

said: "Never get into an argument with a man who buys ink by the barrel."

BUDGET

January 25, 1999

- 1 - What Seems to be the Problem Here? George Gibson Carey IV
- 2 - Nothing is All about Anything . . Stanley B. Troup
- 3 - From the Cradle to the Literary Club Robert W. Hilton, Jr.

1

What Seems to be the Problem Here?

As originally conceived, there was to be a unifying theme in this evening's budget: we were to write about someone we admired. This seemed a very worthwhile and pleasant prospect: there are many people I admire, and it felt like fertile ground. In subsequent weeks we somehow strayed from our original direction, and the doors were opened to a broader range of subject matter. But for me it was too late to change. My train had already left the station, so to speak, and it could not be called back. I had invested too much emotional energy in the original subject.

But the more I looked into the broad subject of admiration, the deeper it became. I began by inventorying the people in my life whom I find admirable, and this was a very happy exercise. But it raised a further question: why do I admire them? What

are the qualities that I admire in others? Are there discernible patterns or lessons to be learned from the list of those whom I admire? To answer these questions, I had to undertake a fairly lengthy analytical process.

I found it prudent to eliminate my immediate family from this exercise. This was no an easy decision, but I set out to be as objective as possible in this exercise, and I felt it would be the wiser course (and perhaps more interesting to my audience) to look beyond my home, in the name of impartiality.

My next decision was further to narrow my field to people whom I know well. There would be no place on my list for great men and women like Churchill, Mozart, Jane Austen or Sherlock Holmes — all of whom have long been important to me. I wanted instead to confine my attention to people for whom my admiration has grown from personal interactions.

So I spent a good month to considering this more narrowly defined universe of people I admire. My next finding came as a genuine insight: the list of people I admire looks just like the list of my most valued friends. They are all there. Apparently, at some conscious or unconscious level it is important to me to choose friends in whom I find admirable qualities. I had never thought of friendship this way before. I have long pondered the mystery of friendship: what kindles the magical chemistry between people that draws them into mutual regard? Is finding something in each other to admire a prime requisite? Can one entertain true feelings of friendship for someone without finding some basis for admiration in that person? I doubt it. It does not follow, however, that one's friends must be admirable in all respects. Even on the short life of my most valued friends, I find few if any who are without fault or flaw, which I suspect is true of us all.

I next turned to consideration of the specific qualities I find admirable in my friends. The list reads a little like the Boy Scout manual, and few worthy attributes fail to make my list. But three or four seem of particular importance.

I admire people who have, by hard work, achieved true mastery of a chosen field. Whether it be a profession, an art, or an avocation, I respect people who have made a sustained – often a life-long – effort to <achieve> excellence.

I admire humility. The most remarkable people I know typically hide their light under a bushel. You would never know, based on casual acquaintance, that they are masters of anything in particular. They never, ever, thrust their mastery upon you, or require that you defer to it.

I admire people who are loyal and staunch under fire. All friendships are tested sooner or later. Mistakes and oversights happen. . .circumstances change. . .and new demands and priorities can encroach upon friendship. I admire people who understand that friendship is a commitment, who can forgive, and who are in friendship for the long haul.

Principles are of primary importance to me. And not just claiming them but actually living them. A boss whom I greatly admired once admonished me, "A principle isn't a principle until it costs you something." What a powerful thought! Principles require sacrifice: they prescribe not just what one must do, but equally, what he must not do.

I particularly admire those who give to others. I have among my friends a special few who have made it a lifelong habit to help others – to share what they have, whether wealth, talent, or time – with those who are in need. This disposition to help and to give is, as best I can tell, not driven by reason: it is a matter of heart. . .a generosity of spirit. It is a much, much more powerful force than writing generous checks, when asked for them. It is an intuitive sensitivity to the needs of fellow men that seems to be instinctive in some and utterly lacking in others. And when – as often seems to happen – exercising this quality requires sacrifice, my admiration knows no bounds.

I will now take the distinct risk of telling you about an individual whom I particularly admire, and who

exemplifies these qualities for me. The hazards in doing this are several. Some of you may know the man, and not share my views. Others may point out his imperfections – but I have already skillfully noted that I do not require perfection in those I admire. Still others may wonder why I don't choose them as my real, living example. Ah well, nothing ventured, nothing gained. . .

