

# Defining conservatism

by John Rosomando  
Collegian Staff

What is conservatism? Who are these people, this evil diabolical menace to our hedonistic, self-fearing culture? What do they stand for?

Conservatism is the belief that there are certain time honored beliefs and practices that are necessary for the maintenance of an orderly society.

Conservatives tend to be skeptical of the ability of human society to improve itself culturally by giving each member of the society the ability to decide her/his own morality.

Conservatism is the rational and logical preservation of all ideas that can be observed to have a positive or negative value judgement.

Central to this belief is the notion that there exists an underlying divinely instituted natural law that all things are bound to including humanity.

Therefore, arguments that are rooted in irrational subjectivity are considered invalid by conservatives because they are in essence a distortion of truth or reality.

Modern conservatism can be directly traced to the reaction of

Edmund Burke to the radicalism of the French Revolution.

Burke was one of the first people to propose the idea that government should be restrained to its "sphere of influence," i.e. defense, infrastructure, internal security.

The government must be constrained from acting in every segment of society in order to prevent the establishment of political, economic and social tyranny. Conservatives believe that individuals are better suited to deal with their own situations than the government.

The Marxist-Socialist nation that everyone must be equal and the government must intervene to prevent inequality between

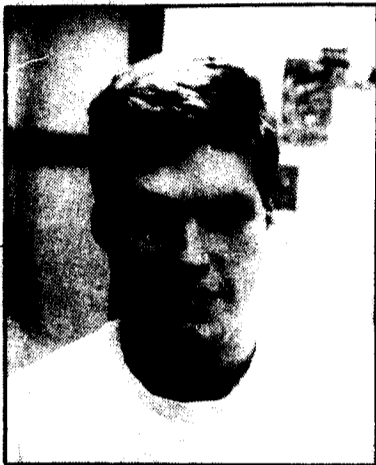
rich and poor is rejected outright by conservatives.

Redistribution of wealth only results in everyone being equally miserable.

Conservatism is about individuals setting out and taking charge of their own lives and not depending upon the government to provide their dignity. Individuals must control their own destinies because if they do not the result is the loss of freedom.

Economic freedom is the central and most important

freedom because without economic freedom we are powerless to control our own destinies. Capitalism is the means for individuals to raise their standard of living. Liberals think that if you redistribute money to the poor they will be



able to improve their lifestyle. When was the last time someone on public assistance improved their way of life?

Capitalism offers individuals the opportunity to raise their standard of living. Socialism exploits everyone and exalts mediocrity and everyone is miserable.

To the conservative, principles are more important than how people feel; or even how they

themselves feel. Principles such as loyalty, honesty, integrity, reverence and personal honor are more important than what is popular in the media or what is the latest fad.

Most conservatives are people of integrity because they will not compromise their principles over a popular whim.

To be a conservative is to be a realist because unless a situation is dealt with in a workable pragmatic way there cannot be a solution.

Many liberals like our beloved President Clinton have this fuzzy-wuzzy idealistic nation of what ought to be; not what is.

To look at a situation through your irrational emotions is like

**"You can't tell me what I can or cannot do"**

looking at the world through a lense; it distorts your view of the world. The only way to view the world socially and politically is through what is dictated by what is logical and

rational because only then can you see what really is out there and not what you think is out there.

For a liberal to say, "You can't tell me what I can or cannot do," is nothing but a lot of self-centered BS in the eyes of a conservative mind set. We are all part of one another and whatever we do either directly or indirectly affects everyone around us.

No person has the right to do something just because they want to do something because what we do will affect others. If we lower our standards all of us will suffer. We are only as strong as our weakest link.

Conservatism is about excellence and high ethical and moral standards unlike liberalism which tends to lower standards and accept mediocrity.

This is unacceptable. By no means can we expect a more civil society without high moral, ethical and sexual standard.

Ethics are the care of any society and without them there can only be one result: the collapse of a society. This is why I can never be a feel-good liberal. There is no prize for second best. You must be the best.

