

GW - "2-fake" - new file 10m 4/1/96

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GORE'S COSTLY

His plan to plug classes into the Internet was a hit until critics started calling it the Gore Tax

By KAREN TUMULTY and JOHN F. DICKERSON WASHINGTON

WHAT KEEPS AL GORE UP AT night? A few months ago, the Vice President was literally jolted awake at 3 a.m. by the idea of a continuous, live Internet image of this planet, an all-earth-all-the-time website. Within weeks, NASA was scrambling to put up the satellites to make his dream come true. Last July 4 he skipped the fireworks so he could stare for five hours into his office computer as it downloaded Pathfinder's first images from the surface of Mars. Another Gore brainchild—he calls it “digital earth”—would allow students with computers to zoom in on any spot of an onscreen planet to learn everything they possibly want to know about it.

It sometimes seems as if Gore views the world through his modem—and would like everyone else to do as well. His staff jokes that the quickest way to get his attention is by e-mail. But Gore is serious in his belief that technology educates and democratizes. It is both the hallmark of his vice presidency and the organizing principle of his presidential campaign.

But these days, not everyone is on the Vice President's bandwidth. His biggest high-tech achievement to date is a program to wire every classroom and library in the country. He has heralded it as “a turning point that [will] transform the shape of America.” But right now, the program is under assault from Congress as an out-of-control entitlement engineered by an out-of-control bureaucracy. Which does not do much

for Gore's reputation as the architect of reinventing government. Even more ominous is another threat: starting this summer, phone companies that were ordered to pay for the program are threatening to add a new charge to the long-distance bills of residential consumers. Critics are already calling it the Gore Tax.

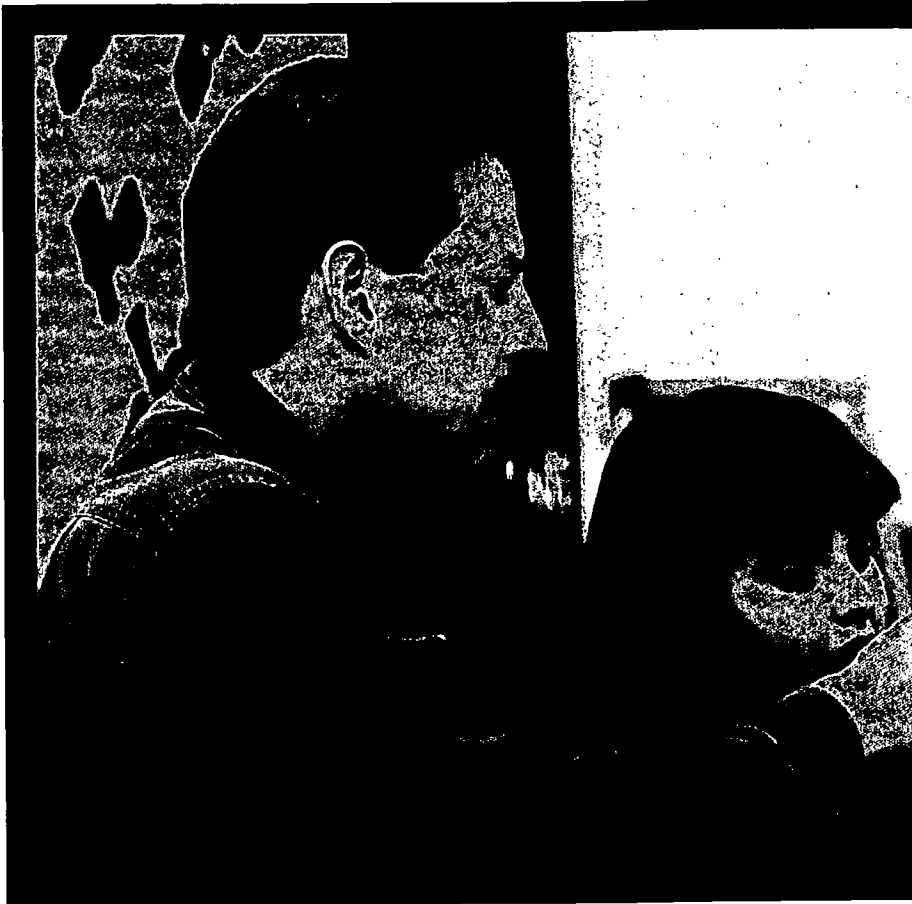
What once seemed an unassailable idea is now ensnared in presidential politics, the byzantine workings of phone deregulation and the design flaws of a funding scheme that camouflages the costs of a huge new federal program by putting it on people's phone bills. Only 75 days into the first round of applications for the program's money, about 30,000 schools and libraries have rushed in to claim \$2 billion, far outstripping the \$625 million the Federal Communications Commission has collected from the phone companies. This has left the commission with the unpalatable option of scal-