Steve Gibbs is one of the most admirable people I know. For those of you who may not know his name, Steve has been, for twenty years and more, the driving force behind Cincinnati's Free Store/Food Bank.

Most of you are doubtless aware of the FreeStore, on Liberty Street in Over-the-Rhine. Each winter the local papers and TV stations show us pictures of the long lines of hungry people who stand in the cold at the FreeStore for bags of groceries for their families. But while these pictures make good holiday copy, the hungry people are there year around.

Fewer people are aware of the FreeStore's companion organization, the FoodBank, located on Tennessee Avenue, which supplies food and essential supplies to other agencies that feed people. . .from the Salvation Army and to the humblest soup kitchens.

In 1998 the FreeStore provided food to 31,000 people in Over-the-Rhine. The FoodBank distributed over 7,500,000 pounds of food (much of it destined for the scrapheap in our wasteful society) to 550 agencies in twenty tri-state counties. It was a typical year. This – and much more besides – is what Steve Gibbs has personally made happen since he arrived in Cincinnati in the early 1970's. To be sure, he's had lots of help: Steve attracts people like a magnet, which is one of his more valuable talents.

Back in his student days, Steve was going a stint of volunteer social work in Chicago when he encountered a remarkable book – Shantytown by Harlan Hubbard. Steve was smitten by what he calls the "houseboat fantasy." He came to Cincinnati or, more precisely, to the Ohio River – to take up a riverain existence. Steve sought out Hubbard and his wife Anna, then living

at Payne Hollow along the Kentucky shore, and set out to emulate their lifestyle on a leaky houseboat of his own. But it wasn't fun or easy or comfortable. It was cold in the winter and very wet most of the time. Steve eventually retreated to Cincinnati where he worked at one time or another for the Red Cross, Talbert House, the Cincinnati Free Clinic, and the Health Department's programs for mental health and alcohol addiction: a solid grounding for his future career.

Along the way, Steve became a trustee of the fledgling FreeStore, the brainchild of a city dump employee named Frank Gersten. Gersten saw daily the hungry and homeless coming to the dump to scavenge for discarded food, furniture, and building supplies. He dreamed of a way to salvage these foods and redirect them to the poor. Steve (who reminisces about seeing hungry people digging the dump for discarded Archway cookies) saw an extraordinary need and opportunity to help. He soon became the executive director of the FreeStore, and he set to work.

The FreeStore's explosive growth under Steve's leadership is a tribute to several special strengths: First, Steve is a tireless and enthusiastic worker, with boundless energy and good humor. He is fun to be with.

Second, he understands perhaps better than any other individual the labyrinthine city, county, state, and federal infrastructures of the poor, the bewildering array of social service agencies, and the way they do and don't fit together. . .so that he is uniquely skillful at spotting gaps and opportunities within the systems.

Third, and perhaps most important, he is a true visionary and entrepreneur with a sixth sense for new opportunities to help the hungry and homeless. He has a special way to think his way through the most complex social problems by asking, "What seems to be the problem here?" and digging until he has found the cause rather than just the symptom. And, when he has found the answer, he devises ingenious new programs that

frequently challenge traditional thinking, but which usually solve the problem.

A case in point: the symptom was the indignity caused by usual sky-high rate of evictions in Over-the-Rhine. These almost always involved single mothers with dependent children who, when they fell behind in their rent, would inevitably be put out on the sidewalk by the bailiff along with their few possessions, which were then stolen. "What seems to be the problem here?" Steve asked himself. He concluded that it was the unseen man in these women's lives who had a way of showing up on the same day as the aid check, and taking off with part (or all) of the money. For people with no resources, there can be no catching up: once these women fell behind, eviction was a certainty. So Steve worked with the city, the county, and the landlords to devise a program under which the mother's aid check comes to the FreeStore, which pays the rent and passes the rest of the money to the mother. The landlords, who Steve asked to pay the costs of the program, loved it and asked their tenants to sign up. Overnight, evictions plummeted. Everybody won.

While other cities had homeless drunks sleeping in doorways, Steve reapplied this thinking to a program which would house and feed Cincinnati's derelict (typically alcoholic or mentally ill) nomads — not in great comfort, to be sure but at least safely off the street — by having the FreeStore appointed the recipient of their welfare checks, and providing safe shelter and a hot daily meal at an Over-the-Rhine lunch counter.

