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Tax receipts
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Teach for America
Teachers
Teacher peer review
Teacher in space
Teacher tug programs
Technology
Technology in schools
Teen car accidents
Teen pregnancy
Telecommunications

TOM W. RYAN
144 Willowleaf Drive
Littleton, CO 80127

303-973-5077 (Fax) 303-932-6010
ryandenver@msn.com

October 27, 1999

Mr. Eric Liu, Deputy Director, Domestic Policy Council
The White House, West Wing, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Mr. Liu:

Enclosed is a letter to President Clinton which sets forth the unique historical opportunity presented to the President for his State of the Union address which will bridge two millennia. Moreover, I have included James Reston's commentary on the missed millennial moment for great ideas. What is written, history will expect.

While Jefferson's blueprint for a National Advisory Referendum will raise President Clinton to the millennial pedestal, there is a practical reason as well. With the President picking two issues and the Congress picking two issues for the November 2000 elections, you expand your options to implement the President's current agenda. Otherwise, you are limited to grinding everything out in Congress.

You can't win all the issues in a Republican controlled Congress. However, you can win some with the people in a popular vote. Why not plan to push some of the issues which will be gridlocked in Congress as those which will be referred to the people? Refer what you can't pass—gun control, campaign finance, senior drug coverage

Battling gridlock gets lost in history. A proposal for a National Advisory Referendum changes history. These ideas are yours for the taking and history for the making. Gridlock or history--you decide!!!

Sincerely,

Tom Ryan

TOM W. RYAN
144 Willowleaf Drive
Littleton, CO 80127

303-973-5077 (Fax) 303-932-6010
ryandenvr@msn.com

October 27, 1999

President William Jefferson Clinton
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Two nights ago I was doing my business expenses at 1:35 AM when I turned the television to C-span and saw you deliver a moving speech on Social Security. **While the nation slept, your stirring words that we have a "chance of a lifetime to chart a course for our future and build the century of our dreams" sent chills up my spine.**

But few people saw you. The time has come to build a prime-time democracy for our future.

When we met in Aspen at Senator Feinstein's home in July, we talked about Thomas Jefferson's idea to create a "National Advisory Referendum" where we as a nation would come together to forge a consensus for our common destiny by casting advisory votes on public policy issues at every general election.

Mr. President, you have a unique opportunity in your State of the Union address to build a democracy for the 21st century with Jefferson's blueprint. You can provide a new vision for democratic participation for the United States and all the world for the new millennium.

Mr. President, this is your chance of a lifetime. You share Jefferson's name. You can share his legacy on democracy.

When Congressman Bill Thomas, (R., CA) delivered the Republican response on C-span, he challenged you, "When are you going to use your enormous talents to bring us together for good?"

The answer can be delivered in your last State of the Union address by proposing National Advisory Referendum legislation to bring us together as one nation forging a public consensus for our common destiny.

Moreover, the bill which I have drafted puts you in a political win-win situation. For the first National Advisory Referendum in November 2000 there would be 4 advisory issues on the ballot—two chosen by you and two chosen by the Congress—giving neither the Democrats nor Republicans any political advantage. Beginning in 2002 and every general election thereafter, the power to place advisory issues before the nation would revert exclusively to the President who would be able to put up to three issues before the people.

This plan is a win-win strategy. If the Republicans pass the National Advisory Referendum proposal, you win. If they oppose the plan, they will suffer the scorn of the American people for blocking one of the most important expansions of democratic rights in the history of our nation. The Democrats could then use it as a wedge issue for the 2000 elections, including Hillary in New York, and Congressional Democrats to win back control of the House.

But this is more than just an election issue, the idea for a National Advisory Referendum is an idea for all time.

Your State of the Union address in January presents you with a unique historic opportunity as we cross the threshold of the new millennium. It will be another 1000 years before another President can put on your shoes and lead the nation across a similar bridge to a new millennium.

But how you cross this historic bridge to the new millennium will be for others to decide—the writers of today and historians of tomorrow.

Just last Sunday James Reston, writing in the *Washington Post*, decried the lack of historic appreciation to bridge the past with our future at this millennial moment, saying:

“It is abundantly clear that this country has already missed out on the glorious opportunity that was the millennium. In the endless blather about Y2K, in the correctly or incorrectly spelled commercialization of the word, in the trivial topic of whether the new age begins in 2000 or 2001, in the worry about champagne supplies and the focus on the big bashes in Times Square and on the Mall, there will be no meaningful experience for the American people. The failure of the imagination is total and across the board: from the political leadership to the scholars. . .

The turning of a millennium should be a time of grand reckoning. Symbolic dates call for symbolic acts, and these dates and acts can acquire real, concrete meaning if they are used as an excuse—and an opportunity—for innovative thinking. What better reason than the passing of 1,000 years in the calendar will we ever have for grand dreams about the future and for a solemn reevaluation of the past? Coming to terms with the past can position a society for the future; it frees the imagination and allows us to dream.

This millennial season should have been the time for American artists and visionaries, builders and thinkers to take center stage, but there has been no effort to mobilize them. As a result, the wealthiest, most powerful nation on Earth will leave little permanent behind to mark the moment. American politicians speak as if the millennium were a decaffeinated Bicentennial, with cheap renamings of existing projects as “millennial.”

...

Potentially, the millennium is the greatest teaching

moment of our times, but who's doing the teaching?"

Mr. President, you have the vision. I have seen it in your eyes each time we have met and talked about Jefferson's blueprint to expand democratic participation in shaping public policy.

You are the Supreme Court of American politics. I respectfully request 30 minutes of your time to represent Jefferson's views for your ultimate consideration as the model for our democratic future.

Your State of the Union address could become the most important speech of your entire presidency as we enter a new age of technology and information. You have a chance to set forth a new vision for our future as a nation and as the model democracy for all the world. When President Kennedy promised to send a man to the moon, he stirred the imagination of our people. He will be forever credited with this great achievement even though it occurred during President Nixon's term in the summer of 1969. President Kennedy gets the historical credit because he was the President with the idea and shared it with the nation. The clips of his speech promising to send a man to the moon are played back to this day as one of the time markers of American history.

The information age presents another time marker. What President will claim this transition for all of history? Mr. President, it is either you at your last State of the Union who will capture this moment for all of time, or it will be given by default to the next President of the new millenium to grab the historic spotlight in his inaugural address for all of time.

Mr. President, you have the vision to claim this historic moment as yours for all of history by proposing a National Advisory Referendum.

As the information age continues to explode into the next century, the people will continue to have access to more and more information. C-span, the Internet, information data banks and web-sites for interest groups and campaigns are just a few of the many new ways people are getting information about public issues which were never envisioned even 20 years ago.

Information is the currency of democracy. The more people are informed, the more they are capable of participating in making decisions. While access to information has expanded exponentially, the way we make decisions at the federal level has remained the same as it was over 200 years ago.

As people gain access to more and more information, they will demand the right to participate more and more in the decision-making process of government. The process of expanding information and demanding more participation are part of the same democratic equation. You can't have the former without the latter. Data flow and decision-making are part of an unstoppable evolution for the 21st century.

Today over 100 million Americans have access to the Internet. We are fast approaching the day when we as a nation can come together on the Internet without waiting for Congress to embrace a more participatory democracy. If Congress fails to act to establish a formal National Advisory Referendum process for every general election, the President will be able to go directly to the people for an advisory vote on the Internet to create a working model for the future of citizen participation and force Congress to pass the National Advisory Referendum proposal. While Congress fails to act, voting kiosks could be set up in public offices and publicly-funded libraries to provide Internet voting access for those without computers. In other words, if Congress fails to act, the technology can quickly be put in place to create an advisory voting process. Once people start voting on issues at the first general election, those members of the Congress and Senate who blocked the bill for a National Advisory Referendum will be vulnerable to defeat as blocking the doorway to expanded democratic decision-making.

Currently, AT&T and Microsoft are developing the technology to merge television, computers and the Internet to expand access to information and entertainment options. However, once this technology is rolled out, it can be turned into a decision-making mechanism for public policy formation. Through television and Internet technology, the President would be able to hold a "National Town Meeting" to discuss a national issue and ask people to cast an

advisory vote to help gauge public opinion. The day when the President asks everyone to provide input through an Internet web-vote is just around the next bend of the century.

The technology for collecting web-votes is already in place. Commercial web-sites are already asking people to participate in making decisions. The Biography Channel allowed people to program the channel for a week by voting in several different categories from sports heroes to political leaders who they wanted to see on television. ESPN gave viewers the same opportunity to program a week of ESPN Classic sports shows and ESPN regularly asks viewers to vote on who was the greatest athlete for a particular category. *Time Magazine* asked readers to vote on the Internet for the 100 people who had the greatest impact (good or bad) in the 20th Century.

While more and more people participate in voting on commercial web-sites and feel empowered by their participation, it will be only a short period of time before people will demand the same participatory rights from their government.

Government leaders who fail to see the emerging technology as a model for greater public participation in policy formation will be left in the dustbins of history. Our democratic future will be one of greater, not lesser, public participation in government decision-making.

While the technology of today will allow greater public participation in policy formation, holding a televised meeting with an instant Internet vote would be a weak and unacceptable substitute for a National Advisory Referendum where campaigns for and against are run prior to the actual vote at the time of elections. Instant voting, while useful for gauging public opinion, is not democracy in action. Democratic decision-making requires informed choices to be made after consideration of all the issues both pro and con. It requires time to think, time to reflect, time to listen, time to talk. Democracy is at its best as a deliberative process, not as a push-button technology.

Having a participatory web-site is nothing like holding a National Advisory Referendum where competing ideas are put to the test of public consideration and decision. However, the idea of voting on the web can be a model for forming a National Advisory Referendum every general election where we come together as a nation to participate in shaping public policy.

Our old democratic bridges from the past 200 years were built for smaller traffic volumes of elected officials and interest group representatives. Today we need a new democratic bridge, one that will handle all the people coming together as a nation to cross the bridge at the same time.

Thomas Jefferson first drew up the blueprint for an expanded democratic bridge in 1816 when he put forward the concept of a collective group of local meetings where the people voted on the issues. The National Advisory Referendum is the modern version of this simple idea and built upon the same solid foundation that government works best when it is derived from the consent of the governed and where every person feels himself a part.

Mr. President, let us join together to build upon our democratic traditions to form a new mechanism in which we as a people can begin to collectively search out our common destiny. As we boldly begin a search for a new consensus, we will be guided by our most fundamental principles and seek to give contemporary meaning to the words, "We the people."

This is the bridge to the 21st century where everyone can walk across. Thomas Jefferson waits to greet us on the other side.

History is in your hands.

You and I have met 6 times: Congressman Richard Gephardt's fundraiser in St. Louis in the spring of 1996, Tom Strickland for Senate fundraiser in Denver at the Inverness Country Club in 1996, at a public campaign rally at the Pueblo, Colorado courthouse in 1996, on the ropes at Red Rocks Amphitheater in Denver in 1996, on the ropes at the Denver Coliseum (Western Stock Show complex) in

1996, and in July of 1999 at the Aspen home of Senator Dianne Feinstein.

I feel as if I have taken this issue through the lower courts and through the appellate process. It's as if I am standing on the steps of the Supreme Court of American politics,

This is my petition for "certiorari".

All I want is for Jefferson's idea to be, in his own words, "fairly, fully, and peaceably expressed, discussed, and decided by the common reason" of your judgment as President of the United States. **Thomas Jefferson deserves no less.** This is my petition on behalf of Thomas Jefferson.

I respectfully request the opportunity to meet with you for 30 minutes to discuss this important idea first proposed by Jefferson over 180 years ago and which can be the democratic bridge to the new millennium.

The technology revolution of today makes Jefferson's idea of the past even more relevant for our future.

With this idea, you will become a man for the millennium. I will be happy just to be a footnote to history.

You share Jefferson's name, you can share his legacy on democracy.

Sincerely,

Tom Ryan

TOM W. RYAN
144 Willowleaf Drive
Littleton, CO 80127

303-973-5077 (Fax) 303-932-6010
ryandenvr@msn.com

October 13, 1999

Mr. Eric Liu, Deputy Director
Domestic Policy Council
The White House, West Wing, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Mr. Liu:

Since faxing you my letter of October 12, I saw 2 newspaper articles and received in the mail a voting pamphlet which have a direct bearing on the relevancy of making "the digital crossroads" one of the themes of President Clinton's State of the Union address for January 2000. Just as President Kennedy captured the imagination of a nation by promising to send a man to the moon, President Clinton can lead this nation across the bridge to the 21st century with a proposal for a National Advisory Referendum where we as a people can come together to forge a consensus for our common destiny as Thomas Jefferson envisioned over 180 years ago.

First, Hewlett-Packard announced that it is leading a group of 22 other companies who are developing new computer-servers to allow mobile phone users to have access to advanced "e-services" on the web. Ulf Beyschlag, product manager for mobile e-services at Hewlett-Packard in Grenoble, France, said, "In 2001, there will be more data-capable phones on the market than PC's."

This same technology will allow voting by phone. If you can access commercial web sites to make transactions by phone, you are just a dial away from accessing government web sites to cast votes for both candidates and issues. Keep this in mind. Secured web sites require the user to use a pin number to gain access to make a transaction. For voting on the web, social security numbers can easily become the "democratic pin number" for "democratic transactions."

Second, IBM has announced that it has formed an industry alliance to create better security for electronic commerce transactions. In addition to IBM, the Trusted Computing Platform Alliance includes Compaq Computer Corporation, Hewlett-Packard Co., Microsoft and Intel Corp. The article noted that e-business will increase from \$43 billion to \$1.3 trillion by 2003.

Greater security for business transactions will mean that the same technology can be used to secure "democratic" transactions over the Internet such as voting for issues and candidates.

Third, the polling place has become one's "home" in Colorado. I just received a voting brochure telling me that I will be receiving a ballot in the mail to vote on an important school issue for Jefferson County residents. For this general election, there will be no polling place. All voting is being done by mail.

Ballots by postal mail can soon be transformed into ballots by e-mail for the 101 million people who have access to the Internet in this country. We need to look out into the future so that when people register to vote, they will give their home address and their e-mail address to the registrar. The possibility of casting ballots from home from one's computer or cell phone can soon become a reality.

The President has a unique opportunity in history to build the democratic bridge to the 21st century in his State of the Union address in January 2000.

By bridging the gap between the technology of today and Jefferson's ideas to give people the right to cast advisory votes on the issues so that the "voice of the whole people would be thus fairly, fully, and peaceably expressed, discussed, and decided by the common reason of society;" President Clinton will become a man for the Millenium and you and I can share a footnote to history.

Sincerely,

Tom Ryan

TOM W. RYAN
144 Willowleaf Drive
Littleton, CO 80127

303-973-5077 (Fax) 303-932-6010
ryandenver@msn.com

DATE: OCTOBER 12, 1999

TO: ERIC LIU, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DOMESTIC POLICY

FROM: TOM RYAN

7 PAGES
(INCLUDES COVER)

SUBJECT: "THE DIGITAL CROSSROADS"

- 1) White House Conference on Democracy and the Internet
- 2) National Advisory Referendum

"All, too, will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful, must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect, and to violate which would be oppression."

Thomas Jefferson
First Inaugural Address

"The mayor of every ward, on a question like the present, would call his ward together, take the simple yea or nay of its members, convey these to the county court, who would hand on those of all its wards to the proper general authority; and the voice of the whole people would be thus fairly, fully, and peaceably expressed, discussed, and decided by the common reason of society."

"I am not among those who fear the people"

Thomas Jefferson
Letter to Samuel Kercheval

TOM W. RYAN
144 Willowleaf Drive
Littleton, CO 80127

303-973-5077 (Fax) 303-932-6010
ryandenver@msn.com

October 11, 1999

Mr. Eric Liu, Deputy Director
Domestic Policy Council
The White House, West Wing, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Mr. Liu:

Your phone call to me continues to impact as a catalyst. You asked me how the Internet could be used to expand citizen participation.

I have come up with the historical handle for President Clinton for the Internet proposal contained in my FedEx to you of October 3.

No President has ever addressed the impact of the Internet on our democracy. When the President makes his State of the Union address in January, he will have a unique opportunity to set forth a vision for the future of our democracy.

The President needs to tell the nation that we are at a "digital crossroads". We as a nation have a choice to make as to how the Internet will be used in our democracy. There are two choices we face as a nation: will the Internet be used merely as a communication mechanism as it is today or will the Internet be used as a decision-making mechanism for our democracy of the future?

If we can buy goods and services and trade stocks securely over the Internet, can the same technology be used to secure the voting process so that we can cast our ballots on-line for both candidates and the issues? If we can create digital signatures for secured commercial transactions, can we create digital signatures for secured voting on the Internet?

I recommend that the President announce during his State of the Union address that he will convene in the Spring of the year 2000 a "White House Conference on Democracy and the Internet." At this digital summit, the President would invite the heads of the major corporations who have the technology and resources to determine what needs to be done to move the electoral process into the digital age where people can vote both for candidates and issues over the Internet or go to the polls. Some states, like Colorado, have mailed ballots for some elections to all voters—giving the voters a chance to cast their ballot by mail, prior to the day of the official election. If ballots are sent by mail, then surely ballots could be made available over the Internet.

The time has come for President Clinton to build a bridge to the "digital democracy" of the 21st century and the new Millenium.

Since all electoral laws and elections are handled by the States, the "White House Conference on Democracy and the Internet" would provide the framework for action to be taken by the States to move toward a digital democracy and serve as a catalyst for future action by the 50 states.

However, the White House conference would allow President Clinton to do what no President has ever done—set forth a vision for the "digital democracy" of our future. By announcing this during the State of the Union address, President Clinton would be put in the same place in our national history as President Kennedy who set forth the vision of sending a man to the moon.

But for the President to have the same historical impact as President Kennedy did, the President must do more than promise an inter-active government and host a White House conference on the "digital crossroads." The President must lay out a bold vision for the future.

President Kennedy is not remembered for an unfocused speech about exploring space. President Kennedy is remembered for promising to send a man to the moon. The goal was concrete which the American people could visualize at the very moment President Kennedy spoke those simple but powerful words.

While we stand at a “digital crossroads” President Clinton can have the same affect on our national psyche by promising a future where we can come together as a nation to forge a consensus for our common destiny by voting on the issues as Thomas Jefferson envisioned over 180 years ago—a proposal for a National Advisory Referendum. With this proposal, the President can forever change the way we govern ourselves and transform his vision of community into a mechanism for national consensus and decision-making.

The President should announce that he will call together the top “digital engineers” from business to figure out how to make the transformation into the digital democracy.

The technology of television forever changed the way we govern ourselves. No elected leader saw the future impact of television. The impact of television evolved without direction. The digital age will surely change our democracy. President Clinton has a unique opportunity to shape the digital democracy of the future before it evolves and make his mark as the bridge builder for our democracy of the future. His next State of the Union address can mark the beginning of a new era of citizen participation and give new meaning to the words, “We the people.”

When I came home this past week-end from my latest trip from Chicago, my next door neighbor and I paused to say hello while we were both cutting our lawns. He said to me, “I saw in the newspaper that the Senate may not pass the President’s health care reform bill. Is that the type of proposal which we would get a chance to vote on under your proposal to President Clinton for a National Advisory Referendum?” When I said “yes,” he said, “That’s exactly what we need to do.”

The people see the need.

The people need a visionary leader to build the bridge.

President Clinton can turn Jefferson’s idea into reality and become a man for the Millenium.

Attached is a revised National Advisory Referendum proposal to make passage practical prior to the 2000 elections.

History is now in your hands.

I respectfully request the opportunity to meet with you and the President to discuss these important ideas for the future of our democracy.

Sincerely,

Tom Ryan

P. S. I have met the President 6 times—6 times in 1996 and 1999. (Congressman Richard Gephardt's fundraiser in St. Louis, Tom Strickland for U.S. Senate fundraiser in Denver, Senator Dianne Feinstein's home in Aspen; and 3 public rallies where I talked briefly with the President along the front lines at Red Rocks amphitheater, a court house rally in Pueblo, CO and the Denver Coliseum).

When I met with President Clinton at Senator Feinstein's Aspen home in July of this year, the President expressed a genuine interest in the idea for a National Advisory Referendum. He said he liked the idea because we could all come together to vote on the issues and it would not require a Constitutional Amendment.

President Clinton shares Jefferson's name; with this idea for a National Advisory Referendum, President Clinton can share Jefferson's legacy on democracy for all of time.

I respectfully request the chance for oral argument.

Let history be the judge.

TOM W. RYAN
144 Willowleaf Drive
Littleton, CO 80127

303-973-5077 (Fax) 303-932-6010
ryandenvr@msn.com

October 3, 1999

Mr. Eric Liu, Deputy Director
Domestic Policy Council
The White House, West Wing, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Mr. Liu:

Thank you for your call earlier this week about my proposal to resurrect Thomas Jefferson's 1816 idea to create an advisory referendum process into a modern-day National Advisory Referendum on issues chosen by the President.

This is the most important letter you will ever receive--for how often can you hold in your hand a proposal that can change the course of history? Let me explain these bold statements.

Your call to me was an important catalyst. After thinking about your call, I came up with a modification in the proposal to make it politically practical for Congress to pass the National Advisory Referendum legislation in time for the 2000 year elections giving President Clinton an historic place in the evolution of American democracy.

The President has a unique moment in history when he makes his State of the Union speech in January 2000. He will be closing one Millenium and beginning another Millenium. While others may expect to see President Clinton merely deliver the last of his State of the Union addresses to close out his presidency, I see an unprecedented moment in democratic history which will not take place for another 1000 years.

The President must grasp this historic opportunity and provide the American people a vision worthy of the moment. The President

cannot just focus on programs to close down his term, but must tie the past and future together with a visionary speech which will ring throughout all of history.

President Clinton can do that by ending his term where he began when he visited Monticello January 17, 1993 promising to be "faithful to Jefferson's idea to shake things up once every generation." The President said at Monticello, "Jefferson was associated with the populism of his day and so we chose him as a symbol of the populism of our campaign."

But Jefferson can be more than a forgotten symbol for President Clinton's campaign. Jefferson's ideas to forge a public consensus on public policy issues by having people cast advisory votes on public issues can become the crowning achievement of President Clinton's presidency. Moreover, it can forever transform President Clinton's concept of community into a mechanism for national decision-making.

I have come up with a practical plan to make this proposal possible.

