant “for limited time to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries,” what does that mean in 2005 for file-sharing services like Grokster? Does downloading MP3s without paying the musicians violate copyright law?

The words by themselves, “living Constitution” proponents argue, do not provide more than general guidance in such situations.

Take the question of capital punishment for teenagers. An originalist would say that there is nothing in the Constitution that expressly forbids it. And since teenagers were routinely executed in 1789, they argue, it should not be considered cruel and unusual punishment in the 21st century.



1973: Protesting the Supreme Court’s decision in *Roe v. Wade*, still hotly debated today

life. What, for instance, does the Fourth Amendment’s prohibition on “unreasonable searches and seizures” have to

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT, MIKE SIMONS/GETTY IMAGES; TIM SLOAN/AP/WIDEWORLDPHOTOS; GRANGER COLLECTION; ILLUSTRATION: SCOTT MENCHIN

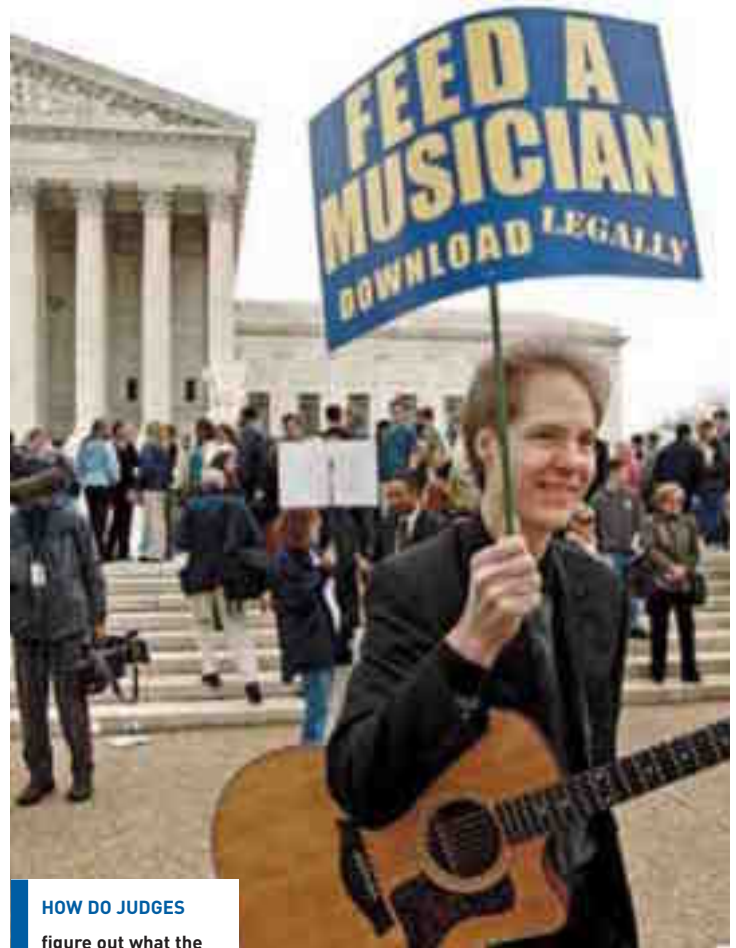
Others say that the Constitution should be responsive to evolving notions of decency and justice. And, indeed, by a 5-to-4 vote, the Supreme Court in March struck down the death penalty for people who were younger than 18 at the time of their crimes.

A RIGHT TO PRIVACY?

The series of cases that most troubles originalists—and which figures in many of today’s most hotly debated social issues—involves a right to privacy that all sides agree does not appear explicitly in the text of the Constitution. It started with a 1965 Supreme Court decision, *Griswold v. Connecticut*, which struck down a Connecticut law that denied married people access to birth control. The Court, in a nutshell, said that married couples, at least when it comes to birth control, had the right to decide what went on in the privacy of their homes, without government interference.

The privacy right first granted in the *Griswold* decision led directly to *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, in which the Supreme Court struck down state laws banning abortion (and thus made it legal throughout the United States), and to other controversial rulings in the last three decades.

With President Bush set to fill one or more Supreme Court vacancies during his second and final term, most observers expect his nominees to be closely questioned at their Senate confirmation hearings about their views of



HOW DO JUDGES

figure out what the Constitution “says” about something like downloading MP3s?

culture and popular views and may take those into account in their decisions, along with legal consider-

ations and their judicial philosophy.