Another example: for reasons best known to Washington, people cannot buy soap with food stamps. . . even though they get very dirty. "What seems to be the problem here?" Steve asked. He discovered that soap ingredients are readily available, and surpluses can sometimes even be had free from an unnamed local soap company. And the FoodBank offices were located in an old brewery on McMillan Street with its cavernous basement. With a little help from retired P & G engineers, the FreeStore/FoodBank was soon in the soap business, packing liquid detergent out of the beer

tanks and making it available not just to Cincinnati's poor but through FoodBanks in other cities as well.

More recently, Steve has been instrumental in a strange-sounding new program. Today's poor typically live far from where the jobs are. When their car breaks down (a frequent occurrence), they lose their employment. This program helps them get their car going again. Steve reasons that the arithmetic is simple: if a family can be kept off welfare by paying for a brake job, it's a genuine bargain.

A critical need for many inner city schoolteachers was personal care products for students who were so dirty, so smeller, or lousy that they simply could not be accommodated in the classroom. Steve saw this need early, and pioneered a program making personal care supplies available to teachers. Today, that program has grown, through the vision of an inspired volunteer, into a new institution housed at the FoodBank called Crayons to Computers which supplies a complete range of contributed school and personal care supplies to teachers throughout the city.

Nothing brings out Steve's entrepreneurial skills like a whiff of food to be found somewhere, somehow. Some years ago, a large supply of bulk cereal, navy beans, and pinto beans became available. But these commodities needed to be packaged in manageable sizes for distribution to the hungry. Steve wheedled a local marshmallow company out of an antique packaging machine that had long since given up the ghost. With the help of the ubiquitous retired P & G engineers, he got the machine running - but it was a primitive affair that needed to have the product fed, by hand, into individual buckets on a chain driven conveyor. Here was another opportunity: Steve hired a squadron of people with muscular dystrophy who, sitting in their wheelchairs, fed the product into the machine one shaky scoop at a time. It was a wonderful example of creative opportunism, feeding the hungry by employing the unemployable.

When Steve was offered bulk quantities of tomato paste, packed in enormous plastic bladders, he was momentarily stumped to know what to do with it. But he

found a solution: he scrounged several hundred pails in which he mixed the tomato paste with pasta and offered it to the soup kitchens as "soup starter." Put it in your kettle, add whatever else you've got, and soup happens! It was an instant hit.

I only saw Steve overreach himself once, when he was offered – and took – a dozen fifty-five gallon drums of chocolate frosting. He never did figure out what to do with that.

Today, Steve is at the peak of his powers. His agency provides a variety of food, housing and services which almost certainly reach more people in need, directly and indirectly, than any other social service organization in the tri-state. And what has he gotten for his efforts? Previous little in terms of the world's goods. For years his measly compensation was an embarrassment to right-thinking people. But there are other rewards Steve values. He is the recognized leader and spokesman for the constituency he serves. And he has the satisfaction that comes with helping people in the most basic human need, and making his corner of the world a better place to live in. How many of us can say that about ourselves when we look in the mirror?

Each year our civic leaders – most of them well-paid Fourth Street bankers and businessmen – celebrate one another by anointing selected members of their in-group as "Great Living Cincinnatians." I do not know the criteria for this honor, but I can't help wondering if these captains of finance and industry have ever looked beyond their inner circle at someone like Steve Gibbs, and compared their own contributions to this community with those of this remarkable man, who, with his persistent challenge, "What seems to be the problem here?" has truly made a difference.

As much as I admire Steve Gibbs, he does not stand alone in my regard. I have other stories I could tell, about the professor friend at CCM who had dedicated a major portion of his life to helping young musicians get started, or a farmer friend who has worked tirelessly over many years to resettle two large and contentious Cambodian families in Cincinnati. . .or a

lawyer friend who has taken a lifelong interest in the problems that beset a dysfunctional inner city African American family. These people, and others like them, are important to me not just as friends but as models or standards to follow in my own life. And I think that challenge is what makes admiring others so very worthwhile.

G.G. Carey

2

Nothing is All About Anything

THESIS: (1) Life is complicated.

(2) Most of us have a need to present an image of ourselves as someone who has answered most of the questions that life has asked of us, in order to do so, we are inclined to oversimplify the answers we develop. Language is the instrument of this deception and serves as a tool for this subversion.

