Apr-1992

Bridgewater Review, Vol. 9, No. 1, Spring 1992

Recommended Citation
Bridgewater State College. (1992). Bridgewater Review. 9(1). Available at: http://vc.bridgew.edu/br_rev/vol9/iss1/1

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Quo Vadis, America?

by Michael J. Kryzanek

Americans have a seemingly innate need to rank their country and to define the times they live in. Whether it is asking questions about who's #1 or trying to make sense out of each decade, Americans appear determined to clarify where we are in the world and what we are about as a people. As we move through the 90s, Americans are already beginning a new round of introspection concerning their status compared to the Japanese and the Europeans and their character as a people headed toward that magical year 2000.

The early returns on this introspection process are quite mixed. Many Americans suspect that we live better than most people, but they are bothered by deteriorating political, social and economic conditions. The current recession has done little to elevate the spirit of many Americans and has begun to affect their perceptions about whether we remain #1. Winning a war in the Persian Gulf while the Japanese win the economic war is of little comfort.

Added to the questioning of our place in the world is the current national fixation with defining the decade. Where the 60s was an age of commitment, the 70s of rebellion, and the 80s of greed, the 90s is quickly evolving as an age of middle class anger and frustration. After seeing minorities gain attention in the 60s, the young in the 70s and the wealthy in the 80s, the middle class has decided that the 90s is their time.

It is now common in America to see protests by a new group of demonstrators - the white, middle class. Whether the issue is taxes, abortion, affirmative action, big government or public corruption, the middle class has now become the 90s version of the 60s "hippies" - disillusioned but determined critics of the system, dedicated to overthrowing the status quo.

Taken together, the questioning of our power in the world and the frequent outbursts of the middle class have created a disturbing climate in this country. As we move deeper and deeper into self-doubt and paralysis, we also begin to lash out wildly against easy targets of our frustration. We blame the Japanese, welfare cheats, politicians, feminists, immigrants and African-Americans. Rather than seeing our current malaise as the result of years of neglect, laziness, phony priorities, and selfishness, we look to the poor people of color or tiny minorities as the source of all that is wrong with America. Perhaps more troubling, we begin to be attracted to the quick fix artists who know how to use a slogan and appeal to the anger of the middle class.

Somewhere lost in this false clatter is the serious talk about taking those tough and long term steps to maintain our position as a world leader. A country that is serious about being #1 and looking toward 2000 with hope and pride works through its distress, rolls up its sleeves, throws out what doesn't work, experiments with new ideas, and tells its leaders to develop policies to address the real needs of the people and not the pet projects of the special interests. A country that wants to remain #1 does not wallow in self-doubt, cynicism, and constant whining over how bad things are.

To avoid the charge that I'm merely spouting off and scolding my fellow Americans without taking a stand, here are a few ideas that may help this country remain powerful and move toward the year 2000 with its affairs in order:

1. Develop a tax system that is both fair and stimulates investment. The system we have now is not only cumbersome, but squeezes the middle class while failing to create a climate conducive to business. It is possible to have a tax system that satisfies both constituencies.

2. Invest in people. This country was made great by a public education system that prepared people for the challenges of the future. We will go nowhere unless we spend money on the young, those who need to acquire a technical skill, and those who are displaced by corporate restructuring.

3. Pay off the national debt. This country cannot grow and meet the needs of its people with such a huge debt burden. If the process of paying off the debt requires spending cuts and new taxes, then so be it.

4. Move quickly toward national health care. The time is now. The doctors and the insurance companies won't like it, but the current system is in shambles and waiting for the national political leadership to do what most Americans now want desperately.

5. Take money out of politics. If our democratic system is not working it is because money not the voice of the people has become the driving force. The key is to get the television networks to provide free air time during campaigns and to outlaw contributions from so-called political action committees.

Our past proves beyond a doubt that we are a people of energy, innovation and determination. Surely if we put our minds to it we can stop placing blame and pointing fingers and begin to get the country moving again. As the Nike commercial so aptly states - Just Do It!
About fifteen years ago I started keeping lists of all the movies I saw. Although I probably go to theater less now than ever, one or twice a month, with VCRs and cable I may be watching more movies than ever before. It’s pretty depressing, but usually I can find maybe ten movies a year that I would want to watch again. As I look over my list of one hundred films from 1980-1989, two things become apparent:

1. There is a higher percentage of American films on the list than in the previous two decades, roughly fifty percent. I don’t think this is because I’ve gotten too lazy to read subtitles. [Fassbinder died, and Bunuel and Truffaut, of course. But British films have become more interesting.] Mainly I think the shift is caused by more American filmmakers doing the kind of quirky little movies that came from Europe in the 1960s and 1970s — thematically irreverent, formally audacious works by independent directors who had more or less complete control over what they put on film. I recently read an article that claimed that the 1970s were the heyday of the American art film. The writer goes on to claim that a film like Bob Rafelson’s *Five Easy Pieces* couldn’t be made today. This is all clearly nonsense. If *Barton Fink* and *My Own Private Idaho* got made last year and were fairly well distributed, things can’t be all that bad. This kind of thinking belongs to a nostalgia for the 1960s and the 1970s that is very much a part of the subject matter for some comic films in the 1980s.

2. A large number of films on my list are comedies that deal satirically with various features of the “me decade.” The humor in these films is often dark, and our reactions are often complex, uncertain: should we be laughing at this or not? These are comedies by virtue of their tone and their happy endings, but these endings partake of a kind of perverse undercutting that renders them problematic. Perverse in the sense of being “willfully determined or disposed to go counter to what is expected or desired: contrary.” These films give us new ways to look at ourselves and our times.

Several comic heroes in American films of the past decade taste the joys of transgression, of a walk on the wild side. Leaving the comforts and complacencies of home, they go forth to encounter the reality of experience, which is slowly or swiftly transformed into their own worst nightmare. Yuppies are especially vulnerable. In *Something Wild* (Jonathan Demme, 1986), a young stockbroker named Charlie (Jeff Daniels) meets Lulu (Melanie Griffith) when he attempts to leave a diner in Manhattan without paying for his lunch. Lulu spots him as a closet rebel, offers him a ride back to his office but, with his reluctant cooperation, abducts him instead. Lulu is a kook, “a wild thing,” as the music on the soundtrack announces. When they stop at a liquor store, she cleans out the register while the clerk’s back is turned. Later, after checking into a motel with money from the office Christmas fund (most subsequent expenditures are handled by plastic), Charlie gets handcuffed to the bed for a session of mildly kinky sex. The ride could end here — Lulu is going to visit her mother in Pennsylvania and suggests that Charlie catch a bus home — but it’s only Friday and Charlie is free until Monday morning.

Lulu has provided Charlie with his fantasy of transgression (“Boy, I’m going to have to write this down,” he gleefully says to himself in the shower), and now it’s his turn to act out her dream of domesticity. Lulu’s real name, it turns out, is Audrey, and for her mother and her classmates at a high school reunion, Charlie pretends to be her husband. Everything is kept light. Charlie survives what he can only imagine as the worst catastrophe when Audrey produces his lost wallet. Her fantasy of a normal life seems to have a fair chance of becoming true as the two discover a real attachment.

