

Kingdom itself. Inside mainland China, we encounter few important or interesting battles (with the notable exception of liberal author He Qinglian). Burma's subjects are mostly people who might best be categorized as unhappy citizens.

Principled activists within China's borders constitute the missing link in breaking down China's current anti-freedom orthodoxy. Until their battle cry is heard, all the noises made by Chinese freedom-fighters abroad, however inspirational, will ring hollow.

*Ying Ma has worked on China-related issues in the U.S. government, non-profits, and the Chinese Internet industry.*

## SHADES OF TRUTH

By Clay Waters

*Coloring the News: How Crusading for Diversity Has Corrupted American Journalism*

By William McGowan

Encounter Books, 278 pages, \$25.95



William McGowan's *Coloring the News* opens with the tale of Dr. Patrick Chavis, an affirmative-action poster boy thanks to a reverent 1995 profile by

Nicholas Lemann in the *New York Times Magazine*. Chavis was a black man admitted to University of California medical school under a state program later ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court's Bakke decision. Lemann found Chavis working in a thriving ob-gyn practice in Compton. Updating the story two years later, McGowan finds that the poster boy has slid off the poster. "The Medical Board of California suspended his license to prac-

tice medicine, finding him guilty of gross negligence and incompetence in the cases of three patients—one of whom had died."

*Coloring the News* is the scholarly part of a recent one-two punch against the liberal media. Its moral companion is *Bias*, the indictment by former CBS News reporter Bernard Goldberg. [See the March issue for *TAE's* interview with Goldberg.] While Goldberg's book received a respectful though negative review in the *New York Times*, the *Times* is apparently struggling to figure out how to respond to *Coloring the News*—which hits the paper hard. Although not as juicy as Goldberg's book, McGowan's measured tone is perhaps even more convincing of the corruption of reporting in favor of "diversity."

*Coloring the News* does have some fun moments. One is when *Times* editorial writer Brent Staples bemoans the racial composition of a series of bleak photographs of drug addicts by Eugene Richards that appeared in the *Sunday Times Magazine*. Staples asks: "Couldn't Mr. Richards have found a setting where most or at least half the drug addicts are white?"

McGowan also gives examples of the media's attempt to sanitize radical leftist groups. He cites media coverage of the Million Man March that fails to include Nation of Islam leader Lewis Farrakhan's wacky, numerology-laced address. He notes that network news viewers are shown only innocuous person-next-door types marching in Gay Pride parades, while viewers of the uncensored C-SPAN see that the real lineup includes topless lesbians and men in leather harnesses.

McGowan devotes an entire chapter to rigorous analysis of media reporting on immigration. He predicts that September 11 will force the press into catch-up coverage of the downside of mass illegal immigration. McGowan also wades fearlessly into issues of race, ethnicity, and crime, and uncovers cowardly reporters who will speak frankly only off the record or not at all. Journalists come off as careerist toadies, enthralled by what columnist Art Carey of the

*Philadelphia Inquirer* terms "phony diversity, a cosmetic, Benetton advertisement vision of diversity, not a genuine diversity of intellects and ideas."

*Coloring the News* includes the first reporting I've seen between book covers on the Jesse Dirkhising murder. Dirkhising was the 13-year-old Arkansas boy sexually tortured and murdered by two homosexual men. The crime received very little press coverage—unlike the murder of the young homosexual Matthew Shepard in Wyoming. On a Nexis search, writer Andrew Sullivan found 3,007 reports of the Shepard killing; 46 for Dirkhising.

McGowan thinks that liberal media bias may actually harm liberal causes, partly because it gives liberals a false sense of confidence. The public outcry against President Clinton's gays-in-the-military proposal caught the new administration by surprise because the media, sensing nothing controversial, kept it out of view until Clinton made it policy. Meanwhile, the Internet, talk radio, and cable news have become countervailing conservative influences, reducing the clout of the mainstream press.