ing back its promises or collecting more from the phone companies and their customers. And it doesn't help the commission's political predicament that the quasi-private corporation set up to administer the program was deemed illegal by the General Accounting Office, or that it was paying \$200,000 a year to its chief executive, former White House aide Ira Fishman.

Higher phone bills and overpaid bureaucrats are not easy things for lawmakers to defend in an election year. “We did not vote to have the FCC set up a giant bureaucracy headed by someone paid as much as the President,” thunders Democrat John Dingell, ranking minority member of the House Commerce Committee. “The era of Kings in this country ended when we kicked out George III.”

Dingell's criticism is particularly searing in view of his liberal credentials and the fact that he was chairman of the committee

DAN NIERLING—WATERLOO CEDAR FALLS GAZETTE



RECEIVED

MAR 21 1997



**Weather fans
you're not alone.**

340 Main St.
Crestville, Idaho 90292

March 17, 1997

Dear The Weather Channel,

Had some spare time, thought I'd shoot you a line. It's raining and a bit chilly here (of course, you already know that). Anyway, I wanted to let you know you've got a loyal fan here. And I'm not just saying that to get a free T-shirt (XL if you happen to send one).

But enough preamble. I sent away for some satellite photos of hurricanes for my collection. If you could impose on Cheryl Lemke to autograph one, I'd be grateful. It should read: To Mostly Sunny Mike, keep your head in the clouds (or something like that -- I'll let Cheryl think of something clever. But keep "Mostly Sunny Mike" intact). The photo is enclosed (try not to crease it). Thanks in advance.

Signed,

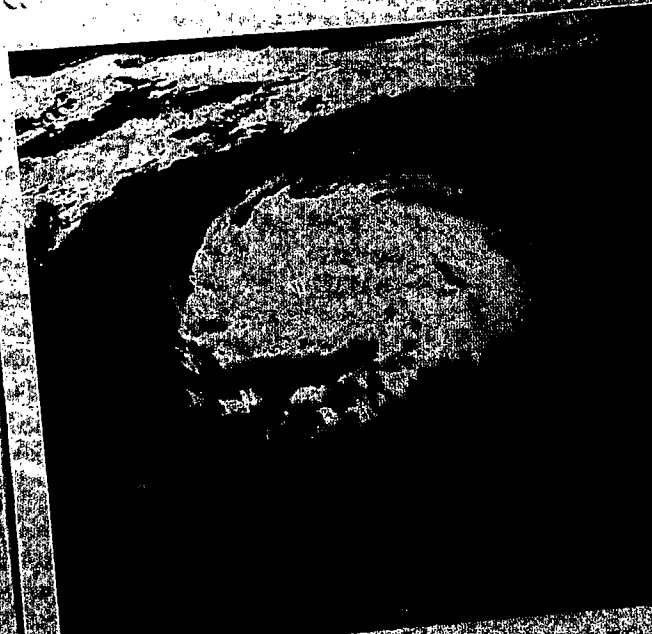
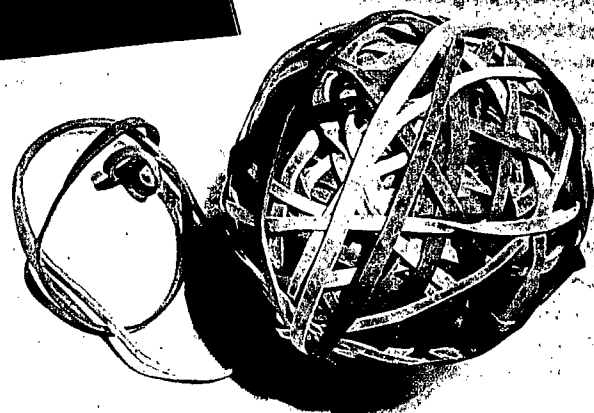
Mike Taylor