Enter Ray (Ray Liotta), Audrey’s high school sweetheart, just out of prison after a five-year stretch for armed robbery. A jealous and impish psychopath, Ray shows both Charlie and Audrey that they are not who they say they are: Charlie’s not a happily married man on a lark but is unhappily divorced, living an empty life in an all but empty house. It is Audrey who is married — to Ray. “You look like a TV couple,” shrieks Ray, and the movie shifts into high gear, taking along its elements of
energies toward punishing their yuppie
disasters that will end some eight hours
get my vote as the flat out funniest films of
the decade, and both direct their comic
heroes for attempting to escape everyday
“Better a live dog than a dead lion.” We
meets Marcy (Rosanna
and she gives him her phone number.

A cautionary tale about the dangers of
leaving the straight and narrow? It would
seem so, and yet certainly nothing about
Charlie’s life is made to seem very desirable. When asked by a colleague what
makes someone like Ray tick, Charlie tries to sum up his experience with a formula:
“Better a live dog than a dead lion.” We
can’t help but think that Charlie really
wants it both ways.

Martin Scorsese’s After Hours and Albert
Brooks’ Lost in America, both from 1985,
got my vote as the flat out funniest films of
the decade, and both direct their comic
energies toward punishing their yuppie
heroes for attempting to escape everyday
life. In After Hours a word processor, Paul
(Griffin Dunne), meets Marcy (Rosanna
Arquette) in a late-night Manhattan diner,
and she gives him her phone number.
Thinking he might like to pursue the
acquaintance, he gives her a call. She
invites him over to Soho. His last $20 bill
flies out the window on the taxi ride down,
beginning a relentless procession of
disasters that will end some eight hours
later when he falls from a moving van in
front of his office building just in time to go
to work.

The punishments that Paul receives are
too methodically administered to lack
design. At one point we see him from on
high as he falls on his knees and asks,

“Why me? What have I done?” He does
well to address his question to the camera,
because it is clear that the man behind the
camera is the Jehovah responsible for his
afflictions. As if to underline this point,
Scorsese himself appears in one scene in the
film, again from on high, directimg spot-
lights on the dancers in a punk nightclub —
a scene in which Paul barely escapes
receiving a Mohawk haircut. (He had
gained admittance to the club with some
difficulty only after listening to the
bouncer/doorman quote from Kafka’s
parable “Before the Law.” Paul might have
expected this immersion in a Kafkaesque
world because he had learned earlier that
“different rules apply when it gets late. It’s
like, after hours.”

Most of the film is taken up with Paul
simply trying to get home. His frustration
peaks when he finally
finds someone who
will give him sub-
cover that
his girlfriend has just com-
suicide. It’s
pretty clear
that the girlfriend is Marcy, and Paul’s
rudeness to her is at least indirectly the
cause of her death. The coincidences keep
piling up, producing some pretty strange
locations: As Paul says, if the two women sound similar, “that’s because they’re the
same person and they’re both dead!” This
death, as the one in Something Wild, comes
as a shock because we have been responding
to the comedy. The shock is softened,
however, by the surreal events that are
increasingly divorced from reality.

Much of the humor here stems from
Paul’s unshakable incredulity. He calls the
police to report that his life is being
threatened by a mob of local tenants who
have decided that he is the burglar who has
been pillaging the neighborhood and he
cannot believe it when they hang up on
him. He keeps expecting the rules of the
daytime world to remain operative: “I just
wanted to leave my apartment and meet a
nice girl, and now I’ve got to die for it?”
A covert reference to one of the dominant
concerns of the decade — the dangers of
sexuality, especially on the singles scene —
the line appeals to our sense of justice even
as it undercuts that appeal with its self-pity.
Paul may be just a nice guy looking for a
good time, but his narcissism, reflected by
his repeated trips to various bathrooms to
stare at himself in the mirror, prevents our
sympathetic identification.

Marrieds in the 1980s aren’t immune to
the dangers of deviation. Lost in America
features a couple of dinks (dual-income-no-
kids: remember?) who give up their jobs
and their California “lifestyles” and hit the
open road in a Winnebago. David Howard
(Albert Brooks, who also wrote and
directed) quits his $100,000-a-year job in
advertising in a fit of pique after he fails to
get an anticipated promotion and is told he
will be transferred to New York. His wife,
Linda (Julie Hagerty), somewhat bored by
the direction their lives seemed to be taking,
follows his lead, and after liquidating their
considerable assets, they go forth to
encounter America, to “touch Indians,” as
David tells their friends. As they leave the
city in their newly acquired mobile home
— “Born to be Wild” on the soundtrack —
David affirms his kinship with a passing
bearded motorcyclist with a thumbs up
sign. The biker responds with his middle
finger.

Heading east, their first stop is Las Vegas,
where they plan to renew their marriage
vows to commemorate the beginnings of a
new life. Linda, however, slips out of their
room in the middle of the night, discovers
she is a compulsive gambler, and loses their
everything, their “nestegg,” playing
roulette.

David tries to sell the casino owner the
idea that he should return their money as
part of a promotional campaign. If he
doesn’t seem to realize how hopeless this is,
perhaps it is because in the world of
advertising, anything is possible, and he is
unwilling to acknowledge that he has left
this world behind.

Brooks never really attempts to distance
himself from the characters. David is the
same mixture of chutzpah and anxiety that

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Brooks himself projects off-screen. He never relaxes, buy he can look with some amusement at the predicaments he creates for himself. And there is none of the spooky mixture of comedy and terror that is found in Scorsese and Demme. No one will die in this movie, and the poke in the nose David receives from a crazed truckdriver serves only to bring him to his senses and to save his marriage, which was in danger of disintegrating when it looked as if he was going to force Linda to pay for her transgression at the gaming tables for the rest of her life.

The couple’s luck is not all bad. At one point a highway patrolman doesn’t give them a speeding ticket after Linda tells him that David’s favorite movie is Easy Rider. “Really! It’s mine, too!” Never mind that the officer’s motorcycle is provided by the state, or that David’s cross-country escape was to have been funded by the advertising industry, both men are not entirely wrong in saying they’ve modeled their lives after those of Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper. As David points out to Linda, even those two 1960s iconoclasts had their nestegg, in the form of a large cache of drugs, stashed in their gas tanks.

The couple make it to a trailer park in northern Arizona, where they begin the day looking for jobs. At the unemployment office, David discovers he is a bit overqualified for the available jobs in the area. He accepts a position, however, as a crossing guard at an elementary school.

The final sequence is perhaps the most abstract road movie ever filmed, a three-minute trip across America, via the interstate, set to the music of “New York, New York,” as sung by Frank Sinatra, whose political shift from the Kennedys in the 60s to Ronald Reagan in the 80s is perhaps emblematic of a national confusion of values.

