
BOADICIA ET ALDecember 14, 1998Albert Pyle

On a winter's night in Berlin in 1989, the Iron Curtain, which, having been made of cheap but thick East German concrete and heavy gauge-but-internally-corrupt Belarusian steel, was neither iron nor what you or I know as curtain material, fell, crushed by the weight of public scorn and the pressure of pent-up consumer demand. It was a Major Moment in Modern History, and it took place under the lights of the world's television networks and under the thoughtful, occasionally even intelligent gaze of the world's anchorpersons. That moment in Berlin was, as those anchorpersons told us many, many, many times, the end of a historic and epic confrontation between superpowers and superideologies. The fall of the Berlin wall and the resultant rowdy Berlin street party is burned into the minds of the televiewing public, an image never to be forgotten until the next never-to-be-forgotten event which was either a super bowl or Desert Storm. I'm afraid I've forgotten which.

Concurrent with the fall of the Iron Curtain, a less dramatic, more private, but in the eternal scheme of things, infinitely more important event took place half a world away. It was an event that brought to a close hostilities with origins far more ancient than the conflict between the Marxist and free market worlds. Or between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. Or Michigan and Ohio State. Or between the Presbyterians and the Presbyterians. It was the last fatal shot fired in open hostilities and was therefore the unofficial end of the shooting phase of the War Between the Sexes.

This essentially unreported event occurred in Lapel, Indiana, a flyspeck on the great dark map of what those sleek anchorpersons in Berlin would call, in

their private, off-the-air moments, flyover country. We, of course, call it home. Mrs. Stanford P. VanHoose, a large, well muscled woman in her early seventies, stood in front of the mirror in her front hall prior to setting out for an evening of cultural uplift at the Whitcombe Circle, a ladies group organized by Mrs. VanHoose's mother Florence Godby, a woman known to her intimates as Mrs. Godby. When the end came, Virginia VanHoose was screwing on to her head what was perhaps the last hat sold by Lapel Fashions, itself the last local independent dress shop in east central Indiana, before giving up the ghost in the early nineteen sixties, the victim of an expanded J.C. Penney on the bypass. The hat, for the curious, was a stoat-brown, scaled-down toque, the kind George the V liked to see on Queen Mary. It was normally skewered through Mrs. Van Hoose's dense, steely chignon by a hatpin long enough to pass through an accountant's neck and two good sized olives.

Mrs. Van Hoose was a great cultural warrior, the president of the Lapel Women's Art League, the immediate Past President of the Whitcombe County Purdue Alumnae, a Chi Omega, President emerita of Hoosier Daughters of Doughboys, and had held every meaningful and prestigious Eastern Star and Daughters of the Nile office at every attainable level in three counties. She was tough, muscular, mean, and at the top of her form. And, although she was not aware of the fact, she was the last battle-ax in the western world. She was about to go down like Sonny Liston in his second match with Cassius Clay.

Mrs. VanHoose's assailant was, as is almost always the case in American domestic violent dramatics, known to the victim since he was, as it also usually is in American domestic violent dramatics, her spouse, State Farm's representative in Whitcomb County Stanford P. Van Hoose. Stan to his friend. Stanford to Mrs. VanHoose. Actually STANFORD.

And he did her in without lifting a finger. Without leaving his club chair. "STANFORD", she said when she had the hat where it would strike maximum terror on the streets of Lapel and maximissimum respect in the social room of the First Lapel Methodist where

the Whitcombe Circle held its strategy sessions. "Time to leave,"

Who knows what got into Stan Van Hoose? Was it the sight of the Berlin Wall caving in and all those giddy Berliners dancing in the platz beamed through the East Central Indiana Cable Company's coaxial cable? Or was it the extra belt of Jim Beam he had poured earlier in the evening while he knew his wife to be in the shower and out of hearing? Or was it simply the stupefying prospect of another night parked behind the Methodist Church, listening to uplifting Hoosier poetry and Hoosier songs as they drifted through the ghastly stained windows? As there was no reporter present to cover the event – no historian closer than Ball State University in Muncie to spot the significance of the moment – we may never know what possessed Stanford P. VanHoose, whose courage had not really been called on since Omaha Beach, to stand up on his hind legs – I speak metaphorically – he never left the recliner – to say to Virginia Van Hoose, "Drive yourself, Virginia. I'm staying here."