Since our talk, I have come up with a revised proposal to have the President pick 2 issues and the Congress pick 2 issues for the first National Advisory Referendum for November 2000 with the power reverting exclusively to the President for all subsequent referendums. See enclosed revised draft. This will take partisan politics out of the political equation. The President can offer to walk across the bridge to the 21st century hand-in-hand with the Republican leaders of the Congress, not as political opponents, but as Americans walking across the bridge to seek out our common destiny for the future.

Moreover, if the President introduces this proposal at the State of the Union address, he can clearly show the American people that this proposal is not about gaining partisan advantage, but about opening up the doors of democracy to the people so that we as a nation can come together to forge a public consensus for public policy.

The President can "rock the house" of American democracy while millions of people watch at home with the most important change in the way we govern ourselves since Thomas Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence.

You are holding in your hands an idea to expand public participation in representative democracy with the power to change the course of history for all time. You are holding in your hands an idea first proposed by Thomas Jefferson in 1816 which has been lost to history for over 180 years. You are holding in your hands an idea which will make President William Jefferson Clinton a man for the Millenium.

You said on the phone that one of the ideas being considered is a “blue ribbon commission” to come up with ideas to expand public participation in government. With all due respect, another report from another blue ribbon commission coming in the last year of President Clinton’s term will soon be lost in the dustbins of history.

There is another path to choose.

Instead of proposing a commission which will be lost in the dust of history, President Clinton needs to dust off the unfinished citizen participation plans of the greatest democratic architect this world has ever known—Thomas Jefferson.

Jefferson’s plans have been on the shelf for over 180 years but are as relevant today as they were to Jefferson in 1816 when he used the New England Town Meeting concept of self-government, where people cast advisory votes on issues of public concern, as his model to reform the very American democracy he helped create—calling the advisory voting process of the New England Town Meetings “the wisest invention ever devised by the wit of man for the perfect exercise of self-government, and for its preservation.”

President Clinton’s speech to create a National Advisory Referendum will shine like a beacon for all the world to see and cast a bright light on the Clinton presidency. The stronger the light of a Clinton/Jefferson plan to expand democratic participation, the weaker the impeachment shadow will be on the President’s legacy.

I live in Denver where John Elway set a record of nearly 50 fourth quarter comebacks, including one to beat the Green Bay Packers in Super Bowl XXXII. President Clinton has been referred to as “the comeback kid”. The last year of President Clinton’s presidency is

like the last 2 minutes of a football game. It's a time when the offense has to play a well-strategized game to keep the defense back-pedaling. This is not a time for marginal plays for more marginal programs; this is a time for a dramatic play to put the ball in the end-zone.

While others may think President Clinton's last State of the Union address will be a time to wind-down his presidency, he can surprise everyone one more time with a bold plan to reform American democracy with the plans of Thomas Jefferson which will shine like a beacon for all the world.

There is no better time to announce a plan for a National Advisory Referendum than at the State of the Union address when he can reach beyond the members of Congress in attendance to the American people watching at home.

By doing so, President Clinton will be forever linked with Thomas Jefferson. As I told President Clinton when I spoke with him in Aspen—"You share Jefferson's name; by proposing a National Advisory Referendum you can share Jefferson's legacy on democracy."

With the advent of Internet technology, the timing could not be more perfect for the President to set forth a new vision for American democracy. People are seeking new ways to participate in shaping public policy.

Yesterday I received an e-mail (see enclosure) from my niece Stacey May with a petition being circulated on the Internet to persuade Congress to maintain funding for the National Endowment of the Arts, National Public Radio and PBS. By the time I got the petition, 769 people had signed. Only just recently, a person would have had to stand at a busy street corner for days to collect that many signatures (note that the Supreme Court has upheld the property rights of shopping mall owners to prohibit petitioning at malls where hundreds of people gather making Internet petition gathering a wave of the future.)

A few days ago my wife Evonne received a fax from "21st Century Fax Ltd.", asking her "to vote" by fax for or against "more effective gun control laws." The fax said the "vote" was being faxed to over 4 million people in the United States. No longer are faxes being sent individually. They are being faxed by computers to computers—over the Internet to reach millions of people.

People want to participate more and with the development of new Internet technology the demand to play an active role in shaping public policy will grow stronger in the future.

The Nielsen/Net Ratings estimates 101 million now have access to the Internet. On September 15 the Denver Post reported that AT&T plans to build 26 new "Internet data centers" across the country to handle the interactive needs of business. Once these centers are built in the year 2000, the infrastructure can also be used by government for our democracy.

People are already voting on-line through commercial web-sites. Both the Biography Channel and ESPN Classic allowed viewers to program their channels for an entire week by voting on which shows they wanted to watch.

The enclosed article on Nokia's new model 7110 mobile phone is a window to the future of cell-phone technology. Nokia is based in Finland where 60% of the people have cell phones compared to 25% in the US. Finland is expected to have 100% cell phone penetration by the end of the year 2000.

The new Nokia 7110's are called "third generation" cell phones. With the model 7110, people are able to access the Internet with just a few flicks to check stock prices, send e-mail, and purchase items.

Ilkka Raiskinin, Vice President for business development says, "Mobile phones are a platform just waiting for additional services and content." If you can access the Internet by phone to make secure purchases and stock trades, voting by phone will also be possible.

Someday in the future people will not have to go to the polls. Secure commercial transaction technology for the Internet can be used as a

way of allowing people to vote from their computers or over the advanced cell phones described above.

ATT's cable subsidiary (TCI) is developing set-top boxes which will turn the television into a portal for the Internet making computers and televisions into a combined technology.

Alta Vista, Free PC and NetZero are all offering free Internet access for those willing to see advertising on their screens hastening the day when the digital divide will be bridged by the commercial power of advertising similar to network television of today.

Oracle has announced plans to develop a \$250 computer for schools. Once this becomes commercially available, it will make access to the Internet the cost of a television set and accepting free advertising.

When the President makes his State of the Union address in January 2000, he will have a unique opportunity to talk about how the technology of the Internet will impact our democracy and the way we make decisions.

But President Clinton has a choice to make.

The first is to merely encourage the development of an interactive democracy where the government becomes more accessible as a result of changing technology.

The second is to provide a focal point for the interactive democracy of our future—holding a National Advisory Referendum every two years. People can then use the technologies of the Internet to seek out information about the issues, join advocacy groups through their websites, participate in on-line forums about the issues, and organize around the issues via the Web and in their communities.

However, if Congress fails to pass a National Advisory Referendum bill, President Clinton could hold the first ever National Advisory Referendum on the Internet. This can be used as leverage to gain approval of the National Advisory Referendum in Congress. If Congress fails to act, not only would they be blocking legislation giving people the right to cast votes on the issues in our national

elections, they would be carving themselves out of having any say in the issues picked by the President for an Internet-based National Advisory Referendum to be held the same day as our national elections in November 2000. For those without computers, Internet voting kiosks could be set up in federal buildings, such as Social Security offices, around the country.

Either the Republicans join with the President in supporting a National Advisory Referendum bill where they can take mutual credit with the President and pick 2 of the issues for the year 2000, or they will be blamed for standing in the way of one of the most historic advancements of democratic rights in our nation's history.

This is a time for an historic speech, an historic proposal, an historic moment. By transforming Jefferson's ideas to give people the right to cast advisory votes on the issues into a proposal for a National Advisory Referendum, President William Jefferson Clinton will become a man for the Millenium.

The National Advisory Referendum will change the course of history.

Everything is now up to you.

History is in your hands.

Sincerely,

Tom Ryan

P.S. The President is like the Supreme Court for our democracy. I would like the opportunity to meet with you and the President for oral argument on Thomas Jefferson's ideas. He's the client, I'm just his attorney. I would like to meet with you before December 11th when I will be meeting President George Bush at my company's Christmas Party in Chicago (see enclosure). I want President Clinton to make history. I don't want to be tempted to give this idea to President Bush for his son. However, I am torn by the realization that though I am a strong Democrat, Thomas Jefferson's ideas are for all Americans.

TOM W. RYAN
144 Willowleaf Drive
Littleton, CO 80127

303-973-5077 (Fax) 303-932-6010
ryandenver@msn.com

August 7, 1999

President William Jefferson Clinton
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

It was great to see you again at the Aspen home of Senator Dianne Feinstein on July 24 where we talked about Thomas Jefferson's idea, formulated in a letter to Sam Kercheval in 1816, to give people a greater voice in government by casting advisory votes on issues to forge a common consensus on matters of public policy.

You said you would have one of your assistants contact me to review the enclosed National Advisory Referendum proposal to give the President the power to put 1 to 3 issues before the people for an advisory vote every general election.

I would like to come to Washington to meet with one of your advisors to discuss how you can resurrect one of Jefferson's ideas which has been lost in history for over 180 years. You share his name. You can share his legacy on democracy. You can become a man for the next Millenium and be linked with Jefferson for all of history.

You talked of your vision of a national community. However, Presidential visions fade with a change of Administrations unless they are turned into a structural change to last for all of time. The key to turning your vision of a national community of people caring for each other is to create a decision-making structure for this new American community for the 21st century. You can build the bridge for all Americans to walk across from Jefferson's plans for advisory votes

on issues and create a new sense of shared responsibility for our nation.

After I left Senator Feinstein's home, I drove to a place that you have never been, but which has been important to your life—the headwaters of the Arkansas River, deep in the mountains of Colorado. The Arkansas River means much to the people of Arkansas—water for life, farming, industry and recreation. **However, the enclosed photo tells a compelling story why Thomas Jefferson's idea to give people an advisory vote on the issues needs to be part of your presidential legacy to strengthen our democracy.**

The Arkansas River begins at the top of Freemont Pass in Colorado. Next to the fragile beginnings of the Arkansas, you will see the Climax Mine where molybdenum is mined. Molybdenum is a metal alloy used to strengthen aluminum for jet aircraft.

The people want both to mine the minerals we need and to protect our environment from pollution and degradation. However, when public policy is made behind the closed doors of private meetings, the voice of the people is all too often unheard.

However, when matters are put before the people for an advisory vote, pictures like the headwaters of the Arkansas River become part of every American's concern. The people themselves, unaffected by special interest contributions to Congressional campaigns, can balance competing claims as to what is in the public's best interest and provide a clear voice as to the will of the people.

As Jefferson himself so eloquently expressed in favoring advisory votes on public issues, “. . . on a question like the present . . . the voice of the whole people would be thus fairly, fully, and peaceably expressed, discussed, and decided by the common reason of the society.” Jefferson patterned his proposal for a national advisory referendum process after the New England “town meeting” form of government which he said was “the wisest invention ever devised by the wit of man for the perfect exercise of self-government, and for its preservation.” (Letter to Samuel Kercheval, 1816).

With the emerging technology of the Internet where over 100 million Americans have access to the Web, you can use the leverage of technology to gain passage of a National Advisory Referendum. If Congress fails to pass the proposal for a new presidential power to put 1-3 issues on the national ballot and go directly to the people for an advisory vote as Jefferson envisioned, you can hold the first ever National Advisory Referendum on the Internet for the general election in the year 2000. For those without computers, Internet "voting kiosks" can be set up at public offices around the country for the model National Advisory Referendum. Social Security numbers can be used as "voter ID's" to block multiple-voting schemes for the Internet vote on the public issues you put before the people.

You will set in motion a new model of citizen participation that will shape the future of our democracy.

Moreover, your proposal for a National Advisory Referendum can provide both Vice President Al Gore and the First Lady with a powerful issue to win their elections in the year 2000. It creates a powerful win-win combination for you and the Democrats.

If the Republican controlled Congress passes the proposal, you win. If they fail to pass your National Advisory Referendum proposal to give the people the Jefferson-envisioned rights to participate in shaping public policy, you can hold the Republicans responsible for standing in the doorway to block the next great civil rights movement—to give all Americans the right to come into the halls of Congress and share power with elected officials by casting advisory votes on matters of public policy at every general election.

If the Republican controlled Congress fails to pass your National Advisory Referendum, it will show the American people that the Republicans want power and privilege to be retained by the elite, rather than be shared with all Americans.

It will put the Republicans on the opposite side of Thomas Jefferson who said, "I am not among those who fear the people," and provide the Democrats another wedge issue for the 2000 elections.

As we stand at the doorstep of a new century and new Millenium, you have a choice to make. Will your second term be remembered more for your walking to the brink, or for leading this great nation across the bridge to establish a new American community where we as a people can become what you promised in your Second Inaugural Address, "one nation, one people, with one common destiny . . . so that the voice of the people will always speak louder than the din of narrow interests"?

During the campaign for your second term, you promised America to build a bridge to the 21st century.

The National Advisory Referendum is the bridge to the 21st century where everyone can walk across.

Mr. President, will you lead the way to build the Jefferson-Clinton bridge?

Mr. President, you share Jefferson's name; you can share Jefferson's legacy on democracy.

Sincerely,

Tom Ryan
303-973-5077

P. S. I am ready to help you in any way I can. I would like to meet with one of your senior advisors so that these ideas can be fully discussed, debated and considered before you make a final decision. The Supreme Court considers briefs and oral arguments before a final decision is made. I am merely acting as Thomas Jefferson's attorney—petitioning for a hearing and oral argument. You, as President, are the Supreme Court of our democratic process.

You have a chance to make a truly historic change in the way we govern ourselves and create for all the world a new democratic model of self-government. History awaits your decision.

TOM W. RYAN

144 Willowleaf Dr.

Littleton, CO 80127

303-973-5077 (Fax) 303-932-6010

ryandenvr@msn.com

July 19, 1999

President William Jefferson Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

**I will see you this
Saturday 7-24-99
in Aspen at Sen.
Diane Feinstein's
home. I'll be wearing
my Bronco's T-shirt!**

Dear Mr. President:

I would like to meet with you for 30 minutes at the White House to discuss with you an idea first proposed by Thomas Jefferson to forge a public consensus for public policy by creating a mechanism for a national advisory referendum. Jefferson's plan for direct democracy was first proposed in 1816 in a letter to Sam Kercheval, but has been lost in history for over 180 years.

You can make history by building a bridge from Jefferson to the 21st century. You can become a man for the next millenium by being the bridge builder who has the vision to merge Jefferson's ideas of democratic participation in policy formation with the technology of today.

To meet your goals of unifying this country, the President needs a new power—the power to go directly to the people for an advisory vote either to build support for legislation prior to its introduction or to spur a reluctant Congress entangled by special interests to take action in the public interest (See enclosed draft of legislation).

I found Jefferson's idea to reform the democracy he helped create by reading a book of Jefferson's letters. Moreover, you and I have discussed Jefferson's ideas 5 times in 1996 at Democratic fundraisers in St. Louis for Congressman Richard Gephardt, in Denver for Tom Strickland for Senate, and at public rallies at Red Rocks, the Courthouse in Pueblo, Colorado, and the Denver Coliseum.

However, the advent of the Internet makes the need for a 30 minute meeting even more compelling today than in 1996.

- 1) You can make history by being the first President to hold a National Advisory Referendum--with or without Congressional support. You can box the Republicans into an corner—if they support giving people a direct voice, you and Al Gore win by creating the first National Advisory Referendum for the year 2000. If they oppose your plan, you can show the electorate that the Republicans blocked your move to give people a direct say in shaping public policy. You can then hold the first-ever National Advisory Referendum on the Internet for the 2000 elections where over 100 million Americans now have access to the Internet.**

For those without computers, publicly funded libraries and schools can be called upon to open their doors for the taxpaying voters to participate in our nation coming together in the first National Advisory Referendum.

Moreover, you can propose placing “voting kiosks” in federal buildings all across America where citizens access public services, such as Social Security offices. My brother, Kevin Ryan, has designed a prototype “voting kiosk” which could be placed throughout the United States. A person would be able to vote electronically on national referenda by using their Social Security number as their federal “voter ID” just as people have e-mail addresses.

You can move forward to implement Jefferson’s ideas for expanding public participation in policy formation with or without Congress passing a National Advisory Referendum bill.

You can create the model today.

How do you think people voting in the first National Advisory Referendum will react to the Republican Party if they block the Clinton/Gore plan in Congress to implement Jefferson's ideas to give people a direct say on the issues through an advisory vote?

The Republicans will find themselves in a democratic catch-22.

You can't lose. It's a win-win strategy.

- 2) You can turn the Republican derision of Gore's Internet remarks upside down by making Gore the co-architect of the Jefferson-Clinton plan for a National Advisory Referendum. If Congress fails to act, you and Gore will champion a National Advisory Referendum on the Internet. Vice President Gore can then take credit for merging technology with democracy to give people a greater voice in government.

It's a win-win strategy for Al Gore.

- 3) This idea can help Hillary win a Senate seat in New York. There is no better way to listen to the people than to take Jefferson's idea to give people a direct say on the issues and make a structural change in our democracy to give people an advisory vote as he envisioned in 1816.

Hillary wins by giving people a greater voice!

When you visited Monticello January 17, 1993, you talked about Jefferson's vision saying Jefferson believed "people should be able to participate by voting every day or in small groups."

Early in 1996 Senator Bill Bradley forwarded you a letter I wrote outlining Jefferson's proposal for a National Advisory Referendum. You responded saying you would try to have your scheduling office set up a meeting. However, your schedulers didn't see the

importance and told me “no” for a private meeting at the White House.

Since then, you and I have met 5 times at Democratic campaign fundraisers, private receptions, and public rallies. When we met at a Tom Strickland for Senate fundraiser in at the Inverness Country Club in Denver, you remembered me from our previous meetings. We briefly talked about Jefferson’s proposal for direct democracy. At one point I said, “Mr. President, just think of the National Advisory Referendum as an extension of your concept of community.” You paused in reflection and then said, “ I agree.”

Now that the events of the past two years are behind us, the time to move forward on Jefferson’s idea has come. The need to meet is even more compelling today than in 1996.

The advent of the Internet gives you the power to implement a National Advisory Referendum for the year 2000 elections without waiting on Congress to act. While passing legislation giving you the power to put three advisory issues on the ballot in every state would be ideal, Congress can’t defeat you. Either the Congress passes the “Jefferson-Clinton Plan for Direct Democracy,” or you can hold the National Advisory Referendum on the Internet as President.

According to Nielsen/NetRatings, over 101 million people have Internet access. Sometime early in the next century technology and democracy will merge to create a National Town Meeting where people will participate directly in shaping public policy on a regular basis.

But today you have the opportunity to share the vision for the future where everyone can participate in shaping public policy much like when President John Kennedy promised to send a man to the moon. His vision is burned in our minds as the architect of our greatest technology quest as a nation.

You can become the visionary to vault our democracy into the next millenium. You can dust off Jefferson's plans. You can build the bridge. You can lead the way.

You can send the enclosed legislative proposal to the Congress to give the President the power to hold a National Advisory Referendum on 3 selected issues every general election starting with the 2000 general election, but if the Republican controlled Congress fails to act, you can hold the referendum on the Internet for 101 million Americans. Moreover, USA Today reported that half of all registered voters 18 or older say they have accessed the Internet using schools or libraries. For voters without home computers, public libraries and schools can be their portals to participate in a National Advisory Referendum. In addition, AT&T has "tele-voting" technology that can allow people to vote over the telephone.

Let's look at three issues you can propose for a National Advisory Referendum for the 2000 elections:

- 1) Any one of your gun control measures submitted to Congress in the aftermath of the Columbine High School shootings which Congress fails to pass;
- 2) Any one of your Medicare or other health care reforms Congress fails to pass; and
- 3) Any one of your most important endeavors since you became President which Congress failed to pass;

The idea to create a mechanism for direct participation by the people on shaping public by casting advisory votes at each general election was proposed by Thomas Jefferson in a letter to Samuel Kercheval and has been lost in history for over 180 years.

The time has come to dust off the plans of democracy's greatest architect—Thomas Jefferson—and fulfill your promise as President to build a bridge to the 21st century.

You should call it—

“The Jefferson-Clinton Plan for Direct Democracy.”

This powerful idea—developed by Jefferson himself--can crown your presidential legacy with the most important advance in democracy since Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence. In addition, giving new life to Jefferson’s idea can help elect Vice President Al Gore as your successor to carry on your important work and help elect Hillary to become the next Senator from New York. What better way to listen to the people than to hold a National Advisory Referendum whereby “the voice of the whole people would be thus fairly, fully and peaceably expressed, discussed and decided by the common reason of society,” as Jefferson himself said about his plan for a national advisory referendum process modeled after the New England Town Meeting concept of self-government common to the early days of our democracy.

In 1996 we met 5 times at Democratic campaign functions in St. Louis, Denver(3 times), and Pueblo, Colorado where we talked briefly about Jefferson’s idea to create a national advisory referendum process to forge a public consensus for public policy so that the “voice of the whole people would be thus fairly, fully and peaceably expressed, discussed, and decided by the common reason of society.”

Prior to meeting you in St. Louis at a private reception for Congressman Richard Gephardt, Senator Bill Bradley sent you a copy of my proposal to give life to Thomas Jefferson’s ideas by establishing a National Advisory Referendum at each general election to create a new mechanism to forge a public consensus for public policy.

You sent me the enclosed letter expressing openness to the idea. I would like to meet with you for 30 minutes to show you how you can bring about the greatest structural change in our democracy to empower people since Thomas Jefferson first penned the Declaration of Independence.

You yourself recently said at a speech at Georgetown University, "Politics at its best is about values, ideas and action." This idea to open the doors of public policy to the people themselves can become one of the cornerstones of your legacy—creating the structural change that will forever bring this nation together. You have sought throughout your presidency to unify this nation. A structural change in our democracy is necessary to accomplish your long-sought goals. Few presidents have grasped the need for structural change as instinctively as Jefferson.

Since receiving your letter, you and I have met 5 times and talked briefly about Jefferson's long lost idea on 3 of those occasions. Here is a summary of where we have met to jog your memory:

- 1) In April 1996 at a private fundraiser for Congressman Richard Gephardt prior to a Democratic rally at the TWA Dome in St. Louis where we talked briefly about Jefferson's idea;
- 2) On the ropes at a 1996 campaign rally in Pueblo, Colorado in front of the County Courthouse where we talked briefly about Jefferson's idea;
- 3) On the ropes at Red Rocks for a 1996 campaign rally with my son on my shoulders;
- 4) At a private fundraiser for Democratic Senate candidate Tom Strickland at Inverness Country Club where we talked briefly about Jefferson's idea;
- 5) On the ropes at a campaign rally at the Denver Coliseum (stock show arena) with my daughter.

You still have time to build your most important democratic bridge for the 21st century—a bridge that will span the time of Jefferson into the next Millenium.