What seems most distinctive about these three movies is the wide range of ideological responses that they permit and perhaps encourage. Culturally hip, Demme, Scorsese, and Brooks each ridicule middleclass complacency even while they provide culturally square, politically conservative “messages” with happy endings that, despite a deeply felt cynicism, seem to present wholesale sell-out as the only sensible course of action.

The last two comedies I wish to discuss are Jim Jarmusch’s Stranger than Paradise (1984) and David Lynch’s Blue Velvet (1986). They are, it seems to me, simply the best American movies of the 1980s: in part because they analyze nostalgia without being drenched in it; in part because each creates its own idiom, so that when we leave the movie theater, we see things as if they were framed by Lynch’s camera or Jarmusch’s rhythms. Each, in its own way, responds to contemporary reality by reflecting the middle by way of the margins. Each, in its own way, encourages repeated viewings by virtue of its richness, even as it resists an easy first reading by virtue of the intellectual and emotional demands it makes upon the viewer.

Stranger than Paradise is low-budget, black-and-white, “avant-garde,” but fun. It has the look of some of the Andy Warhol films of the 1960s, but instead of simply letting the camera run, it imposes upon its material a very strict rhythm: Each scene within the three titled parts of the film ends with the marked punctuation of a cut to black. Film comedy always depends upon the establishment of a comic rhythm, whether it is the meticulously planned sight-gags of the silent era or the perfectly timed line of dialogue in the Hollywood screwball comedies of the 1930s and 1940s. Jarmusch discovers another source of comic rhythm by holding a shot just slightly longer than he should. We are perhaps twenty minutes into the film before we see how this works.

Willie (John Lurie) is a Hungarian-American living in the most depressing apartment in New York City and devoting what little energy he has to severing all his ethnic ties. He has no visible means of support, but that is hardly a problem, since his needs are so few — a frozen dinner, a black-and-white TV set, maybe a movie or a poker game with his only friend Eddie. Enter Eva (Eszter Balint), a cousin from Budapest who needs a place to stay for a few days until she can go to Cleveland to live with her Aunt Lotte. Willie isn’t very nice to Eva, but she finally wins him over, somewhat, by demonstrating her abilities as a shoplifter. Part One ends with Eva leaving for Cleveland and Willie and Eddie having a beer together in Willie’s apartment. Both men move slightly forward in their chairs as if they are about to speak. Nothing happens — cut to black. Trust me: It is hilarious. The film is filled with little moments like this, when the dramatic utterance is lost as the opportunity for speech passes. I want to say, however, that
the film is about talk, a sort of My Dinner with Andre (1981) with characters who have nothing to say.

As in the other films I've described, there is an attempt to leave the sterility of everyday life. We discover that both Willie and Eddie have been thinking about Eva for months, not by what they say but by their sudden decision to pay her a visit in Cleveland. In the most touching scene in the movie, the guys surprise Eva at her job in a fast-food restaurant, and Eddie is inordinately pleased that she remembers him. Even Willie loses a bit of his cool when he shows some jealousy over Eva's new boyfriend. What these tourists discover in their travels, however, is that nothing ever changes. There's nothing to see, nothing to do. "You know, it's funny," says Eddie, "you come to some place new, and everything looks the same," and Jarmusch's camera confirms the truth of this observation. Most of the time in Cleveland is spent playing cards and watching television. When the three characters finally decide to venture outside the house for some sightseeing, they go to look at Lake Erie. But it is the middle of a snowstorm, and all they see is an all-engulfing whiteness. Never has nihilism presented such a comic face, except perhaps in Samuel Beckett, but the Irish author kept on talking even after demonstrating there was nothing to say. Jarmusch shows us what it is really like to come to the end of words.

Like the characters in Gus Van Sant's own films - Drugstore Cowboy, (1989) and My Own Private Idaho (1991) — Willie and Eddie express the problem of how to spend time, how to live outside the mainstream of American life. Some essential aspect of their acculturation just didn't take. They seem to want to enjoy the pleasures of tourism but finally just don't know how. Florida at the end of the film, is represented by a pair of sunglasses and a dreary motel room. The austerity of style here reflects a real emptiness. I won't give away the ending (I suspect fewer people have seen this film than the others, although it is available on video), but say that magic does enter into the mundane and that the cool, unflappable Willie finally does discover that life contains surprises.

To simplify, if Stranger than Paradise shows us a world drained of color, Blue Velvet presents the garish colors of a carnival world. Both films are expressionistic in that they make us see things not as they are or as they are presented by film "realism." In Lynch's film there is a kind of hyper-realistic attention to minute detail even while its melodramatic mode is excessive and gives a cartoon-like quality to its presentation of both innocence and experience: The good people of Lumberton belong in a mawkish family sit-com, and the bad people are straight from hell.

Jeffrey (Kyle MacLachlan) comes home from college to help with the family business after his father has a stroke. Walking across an empty lot one day on the way to visit his father in the hospital, he discovers a human ear. Although Jeffrey dutifully reports his discovery to the local authorities, he and a police detective's daughter, Sandy (Laura Dern), conduct their own investigation. Jeffrey, however, soon leaves his partner behind as the film becomes the story of his initiation into the darker areas of human experience, and he is forced to acknowledge his own complicity in the evil that surrounds him.

Even though Lynch frequently interrupts this story with a joke, it would be a mistake to conclude, "Oh, it's just a comedy." Even more than the other films mentioned here, Blue Velvet attempts to shock us with its violence. In this case the violence stems from a graphic visual and verbal depiction of deviant sexuality, mainly sado-masochistic in nature but not restricted to that.

While most film critics were quick to praise the film's originality and the power of its dream-like images, several, like Roger Ebert, had strong moral objections to the combination of elements of pain and degradation with what often seemed a sophomoric sense of humor. For Ebert, what Lynch does to his leading lady (Isabella Rossellini) is more sadistic than what his maniacal villain, Frank Booth (Dennis Hopper), does to her. As Ebert puts it, "What's worse, to inflict pain upon someone or to stand back and find the whole thing funny?"

But Lynch doesn't find the whole thing funny. It isn't funny when Jeffrey, after his first encounter with the dark side, asks why there is so much evil in the world. Nor is it funny when Sandy replies by describing her dream of the return of the robins in the spring, with the birds dispelling the darkness and bringing with them a world of sweetness and light. But this scene prepares for the film's parody of a happy ending, in which the forces of evil are destroyed, fathers recover from strokes, mothers are reunited with sons, and life is a weekend cook-out, complete with robins. But the robin shown close-up has a bug in its beak. On seeing this, Jeffrey's bird-like aunt says with disgust, "Oh, I could never eat a bug," even as she shoves another bite of food into her mouth. The humor of the scene is inextricably bound up with the horror of the discovery that even robins are predators.

If the 1980s come to be seen (to borrow a phrase from an Auden poem that summarizes the 1930s) as "a low, dishonest decade," a large portion of its dishonesty probably derives from its hypocritical attempt to maintain a rigid separation of the light and the dark, of "us" and "them," to call the placid surface "reality" and to demonize the darkness, to tell us we can visit the wild side without having to live there. Some comic filmmakers of the decade expose this hypocrisy by extracting a price for the laughter they invoke.
The Native Americans’ Struggle for Economic Self-Sufficiency

by Sandra Faiman-Silva
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The Columbian Quincentenary, 1992, is being observed by both First Americans and more recent settlers as a year of reflection and self-assessment. How have the First or Native Americans, so-called American Indians, fared through five centuries of culture contact? Some insights into the ongoing struggles of Native Americans to retain their cultural viability and integrity can be gleaned in an unlikely source, through a critical analysis of organized gambling in Native American communities.