An illustration: To explain ourselves to others normally requires the use of language. If our command of language is not equal to the task of explaining a complicated situation, or if we fail to recognize just how complex a problem is, we are inclined to oversimplify.

Sadly, few problems in life lend themselves readily to simple analysis. Let us turn for example to what has truly become our national religion, as much as Islam is in Iran or Catholicism was in 15th Century Spain. I speak, of course, of our present worship of sports in America.

The Emperor Justinian more than 15 centuries ago commanded his imperial architects Anthemius of Tralles and Isidorus of Miletus to design a church that would

define Constantinople forever as the center of the Roman Empire. History, however, intervened to demonstrate that people and ideas, not buildings, make such judgments. When the Turks conquered Constantinople 900 years later, the Hagia Sophia became a mosque, and yet another 500 years later the secular government of Turkey transformed that Byzantine masterpiece into a secular museum.

How little times have changed! Rather more recently, our county's emperor-equivalent Beddinghaus, with the support of his mini-curia and faced with the dark threats of powerful church elders, decreed that not one but two magnificent places of worship be constructed, not overlooking the Bosphorus or even the Tiber, but on the very banks of the Ohio. These bold decisions in defense of the faith, we are told, successfully protected the community from the economic incursions of the Visigoths of Newport and the Tartars about to sweep down from Butler County. But I digress.

Until just a few decades ago, news of sports was disseminated to the public by the printed word or by radio. The reporters were professional journalists or writers who, for the most part, had become serious students of the sport they were reporting. The sport of boxing, for example, has never been reported with greater insight or with greater literary style than by the late A.J. Liebling. His descriptions of boxing matches, and more importantly the persona, were replete with references to writings by the early British boxiana expert, Pierce Egan. The reader was occasionally treated to a disquisition on the manly art by a 12th Century Arab potentate whose writings on boxing Liebling must have unearthed from the ruins of the great library at Alexandria. Nor did Liebling neglect contemporary sources. One of his more colorful confidants was the celebrated corner-cut man, Whitney Bimstein. Bimstein derived many of his similes from the animal kingdom, occasionally describing a fighter as "a manimal" or a "noctopus."

Today, however, television treats us to commentary by former practitioners of the sport. Although exceptions can be found, most of these experts appear to have ended their formal schooling before elementary

school was successfully navigated or, if they completed that phase of their formal education, they have taken too many ten counts and their intellectual elevators no longer go to the top floor.

In the case of football, the commentators recruited from the active practice of the sport frequently appear to have overstayed their welcome in the weight room or to have bumped helmets in celebration a few times too many. The impression is enhanced by the occasional appearance on camera of these worthies, doubtless guaranteed by their contracts.

The compelling vision I retain is that of a thick-chested humanoid with a size 20 collar and a size 5 hat.

Baseball, that most civilized of popular sports in America, happily is largely free of these specimens. The print media are graced by the writings of Roger Kahn, Roger Angell, the late Jim Murray and literate cross-overs from politics and science such as George Will and Stephen Jay Gould. To be sure, baseball broadcasts on television include commentary --- the color commentators often derived, it seems, from the ranks of retired catchers who had shed the tools of ignorance when their wheels finally are down and permanently locked, or the rotator cuff has assumed the appearance of a dolly after the church picnic.

Lest you find this complaint too fussy, let me hasten to assure you that the author cherishes the true artist and original such as the late Dizzy Dean. His magnificent, "He slud into third and they threwed him out!" could not be clearer.

Fortunately, the majority of today's baseball commentators know the game well and even occasionally speak in simple declarative sentences. Regrettably, however, the plague of oversimplification has infected them as well. Few broadcasters or sports commentators or particularly the athletes themselves fail to employ the ubiquitous generalization --- whether it is batting, fielding, base stealing or pass defense, or sacking the quarterback, jumpshooting or rebounding,

without noting --- **THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!** This oversimplification often is as much a consequence of poverty of language as it is of content. In fact, no single thing is what **ANYTHING** is all about.

And while we're at it, how about "positive"? Why not favorable, useful, beneficial, encouraging, constructive, affirmative, promising, optimistic or any one of another twenty adjectives that might brighten our understanding? Have you heard an athlete --- or, for that matter --- a politician --- fail to use "positive" repeatedly as the word for all seasons?