As war-loving Mars might hurl a thunderbolt at the titanic enemies of Olympus to send them howling for pity across the Peloponessus, so did the ordinarily colorless State Farm rep strike devastation to his wife in the front hall of the ten room Queen Anne house that had taken the matron a lifetime of careful shopping as far away as Fort Wayne to fill with dark, ominous furniture. As fire will race across a bowl of oil in the torch of Minerva, so did adrenaline, the king of hormones, course with divine speed through the body of Virginia VanHoose. And as the mightiest fortress wall is fabled Byzantium could be invisibly corrupted by years of bad sewage (thanks to primitive cost-cutting and possible kickbacks to famously corrupt Constantinopolitan civil servants) seeping under the foundations of the Eastern Roman capital, weakening it so effectively that it will yield to an ill-timed wind, not to mention a smart shove by an ambitious Musselman invader, so may the inner workings of even the mightiest cultural warrior queen be corrupted by improper diet that she would fall too. In Mrs. VanHoose's case it was a fondness for lavish breakfasts that did her in. Seventy some years of bacon and eggs

and buttered muffins and Maxwell House with real cream had layered the Hoosier matron's blood vessels with enough plaque to point up the mortar in the Indiana statehouse. The sudden cyclonic rage she felt upon hearing her husband's flip refusal to motor her to her eagerly anticipated evening of cultural bullying triggered one of those unpleasant vascular accidents we all know scientifically as apoplexy. A great chunk of either high-density or low-density (when it happens to you, you don't really care which it is) cholesterol and/or lipoproteins, reacting to a tsunami-like and catastrophic increase in Virginia Van Hoose's blood pressure, broke off along an old fault line, coursed through her no-longer supple blood vessels, lodged in her brain somewhere due east of the hippocampus, and within seconds she was laid flat. Her funeral was surprisingly small. Stan Van Hoose spent the last years of his life microwaving Stouffer's macaroni and cheese and not going out.

There were no headlines when this last queenly warrior fell in the war between the sexes. There were no randy crowds in Times Square. No thanksgiving services at the First Lapel Methodist. No babies were named for Stan Van Hoose, and he wasn't considered by the Democrats as an Eisenhower-type candidate capable of knocking off the seemingly invincible George Bush. No treaty was signed, and there was no interminable panel discussion on the MacNeil Lehrer News Hour considering every possible way the probable effect on the nation of the end to hostilities in the war between the sexes could go. There would be no cenotaph on Constitution avenue. There is no historic railroad car where terms of surrender were signed on a siding in Indianapolis.

Why is this so? How did the last shot fired in a war of such immeasurable longevity fail to catch the ear of a gunloving country? What does the death by spousal impudence of a clubwoman in middle America have to do with the clash of civilizations? And why is there a certain uneasy shifting in the seats here tonight when the subject of the war between the sexes is brought into the open? Why does the sharp tang of fearful sweat cut through the gentle aroma of tweed, sherry, and smoke in this beloved room at the mention

of the great historic hostility or frank mention of women as enemy? Is this not a safe place? Are we not alone? If we cannot analyze the brilliant dispatch of the great enemy here in the Sanctum Sanctorum Cincinnatiensis, gentlemen, what's the point of locking the doors?

It is not possible to discuss the end of the war between the sexes without at least some small understanding of its history. Needless to say, the restrictions of time laid upon me by the unwritten rules of this society, rules I take very seriously indeed, will not allow me to give the sort of deep analysis of the thousands of years of hostilities that would satisfy the many professional and amateur historians in our midst. There is, alas, just time enough for a few historical thoughts, examples and anecdotes to honor this society's unwritten rule that there be included in each paper a dozy middle, a quiet time during which those among us, and we know who we are, who need to slip into a wee trance, may do so.