Many tribes throughout the United States have contemplated high stakes gaming, including the Mashpee Wampanoags, who were approached by private investors wanting to begin gaming operations in that Cape Cod community. Another tribe, the Pequots successfully fought for the right to enter the gaming business, and recently opened a multi-million dollar gambling casino on tribal property in Ledyard, Connecticut.

Although the Mashpee Wampanoags chose not to join the bingo bandwagon, debates over gaming in their and other Native American communities speak to profound dilemmas facing Native Americans. Although highly diverse as a group, Native Americans share a common legacy as the poorest ethnic minority in the nation, even amidst vast potential stores of wealth. Approximately one-third of reservation-based tribes live on resource-rich lands, mainly in the Southwest and Northwest, some with abundant minerals, timber, or other natural resources. In fact, several tribes created the Council of Energy Resource Tribes (CERT), modelled on OPEC, to collectively develop strategies for marketing tribal resources, mainly oil, natural gas and coal.

The majority of Native Americans, however, are resource-poor, inhabiting lands of little value, some virtually uninhabitable in the remote reaches of the Dakotas, Montana, and Arizona. Like the Mashpee Wampanoags, who in 1977 lost their bid for formal tribal recognition by the United States government and own collectively only about fifty-five acres, about two thirds of tribes are resource-poor, with few material assets to sustain their people. Like their counterparts throughout the Third World, Native Americans experience staggering rates of unemployment, disease, infant mortality, and diminished life expectancy, the highest rate of any ethnic community in the nation.

Reagan’s “New Federalism” Economic Policies

The Federal Government has devised many strategies to solve Indian economic woes, from the New Deal Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 to the Indian relocation and termination policies of the 1950s. All of these policy proposals have had to reconcile two often contradictory aims: preserving tribal cultural integrity and self-determination while working to bring Native Americans into the economic mainstream of American life.

In 1983 Ronald Reagan unveiled a policy initiative to promote tribal development and self-determination, reduce bureaucratic waste and excessive federal regulation in Indian administration, and reduce federal costs of administering tribal programs. A major impetus for Reagan’s initiative was the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (PL93-638), by which tribes were encouraged to take over Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)-run programs, including health services and hospitals, jobs training, and resource management.

The federal government argued that by dealing with Indians on a government-to-government basis, providing block grant seed money for private sector business initiatives, and reducing bureaucratic meddling in tribal decision-making (i.e., turning over many BIA functions to tribes), tribes could begin to develop truly self-sustainable economies, thereby alleviating the extreme poverty and cultural and social malaise endemic to Native American communities.

A series of “Social and Economic Development Strategies” (SEDS) were proposed to bring self-sufficiency and economic autonomy to tribal communities, while reducing federal expenses and “excessive federal control” of tribal decision-making. Policies implemented entitled tribes to apply for federally-funded block grants under Title XX to finance housing, employment training, and other services previously administered through the BIA.

Results of these “new Federalism” initiatives for tribal self-sufficiency have been mixed, prompting some to call Reagan’s policies nothing more than “sophisticated termination” while others called them “termination by accountants.” One undisputed effect has been...
to drastically downsize federal budget expenditures to Native Americans, which were reduced by twenty-two percent in one year, from $3.4 billion in 1982 to $2.7 billion in the 1983 budget. Essential tribal programs including health-related Community Health Representatives, CETA programs, “mutual help” home construction monies, and BIA-funded education entitlements have all been targets of Reagan/Bush-era budget cutting measures.

**Indian Responses to ‘New Federalism’**

Tribal development initiatives in the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma during the “new Federalism” era reveal the ambiguities of these self-determination/self-sufficiency efforts, and the contradictions Native Americans face as they work toward tribal self-sufficiency, cultural integrity and freedom from bureaucratic abuses.

Beginning in 1985 the Choctaws implemented “new Federalism” policies in earnest when they took over operation of the 52-bed Talihina Indian Hospital, renamed the Choctaw Nation Indian Hospital, and three outlying clinics, which together employed over two hundred people. The Choctaws were the first tribe to act on their newly-acquired right under provisions of the 1975 Indian Self-Determination Act to contract what were formerly BIA-run services in the area of full hospital administration. Hospital take-over was the tribe’s first step to increase tribal employment, improve the quality of contracted services, and free the tribe from BIA control of its economic affairs.

Perhaps the boldest, and potentially most controversial tribal undertaking was in 1987 when The Choctaw Indian Bingo Palace opened at Durant, Oklahoma, creating about 140 additional jobs and promising to be a significant tribal revenue-producer. In its second year of operations the bingo concession netted more than one million dollars in profits and the tribe expects to earn $12 million annually when it takes over full ownership after seven years. Bingo concession profits subsidize health-related services not funded by Indian Health Service appropriations, including specialized medications for diabetes and arthritis, funds drastically curtailed during the Reagan years. Revenues have also been used to construct Community Centers throughout the Choctaw Nation, and for higher education scholarship programs, elderly nutrition programs, and emergency assistance programs.

The Choctaw tribe continued to undertake additional development projects, and in 1989 the tribe obtained a $249,000 BIA Indian Business Development Grant to sub-contract chemical finishing operations from Texas Instruments Company under Defense Department contracts. The tribe also began courting Boeing, General Dynamics, and other companies to entice them to site industrial development enterprises in the Choctaw Nation. In 1988 the tribe gained added managerial leverage when it established the Choctaw Nations Tax commission and passed a Sales Tax Act, which would permit the tribe to collect tax revenues on its various business operations, a right denied since the Curtis Act termination legislation was passed in 1898. These aggressive tribal efforts brought more than three hundred jobs to Choctaws during the 1980s, and by 1990 the tribe employed more than seven hundred people. Choctaws currently have taken over contracting of all BIA services, although about sixty-five percent of operating funds, still come from the federal government.

Choctaw efforts to increase tribal revenues have been laudable, but at what cost? Placing the tribe’s development strategy into national and international contexts reveals that Choctaws continue to be subject to exploitation and dependency, veiled in self-determination rhetoric, which compromise fundamental moral, ethical and economic considerations in favor of narrowly economic goals.

Three significant problem areas emerge in a closer examination of tribal development strategies and remain as persistent obstacles to full tribal autonomy, self-sufficiency, and cultural viability.

First, the very nature and implications of private sector investment in Native American communities in general and the Choctaw Nation in particular place weaker tribal entities at the mercy of formidable development interests who may sacrifice human, environmental, and social well-being in favor of corporate profits. Tribal communities, including the Choctaw Nation, now compete for multinational corporate investment (MNC) dollars with foreign locations too unstable to remain as sites of substantial MNC investment; and Choctaw workers have replaced cheap, readily available, unskilled foreign workers in the MNC formula for corporate profit-making.