That may have been the case, for example, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the landmark 1954 Supreme Court



A CONFIRMATION BATTLE is expected in the Senate over President Bush’s nomination to replace Sandra Day O’Connor on the Supreme Court.

The current Justices: (from left) Breyer, Ginsburg, Kennedy, O’Connor, Rehnquist (Chief Justice), Scalia, Souter, Stevens, and Thomas.

these cases, and, in particular, of whether *Roe v. Wade* was an accurate interpretation of the Constitution or whether it constituted “judicial activism.”

It’s important to remember, however, that judges are not automatons who strictly adhere to one philosophy in every one of the hundreds or thousands of cases they decide.

In fact, judges are human beings just like the rest of us. They watch television, go to the movies, read the newspaper, surf the Internet, and, it is often said, “follow the election returns.” In other words, they are aware of popular

decision that outlawed “separate but equal” racial segregation in public schools. The *Brown* decision is considered by many to have been the Court’s finest hour. But leading constitutional scholars at the time, even those sympathetic to the result, criticized the decision as judicial activism.

“When you work with the Constitution, you inevitably find out that all of the methods of interpretation should be used,” says Professor Tushnet, the constitutional scholar. “You’re going to want to do some originalism. You’re going to want to do some ‘living Constitution.’ Everybody does it.”

A Town for the

Would a town where sign language is the norm be a boon to deaf people—or further isolate them from the rest of society?

MILLER (left) and Barwacz at the proposed site of their town built around sign language

By Monica Davey in Salem, South Dakota

Standing in an empty field along a windswept highway in South Dakota, Marvin T. Miller, who is deaf, and his mother-in-law, M.E. Barwacz, who is not, envision the town they want to create here: a place built around American Sign Language, where teachers will sign, the town council will hold its debates in sign language, and restaurant workers will be required to know how to sign orders.

Nearly 100 families from as far away as Australia have already declared their intention to live in Miller and Barwacz's village, to be called Laurent, after Laurent Clerc, a French educator of the deaf from the 1800s. The families include people who are deaf or hard of hearing, or who can hear but just want to communicate in sign language.

"Society isn't doing that great a job of, quote-unquote, integrating us," says Miller, 33. "My children don't see [deaf]



AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE would be the preferred mode of communication in Laurent.

role models in their lives: mayors, factory managers, postal workers, business owners. So we're setting up a place to show our unique culture, our unique society."

GLASS & OPEN SPACES

While deaf enclaves have cropped up throughout the nation, this would be the first town expressly created for people who sign, its developers say. The homes and businesses would incorporate glass and open space for easy

Deaf?

visibility across wide distances. Fire and police services would be designed with more lights and fewer sirens. And shops, businesses, and restaurants would be required to be sign-language friendly.

In Salem, a farming town of 1,300 people three miles from the proposed site of Laurent, people seem unsure of what to make of the idea. Some wonder how the proposed town of 2,500 would mesh with McCook County's economy of corn, cows, and pigs. Others doubt Laurent will ever become a reality.

A CONTENTIOUS IDEA

And, in the complicated political world of deaf culture, Laurent is an increasingly contentious idea. For some—like Miller; his wife, Jennifer, who is also deaf; and their four deaf children—it seems the simplest of wishes: to live in a place where they are fully engaged in day-to-day life. Others, however, particularly advocates of technologies that help deaf people use spoken language, wonder whether such a town would merely isolate and exclude the deaf more than ever.

“We think there is a greater benefit for people to be part of the whole world,” says Todd Houston, executive director of the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Washington, D.C. “I understand the desire to be around people like ourselves, and I don't have

a problem with that, but I don't think it's very wise.”

Over the past 15 years, Houston says, it has become easier for the deaf and hard of hearing to grow up using spoken language. He cites a steady rise in the use of cochlear implants (electronic devices surgically implanted in the inner ear that can in many cases restore partial hearing to the deaf), more early diagnoses and therapies for deaf children, and efforts to place some deaf children in mainstream schools.

That change has set off intense political debate over what it means to be deaf and what mode of communication—signing or talking—the deaf should focus on.



MANY SCHOOLS now offer American Sign Language as an alternative to studying a foreign language.