Mostly Sunny Mike Taylor

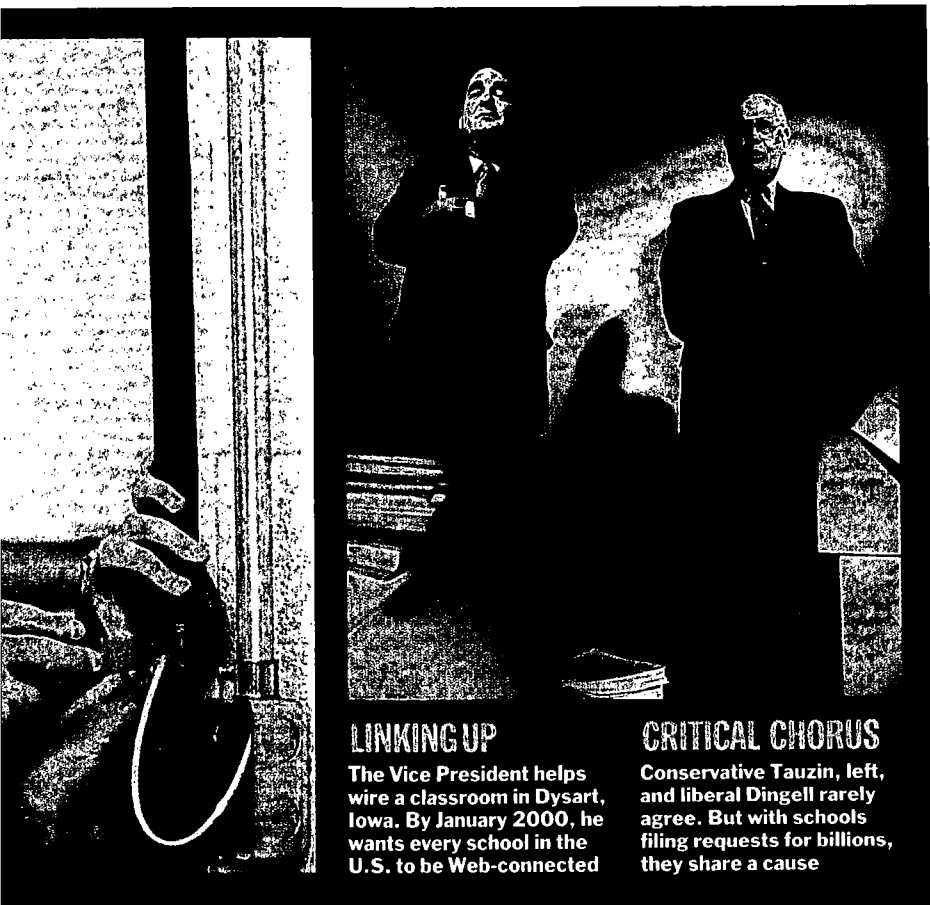
P.S: Have you guys thought about doing trading cards for all the meteorologists? I, for one, would collect them all. Just a thought. Feel free to move forward with this idea should it strike you.

340 Main St.
Crestville, Idaho 90292

The Weather Channel
300 Interstate North
Atlanta, Georgia 303



HIGH-WIRE ACT



LINKING UP

The Vice President helps wire a classroom in Dysart, Iowa. By January 2000, he wants every school in the U.S. to be Web-connected

CRITICAL CHORUS

Conservative Tauzin, left, and liberal Dingell rarely agree. But with schools filing requests for billions, they share a cause

when a promising young member named Al Gore was selling the intriguing concept of an "information superhighway." But Dingell is far from alone. Commerce Senators who have reviewed the thousands of grant applications pouring in complain that schools are attempting to use the program to buy everything from carpeting and paint to computers that exceed the power of those at NASA. What's more, lawmakers grouse, why should the Federal Government pay for something many schools would do on their own?