Texas Instruments was just such an investor when it contracted with the tribe to run a branch of its chemical finishing operations in 1989. Forced to close its El Salvadorian chemical facility in 1985, then the largest chemical plant in Central America, due to the war torn country’s on-going civil unrest, TI chose southeastern Oklahoma because it offered many advantages at greatly reduced costs.
Choctaws, like their Salvadoran counterparts, were a relatively cheap, docile and readily-available labor force willing to perform routine jobs using often dangerous chemicals in a setting free of the volatility of a nation embedded in civil war turmoil.

Native American communities seeking valuable investment dollars which translate into jobs and income for their citizens, are ripe for such domestic corporate entrepreneurial investments. Hidden in these enterprises, however, are heavy costs in both personnel and tribal resources. Like foreign laborers and illegal aliens, Native American workers are willing to perform hazardous, distasteful jobs American-born white laborers often refuse, jobs which endanger human health and compromise the well-being of workers. Currently Native American communities are being courted by hazardous waste disposal companies to site hazardous waste dumps on tribal land, a venture most communities categorically reject in the face of Love Canal, but which spell potential financial wealth for impoverished Native American communities.

A second area of heavy tribal investment in the Choctaw Nation, again with an ambiguous history and potentially-volatile future, is high stakes gambling. Since 1980 dozens of tribes have invested in high stakes bingo operations, which offer the lure of substantial revenues with minimal costs for capital outlays or technological expertise. Further, since bingo concessions on tribal lands lie outside of state jurisdictions, tribes are not restricted in their capacity to sponsor such gambling operations. Currently about one-third of tribes have entered the high stakes gambling business, in part an outgrowth of the development-for-self-sufficiency initiatives of the Reagan/Bush-era’s “new Federalism” policies, a particularly attractive option for resource-poor tribes.

Debates over high stakes bingo and other gaming operations on tribal land, at times acrimonious and even violent, have pitted more conservative traditional factions opposed to gaming against secular tribal members who favor such enterprises. Fractional disputes among Canadian and New York state Mohawks led to violence which left two dead and brought intervention by the Canadian mounted and local police forces.

Not only does gaming precipitate intra-tribal factional disputes, but tribes must also confront states which may not endorse tribally-run high stakes gaming operations that compete with their state-run operations. Although recent Supreme Court rulings have protected tribal rights to sponsor gaming, this right is by no means secure, and its reversal would deny tribes much-needed revenues.

A third by-product of Choctaw development has been that unemployment remains a pressing unresolved problem, perhaps a symptom of “new Federalism’s” fundamental contradictions, based on a free market economic model that views tribal entities rather like corporations competing with states for federal and private investment dollars to implement development and cultural visions or needs. Unemployment, at astronomical levels throughout Native American communities, including the Choctaw Nations, has increased steadily during the “new Federalism” era. “In 1981, at the height of one of the most severe recessions in U. S. history, the unemployment on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota stood at fifty percent. In 1986, after what has been described as the longest and strongest economic recovery this country has ever experienced, the unemployment rate at Rosebud was eighty-six percent, an increase of seventy-two percent in five years.” Choctaw Nation unemployment currently estimated at thirty-seven percent, has risen steadily since the early 1980s; while elsewhere Native American unemployment is a shocking eighty to ninety percent.

These development schemes persistently ignore the most abundant tribal resource, tribal members themselves, who remain unemployed and often unemployable due to lack of marketable skills. Those businesses attracted to reservations and rural Indian communities are often not labor intensive but capital intensive; and where labor is needed it is unskilled, as in virtually all the Choctaw tribal development initiatives undertaken during the new Federalism era.

Where dollars are being made in tribal projects, as in the bingo jackpots, few jobs are created, and even fewer skills are being cultivated. What in effect has occurred is that tribally-sponsored private sector investment initiatives now maintain the tribal welfare state the federal government has abrogated to them. Tribal earnings now replace federal dollars lost during the 1980s to provide day care and head start programs, home weatherization programs, dental and health benefits, and food commodities for local Indians.

Current federal initiatives may signal yet another attempt, disguised as private sector development for self-sufficiency, to abrogate the sacred trust relationship between the federal government and tribal peoples. If indeed the “new Federalism” is a disguised policy to abrogate long-standing tribal trust obligations, as some tribal spokespersons fear, then tribal viability is indeed in jeopardy. As we assess the status of Native Americans in the Columbian Quincentennial Year, we continue to debate what is and should be their rightful place in our community. How to reconcile tribal and cultural self-determination with full economic assimilation into the mainstream of American life remains elusive for Native Americans and their allies.
Advertising and Cultural Change: Budweiser Ads of the 1940s and 1990s

by Jason Rallis, '93

Many historians of the media and popular culture have documented the ways in which advertisements reflect the attitudes and aspirations of the era in which they were created. Two ads for Budweiser beer, created 50 years apart, provide concrete evidence of important cultural changes.

Few people today associate beer with colonial America or with patriotism. Yet this is precisely the connection that Budweiser sought to make in its advertising during World War II. For example, a colonial tableau depicted in one of the ads released during the War shows a housewife and her three children. The woman, wearing a bonnet and apron and showing an expression of concern, stands facing the audience. Her left hand rocks a cradle while her right stirs the steaming contents of a large black kettle over an open hearth. A young girl sits to the left, smiling as she sews; to the right, a boy also smiles as he churns butter. The room is furnished with many colonial tools and implements, and a rifle and powder horn hang over the fireplace. Beneath and to the left of this hearthside tableau is a picture of a tiny minuteman, with its own caption: “For Freedom’s sake...Buy War Bonds and Stamps.”

The text describes the life of the minuteman’s wife: “She was a Jill of all trades...cook, spinner, weaver, pork salter, candle maker, baker, laundress and gardener.” This lifestyle is compared with that of American women during World War II: “Some are serving with our armed forces. Some work in war plants. Others grow Victory gardens, preserve fruits and vegetables, cook, serve, sew...save fats, cans and paper.” In the lower right hand corner, a tiny Budweiser bottle and some more small print suggest that “The women of America...have discovered that...Budweiser makes their simple wartime meals taste better.”

Analyzing this advertisement, one is struck by the imagery of labor and frugality. Not only are both children working, but the mother is doing two jobs at once. The fact that the room is filled with household tools also emphasizes labor and economic self-sufficiency. Both the text and illustration also convey the idea of survival without luxuries (“simple wartime meals”); readers are encouraged to save what they can and do without what they don’t need.

The reasons for the minuteman imagery are obvious. The nation was being asked to pull together in a collective effort to combat a powerful enemy, and the romanticized determination of the colonists during the American Revolution was an appropriate parallel for Americans in the early 1940s.
Fifty years later, merchandising strategy has changed dramatically. Beer advertising has largely shifted from magazines to television, and the focus and content of the ads have undergone a striking change. An ad for Bud Dry illustrates the point. In contrast with the small, discreet image of the Bud bottle and glass in the World War II ad, here an oversized bottle of Bud Dry and a glass mug occupy two-thirds of the magazine page. Beads of water cover both, and the condensation on the mug has been wiped away to form a dollar sign. The caption reads, “If money can’t buy happiness, then why do all dates start at the cash machine?” Beneath the caption, a few lines of text extol the virtues of Bud Dry and pose the question “Why ask why? Try Bud Dry.”