# Dave's a poet, too!

by Dave Barry  
Syndicated Columnist

Recently I got a very nice computer generated letter from an outfit call The National Library of Poetry.

"Dear Dave," the letter begins. "Over the past year or so we have been reviewing the thousands of poems submitted to us, as well as examining the poetic accomplishments of people whose poetry has been featured in various anthologies released by other poetry publishers. After an exhaustive examination of this poetic artistry, The National Library of Poetry has decided to publish a collection of new poems written the THE BEST POETS we have encountered.

"I am pleased to tell you, Dave, that you have been selected to appear in this special edition: Best Poems of 1995 ... The poem which you will submit for this edition has been accepted for publication sight unseen on the basis of your previous poetic accomplishments."

You talk about feeling honored. It's not every day that a person who does not, technically, write poetry is selected as one of the top poets for a year that has not, technically, occurred yet.

Oh, I know what some of you are thinking. You're thinking, "Dave, you wienerhead, they don't really think you're a leading poet. They got your name from some mailing list, and they'll publish any drivel you send in, because what they REALLY want to do is throw a book together and then sell it to a bunch of pathetic loser wannabe poets' for some absurdly inflated price like \$50."

Well that just shows how much YOU know. Because it turns out that Best Poems of 1995 is now available at a special pre-published discount price of just \$49.95. But listen to what you get: You get "a superb collection of over 3,000 poems on every topic," as well as "an heirloom quality publication" with "imported French marbled covers."

I called the number listed on The National Library of Poetry letterhead; a pleasant-sounding woman answered, and I asked her which specific poetic accomplishments of mine the judges had reviewed before selecting me as one of the Best Poets.

"Um," she said, "we don't have that available right now. All that information is closed in a backup file system."

I frankly have had very poetic

accomplishments. I once thought about writing poems for a line of thoughtful greeting cards but I finished only one, which went:

"Thinking of you  
At this special time  
And hoping your organ  
Removal went fine."



Of course I have to produce an entirely new poem for Best Poems of 1995. I asked the woman at The National Library of Poetry if there were any special literary criteria involved; she said the only one was that the poem had to be, quote, "20

lines or less."

I was happy to hear that. If there's one thing I hate, it's a long poem. And if there's another thing I hate, it's a poem wherein the poet refuses to tell you what the hell he's talking about. For example, when I was an English major in college, we spent weeks trying to get a handle on an extremely dense poem called "The Waste Land" by T.S. Eliot, only to conclude, after endless droning hours of classroom discussion, that the poem was expressing angst about the modern era. I felt like calling Eliot up and saying, "Listen, T.S., the next time you want to express angst, just EXPRESS it, OK? Just say 'Yo! I'm feeling some angst over here!'"

I believe that if some of your former big-name poets such as Homer and Milton (neither of whom, to my knowledge, was invited to be in Best Poems of 1995) had observed The National Library of Poetry's 20-line limit, their careers would be in a lot better shape today.

Anyway, I wrote a poem for Best Poems of 1995. I call it, simply, "Love." Here it is:

"O love is a feeling that makes a person strive

"To crank out one of the Best Poems of 1995;

"Love is what made Lassie the farm dog run back to the farmhouse to alert little Timmy's farm family whenever little Timmy fell into a dangerous farm pit;

"Love is a feeling that will not go away, like a fungus in your armpit;

"So the bottom line is that there will always be lovers

"Wishing to express their love in an heirloom quality book with imported French marbled covers;

"Which, at \$49.95 a pop multiplied by 3,000 poets

"Works out to gross literary revenues of roughly \$150,000, so it's

"A good bet that whoever thought up the idea of publishing this book

"Doesn't care whether this last line rhymes."

I sent this poem in to the folks at The National Library of Poetry. If you think that you, too, have what it takes to be one of the Best Poets of 1995, you might want to send them a poem of your own; their address in Box 704, Owings Mills, Md. 21117. Tell them Dave sent you.

And T.S., if you send something in, for God's sake keep it simple.