

persuading descendants of Field Jefferson, the president's uncle, to take part. According to *U.S. News & World Report* senior writer Lewis Lord, Barger had expected that the DNA tests might link Samuel and Peter Carr, sons of Thomas Jefferson's sister, to Hemings. Grandchildren of Thomas Jefferson had said the Carr brothers probably fathered Hemings's children. But Foster and his colleagues found no DNA match between the Carr and Hemings lines.

Barger now suspects, according to *U.S. News*, that the father of Hemings's children was Randolph Jefferson, who lived 20 miles from Monticello, or his sons, who were in their teens or twenties when the children were born. He cites a Monticello slave's memoir that said Randolph "used to come among black people, play the fiddle, and dance half the night." He also quotes a letter in which Thomas Jefferson invited his brother to Monticello nine months before Easton's birth. However, Lucia Cinder Stanton, a Monticello historian who has been examin-

ing Jefferson documents for two decades, tells *U.S. News* that Randolph can be definitely placed at Monticello only three times between 1790 and 1815. Thomas Jefferson, in contrast, always happened to be at Monticello when Hemings conceived a child.

Yet another possibility is outlined by Gary Davis, of Evanston (Illinois) Hospital, in a letter in the same issue of *Nature*: that Thomas Jefferson's father or grandfather, or one of his paternal uncles, fathered a male slave who had one or more children with Sally Hemings.

Foster and his colleagues call Davis's theory "interesting." However, they conclude: "When we embarked on this study, we knew that the results could not be conclusive, but we hoped to obtain some objective data that would tilt the weight of evidence in one direction or another. We think we have provided such data and that the modest, probabilistic interpretations we have made are tenable at present."

## PRESS & MEDIA

### *Four-Star TV News*

"Local TV News: What Works, What Flops, and Why" by Tom Rosentiel, Carl Gottlieb, and Lee Ann Brady, in *Columbia Journalism Review* (Jan.-Feb. 1999), 2950 Broadway, Columbia Univ., New York, N.Y. 10027.

Everyone knows that "tabloid" local TV news shows can reap high ratings, but a study of 61 stations in 20 cities finds that "quality" newscasts can sell, too.

Five of the eight local stations that the study judged tops in journalistic quality had rising ratings (as did four of the worst seven stations), report Rosentiel and Gottlieb, the director and deputy director, respectively, of the Project for Excellence in Journalism, which conducted the study, and Brady, senior project director at Princeton Survey Research Associates, which helped.

"The stations least likely to be rising in ratings," say the authors, "were those in the middle, which were often hybrids—part tabloid and part serious. This suggests that audiences . . . are segmenting," with one group panting for "revelation, scandal, and celebrity," and another wanting "a more sober, information-based approach."

More than 8,500 stories from some 600 broadcasts were scrutinized in the study. The stations were then ranked according to "quality," and the results compared with the stations' Nielsen ratings over a three-year period.

Just what makes good newscasts? They "should accurately reflect their whole community, cover a wide variety of topics, cover what is significant, and balance their stories with multiple points of view, a variety of knowledgeable sources, and a high degree of community relevance," the authors say.

Big-city stations do a worse job journalistically than those in medium-sized markets, according to the study. "Stations such as WABC in New York were doing overblown 'exposés' into bizarre body piercing," the authors observe, while two stations in Evansville, Indiana (pop.: 126,272), were doing a good job of covering their community—and doing well in the ratings, too. Evansville, in fact,

boasted the highest-quality station in the study—WEHT, an ABC affiliate—as well as the third best, WEVV, a CBS affiliate.

Most local TV newscasts “are far from

excellent,” providing coverage that is “superficial and reactive,” the authors note. But “there is a wider range of quality out there than many critics might think.”

## RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

### *Henry VIII's 'Middle Way'*

“The Making of Religious Policy, 1533–1546: Henry VIII and the Search for the Middle Way” by G. W. Bernard, in *The Historical Journal* (June 1998), Cambridge Univ. Press, Journals Dept., 40 W. 20th St., New York, N.Y. 10011–4211.

Who was the architect of King Henry VIII's religious policy after he broke with Rome in 1533? Thomas Cromwell, say many historians of the Tudor era. Henry was only “the playing of factions,” dominated during that decade by Cromwell, his principal adviser.

Bernard, a historian at the University of Southampton, England, paints a different picture, one of a determined king who knew his own theological mind very well.

“A break with Rome was being threatened and ideas that could justify it were being

aired,” Bernard says, “as early as 1527,” when the king began his effort to divorce his first wife, Catherine of Aragon (who had not produced a son), and marry Anne Boleyn. This was well before Cromwell's rise to prominence. That the actual break with Rome did not take place until after Cromwell's rise was not due to kingly indecision. Henry had to lay the groundwork in his own realm first, Bernard points out.

After the break did occur, Henry “was deeply involved in efforts to define true religion,” Bernard notes.

“Many prefaces, petitions, and letters reveal his participation in debates.” The king, he argues, skillfully and consistently sought “a middle way” between the papists and religious radicals such as the Sacramentarians (who regarded the sacraments as merely symbolic) and the Anabaptists (who opposed infant baptism). “He was anti-papal, against the monasteries, against superstitious and idolatrous abuses, but he was also opposed to novelties, to justification by faith alone, and upheld something like traditional teaching on the mass.”



King Henry VIII does not need much help from his advisers to tram-  
ple Pope Clement VII, in this painting from the period.