

OBSERVER  
Russell BakerSuitable  
To  
Wed

Lavinia Lucy Laplante, the daughter of Mrs. Earle Spratt Stuckbridge of Hankering Pines, Ohio, and Francis Plantagenet Laplante of Rust Hills, N.J., was married yesterday to P. Pickering Puttoon, the son of Mrs. Potter Patton Puttoon and the late Mr. Puttoon of Puttoonconset, Mass. The ceremony, at the Shrine of Eternally Upward Mobility, was performed by the bridegroom's uncle, the Rev. Gaspard Puttoon, a member of the board of Stears, Blight & Smutch Inc., as well as its executive chaplain.

The bride's maid of honor was her sister, Melanie Melissa Laplante, who is a junior partner in the law firm of Pommes, Frets, Frets, Spang, Spalden & Usquebaugh.

The best man was Hilary Dock, heir to the huge mouse-and-clock toy empire based on the Hickory Dickory Clock Company, which was founded by his grandfather, the late Hector Dexter Dock.

The bride is a senior project coordinator in the Alemtastics Division of Squexnton. She is a certified corporate coordinator, licensed to coordinate projects in taxonomy, bifocals, quashing, esoterics and group hysterics, as well as alemtastics, quintonics and uxorious weekends.

She is a graduate of Old Moms Mosely's School for Girls in Foxy Crossroads, Va., and holds a degree in senior analysis, magna cum laude, from the Massachusetts Institute of Degrees.

The bride's father, Mr. Laplante, is almost entirely lacking in social distinction but holds memberships on dozens of corporate boards. He is a former stock-car racing driver who was later discovered to be the natural heir to the British Earldom of Floovry, with immense holdings in slum properties in Birmingham, England.

Though the bride's mother, the former Countess Floovry, divorced his Lordship several years ago, the grounds specified in her suit did not discredit the peerage. Her subsequent marriage into the distinguished Stuckbridge family, whose business has for three generations made Hankering Pines, Ohio, synonymous with ball bearings, was followed almost immediately by induction into the Upper Hankering Pines Garden Club.

The groom is a member of the fifth generation of a family whose name has been an integral part of American society since its founder, Muldoon Puttoon, stole the Passaic & Bayonne Railroad during Reconstruction and went on to teach the late Lillian Russell how to drink champagne out of her shoe.

Her shoe, which Muldoon Puttoon also stole, is still among the Puttoon family's heirlooms, but the family has abandoned the old custom of making every new bride drink champagne from it so the groom can steal her shoes while her attention is distracted by this barbaric method of drinking champagne.

This was last done in 1925 when the

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bride, the late Mrs. Paula Puttoon, sued the bridegroom for mental cruelty, was awarded most of the family's wealth and removed it to Switzerland.

P. Pickering Puttoon, the newest in a long line of Puttoon bridegrooms, is a graduate of St. Izod's Prep and the Harvard School of Senior Consultancy, where he was awarded his M.A. after graduating from Yale, magna cum skull and bone.

He is a senior consultant in Mergex's Brazilian Division of Junior Consultancies and Incidental Money Accumulation, with offices in Manhattan.

His father, the late Potter Patton Puttoon, was the most controversial inventor of the 1950's. His invention of a business that could be operated without either a consultancy—senior or junior—or a project coordinator was greeted at first as a boon to humanity.

Public opinion turned against him when the nation's educators charged that his invention was a scheme to deprive future college graduates of pleasantly superfluous jobs.

A man who could always be counted upon to make a scene, Mr. Puttoon issued his famous statement—“God forbid that I should do anything that might make my son work for a living”—and destroyed his invention.

At his death two years later, his pallbearers included Simpson Sterling Sutte, of Philadelphia, Hobe Sound and Beverly Hills, the son of the late Murray Nelson Comstock Sutte and his wife, Mrs. Sutte; Velma Veitch, of Wall Street and Liechtenstein, whose education at Girl's Prep of Boston and degree in agriculture from Texas A & M...

## Environment-Buster Reagan

By John B. Oakes

In every crucial issue of this crucial election—from nuclear arms control to pillage of the nation's natural resources—Ronald Reagan has distorted the reality of his own position. In none has he done so more flagrantly than in his claim to be protector of the natural environment. He is in fact the only openly anti-environmental President in our history.

“I feel as strongly as anyone about preservation of the environment,” said Mr. Reagan in the Presidential debate as he swore allegiance to the nation's parks and wilderness areas.

What has really happened in this Administration? “Millions for development, not a cent for protection” might as well have been the motto.