The blame inevitably finds its way to Gore, whose hand many see in virtually everything the FCC does. Its past chairman, Reed Hundt, goes back so far with Gore that the two of them saw the Beatles' first U.S. concert together. And Gore hand-picked its current chairman, William Kennard. Gore is also closely linked to the inner workings of the industry, where sev-

eral of his former aides have found lucrative and powerful positions. Complains Louisiana Republican Billy Tauzin, chairman of the House telecommunications subcommittee: "The FCC is an independent regulatory authority, yet we continue to see the Vice President exercising an extraordinary amount of influence over it."

It was Congress, of course, that passed the law authorizing the program, or at least authorizing something. A modest three sentences of the massive Telecommunications Act of 1996 told the FCC to expand an existing industry-funded program that provides low-cost telephone service in rural areas and inner cities into one that would hook up schools and libraries. "We gave them much more of an opening than we have in the past," says John McCain, chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee. "They did what bureaucrats do when you give them money and power."

But what Congress gives it can also take away. So the FCC is scrambling to answer the most pointed complaints. It promised earlier this month to revamp the bureaucracy it built around the program and to cut Fishman's salary by \$50,000. It is considering scaling back its initial spending. And Kennard vows that schools will not be allowed to use the money to buy computers, software or other ineligible items, and that poorer schools will see their applications handled first.

That's the easy part. Appeasing the phone companies will be harder. "While we support the goal of wiring classrooms," says MCI spokesman Brad Burns, "we don't think we should be put in the position of playing fee collector for the Federal Government." The long-distance companies have already begun collecting the surcharge from their business customers, adding as much as 5% to their bills. In July, they warn, they'll place a line-item charge on residential users as well. Phone companies, which are trying to outdo one another by offering service for pennies a minute, claim the surcharge is the only way they can keep their rates competitive. But the FCC argues that in exchange for picking up the tab to wire these institutions, it has lowered other fees the long-distance companies pay. The commission also says carriers stand to gain part of the business generated from this new market.

The debate is likely to get lost on the consumer. "You can call it what you want," says Paul Harman, a Georgia accountant who complained to the FCC after his company noticed the charge. "It's just another form of taxation. The consumer pays in the end." Lawmakers have begun to hear similar complaints. At a hearing in February, Congressman Ed Bryant, a Tennessee Republican, waved a copy of a telephone bill sent him by a constituent who was confused and angry over the \$4 surcharge his company was having to pay. "How shall I explain this tax to my constituent?" Bryant demanded. "Do I tell him I voted to place that tax on him to support schools and libraries on the other side of the continent?"

Gore and his allies, backed by considerable polling, say taxpayers are more than

willing to pay a small amount each month to guarantee their children a place in the digital economy. "If they want this fight, bring it on," says a Gore aide with a taunting schoolyard wave. "Politicians who are against this are going to seem like they are against the library or the telephone."

For all their bravado in public, however, Administration officials were scrambling

behind the scenes last week to head off anything that might be called a Gore Tax, and they hinted that a deal is in the offing. On Friday the Commerce Department called on the FCC to do what it could to assure that any charge the residential consumer sees would not be more than \$1 a month per telephone line. "I am totally happy to have a debate over whether or not it's worth \$1 a

month to wire the schools," said Ron Klain, the Vice President's chief of staff.

And the program is not without its powerful supporters, both in and out of the classroom. Silicon Valley, whose executives Gore is ardently courting, is particularly enthusiastic about the idea of wiring the vast, untapped market that Andrew Blau of the Benton Foundation, a nonprofit group that

SHOULD SCHOOLS BE WIRED TO THE INTERNET?

Vice President Al Gore

Yes—It's Essential to the Way Kids Learn

AS TIME WROTE LAST OCTOBER, "ALL KIDS, NOT JUST ONES from families that can afford a home computer, should grow up with a mouse in their hand." The President and I could not agree more. Access to the basic tools of the information age is no longer a luxury for our children. It is a necessity.

