
trappers about \$30 million a year "to purge the western range of wolves, bears, cougars, and coyotes that prey on domestic livestock." Federal dams on western rivers supply ranches with plentiful subsidized water, even in times of drought.

"A more massive subsidy to both private- and public-land ranchers," Hess says, is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's emergency feed program, which pays ranchers half the cost of hay and grain to keep their herds alive during the worst droughts. In recent years, he says, the program has become "an entitlement program for dry years and wet. . . . Nevada ranchers, the most vocal of sagebrush rebels and the most intent on kicking Uncle Sam out of the West, receive on average \$18,000 per year for every man and woman in the program." The program not only costs the taxpayers as much as \$500 million a year but also encourages overgrazing—which means less grass produced next year and greater need for drought relief. "But as long as government payments for emergency feed grow as fast as the grass disappears," Hess notes, "ranchers can stay in business, and even make a profit."

The West's real war, Hess contends, is with itself. "The West, paradoxically, is the most urbanized region of the nation. It has a sparse and tiny rural population; Nevada, for example, has 90 percent of its population in its three major urban centers." While the ranchers cling to their government privileges and subsidies, western environmentalists, sportsmen, and outdoor enthusiasts have other uses in mind for the region's vast expanses of public lands. The latest sagebrush rebellion, Hess says, may turn out to be subsidized ranching's "last hurrah."

A Role Model Fallacy?

"Following in Her Footsteps? Faculty Gender Composition and Women's Choices of College Majors" by Brandice J. Canes and Harvey S. Rosen, in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (Apr. 1995), 201 ILR Research Bldg., Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. 14853-3901.

It is conventional wisdom in academe these days that if there were more women teaching science, engineering, and mathematics, then more female undergraduates would decide to major in those subjects. This idea has had consequences. Colleges are trying to hire more female professors, for example, and the National Science Foundation has awarded grants for women scientists and engineers to serve as visiting professors. But the conventional wisdom may well be invalid, contend Rosen, an economist at Princeton University, and Canes, a graduate student at Stanford University.

Examining data from the 1970s and '80s from Princeton, the University of Michigan,

Don't Hound 'Deadbeat Dads'

Liberals and conservatives alike now seem to favor extracting child support from the "deadbeat dads" of children whose mothers are on welfare. Writing in the *American Spectator* (June 1995), George Gilder, author of *Wealth and Poverty* (1981), spies a pitfall.

Because of the promotion of early sexual activity through television, films, sex education, and the welfare state—all attacking the constraints of chastity and female modesty—the girls of the welfare culture are widely promiscuous from the age of 14, whether black or white. Many black youths, in particular, can be linked as DNA dads to some ghetto child or other. Thus the threat of garnishment makes official employment a treacherous arena for inner-city men. They can never know when their paychecks will be devastated by a huge lien, representing years of support payments for some unknown child (or even for a known child who has long received payments off the books). Like all welfare crackdowns focusing on desirable activity—honest work, savings, and tax payments—the DNA-Dad programs will destroy marriages and forcibly drive men out of the official economy into crime and other underground work.

A Republic of Meddlers?

In *Society* (May-June 1995), Charles Edgley, a professor of sociology at Oklahoma State University, and Dennis Brissett, who teaches behavioral science at the University of Minnesota Medical School at Duluth, decry the latest national pastime.

There was a time long ago when the phrase "it's none of your business" meant something. Not any more. A boorish and persistent army of meddlers, equipped with righteous indignation and a formidable array of theories and technologies, has made almost everyone's business its own. Meddling in the lives of others is now the republic's most visible obsession. Examples are everywhere—from national crusades against bad habits such as drinking, smoking, and gambling to the efforts of a group in Woodbury, Minnesota, to create a "fragrance-free" work environment where workers are insulated not only from the disgusting stench of tobacco smoke but also from the aroma of perfumes, shampoos, and aftershave lotion as well. . . . In Takoma Park, Maryland, a group of "concerned citizens" tried to ban outdoor grills and lawn mowers, spawning a countermovement that calls itself "pro-choice" on the question of charcoal and Toros. . . .

Obviously, not all this meddling is bad. In fact, the consequences of meddling, at least in terms of what the meddler wishes to accomplish, may be quite positive. But whether meddlesome interventions succeed or not (and there always seems a way to make them seem successful), a deeper concern is the attitude of meddling that has become so prevalent in our society. Increasingly, it seems, people are stampeded into believing, with very little reflection and much cocksure arrogance about the matter, that meddling and being meddled with are cultural virtues; indeed, that they are the hallmark of what

good people do for each other. The alternative to meddling is now more often seen as an apathetic, uncaring, isolated disregard for others symbolized by those tragic instances in which cries for help go unheard or unanswered. . . .