In the real world most events have multiple causes. A, alone, usually does not directly lead to B. Rather, it is more likely that A plus C minus the product of D and E result in B. That can be difficult to explain. How tempting it is, particularly if our command of language is limited, to sacrifice all subtlety, neuter all nuance, and slip between the horns of ignorance and illiteracy by explaining in today's popular reductio ad absurdum, **"THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT."**

Finally, the process of acquisition of language by children remains in dispute by linguistic scholars. The last thing that should prove helpful in resolving some of the scholarly differences is the opinion of amateurs. So here goes:

Infants and children are taught to associate certain sounds with specific objects or actions. As vocabulary grows, they begin to invent and employ simile. For our purposes this evening I would define simile as a figure of speech that compares two unlike things. The use of simile requires only knowledge of a single object or topic beyond the reference object or topic. Example: "The man is as fat as a hippopotamus." The listener (or reader) is spared any requirement of thought process except the recognition of the second object or thought. A simile usually is preceded by "like" or "as." I call attention to that as it may help us understand the pattern of language development that seemed to emerge several decades ago from the La Braya tar pits and the nearby San Fernando valley high schools.

In this system anything that **RESEMBLES** a thought is introduced by the word "like." Believed originally to be limited in use by prepubescent females, this affliction has spread more rapidly than AIDS and now even infects the language of graduate students.

A figure of speech that is in little danger of overuse by the average college student, college or certainly professional athlete or sports announcer is the metaphor.

A metaphor is a word or phrase denoting one kind of object or action used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them. The creation of or understanding of a metaphor, as contrasted with the simile, requires the author or listener or reader to have knowledge or understanding of the metaphor. Using a metaphor is a bit more taxing intellectually than is the use of a simile --- but, oh, how much more rewarding.

One could go on and on --- but, hey, **THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!**

Stanley Troup

From the Cradle to the Literary Club

In my pragmatic and rudimentary theology, each one of us is born into this world with the notion that he is the center of the universe. That bizarre, not to say immature, notion is nurtured by the fact that initially no one and no thing exists except insofar as it responds to our needs. The first person of whose existence each of us is aware is one's mother, who tries to meet our every need. At about age two, each of us gradually becomes aware of the existence of a father, who not only meets a few of our needs but also

commands obedience. A year or two later, along comes a sibling. Later other siblings arrive and even on or two contemporary friends. The trouble with all of them is that each of them thinks that he (or, God help us, she!) is the center of the universe. That is the beginning of trouble, strife and disillusionment.

The bitterness of this bruising encounter with reality is partly offset by the love of our parents, who usually keep insisting that no matter what our siblings and self-styled friends say, each of us is uniquely special. One example of a "tough love" parental introduction to reality is an event which comedian/teacher Sam Levinson reports as having happened to him. One day, when he was about five or six, he returned from school with a mixture of blood and tears cascading down his face. He had been the victim of the neighborhood bully, who had punched him in the nose and generally beat him up. He raised his small arms up to his mother, seeking and expecting solace and comfort. Her reply was, "What is there about you, Sammy, that makes everyone who sees you want to take a punch at you?"

Offsetting this and other humiliations, from the very beginning each of us makes exciting new discoveries of the wonders of the world and experiences personal empowerment. Every day each of us can do something we could not do the day before. We run faster, jump higher, think more clearly, and generally, almost miraculously, achieve. There is another strange phenomenon which is more applicable to members of my audience tonight than it is to run-of-the-mill humanity. Each of us is apt to be head-of-his-class in grade school, high school and college. There is apt to be a lag time early in our careers at each of those academic levels when we are surprised to discover that instead of being No. 1 in our class, someone else is, and we have to do some catching up --- which we do, but with some pain. Only in professional school or in the real world following our academic careers do we discover that, with rare exceptions, we can never be No. 1 again.

The chief exception is, of course, when we meet some beautiful young lady, who gazes deep into our

eyes, and, never losing eye contact, calls us "dear," assures each of us that he is the handsomest, wisest, funniest, person she has ever met, full of wit and wisdom. At this stage in life, most of us "suspend disbelief," hope triumphs over reality, and we marry. We age rapidly when we discover that we have a whole new world of responsibilities – tiny bits of humanity who think we are God. At age two, a child regards his father's return from work as the big event of day. From age two to four, the child looks up from viewing TV and says, "Hi, Pop." At age four and thereafter, he may fail to greet us or even indicate an awareness of our presence. My wife, once so totally adoring and focussed on ME, may desist from cleaning and cooking for our brood long enough to repair my wounds resulting from struggles to make a living during the day. She also helps me solve many of the problems that I would not have had if I had not married her in the first place.