Today communications and information technology are transforming our economy and our society, changing the way we live, the way we work and the way we relate to one another. In recent years, information technology has been responsible for more than one-quarter of real economic growth. Jobs in information technology pay significantly more than nontechnology jobs. By the year 2000, 60% of all jobs will require the technology skills that only a fraction of Americans now have.

But technology skills become important long before people look for jobs. They become important as soon as children begin to learn. In a decade-long series of studies, the Education Department reports that students in classes that use computers outperform their peers on standardized tests of basic skills by an average of 30%. And a 1996 study showed that students with access to the Internet not only presented their final projects in more creative ways but also turned in work that was more complete and had better syntheses of different points of view. Numerous other studies show that children in technology-rich learning environments showed more enthusiasm, had higher attendance rates, developed better writing skills and displayed a greater capacity to communicate effectively about complex problems.

That's why the President and I have worked so hard to enable all of our schools and libraries to have affordable access to telecommunications and information technology. The E-Rate program, for instance, gives crucial discounts to schools and libraries, with the steepest discounts going to the neediest communities. Through this tailored program, we are committed to helping ensure that all children—regardless of race, income or geography—can have an equal chance to learn and succeed.

Without such help, technology is yet one more hurdle for poor and rural communities struggling to keep up with richer ones. Already, America is sharply divided between those with

access to computers and the Internet and those without it. Only 13% of classrooms in schools with a high percentage of minority students are connected to the Internet, compared with 27% of classrooms overall.

Some critics view the new technology as a frivolous tool of education. But more and more, computers are at the very heart of how schools teach and children learn. Other critics are worried about the changes they imagine the new technology may bring. Over the course of history, progress often spurs anxiety. When Greek merchants began importing Egyptian paper into Athens, Socrates condemned it, complaining that the use of paper would, according to writer Nicholas Allard, depersonalize interactions, disrupt human ties and "replace public discourse with less desirable and potentially dangerous private communication."

Still other critics say we are diverting needed resources away from other, more pressing educational priorities. But we need not limit ourselves to investing in one or the other. We can do both, and we must.

Since 1993, we have worked hard to improve education from preschool to postgraduate level. We expanded Head Start, created Goals 2000 to help states set high academic standards, expanded charter schools, focused Title 1 funds more on low-income children, while setting the same standards for those children as for all others, and made college affordable to everyone through grants, loans, scholarships and tax benefits.

In the President's balanced budget, which he sent to Congress in February, we propose to build on those accomplishments by expanding those key investments while also paying for 100,000 new teachers, providing tax incentives to accelerate new school construction or renovation and investing more in education technology.

All parents want to help prepare their children for the future. Today that challenge means helping them grow up in a world in which information and communications technology dominate the economy and shape our society. We must give our children—all our children—the chance to succeed in the information age, and that means giving them access to the tools that are shaping the world in which they live.

CYNTHIA JOHNSON FOR TIME



Children [with computers] developed better writing skills and greater capacity to communicate.

studies the social impact of technology, describes as "like China within our borders." To enlarge this new customer base, companies have offered seminars, free software and help with the applications that schools must make to receive the funding. Industry sources have estimated that \$2 billion spent on wiring schools produces as much as \$6 billion in sales of computers and peripherals.

But Republicans see this as nothing less than a stealth campaign to enhance Gore's presidential prospects. "This was not to be a political cash-grant program so that Al Gore can run for President," Tauzin complains. Gore's allies insist it is the Republicans who are playing politics. "This is a Clinton and Gore signature item," says former FCC Chairman Hundt. "The divi-

sive, partisan, do-nothing Congress would rather not see something succeed than see it succeed on terms that would be regarded as positive for the Democrats."

All of which leaves Gore with an important lesson as he approaches his 2000 campaign: cyberpolitics isn't the safe territory he might have thought it was. That's one more thing he can start to lose sleep over. ■

David Gelernter

No—Learn First, Surf Later

QUACK-MEDICINE COMES IN TWO VARIETIES: "IRRELEVANT but harmless" and "toxic." The Administration's plan to wire American classrooms for Internet service is toxic quackery. Four-fifths of U.S. schools have Internet access already; instead of wiring the rest, we ought to lay down a startling new educational directive: First learn reading and writing, history and arithmetic. Then play Frisbee, go fishing or surf the Internet. Lessons first, fun second.