Physical facilities in the parks have indeed been improved—so the private concessionaires could cater more profitably to more people. But what about the scenic wonders and natural resources the parks are supposed to protect?

This Administration tried to stop dead in its tracks all acquisition of vitally needed new parkland (though ample funds were available) until an outraged Congress forced it to take minimal action. It has attempted to

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cut grants for park purposes to the states, to phase out the urban parks program, to open vast areas of the Alaska parks to hunting, to undermine protection standards not only for the national parks but throughout the entire system of public lands.

It has even tried to politicize the Park Service. In a privately circulated internal memorandum, the most knowledgeable and nonpolitical of the citizens' watchdog organizations for the national parks recently stated that “the Administration has attempted to gain total control over the professional decision-makers and the managers... [and] has demoralized the Park Service to the point that many career personnel are leaving.”

Mr. Reagan's park policies were set in place, with a vengeance, by the former Interior Secretary, James G. Watt, to whom the President gave full support, as he did to the former Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Anne Burford, and a host of lesser known officials with the same aim: dismantle the nation's entire environmental protective system.

From offshore oil exploitation on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, to strip-mining regulations in the Middle West, to the failure to clean up toxic waste sites throughout the country, the story has been the same: contemptuous flouting of public law to benefit private exploitation. Only a

string of successful lawsuits by public-interest environmental organizations, with an occasional assist from Congress, has prevented complete catastrophe.

In the debate, Mr. Reagan also claimed to have “added millions of acres to the wilderness lands... I think that we're out in front.” The truth? Of all the many aspects of en-

and the support it has received from the public that the President can (falsely) claim credit for recent expansion of the wilderness system.

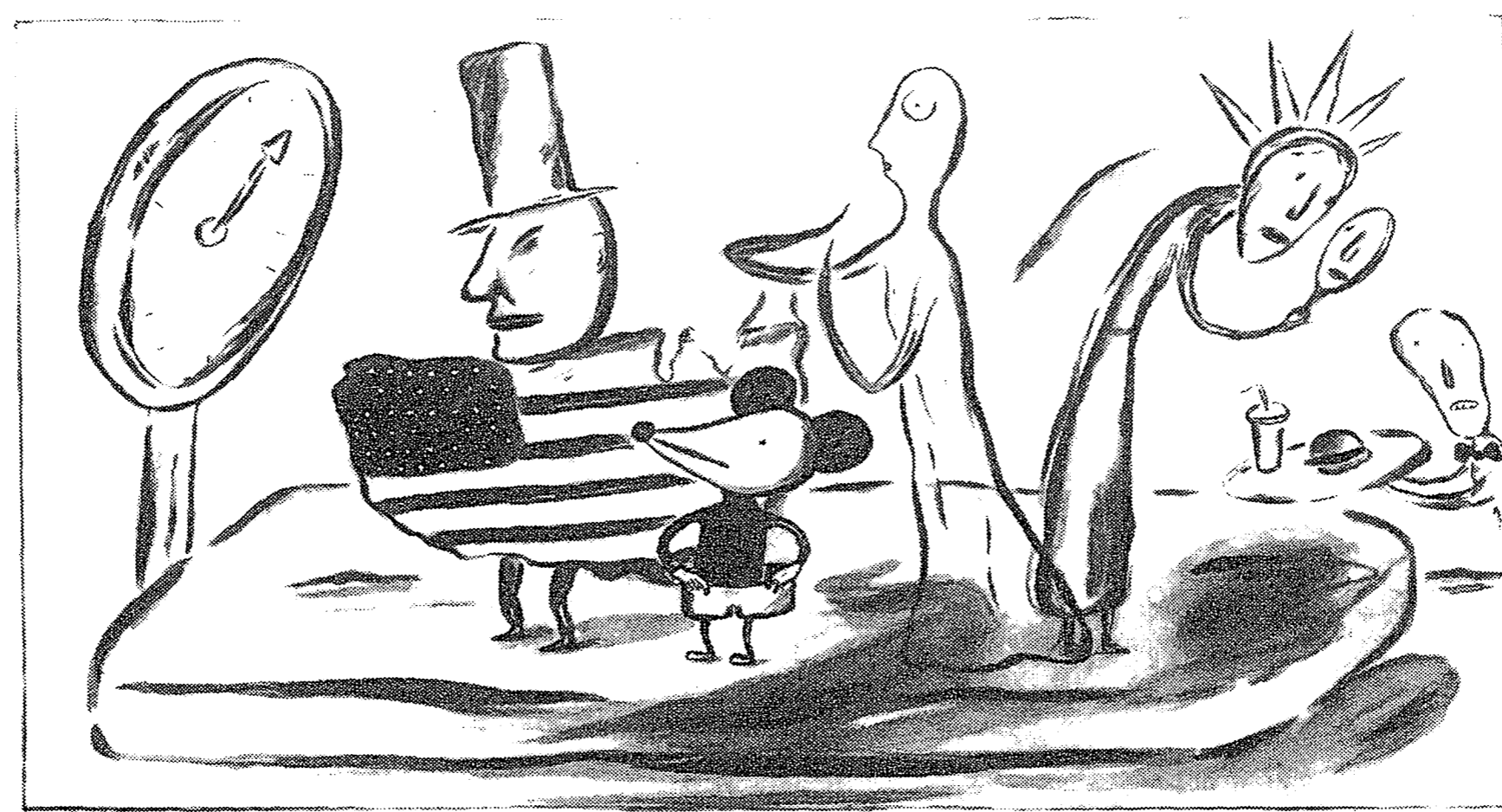
The Wilderness Society, a citizens' organization of 50 years' standing, sums it up this way: “In virtually every area, the Reagan Administration has pursued an aggressive policy of anti-environmentalism... Nowhere is [its]... philosophy better demonstrated than in its attacks on the wilderness system.”