One quibble with the book is its occasional conflation of reporters and columnists. *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert is, after all, paid to spout humorless liberal opinions. News reporters are supposed to be objective.

Still, this is a necessary book for anyone who knows the media is biased and wants to have specific examples at his fingertips. Every few pages of *Coloring the News* recount some forgotten cultural skirmish capable of enraging conservatives all over again, from the lunatic feminism that tinted the coverage of military pilots Kara Hultgreen and Carey Lohrenz to the cowardice that muddied reporting of the black attacks on Jews in Crown Heights. McGowan doesn't offer a way out, but his book is a galling, frustrating call to action.

*Jersey City, N.J. resident Clay Waters was an editor for Bridge News Service.*





## Needing a Win

By Blake Hurst

SYRACUSE, NEBRASKA—We drove the 60 miles home with tears of frustration running down Ben's face. He'd just lost two wrestling matches, and he was mad, and disappointed, and embarrassed. Ben is 15, a high school freshman, and a delightful kid, but his freshman season of wrestling has been difficult. No, it's been awful.

There are only four kids on his team, all underclassmen, so Julie and I, along with a contingent of about four other parents, one coach, and one cheerleader (the others quit) have been traveling around Iowa and Missouri and Nebraska this winter, watching our sons spend most of the season on their backs. I think it was Grantland Rice who said, and I'm paraphrasing here, that "the race doesn't always go to the swift, or the battle to the strong, but that's the way to bet." In adolescent wrestling, bet on the kid with hair on his legs.

While the cool kids all play basketball, Ben decided his future lay in wrestling. So he'll never know the excitement that surrounds high school hoops: No packed gyms with a full coterie of cheerleaders and pep band. No high school chorus starting contests with the national anthem. No big spread in the local paper (especially since the son of the guy who owns our newspaper shows every sign of being an outstanding shooting guard). For local wrestlers it's just sweat and empty gyms on Saturday afternoons, and trips home bearing the sting of another defeat at the hands of someone older,

more experienced, and more athletic.

We suffer through four-hour tournaments, hoping the halt and lame of Rock Port, Stanberry, and Hopkins will be wrestling in the 152-pound class. Instead, every kid who shakes hands with Ben at the start of each match looks like he just stepped out of a commercial for home exercise equipment. Sometimes they pin Ben in seconds, sometimes he lasts the whole six minutes, and a few times he's won, but every match is exhausting.

Nobody ever told me that being a parent was so much work, and so confusing. How do you deal with the disappointment of your only son, who lifts weights three times a week, who practices for two hours every night, who studies the tapes of each match, who hasn't eaten a full meal in over two months in order to make his weight class? The truth is, we would really like him to pin some sucker from a neighboring town and spend a drive home with a happy kid.

Say what you will about the benefits of competition, the preparation for life that comes with difficulties, the satisfaction that comes from working hard toward a goal, the honor that comes from playing by the rules. When you're 15 none of these things can substitute for winning.

Parents of young athletes have been much in the news lately, and the stories always paint us in a bad light. It's said we're too wrapped up in our kids, too focused on winning, all suburban Mike Tysons ready to explode at any affront from opposing players, parents, coaches, or referees. I don't see that at all. What I see is parents so nervous they can hardly

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*When you're 15 none of these things can substitute for winning.*

sit, so dedicated they drive hundreds of miles a week to practices and games, and concerned about winning only because they want what their kids want.

I myself don't particularly care about my son's won-lost record, or his wrestling future, or whether his team ever wins a meet. But he is working so hard, and wants to win so much, that I'd trade about anything to get him just a few successful outings.

I'll never confront a referee, although I've yelled at a few. And I'm sure Ben will always conduct himself honorably, because we demand it.

Having said all that, please forgive me for hoping that one of his future opponents sprains his ankle, or breaks up with his girlfriend the night before, or just has a bad day. Because Ben really, really, needs a win.