The caption jokingly reflects the cynicism of contemporary society (preoccupied with rape trials, sexual harassment hearings, a disintegrated Soviet Union and continuing tension in the Middle East). “Why ask why?” suggests that it’s useless to question or analyze excessively, as many people tend to do in an attempt to make order out of the natural chaos of life. It tells the reader to relax and accept things the way they are. This same mood spawned the popular Bobby McFerrin song, “Don’t Worry, Be Happy,” in the late 1980s.

The most famous Anheuser-Busch television ad campaign in recent years centered around a “party animal,” a black and white dog named Spuds MacKenzie. Spuds was always at the scene of a party, usually by a pool, where naturally the beer flowed freely. Three or four beautiful bikini-clad women were constantly in attendance, and Spuds observed the festivities with cool, calm composure.

These contemporary ads are, culturally, poles apart from the magazine ads of the forties. No early American scenes are nostalgically evoked. Instead of drinking beer as a reward for hard work, the idea in the ’90s seems to be to forget the hard work and skip straight to the beer. Americans, apparently, don’t want to see labor idealized; they want to see a carefree life. One student I know says that his idea of a perfect lifestyle would be to live in a beer commercial. In place of Americana, the pioneering spirit and the work ethic, contemporary Budweiser ads nourish the dangerous illusion that Americans have already reached the top and that we have only to sit back, relax and enjoy the rewards."}

Jason Rallis is majoring in art with a concentration in graphic design. This article is an excerpt from a research paper he composed for Professor Barbara Apstein's English Composition class. It has been abridged and edited by Professor Apstein.
CULTURAL COMMENTARY

AN AMERICAN MYTH - TAKE

by William C. Levin  -  Department of Sociology & Anthropology

As we enter another presidential campaign season we should, in our own defense, sharpen our skills at recognizing the candidates’ manipulation of our national symbols. I’m not talking about the baby-kissing, flag-waving, ethnic-food-consuming sort of symbols. Those are merely photo-opportunity level messages designed to reassure us that a candidate has roughly the same sorts of innards (cranial and otherwise) as we do. Rather, I am concerned about those more deeply held values that identify us as a people, values like patriotism, progress, and individualism. The politician who succeeds in manipulating the symbols for such values in a way that pleases the electorate will, as usual, have the inside track to the presidency.

As a case study, let’s look at individualism, an American value which sociologists agree was fundamental in the founding of our country, and is still powerful in our identity. This is most clearly seen in the presidency of Ronald Reagan, whose dominant ideological belief was that the unencumbered individual is the engine of our productivity and the genius of our liberties. No president in modern times has manipulated the symbols of this value better than Reagan.

What, then, can the presidential candidates in 1992 do to identify themselves with American individualism? What symbols are there to manipulate? One clear candidate is good old (died in 1899) Horatio Alger. His name is still invoked to characterize people who rise from “rags to riches” by reason of their hard work, moral purity, wit, and willingness to take risks. Curious about the survival of this dated symbol of American virtues, I went looking for some of the facts of Alger’s life and works. I found that the phrase “Horatio Alger story” as most people understand it, has little to do with Alger and a great deal to do with American myth-making.

Reference works estimate the number of books Alger wrote at something over 120. Of these, about 100 were stories about the adventures of poor boys, including titles like Forging Ahead, Making His Mark, Cast Upon the Breakers, and Ragged Dick; or, Street Life in New York with the Bootblacks. Our politicians invoke these stories in their “rags to riches” sense, talking about how the heroes get rich because of their hard work, willingness to take chances, and their high moral character. In fact, Alger’s books do not teach this simple lesson. In story after story a poor boy does work hard, takes chances and follows his Puritan moral compass. But it is not these qualities, but dumb luck, that leads to wealth. For example, in Cast Upon the Breakers young Rodney Ropes, a lowly but honest and aspiring clerk, has been wrongly accused of embezzling from the company of Otis Goodnow. During his effort to clear his name by discovering the true criminals, Ropes is kidnapped and held for ransom in a cave, in which he discovers gold. In countless other Alger books, the young street boy is eventually discovered to be the long lost child of phenomenally wealthy people, or otherwise stumbles into wealth during an adventure. We modern Americans have culturally edited the stories to make them conform to what we wish them to say, and have ignored the inconvenient details which Alger included to express his personal and theological beliefs.

And what about Alger himself? It is common to hear that a person’s life is like a “Horatio Alger story,” as if Alger himself lived the “rags to riches” life. In fact, Alger was born in rather comfortable circumstances, the son of a pompous and overbearing father who controlled the boy’s destiny. Alger was no adventurer, nor was he any kind of capitalist. His stories made a good deal of money (though the great bulk were sold after his death) but Alger squandered the money he made and died penniless. And what of Alger’s moral character? He attended Harvard Divinity School and was for fifteen months minister of the Brewster (Mass.) Unitarian Church. The Dictionary of American Biography (1964) says he resigned the position to “devote himself to literature,” but the Oxford Companion to American Literature (1983) reports that he was “perhaps ousted for questionable relations with his choirboys.” In his “tell all” biography of Alger in 1974, Edwin Hoyt cites records of the Brewster Unitarian Church which report that Alger did not deny the charges leveled against him by a committee of church elders, but merely admitted to “imprudence,” and left town on the next train.

Sometimes we want too much for the symbols of our way of life to be as we imagine them. We know that if we examine our myths closely we will find them to be as flawed and complex as our own lives. But if in the process of examination some of the lovely haze of nostalgia gets rubbed off our dreams, in the long run our worthwhile symbols will survive (baseball comes to mind) and we will be alerted to the kinds of misrepresentation which are all too common in political campaigns.
TRIANGLE TREK
by Thomas E. Moore
Department of Mathematics & Computer Science

Viking ships rode the tides in Boston Harbor in September, 1991 in a re-creation of a fanciful trek that Leif Erickson's crew might have made as they explored South along the coast of Vinland. Of course this was just a Scandinavian tease, coming as it did just before the quincentennial celebration of Columbus’ discovery of the lands of the Western hemisphere. Native American peoples might well deem both explorations as instances of rediscovery.

And that is the point of departure for what follows.

I will tell, more aptly retell, of two examples of discovery/rediscovery in a world of the imagination, a mathematical terra incognita. The first tale should be familiar to mathematicians and historians of science but deserves a wider audience. The second tale, which I humbly include, is an anecdote of a person exploration.