When we think of Greek drama with its universalities and many lessons, we are conditioned to think of the tragedians Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Euripides and their great mythic dramas of war, murder and betrayal. But it was the brilliant comedian Aristophanes who first warned the western world of the coming war between the sexes in his most excellent play Women In Council. In this extremely important work, a play which I suspect no more than one or two of us has ever seen performed, the women of Athens, unhappy with the governance of their menfolk, subvert the famous Athenian democratic system by rising early, donning their husband's clothes, pasting on fake beards, and taking over the morning's legislative business. I don't really think that I need to remind this society that in that fabulous golden age, no one other than the free men of Athens had the vote. The governmental machinery that the ladies install is eerily Marxist although the play antedates George Bernard Shaw and John Maynard Keynes by two thousand years. Under the rules voted in by the Women In Council, private property is abolished. All dining is in public halls and at public expense. And the older and less attractive women of Athens have first crack at the

services of the younger and handsomer men. Aristophanes has as much fun with this as Georges Feydeau or Mel Brooks. The play is hilarious, and, because there was no chance of such upheaval ever happening, or so he thought, much of the fun is at the expense of the men, whose early morning habits of bowel and bladder are most cruelly japed. Blepyrus, husband of the women's ringleader Praxagora, when he awakens to find his clothes missing must put on his wife's little mantle and Persian slippers to cover himself on the way to the outhouse. This would have to be one of the first if not the first drag bits in comic history.

The lesson of Women In Council is that, however many semi-legitimate beefs women may have against men, to put power into their hands is to invite primal chaos to rein. I am obliged to point out that the most likely reason that most of you may not have read, much less seen performed this important and very amusing work has less to do with the academic belief that Greek comedy isn't funny, and everything to do with the years in which American women had an iron grip on public and private schoolrooms and on their curricula. Schoolma'ams found this play offensive, so they made it disappear. And in this post-bellum era with its strict rules of political correctness, it is still unlikely that you will ever see Women In Council on the stage anywhere outside of a secret society.

Closer to our times is the lesson of Boadicea. All of us here of course remember Boadicea, queen of the Britons. But how do we remember her? We remember her as she was taught to us in classrooms controlled by — as I have just pointed out — women. Elementary school teachers whose Boadicean lesson was carefully restricted to the tragedy associated with her disastrous rebellion against the Roman occupation. She is a noble heroine. A tragic symbol. As they say now, yada yada. When in fact the lesson learned from the Boadicean war by the men of the time was very different. Now, I am sure I don't need to tell anyone in this room that Boadicea's husband was Prasutagus, king of the Iceni, or that the famously trusting Prasutagus, acting on the advice of his attorney Athelstan Redeready, known familiarly as "Al," signed a will leaving his private wealth to his two daughters,

Prasutagilla and Betty, and to the Roman emperor Nero. Yes, that Nero. Of all people. Athelstan "Al" Redeready — Redeready being roughly translated as "advice when you need it" — having advised him that he could count on the Romans to protect the daughters and, even more important, the bearer bonds and Celtic gold mines. In 60 AD, Prasutagus died, and the Romans, who were every bit as trustworthy as present day Arkansans, promptly annexed Prasutagus' little Kingdom of Norfolk, humiliated his family, and plundered all the chief tribesmen.

In the absence of a male heir, Queen Boadicea, hitherto known chiefly for her hair-trigger temper, tart tongue, and a tendency to indulge in cannibalism when things didn't go her way, grabbed the controls of the family business and went about Greater East Anglia organizing a revolt. "Al" Redeready, in the confusion, managed, as a good lawyer would, to hang on as adviser to the queen. It was the first time in living memory that a woman was commander in chief in Britain, and for a time it was a success. With the Roman governor out west in Wales, Boadicea whipped up a rebellion in the neighboring East Anglian kingdoms, leveled the cities of Verulam and Colchester, led a successful raid on Londonium, massacred 70,000 Romans and annihilated the 9th Roman Legion which had been sent from Lincoln to quash the rebellion.