I am edging toward a very delicate problem. About twenty-years ago I spotted a young journalist from Indiana who seemed extraordinarily intelligent, sensitive and articulate for one raised so far from Cincinnati. As a matter of fact, I persuaded him to allow his name to be proposed for membership in our Club. Since his election to membership on November 6, 1978, he has written a half dozen extremely high quality papers for our Club and is generally much admired. We even made him a trustee. You can imagine my dismay when he identified me last June as the leading advocate in our ranks of "let-it-all-hang-out" writing.

Actually, I am usually distrustful of that kind of writing, often typified by autobiographies and memoirs, although I proudly claim the friendship of recently deceased Robert Norrish, who wrote a gorgeous, very autobiographical and candid paper much of which described his long and courageous battle with cancer. I regard getting Bob Norrish into our Club as one of my greatest achievements. In my view his "Unfinished Business – Dear Mom" was one of the all-time great papers written for our Club. It was in the form of a letter written to his mother ten years after her death. The Cincinnati Post asked for permission to publish it.

Permission was granted provided that nothing be deleted by editing. It was printed verbatim in its entirety. It doubtless was "let-it-all-hang-out" writing, but I thought it was superb, infinitely preferable to the news columns of our two local newspapers. Journalism is supposed to be facts - just facts - narrative stories. Literature is a plot which includes both story line and the interior emotions and relationships of its characters. We are, after all, a literary club.

But enough about the psychiatric problems of my brilliant, comparatively young journalist from Indiana. Actually, he and I are in total agreement on about 95% of the issues facing humanity. We both agree that egocentricity dilutes and spoils the message of any reader of a Literary Club paper. When a reader's primary message, silent or explicit, is: "How fortunate you are to be listening to me tonight, how lucky you are to be absorbing my wisdom," he has, to that extent, lost his audience. There is absolutely nothing wrong with emotion --- indeed, that is what life is all about --- but the reader should not give one's audience the impression that he is like the comedian Jack Oakie of whom it was said "When he first looked into a mirror, it was the beginning of a life-long romance."

To finish my description of our journey from cradle to the Literary Club, let me state that it has been my experience that upon qualifying for Social Security, most of us begin to feel weary and in need of comfort, solace and even rebirth. We experience these things in our intellectual oasis at 500 East Fourth Street. According to our learned Dr. Stanley Troup, our mortal clay is somehow metamorphosed into something finer as we go through our first few years of membership, the Catholic equivalent of purgatory. What we write depends on how we feel about our audience, comfortable and secure in feeling that their judgment of our writing has been softened by the pre-paper open bar, by generosity of spirit, and the uneasy feeling that each of them will take his turn on the chopping block - or worried and insecure.

Our Club is a fellowship. 99.44% of us like and admire each other. Few of us would reject the

suggestion that we conclude each of our sessions by standing, bowing to each other, and singing (under the direction of our resident musical genius, Bob Kalthoff) a hymn titled "How Great Thou Art." We have, after all, arrived in the earthly equivalent of heave.

Robert W. Hilton, Jr.

GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROADWAY

February 1, 1999

C. Francis Barrett

Gentlemen, right now you are probably wondering what this paper is about. Mere mention of the word "Broadway" evokes memories and dreams in all of us. Close your eyes and think what "Broadway" means to you.

Could this be about Broadway, the most famous street in New York, running from one end of the island of Manhattan to the other, beginning in the financial district at Battery Park, heading north past the old U.S. Customs House, passing between Trinity Church and the New York Stock Exchange, on into China Town, then into Little Italy and beyond to Greenwich Village, crossing 34th Street, with the Empire State Building rising on the right, on into the Garment District and heading toward Times Square and New York's Theater District with memories of Cole Porter, or Gene Kelly Singing in the Rain, or the dancing of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, and a place where millions will gather in less than a year to await the next millennium, on north heading unmolested toward Central Park, if such is ever possible, through Columbus Square, and then on to the Upper-West Side, passing just east of the Metropolitan Opera House and the Lincoln Center, going further north across West 116th Street, through the urban campus of Columbia University, northward through Harlem and on into northern Manhattan?