It has consistently tried to limit wilderness areas to an irreducible minimum or to destroy them altogether through allowing speculative mineral development. It has wrecked potential wilderness areas in the national forests through its cutting and road-building policies. It has participated in a gigantic swindle of the public by selling nationally owned timber at below-cost prices and leasing nationally owned coal rights at below-market fees. It washes its hands of the acid rain that is steadily destroying the forests and lakes of New England and the rest of the Northeast.

The President cares about the environment “as strongly as anyone”? Yes, as strongly as the Watts, Burfords and other members of his Administration's team of hungry wreckers. Mr. Reagan is often called “the great communicator.” He would be better named “the great dissimulator.”

He cares  
the way that  
Watt and  
Burford  
did

vironmental conservation to which Ronald Reagan has shown total hostility, wilderness protection must rank as No. 1. His former Interior Secretary carried out this policy with glee; the situation is but little improved under his less flamboyant present Secretary, William P. Clark. Again, it is only thanks to Congress



Carolyn Gowdy

## America in the Age of Enlitenment

By Robert Garfield

This is a rant. It's about R. J. Reynolds, Robert Browning and seltzer. It is also about the not inconsequential fact that our society is having its substance vacuumed out of it.

But we get ahead of ourselves. This all begins a long time ago—with the creation of the universe.

On the first day, God said, “Let there be light.” He was referring to sunshine, but evidently there's been some misunderstanding. Otherwise, why, many millennia hence, would Stella D'Oro get involved? In grocery stores everywhere stands the evidence: lite bread sticks. Why?

Why lite beer? Wherefore lite corn chips? What reason lite pickles? Explain, please, lite TV dinners, lite margarine, lite vegetable oil, lite ketchup and lite pancake syrup. Lite pancake syrup!

Not everything is lite, of course. Some products are “low.” To wit: low-calorie, low-sodium, low-cholesterol, low-tar cigarettes. And where

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there is no “low,” lo, there is “no:” no preservatives, no caffeine. In Atlanta, a single D'Lites fast-food restaurant has burgeoned into a 25-store nationwide chain on the strength of lite burgers and a chicken sandwich served on lite buns smeared with lite mayonnaise. The Canada Dry Corporation and Schweppes now sell low-salt seltzer, no matter that there isn't enough salt in regular seltzer to sting a baby's eyes. Schweppes executive John Carson explains, “I guess it just makes people more comfortable.”

He's right, but the lite phenomenon is much bigger than the grocery store. We're witnessing a transformation in the needs and desires of an entire culture. Time was, we were a nation that clawed for more. Now what we seek is less and less. Let's just hope it can be stopped before we waste away, hapless victims in the liting of America.

Like so many contagions, it all started overseas. In 1855, Robert Browning lyricized to the effect that “less is more” and, in the 1920's, architect Mies van der Rohe seized on the principle—to the lingering detriment of airport design. The virus incubated for decades. Then came the beer and

the bread sticks, and now everything is scaling down. Take industry. Heavy industry is all but dead. Our economic future depends on light manufacturing. Or popular music: whereas there was not a single lite rock station in 1980, 1984 finds at least one in nearly all of the nation's 25 biggest markets.