While everything was going great for the rebels, "Al" Redeready was at Boadicea's elbow, always there with a suggestion, a tactic, a strategy. And, it must be said, he was largely responsible for convincing the local chiefs that having a woman at the head of the troops was not just a good idea, it was a great idea. But things started to go downhill after the big win over the Ninth Legion. Roman reinforcements started pouring in, and the rebels started taking losses. As the British position weakened, the Romans started sending in envoys with proposals for surrender. Boadicea, not having been trained in the manly arts of negotiation and compromise, had one response for the envoys who arrived at her camp and marched up to her tent under a white flag. She et them. First she et Lucius Quintillus, a family man whose enlistment would have been up in another month when he was sent in. She

then met Marcus Publius, the governor's favorite bocce opponent. When he brought a final proposal from the Governor, she et Vercingetorix Dubois, an up and coming Gaul. And when he suggested that eating ambassadors was getting them exactly no place and that they were about to be wiped out if they didn't come to some terms of agreement, Boadicea et Al.

What was the real lesson of Boadicea? It was not that Romans are perfidious. Or that colonial government is a bad thing. The real lesson of Boadicea, the important lesson, the same lesson taught by Aristophanes, was that men put the reins of government in the hands of women at their peril. And that lesson was understood by English men. Seeing the possibility that their strict but sensible policy of primogeniture would in all likelihood lead one day to more reigning queens, British men set to work inventing and refining that fabulously safe redoubt of men, parliament and, concurrently devolving the power of the royals. It was a sensible and totally understandable reaction. It was a wise reaction, leading as it did to centuries of sound government. But it also set the teeth of Western World's women on edge, and contributed mightily to long-term resentment and centuries of female insurgency, all part of the long, long war.

The male ascendancy held until the industrial revolution when foolish, foolish men, dazzled by the labor saving and wealth creating possibilities in machinery, became sufficiently forgetful of the lessons of the past for women to seize control of civilization through the twin levers of Home and Society. Installed by their foolishly trusting and ever richer menfolk in houses of greater and greater luxury and refinement, handed over the power of the nursery, granted the final say in all matters of real importance - Who would and would not be received socially - How leisure time was to be spent - What are the most desirable seats in the theatre - women found themselves in civilization's driver's seat before men had an inkling of their mistake. Inherently shrewder than men, as proven in countless laboratory and real world trials, women held on to their gains and consolidated them.

So it was that we here tonight, men of a certain age, found ourselves born into a world controlled utterly and completely by what I may call, because we are alone here, the fairer sex. We were born into a world at war and that is how we spent our formative years.

It scarcely seems possible, given the unquestioned female domination of the western world from 1837, the year of the Victorian ascension, to the largely ignored death of Virginia Van Hoose in Indiana in 1989, I say it is astonishing that a generation of men has come to adulthood ignorant of what was once thought to be an endless reign of terror, the years of open hostility and warfare, and the long subjugation of the male sex to female caprice. But I will wager that a mention of "The War Between the Sexes" in a gathering of men under the age of forty will get you the reaction "Dude? What war?"

Ironic, isn't it? So many of us here tonight are veterans of that war, some of us shell shocked, others still unready to recall the carnage of the past lest we begin to gibber, but all of us knew what we fought for. Some of us even consider the days of battle the last time we were really alive. Yet we have sired and are followed by a cohort that never knew fear. That doesn't really have any idea that there even was a war.

So different are the relations between men and women today from those of the war years that certain concepts don't compute for lads in their teens and twenties. The cartoon image of a middle aged man attempting to sneak into his own house, shoes in hand, in the middle of the night, after a too-long night of poker, so rich in significance, so poignant, is meaningless to anyone below the age of forty. The rich symbolism of Maggie aiming a vase at Jiggs, or threatening to cut the clotheslines, sending him to a bloody death is lost. For the younger generation of men today, James Thurber's house with a woman's head might as well be the sphinx.

But enough of morbid gloom. Let us wallow for a few moments in our victory. When the history of the war between the sexes is published, as will eventually

be done, it will be universally agreed that when it at last dawned on Western man that a war of attrition was getting them no place — women controlling the birth rate, and all, the master stroke of the manly victors was the strategic decision to go for decapitation — to lop off the heads of the opposing army, known politely as grandes dames and impolitely as battle axes. Or, more correctly, battle axen.