You are Jefferson's namesake and share his democratic vision.

You have a unique opportunity in history to take Jefferson's democratic idea for direct participation in decision-making and vault it into the next millenium

You have the opportunity to become one of the greatest "democratic" visionary presidents in our nation's history by giving life to one of Jefferson's long lost ideas buried for nearly two centuries.

Today people are already voting on the Internet to choose which shows classic sports shows are going to be broadcast on ESPN and which biographies are going to be shown on A&E's "Biography" program. News web sites like MSNBC are opening the public polling process to everyone who surfs the net with real time polls on the topics of the day.

Today's technology has opened the window for the future where people will participate directly in shaping more and more decisions which affect their lives.

The time has come for you as President to open the democratic door to our future by building on the solid foundation of Jefferson's ideas for a national referendum "where the voice of the whole people would be thus fairly, fully and peaceably expressed, discussed and decided by the common reason of society."

While you still have your strong hand on the door handle to the White House, you have the opportunity to turn that handle and cross the threshold into a new tomorrow for all Americans where democracy and technology will merge to create a stronger bond between citizen and government. Over 180 years ago Thomas Jefferson envisioned a new democratic era of direct public participation in shaping public policy where "the whole is cemented by giving every citizen, personally, a part of the administration of the public affairs."

In setting forth a new democratic vision for America, you can set forth a new democratic vision for all the world. Once we establish a National Advisory Referendum, we will be just a digital vision away from holding a World Vote to bring together our global village on issues relating to the environment, health, trade and ultimately, war

and peace. Television and internet technology will create for the world a new mechanism for peace and prosperity.

You are a visionary.

You have the power to lead this nation across the threshold to an era of democratic decision-making that one day will become the democratic model for all the world.

All I ask is for 30 minutes to make my case for a man who can no longer speak his words—Thomas Jefferson. We have met 5 times in crowded rooms and crowded campaign lines.

I ask for one private meeting to share with you an idea which is so powerful that if we succeed it will forever empower people throughout the world,

History awaits your decision.

Important decisions in law are not made by the courts without time for oral argument. You are the Supreme Court of democratic reform. You have seen the brief for the “Jefferson-Clinton Plan for Direct Democracy.”

I respectfully request a 30 minute meeting to discuss with you these important ideas and make the case for Thomas Jefferson’s last important writings on reforming our democracy to include people directly in public policy decision-making. I will meet with you anywhere, anytime, at the White House or on the road.

Jefferson’s ideas deserve your attention. You share his name. You now have the chance to share the same ideas and be forever linked in history as the architect and the builder of the democratic bridge to the 21st century.

This is a decision you alone can make.

Mr. President, with this idea for a National Advisory Referendum to forge a public consensus for public policy, you can share Jefferson's legacy for all of history.

After 3 years and 5 different brief meetings with you at campaign rallies and fundraising events, I have one simple request. Can we meet for 30 minutes at the White House to discuss this important idea to give people a direct say in public decision-making as Jefferson envisioned in 1816?

We are both standing on the threshold of history. Just give me a "yes" or a "no" as to whether we can meet to discuss Jefferson's long-forgotten idea to give people a greater say in our democracy.

I look forward to seeing you in Aspen at the home of Senator Diane Feinstein this Saturday July 24.

Sincerely,

Tom Ryan

P.S. Just last month John F. Kennedy, Jr. set forth a new vision of our future to expand participation by merging Jefferson's democratic ideas for public decision-making with today's emerging technology by proposing voting on the Internet, calling it "convenient, appealing, and relevant." Kennedy went on to say, "It's hard to kiss rituals goodbye, but if the result is greater participation, it's a worthwhile sacrifice. We need to develop dramatic steps to revitalize our democracy." (Denver Post, 6-10-99)

pressing the flesh online

E-CAMPAIGNING HAS BEEN UPGRADED FROM NOVELTY TO NECESSITY IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE. CANDIDATES

MUST NOW COMPETE IN THE WILDS OF THE WEB, A

WORLD WITH ITS OWN RULES. POLITICS AND GOVERNING MAY NEVER BE THE SAME. BY HOWARD FINEMAN

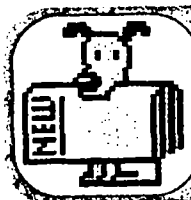
FROM HIS OFFICE IN CINCINNATI, Rick Segal wanted to create a "swarming effect" in Iowa for Steve Forbes. The goal there, he knew, was simple: get Iowans to Ames—and get them to vote in the straw poll. GOP candidates were busy crisscrossing the cornfields, offering free bus rides and tickets, filling vast tents with food and music. Segal, an Internet marketer paid to serve as Forbes's Webmaster, came up with another idea. The campaign's computer servers in Maryland had a national list of 32,000 supporters and e-mail addresses. Why not use it? The rest of the Forbes brain trust, back in Washington, agreed.

So the word went forth in an e-mail alert: check your Christmas-card list, your Palm Pilot, your alumni directory. Pass along a message (complete with a hot link to the Forbes Web page) to any Iowa friends or relatives. Urge them to go to Ames and to vote for Steve. The result, Segal concedes, was less a swarm than a dust devil. Perhaps 250 of Forbes's nearly 5,000 votes in Ames were earned this way. But that was an important 5 percent of Forbes's respectable second-place finish—and a harbinger of

e-campaigning. "It was all done on the Net," says Segal. "We were across the country, and we didn't have to set up another headquarters on some Main Street in Iowa. Isn't it way cool?"

Yes, it is. In the ever-accelerating world of the Internet, e-campaigning has gone from a novelty to a necessity in less than a year. With increasing sophistication and urgency, campaigns are using the Web as a bulletin board, advertising medium and organizing tool. Television—broadcast, cable and satellite—remains the overwhelmingly powerful vehicle for mass-market, "passive," one-way selling. But the Internet is fast becoming a Virtual New Hampshire: a quirky but pivotal place where campaigns are launched or scuttled, where savvy organizers and voters roam in search of action, answers and influence.

As it grows in importance, the Web is generating its own issues and folkways.



Americans with Net access spend an average of 8.5 hours a week online. Most of the most popular uses are travel, weather, music, and technology.



Candidates know they have to address Web-based concerns such as privacy, free speech and taxation of Internet sales. The candidates also know they must understand the culture of the Net, which honors voluminous and readily available information, two-way communication and a sense of community knitted together by modem. In a shrewd move last week, George W. Bush made his entire contributor list available online—an attempt not only to blunt criticism of his lavishly funded campaign, but to win points for style.

The Web had its political coming of age last year, in Minnesota, in Jesse Ventura's successful bid for the governorship. An independent with no party structure or endorsements, all he had was fame, blunt-spoken ideas—and the Net. For months Ventura had no physical "headquarters," just an ever-growing e-mail list. Two thirds of his fund-raising pledges arrived via the Internet. His final, three-day, get-out-the-



STYLING: JENNIFER HARRIS

vote bus trip was organized by e-mail. Ventura's site never was fancy. No elaborate graphics. It was a simple, text-based community of Ventura fans. The network generated a surge at the end, especially among young, new voters—an age group, not coincidentally, that grew up online. He won half the under-30 vote in a three-way race. “The Internet didn’t win it for us,” says Ventura Webmaster Phil Madsen, “but we couldn’t have won without it.”

The Y2K presidential campaigns have gone to school on the Ventura story. Unlike “The Body,” they care about appearances. As much to show their Net savvy as to sign up volunteers, the campaigns have sites full of Java-scripted doodads, interactive features and digitized daily photos from the hustings. On Al Gore’s, surfers can enter a “just for kids” area, check out voter-registration requirements by clicking on a map of the United States or download computer wallpaper decorated with the Gore logo. Several

campaigns offer versions of their sites in Spanish and links to independent news outlets. The Gore and Forbes sites are perhaps the most elaborately organized; Bush’s the most intent on showing off the candidate himself. “Campaigns tend to reflect the candidate,” says Phil Noble, an online-politics consultant. “And so do the sites.”

It’s important to be convincingly digital because the voters increasingly are. According to a new survey by the University of California, Santa Barbara, half of all adults now have access to the Internet either at home or at work, and more than half of them at one time or another have used the Net to delve into political topics. By the end of last year, more than 36 million Americans were getting news at least once a week from the Internet—more than triple the number of three years earlier. Among the states, New Hampshire is second (behind only Alaska) in the percentage of voters online. The Granite State—where primary rules give independ-

THE WEB WAR ROOM

The Bush staff, which is led by Karl Rove (far left), has put its contributor list online in a move to win points among the digerati

ents extraordinary power—seems destined to be the place in which digital and physical campaigning will merge.

The real work online is, therefore, organizational. Gore and Bill Bradley are both using the Net effectively to enlist support. Both have raised sizable credit-card donations online, and Bradley recently won a ruling making such donations “matchable” for federal funds. But no one is making a more elaborate effort than Forbes, whose campaign manager, Bill Dal Col, vowed earlier this year to run “the first Internet-based campaign.” More than any other, the Forbes Web site is geared toward signing up recruits and eliciting information about them. The Forbes database, says Webmas-

JAVA-SCRIPTED DOODADS

Gore's site features a 'just for kids' area, an interactive U.S. map with voter-registration requirements and wallpaper with the Gore logo

ter Segal, has broken down its e-mail list into dozens of categories, and sends each of them targeted messages.

In the try-anything, price-is-no-object Forbes campaign, there's more. If you stop by the Forbes Web site, you'll be asked if you want to become an "e-precinct captain." If you do, you'll be asked to submit an e-mail list of friends who will comprise your e-precinct. The names on the list then, automatically, get a "personalized" (but pre-written) appeal from you. "Join us," it says. "I've committed to helping Steve Forbes become president... and I'm asking you to help."



It's harder to use the Internet for political advertising. TV remains the best way to reach the large mass of undecided voters who settle general elections. "It's the less-engaged voters in the center who matter most in the end," says Democratic media consultant Robert Shrum. "And the only way to ensure you reach them is with television. The Internet still requires you to be an active participant, but most voters are passive recipients of political information." Even so, Forbes is trying to at least go where the voters are on the Web. His campaign will soon begin advertising on many day-trading and investment sites.

The opening of the West transformed American politics, giving rise to a host of new issues, from the extension of slavery to conservation. The domestication of cyberspace is doing the same thing. The most ur-

'we're in the middle of a cyberwar'

RUSSIAN HACKERS MAY HAVE PULLED OFF WHAT COULD BE THE MOST DAMAGING BREACH EVER OF U.S. COMPUTER SECURITY

BY GREGORY VISTICA

IT'S BEING CALLED "Moonlight Maze," an appropriately cryptic name for one of the most potentially damaging breaches of American computer security ever—serious enough for the Department of Defense to order all of its civilian and military employees to change their computer passwords by last month, the first time this precaution has ever been taken en masse. The suspects: crack cyberspooks from the Russian Academy of Sciences, a government-supported organization that interacts with Russia's top military labs. The targets: computer systems at the Departments of Defense and Energy, military contractors and leading civilian universities. The haul: vast quantities of data that, intelligence sources

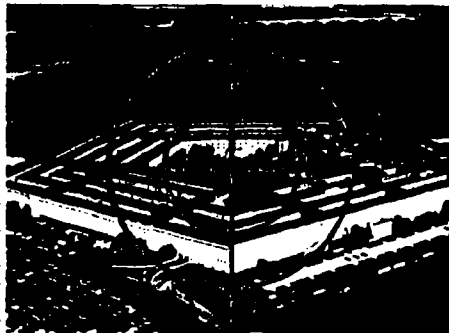
familiar with the case tell **NEWSWEEK**, could include classified naval codes and information on missile-guidance systems. This was, Pentagon officials say flatly, "a state-sponsored Russian intelligence effort to get U.S. technology"—as far as is known, the first such attempt ever by Russia. Washington has not yet protested to Moscow. But Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre, who has briefed congressional committees on the investigation, has told col-

leagues: "We're in the middle of a cyberwar."

In a cyberwar, the offensive force picks the battlefield, and the other side may not even realize when it's under attack. Defense Department officials believe the intrusions, which they describe as "sophisticated, patient and persistent," began at a low level of access in January. Security sleuths spotted them almost immediately and "back-hacked" the source to computers in Russia. Soon, though, the attackers developed new tools that allowed them to enter undetected (although they sometimes left electronic traces that could be reconstructed later). Intelligence sources say the perpetrators even gained "root level" access to some systems, a depth usually restricted to a few administrators.

After that, "we're not certain where they went," says GOP Rep. Curt Weldon, who has held classified hearings on Moonlight Maze.

As a federal interagency task force begins its damage assessment, a key question is whether the Russians managed to jump from the unclassified (although non-public) systems where they made their initial penetration into the classified Defense Department network that contains the most sensitive data. Administration officials insist the "firewalls" between the networks would have prevented any such intrusion, but other sources aren't so sure. Besides, one intelligence official admitted, classified data often lurk in unclassified databases. With enough time and computer power, the Russians could sift through their mountains of pilfered information and deduce those secrets they didn't directly steal. That's one more thing to worry about, although security officials admit that they have a more pressing concern. The intruders haven't been spotted on the network since May 14. Have they given up their efforts—or burrowed so deeply into the network that they can no longer even be traced?



Newsweek e-Life

Was There a Cover-Up?
WACO

**SPECIAL
REPORT**

How the Internet is Changing America

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SPECIAL REPORT

the dawn



THERE'S NO TURNING BACK. ONCE A NOVELTY,

THE INTERNET IS NOW TRANSFORMING HOW

AMERICANS LIVE, THINK, TALK AND LOVE; HOW

WE GO TO SCHOOL, MAKE MONEY, SEE THE

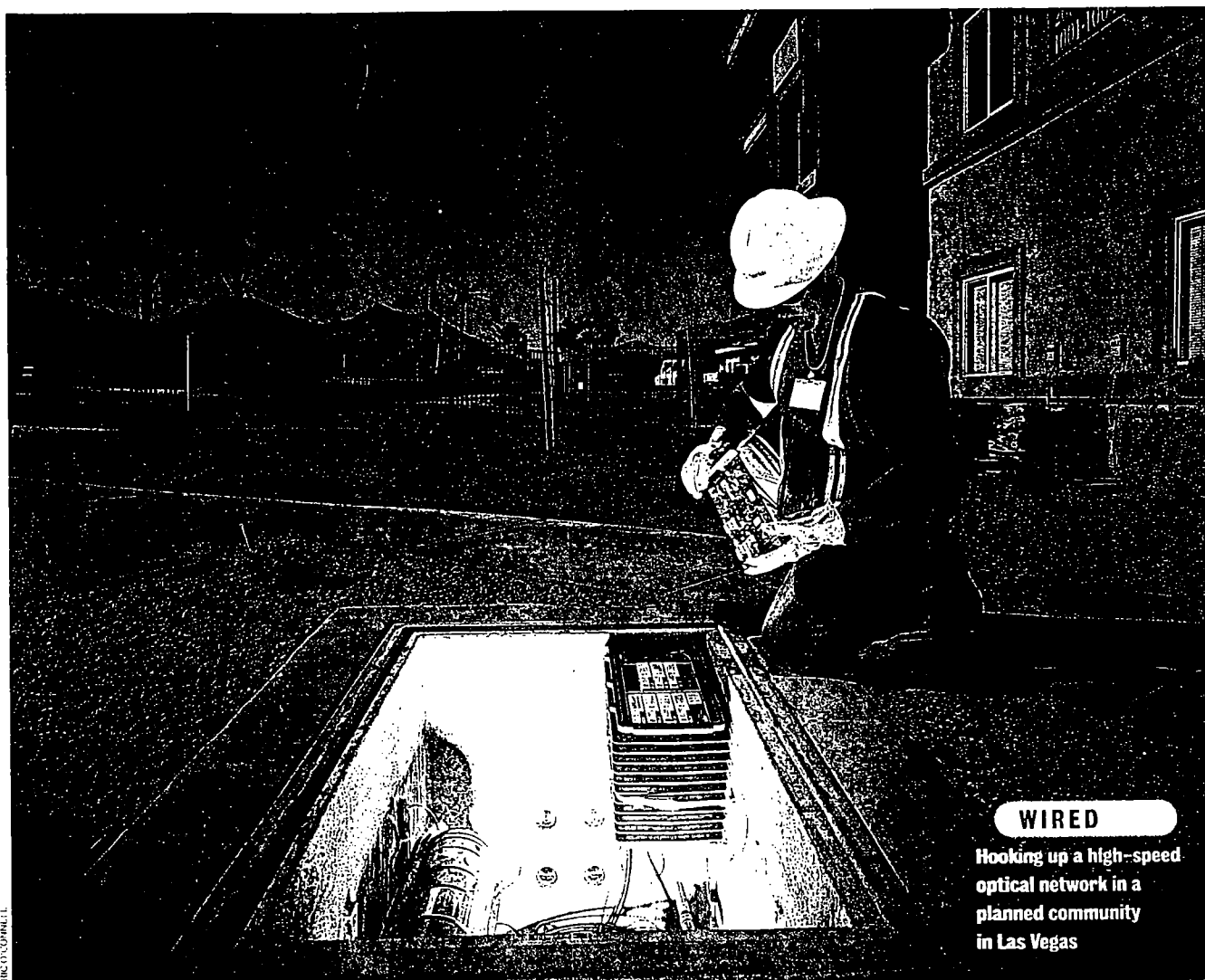
DOCTOR AND ELECT PRESIDENTS. THIS

of e-life

ISN'T JUST ABOUT THE FUTURE—IT'S ABOUT THE

HERE AND NOW. A SPECIAL NEWSWEEK REPORT.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES PORTO

**WIRED**

Hooking up a high-speed optical network in a planned community in Las Vegas



AS THERE A SINGLE MOMENT WHEN WE TURNED THE CORNER?

When we moved from a culture centered on network television, phones with wires, information on paper and stock prices based on profit into a digital society of buddy lists, streaming video, Matt Drudge and 34-year-old billionaires in tennis shoes? Did the transition come with the Deep Blue chess match, when millions of Web-surfers watched a stack of computer chips dominate the

world's greatest player in a test of "intelligence"? Could the global outburst of online mourning after the death of Princess Diana have marked our passage? Did it come last Christmas, when hundreds of thousands of shoppers avoided malls and clicked through their gift lists? Or was it the online lingerie fashion show? The online birth? And just when did putting an e-mail address on a busi-

ness card stop marking you as ahead of your time?

Let the chat rooms debate what marked the turning point. What's certain is that America has digitized, and there's no going back. Worldwide there are almost 200 million people on the Internet. In the United States alone, 80 million. The numbers tell just part of the story: the Net is no longer a novelty, an interesting way to pass the time. A third

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of wired Americans now do at least some of their shopping on the Net, and some are already consulting doctors on the Net, listening to radio on the Net, making investments on the Net, getting mortgages on the Net, tracking packages on the Net, getting news on the Net, having phone conversations on the Net, checking out political candidates on the Net, even, um, having sex on the Net. Each of these activities is impressive, but the aggregate effect is a different kind of life. Our goal in this special issue of **NEWSWEEK** is to examine what's happened, why, and how the Internet is changing the way we live now.

It's been 30 years since the Internet's predecessor, the Arpanet, was switched on to help academics and government wonks get connected. Almost 25 years since the first software for personal computers (co-written by some kid named Bill Gates). About five years since the Net became in effect the world's grandest public utility, driven by a combination of cheap, powerful PCs, a remarkably scalable infrastructure that sped up our connections (though not enough), and easy-to-use browsing software that took advantage of the Net's open rules. And maybe three or four years since concocting Internet business schemes became the world's most desirable creative outlet, the contemporary successor to writing the Great American Novel.

The triumph of tech, for better or for worse, is far from complete—in schools, businesses, operating rooms, labs, banks or the halls of government. Just about everything we've ever done that has to do with communication and information has been digitized, and now we're going to start tackling stuff that hasn't been done because you can do it only with the Internet. And if you think up something that fits that bill,

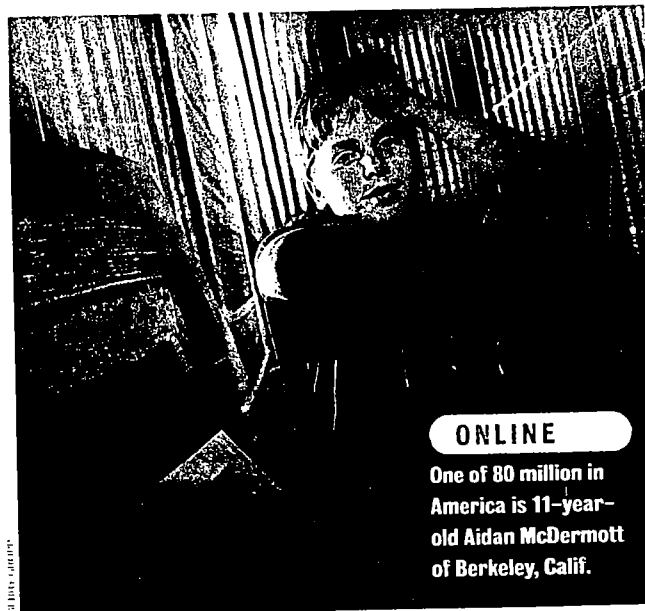
there's a venture capitalist in Palo Alto who will whip out a huge check for you. Even the most knuckleheaded CEO—the kind of guy who used to think it was beneath him to put a terminal anywhere near his mahogany desktop—now knows that job No. 1 one in the firm, no matter what the company does, is to figure out how to become an *Internet* company, because he can be damn well sure that his competitors are.

It's crucial to assess the impact of this shift, because the digital revolution is much more profound than a mere change of tools. The Internet is

built on both a philosophy and an infrastructure of openness and free communication; its users hold the potential to change not just how we get things done, but our thinking patterns and behavior. Bound together by digital mesh, there's hope we may thrive together—if some nagging, unanswered questions find felicitous answers. Can a spirit of sharing be maintained in the face of the need to recoup huge invest-

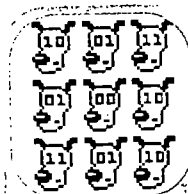
ments? Will persistent security holes—both personal and national, with the threat of cyberwar—erode our confidence in this new medium? Is it really possible for governments to forgo their impulses to regulate the Net with their usual heavy-handedness? How will the bounty of the digital age be distributed fairly?

The corner has been turned, but only just. We're at the beginning of a new way of working, shopping, playing and communicating. At **NEWSWEEK** we're calling this phenomenon e-life, and it's just in time. Because the day is approaching when no one will describe the digital, Net-based, computer-connected gestalt with such a transitory term. We'll just call it life.