FAST FACTS

- 90% of infants born with hearing loss have hearing parents
- American Sign Language is the fifth-most-studied language at U.S. colleges

SOURCES: AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS; MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

Those who want to live in Laurent, though, say their intent is not exclusivity, but the inclusion of diverse people, especially those who do not have the luxury of communicating with speech.

Lawrence J. Brick, a retired school administrator from Philadelphia, says Laurent holds attractions that most hearing people would struggle to grasp: no longer having to shy away from the neighbors, fearing he could not communicate; no longer having to guess what a store clerk is saying about a price; no longer having to apologize for being deaf.

'HAPPY BEING DEAF'

But Dr. Michael Novak of Urbana, Ill., who has been performing cochlear implants since 1984, is convinced that the trend among the deaf is actually shifting toward therapies that could help the next generation of deaf people use

spoken language—and that the appeal of a town for sign-language users might fade away.

For his part, though, Miller says reports of the “death of sign language and deaf culture continue to be greatly exaggerated.” Not everyone, he says, is eligible for or would even want to receive technologies like cochlear implants. “I do not want one for myself,” says Miller. “I am very happy being deaf. To me, this is like asking a black or Asian person if he/she would take a pill to turn into a white person.”

Monica Davey is a correspondent in The Times's Chicago bureau.



1920: Women Get the Vote

The 19th Amendment was ratified 85 years ago, after decades of campaigning by the women's suffrage movement



WOMEN celebrate ratification of the 19th Amendment in August 1920.

BY SAM ROBERTS

When John Adams and his fellow patriots were mulling independence from England in the spring of 1776, Abigail Adams famously urged her husband to “remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors.” Otherwise, she warned, “we are determined to

foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.”

That summer, the Declaration of Independence proclaimed that all men are created equal but said nothing of women's equality. It would take another 144 years before the U.S. Constitution was amended, giving women the right to vote in every state.

That 19th Amendment says simply:

“The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.” It took effect 85 years ago in August after a dramatic ratification battle in Tennessee in which a 24-year-old legislator cast the deciding vote.

The amendment was a long time coming. At various times, women could run for public office in some places, but

could rarely vote. (As far back as 1776, New Jersey allowed women property owners to vote, but rescinded that right three decades later.)

'WOMANIFESTO'

The campaign for women's rights began in earnest in 1848 at a Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, N.Y., organized by 32-year-old Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other advocates. Stanton had drafted a "Womanifesto" patterned on the Declaration of Independence, but the one resolution that shocked even some of her supporters was a demand for equal voting rights, also known as universal suffrage. "I saw clearly," Stanton later recalled, "that the power to make the laws was the right through which all other rights could be secured."

Stanton was joined in her campaign by Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, Lucretia Mott, and other crusaders who would become icons of the women's movement. Some were militant. Many were met with verbal abuse and even violence. Already active in the antislavery movement and temperance campaigns (which urged abstinence from alcohol), women often enlisted in the fight for voting rights too.

WYOMING IS FIRST

They staged demonstrations, engaged in civil disobedience, began legal challenges, and pressed their case state by state. In 1869, the Wyoming Territory gave women the vote, with the first permanent suffrage law in the nation. ("It made sense that a place like Wyoming would embrace women's rights," Gail Collins of *The New York Times* wrote in her recent book *America's Women*. "With very few women around, there was no danger that they could impose

their will on the male majority.")

In 1878, a constitutional amendment was introduced in Congress. The legislation languished for nine years. In 1887, the full Senate considered the amendment for the first time and defeated it by about 2-to-1.

But the suffrage movement was slowly gaining support. With more and more women graduating from high school, going to college, and working outside the home,



SUSAN B. ANTHONY



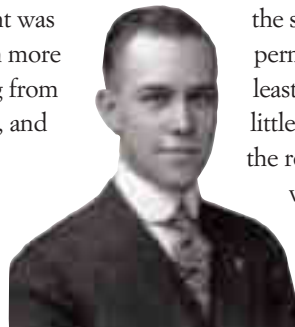
ELIZABETH CADY STANTON

many Americans began asking: Why couldn't women vote too?