The battle axen, modern day daughters of Boadicea, were those women like the late Virginia Van Hoose, natural leaders of a certain age who had corseted themselves in famously impenetrable armor of rubber and whalebone and set out to command superbly trained troops organized not in the phalanxes and cohorts of Roman memory but into new fierce lightning-quick auxiliaries, societies, sororities, and clubs.

How odd they would look now, but what terror they struck in their heyday, the battle axen. Who even knew what age they were, these women? At some time in their late thirties they slipped over those fabulously impenetrable corsets dusky uniforms of wool and crepe de chine and wrapped about their necks and shoulders the skins of fox and weasels. Furs with the heads left on. Vicious little jaws hinged and sprung to clamp onto their own tails. Or the nose of an impudent male. Three rows of mink for a colonel. Four rows for a general. Truly formidable they were with hair locked into chignons of unimaginable complexity. Calculating eyes behind the chill of rimless spectacles.

From the lecterns of women's clubs and circles, from thousands and thousands of principals' offices and millions of teachers' desks, with a deathgrip on the nation's Sunday schools, they controlled society. And through society they controlled a nation. Who could argue with them? They appeared to their enemy to be unconquerable. And yet who sees them today?

Behind the dazzlingly successful decapitation of the battle axen was a most unlikely alliance, the strange partnership of the male generals in command and a hitherto scorned and ostracized male subdivision, fashion designers. The generals were keen men when it came time to building a bridge or calculating throw

weight, but as engineers they knew absolutely nothing about style or silhouette and to a man, they saw their opposite numbers on the field of battle as immutable and impenetrable in their baffling layers of outer and undergarments. It was the fashion designers who realized that as long as women were able to wear the fearsome and massive armor of corsets and the terrifying skins of foxes and weasels, doughboys and G.I.s could and would never take them on in battle. The troops would be forever intimidated and impotent. It was fashion designers who understood that women could be lured from the safety of their carapaces, and it was fashion designers who understood that the way to coax women out of their armor was to make that armor unfashionable.

Approaching the generals with what is now recognized by military historians as a fabulously ingenious and revolutionary plan to convince women that the look of the future was willowy and boyish, the designers were received coolly by the brass. It was not until the designer Rene Coty produced side by side drawings of the Norway's Queen Maud in a mink-topped coat and the film star Clara Bow in a sexy little jersey number that the cautious generals saw the wisdom of fashion strategy and gave it their approval. With their ties to the worlds of advertising and public opinion, the fashion designers were able to saturate the media with a saucy new look of unfettered, unarmored womanhood. The great mass of ladies fell for it and fell hard. Within months, the once honorable phrase "stylishly stout" became laughably impossible and disappeared from usage in the mainstream journals such as the Saturday Evening Post, itself eventually to disappear. As fashionable young women around the world were seduced by the comfort and freedom of movement provided by a new generation of lightweight underwear, their mothers looked down at the bosoms and hips that had once lent such great authority and dignity and found them unacceptable. The fear of fat became endemic; Metrecal replaced meat. Energies formerly devoted to the management and manipulation of men and society were shifted to the quest for weight loss. The many layers of clothing became fewer and fewer, thinner and thinner. Girdle factories in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago closed their doors and corset

shops all over the country turned off the lights. Foundation garments were reduced to a few boneless brassieres, and those, in one of the brutal ironies that accompany societal upheavals and war, were blithely burned by the very women they had been designed to defend. The great statement women who had once held the reins of power now held to their frames gauzy skirts and gabardine pants and realized too late that their authority had disappeared with their dignity. Women were shadows of their former selves, and suddenly men were no longer afraid.

I should mention, at this point, that there were quislings among the women, the Duchess of Windsor being a prime example. With her "you can never be too rich or too thin" remark, she sent thousands of her hefty sisters into early retirement, possibly to their graves. How lucky England was not to have been led in World War II by Wallis Warfield through her spineless paramour.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the successful effort to eliminate the battle axen as leaders of the female forces. The force of a single WCTU crusader or madam president has never been equaled. In the days of the female ascendancy, a fifty year old woman armed with a cause, a hat, and an umbrella could and did march into any slum, bar, political gathering, or combination of those three unholy places, whack that umbrella on the counter, fiddle with the control end of her hatpin, and the men would fly like ninepins. Or tenpins. Whatever.