*An even more pernicious dimension is, however, at the nub of meddling. It is that meddling is done so impertinently. It is the meddler's impudent arrogance, effrontery, and audacious presumptive understanding of the meddlee that makes meddling so different from most other forms of human association. Meddlers neither approve nor indulge the meddlee's behavior. At the same time, they presume to understand—or at least claim to be in possession of an understanding of how to understand—not just the behavior but the self, relationships, and entire life of the meddlee. In short, it is the meddlers' wholesale, know-it-all arrogation of the meddlee that makes meddling the bane of modern civilization. In the process, differences between the meddler and meddlee become inequalities, establishing the moral, intellectual, and psychological superiority of the meddler. As Alida Brill [author of *Nobody's Business: Paradoxes of Privacy* (1990)] has observed, "privacy invasions are virtually always justified for a higher moral purpose or public good or for a nobler motivation than privacy protection." So it is little wonder that people take such pride in being meddlers. It just may be the last bastion of socially sanctioned snobbery in an egalitarian society.*

and Whittier College, Canes and Rosen found that female students did tend to cluster in departments with larger numbers of female professors. In an average year at Princeton, for ex-

ample, 19 percent of the English professors were female, as were 50 percent of the graduating English majors. But coincidence is not causality. Those female English majors may

have had other reasons for picking the field.

If same-sex role models are an important factor in such decisions, then an *increase* in female professors in a department should boost the number of women majoring in the subject. But Canes and Rosen found no evidence that this happened. At Princeton, an increase of 10 percentage points in the proportion of female faculty members in a department resulted in perhaps a half-point rise in the department's percentage of female undergraduates.

Of course, the absence of evidence does not prove that professorial role models are not important. But Canes and Rosen suggest that some skepticism is in order. It may be that in selecting a major (or career), undergraduates mainly take the measure of their own capabilities and situations.

Before Time Was Money

"'Time That Can Be Relied Upon.' The Evolution of Time Consciousness in the Mid-Hudson Valley, 1790-1860" by Martin Bruegel, in *Journal of Social History* (Spring 1995), Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213.

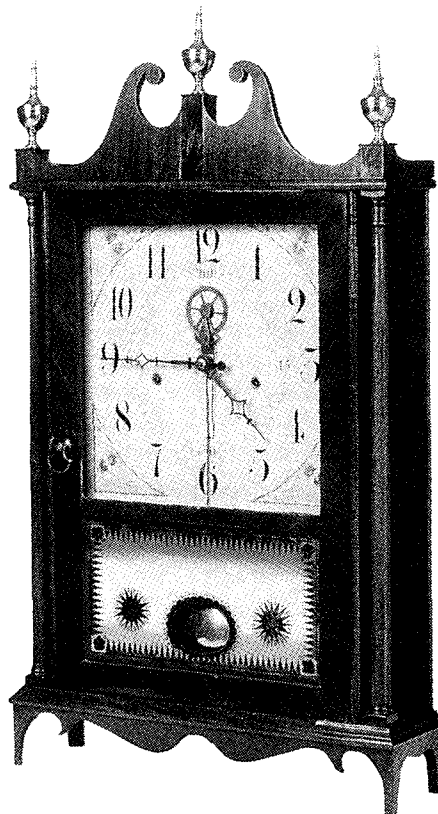
Harvard's David S. Landes, the author of *Revolution in Time* (1983), and other scholars have maintained that it was only when railroads penetrated the countryside that rural Americans in the 19th century became conscious of time as something precisely measured by clocks rather than by the sun and the seasons. Bruegel, a historian at Cornell University, contends that in New York's rural Hudson Valley, the change came before the railroads, with the introduction of clocks.

When the 19th century began, the agricultural economy of the mid-Hudson Valley required little in the way of timing, Bruegel says. "The vast majority of exchanges were confined to the neighborhood, where time was an abundant resource." Occasional trips to the landings on the Hudson River to deliver produce for the New York City market "called for some planning and arrangements, but the coordination of these journeys involved few

people and needed no timetables."

By 1810, the invention of interchangeable parts had ushered in an era of mass-produced clocks. Peddlers on horseback roamed the mid-Hudson Valley, selling the new timepieces. "The Yankee pedlars, with their wooden clocks, are renowned," wrote the English author Harriet Martineau in 1837. These men, in her view, were "great benefactors to society: for, be their clocks what they may, they make the country people as well off as the inhabitants of towns, in the matter of knowing time."

"People owned timepieces before time owned people," Bruegel writes. Initially, the clocks and watches were prized as "objects of refinement," not as tools for what we now call time management, he notes. Athens merchant John Smith's gold watch, valued at \$25 when he died in 1810, reflected his social distinction. A gold watch, observed the author of an 1833



This 1816 pillar-and-scroll timepiece, made in Connecticut, was one of the first mass-produced clocks.