ONLINE

One of 80 million in America is 11-year-old Aidan McDermott of Berkeley, Calif.



This year there are 196 million Internet users worldwide. By 2003 more than 500 million people will be surfing the Web.

wired for the bottom line

THE LEADERS OF AMAZON.COM, EBAY AND PRICELINE DON'T JUST WANT YOU TO BUY

THINGS AT THEIR SITES; THEY WANT TO CHANGE THE WAY YOU SHOP. WHOSE IDEAS

WORK FOR YOU? WHAT'S NEXT IN THE WORLD OF E-COMMERCE? BY STEVEN LEVY

JEFF BEZOS'S E-COMMERCE vision materialized during a cross-country ride in a hand-me-down Chevy Blazer. Meg Whitman's light bulb flicked on when she heard a woman whose life had been changed by selling China horses. Jay Walker's epiphany came during a takeout lunch with a group of patent lawyers.

Now they lead companies at the forefront of an online shopping revolution. And of course they are incredibly rich. But focusing on their sudden, shocking wealth is an asset-backward way of looking at these entrepreneurs. Better to ask, which of these three will change your life more? Even though online buying represents a fraction of total consumer sales these days, it's a fraction that didn't exist a few years ago—and with sales estimated at \$184 billion within three years, the curve is headed straight up. And that's just a springboard for a future that no one's figured out yet. Even tougher to predict is the way we'll be shopping online. Since e-commerce is so new, the question is still open as to the best ways to do it. Will the process generally ape purchasing in the physical world, or will we try more exotic schemes?

For hints on that, look to the three current icons of e-commerce. Each embraces a different model, and all three approaches have already begun to change the way we shop. Bezos, 35, of Amazon.com, is a khaki-clad Seattle dude heading a classic start-up built on

selling by the traditional exchange, only without the bricks and mortar of storefronts. eBay CEO Meg Whitman is a refugee from old-style corporations, a mother of two who believes that lives will change and fortunes will be made when buyers and sellers participate in auctions. And Priceline founder Jay Walker, a Connecticut marketing whiz, cooks up business plans that would have been impossible before the Net; the first of these allows

customers to name their own prices for airline seats, hotel rooms and, coming soon, supermarket items ranging from cola to detergent.

A few years ago no one had heard of these people. But in the next century (you know, the one that begins in 100 days or so) their ideas may well furnish your bookshelf, stuff your pantry, arrange your flights and rule your pocketbook—if they aren't already.

Jeff Bezos's laugh crashes his conversa-

once, twice ...

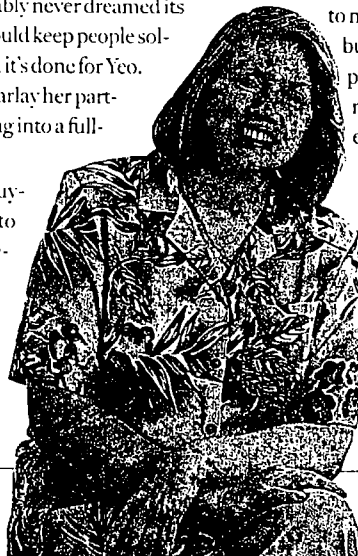
Robin Yeo When Robin Yeo lost her job as a legal secretary this past May, her first unemployed thought was, "Well, I still have eBay." The company probably never dreamed its Web auction site would keep people solvent, but that's what it's done for Yeo. She's used eBay to parlay her part-time antiques dealing into a full-time income.

She started out buying antiques to add to her stock. "I was seeing stuff for auction that would take years of searching to find," she says. Then she thought

of combing through her apartment for items to sell ("I was always a pack rat") and found that an old Disney toy from the early 1980s was worth \$85. We won't even mention how much she got for her Beanie Babies.

Yeo uses the cash she makes to travel to more antiques shows, where she buys collectibles to auction at high profits. "You go to shows and the main topic of conversation is eBay," she says with a laugh.

The bottom line: Yeo hasn't touched her savings since she became unemployed. By the grace of eBay, she says she'll never go back to a "real" job. She hopes to gross more than \$100,000 this year, and is more than halfway there already. Not too bad for a pack rat.



SPECIAL REPORT

tion every minute or so. It's a Tourette-like *AHHHH ha ha ha haah* bray that acts as a pointer to amusing phenomena in this interesting world we live in—the Amazon.com CEO's high-fidelity version of a raised eyebrow.

It's no wonder he laughs so much. One would have to be living somewhere far downriver on the actual Amazon not to have heard of Bezos's company by now. It's not only the dominant online bookseller (valued at \$22 billion while Borders, with 260 physical superstores, is worth a bare billion), but has quickly become the biggest music retailer on the Net, as well as a seller of toys and consumer electronics. Amazon.com is the flagship for Internet commerce, living proof of the viability of its business model—selling goods directly to customers on the Net. So why hasn't it chalked up profits yet? Its officers explain that revenues are still being plowed into building a business that will become, says one exec, "the place where you can discover anything you want to buy online."

a changing game

Tracy O'Such When Tracy O'Such got a fat bonus last year, she was thrilled. The 38-year-old exec decided it was time to buy a new car, her first, and set her heart on a Mercedes. After using the Web to research models and prices, O'Such set off for dealerships near her Fairfield, Conn., home. She found a C250 that she loved, but ran into what she calls the "Hi, sweetie, want to buy a car?" attitude from the salesman. She asked about the sticker price and wanted to negotiate; he told her about the available colors. When she decided to buy, the salesman named a price \$5,000 higher than hers and refused to budge. She tried to wheedle him down, but he kept insisting that his price was a giveaway. "It was over \$40,000," she marvels. "He wasn't doing me any favors." Finally, O'Such gave up and went on Priceline.com. She listed the model and color, and named \$38,000 as the price she was willing to pay. Within 12 hours, she had a taker: Continental Motors in Fairfield—same dealership, different salesman. She called her salesman back and said, "Guess what? I've found the car for my price." He protested, claiming that was impossible. "It's in your showroom," she said. Silence.

O'Such says Priceline made all the difference. "Just having the information made me able to negotiate with confidence," she said. "Especially as a woman, that's important."

Bezos's idea was simple: as the Internet extended its reach, an efficient retailer could do away with the bricks and mortar (hereafter referred to as B&M) of physical stores and serve customers better because the Net allows sellers direct contact with buyers. All at a potential profit margin the B&M guys can't match. If a chain of 1,000 stores wants to double sales, Bezos says, it has to open *another* thousand stores, with all the land and manpower costs that that entails. But once an online operation gets past the fixed cost of its Web site and distribution channel, it can handle bigger sales with very few extra expenses. "You can offer both the lowest prices and the highest serv-

ice level," he says, "which is impossible in the physical-world environment."

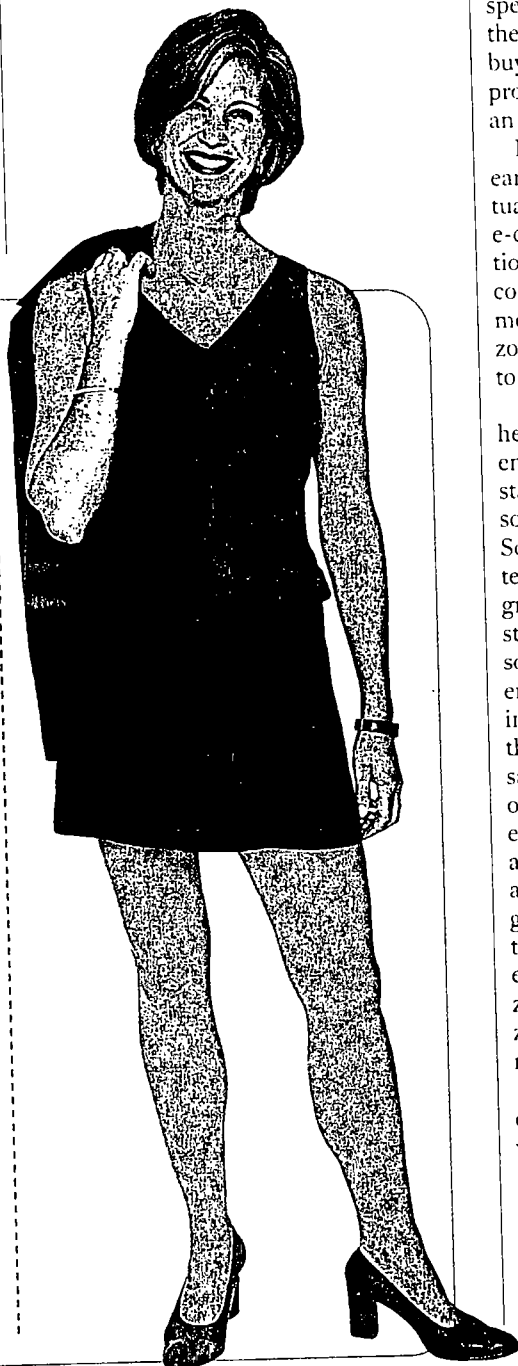
These concepts came together in 1994 after the Florida-born Bezos left a job as a financial strategist and flew to Ft. Worth, Texas, to pick up his father's 1988 Blazer. As his wife, MacKenzie, drove, Bezos hammered out his business plan on a laptop. The destination was Seattle, which offered an ideal employment pool of overeducated slackers.

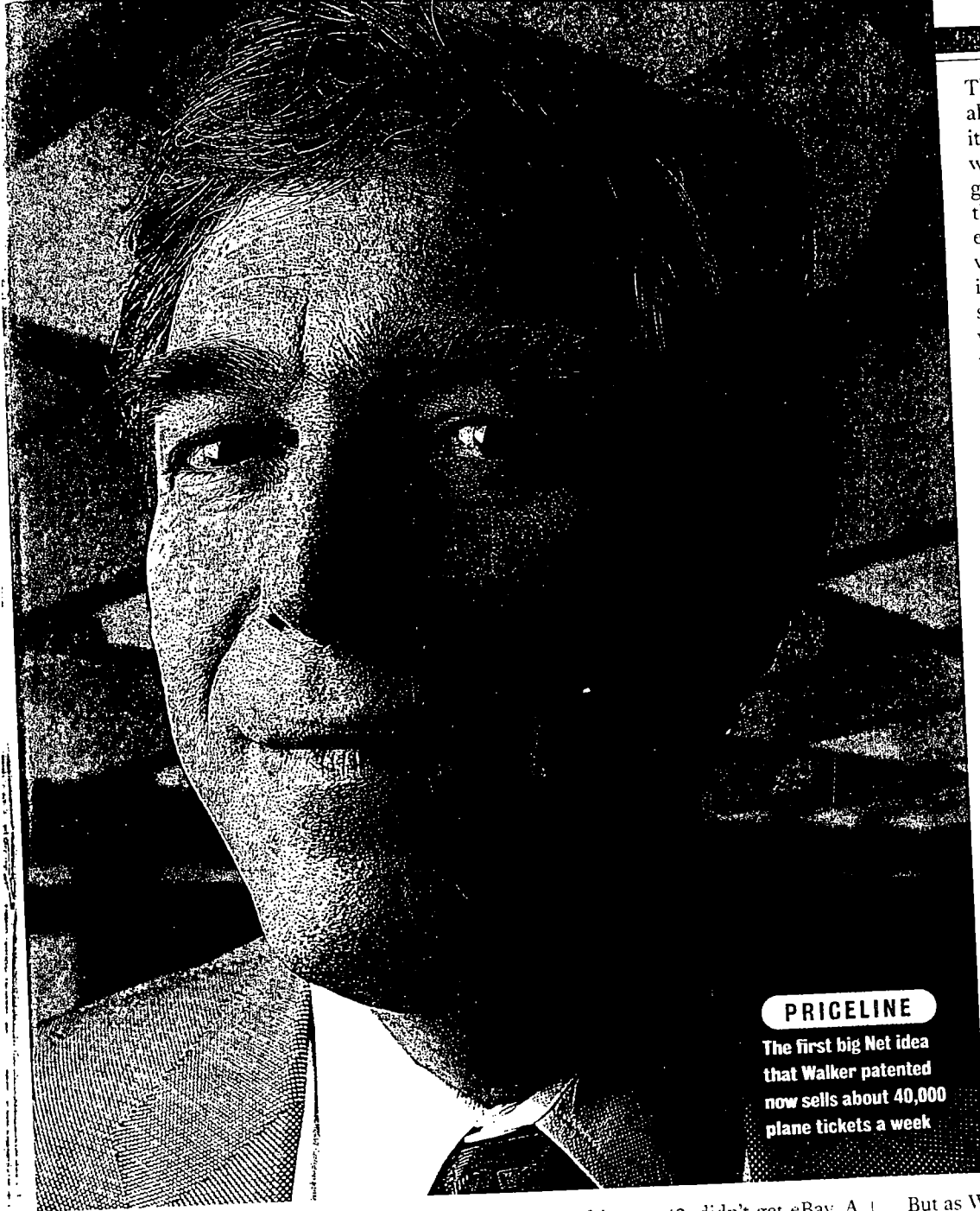
Bezos's business plan originally met with skepticism, and even its author had doubts. "The big problem was not whether the technology would work," he says, "but whether customers would want to shop this way." He spent a year of planning before he opened the site, figuring out what would push book buyers into the digital age. His prime goals: providing a wide selection, good prices and an effortless experience.

Fortunately, Internet users then were early-adopter types, ready to take the virtual bungee jump into the new world of e-commerce. And as the Internet population grew, and increasingly resembled the country's overall demographic, word-of-mouth spread. In the last two years Amazon's customer list has grown from 2 million to 11 million.

In the process, Bezos and company have helped define the online shopping experience. In B&M bookstores you get to scan the stacks, order a latte and maybe impress someone with a *bon mot* about "Chicken Soup for the Soul." Bezos had to pioneer alternative pleasures. For those wishing to grab a certain item and split, Amazon is streamlined for speed. But there's also reason to hang out. On Amazon, information is entertainment—and a way to lure people into buying more. Simply by repackaging the data it generates—ranking books by sales, identifying other purchases by buyers of a certain tome and revealing the best sellers among "purchase circles" (in a given area code or company)—Amazon offers an automated, useful and effective means of generating recommendations. Not to mention reader reviews: Amazon posts 'em all, even negative ones. Why? Because Amazon's business is not selling things, says Bezos. "Our business is helping customers make purchasing decisions," he clarifies.

Amazon.com and its model has quickly become a standard—and competition is everywhere, from catalog-based sellers as well as B&M retailers. But conventional wisdom has it that in any given retail category, there's going to be only two or three big-time winners in cyberspace. Rather than go head to head with a giant, competitors must specialize, and even then it's a struggle. "On the Internet," says Chris MacAskill, CEO of Fatbrain.com,





PRICELINE

The first big Net idea
that Walker patented
now sells about 40,000
plane tickets a week

which focuses on technical books, "you're across the street [from your competition], whether you like it not."

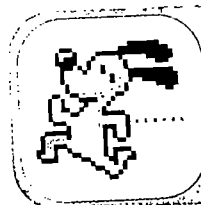
Bezos thinks that the entire economy will benefit from ripple effects of e-commerce. In the not terribly distant future, we'll have vans circling the suburbs with hardcover best sellers, CDs and grocery items. Within hours of logging your order on a Web site, the van drops off the loot. Or maybe the order will be logged from a palmtop computer or a cell phone.

The direct-selling model is still evolving, but it's the bedrock of e-commerce. "It all has to do with the balance of power shifting away from companies and toward consumers," says Bezos.

The next significant shopping innovation arrived in a flurry of Furbies. But at

first Meg Whitman, 42, didn't get eBay. A career ranging from Disney to Hasbro toys had honed her instincts to appreciate the incipient power of the Net. But in early 1998, when she visited the site devoted to hosting auctions—largely collectibles like Beanie Babies and baseball cards—she found it hard to use.

The company had been founded in 1995 by Pierre Omidyar, who wanted to augment his girlfriend's collection of Pez dispensers.



In 1997, only 300,000 people used high-speed access to get online. It's up to 2.4 million today, though 34.8 million Americans still slog on to the Net with a modem.

The Net was a great way to allow sellers of obscure items to reach others, and it was easy to use the technology to run auctions. Only after the site took off did Omidyar establish it as a business, and what a model it was: all the inventory, the ordering, the shipping and the payments would be done by customers, the sellers and buyers registered on the eBay site. Revenues would come simply by taking a cut of sales.

By the time Omidyar began courting Whitman to become his CEO, the site was wildly popular and already profitable. eBay had transformed auctions into supercharged classified ads, and the last-minute bidding frenzy added the extra oomph of a game show. But what finally lured Whitman to Silicon Valley from Pawtucket, R.I., was her discovery that its user base had become a community. Its ingenious (yet imperfect) means of establishing trust in sellers and bidders: feedback from users themselves. Extensive chat boards let eBaysians share tips and gossip. By the time Whitman attended a focus group of people whose livelihood now consisted of hawking items on eBay, she understood how auctions could empower people—and how customer loyalty could help eBay maintain a dominant market share.

But as Whitman has learned, hosting an Internet community is like leading a tiger by the tail. When you let your users down—eBay has been plagued by power failures—you hear their pain instantly. If you decide to raise a fee, as eBay did recently, the attacks will come with the passion of a Balkan conflict. "LET'S [GET] THAT MORON OUT OF OFFICE," went a recent rant about Whitman on an eBay chat board. "SHE IS COMPLETELY INEPT AT HER JOB."

Whitman quickly revamped the site to make it easier for users to participate, and addressed ways to make customers feel safer in purchasing. Now she's working to solve the cumbersome payment process by allowing all buyers to use credit cards instead of personal checks or money orders. She is also trying to expand eBay beyond its



REAL DEAL

Amazon's store is virtual, but warehouses like this one in Nevada are brick and mortar

core model of collectibles. Los Angeles is eBay's testing ground for local auctions—stuff like cars and furniture that can't be easily shipped. And eBay's purchase of the snooty Butterfield & Butterfield gets the company into high-end jewelry and art.

Of course, there's a limit to the number of things people will buy at auction, a system that's entertaining but not necessarily effi-

cient or thrifty for buyers (after all, the "winner" is the one who pays the most). So Whitman won't rule out some alternate models for eBay, including some fixed-pricing items.

In short, says Whitman, "we are enabling a kind of commerce that didn't exist to any extent before, and that's person-to-person commerce." A lesson she brings

home every Saturday morning, when she spends a couple of hours online, bidding for Pokémon cards with her 11-year old son. "Last weekend," she reports, "we got a Blastoise foil card for \$49."

So far eBay is holding its own against tough competition, including free-to-seller auctions at Amazon and Yahoo! (Microsoft will probably do its own auctions on its MSN site later this year). But while the company may thrive, countless other firms will soon be using the auction model to sell business products and services.

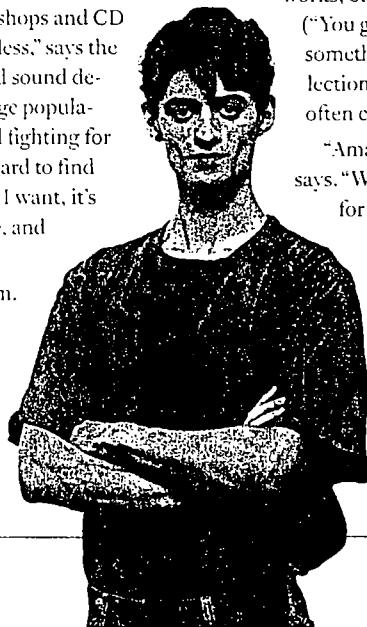
In contrast to eBay's Silicon Valley-standard cubicles, decorated with knick-knacks purchased on the site, the shelves in the Stamford, Conn., offices of Jay Walker are lined with leatherette Franklin Mint special editions and bound copies of patent applications. On the wall is a billionaire's bounty of rare items from the space race and a one-of-a-kind collectible: Richard Nixon's letter to Kissinger resigning his presidency.

Walker, the man who's taking e-commerce a step beyond eBay's auction model, isn't your typical Internet start-up CEO. At 43, he's a Scarsdale, N.Y.-born veteran of more than a dozen companies. Marketing, not technology, has been his focus. "I was the kid who had the lemonade stand," he says. The Internet, of course, is sort of a marketer's nirvana, a gathering place for

in the amazone

Crispin Freeman lives in New York City, a major marketplace of books and music. But he hardly bothers with the city's many bookshops and CD stores. "They're clueless," says the 27-year-old actor and sound designer. "There's a huge population on this island all fighting for the same stock. It's hard to find stuff. If I know what I want, it's easier to get it online, and they'll ship it to me."

Enter Amazon.com. Freeman's love affair began two years ago when it found him an out-of-print book in hardcover and in mint condition. "I was, like,



you guys are the bomb," he recalls. He's bought at least \$1,000 worth of books, music and DVDs from them since.

Freeman says the site is more helpful than your average store. He finds rare works, often accompanied by reviews ("You get people who might know something," he says). The music selection helps him in his work, which often calls for obscure finds.

"Amazon can do great searches," he says. "When we need Brazilian music for a project, I go to Amazon and type in 'Brazilian music.'"

Chances are they're going to have a lot more than Tower. And if the favored CD isn't in stock, Amazon has it listed and can tell him when it can get it. "If I'm going to get online and research it myself, I might as well order it while I'm there."

➔ WANT TO WEIGH IN ON E-LIFE? JOIN OUR EXPERTS ON WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 15, NOON EDT. AT WWW.NEWSWEEK.COM.



AMAZON

Bezos's company proved that you could sell goods directly to e-customers

access to airline databases, and hooks them to software that pulls the trigger on the right prices.

Walker patented the scheme. Then, after his brain trust figured out a way that airlines might fight the idea (an "anytime ticket" sold cheaper in exchange for letting the airline choose the flight), he patented that scheme, too. Just in case. (Some of Walker's patents are being challenged by inventors who say they had thought of the ideas first.)

Potential customers were drawn by a splashy ad campaign featuring William Shatner (who hopped on the Starship Free Enterprise by taking his payment in stock). But it took a while to get the airlines on board; Priceline wound up letting Delta take a big share of its stock. As customers learned to make realistic bids, and Priceline added airlines to make more flights available, more customers (but still less than half) are making successful bids. Priceline isn't making profits yet, but it's selling about 40,000 tickets a week. And though its stock is considerably down from its peak earlier this year, Wall Street values the company at more than \$8 billion.