No man or boy no matter how strapping or brave could face down a Sunday School superintendent standing tall in her laced up high heels. What were all the Eleanor Roosevelt jokes about? The printed record will tell you that they had to do with resentment on the part of the ruling classes or Mrs. Roosevelt's failure to stay within a woman's role. That is not so. The jokes were the nervous and feeble attempts of men to conquer their universal fear that she or someone like her would come into their office and whack the umbrella on the counter and the knowledge that if she did so, they would be sure to collapse utterly and give her whatever she wanted. Immediately.

But the fashion strategy worked like a charm, and the grim head of the power structure was eventually cut off. Confusion spread among the troops.

Effective as the fashion strategy was, that measure alone would not suffice to crush the enemy. Winning the war required a one-two combination punch. The removal of the female generals required follow up action to ensure that there would be no emergency of a new generation of leaders and a resumption of white-hot hostilities. We are now talking about the mid-century and the phenomenon of the baby boom. It is important to remember that the baby boom was fifty percent female. And that women normally outlive men. It was perfectly possible that new Boadiceas could crop up once the dust settled.

The strategy that evolved to solidify the male victory came not from the think tanks of the west but from the martial arts studios of the east, and that strategy reflected a sophistication not normally associated with the gender that invented boxing and the National Hockey League.

A few, great, far-seeing masculine theorists, men of sophistication, took a look at the ever more important orient, saw the beautiful economy of jujitsu and adapted it to their needs. Jujitsu as we all know from watching the beautiful Mrs. Emma Peel throw hoodlums over the fence week after week on the thrilling television series The Avengers, I say Jujitsu works by using the momentum of one's attacker basically to throw himself over the fence. One steps back and lets the charging opponent go where he is headed, throwing one's own twist of the wrist in at just the right moment so that the villain rotates once or twice in mid air and then falls flat to the ground. It's a pugilistic concession.

To bring the armies of Eve to their knees, men adopted strategic concession. It was brilliant and it worked and it pretty much boiled down to giving in to the rising demands of the opposite sex, even when we knew that what they didn't know was that what they wanted in the worst way was, in fact, the very worst way to go.

Those among you who are not using this restful hour to enjoy a quiet snooze away from what might well be an unreconstructed warrior in the kitchen at home, will have anticipated that we will now be discussing Women's Liberation. Which was, as we know, not.

Even as the battle axen of the mid century were disappearing, their daughters and granddaughters, dazzled by the siren songs of the sixties, saw the times as being right to throw off what they believed to be their chains and take their rightful place in the Modern World.

What were the chains they were throwing off? The traditional role of women. What was the traditional role of women? The traditional role of women was not necessarily what was truly the traditional role of women because, of course there was no one traditional role. Women had been filling uncounted roles at all levels of technical difficulty. But, to hear the battle cries of the shocktroops of women's liberation, women whose sense of themselves had been developed by television rather than intelligence and observation, there was one traditional role, housewife. The straw woman held up was the model we now call June Cleaver, a mythical creation in high heels and an apron who never left her kitchen and always deferred to her husband. Who among us here tonight ever saw that woman in real life? Yet time and again we have been accused of forcing the women in our lives into those dangerously high heels. There is no justice.

What was to go in place of this false traditional role of woman? Well, Aristophanes knew. The traditional role of man. Rebellious young womanhood, being - well - young, thought that the jobs to which the men of the world marched off each day represented true power and, consequently true fulfillment. Men, who, after centuries of experience knew the world of work to be rather less than it seemed, quickly and correctly saw the golden opportunity to employ the jujitsu stratagem which had been long at the ready. Women, arming themselves with weapons of law and scorn, rushed the battlements of the professions, of business, of the military, and men, rather than meeting them with boiling oil, opened the gates and let them in. Within

a historical eye-blink, Western Woman had totally abandoned the machinery of the nursery, school, auxiliary, and social register and was completely enmeshed in the mechanics of the male world. It wasn't a total cakewalk. There were deadly firefights where the deadliest firefights had always been, which is to say in small colleges and university humanities departments and in churches, but for the most part, the jujitsu strategy of giving women what they wanted effected quick, total, and absolutely unwitting disarmament of what was now revealed truly to be the weaker sex.

