

# BOOK REVIEW

AROUND THE VILLE

## Author lists U.S. failures

Sara DeGonia

Assistant Features Editor

I am definitely a moderate. My friends constantly accuse me of being a liberal. I use the word "accuse" because the way they say it is like suggesting I committed a crime. And the more they label me a lefty (they, by the way, consider themselves conservatives), the more I have resigned myself to the political identity.

But after reading "100 People Who Are Screwing Up America" (And Al Franken is #37) by Bernard Goldberg, I am prepared to sit squarely on the fence as long as neither side is exactly what I want.

Goldberg's book is his personal list of — as one might guess — the 100 people

who, in one way or another, are damaging the wholeness of our country.

Typical cynics, especially those who think their intellects rival Einstein's, would look at the title and the political ideology of the author and promptly assume it is an attack on some political party.

The cynic would not be entirely wrong. A majority of those who made the list are, in fact, of the liberal ideology — but then, so is Goldberg.

But Goldberg doesn't condemn these folk merely because they voted for Kerry or Bush in the last election.

It's a lot more moral than that.

In fact, underneath that humorous title and the book's clever list layout is an overwhelming theme consistent throughout the work: Goldberg cares about America, and he cares about what is right.

Having not read any of Goldberg's previous works, I could not say whether his attitudes in "100 People" are consistent with his past opinions, but he has done his homework.

It's not as if he is blindly faulting 100 people — plus a few groups — for damaging the U.S. Unfortunately, they've all done something worth mentioning that has detracted from what Goldberg thinks our nation is all about.

And the really intriguing aspect is that a few on the list are personal



Wire Photo

Michael Moore poses in 2002 in Los Angeles. Moore is the No. 1 choice on author Bernard Goldberg's list of "100 People Who Are Screwing Up America (And Al Franken is #37)."

friends and former colleagues of Goldberg. He's not saying they're bad people. He's just saying they've made catastrophic choices that inflict irreversible wounds on our 50 states.

The book actually begins with several chapters describing general groups of citizens harming America, including America Bashers, White-Collar Thugs and TV Schlockmeisters.

These chapters make the list worth reading. Goldberg is clearly affected by the degradation increasing every day. Yet, he quite classily avoids coming off as bitter.

Several of the list's members are quite shocking: Barbra Streisand, Barbara Walters and Nobel Peace Prize Winner Jimmy Carter. Several of the list's members scream to be included: Michael Jackson, Jerry Springer and Al Sharpton.

My personal favorite is No. 95, Courtney Love. Most of the list members receive two to three pages of explanation as to why they made the list. Under Love's name is one word: Ho.

As an aspiring intellectual — in other words, I go to college to gain knowledge — this book is highly fascinating.

Perhaps I'm too trusting — as I often discover in my personal life — but I believe what Goldberg has to say. He's an accomplished, award-winning journalist, and the cited incidents under each individual's name are very specific. Each entry is like a miniature modern history lesson.

In fact, I'd consider owning the book as a reference tool. It discusses several topics of extreme relevance in today's society: the war in Iraq, the countless comparisons of

the leader of our country to Hitler, the Enron scandal, etc.

Furthermore, the book is a testament to the beauty of open-mindedness.

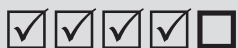
Goldberg mentions several times the flexibility of his compilation. I certainly don't agree with all 100. The last page of the work is a note that invites readers to submit their own entries to Goldberg.

Perhaps there will be a sequel. I'm sure, and I think my new role model Bernard Goldberg would agree, there will be a whole new lot of self-absorbed people screwing up our country in another five years or so.

Bottom line: "100 People" is a must-read in the truest sense of the phrase. Anyone who wants to laugh or cry about the state of our country is sure to find some tidbit of pleasure in Goldberg's diatribe.

### Book Review

**"100 People Who Are Screwing Up America"**  
**Author: Bernard Goldberg**  
**Publisher: HarperCollins**  
**Pages: 320**



## "Honeymoon" proposes twist on travel tradition

Memoir examines relationship between two brothers exploring the world after wedding failure occurs

Amanda Knox

Index Staff

If you can get past the seemingly incestuous title, you're in for a treat.

Franz Wisner's "Honeymoon with My Brother" is a funny and witty autobiographical story about two brothers who take a few years out of their lives and learn how to live in the process.

Only days before Franz is set to marry his girlfriend of 10 years, Annie, the high-profile yuppie from Southern California gets a call from Annie's brother. The wedding is off. Annie can't go through with it.

Devastated, Franz has to make a decision quickly about what to do with the caterers, musicians, friends and family flying in, nonrefundable plane tickets and room reservations that he and everyone else has scheduled for the weekend.

While making cancellation phone calls, Franz has an epiphany. Several people said they were flying in anyway, so why not have the wedding without the bride?

And so it was: The wedding was back on, just slightly modified into a weekend-long party with 70 of Franz's good friends.

He even goes on his honeymoon to Costa Rica, only with his brother, Kurt, instead.

Like Franz, recently divorced Kurt is also at a turning point in his life.