Priceline has extended its model to hotel rooms, mortgages and cars. How far can

millions of credit-card-holding consumers. Walker, however, was clever enough to realize that Netizens were not to be regarded as sitting ducks, but as a new population hungry for ways to empower themselves. And that the Net can enable heretofore unimaginable business models. Models that could—and would—change virtually every industry on the planet.

Walker believes that those who think up such ideas should own them, a conviction reinforced by recent legal rulings holding that business methods could be patented. This opportunity was confirmed to him by a dozen patent lawyers whom he hired to eat lunch with him in the law firm's boardroom ("It cost me about \$2,000," he says). He quickly formed a company, Walker Digital, to dream up new tech-driven

schemes, patent them and spin them off into businesses.

The first big idea was Priceline, which allows people to name their own price for flights, if they offer flexibility on carrier and times. The airlines can sell unused seats, and won't lose their regular customers, since Priceliners can't specify which airline they want. It's the kind of thing that could be done only on the Internet, which offers millions of people quick



Of the Internet users who have shopped online, 58% have bought books, 44% have ordered software, 26% have purchased clothing and 20% have acquired toys

it go? Maybe we'll know when the company rolls out a service called WebHouse Club later this fall. This applies the name-your-price scheme to groceries. Customers can specify how much they'll spend for items like name-brand colas, batteries, scouring pads and diapers—but cannot specify the exact brand. If their prices are accepted (answers come within a minute), their credit cards are charged for the item and they print out a voucher that their neighborhood store will accept. (The service will roll out in the New York City area, with more than 600 stores participating.) Does this seem labor intensive? Walker doesn't think so: "If you can name your own price for beef or beer, you're pretty motivated."

Whether or not the grocery venture

works. Walker has proved that the Net is fertile ground for launching entirely new approaches to commerce. Other companies will follow. For instance, a firm called Mercata brings consumers together so their collective buying power can drive prices down. And Microsoft's Expedia travel site has announced a name-your-own-hotel-price scheme that seems similar to Priceline's (no word yet on whether

Walker will charge patent infringement). Will new models thrive? Absolutely. But they won't necessarily drive out the earlier ones. Jeff Bezos's direct approach seems firmly established and Whitman's auction economy is finding favor in areas beyond the Pokémon zone. And other Internet giants like AOL, Yahoo and Microsoft—less interested in direct selling than pointing their members to retailing partners—well-

come any model that draws customers. Meanwhile, Walker is figuring out the next big change. Maybe, he muses, it will come when computers can reliably recognize voices. And Walker knows just how it will work: "You're going to walk into the store and say, 'Hi, I'm here. I have some Priceline prices.' And they'll say, 'Great.'" Ka-ching!

With ANJALI ARORA and ESTHER PAN

Taking a Flier on the Web

Execs who left Corporate America for the unknown

INTERNET START-UPS aren't just for kids; executives at the top of their game in established businesses are chucking security for a piece of the Net. Below are a few of the big names that have recently struck out for cyberspace.



Geraldine Laybourne
Oxygen Media

For nearly two decades, Gerry Laybourne was the queen of kids' TV, building the Nickelodeon brand and later heading up the Disney/ABC Cable Networks. Now she's aiming for the women's market. Oxygen produces Web content on topics ranging from personal finance to child care and will launch a cable network next February. The women's online field is crowded, with tenacious competitors like

Candice Carpenter of iVillage. But Laybourne has powerful partners—Oprah Winfrey and Carsey-Werner's Marcy Carsey. "Oxygen is one of the sites that will still be around in three to five years," says Jupiter Communications' Anya Sacharow.

Jay Chiat
ScreamingMedia

When he ran the advertising firm Chiat/Day, Jay Chiat was known for his funky office space and brusque business style. He gave up the offices, but Chiat's still in the business of moving fast. His ScreamingMedia pulls real-time content from sources like AP and The New York Times and delivers it in customized packages to clients like AOL and Microsoft.

C. Everett Koop
drkoop.com

Dr. Koop quit his job as U.S. surgeon general a decade ago, but he's still one of the most recognizable names in medicine. In 1998 he launched a site featuring news and advice on health topics from flu shots to the



Lou Dobbs
space.com

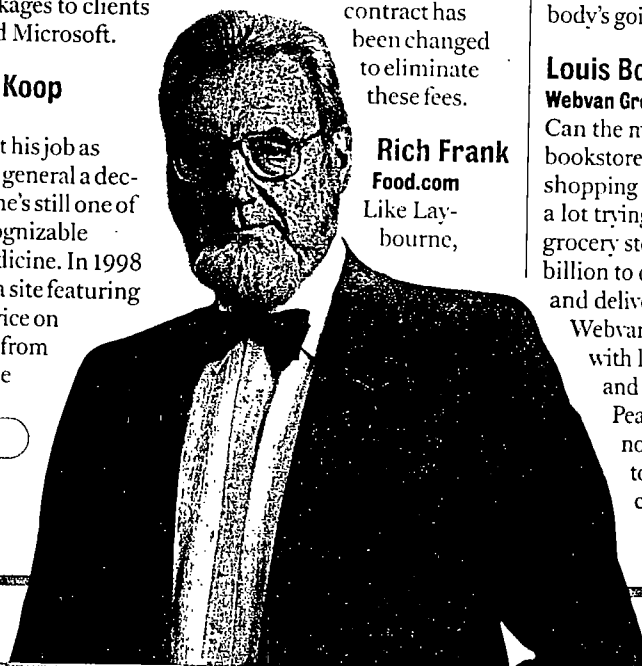
After two decades at CNN, the former host of "Moneyline News Hour" and "Business Unusual" struck out for the wilds of the cyberworld. Space.com, a news and entertainment site about outer space, was launched in July, and analysts say it has star potential. "It's well put together and has an easy name," says Datamonitor analyst Robert Shavell. "If we send somebody to Mars or find little critters in the water of asteroids, everybody's going to go there."

Louis Borders
Webvan Group

Can the man behind Borders bookstores bag the online-shopping market? He'll spend a lot trying. Borders's online grocery store is spending \$1 billion to develop distribution and delivery in 26 cities. But Webvan still has to deal with low profit margins and competitors like Peapod. Bottom line: no one knows if tomatoes will sell in cyberspace.

RANA DOGAR with
KEVIN PERAINO

Rich Frank
Food.com
Like Laybourne,



NEW ON THE NET

(Clockwise from above) Television talent turned Webbie Gerry Laybourne, rocket man Lou Dobbs and former U.S. surgeon general C. Everett Koop

big surf in a little school

HALF OF U.S. CLASSROOMS ARE NOW HOOKED UP TO THE INTERNET. IN ONE RURAL TOWN, IT'S A VITAL—BUT FINICKY—LINK TO THE WORLD. BY BARBARA KANTROWITZ

ON THE THIRD DAY OF school in Stoddard, N.H., 8-year-old Justin Holland, meteorologist for the week, makes a prediction: "It's going to rain. Guaranteed. I saw it on the news." His teacher Maggie Sergeant isn't sure. "Why don't we check out the weather map on the computer?" And so, for the first time that morning, the Information Age struggles to make its way through the woods of rural New England and into the three-room James Faulkner Elementary School (just 48 students in kindergarten through fifth grade).

Step One: while her students, 17 second and third graders, write in their journals, Sergeant sits down at one of the two computers in the corner of her classroom and tries to access the Web site of a local TV station, WMUR in Manchester. A minute or so later, she gets an error message ("Netscape is unable to locate ..."). She tries again. Another minute passes; another error message. Sergeant sighs. She's pretty sure the culprit is the modem attached to the school's server in the combination library/office across the hall. "I spend a lot of time making sure it's working," she says.

Step Two: Sergeant crosses the corridor and jiggles the modem so it's at just the right angle—a technique she's clearly perfected over many months. After about a minute, she returns to her classroom.

Step Three: back in the computer corner, Sergeant gets the WMUR site and pulls up a

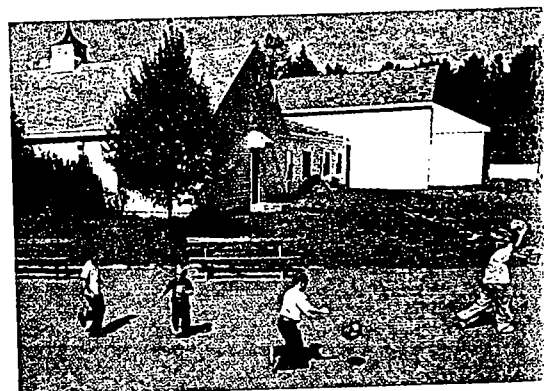
map showing Hurricane Dennis menacing the Carolinas. White spots hover over the entire East Coast—including New Hampshire. She calls up the kids in groups of four. "What is that white area?" she asks. One boy guesses: "Clouds?" "That's right," she says. "And what do we think of Justin's prediction?" Jeremy Jarest is convinced: "It's going to rain."

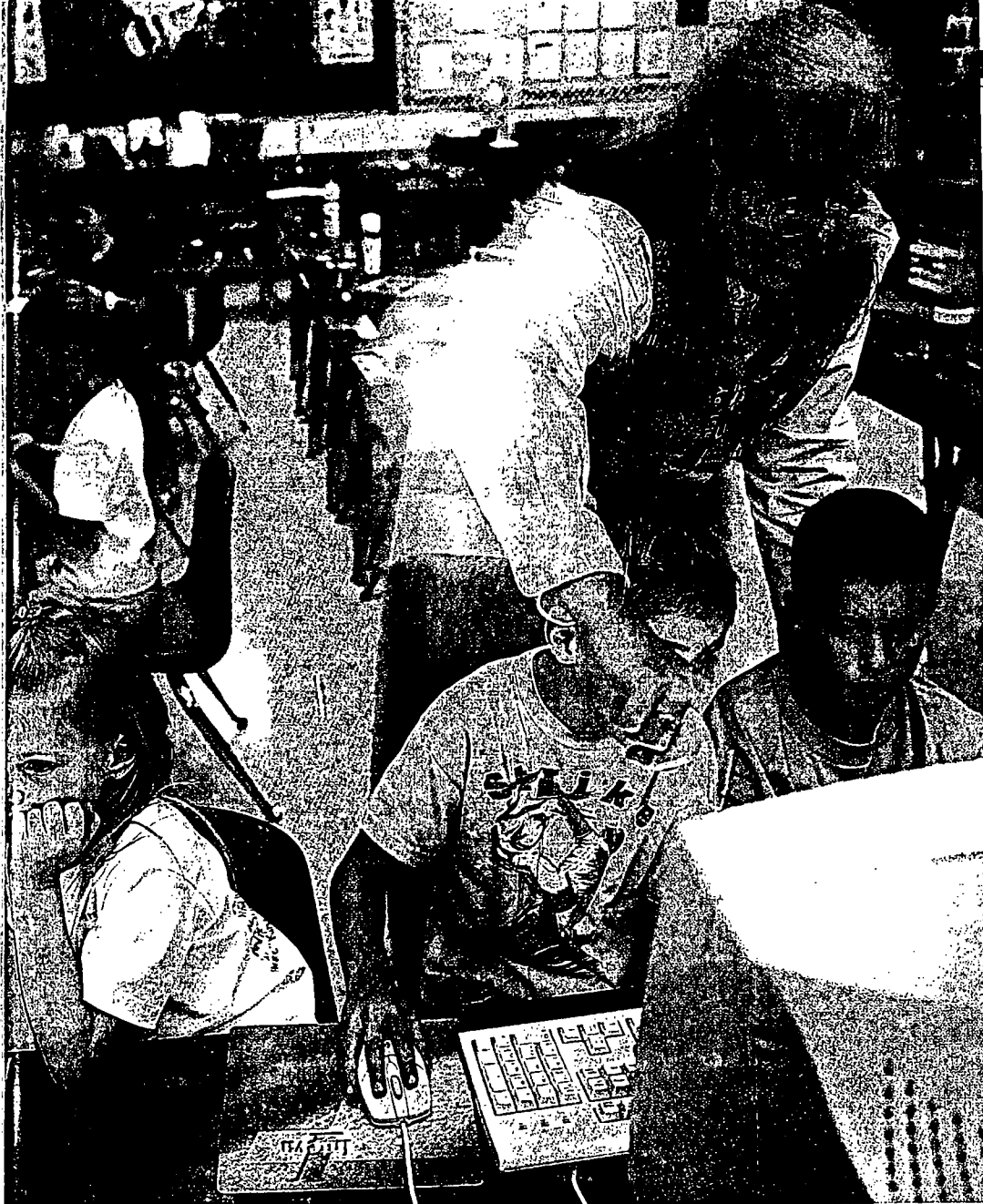
The kids' enthusiasm is Sergeant's reward. Later in the afternoon, after the school bus has left, she smiles as she recalls their faces as they studied the weather pictures. "They were so into that map," she says. "That's what I like ..."

According to a recent Department of Education survey, 51 percent of American classrooms had Internet connections last year, opening up a world of information beyond encyclopedias and battered library books. Even in tiny Stoddard (population "around 700," says town clerk Joan Read), the Net is as much a classroom fixture as the blackboard or the two gerbils, Max and Million. "It's another tool," says Sergeant. "To use or not use it depends on what you need to do."

But while big districts have technology departments and megabudgets dedicated to making sure that all their connections work, Stoddard just has 30-year-old Maggie Sergeant, whose position as "technology guru" is strictly voluntary. Her budget for this year is all of \$2,000—"not much," she con-

cedes, but still higher than last year's \$1,500. It's not enough to pay for a cable connection, which would mean an end to that pesky modem (the companies Sergeant sought estimates from wanted close to \$3,000). And not enough to pay someone to network the school's nine computers so they can share





LESSON PLAN

Sergeant oversees students in the computer corner of her classroom. At left, recess at the three-room schoolhouse in the woods.

Internet connection and a color laser printer. That's why Sergeant and her husband, Warren (fortunately, a computer programmer), spent more than 110 hours over the last two summers networking the school, snaking wires through the walls and ceilings. "It was either that," she says, "or no Internet."

Not much of a choice, in Sergeant's view. After fifth grade, Stoddard kids are bused to middle school and high school in Keene, about half an hour away down Route 123. There, they have to compete with students who get computer instruction starting in first grade. Sergeant and her principal, Mark LaFleur (who also doubles as the

fourth- and fifth-grade teacher), don't want their students to be at a disadvantage. They also need the tremendous resources available online, especially critical in a rural area. This year, for example, LaFleur's class will study Egypt and the Pyramids. He spent his summer creating an elegant Web page with links to Egyptology sites around the world and space for kids to post projects.

The teachers have their own reasons to be connected. In a small school, there's not much chance to exchange ideas with other teachers. Mailing lists and bulletin boards fill that need nicely for Sergeant, LaFleur and Nancy Kowalski, the kindergarten and first-grade teacher. Putting the school online also helps them keep in touch with parents (60 percent own computers, according to a survey Sergeant conducted last year). Sergeant has created a Web site for the school where she posts spelling lists,

homework and helpful links.

When Sergeant first came to Stoddard in February 1997, it was the fulfillment of a dream. "I always wanted to teach in a one-room schoolhouse," she says. "This was the closest thing around here." She loved Stoddard, but was concerned about the lack of computers. Apple II's, some older than the students, ran outdated software.

Unlike many teachers, Sergeant is not intimidated by technology. She says she's been "hooked" on computers since seventh grade. But she knew that interest alone wasn't enough to bring Stoddard up to date. In early 1998, LaFleur encouraged her to enroll in an innovative program offering a Master of Arts in teaching with Internet technologies at Marlboro College, an hour away in Vermont. Much of the classwork was, appropriately enough, online—through discussion groups, e-mail and Internet research. The students met at the college only a few days a month. It was costly: close to \$18,000 out of her own pocket for tuition and books.

But to Sergeant, it was worth the sacrifice. She's the kind of teacher who goes all out for her students, even planning her wardrobe to keep their attention. Her earrings: a boy dangling from one ear, a girl from the other. The barrette that holds her blond hair back is a frieze of animals; her vest is decorated with blocks and books. Kids check out titles from the classroom library (called Pooh's Corner after her favorite character), using a program her husband created. She buys all the books herself, about 100 a year. In addition to using computers as a source of information, students get time to work on their own with educational software she's selected. Later, when they study pioneers, she plans to hook them up with an online version of the popular Oregon Trail program linking kids around the country. "For most of them," Sergeant says, "Keene is the largest city they know." But like all kids, they want to know more. "So many times," says Sergeant, "they have questions I can't answer. Now I can say, 'I don't know the answer but I know where to go.'" If only that modem would behave. ■

BETWEEN THE LINES

bridging the digital divide

IN A NEW KIND OF CYBER CLASS WARFARE, IT'S THE TECH HAVES AGAINST THE HAVE-NOTS. BY JONATHAN ALTER

SOMETIMES THE BIGGEST NEWS COMES IN STATISTIC-laden reports put out by think tanks with boring-sounding names. Last week the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (cbpp.org) released a depressing study called "The Widening Income Gap." It turns out that the gap between rich and poor in the United States is now greater than at any time since the Great Depression. If this was just because of all the

new millionaires, it wouldn't be so terrible. The rich getting richer is, in theory, good for everyone. But it turns out that the poorest fifth of Americans have actually seen their after-tax income decline over the past 20 years. One in five children lives in poverty. The richest 2.7 million Americans now have as much income as the poorest 100 million. These trends are being driven by technology, and the now familiar notion that what you earn depends on what you learn. Unless the "digital divide" is narrowed soon, the United States may be headed for a return to the class warfare of a century ago, the last time the economy changed so fundamentally. It won't be pleasant.

There's good news and bad news across this new continental divide. Access to computers is expanding rapidly. In 1998 more than 40 percent of American households owned computers, and 25 percent of all households had Internet access. Hardware prices are still falling, and used computers are making their way into even the poorest areas. Community technology centers (ctcnet.org) are springing up, and inner-city schools are being wired more quickly than anticipated, thanks in part to the billions provided through Washington's "E-rate" program, which underwrites Internet access. For Americans with incomes of \$75,000 and higher, the gap in home-computer ownership between whites and blacks has narrowed some in the last year. That suggests the digital divide may eventually close, if prices fall and incomes rise.

But in the meantime, the divide is getting worse. According to a new Commerce Department report, "Falling Through the Net" (ntia.doc.gov), the gap in Internet access between those at the highest and lowest income levels grew by 29 percent in one year alone. African-Americans earning under \$40,000 are less than half

as likely as whites in the same income group to own a home computer. There are plenty of theories as to why, starting with the absence of enough black and Hispanic role models in the world of high tech. That, in turn, is partly the product of weak minority-hiring records in places like Silicon Valley. And there are cultural factors. So far, mobile phones and other wireless communications have shown greater appeal than the Internet in many minority communities, though some individual sites, like the Spanish-language StarMedia portal, are catching on.

What's being done about the digital divide? Companies say they can't hire enough qualified minorities, yet few provide more than a token contribution to nonprofits working in the inner city to close the divide. There are exceptions. Techcorps.org has 6,000 volunteers in 43 states helping poor schools plug in; cyber-mentoring programs that help professionals become e-mail pen pals with disadvantaged kids (for example, imentor.org) are cropping up. More common are the press releases that cross my desk from high-tech companies with multibillion-dollar market caps that want publicity for their five-figure charitable table scrapings. Most would rather lobby Congress to import more low-paid skilled immigrants than seriously invest in closing the divide.

It's a long road. The computer is not a *deus ex machina*—a god that can fix every social injustice. Access to technology won't by itself level the playing field: if you wire them, they won't necessarily prosper. Computers might become as common as TVs, but they require initiative and creativity to use fully. Knowing how to play computer games is not the same as knowing how to design them.

"The access gap will close, but the gap in being able to use the technology in meaningful ways may get even larger," says Mitchel Resnick of the MIT Media Lab. Resnick, who cofounded creative after-school centers for at-risk kids (computerclubhouse.org), compares it to the study of foreign languages. "It's like the difference between having a phrase book and real fluency." Getting out of the ghetto requires the latter, but even fluency isn't enough. Job-readiness skills—how to show up at work on time and interact well—are at least as important as learning Web

design. Here, too, the high-tech companies aren't doing enough. They've mostly turned a blind eye to welfare-to-work programs.

In the political world, everyone keeps asking how the Internet will affect the 2000 campaign. Maybe it will do so less as a tool for organizing and fund-raising than as a metaphor for deeper questions of social justice. That theme is already in play: with President Clinton poised to veto a \$792 billion Republican tax cut heavily weighted in favor of the rich. (Average tax cut for the top 1 percent: \$32,000.) If prosperity holds, the next election may turn on economic fairness, which today increasingly means digital fairness.

Income gaps will always be with us. The wealth of the Information Age cannot, in a free society, be equally shared. But the knowledge and opportunity that the new economy creates should know no class distinction. Once the digital and opportunity gaps close, some greater economic justice will follow.





losing your good name online

ALL IT TAKES IS YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER, AND SOMEBODY CAN STEAL YOUR IDENTITY—AND THE NET'S MAKING IT EASIER FOR THE BAD GUYS. BY JARED SANDBERG

AFTER LEASING TWO HIGH-end sport utility vehicles in just two days last spring, Kenneth Morse was finally stopped by a third dealership on the third day. Noting Morris's suspicious SUV-buying spree through a credit check, the New Jersey Mercedes dealer said no deal.

It was a good thing, because the real Kenneth Morse was more than 250 miles away, pushing papers at his desk in upstate New York. With just his name and Social Security number, someone had hijacked Morse's credit-worthiness and was joy riding it for all it was worth. The cops, who weren't much help, knew enough to suspect he had given out his Social Security number somewhere

online. The suspect was ultimately caught, and Morse's name was cleared—as best as he can tell. He still doesn't know exactly how it all happened. And he still drives his old Camry, a rusty beater with 160,000 miles.