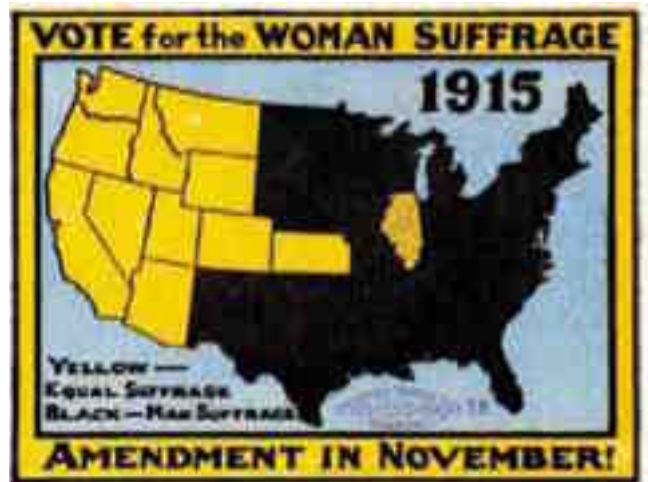
Plenty of opposition existed, according to Collins: Democrats feared women would vote for the more socially progressive Republicans. The liquor industry, afraid of prohibition, also opposed women's suffrage, as did many people in the South, where blacks had been largely disenfranchised since Reconstruction.

In 1918, after much cajoling and picketing by suffragists, President Woodrow Wilson changed his mind and backed the amendment. The next year, both houses of Congress voted to amend the Constitution. Suffrage advocates predicted quick ratification by the states. (By 1919, 28 states permitted women to vote, at least for President.) Within a little more than a year, 35 of the required 36 states had voted for ratification.

The last stand for anti-suffragists was in



< HARRY BURN



A SUFFRAGE STAMP from 1915 shows the 12 states, all in the West and Midwest, that allowed women to vote.

Tennessee in the summer of 1920. Their showdown in the State Legislature became known as the "War of the Roses." (Pro-amendment forces sported yellow roses; the antis wore red.)

After two roll calls, the vote was still tied, 48-48. On the third, Harry T. Burn, a Republican and, at 24, the youngest member of the legislature,

Sam Roberts is urban affairs correspondent for The New York Times.

A CARTOON from
a 1917 magazine



MORE THAN 20,000 marchers took part in this 1915 parade
in New York City in support of women's suffrage.



IN 1984, Geraldine
Ferraro ran for Vice
President on the
Democratic ticket,
with Walter Mondale.

switched sides. He was wearing a red rose but voted for ratification because he had received a letter from his mother that read, in part: "Hurrah and vote for suffrage! Don't keep them in doubt!"

Burn said later: "I know that a mother's advice is always safest for her boy to follow and my mother wanted me to vote for ratification. I appreciated the fact that an opportunity such as seldom comes to mortal man—to free 17,000,000 women from political slavery—was mine."

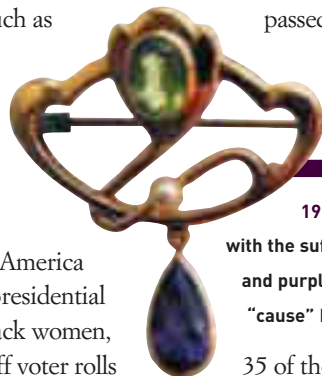
GRADUAL CHANGE

In 1920, women across America had the right to vote in a presidential election. (In the South, black women, and men, would be kept off voter rolls in large numbers until 1965, after passage of the Voting Rights Act.)

But newly enfranchised women voted in much smaller numbers than men. "Women who were adults at that time had been socialized to believe that

voting was socially inappropriate for women," says Susan J. Carroll, senior scholar at the Center for American Women and Politics.

The political and social change sought by suffragists came gradually and not without fits and starts. An Equal Rights Amendment, stipulating equal treatment of the sexes under the law, was passed by Congress and sent to the states in 1972, but later failed after being ratified by only



1910 PIN: Women wore jewelry with the suffrage colors—green, white, and purple—just as people wear "cause" bracelets and ribbons today.

35 of the necessary 38 states.

In 1980, however, women surpassed men for the first time in turnout for a presidential election. Since then, there has also been a substantial rise in the number of women running for and holding political office.

In 1984, Democrat Geraldine Ferraro was nominated for Vice President, the first time a woman ran on a major party's national ticket. Twenty-one years later, while women make up a disproportionately small share of officeholders, they are getting elected in higher numbers than ever before: Women now hold 14 Senate and 66 House seats (both records), plus eight governorships (one less than last year's record).

A FEMALE PRESIDENT?