Finding themselves inspired in Costa Rica, the brothers decide to extend their honeymoon.

They quit their jobs, sell their houses, get rid of their cell phones and give away most of their other stuff to friends or charity.

Although they never had been particularly close, Franz and Kurt's ensuing two-year journey through 53 countries teaches each of them a few lessons about love, life and brotherhood.

The men begin their journey in Europe, visiting friends in Croatia, Russia, Prague and several other places.

They buy a new Saab in Germany and drive it around the continent. They talk with the locals to learn the hot spots. They fumble their way out of speeding tickets. They nearly get arrested several times. They meet beautiful women, some of whom become beautiful stalkers.

They schmooze their way through border patrols by flashing pictures of George W. Bush (but

they also have pictures of John Kerry, just in case).

After three-and-a-half months, 7,500 miles on the road and another 8,000 miles in airplanes, Franz and Kurt head back to California to regroup before their next jaunt to Southeast Asia.

From Southeast Asia, they travel around South America and finally finish their honeymoon tour on the continent of Africa.

As Franz describes their journeys and escapades, the reader can picture the landscapes and feel the energy of the people.

The smells become real, both wonderful and nauseating. The sights are described like a painting: detailed and yet abstract enough to use your imagination.

And, if you listen carefully enough, the sounds of children's shrieking laughter and the slurp of raw, exotic seafood come alive.

One of the themes woven throughout the book is a connection to family. Franz and Kurt bond after spending their entire lives as mere acquaintances.

While slowly learning about each other, they also correspond with their 98-year-old step-grandmother, LaRue, who lives in a nursing home.

Ironically, the men are the center of LaRue's world. She keeps track of their progress by push-pinning dots on a world map for all her friends in the nursing home to see.

In the end, a sad turn of events takes the reader for an emotional ride through examining a life lost.

The book is part self-discovery and part social commentary. Franz and Kurt see America's influence in all the corners of the world and not as necessarily good. In fact, they quickly find themselves actively avoiding other Americans and common tourist areas in foreign countries.

They encounter people who were afraid of them because of shows they have seen on TV and other people who selflessly offer them food, lodging and good conversation.

They realize some of the biggest smiles they see are in areas where people have the least.

Ultimately, it is by stepping out of their former culture and into foreign ones that they learn what life is all about.

"Honeymoon with My Brother" is a quick read but has lasting effects. The brilliant part about this book is that it inspires the reader to embark on such a journey of one's own.

Aboard, they learned how to truly live instead of just be. If you haven't caught the traveling bug already, this book just might make you vulnerable to it.

### Book Review

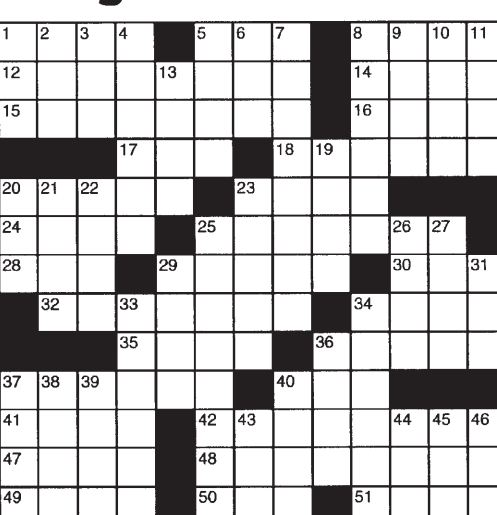
**"Honeymoon With My Brother"**  
**Author: Franz Wisner**  
**Publisher: St. Martin's Press**  
**Pages: 288**



### King Crossword

#### ACROSS

1 Hertz rival  
 5 Cleopatra's slayer  
 8 Gabriel Chanel  
 12 Calamitous occurrence  
 14 "Lang Syne"  
 15 Florida tribe  
 16 Small combo  
 17 Prune  
 18 Motion detector, e.g.  
 20 It's full of shish  
 23 Russian council  
 24 Actor Sharif  
 25 Part-time athlete  
 28 Corral  
 29 Tenth president  
 30 Raw rock  
 32 Prof's session  
 34 Mirth  
 35 Satiated  
 36 Hue  
 37 Drag  
 40 Reactions to fireworks  
 41 Lotion additive  
 42 Like Limburger or Muenster  
 47 Vicki Lawrence role  
 48 Damaged  
 49 Parade  
 50 Rds.



#### DOWN

11 Eastern potentate  
 19 "Keystone" officer  
 21 Iowa city  
 22 Poison  
 23 Holdup  
 25 Condensed outline  
 26 Bagel sans hole?  
 27 Sandwich treat  
 29 "Scrabble" piece  
 31 Always, in verse  
 33 "American Pie" singer Don  
 34 Back-fence chitchat  
 36 - Pet  
 37 Unaltered  
 38 Dressed (in)  
 39 Base runner's goal  
 40 Rock concert equipment  
 43 Ambulance VIP  
 44 Bobby of hockey lore  
 45 Doctor's due  
 46 Gridiron scores (Abbr.)

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### Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



### Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps

