

Fair Comment



Ellis Island attracted newcomers drunk on hope.

camp sites in Europe. Except there, the emotion is a despairing shriek, whereas at Ellis it is the beelike hum of millions of lives awakening to a new beginning. For Ellis Island is linked to the Holocaust. At least 2 million Jews and their descendants who came through here would, with their descendants, have died in the death camps if the immigration gates had not been opened. Millions more would have been saved if the gates had not been shut. Hundreds of thousands of Poles, Ukrainians, Armenians and Chinese would have died in the totalitarian slaughters unleashed upon their homelands if they had not found refuge through the immense and terrifying chambers of Ellis Island, as awesome as a taste of the Last Judgment.

Ellis Island should be paired with Auschwitz as a symbol of the 20th century, not in shame, but in honor, not in likeness, but in contrast. Ellis Island was the answer to Auschwitz. Just as the gates of Auschwitz opened onto a hell made manifest, a city of death whose prime industry was the annihilation of millions of human beings, Ellis Island was a city of life whose job was to process millions of people into democratic and responsible free citizens.

In the current intense debate on immigration, Ellis and its millions of murmuring ghosts have much to tell us.

They tell us that immigration to this nation is not a curse, but the greatest of blessings. That immigrants bring as soon as they arrive a vast reservoir of low-income labor and demand for basic necessities that fuels the economic engines of prosperity for decades to come. Had the gates of Ellis not been shut by the 1921 Johnson Act and subsequent legislation in 1924, the Great Depression would have lasted only a few months, not more than a decade. That generation of Americans paid bitterly — and deservedly — for locking the doors of hope and condemning multiple millions to death in the fires of World War II.

But Ellis also eloquently testifies to the wisdom of President Clinton's bold new plan to tame illegal immi-

gration. For Ellis teaches us that blind surrender to the tides of immigration would be disastrous, too. Had AIDS been a recognized disease in the great Age of Emigration, there would have been no whining about inalienable rights. No one with AIDS would have been allowed in the country. No hate-crazed Islamic fundamentalists would have been allowed in, or to stay, to freely preach or encourage assassination or terror. They would have been unceremoniously shipped back to their ports of departure posthaste. The security and health checks would have ensured that.

The background checks in those days sinned on the side of cruel harshness, just as today they wildly err on the side of suicidal, anything-goes permissiveness. But their principle was sound. The idea of a dual- or triple-language United States was regarded as worse than unwise, or even disloyal. It was seen as absurd, most of all by the immigrants themselves. My wife's grandparents came through the gates of Ellis, but though they spoke Russian and Ukrainian as their native languages, they and their children worked hard to eradicate those languages from the next generation. They wanted their children and grandchildren to grow up as Americans. And so they did. My late father-in-law and his three brothers all

went out and fought for America in Western Europe, Italy, the Burma Theater and New Guinea in World War II, as did the children of many millions more immigrants.

Unrestricted immigration, whether tumbling from the air into LAX or JFK or flooding across the Rio Grande, poses as great a threat to the future of American civilization as the barbarian floods of the fourth century of the Common Era proved fatal to the Roman Empire. As the great military historian Arthur Ferrill shows in his *Fall of the Roman Empire*, following 18th century chronicler Edward Gibbon: Within 80 years — two biblical generations — of the military borders being abandoned, Rome collapsed. Then its proud capital was sacked by barbarians who had been allowed to tramp across the borders and settle en masse and undigested. Unassimilated and untamed, they undermined Roman civilization from within.

The millions of ghosts that throng Ellis Island would not want such a fate to befall the America they loved so much.