While it's early to handicap the 2008 presidential election, some analysts predict that Democrats will nominate Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York. Among Republicans, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is mentioned as a candidate, though she insists she has no interest in the job.

The mere speculation that a woman could head one or both of the major party tickets for President is yet another milestone in the long political evolution of women in the United States. ❶

China's Leaders Have a New Watchdog: The Internet

The Chinese Communist Party may finally have met its match—the Internet. The Internet is beginning to play the watchdog role in China that the press plays in the West. It is also eroding the leadership's monopoly on information, and is complicating the traditional policy of “*nei jin wai song*”—cracking down at home while pretending to foreigners to be wide open. Some 100 million Chinese now surf the Web; e-mail and Web chat rooms are ubiquitous. The authorities have arrested a growing number of Web dissidents, but there just aren't enough police to control the Internet. So where is China going? I think the Internet is hastening China along the same path that South Korea, Chile, and Taiwan pioneered: In each place, a booming economy nurtured a middle class, leading to better schools, more international contact, and a growing squeamishness about torturing dissidents. By giving its people broadband, the Chinese leadership is digging the Communist Party's grave. —*Nicholas D. Kristof* [5/24/05]



What's Happened to America's Middle Class?

Baby boomers like me grew up in a relatively equal society. In the 1960s, America was a place in which very few people were extremely wealthy, many blue-collar workers earned wages that placed them comfortably in the middle class, and working families could expect steadily rising living standards and a reasonable degree of economic security. That middle-class society no longer exists. Working families have seen little if any progress over the past 30 years in average income. And economic security is a thing of the past: All it takes is a bit of bad luck in employment or health to plunge a family into poverty. But the wealthy have done very well indeed. Since 1980 in particular, U.S. government policies have favored the wealthy at the expense of working families, from tax cuts to bankruptcy “reform.” The reason for concern is that a society in which most people can be considered middle class is a better society—and more likely to be a functioning democracy—than one in which there are great extremes of wealth and poverty. Reversing the rise in inequality and economic insecurity won't be easy, but let's try to do something about the politics of greed. —*Paul Krugman* [6/10/05]

What if Ads Could Dribble?

Top executives in the NBA are suggesting that they would consider allowing advertiser logos to appear on player uniforms—if the price was right. The NBA has kept its jerseys sacrosanct so far, staving off even the logo of Reebok, which provides all NBA uniforms. But some foresee a day when that might change. “Anything that creates new revenue sources is good for both the teams and the players,” says Mark Cuban, owner of the Dallas Mavericks. But what about a potentially negative reaction from purists? Advertisers could also irritate die-hard fans, a risk they run any time that ads annex yet another part of American culture. Fans feel so intensely about their teams and identify so closely with players, moreover, that they may complain loudly. Then again, that's what draws advertisers to sports in the first place. —*Nat Ives* [5/26/05]



**YOUR LOGO
HERE?**
The NBA
is thinking
about it.

OPINION features excerpts of pieces by columnists from the Op-Ed page and other sections of The New York Times. All columns from the last seven days are available at nytimes.com; Op-Ed pieces (by columnists and outside contributors), plus Editorials and Letters to the Editor, are at nytimes.com/opinion. Please let us know what you think of OPINION at upfront@scholastic.com.

YES Where and how women serve in the military should be based on ability and training, not gender. Policies that prohibit the military from using the skills of all servicemembers should be changed.

Today, more than 350,000 women serve in our military, with some 30,000 in Afghanistan and Iraq.

But policy now limits where women serve in the Army and Marines. Specifically closed are infantry, armor, and most artillery units, and women cannot be assigned to units whose primary mission is to engage the enemy. These policies are based on what is believed to be the will of the American public, not women's proven abilities.

Women have always fought and died in America's wars. (As of June, 41 women have died in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.) They've led men in battle, been prisoners of war, fired lethal weapons, and operated our most sophisticated systems. They fly combat aircraft and serve on combat ships. Women meet the military's physical and mental standards, are technically proficient, and are highly trained war fighters and leaders. From my 28 years in the Air Force, I know that servicemen consider women part of the team.

In today's all-volunteer force, women have accepted the challenges, responsibilities, and dangers of military service, just as the men have. With today's battlefield and the war on terror, there are no front lines, and every unit regardless of size or mission has the potential to engage with the enemy.