And who's the king of the best-seller lists? Mailer? Updike? No. The 1980's undisputed superstar of publishing is Garfield the Cat (no relation). The printed word also reveals the elevation of lite in other disciplines. In “Megatrends,” we have lite sociology. In the “One-Minute Manager,” lite business administration.

So what gives? To Dr. Joseph Smith, a consumer researcher, what we're seeing is nothing more than the evolution of the “me generation.”

“Lite is easier,” he says, “unconstrained, not heavy. All of this hangs around a kind of implicit desire to be free of burden, and escape from structure and the oppressiveness of tight boundaries: the constraints of guilt, the constraints of our own damned superegos.”

Yikes. If you think this a slightly overdrawn explanation of lite fish sticks, you should consider Smith's

own caveat: “You really need a Viennese accent to say all of this. It's an exercise in lite psychology.”

But Freudian motivation or no, lite is seeping into every darkened fold of society—places where it has no business being. Such as criminality. There was a day when men were men and corruption was corruption. Hoods stood before Congressional committees, sneeringly pleading the Fifth. Good young Republicans broke into psychiatrists' files. Presidents obstructed justice. Now what do we have? We have lite scandal. Missing briefing books and no-chance Democrats with sloppy tax returns.

And what do we have in the White House? Yes, sir, a lite President: Ronald Reagan—everything you always wanted in a head of state, and less, seeking as he does to allow business to operate according to the returns of diminishing laws. He even sends light convoys to wage lite war.

This brings us to Berkeley, Calif. In a stunning reversal of policy, the City Council recently decided to begin saluting the flag one week in every four. It was a lovely gesture, except for its grim portent. When radical politics go lite, what will be next?

NEW YORK  
Sydney H. SchanbergGeorge  
The Gender  
Bender

George Bush and his wife, Barbara—whom some people have referred to as his... I can't say it, but the dictionary says it's a slang word for a tough guy's female accomplice and it rhymes with doll—have been accused of showing disrespect for Geraldine Ferraro, the Democratic candidate for Vice President.

George Bush is very Republican and he wants to keep on being Vice President, which are two good reasons why he might not wish to treat Congresswoman Ferraro with too much kindness. But disrespect would be uncalled for and downright... I can't say it, but it rhymes with nude.

So that's why The Gender Bender has become such a big issue in the campaign—almost on a par with The Sleaze Factor and The Snooze Factor.

The Democrats are milking this issue for all it's worth and then some, which means their behavior has not been exactly decorous. Nonetheless, a look at the record suggests they do have something to holler about.

First Mrs. Bush called Mrs. Ferraro, in a reference to her financial worth, “that \$4 million... I can't say it, but it rhymes with rich.” Everyone knew what name Mrs. Bush had called the candidate, but Mrs. Bush tried to save some face by contending that the unspoken word had been “witch.”

Shortly thereafter, however, Mr. Bush's press secretary, Peter Teeley, removed all doubt. He called Mrs. Ferraro “too bitchy.” (Later, struggling to disengage his shoe leather from his molars, Mr. Teeley said he had meant it only in the sense of

Playing  
the macho  
game with  
Mr. Bush  
and the boys

“crabby.” Oh well, I guess that makes everything all right.)

Then came the televised debate last week between Mr. Bush and Mrs. Ferraro. They agreed in advance on the manner in which each would address the other—it would be “Vice President Bush” and “Congresswoman Ferraro.”

She stuck to her agreement. He called her “Mrs. Ferraro” throughout.

Was it deliberate? Only Mr. Bush knows. But he and his wife had already shown the public a pattern of behavior that makes it legitimate to question his debate nomenclature.

The day after the debate, Mr. Bush boasted to some longshoremen's union officials at a New Jersey rally that “we tried to kick a little ass last night.”

The Vice President said later of the remark, when some commentators suggested it was unworthy of him: “It's going to help. Everybody understands exactly what I was saying,” going on to describe the remark as “an old Texas football expression.”

Are football expressions designed to keep women out? Locker-room language sure doesn't invite them in.

Republican women are supposed to know intuitively that they aren't welcome in the locker room, and maybe the Republican men are trying to tell Geraldine Ferraro—the first woman to be on the Presidential ticket of a major party—that she doesn't fit either.

“It's a macho game we play,” said Edward Rollins, the Reagan campaign manager, seeking to justify the demeaning language the Republicans had been using about Mrs. Ferraro.

The Reagan-Bush team players aren't the only ones offering us glimpses of the Gender-Bender Factor.

One of the reporter-questioners at the Oct. 11 debate asked Mrs. Ferraro: “Do you think in any way that the Soviets might be tempted to try to take advantage of you simply because you are a woman?”