Pascal, the Precious Mirror and other Precursors

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) of Clermont and Paris, France is justly famous inside and outside mathematics. A philosopher and prose-stylist without equal, he made fundamental contributions to geometry and probability. His name is even linked to the history of computer science by his invention at age 19 of a mechanical adding machine (which was, however, a commercial failure). A contemporary of the great jurist-mathematician Pierre de Fermat of Toulouse, it is their correspondence on matters mathematical that prompts us today to call them the co-founders of probability theory. However in this connection we must mention that Girolamo Cardano (1501-1576), in his 1560 book on gambling, *De Ludo Aleae*, gave the formal definition of the probability of an event and so perhaps he deserves a share of the title.

More to the point of this tale is the artifact known today as “Pascal’s Triangle.” It is a sequence of numbers that occurs in many aspects of calculation including algebra, combinatorics, (the theory of counters), and number theory. Its connection with coin tosses, dice sums and card deals made it inevitable that it appear in the analysis Pascal was urged to do by a friend on games of chance. The actual object we find printed in Pascal’s posthumously published *Traite’ du triangle arithme’tique* (1665) in the following form:

```
1
1 2
1 3 3
1 4 6 4
1 5
```

The fundamental step of construction, other than placing 1s on the top and left borders is that any other number is the sum of the number before it and the number above it. (The reader may pause here and extend it both horizontally and vertically. Beware! Seduced by patterns in the triangle you may be gone-exploring for quite some time.)

The triangle is usually presented in modern mathematics textbooks in the following form and it is this version that we will refer to as “Pascal’s triangle” in the remainder of this article.

```
1
1 2
1 3 3
1 4 6 4
1 5
```

In this presentation a number, other than the obligatory 1s, is obtained by adding each two consecutive numbers already present in a row (such as 3 + 3) and placing the result (observe the location of the 6) between these two summands, in the next row down.

The occurrence of the triangle in Pascal’s *Traite’* in 1665 was by no means its first appearance in print.
In China the mathematician Chu-Shih-Chieh printed his book *The precious mirror of the four elements* in 1303 containing the following diagram: XMAS TREE HERE

Chu was concerned with binomial expansions such as we learn in elementary algebra. A few examples will make the connection.

\[(a + b)^0 = 1\]
\[(a + b)^1 = 1a + 1b\]
\[(a + b)^2 = 1a^2 + ab + 1b^2\]
\[(a + b)^3 = 1a^3 + 3a^2b + 3ab^2 + 1b^3\]

This list begins a systematic calculation of binomial expansions. The patterns exhibited here suggest the general result known as the binomial theorem, which is useful not only in algebra but in probability as well. For our present purposes we just point out one of these patterns. If the reader will suppress all symbols on the right hand side of the equalities above, except the constant coefficients, then we are left (on the right) with:

```
1
1 1
1 2 1
1 3 3 1
```

Even Chu wrote that the triangle was ancient knowledge in his own time and refers to a Chinese work of 1050 A.D., not extant.

The triangle also appears in the work of Persian mathematicians such as Al-Tusi (1200 - 1275) in his charmingly entitled *Collection on Arithmetic by means of board and dust* [1]. On Jordanus de Nemore (circa 1225) in his *De arithmetica* constructed the triangle and noted some patterns. Manuscript copies of the work offer various manifestations of the triangle such as the two that follow.

```
1
1 1
1 2 1
1 3 3 1
```

Its first appearance in a European book was in an arithmetic of 1557 by Peter Apian, an astronomer at the University of Ingoldstadt. The triangle also occurs in the *General trattato* (1556) of Niccolo Fontana (Tartaglia) as well as in the *Opus novum de proportionibus* (1570) of Cardano.

In these works it is the triangle's connection with dice throws that is important. In order to put this connection in front of the reader, we make a table which shows in how many ways up to 6 dice can make a certain total (by adding the spots that show). Thus one die can make a sum of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 and can do each in only one way. But two dice can sum from 2 through 12. They can deliver the sum of 2 only by throwing "snake eyes" (1&1) while a 3 can be had in two ways (1&2 as well as 2&1). The sum of 7 is the most frequent total obtainable with two dice, in six ways. Three dice allow a sum of 3 in one way but a sum of 4 in three ways (1&1&2 and 1&2&1 and 2&1&1). And so on.

This leads to the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, the next to last row shows that five dice give a sum of 5 in only one way but give a sum of 6 in five ways. If the reader suppresses the 0s in the table, the Pascal’s triangle emerges, now appearing as the columns of this table.

So, with the many appearances of the arithmetical triangle in print long before Pascal’s 1665 treatise, why do modern authors insist on calling it "Pascal’s triangle?"

A survey of the works alluded to above that contain the triangle and appeared prior to Pascal’s treatise shows that the use of the triangle in those works is narrower in scope than that of Pascal. In fact Pascal’s treatise includes all the classic applications: the construction of figurate numbers, the theory of counting (combinatorics), the expansion of binomials to powers, as well as its use in dividing the stakes in unfinished games of chance. Moreover, as a work of pure mathematics it is penetrating in its discoveries of the relationships among the numbers in the triangle. These relationships are not merely set out as claims to the truth but proved to be the truth. Indeed on such proof employs the technique, attributed to Pascal and now called mathematical induction, which is perhaps the key proof method in computer science.

Therefore, despite the earlier manifestations of the triangle, we do indeed proclaim it as "Pascal’s triangle."

**A personal reminiscence of the triangle**

In teaching Topics in Mathematics to liberal arts majors I usually include a brief foray into probability and this necessarily...
**Triangle Trek - Continued from previous page.**

Introduces my students to "Pascal's triangle."

Now there are many relationships among the numbers in the triangle and observing patterns among them and generalizing to a conjecture is a good exercise in inductive thinking. For example, the next figure indicates the sum of the numbers in each row. The results are suggestive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Name n</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oddtotal n</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A more subtle observation results from counting the number of odd numbers as the accumulate from the topmost "1" down through a particular row in the triangle. For convenience let's call this total, through the numbers in row n, by the name Oddtotaln. Thus Oddtotal2 = 5 and Oddtotal3 = 9.

A little work revealed the data in Table A below.

The results are suggestive. We therefore conjecture that what we have observed in these first rows of the triangle will persist throughout each and every one of the infinite number of rows of the triangle. That is, each row sums to a power of 2. More precisely, row n sums to 2^n.

It is this observation of patterns that is at the heart of inductive mathematical thinking and the triangle is highly valued as a rich source of such patterns.

In attempting to lead the students to similar observations in a recent version of this course, I had them focus on the distribution of odd numbers in the triangle. They easily spotted rows in which all the numbers are odd, for instance rows 0, 1, 3, 7, and 15. Row 7 of the triangle, for example, consists of the odd numbers 1 3 7 21 35 35 21 71. The also observed a pattern in the corresponding row names. For example, just as 7 = 8 - 1 = 2^2 - 1 and 15 = 16 - 1 = 2^4 - 1, all the rows found to have only odd numbers had row names of the form 2^n - 1.

Again I mention the importance of the triangle as a resource for problems of pattern observation and inductive thinking, quite apart from its applications to gambling or probability.

A little work revealed the data in Table A below.

