



*"I don't want stock options. I want you to pay your tab."*

would win. I never did—I couldn't reach him under the bed—and we lost. I knew it all the time." She stayed in bed the next day.

This is pitiful, but one really should be sorry for everyone else, all the rest of us, who can't think of anything to care about on anything like this scale, and might not have the nerve to hang in there, against such odds, even if we did. Thanks, Mets. Let's go, Yankees. —ROGER ANGELL

## DEPT. OF HELPING HANDS

*Will the rap world be the swing vote that elects President Trump?*



YOU can say one thing for Donald Trump, the prospective Presidential aspirant: unlike a great many other political candidates, the man does not pander. In a chat last week about the possibility that he might run on the Reform Party ticket next year, Trump had a special message for any readers of this magazine who might consider him *déclassé*.

"They may think of me as *nouveau riche*," he said, "but I probably did a lot better in college than most of your readers. The old rich who fancy themselves intellectuals? Most of them have never even made any money themselves. They may look down their noses at me—but I think they kiss my ass."

Some candidates have gender gaps. Others have generation gaps. But Trump believes that he has encountered

a new kind of gap: a snob gap. He may jet around the country in his own Boeing 727, his guest passengers safely snapped in by seat belts with gold-plated buckles while he catches a nap in his king-sized bed, but he says that market surveys show that the Americans who like him best and identify with him most closely are the working poor. Roger Stone, the director of Trump's Presidential Exploratory Committee, says his research reveals that the real-estate billionaire's strongest supporters are blacks and Hispanics, as well as white voters who earn less than twenty-five thousand dollars a year. "It seems to be my strength," Trump agreed. "They like a certain something."

"It's a life-style thing," one of Trump's associates suggests. "They think, If I hit the lottery—that's the way I would live. The boats, the planes, the beautiful women. That doesn't appeal to the Ph.D.s, or old money, but he's from Queens—he's got regular-guy appeal."

David Bositis, a senior political analyst with the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a think tank specializing in African-American issues, believes that part of Trump's popularity is that "he has no racial baggage." Unlike many candidates who pay lip service to racial inclusiveness, Trump conspicuously socializes with black and Hispanic celebrities, and in the party pages of glossy magazines his is often the only white face in a sea of rappers or sports stars. He has cultivated friendships with athletes such as Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, and Sammy Sosa, and hip-hop moguls such as Sean (Puffy) Combs and Russell Simmons, a foun-

der of Def Jam Recordings. "I like Russell and Puffy," Trump said, "because they fought hard to get where they are. I did and they did. There's a certain affinity, and it goes both ways."

According to Simmons, who says that he "loves" Trump, "Donald is the epitome of what people in the trailers and the projects—the economically challenged—want. He's the American dream." Trump's name pops up often in rap and hip-hop lyrics, both as a noun, meaning money, and as an adjective, meaning luxuriously cool. (There's "Trump Change," by the West Coast rapper E-40, and a group called Da Cocoa Brovaz has a song called "Black Trump," which contains the rhyme "You rollin' like Trump, you get your meat lumped.")

But even Simmons has his doubts about Trump as President. "I'm a good friend of his," he said over the telephone from his office. "But he voted for Giuliani! What did Giuliani ever do for anyone black? Ours isn't a political friendship." After a pause (he said he had to deal with a million-dollar check that had just arrived on his desk), Simmons explained his thinking in the kind of language that Trump would surely understand: "I'd rather loan him money for something personal than for his politics. He's a great businessman, but I'm supporting Bill Bradley this week." —JANE MAYER

## LIFE OF THE MIND DEPT.

*The care and feeding of humanists.*



THEODORIC THE BARBARIAN had no objection to keeping a few humanists in the back of his palace. They ate little, made do in cramped quarters, and could be entertaining. Eventually, though, the novelty wore off. Bored with his court philosopher, Boethius, Theodoric called him away from his scribbling (he was finishing "The Consolation of Philosophy") and had his head crushed like a grape. Barbarians did not grant tenure.

Things have got better for those who live by the pen, yet intellectuals continue to regard their patrons with a mixture of gratitude and anxiety. Hence the wide

eyes on the day, last month, when the first set of fifteen fellows took up residence in the New York Public Library's new Center for Scholars and Writers. Carved out of the northeastern corner of the main library, this utopian habitat for humanists offers oak panelling, red serpentine marble, and soundproof glass offices, with hardwood blinds, organized around a lofty-ceilinged common room. The intellectual historian Peter Gay, who is the center's founding director, can stroll to the coffee machine and merely glance around to insure that his scholars are all hard at work.