I've used the Internet nearly every day since September 1982. It's a great way to gather information, communicate and shop. And in one sense, the Internet is good for the American mind. Up through the early '90s, everyday written communication seemed to be dying out. Thanks to e-mail and fax machines, writing has come back. In this respect, the Internet could be a fine teaching tool—a way to share good, scarce writing teachers. One teacher could manage a whole district of students if they were all connected electronically.

But the push to net-connect every school is an educational disaster in the making. Our schools are in crisis. Statistics prove what I see every day as a parent and a college educator. My wife and I have a constant struggle to get our young boys to master the basic skills they need and our schools hate to teach. As a college teacher, I see the sorry outcome: students who can't write worth a damn, who lack basic math and language skills. Our schools are scared to tell students to sit down and shut up and learn; drill it, memorize it, because you must master it whether it's fun or not. Children pay the price for our educational cowardice.

I've never met one parent or teacher or student or principal, or even computer salesman who claimed that *insufficient data* is the root of the problem. With an Internet connection, you can gather the latest stuff from all over, but too many American high school students have never read one Mark Twain novel or Shakespeare play or Wordsworth poem, or a serious history of the U.S.; they are bad at science, useless at mathematics, hopeless at writing—but if they could

only connect to the latest websites in Passaic and Peru, we'd see improvement? The Internet, said President Clinton in February, "could make it possible for every child with access to a computer to stretch a hand across a keyboard to reach every book ever written, every painting ever painted, every symphony ever composed." Pardon me, Mr. President, but this is demented. Most American children don't know what a symphony is. If we suddenly figured out how to teach each child *one* movement of *one* symphony, that would be a miracle.

And our skill-free children are overwhelmed by information even *without* the Internet. The glossy magazines and hundred-odd cable channels, the videotapes and computer

CDs in most libraries and many homes—they need *more* information? It's as if the Administration were announcing that every child must have the fanciest scuba gear on the market—but these kids don't know how to swim, and fitting them out with scuba gear isn't just useless, it's irresponsible; they'll drown.

And it gets worse. Our children's attention spans are too short

**Our schools are
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already, but the Web is a propaganda machine for short attention spans. The instant you get bored, click the mouse, and you're someplace else. Our children already prefer pictures to words, glitz to substance, fancy packaging to serious content. But the Web propagandizes relentlessly for glitz and pictures, for video and stylish packaging. And while it's full of first-rate information, it's also full of lies, garbage and pornography so revolting you can't even describe it. There is no quality control on the Internet.

Still, imagine a well-run, serious school with an Internet hookup in the library for occasional use by students under supervision who are working on research projects; would that be so bad? No. Though it ranks around 944th on my list of important school improvements, it's not bad. But in reality, too many schools will use the Internet the same way they use computers themselves: to entertain children at minimal cost to teachers. If children are turned loose to surf, then Internet in the schools won't be a minor educational improvement, it will be a major disaster. Another one. Just what we need. ■

Gelernter is a professor of computer science at Yale. His 1991 book, *Mirror Worlds*, predicted something like today's Web.

Young, G.O.P. and Black

The well-backed candidacy of Dylan Glenn challenges ideas about race and politics

By TAMALA M. EDWARDS ALBANY

IN CIVIL RIGHTS LORE, ALBANY DOESN'T get talked about much. That's because the small Georgia city, four hours south of Atlanta, is remembered as the place that turned back Martin Luther King Jr., sending the crusader home empty-handed. Albany sits in the heart of peanut country amid a dusty interweave of farm towns and red clay countryside. It's a world of tradition and habit; both dictate that this district belong to the Democrats. All the same, Al-

coln, earned the opposite image as the party on the wrong side of civil rights. With this precedent, it is startling that Glenn stands as a favored G.O.P. son. Two months before the primary, he has raised \$360,000, most of it in fund raisers thrown from Los Angeles to New York City. His financial disclosure reports read like a *Who's Who* of the party, with three former Republican National Committee chairmen, a Rockefeller and pundit Mary Matalin contributing. He has a primary challenger, a white businessman who quotes "Stonewall" Jackson and is

ty that looks ahead," says an aide to the Speaker, who made Glenn a delegate to a June White House Social Security summit.