My eye was attracted to the subtotals 1, 3, 9, 27, 81 which are successive powers of 3, without an omission. The is, 1 = 3^0, 3 = 3^1, 9 = 3^2, 27 = 3^3 and so on. This was new to me! Excitement ran through me, perhaps not unlike that shared by the men aboard the vessels of Columbus at their landfall, as I stepped onto terra mathematica. My conjecture sprang to life as the statement, "Let k be any nonnegative integer. Then Oddtotaln = 3^k is solvable for n = 2^k - 1."

I should point out that the importance of all of this for me, more generally for any mathematician, is not that a discovery like this will have any practical application. That would be an unlooked for bonus. Rather it is the discovery process itself. It is simply the search for truth, albeit mathematical truth. And the excitement is the rush we used to refer to as the thrill of the chase!

In due course I had a proof of my conjecture (another discovery process) and faced the decision of what to do with the result. It was too much a mathematical tidbit, I thought, to deserve more than the status of a problem proposal in a mathematics journal, one pitched at the undergraduate level. I decided on The College Mathematics Journal and started the department secretary on typing the problem and my solution, addressed to Roger B. Nelson, CMJ Problem Editor, Lewis and Clark College, Portland, OR.

As this was going on I decided to scan my immediate references to see if my discovery had after all been someone else's. An article in a 1988 issue of The Mathematical Intelligencer by Marta Sved, University of Adelaide, South Australia, did mention my result, unmotivated and without proof but, and this is the kicker, referred to its occurrence as a problem proposal submitted by her to the journal Mathematics Magazine! Sure enough, as I quickly checked it, was my problem, posed in a 1985 issue.

What could I salvage here?

Perhaps the solution to her proposal would differ from mine sufficiently to warrant publication after all. Checking a subsequent issue of the same journal revealed no fewer than three different solutions sent in by the readership. Moreover one of them was exactly like mine and submitted by none other than ... Roger B. Nelson of Lewis and Clark College! How embarrassing my submission would have been - but I was in time to pluck it from the tray of outgoing mail!

This then was my brush with the triangle and priorities in mathematics. At least one lesson should be drawn. Do not, dear reader, boldly go where others probably have gone before!
In many respects these are exciting times at Bridgewater State. Although much of the attention has been on issues relating to funding and tuition, Bridgewater has been quietly but methodically moving through a critical process of self study which will lead to a refocused and revitalized campus community.

Heading the self study program at Bridgewater is Sociology professor Howard London. Howard leads a large faculty, staff and student committee system charged with delivering reports on twelve facets of college life from academic programs to finance to publications. The self study process, which is required for accreditation by the New England Association for Secondary Schools and Colleges (NEASC,) is currently moving toward a completion date of Fall, 1992 when a team of experts from NEASC will travel to Bridgewater to evaluate the college’s programs using the work of the self study team.

Howard London comes well prepared for his chairmanship of Bridgewater’s self study process. With a Ph.D. in Sociology and an additional Masters in Social Work from Boston College, Howard has developed a research interest in the sociology of education, particularly with respect to the relationship between family background and the educational environment of the modern American student. Howard is currently involved in three research projects connected to his interest in the sociology of education.

Howard has written the lead article in a forthcoming book, of which he is the co-author, on how first generation college students negotiate the various cultural and family obstacles to success in higher education. Howard is especially interested in exploring the impact of social class constraints and family dynamics on academic performance. For example, the first in a family to attend college both fulfills hopes for upward mobility, but also threatens family cohesiveness by creating a social class gulf due to new standards of achievement.

Howard’s work with first generation college students has also become part of an ongoing study that is based on long oral interviews. Howard has interviewed scores of college students to develop what he hopes will be a comprehensive analysis of the connections between the home setting and the choices and performance of young people in college. Howard feels there is a relationship between family environment and such factors as selection of academic programs, work patterns, length of time in college, grades and problems such as drug and alcohol use.

Howard is also a major participant in a study sponsored by the Exxon Education Fund to examine general education requirements at New England colleges and universities, focusing on those institutions with modest financial resources. Working with a team of educators based at UMass Boston, Howard is interviewing faculty and administrators at these schools to determine how to best design or redesign general education programs in order to meet the ever changing needs of today’s undergraduate. Howard believes that general education programs tell a great deal about a college and how it is meeting the challenges of educating students in the 1990s.

Amidst all the work demanded by the college self study and his considerable research efforts Howard is recognized as one of Bridgewater’s finest classroom teachers. His courses in the sociology of education and the sociology of organizations are high on students “must take” list. Like many Bridgewater faculty members, Howard is accessible to the students and is always interested in talking to students about how their life outside the classroom affects their life in the classroom.

Outside his academic work Howard is an avid jogger and the father of two children, Katie and Eric. Howard shares his busy schedule and his joy for running with his wife Barbara, a Boston internist.

As Bridgewater moves through the 1990s and adjusts to inevitable economic and political change, the work of Howard London is certain to be an integral part of how this college defines itself and how it deals with the charge of preparing students for the challenges of tomorrow.
Is There Gender Bias In Journal Refereeing?

Among her recent research projects, Margaret Landman of the Department of Economics has conducted a comparative study of the effects of journal refereeing practices on the publication rates of female economists and sociologists. There are two main types of processes used: non-blind refereeing, where the reviewers know the identity of the author, and blind refereeing, where the reviewers do not. In economics, most of the top journals employ non-blind refereeing, but in some other academic disciplines, including sociology, the best journals use blind refereeing. There is some concern that the former policy may allow bias against women. In order to study this question, Dr. Landman conducted a cross-disciplinary analysis of publication rates, because data on submission and acceptance rates by gender are generally not made available by journals. By focusing on women in different disciplines, who in many ways face the same types of handicaps relative to men in their fields (additional family responsibilities, geographic immobility, etc.), Dr. Landman could better separate the effects of the reviewing process from real productivity differences. After adjustments are made for the different percentages of women in each field, she found that female sociologists are significantly more successful in publishing articles in prestigious journals than female economists. It is interesting to note that one of the two economics journals in this study announced in December 1991 that it would be changing to a blind refereeing policy. Dr. Landman hopes other economics journals will follow this lead in making the publication process fairer for economists.

The Iconoclast Controversy

The manipulation of religious issues in the political arena is not a situation unique to the modern age. Iconoclast Controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries appears on the surface to have been a theological and disciplinary dispute related to the abolishment or at least the acceptable usage of various types of sacred images in church adornment and services. But the issue was used by ambitious individuals in both western Europe and the Byzantine world as a means of gaining political and military support. A difference of opinion between scholars at the Carolingian court in Aix-la-Chapelle and the papacy played an important role in the coronation of Charlemagne in Rome in 800. Unscrupulous individuals seeking to gain the imperial throne in Constantinople either through intrigue or military power, curried favor among either the iconoclasts or their opponents, the iconodules, depending in some cases on their own personal beliefs but often relating to the potential support to be gained by advocating one policy or another. History professor Donald Keay in his book Political and Religious Schism: The Iconoclast Controversy, presents a history of the contemporary secular repercussions of the theological issue and an analysis of the more permanent political and religious consequences resulting from the conflict.