For the next nine months, this year's fellows (I am one of them) will sit thus, pecking at their keyboards and awaiting deliveries of the library's holdings, which arrive daily on a rolling cart. With luck, they will produce something

by next spring, when they are scheduled to give public lectures—answers, in effect, to the unspoken command "Show us an idea worth the fifty thousand dollars we gave you to come up with one and the nineteen-million-dollar nest we created for you to do it in."

Unaccustomed to such largesse—to fresh orchids, Herman Miller Aeron chairs, and free doughnuts—the fellows milled about at first, as if they expected to get thrown out. But acclimatization proved rapid. Allen Kurzweil, a novelist, began poring over two forbidding manuals of heraldry and initiated talks to persuade manuscript librarians to unroll for him a five-hundred-year-old, sixty-foot-long genealogical scroll of the Frankish dynasty, an exercise that would clear the restored Rose Gallery, in Astor Hall. The architecture critic

Ada Louise Huxtable mastered the Internet. Tony Holden, biographer of Prince Charles and Tchaikovsky, asked for Leigh Hunt's autobiography and went out for a cigarette on the Fifth Avenue steps. A delivery man arrived with a futon and several large throw pillows, which were rapidly spirited into one fellow's office.

Later that morning, Francine Prose, the novelist, and Andrew Delbanco, the literary scholar and critic, could be seen through the slats of their blinds, reading peacefully. The word "truth" could be heard near the copy machine, uttered without irony. By midday, several fellows had taken off their shoes and were moving about the common area in stockinged feet.

At lunch, which is served daily in the common room, several fellows traded tales of being on the barricades in '68. Paul Berman, the author of "A Tale of Two Utopias: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968," was describing his student days, clashing with the "fascists" at Columbia, when Gay spoke up and announced that he had been one of those "fascists."

Gay, who as a child witnessed Kristallnacht before fleeing Germany, was quick to point out that you could easily get a hankering for law and order when student hooligans turned your office into a rebel camp, ransacked a decade's worth of notes, and made off with both of your carefully annotated volumes of Lefebvre's "La Révolution Française." Berman asked if Gay's office had been in Fayerweather Hall.

"Indeed," Gay replied.

"Then I probably slept in it," he confessed, "and maybe pawed your shelves." Did he, by chance, have two half-morocco volumes of Lefebvre? All eyes turned to Berman. "I'll check my bookshelves," he said.

The fellows retired to their cells, where they made a studious *tableau vivant* for the library's president, Paul LeClerc, that evening, when he gave a group of trustees a tour of the center. A woman of means, bejewelled and ebullient, praised the space, then peered between the blinds of one cubicle, which contained a solitary scholar staring out the window. "Look at the way they have these wonderful little . . . *refuges*," she breathed. A pause. "Like endangered species." —D. GRAHAM BURNETT

## HOW'S THAT AGAIN? DEPT.

*Bush . . . has confused Slovenia and Slovakia, called Kosovars "Kosovarians" and called East Timorese "East Timorians."*  
—Salon, September 28, 1999.

### THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

My fellow-Americanians:

Over the past two years, I had the special privilege of travelling this great land of ours. I shook hands with Kansanians and South Dakeutians, picked potatoes with Idahovians, and ate barbecued po'boys with Alabamianians.

I met the young and the old, the rich and the poor, Jewstaceans and Gentillia. I met Hawaiiticians, Alaskalopians, and Puerto Ricordians.

And, everywhere I went, the Americanian people sent the same message, loud and clear: the era of big governmentiantudinism is over.

My friends, as we begin a new millennium let us pledge to defend freedom everywhere, from the Montezumian halls to the Tripolistic shores.

Let us send the message of freedom to all the peoples of the world:

not just the Kosovarian and the East Timorian, not just the Slovakian and/or the Slovenian, but the Perugian, the Brazilliantine, the Russianomatic, and the Chineezish.



Let us work together in Washingtopolis, both Democresians and Republicateers. Let us recognize the issues that unite us, and stop using the labels that divide us, like "conservaticious" and "librarian."

It is time to recognize that we are all Americanians, whether we be Caucastic, Africanoodian, Asiadontic, or Hispanicky. Together, as one, we can make this country a better place—not just for us, not just for our children, but for geraniums to come.

God bless each and every one of you. And God bless Americanistan.

—ANDY BOROWITZ