For now they were playing by men's rules. Trading their love beads and tee-shirts for the first primitive ladies' business suits, squeezing formerly bare feet into sober pumps, liberated women walked willingly into the world of work, never understanding that they had been set up, that they were trading real power for titles on the door, and that their hold over the lives of men was lost for the foreseeable future.

Not in our lifetimes and perhaps never again would women hold the power of the dinner hour, or the children's bedtime, or the imposition of domestic values. Turning their children over to cheerless paid professionals, women voluntarily walked into the office and took on most of the work, never understanding that the game was and had been for ages to get out of doing anything that might interfere with talking about sports.

What was the great war really about? It seems clear now that the dust has cleared and reality has settled in, that what women truly wanted was not to go out every day and do business, but to go out to someplace nice once in a while. They wanted to get dressed up in the evening and have a little fun. Preferably beginning with a meal that someone else had fixed. Where did they want to go? To the opera. To the ball. To the movies. They wanted to dance. And they wanted men to go with them. When it is the great cosmic joke that when men truly wanted was not to get out.

It is interesting. Those of you who have followed tonight's long trail through the semiclassical allusions will be thinking, "Oh, yes. Aristophanes and that play. Men want control." Well, actually no. Oh, men wanted control, all right, but not for control's sake, the way we have been represented. Men wanted control so they don't have to do anything. That's pretty much it. They didn't want control of the nursery, even though control of the nursery would have meant shaping societal attitudes forever and ever. They didn't want that any more than they wanted control of polite society, even though control of polite society meant ultimate control of every caste and interest group, and an iron grip on weddings, mergers of far greater importance in the scheme of things than any corporate union. They basically wanted to stay home and watch the fights on TV.

I pointed out at the beginning of this paper that the cessation of hostilities went unremarked in the news. If you thought that I blame the relative isolation of Lapel, Indiana for this spectacular oversight, then you have been misled. It is in fact the undeclared terms of the unwritten peace treaty unsigned by either side but accepted by all that are to blame. Everyone is too embarrassed by the settlement to let it see the light of day. And the treaty binds us not to discuss our huge mistake.

Women are embarrassed that they have been suckered into a world of office politics, endless meetings, and that new horror of the age, corporate retreats. They are humiliated to find themselves finally in the halls of government only to learn that the process of law-making is seamier than the soap operas they left behind and that the dialogue is deadlier. They find, to their dismay, that there is no way to slip away from the office bore when the office bore is the boss. They see the price the Queen has paid for trusting to paid nannies. They know now that they have entrusted the classrooms they themselves once ran to idiots and incompetents. And, as their own mothers slip away, they find that there is no home life left.

Men are embarrassed that it was in the end so easy to win the war, that they can no longer hide their

goofing off at work from women's eyes, that women are no longer mystified by athletics, that far too many families have learned to live without them, and that they now, when they should be at home watching heavyweight wrestling, they find themselves in the dangerous aisles of the Kroger looking for anything that will microwave.

The victory, however Pyrrhic, is won. That is the way things are. That is the way things will be. The war between the sexes is over. Until the day somewhere, perhaps in the far reaches of provincial China, or the steamy Brazilian jungle, a woman, exasperated by a man, will pick up a hatpin and she will see the possibilities.

BUDGET

December 21, 1998

- 1 - A Wee Dram of Uisge Beatha . . William R. Burleigh
 2 - Druids in the Desert Anthony G. Covatta
 3 - Brevity Martin B. Macht
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1

A Wee Dram of Uisge Beatha

As the Caledonian MacBrayne ferry slipped through the early morning fog, Port Ellen was hardly visible from the mists rising from the warm waters of the Sound of Jura. Yet we had unmistakably arrived at our destination, the isle of Islay, southernmost of the Hebrides.