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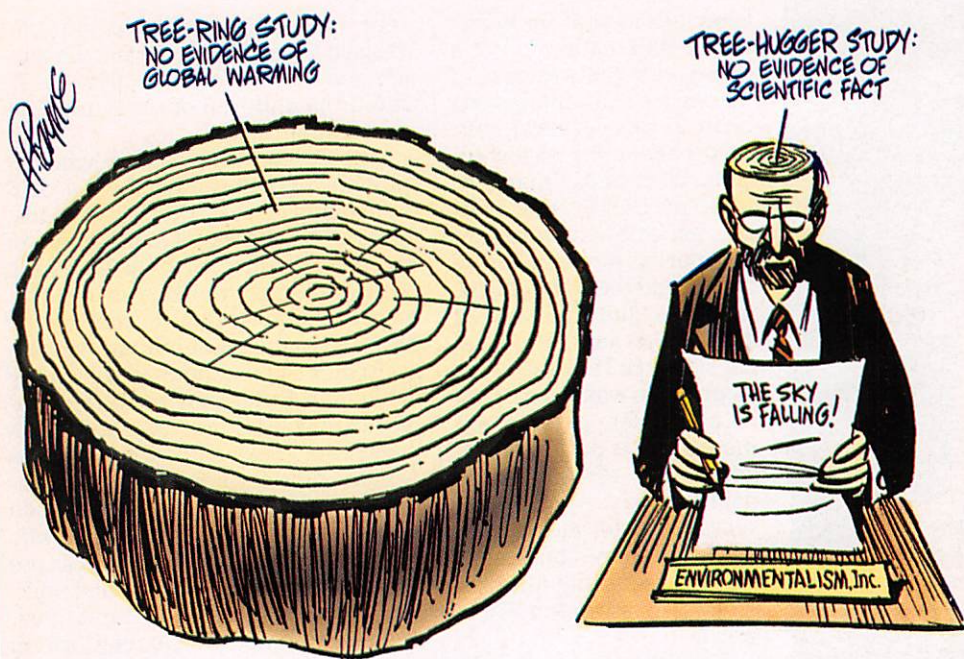
Gays Given Wrong Spin on Genetics

By Reed Irvine
and Joe Goulden

What science story is most likely to make three out of four evening network newscasts, *Nightline* and the front pages of the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *USA Today*? (a) A finding that the ozone layer may not protect us from sun rays that cause lethal skin cancer; (b) a discovery that there has been no increase in global temperatures since the beginning of the industrial age; or (c) a finding that there may be a genetic predisposition to homosexuality.

The correct answer is (c).

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On July 13, the *New York Times* carried an Associated Press story reporting that researchers had discovered that annual rings in ancient alerce trees, one more than 3,600 years old, had shown "that although the climate near the West Coast of South America has warmed and cooled many times over thousands of years, there has been no increase in temperatures during the industrial age." This story was based on an article in *Science* magazine that concluded "global warming may not be a generalized problem" and that "more has to be learned about atmospheric circulation of temperatures before science can draw any final conclusion about the effect of industry on global climate."

This suggests it is premature to spend billions of dollars to avert the climatic disaster that Vice President Al Gore and others predict. The *Times* ran this important story on Page C5.

On July 23, the *Washington Post* reported on Page A2 that the July issue of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* had disclosed that malignant melanoma may be caused by "previously unsuspected kinds of solar radiation — including visible light — that are not absorbed by the ozone layer and that pass right through sunscreen lotions." Melanoma is the skin cancer that kills nearly 7,000 Americans each year. Predictions that thinning of the ozone layer would in-

crease the incidence of melanoma have been a persuasive argument for banning chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs, the refrigerants that some scientists think pose a serious threat to the ozone layer. The discovery that ultraviolet-A rays, which are not blocked by ozone, cause melanoma in fish led researchers to conclude that depletion of the ozone layer may have little effect on the incidence of melanoma.

Since there are serious doubts on

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the part of many scientists that CFCs deplete ozone in the stratosphere, and since the replacement of CFCs is proving to be difficult and enormously costly, the discovery that ozone may not protect us from melanoma suggests we

may be able to safely take our time in studying the ozone question further. This, too, is important information. A Nexis search indicated that the only papers that carried it besides the *Washington Post* are in Dallas, Houston and Orlando, Fla.

On July 15, all the TV network evening news programs except CBS's reported that *Science* magazine had disclosed the results of research indicating the discovery of a hereditary link to homosexuality. The next morning this story was on the front pages of the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *USA Today*. It was the lead story in the B section of the *Wall Street Journal*. The *Washington Times* ran a big story on Page A5.

What made this story so much more newsworthy than the other two science stories that had been virtually ignored? *USA Today* said, "The findings are sure to rock the debate over the origin of homosexuality and the place of homosexuals in the military and society." The *Los Angeles Times* quoted a University of California, Los Angeles, psychiatrist as saying the discovery could have a major impact on laws prohibiting homosexual conduct, leading courts to overturn those laws, because it is unconstitutional to discriminate on the basis of "immutable traits, such as skin color."

The discovery, if verified by additional research, does not mean that, like gender and race, the heritability of homosexuality is 100 percent. An earlier study of identical twins, which was biased toward higher heritability, found it to be 50 percent at most. *Time* magazine ran the only story which pointed out that many former homosexuals have gone straight. Such changes prove that homosexuality is not immutable and that there is no reason for homosexuals to believe they are doomed by their genes to adhere to a lifestyle that will literally kill a high percentage of them.

If a genetic predisposition to alcoholism, drug addiction or criminality were discovered, few would say that all efforts to discourage such conduct should be abandoned as hopeless. Science and the media should send the