Glenn was bred to be a Republican and straddle racial lines. The youngest son of a retired grade school principal and counselor, he grew up in Columbus, Ga., with parents who stood out for their affiliation with the G.O.P. "My father believed in individual responsibility and less government," says Glenn. He spent his last three years of high school at Episcopal, a D.C.-area boarding school, before heading off to Davidson College, a favorite of Southern gentry. That was followed by stints as a legislative aide to Cochran, a policy assistant in the Bush White House and convention adviser to the R.N.C.

His inner circle is made up mostly of whites, but he has also befriended Gen Xers like Yusef Jackson, son of Jesse. The balancing act is most evident in his cam-

paign video, a multicultural mélange showing Glenn with kids and farmers. At one point he is seen ambling with his parents and a golden retriever through the Georgia countryside. Dylan "never talked about race," says his mother to the camera.

What Glenn is highlighting these days is his ties to powerful Republicans, which he argues will give him more swat in Congress than either of his opponents. But that distinction could cost him in a district that is 39% black and deeply suspicious of the G.O.P. Says civil rights hero and Georgia Congressman John Lewis: "The question will be, Are you what we used to call a 'race man'?" Still, Lewis sees something else in the Glenn race: an emerging conservatism among young blacks—or at least a reluctance to sign up

blindly with the Democratic Party. "As younger black professionals move up, they tend to move away from party affiliation. They could be up for grabs," he says. While most older blacks identify themselves as Democrats, a 1997 poll by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies found that 42% of blacks ages 26 to 35 classified themselves as independents.

If Glenn wins in November, the person he may need to thank will be Bishop. The Democrat eked out a 54% win over a white Republican two years ago in a district that is two-thirds white, but improved that standing with good constituent service—and an occasional visit to a rattlesnake roundup. "A lot of whites were scared to vote for a black, but Sanford changed all that," agrees R.S. Smith, 65, a white retiree in Bainbridge, looking over at Glenn. "Yeah, I'll give this fella a look."



WHY GLENN'S ELECTION IS A LONG SHOT

His opponent is an incumbent popular for saving the peanut bill and lading out pork.

■ WHY IT'S NOT

He's raised \$360,000 and should be well funded in the general.

He's backed by party stars like Colin Powell and James Baker.

The state is turning Republican, and young blacks are less tied to the Democrats.

bany is headquarters of Dylan Glenn's run for Congress, and if the 28-year-old wins, his election as the district's first Republican will be least among the reasons to cross-tab him in the history books. In a party defined for so long by its whiteness, Glenn is black. While most black Republicans complain of being ignored by the party, he has drawn money from such potentates as James Baker and Colin Powell. And in this majority-white district, the Democrat he has to beat, Sanford Bishop, is another black man.

A win by Glenn would be like a centennial bookend: the last Southern black Republican in Congress was North Carolinian George White, who left office in 1901. In the next 100 years, four other black Republicans would go to Congress. But for the most part the G.O.P., which once commanded black support as the party of Lin-

married to a former county peanut queen, which should mean that party officials must remain neutral. But Mississippi Senator Thad Cochran is ignoring protocol, having stumped for Glenn last December and narrated his campaign video.

Such backing is partly the result of Glenn's decades of networking. Even his most intimate friendships seem to have served a purpose. "My wife's cousin's son is Dylan's best friend," Cochran explains when asked how Glenn got his first job in Cochran's office. Pictures of George Bush, Newt Gingrich and other G.O.P. stalwarts stare down from the wall of Glenn's headquarters. But the support is not just the wages of bonhomie. Republicans know that as America becomes more ethnically diverse, they must attract more minority voters to retain the majority. "This is not about being the party of the moment but the par-