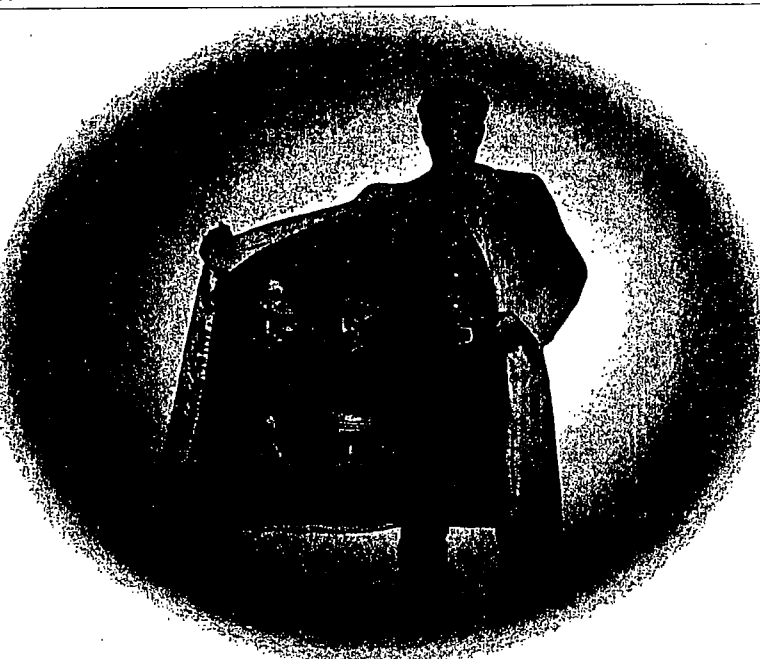
Morse was a victim of the worst kind of privacy violation—the theft of his identity. This alarming prospect is poised to be an increasingly common nightmare as the tendrils of

the Internet take root ever deeper in our daily lives. All it takes is your name and your Social Security number, and your identity can be plucked from you easier than a coat from a closet. With Social Security numbers being used as account identifiers by financial-service firms, health-care companies and motor-vehicle departments—all of which are going online—it is becoming easier for impostors to put on your happy face. Once it's stolen, count on bureaucratic torture: a seemingly endless telephone and letter-writing campaign trying to atone for your alter ego's sins. Peter Neumann of the R&D firm SRI International calls identity theft the "hidden downside of computing."

For crooks, however, it's payday. The Internet hasn't caused the problem—people still rummage through Dumpsters to reconstruct personal details from trash—but the Web has allowed criminals to lock onto marriage licenses, property records and motor-vehicle information with a mouse-click. "Before, you had to go to the county courthouse to find that information," says Beth Grossman, identity-theft program manager (yes, there is such a person) at the Federal Trade Commission. "Not anymore." Computers are powerful enough now to pry open widely used software safeguards, compounding the problem.

The advent of e-commerce is, however inadvertently, endangering privacy. Companies have long boasted about the efficiency, convenience and personalized service that distinguish commerce online. But that promise hinges on the merchants' intimate knowledge of their customers' tastes and behavior. For starters, they know who their customers are, where they live and their credit-card numbers. And the more someone buys, the more the seller finds out about him: likes bourbon and trash novels; sends someone not his wife flowers every Wednesday.

Any Web-site operator can reconstruct a



Watch Your Step

It doesn't take much to steal your identity. Some tips to protect it online:

SOCIAL SECURITY NOS.:

These open a floodgate of information. Keep them closely guarded.

PASSWORDS: Internet-service providers won't ask for them. Anyone who does is likely to be a scam artist.

ATTACHMENTS: Don't open these if they're from a stranger—they can launch 'sniffers' or Trojan horses, programs that steal and spread passwords.

PRIVACY POLICIES: Web retailers need personal data to make a sale. Be sure they aren't going to pass it around.

sure AOL knew it wasn't him in the event any records became public. He began a weeklong lobbying effort, calling AOL, privacy groups and a senator's office. Ultimately, he found out that the "criminal" activity was software piracy, and he's still waiting for a letter from AOL that clears his name.

Aravosis says he never gave out his password, nor did he download a malicious program, but AOL staffers suspect he did. Using AOL's Instant Messenger service, online cons can send a user a missive posing as an AOL employee who needs the user's password for some reason or another. "We are experienc-

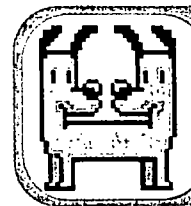
ing difficulties with our records... I need you to verify your logon password to me so that I can validate you as a user." If you don't fall for that ploy, you could become the unwitting victim of a "Trojan horse" program—an innocuously named e-mail attachment that stores your password when you open it. The program then e-mails the information to the perp.

So you have to be digitally vigilant. Guard your Social Security number as if it were the master key to your life, which it is. And plead with your insurance company and financial institution not to use the number as your account ID (good luck).

Paranoid, maybe, but it could have saved William Bergau. In May 1998 the 35-year-old college recruiter and his wife had their wallets stolen from their car and returned the next day. But the thief kept checks and Bergau's Social Security card, which he used to obtain a fraudulent driver's license by telling the DMV he had lost the original. He successfully purchased goods and withdrew money. But the real problem hit Bergau when the pretender started getting arrested, under Bergau's name, for drunken driving, marijuana possession and grand-theft auto. A year after the theft, when Bergau was on vacation with his wife and kids in Arizona, thousands of miles from home, he was pulled over for speeding. "His" record—for driving under the influence—came up, and the cop wanted to lock him up. "The kids are in the van thinking Daddy's going to jail," he says. But Bergau explained the theft of his identity and, after more letters and calls, he finally got off the hook. He wasn't ensnared online, but the Internet makes his predicament more imaginable for the rest of us.

Now Bergau carries around a series of letters from agencies and the police explaining his plight. But the notes give him little comfort: "I'm going to spend my whole life picking up the pieces of this guy's dirty work." For him—and anybody whose identity is lifted in cyberspace—it's hard to see if he'll ever truly get his name back.

Now Bergau carries around a series of letters from agencies and the police explaining his plight. But the notes give him little comfort: "I'm going to spend my whole life picking up the pieces of this guy's dirty work." For him—and anybody whose identity is lifted in cyberspace—it's hard to see if he'll ever truly get his name back.



46% of Americans send or receive e-mail every day. In addition, as many as 476 million instant messages are sent daily by AOL's 43 million registered users.

wiredville, U.S.A.

IT'S NOT 'THE JETSONS,' BUT CYBERTOWNS ARE ALREADY BEING BUILT THAT HARD-WIRE RESIDENTS TO EACH OTHER AND TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD. THESE TOWNS WILL BRING A WHOLE NEW WAY OF SHOPPING, WORKING AND KEEPING IN TOUCH.

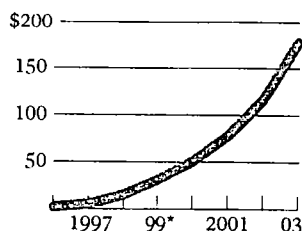
U.S. households online

PERCENTAGE BY RACE

Asian-Am.	64%
Hispanic	36
Caucasian	34
Afr-Am.	23
Other	24
Total pop.	33

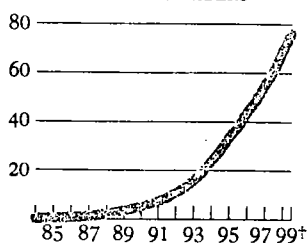
Global e-commerce revenue

IN BILLIONS



U.S. mobile-phone users

MILLIONS OF SUBSCRIBERS



U.S. mobile-phone bills

MONTHLY AVERAGE

1998	\$39.43
1997	42.78
1996	47.70
1995	51.00
1994	56.21
1993	61.49
1992	68.68
1991	72.74
1990	80.90
1989	89.30
1988	98.02
1987	96.85

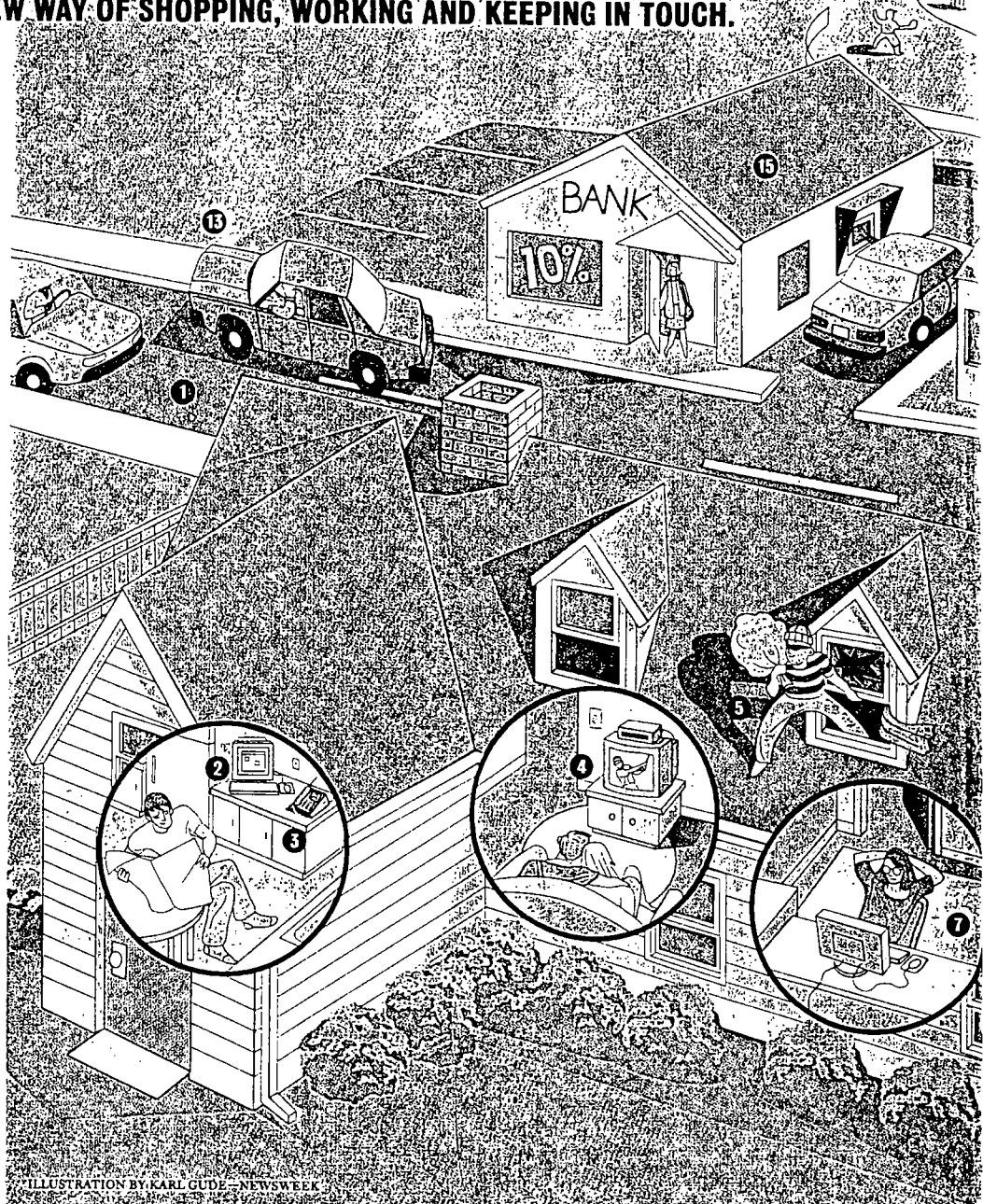
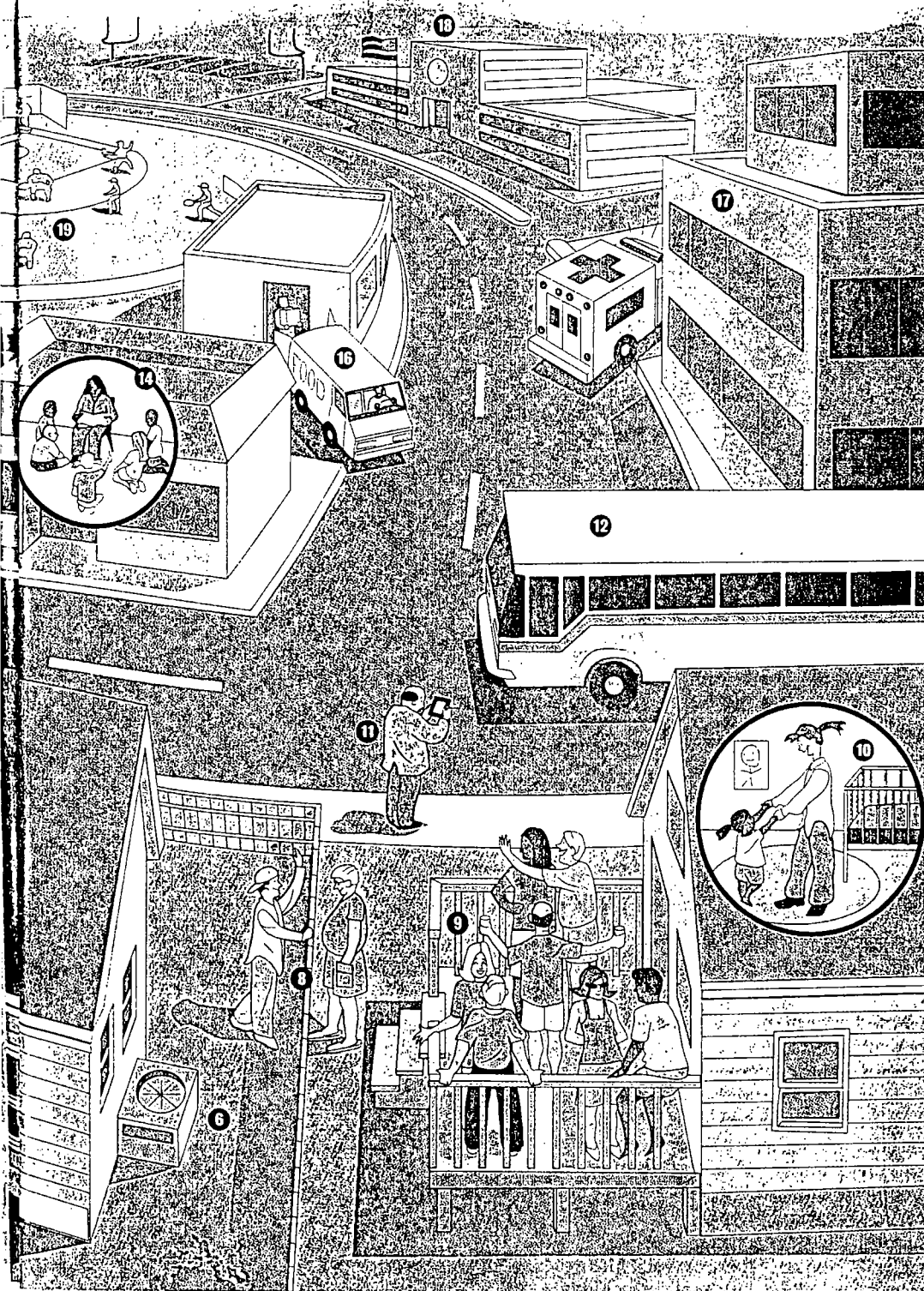


ILLUSTRATION BY KARL GUDE—NEWSWEEK

Welcome to Wiredville, where state-of-the-art, fiber-optic cable under the street **1** changes the way you live and work. The Internet is always on **2**, at speeds that are 100 times faster than today's 56K modems. The same wires also deliver cheap

phone service with video capability **3** plus hundreds of digital cable channels to your televisions **4**. The network within your home allows you to monitor systems such as your burglar alarm **5** and air conditioner **6** from any computer in the world. Meanwhile, you can also

log in to your office from your den **7**. In the neighborhood, casual conversation will move from the yard to the Net **8**. With everyone's e-mail address listed on the community Intranet, you can plan parties over e-mail **9** or peruse the local bulletin boards to hire a babysitter **10**.



Handheld 11 and auto-based computers will offer access to the community network, letting you, say, track the location of a public bus 12 or get directions and traffic reports on your way to work 15. Worried moms can check the videocam in the local day-care center 14. And since

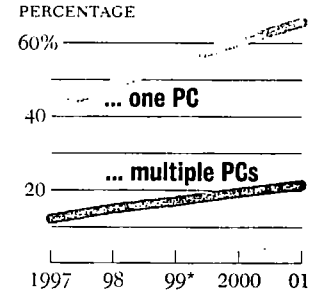
the local stores and commercial outlets like the bank 15 operate online, you can order dinner, a dry-cleaning pickup, even groceries 16 to be delivered to your door. The local hospital 17 and school 18 are also on the network, which means that you can check in remotely with

doctors and teachers, and they can access the latest in long-distance learning and telemedicine technology. But the whole thing really starts to pay off when you sign your kids up for activities like Little League 19, and then easily find other parents to shuttle them to the game.

Number of daily office communications by:

Telephone	52
E-mail	36
Voice mail	23
Postal mail	18
Interoffice	18
Fax	14
Pager	8
Cell phone	4

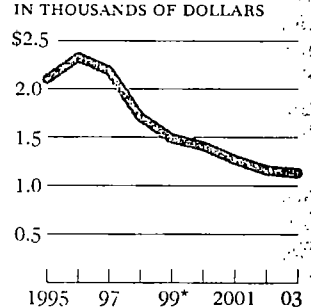
Households with ...



Y2K outlook RESPONDENTS WORRIED ABOUT FAILURE OF:

Banking/accounting	DEC. 1998	63%
	AUG. 1999	48
Air-traffic control		46
		35
Food/retail distribution		37
		35
Emergency/911		36
		27
Hospital equipment/services		33
		22
Nuclear power/defense sys.		30
		18

U.S. average PC cost



*PROJECTED '99 AND AFTER. *AS OF SEPT. 10.
SOURCES: DATAQUEST; PUNEY BOWEN, INC.;
CTIA; IDC; FORRESTER RESEARCH, INC.; NSF

Tom #44 11-14-95
Lujan

Copies of post
correspondence for
your files to
General

Bob Lujan

TOM W. RYAN
144 Willowleaf Drive
Littleton, CO 80127

303-973-5077 (Fax) 303-932-6010

ryandenvr@msn.com

October 31, 1999

Important
(9 pages, includes cover)

Mr. Eric Liu, Deputy Director, Domestic Policy Council
The White House, West Wing, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Mr. Liu:

I look forward to speaking with you sometime this week.

However, even before we speak there is some important news out of California which makes the case for President Clinton to propose a National Advisory Referendum even more compelling.

The cover story for the September 20th, 1999 issue of *Newsweek* is "e-Life—How the Internet is Changing America."

Some quick facts from the article before I jump to what's happening with "e-democracy" in California: Half of the school classrooms are already wired to the Internet; 200 million people are on-line to the Internet worldwide (80 million in US); 500 million people will be on-line by the year 2003; 60% of American households have a PC; the average price of a PC has dropped over 50% in 4 years with the cost of a PC today at less than \$1,000 and falling; 46% of Americans send and receive e-mails on a daily basis.

e-Democracy Taking Root in California

According to the article:

"But the biggest issue now emerging in the world of on-line politics is about . . . on-line politics. In California (of course) a movement is underway to allow votes to be cast over the Internet. Activist Marc Strassman is filing papers to put the question on the ballot in November 2000. Some analysts

argue that people could vote early and often by modem and that it would widen the 'digital divide' between the rich and poor. But Strassman contends that technical problems are soluble, and 'anything that makes it easier for people to vote,' he says, 'is a good idea in these days of voter cynicism and apathy.'

Now all he has to do is collect 500,000 signatures. He and his allies must gather them the old-fashioned way—on paper and in person. And Strassman has come up with a novel way to use the Internet to make the process simpler. Voters who want to sign won't have to go to a shopping-center parking lot to do so. They'll be able to download a petition form, sign it and send it in. 'A petition only has to have one name on it to be valid,' says Strassman. Of course, that's the way it works in the world of politics on the Web; you start with one person and hope for a swarm."

Whether the California effort succeeds or fails in 2000 does not matter. It will be a lightning rod for citizen activists around the country. Moreover, the billionaire entrepreneurs of Silicon Valley can easily fund initiative drives around the country. One of my "activist" friends, who is a State Senator in Illinois, sent me an article this week that Bill Gates's foundation has \$17 billion in assets. And, according to federal law, the foundation must give away a minimum of 5% of its assets each year—that's \$850 million a year. Moreover, as the stock market climbs, the value of the assets will grow—requiring more money to be given away each year. In addition, foundations can fund activities aimed at passing laws (legislative or initiative) as long as those funds don't exceed 5% of the total money being given away to educational and charitable activities. Therefore, if Bill Gates decided to take on e-democracy as a cause, the Gates Foundation could give away up to \$42.5 million a year for initiative campaigns. But this movement is not dependent upon Bill Gates. All it will take is one Silicon Valley billionaire to decide e-democracy is what he wants to fund for a public legacy and the movement will be off and running. The money to make this movement happen is there. And somewhere will be found the person to make it happen.

But citizen groups don't need to wait to find a billionaire to begin this movement. In 1971 I founded the Missouri Public Interest Research Group (MoPIRG) after meeting Ralph Nader at St. Louis University where I was a business student and then graduated from law school. We put an initiative on the ballot which stopped the nuclear power industry cold in Missouri by prohibiting the electric utilities from funding the construction of nuclear power plants out of the rate base (called "construction work in progress"). And then later, as an attorney, I beat them again in the courts when they tried to recoup their lost investment in nuclear power from the ratepayers.

What happens in California can become a lightning rod for similar campaigns in smaller states where the number of signatures required can be easily obtained without the need for large campaign funds. We gathered over a 100,000 signatures in Missouri through volunteers without the need to raise large sums of money and won the battle with the utilities with the public to pass the measure while being wildly outspent by the utilities who tried to defeat it at the polls.

Just as the environmental movement was fueled more by volunteers than by funding from deep pockets, so will the e-democracy movement over the next decade.

The Progressive Movement gave us the right to initiate and pass laws directly by the people, first championed by California Governor Hiram Johnson, as a way to reduce the power of the railroads. Initiative rights will allow citizens to put issues on the ballot if state legislatures are reluctant to pass the e-democracy reforms.

The Choice for the President

President Clinton has a choice to make. The movement toward e-democracy is just around the corner. The President can either miss the boat at his State of the Union address, or steer the course for a new democracy for the 21st century.

What makes a leader is not waiting to ride the public wave, but helping to create the public wave. Moreover, to capture the imagination of the public, the President must do more than talk about

the implications of e-democracy for our nation at his State of the Union address in January.

President Kennedy is immortalized not for promising to explore space but for promising to send a man to the moon. People immediately could internalize the startling image of a person walking on the moon.

President Clinton must do the same if he wants to climb to the same pedestal. Talking about e-democracy in the nebulous terms of more citizen participation will be lost in history.

President Clinton must take e-democracy to the next level. Where will this new technology lead?

It will lead us back to the beginning to Thomas Jefferson and his proposal to create a community with the capacity to make decisions not only about candidates but about the direction of public policy.