Why handicap our military with outdated and unrealistic policies restricting the use of capable people? It is time such policies were abolished.

—**Brig. Gen. Wilma Vaught**
U.S. Air Force (Retired)

Should women be allowed in combat?

Women make up 15 percent of America's armed forces, but military policy prohibits them from serving in combat zones



THOUSANDS of servicewomen are currently in Iraq and Afghanistan.

NO The nation's pride in our military women does not justify assignments in direct ground combat, which involves more than the experience of being in danger, or even the risk of ambush.

Forget about Lara Croft, and think about real-life infantry, Marines, and Special Operations Forces that engage the enemy in places like Fallujah in Iraq. These men carry electronic equipment, weapons, ammunition, heavy body armor, and water weighing 50 to 100 pounds. Such burdens would weigh more heavily on smaller female soldiers who have, on average, 45 to 50 percent less upper-body strength and 25 to 30 percent less aerobic capacity, which is essential for endurance.

In the Army's own surveys, 90 percent of enlisted women have said they oppose involuntary combat assignments on the same basis as men. They know that training for female soldiers is modified to compensate for physical differences, but there can be no modifications on the battlefield. In direct combat, women would not have an equal opportunity to survive, or to help fellow soldiers survive.

Even if physical capabilities were objectively measured and equal, coed combat assignments would affect discipline and unit cohesion. Women lose more duty time due to medical issues, including pregnancy, and their absence would be particularly disruptive in combat units where concentration and mutual trust are essential for survival.

At times, we have no choice about sending young men to war, but we do have a choice when it comes to sending young women. Changing that would be a mistake.

—**Elaine Donnelly**
President, Center for Military Readiness

Helping Afghan Girls Get to School

BY CLOTILDE DEDECKER, 18

Last year, workers in Afghanistan finished construction on the six-classroom brick-and-concrete Zarghona Middle School in Kandahar, and 300 Afghan girls who had never gone to school before are now students there.

The school owes its existence to a talk at the YWCA in Buffalo, N.Y., that I happened to attend with my mother in March 2002. It was a panel discussion on “Afghanistan, Women,



STUDENTS AT the all-girls Zarghona Middle School in Kandahar

and Islam,” and the speakers introduced me to the plight of Afghan women and girls.

THE TALIBAN

From 1996 to 2001, Afghanistan was ruled by a conservative Muslim group called the Taliban, whose rigid interpretation of Islam stripped

Dedecker graduated in May from Nardin Academy in Buffalo, N.Y., and is now a freshman at Harvard.

women of their rights. Girls were not allowed to go to school. The Taliban were ousted in November 2001 by U.S. and allied forces and Afghan rebel groups, but women are still struggling to regain their rights.

One of the speakers at the YWCA was Susan Safi-Rafiq, an advocate for Afghan women. She said that before the Taliban, women had made up a significant portion of the country’s professors and doctors. That surprised and impressed me. She made a plea to help Afghan girls get the education they had been denied under the Taliban.

The thought of being denied an education because you were a girl was horrifying. I went to an all-girls school, and it was a very empowering experience. My school always seemed charged with a feeling of sisterly support that I know will always remain with me.

I thought that Afghan girls, after years of oppression, were entitled to the same sort of experience. I hoped an all-girls school would provide a supportive environment where they would see that women have value.

After her talk, I introduced myself to Safi-Rafiq. I told her I wanted to get involved, and that all-girls’ schools could help by doing what they do best: promoting the education of girls. She encouraged me to pursue the idea.

That spring, I presented a proposal



DEDECKER spearheaded a campaign to build a school for girls in Afghanistan.

‘The thought of being denied an education because you were a girl was horrifying.’

to raise money to build a girls’ school in Afghanistan to the principals of eight nearby girls’ schools, and six agreed to participate. The “Western New York Girls Schools’ Coalition: Afghanistan Project” was born.

\$21,000 RAISED

We organized car washes, bottle drives, dances, and bake sales to help raise money. We also received some generous donations. Our goal was \$12,000, but building the school ended up costing about \$18,000. To date, we have raised more than \$21,000.

We sent the Afghan students a photo of all the girls in the coalition. We haven’t heard back from them, but that’s perfectly fine: As long as they have their school, we’re happy! 📍

Send us your 500-word story, along with your name, address, and phone number. If we publish it, we’ll pay you \$100.

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