And Marvin Kalb, on NBC's “Meet the Press” last Sunday, asked her: “Ms. Ferraro, could you push the nuclear button?”

She said, unsurprisingly: “I can do whatever is necessary in order to protect the security of this country.”

The assumption behind Mr. Kalb's question has to be that somehow a woman is less capable than a man of making the tough decisions about national security and defense.

The producer of the show was asked why such a question was not directed at George Bush in his appearance last month. She said: “I don't think there would be any reason [to ask him]. He's already got the job.”

I guess that means that once you get into the White House, no matter how wimpy a personality you were previously you suddenly are able to lift weights, kick sand in weaklings' faces, leap tall buildings in a single bound—and drop the bomb.

Like a lot of other people who have lived a few decades, I have on several occasions observed myself and other people under stress—including the stress of military situations. I can say that I never saw women fade faster than men. In fact, on several occasions, I saw the opposite.

Let's stop patronizing candidates because they're women. □

## Another Trumanesque Rural Vote?

By Richard J. Margolis

NEW HAVEN—It is probably true that Walter F. Mondale cannot win the election without extraordinary help from rural voters, who represent one-third of the total electorate. It may also be true that a rural turn-around this year could do for Mr. Mondale what it did for Harry S. Truman in 1948.

Viewed from a demographic angle, Mr. Mondale's rudimentary rural strategy is not so wild a dream. For one thing, there are relatively more rural voters now than there used to be. The 1980 census showed the rural sector of the nation growing at a considerably faster rate than its metropolitan counterpart. Apparently lots of people with urban ways have been moving to rural areas. Their votes are up for grabs.

Richard J. Margolis was first chairman of Rural America, an advocacy organization. Last year, he studied rural politics as a fellow at Harvard University's Institute of Politics.

To win them, Mr. Mondale will have to take a page out of Jimmy Carter's 1976 election book. That year, Mr. Carter collected 126 electoral votes from “rural influence” states—those with non-metropolitan populations of 30 percent or more—compared with Gerald R. Ford's 95 electoral votes. Had the totals been reversed, Mr. Ford would have won the election by 5 electoral votes.

Mr. Carter also carried Pennsylvania and Ohio, both narrowly. Those victories occurred not only because he won substantial urban majorities but also—to quote Mr. Carter's pollster, Patrick Caddell—“because we were able more or less to break even in rural areas.” If the two states had gone to Mr. Ford, he would have won the election by 47 electoral votes.

In the South, Mr. Mondale's hopes could hinge on rural blacks, a voting block that is anti-Reagan but largely unregistered. It comprises 44 percent of the total black voting-age population in nine Southern states (excluding Florida and Texas); in four of those states—Mississippi, Arkansas and the Carolinas—it actually outnumbers its metropolitan brethren.

The figures here are fascinating. Mr. Reagan's margins of victory were remarkably thin in quite a few Southern states, including Tennessee (4,710), Arkansas (5,123), South Carolina (11,057) and Alabama (17,462). But the number of unregistered blacks in those states remains lamentably high—158,000, 85,000, 292,000 and 272,000, respectively. In theory, the black registration drive throughout the South could do wonders for Democratic prospects.

But Mr. Mondale will have to do much more to assure a rural-based upset of Trumanesque proportions. Rural people nowadays seem tired of being written off as a saving remnant or the wave of the past. What they want from their President, one guesses, is to be brought into the national picture. A measure of equity and a bit of recognition from Washington would go a long way.

Mr. Mondale ought to reassure rural voters that he cares deeply about their welfare and that he hopes to preserve their special gifts—both their open space and their small-town pace. He needs, in short, to find a compelling rural voice, something

Mr. Reagan seems to have acquired while doing Westerns in Hollywood.

In the Republican game plan, rural voters are not so much to be wooed and won as to be hugged and held. Last time around, they gave Mr. Reagan 53 percent of their votes; Jimmy Carter got only 41 percent and John B. Anderson got the rest. Back then, at least, old-fashioned ruralism and new fangled Reaganism seemed made for each other.

Still, Mr. Reagan cannot take the rural vote for granted. His budget cuts have been especially hard on small towns, placing heavy burdens on such key institutions as schools, clinics, old-age centers and volunteer fire departments. His farm policies have brought on an epidemic of Middle West foreclosures and bankruptcies. And his deregulation adventures—in part a legacy from the Carter years—have sent rural telephone rates soaring and have all but banished public transportation from rural roads, rails and airport runways.

Ronald Reagan has a lot to answer for in rural America—if Walter Mondale can find a way to phrase the questions. □