Jefferson saw a world where we could all come together to cast advisory votes on the issues so that the “voice of the whole people would be thus fairly, fully, and peaceably expressed, discussed, and decided by the common reason of society.” (Letter to Sam Kercheval, 1816)

For President Clinton, promising to send legislation the Congress to create a National Advisory Referendum where we as a people can come together to forge a public consensus for our common destiny can be the President’s speech to send a man to the moon.

But instead of sending a man to the moon, President Clinton will be sending a message to the heart of the American people.

On Friday, I e-mailed a copy of my October 27th letter to President Clinton to my niece Stacey May who owns a computer design business in New York. She e-mailed me yesterday that she was “all choked up” reading my letter to the President. Why? This is about giving her something that is real—an opportunity to join with millions of other Americans for the first time in our nation’s history to forge a public consensus for our common destiny. She not only understands it, she feels it. When you speak to the heart, you can move a nation..

The President has a unique opportunity--to speak to the hearts of the American people about what it means to be a national community for the "New American Century"—one nation, coming together, to forge a consensus for our common destiny.

But for great words to last, they must be followed by great deeds.

By introducing legislation for a National Advisory Referendum, President Clinton will do more than create a mechanism for public decision-making, he will have created a "New American Community" for the "New American Century."

President Clinton can lead us forward into a new democratic age by going back to the beginning of our democratic roots.

By proposing a National Advisory Referendum, President Clinton will join Thomas Jefferson as the most important democratic architects of our American democracy.

That is the legacy which the President can claim.

This is the decision the President must make: miss the boat or steer the course for a new democratic age.

I look forward to talking to you.

Sincerely,

Tom Ryan

Clinton Library Transfer Form

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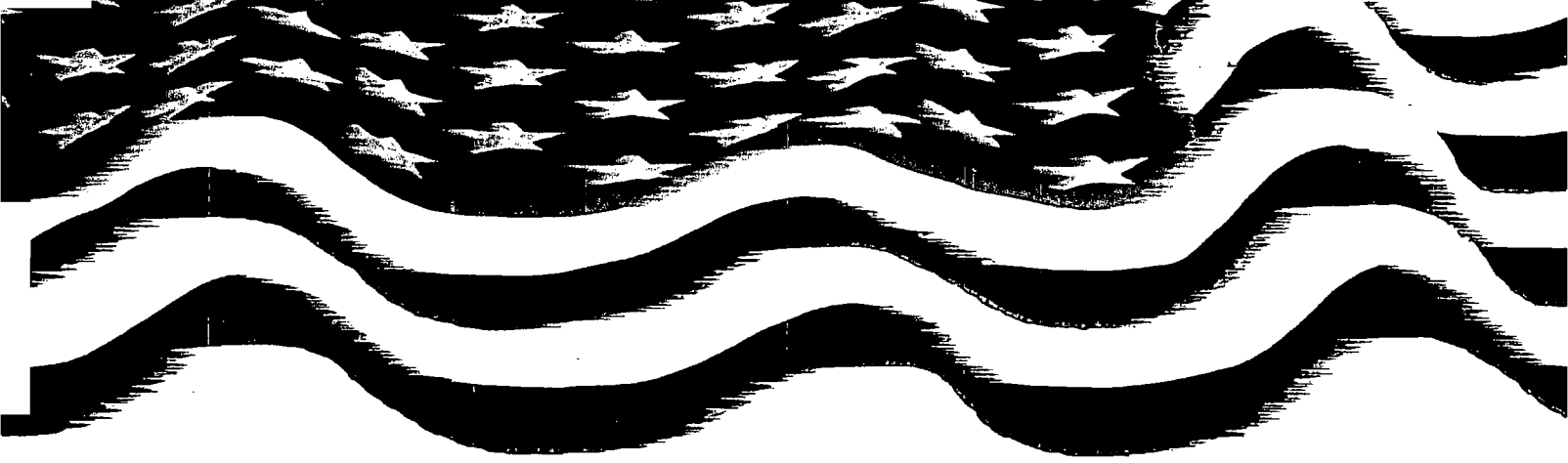
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**A PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A
NATIONAL ADVISORY REFERENDUM
ON ISSUES REFERRED TO THE
PEOPLE BY THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES**

Prepared for President William Jefferson Clinton

By Tom Ryan

**August 5, 1999
Denver, Colorado
303-973-5077
ryanddenver@msn.com**

**Proposed Legislation
to Give the President of the United States the
Power to Refer to the People up to Three
Issues for a National Advisory Referendum to
Give People a Greater Voice in Government
and to Forge a Common Consensus on
Matters of Public Policy.**

Section 1. The President of the United States may at his sole discretion submit to the voters of the United States one, two or three issues for a non-binding advisory vote of the people to be held at any general election for the Congress of the United States.

Section 2. The purpose of the advisory referendum is to give people a greater voice in shaping national policy by directly participating in a vote on issues referred to the people by the President of the United States. Issues submitted by the President may include proposed federal legislation, regulations or executive branch policies. Any issue referred to the voters of the United States shall be written in such a way that a "yes" or "no" vote may be taken.

Section 3. The President shall submit to the election authorities of the several states the issues for the advisory vote of the people no later than 120 days prior to the general election. The issues submitted by the President shall appear on the ballot in close proximity to the election of the Senators and Representatives to the Congress of the United States.

Section 4. Any state receiving federal funds shall participate in any referendum referred to the several states by the President of the United States as a condition for the continued receipt of federal moneys.

Section 5. Enforcement of this act shall be by a writ of mandamus in federal district court.

30 Reasons in Support of a National Advisory Referendum

1. The National Advisory Referendum will give people a greater voice in government.

People want a greater voice in government. The *Los Angeles Times* found that 69% of the people feel that “people like me have almost no say in the political system,” *Los Angeles Times* November 5, 1995. The proposed National Advisory Referendum giving the President the power to call for a national vote on 1 to 3 issues every general election will give the people the greater voice they want in national decision-making through an advisory referendum. A democracy cannot continue to ignore the disaffection with government of a majority of its citizens. The National Advisory Referendum will create the most direct response to solving this serious problem by opening the doors of decision-making to the people themselves. Giving people a direct say on the issues is the best way to make people feel a part of the whole. “That government is strongest of which every man feels himself a part,” Thomas Jefferson.

2. A National Advisory Referendum will not change the ultimate decision-making authority of the President, the Congress or the federal agencies as provided for in the Constitution.

The proposal for a National Advisory Referendum is designed to give the President the power to forge a consensus for public policy while leaving the ultimate decision to elected officials or government agencies. The vote of the people would be purely advisory to guide government officials in the exercise of their responsibilities to act on behalf of the people.

3. A National Advisory Referendum on 1 to 3 issues chosen by the President for a vote every two years will not replace the principles of representative government with direct democracy.

Giving the President the discretionary authority to call a national referendum on 1 to 3 issues every general election does not even put a dent into the principles of representative government. Even on those issues put to a

popular vote, the elected officials would still have the responsibility to accept or reject the popular will expressed in the referendum and decide what action to take based on their judgment as elected officials. Any legislation passed pursuant to a National Advisory Referendum would be drafted, debated, amended and ultimately voted on just as all other bills are. In addition, the President, in his capacity as an elected official, would determine whether it is in the public interest to put any issues on the ballot for a popular vote.

The National Advisory Referendum is designed to create a more organized and more structured means for expressing public opinion on important issues so that elected officials can determine how best to represent the public interest as government officials. Officials rely on polls, focus groups, constituent mail and surveys, meetings with representatives from interest groups, newspaper articles and editorials, television news and other means to gauge public opinion before deciding what to do. All of these represent a fragmented approach to determining the public pulse for government action. The National Advisory Referendum is designed to provide a more structured mechanism for public input and is designed to be part of the input stage of public decision-making, not the decision-making itself by government officials.

This non-binding referendum should not be confused with other proposals to create a binding national referendum which would substitute a popular vote on a proposal for decisions made by elected officials. The National Advisory Referendum is not direct democracy where people pass the laws themselves. The advisory referendum is designed to increase public input while leaving the authority for making decisions untouched and untrammelled. Therefore, the proposal to seek advisory votes from the public on 1 to 3 issues every two years becomes part of the traditional responsibility of elected officials to gather public input and assess public opinion before making decisions. It does not change who makes and establishes public policy. It merely expands the ability of the people to participate in the public input stage of the democratic process.

4. We have a mixed democracy at the local and state level with both referendums and representative government working well together; the time has come to create a mixed democracy at the national level.

Some may argue that the framers of the Constitution created a system of government where only the elected representatives of the people made decisions. This may be true, but it ignores the reforms made by the Progressive movement to create a referendum process as a check on representative democracy. These reforms were instituted in almost half of the states, including the largest state, California. Therefore, we no longer have a pure representative democracy at work in the United States. We have a mixed democracy and it is working well with both representative government and the people themselves passing laws at the state level. During the 1996 elections, there were 91 referendums put to a vote of the people at the state level. This was the most referendums since the turn of the century when the rights of initiative and referendum were given to the public during the wave of reforms passed during the Progressive Era. Today it is clear that the people want more direct say in public policy matters. It is time to create a mixed democracy at the national level. Non-binding national referendums would allow us to experience public votes before deciding whether binding referendums as they exist at the state level would be appropriate at the national level.

5. The National Advisory Referendum will increase the power of the President to lead the nation in finding common ground for public policy proposals.

Currently the President must make his proposals to the Congress where they are heard and decided. Under the proposed National Advisory Referendum the President would have the power to make a proposal directly to the people, gain a mandate, and then make a formal proposal to the Congress after the people have voted in favor of its passage. This would give the President a new power to bring the country together before going to Congress.

6. The National Advisory Referendum will increase the power of the President to end gridlock in Congress.

When Congressional gridlock blocks an important Presidential proposal, the President will be able to end the gridlock by putting the issue before the people at the next general election to get a public mandate for its passage. This new leverage will give the President more power to achieve his public policy goals.

7. National Advisory Referendum is a marginal reform with a monumental impact in the best tradition of expanding democratic rights.

Thousands of public policy decisions are made by the President, Congress and federal agency officials each year on behalf of the public. To give the President the power to refer 1 to 3 issues for public debate and non-binding vote every two years represents a very small change in the way we govern ourselves. It is a marginal reform of representative government. However, it will be monumental in its symbolism and effect. For the first time in the history of this great nation, we as a people will come together to forge a consensus by public vote on a matter of public policy. The National Advisory Referendum will create a new mechanism to find the common ground among our people. The National Advisory Referendum will give new meaning to "We the people."

For over 200 years we have seen a steady march in history to expand democratic rights: eliminating property as a condition to vote; direct election of the United States Senate; state constitutional changes giving people the right to propose and pass laws through citizen initiatives; giving women the right to vote; elimination of poll taxes and other discriminatory measures against African-Americans; reducing the voting age from 21 to 18; passing the motor-voter registration law.

The National Advisory Referendum would continue our great march forward to the 21st century with a major expansion of democratic rights for all Americans. The changes would be marginal (advisory votes on 1 to 3 issues every two years) but the impact would be monumental (creating for the first time a right to vote on issues at the federal level.)

8. The National Advisory Referendum shifts power from the federal government to the people themselves.

According to an October 6, 1996 *New York Times* poll, 67% of men and 57% of women believe that “government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals.” The National Advisory Referendum will allow the President to gain public approval for new, far-reaching government initiatives before proposing them to Congress. At a time when the majority of Americans believe government is doing too much, this new mechanism for an advisory vote of the public would be a responsible way to expand the role of government. The issue is not whether government is big or small, but whether the government is doing what the public wants. The National Advisory Referendum would allow the President to overcome a presumption that the public does not favor expansive government programs by seeking direct public support for such measures as national health insurance prior to proposing them to Congress.

9. The National Advisory Referendum will allow the President to take more political risks to move the nation forward by gaining the consent of the people before seeking passage of politically risky proposals.

Special interest groups can mount successful campaigns to defeat proposals before Congress by running a campaign of misinformation and labels to scare the public into believing it is a bad proposal. This was effectively done to defeat national health insurance. The National Advisory Referendum will give the President the power to place a policy issue before the public to gain public support prior to making a formal proposal to the Congress. This will expand the President’s options in developing strategy and allow the President to take more political risk in moving the nation forward. The President will send the vast majority of his proposals to the Congress first, but with the National Advisory Referendum he will be able to take a few proposals to the people first. More options mean more power for the President to pass his legislative agenda.

10. The National Advisory Referendum will shift some of the moral responsibility for solving problems from government to the people as a whole so that we can collectively solve our problems.

When social problems are viewed as the government's problem, people tend not to take on a personal sense of moral responsibility. A National Advisory Referendum can shift more of the responsibility to the people themselves who have a moral obligation to shoulder this responsibility and collectively make the decisions to solve our social problems. If we are to resolve some of our deepest social problems such as those which involve poverty, the people themselves must be actively involved in accepting moral responsibility as a national community for finding solutions. The National Advisory Referendum will help us move away from the idea that we as individuals don't have any responsibility to solve these intractable problems.

The National Advisory Referendum process will give the President the power to seek public support for solutions to these problems. During the process of debate and discussion among the people, civic and religious groups will be actively involved in raising the moral consciousness of the people. This will have far reaching effects as we move into the next century.

People cannot be expected to take moral responsibility for the problems of our national community if they are not given the opportunity to participate in making decisions to solve our problems. **The concept of community responsibility must be expanded to embrace shared decision-making.**

11. The polls show that people are in favor of a national referendum.

The *Business Week*/Harris Poll of March 13, 1995, found that only 30% of the American people believed that "the U.S. government usually represents the interests of the American people," while 63% of the people believe that the U.S. government usually "represents special interests."

A *Los Angeles Times* poll of November 5, 1995, found that 69% of the people agree with the statement that "people like me have almost no say in the political system."

The Gallup Poll reported in the *Washington Post* on May 24, 1981, found that people favored by a 2 to 1 margin a constitutional amendment to create

a national citizen initiative right which would allow voters to place binding issues on the national ballot when 3% of eligible voters signed a petition.

A more recent poll by the Americans Talk Issues Foundation which was reported in the *Washington Post* in 1995 found that the same two-thirds majority favors having binding national referendums.

12. The National Advisory Referendum will strengthen our mutual sense of community by creating a structure for a National Town Meeting where we as a nation discuss the issues and then tell our elected officials what we want them to do.

Putting an issue on the ballot for a non-binding advisory vote by the public would be like holding a National Town Meeting where we as a nation can come together to form a consensus on public policy. By coming together as a national community to vote on public policy questions, we will strengthen our common ties, which bind us as a community and as a nation.

13. A National Advisory Referendum where millions of people vote is better than any poll or focus group in giving elected officials input on what the people want.

Polls and focus groups provide elected officials with a flawed sampling of public opinion even when they are scientifically valid for one simple reason: polls don't educate people prior to sampling their opinion. Moreover, when campaigns are run to involve people in a decision-making process, people often change their minds. Polls designed to gauge public opinion so that policy judgments can be made can't reflect the dynamics of a democracy, which has not yet been engaged. If there is no means to educate the public, the polls will reflect the views of an uninformed public. Therefore, a National Advisory Referendum has the benefit of moving our nation forward by creating a process which will help educate the public about more important public policy issues.

An excellent example of this polling flaw took place in Colorado during the 1996 elections. A right wing out-of state organization came into the state to place on the ballot a "parental rights" proposal giving parents the right to control their child's education, discipline and so forth. When the initiative was placed on the ballot the public opinion polls showed that an

overwhelming majority supported it. Yet after the campaigns of both proponents and opponents were run, the people voted it down by a wide margin. If elected officials decide policy on the basis of polls, they are making decisions on the shifting sands of public opinion which changes as people are given new information about the pros and cons of particular policy options. Polls can play an important role in a democracy to point elected officials in a particular direction, but they should never be cited as a legitimate reason for opposing giving the people as a whole a referendum process to forge a public consensus.

14. Thomas Jefferson first proposed the concept in 1816.

In 1816 Thomas Jefferson wrote a letter to Samuel Kercheval praising the New England Town Meeting concept as “the wisest invention ever devised by the wit of man for the perfect exercise of self-government, and for its preservation.” He stated that “the whole is cemented by giving to every citizen, personally, a part in the administration of the public affairs.”

Jefferson then put forth a plan to hold meetings simultaneously throughout the land so that the collective voice of the people could be gathered: “The mayor of every ward, on a question like the present, would call his ward together, take the simple yea or nay of its members, convey these to the county court, who would hand on those of all its wards to the proper general authority; and the voice of the whole people would be thus fairly, fully and peaceably expressed, discussed and decided by the common reason of society.”

Jefferson’s proposal for a National Advisory Referendum process was framed in the Kercheval letter in a discussion of how to keep our Constitution relevant by making “periodical repairs, from generation to generation, to the end of time, if anything human can so long endure.”

Jefferson says of each generation, “they have a right to direct what is the concern of themselves alone, and to declare the law of that direction; and this declaration can only be made by their majority.”

While Jefferson talks about a representative convention to make the “periodical repairs”, he clearly does not leave the decision-making to the exclusive discretion of the elected representatives to the convention. Jefferson’s vision is to create a process where everyone participates in a

direct way. He asks, "But how to collect their voice? This is the real difficulty." He rejects "meetings . . . so large that few will attend." Rather, he envisions small "ward" divisions modeled after the New England Town Meetings which are small enough that every citizen could attend and cast their "yea or nay" concerning the proposed changes to the Constitution.

While Jefferson set forth his democratic architecture to maximize democratic decision-making when making changes in the Constitution, the process can easily be adapted for anything of national concern through a National Advisory Referendum held at each general election.

Jefferson's focus was on the principle for "collecting their voice" so that the "voice of the whole people would be thus fairly, fully, and peaceably expressed, discussed, and decided by the common reason of the society" rather than focusing on the method. Jefferson's genius was that when proposing a principle, he also thought about the practical side of implementing it to make it workable in a functioning democracy.

Jefferson would be the first to say we should adapt his principle of "advisory" voting on the issues to the practical considerations of our time rather than be chained to his ideas for small meetings. His principles of including everyone into the process of decision-making should be our guiding light rather than his 1816 means of bringing our nation together through neighborhood meetings. As Jefferson himself said, " But I know also, that laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, and manners and opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also, and keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy, as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors. It is this preposterous idea which has largely deluged Europe in blood."

Today we can take Jefferson's principles of democratic reform written in 1816 from the chief architect's perspective of our first 40 years as a democracy and implement them for the next Millenium in the form of a National Advisory Referendum. Jefferson believed that for democracy to survive, it must constantly change with each generation "so that it may be handed on, with periodical repairs, from generation to generation, to the end of time."

As we stand on the doorstep of a new Millenium, the time has come to build a bridge to the 21st century on the firm foundation of Jefferson's plans to give people a direct say on the issues through an advisory voting process.

15. It's inevitable that someday we will create a national referendum.

The march toward democracy is unstoppable over time, whether blocked at home or abroad. The right of people to control their own governments is so fundamental that it will overcome all obstacles in its path over the long term of history. Democratic decision-making has two fundamental components, which have been with us since the very beginning of this country: voting for representatives and voting on issues.

At the local level people have been voting for representatives and voting on issues even before the United States of America was formed. One only has to look at the New England Town Meetings for historical proof that Americans exercising their democratic rights never limited themselves to merely voting for representatives to make all the decisions for them and have a rich tradition of voting on issues throughout our history.

The desire to vote on issues beyond the local level prompted people in nearly half the states to change their state constitutions to allow citizens to vote directly on issues through citizen initiatives and referendums.

Currently, the twin democratic rights of voting for representatives and on the issues exist at the local and state level. There is no doubt that it is only a matter of time that the evolution of our democracy will once again expand citizen voting rights to include voting on issues at the federal level just as it was expanded from the local to state level in the early part of the 20th century.

Since the march to expand democratic participation is unstoppable, President Clinton has a unique opportunity to provide the vision needed to move our democracy forward into the 21st Century by proposing an expansion of the democratic franchise to vote on federal issues through a National Advisory Referendum.

16. President Clinton has a chance to join the same historically great Presidents as Washington, Lincoln, and F. Roosevelt by ushering in a fundamental change in the way we govern ourselves.

In an article in the December 15, 1996 issue of the *New York Times Magazine*, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. asked historians to rate the Presidents. Washington, Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt were judged as Great, while Jefferson, Jackson, Polk, T. Roosevelt, Wilson and Truman, were judged as near great.

After noting that the current consensus is that President Clinton is ranked among the average, Schlesinger offers this historical advice:

“To make a mark on history, let Clinton liberate himself from polls and focus groups. Let him put his first-rate intelligence to work on the hard issues. Playing it safe, taking it easy, sticking to the middle of the road may make for a more comfortable second term. But following this course would put Clinton alongside William Howard Taft and Rutherford B. Hayes on the ratings list. Only boldness and creativity, even if at times foiled and frustrated, will earn him a place among the nine immortals.”

The proposal for a National Advisory Referendum meets this historical test of tackling the tough issues with boldness and creativity. For decades politicians have failed to address the continuing alienation the majority of people feel from their federal government. People have been clamoring for more control and have gravitated to negative proposals like term limits simply out of political exasperation. Term limits address the symptoms of an unresponsive, isolated, insulated federal government, but do nothing to give people more actual control over the policies, which are the root of their frustration.

Politicians from both parties continue to practice “savior” politics: Vote for me and I will save you from the bad guys. But no one on the national stage has sought to solve the underlying problem of citizen alienation, which even President Clinton has talked about in his speeches. In a speech to Glendale Community College students in 1996, the President said, “Washington is far away. It’s easy to become alienated from it.”

During a speech to Iowa Democrats, President Clinton said, "We have to find a way to come together. If we do, there is no stopping us." The way to come together as a nation is to create a mechanism where we as a people can come together to forge a common consensus for public policy as Thomas Jefferson first envisioned in 1816 as revealed in a letter to Samuel Kercheval. (See point Number 14 above.)

President Clinton spoke about Jefferson's ideas during a visit to Monticello January 17, 1993, where he noted that Jefferson believed "people should be able to participate by voting every day or in small groups." When a student named Rowena queried the President about his Jeffersonian views, the President said he wanted to be "faithful to Jefferson's idea to shake things up once every generation." Then again on January 20, 1993, during a lunch in Washington, President Clinton echoed the ideas of Thomas Jefferson when he said, "Once in a generation we are called upon to redefine the public interest and the common ground."

The National Advisory Referendum is a practical, workable proposal for the 21st century to allow our nation of 265 million to come together on the issues as Jefferson envisioned almost two centuries ago. Moreover, it would shake things up in our democracy to provide a new vibrant dynamic between the people and their elected representatives at the national level in the best tradition of Jefferson's idea for periodic peaceful revolutions to move our nation forward.

President Clinton said in Monticello that during his 1992 presidential campaign, "Jefferson was associated with the populism of his day and so we chose him as a symbol of the populism of our campaign." But Jefferson is more than a symbol for President Clinton. The President bears his name-- William Jefferson Clinton.

President Clinton is the only President in the history of our nation to bear Jefferson's name and share his populist ideals. The President is in a unique historical position to revive the populist participation proposal which Jefferson put forward in 1816 to expand democratic participation and make the New England Town Meeting a model for national decision-making.

It's impractical today to hold a series of town meetings to vote on a common issue as Jefferson envisioned in 1816. But we can as a nation come

together to vote on issues in a National Advisory Referendum and through our discussions and deliberations create a 21st century version of a National Town Meeting.

It is inevitable that someday some President will succeed in creating a national referendum. That change, though marginal in nature, would be such a monumental shift in “dynamic-power” to the people it would forever change the way we make national decisions. There is no doubt that such a monumental shift in “dynamic” power away from Congress to the people would vault that President to become one of the great Presidents in our nation’s history.

All the Presidents who have been judged as “great”, Washington, Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt were involved in either creating, preserving or shifting power: Washington pulled this nation together from the very beginning; Lincoln held it together when it was torn apart; and Franklin Roosevelt both created new federal powers and shifted more power to the national government.

A National Advisory Referendum would be such a huge shift in power that it would forever shape the future of our country in the same magnitude that Washington, Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt have done in their times. President Clinton called for a huge power shift in his first inaugural address when he said that we must “reform our politics, so that power and privilege no longer shout down the voice of the people.”

But it will take turning these great words into great deeds to make President Clinton one of the great Presidents in our nation’s history. The National Advisory Referendum would “reform our politics, so that power and privilege no longer shout down the voice of the people.”

If the President’s stirring call during his first inaugural address was to be the guiding vision of this President, then the National Advisory Referendum can be it’s fulfillment and the “Bridge to the 21st Century” upon which all Americans can, for the first time in the history of this great nation, walk across to forge a public consensus for our common destiny.

This truly would be a monumental shift in power--A great deed.

17. During the 1996 campaign President Clinton agreed that a national referendum would be an extension of his concept of community and in 1993 endorsed a national advisory referendum for the people of Russia as proposed by President Boris Yeltsin. Moreover, at a July 1999 fundraiser in Aspen, Colorado at the home of Senator Dianne Feinstein, President Clinton expressed interest in the idea of creating a National Advisory Referendum to give the people a greater voice.

President Clinton said in his State of the Union address for 1996, "We must go forward as one America . . . and try to find common ground." During the Presidential campaign for 1996, President Clinton talked continually about his vision of community where we as a people come together as a nation to forge a consensus for our future.

However, for the President's vision of a national community to survive, it must be turned into a structural change. Presidential visions fade with time; visions turned into structures last for all time for all to see. The key to turning President Clinton's vision of a national community of people caring for each other is to create a decision-making structure for this community.

The National Advisory Referendum is the decision-making structure upon which President Clinton can turn his vision of a national community into reality. Structures create a community. Without a decision-making structure where people can take direct responsibility for their national community, the President's vision will be illusory and lost for history.

Both Jefferson and President Clinton share the same vision for our national community. Jefferson said, "And the whole is cemented by giving every citizen, personally, a part of the administration of the public affairs."

Jefferson added, "I am not among those who fear the people."

While attending a fund-raiser for Tom Strickland, Democratic candidate for U. S. Senate in Colorado, I briefly spoke with the President about the idea for a national referendum. I said, "Mr. President, just think of the national referendum as an extension of your concept of community." The President paused for a moment and then said, "I agree."

On July 24, 1999, at the Aspen home of Senator Dianne Feinstein, I again spoke to the President about Jefferson's idea for a National Advisory Referendum process. After introducing myself to the President and reminding him that we had met at a fundraiser for Congressman Richard Gephardt in St. Louis in 1996 and again in Denver at a fundraiser for Tom Strickland where we talked about Jefferson's idea for a National Advisory Referendum, the President said, "One of my staff members told me you would be here." I said, "Mr. President, you share Jefferson's name. With the National Advisory Referendum, you can share Jefferson's legacy on democracy." The President said he remembered our meeting and talked about how he envisioned the National Advisory Referendum, "I would put out 3 issues every 4 years for the people to vote on. And since it would be non-binding, it wouldn't require a constitutional amendment." I responded, "Yes, Mr. President that's exactly right."

But the President has done more than just talk positively about Jefferson's ideas for a National Advisory Referendum. In fact, the President actually endorsed a National Advisory Referendum on March 3, 1993 for three national issues--for Russia--as proposed by Russian President Boris Yeltsin. A review of the 3 ballot issues makes it clear that the national referendum was advisory: 1) "Do you have confidence in Russian President Boris Yeltsin?" 2) "Do you approve of the socio-economic policy carried out by the president of the Russian Federation?"; and 3) "Do you consider it necessary to carry out early elections for the president (and the deputies) of the Russian Federation?"

If President Clinton believes that a National Advisory Referendum is good for the Russian people, doesn't it also stand to reason that he should support a National Advisory Referendum for the people of the United States to express their will on some of the issues facing our nation?

On the night President Clinton was first elected, November 3, 1992, he showed his conceptual support for giving people more power over government by saying to the crowd assembled at the Governor's Mansion, "We must reform the political process, reduce the influence of special interests, and give more power to the people like you here tonight."

The best way to reform the political process to empower people is to change the structure of government itself by creating a mechanism that transfers power directly to the people. Giving people a chance to vote on national

issues would fulfill what President Clinton promised the people on the day he was first elected.

The National Advisory Referendum meets the three stated goals of the President--to reform the political process, to reduce the influence of special interests, and give more power to the people.

18. The National Advisory Referendum will help the President achieve the goals he established for his second term as expressed in his Inaugural Address, January 20, 1997.

Each of the following quotes are consistent with giving the people a new national voice on public policy issues through a mechanism which will allow everyone to participate in deciding the direction of public policy:

"We must keep our old democracy forever young."

"At the dawn of the 21st century, a free people must now choose to shape the forces of the Information Age and the global society; to unleash the limitless potential of all our people; and yes, to form a more perfect union."

"Today we can declare government is not the problem and government is not the solution. We, the American people, we are the solution."

"We need a new government for a new century humble enough not to try to solve all our problems for us, but strong enough to give us the tools to solve our problems for ourselves."

"Our greatest responsibility is to embrace a new spirit of community for a new century."

"Will we be one nation, one people, with one common destiny or not?"

"And in this land of new promise, we will have reformed our politics so that the voice of the people will always speak louder than the din of narrow interests regaining the participation and deserving the trust of all Americans."

“America demands and deserves big things from us, and nothing big ever came from being small.”

“And so, my fellow Americans, we must be strong, for this is much to dare.”

“Yes, let us build our bridge, a bridge wide enough and strong enough for every American to cross over to a blessed land of new promise.”

Not only will the proposal for a National Advisory Referendum help the President achieve these goals by building a new structure for citizen participation in shaping public policy, but the President can also propose that for the first National Advisory Referendum in November of 2000 that the first three issues to be placed before the people in an advisory vote be three of the President’s proposals which were not approved by the Congress during the last 8 years. For example, the President could propose:

- 1) Any one of the gun control measures which the President proposed after the tragedy at Columbine High School and which failed to pass Congress;**
- 2) Any one of the Medicare or other health care reforms which Congress failed to pass; and**
- 3) Any one of the most important endeavors since the President Clinton was elected which Congress failed to pass.**

19. The National Advisory Referendum is the “express lane” for the “Bridge to the 21st Century.”

During the Presidential campaign of 1996, President Clinton said he wanted to build a bridge to the 21st century. If the President builds a traditional two-lane bridge for the Democrats and Republicans, there will be more traffic jams and gridlock on the bridge just as we have had on the bridge built for the 20th century. The time has come to build a bigger bridge with a third lane--an express lane directly to the people. The proposal to give the President the power to refer 1 to 3 issues to the people at every general

election for an advisory vote would create a badly needed **express lane** for the President and the people of the United States, allowing them to bypass the Congress when there is a legislative traffic jam on the bridge.

The President could use one of the standard Democratic and Republican lanes for the vast majority of his proposals. But when he finds that a few of his important ideas are being bogged down in the political traffic on the bridge, he would have the power to shift over to the **express lane** and go right to the people.

The fast paced world of the 21st century requires a bigger bridge with an **express lane** for the President and the people.

20. The National Advisory Referendum will provide an effective response to Republican ideas of limiting government at the federal level.

The Republican rise to power since their devastating defeat after Watergate has been built around the ideas of limiting the role of the federal government--less government, less taxes, less spending, and more local control--and, portraying the Democrats as the party of the defenders of big government, high taxes and out of control spending. The issue, however, is not whether the federal government is big or small, but whether it is doing what the people want, big or small.

Even though it is easy to argue that there are many "big" things that government does which benefit the public, e.g., food safety and Medicare, the risk of losing to a slick negative campaign causes most politicians to shy away from supporting an expanded role for government.

The National Advisory Referendum will give progressive politicians a way to build support for an expanded federal role by giving people an opportunity to vote for specific programs for the federal government. If the people vote for them, then Congress should enact them, be they big or small. In addition, referenda allow other groups to get involved in a public way. It takes some of the heat off elected officials and lets others get involved in educating the public. It brings about a more informed electorate and makes progressive politicians less vulnerable to the liberal-label attacks by conservatives.

If we fail to create a public decision-making mechanism like the National Advisory Referendum we will slow the pace of progressive change. Progressives who dare to propose expanded federal programs like national health care over the next decade are more likely to be defeated by conservative opponents running negative campaign ads to scare the public even before the progressives can build a legislative majority. By creating an “express lane” to the people, a progressive idea can be put forth directly to the people to gain the public support necessary to build a legislative majority.

Without a consensus building mechanism like the National Advisory Referendum, progressive politicians will more likely be marginalized by the middle and, as a result, our future will be compromised.

The National Advisory Referendum will give progressives new mobility and freedom to win the big games. In football terms, the National Advisory Referendum is like the West Coast passing offense. If progressives try to grind it out on the ground, they will lose to the bigger bodies that free agency money has produced for the conservatives. You can beat a bigger, stronger team with an effective passing game. The National Advisory Referendum is the passing attack progressives need as we enter the 21st century. The people are excellent receivers.

21. The National Advisory Referendum can be used to promote national health care reform and other proposals from the President.

The problem with first going to the Congress with fundamental changes affecting powerful economic interests is that they can distort the issues and run an effective misinformation campaign that thwarts the public interest. This is what happened to national health care reform. The problem is that there currently is no other way but to take your case to the Congress while trying to win the public relations battle with the public.

If we add a mechanism to our system of decision-making allowing the President to put 1 to 3 advisory issues before the people during each general election, the President would be able to first take his case to the people, beat the special interests at the ballot box, and get a mandate from the people to move forward.

The passage of a National Advisory Referendum would give new life to national health care reform. The President would be able to place before the people a national health care reform proposal either during the election of 1998 or 2000. The President should pick a winnable part of the past program such as the following:

Are you in favor of requiring companies with 15 or more employees to provide health insurance to their full-time employees?

Yes

No

This issue demonstrates how the President could put a proposal before the people, run a campaign for its approval, and then push it through the Congress after winning the mandate from the public.

22. The National Advisory Referendum will help replace the break down of big party, big interest group representation of the past several decades.

When President Clinton spoke at the Tom Strickland for Senate fund-raiser, he talked about how big interest group representation was breaking down. Not only was the era of big government at an end, but the idea of having a big interest group represent you, be it a party or a labor union, was also breaking down, the President said. People are more interested in the issues than the labels and affiliations.

The President is correct. Government by interest group is breaking down. In the past several decades people were effectively represented by the institutions to which they belonged. Not only did we have a representative form of government, **but also we had a representative form of participation.** People joined a labor union or a local political organization like a city ward. The people participated in the group whose leaders would in turn represent the members within in the world of government.

Now, more than ever before, we need to create a new mechanism where people can more effectively participate and represent their own interests directly to the government. The advances in computer technology and the

Internet will speed these trends along. And that is why the National Advisory Referendum is an idea whose time has come.

The National Advisory Referendum allows people to represent their own views directly without being a member of another group. In addition, the National Advisory Referendum will provide a mechanism for collective action by the national community. While the Internet and other advances in technology will empower people with access to information, for the foreseeable future, we will need some other way to come together as a nation rather than merely plugging into the Internet. The National Advisory Referendum is a practical way for millions of people to collectively participate in a democratic decision-making process.

23. The National Advisory Referendum will help counterbalance the influence of big money in politics.

It will always be easier for special interest groups to buy influence with Congress than with all the American people. While groups with money may still be able to fool the people some of the time in voting against their own interests by running a campaign of misinformation, it is far more likely that people will on most issues be able to figure out what is in their own self-interest.

While no system of democratic self-government has ever been designed as fool proof, the people are the best protectors of their own self-interest. As Thomas Jefferson said, "I am not among those who fear the people."

24. The National Advisory Referendum will help move our democracy away from labels, e.g. "tax and spend liberals," to the issues.

By having issues on the national ballot, people will be able to focus on the issues and not just the labels pinned on politicians by their opponents. When issues are on the ballot, it forces interest groups to educate the public about their positions and brings policy questions to the forefront of public debate. Having people debate the merits of national issues would have a positive enlightening affect on the voters and would diminish the impact of the politics of name calling and labeling.

25. The National Advisory Referendum will give second term Presidents more power to enact proposals in their last 2 years than ever before.

If the President had the power to refer 1 to 3 issues to the public, he would have more leverage with the Congress during his second term. If the Congress refused to enact the President's program in the first two years of the second term, the President would be able to take up to 3 of those issues directly to the people during the mid-term elections. This would create an entirely new dynamic for the President and give him more power in working with the Congress for passage of his second term agenda.

In addition, the President would also have the power to set the issues agenda for the Presidential election at the end of his term. This would significantly increase the leveraging power of the President in his final two years in office of his second term. Currently, the President has little leverage in his last two years in office of his second term.

26. Giving people the right to vote on national issues can become the next great civil rights movement for political equality in participation.

Too often the discussion of civil rights involves issues only affecting a minority of the population. Giving people the right to vote on national issues is an expansion of political rights for all Americans which will promote political equality. When there is an issue on the ballot, each vote will have the same equal impact, whether you are rich or poor. With respect to the issue on the ballot, the collective vote of the individual will be more powerful than the behind-the-scenes influence of interest groups.

To give people the right to vote on national issues would be an expansion of everyone's civil rights. At a time when many people question the value of many targeted programs favoring one group over another, the push for a National Advisory Referendum can be seen as the beginning of a democratic civil rights movement where everyone gains. This movement would encompass other issues to improve political equality in the United States such as campaign finance reform.

27. The National Advisory Referendum is the wedge issue for separating those who favor the power elites in our country from those who favor the people themselves.

When you get down to the bottom line, there is only one issue involving a National Advisory Referendum: do you trust the people? If an elected official does not trust the people enough to participate in a non-binding advisory referendum, how can he then say he can represent their interests? Those who don't trust the people to participate in a non-binding vote favor an elitist form of government over a populist form of government.

Conservatives have been using liberal elitism as a wedge issue against the Democrats. During the 1996 presidential campaign, Bob Dole said the difference between himself and President Clinton was that "Bob Dole trusts the people and Bill Clinton trusts the government." Newt Gingrich said on January 20, 1995, "Our goal is to disperse power so the people can decide."

The National Advisory Referendum will give the Democrats an important wedge issue to determine whether their Republican opponents are democrats with the small "d" or demagogues with a big "D". Elitism can be either liberal or conservative. The National Advisory Referendum can be a wedge issue to determine whether people are liberal elites or conservative elites. The American center, however, is not defined by liberal or conservative elites but by common sense-minded people. Elitism has no place in a democracy where public policy must be derived from the consent of the governed.

Too often elitism has been confused with leadership. In a democracy leadership is about forging a public consensus for public policy. Leadership is educating people so that a new consensus emerges for public policy that enjoys public support. Leadership is not dragging the people kicking and screaming into a future they do not want, no matter how right the public policy may seem to its proponents. Zealous righteousness, from either the left or right, is dangerous to a democracy where majority consent must be the basis for public policy.

Thomas Jefferson spelled out in his first inaugural address how the balance between majority will and minority rights must be maintained in a democracy.

“All, too, will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority in all cases is to prevail, that will, to be rightful must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect, and to violate which would be oppression.”

It is time to recognize that enlightened social policy means that the people themselves are brought into the consensus of decision-making. It is time to understand that leadership is not the prudent exercise of social authority over people but rather the ability to persuade the people to willingly follow the chosen path and facilitate their participation in determining its direction. It is time to understand that any political party, which does not have trust and confidence in the people, does not have any legitimacy to claim it represents their interests.

With a National Advisory Referendum, the President would lead, the people would decide, and Congress would act on the will of the people.

28. The people will benefit greatly with increased participation with no significant increase in the cost of government.

From a cost/benefit perspective, the National Advisory Referendum wins hands down. Giving people the right to participate in a national referendum would cost very little since the voting would take place at already scheduled general elections. There would be insignificant costs in coordinating the ballot issues with the several states.

29. Other nations allow their citizens to vote on national issues.

The people of Switzerland vote on numerous national issues every election.

In 1995 the President of France was given the power to refer issues to the people in a national referendum.

The people of Ireland have held national referendums.

The people of Sweden have held national referendums.

In 1993 Russia held a non-binding advisory referendum on 3 issues, which was endorsed by President Clinton.

The United States is a leader in democratic self-government. We should continue that role by creating a National Advisory Referendum as a way of expanding popular participation for the 21st century.

Ironically, the only national referendum held in the United States was sponsored by the Postal Service to determine which Elvis stamp would be issued (over one million people voted!) Shouldn't the people have the right to vote on more meaningful issues like health care?

30. The time is right to give people an advisory vote on national issues as we enter a new age of technology and information.

As the information age continues to explode into the next century, the people will continue to have access to more and more information. C-span, the Internet, information data banks and web-sites for interest groups and campaigns are just a few of the many new ways people are getting information about public issues which were never envisioned even 20 years ago.

Information is the currency of democracy. The more people are informed, the more they are capable of participating in making decisions. While access to information has expanded exponentially, the way we make decisions at the federal level has remained the same as it was over 200 years ago.

As people gain access to more and more information, they will demand the right to participate more and more in the decision-making process of government. The process of expanding information and demanding more participation are part of the same democratic equation. You can't have the former without the latter. Data flow and decision-making are part of an unstoppable evolution for the 21st century.

Today over 100 million Americans have access to the Internet. We are fast approaching the day when we as a nation can come together on the Internet without waiting for Congress to embrace a more participatory democracy. If Congress fails to act to establish a formal National Advisory Referendum

process for every general election, the President will be able to go directly to the people for an advisory vote on the Internet to create a working model for the future of citizen participation and force Congress to pass the National Advisory Referendum proposal. While Congress fails to act, voting kiosks could be set up in public offices and publicly-funded libraries to provide Internet voting access for those without computers. In other words, if Congress fails to act, the technology can quickly be put in place to create an advisory voting process. Once people start voting on issues at the first general election, those members of the Congress and Senate who blocked the bill for a National Advisory Referendum will be vulnerable to defeat as blocking the doorway to expanded democratic decision-making.

Currently, TCI (recently merged with AT&T) and Microsoft are developing the technology to merge television, computers and the Internet to expand access to information and entertainment options. However, once this technology is rolled out, it can be turned into a decision-making mechanism for public policy formation. Through television and Internet technology, the President would be able to hold a National Town Meeting to discuss a national issue and ask people to cast an advisory vote to help gauge public opinion. The day when the President asks everyone to provide input through an Internet web-vote is just around the next bend of the century.

The technology for collecting web-votes is already in place. Commercial web-sites are already asking people to participate in making decisions. The Biography Channel allowed people to program the channel for a week by voting in several different categories from sports heroes to political leaders who they wanted to see on television. ESPN gave viewers the same opportunity to program a week of ESPN Classic sports shows and ESPN regularly asks viewers to vote on who was the greatest athlete for a particular category. *Time Magazine* asked readers to vote on the Internet for the 100 people who had the greatest impact (good or bad) in the 20th Century.

While more and more people participate in voting on commercial web-sites and feel empowered by their participation, it will be only a short period of time before people will demand the same participatory rights from their government.

Government leaders who fail to see the emerging technology as a model for greater public participation in policy formation will be left in the dustbins of

history. Our democratic future will be one of greater, not lesser, public participation in government decision-making.

While the technology of today will allow greater public participation in policy formation, holding a televised meeting with an instant Internet vote would be a weak and unacceptable substitute for a National Advisory Referendum where campaigns for and against are run prior to the actual vote at the time of elections. Instant voting, while useful for gauging public opinion, is not democracy in action. Democratic decision-making requires informed choices to be made after consideration of all the issues both pro and con. It requires time to think, time to reflect, time to listen, time to talk. Democracy is at its best as a deliberative process, not as a push-button technology.

Having a participatory web-site is nothing like holding a National Advisory Referendum where competing ideas are put to the test of public consideration and decision. However, the idea of voting on the web can be a model for forming a National Advisory Referendum every general election where we come together as a nation to participate in shaping public policy.

Our old democratic bridges from the past 200 years were built for smaller traffic volumes of elected officials and interest group representatives. Today we need a new democratic bridge, one that will handle all the people coming together as a nation to cross the bridge at the same time.

Thomas Jefferson first drew up the blueprint for an expanded democratic bridge in 1816 when he put forward the concept of a collective group of local meetings where the people voted on the issues. The National Advisory Referendum is the modern version of this simple idea and built upon the same solid foundation that government works best when it is derived from the consent of the governed and where every person feels himself a part.

We seek to build upon our democratic traditions to form a new mechanism in which we as a people can begin to collectively search out our common destiny. As we boldly begin a search for a new consensus, we are guided by our most fundamental principles and seek to give contemporary meaning to the words, "We the people."

This is the bridge to the 21st century where everyone can walk across. Thomas Jefferson waits to greet us on the other side.