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# A Roundtable Discussion Virtual Games: The Media Coverage of the 1996 Olympics

By S. W. Pope et al.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Last year I introduced the roundtable as an annual feature of this section. The pioneering foray (volume 23, Spring 1996) scrutinized Ken Burns's nine-part documentary *Baseball*—arguably the sports media event of the year in the United States. This year we turn our sights to the media extravaganza that was the 1996 Olympic Games. Prior to the Games, I asked several scholars from around the globe to track the media coverage in their respective countries. This undertaking was aided by a stimulating discussion on the sport history e-mail network (SPORTHIST coordinated by Michael Salter at the University of Windsor) that ensued during the Games. I have brought together comments from SPORTHIST and observations from the following panelists. Daryl Adair, Mark Dyreson, Tara Magdalinski, Robert Rinehart, and Dwight Zalus. In so doing, I have taken some editorial license. Although all of the discussants granted me permission to use their comments in this forum, I have juxtaposed them in a manner that presents a single, flowing conversation.

What follows is a staged compilation of perceptive commentary. There is a decidedly Western orientation throughout by an almost exclusively male cast of observers. Several other invited participants declined to participate in the process.

I hope that readers will find this a worthwhile, entertaining, provocative feature. Your comments and reactions are most welcome.

Setting: A sports bar in mid August 1996. The participants have ordered a first round of beverages while exchanging pleasantries around two English-styled pub tables.

Ben Rader: Is it a misperception on my part, or does NBC's framing of the Atlanta Games represent a new stage of televised American chauvinism? The extensive coverage of the American women's gymnastics could be rationalized in terms of their sheer drama, but was it fair to primarily showcase the failures of other teams? Although I understand Dick Ebersoll's effort to imitate Roone Arledge, I sense that Arledge had a far more international perspective on the

Games. And what do we make of the *expert* commentators who seem to be merely cheerleaders? What happened to the technical analyses of sport?

Steve Gietschier: Well, Ben, it almost goes without saying that the televised version of the Games—at least in the United States—is simply another step on the road to perdition, another indication of how crass and commercial the Olympics have become. I do not think that NBC's presentation of the Olympics as entertainment has increased the level of chauvinism. Some commentators are solid and objective, and some are not. And those who yearn for the good old days of Jim McKay and Roone Arledge perhaps forget some of the dreadful commentary of ABC's early coverage.

Tim De Schriver: Yes. We must remember that NBC is not in the Olympic coverage business; they are in the business of generating revenue and selling advertising audiences to their corporate clients. As such, they must present the Olympics in a manner that attracts the largest viewership. Let's face it, intellectuals (like us) [guffaws from around the table] are not the primary target audience—it's mass society, which, I suspect, is loving every minute of this coverage. My undergraduate sport management students, for example, are overwhelmingly positive about NBC's coverage and framing.

Dick Crepeau: The ratings are what television is all about. They're the name of the game. McDonald's has not sold a billion hamburgers by producing gourmet food. What is good is not always popular, and what is popular is not always good.

Steve Gietschier: Ratings are, indeed, the operative issue. American cities that bid for the Games typically make a guaranteed, lucrative television deal part of their proposal to the IOC [International Olympic Committee]—based on the assumption that the events would be telecast live. But, as we all know, this does not happen. The women's gymnastic team final was an afternoon not evening event as presented. But given its popularity, it doesn't seem to have mattered; people watched it anyway and, I suspect, did not seek out the results ahead of time. In 2000, with the Games in Sydney and with the magic of the International Date Line, we in the United States will actually be able to see taped coverage of events that have not yet happened.

Dick Crepeau: I love it, Steve. Any network capable of claiming that it is bringing you the games *virtually live* is capable of all sorts of atrocities of coverage in the service of TV ratings. Any resemblance between the Atlanta Games and the NBC Virtual Games available on TV is purely coincidental and such a disclaimer ought to be read at the beginning and end of each NBC broadcast.

An eavesdropper from a nearby table: Pardon me, but I've overheard your conversation and must ask a question. If you all so despise NBC's coverage why not either turn off the TV altogether and/or start your own company and broadcast them differently?

Duncan Humphreys: Hear, Hear! I'm interested in the athletic performances of people from New Zealand as well as being fascinated by the sheer aesthetics of high level performance, determination, and sacrifice of athletes the world over. But given the unsatisfactory televised coverage and the puerile, hyped, underinformed drivel of commentators (how many of us would want one of those

commentators here in our midst tonight?) am more than willing to look elsewhere for coverage. I say kill your television and search for alternatives!

**Daryl Adair:** Starting my own media company is highly unlikely, unless, of course, I win the lottery. Even the leading media magnates, like Rupert Murdoch from my country, Australia, was left rather red-nosed when a recent SKY bid for televised Olympic coverage was turned down by the IOC. In short, even if one owns a broadcast company, there is no guarantee that they will be able to broadcast the Games given the politicized bidding process. It seems equally unrealistic to simply ignore televised coverage if one wants to see visual images of athletic performance. Radio commentary can be entertaining, but an oral description of high diving, for example, just can't match the real thing. Seeing is believing. Remember the Coca-Cola jingle? Words of wisdom there. I can't turn off the tube, even though much of it turns me off.

**Steve Pope:** The problem with the 'turn off [or kill] your television' argument is that it assumes that one can independently escape the pervasive influence of the mass media. This is a naive, elitist, and ultimately anti-intellectual position. I've generally found the non-TV-viewing iconoclast out of the cultural loop. 'Mass culture' is an inappropriate label for television. TV culture, I argue (along with Camille Paglia and Neil Postman) is THE cultural medium of contemporary post-modern society. To opt out is to disengage and thereby become ostracized from what larger society sees as the 'real' thing and thus, be consigned to the sidelines of debate and critique.

**Duncan Humphreys:** Forgive me if I misinterpret your argument, Steve. But is it such a bad thing to be ostracized from, or rather consciously rejecting, something that serves no purpose to me? What society sees as the 'real' thing does not interest me. It, more often than not, serves to obscure what is really going on in the world. I watch enough TV to tell me what the 'real' world is thinking and doing but to contextualize what I know from other, far more accurate and revealing sources. Also, I have no interest in TV culture because it is not MY culture.

**Steve Pope:** As sport scholars we are obliged, in my view anyway, to follow, engage, critique the ways in which sports (in this case, the Olympics) are covered and presented to the international public. In so doing, we become more effective public intellectuals and scholars who, to be sure, are becoming extinct these days. It is not exactly like making a deal with the Devil.

**Bob Rinehart:** Okay, let's table the issue of the 'legitimacy' of television for some future conference and get back to the actual media coverage and 'spin' of the Games. Thus far the conversation has focused on NBC and the United States. Let's broaden it. I watched a 'split-nation' Olympics. During my stay in Ontario, I saw both NBC and the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Company] coverage. The United States and Canada are more similar than different in their reporting styles, but they do differ in degree. I noticed that the Canadian announcers were more polite to athletes—praising their efforts, both successes and failures. The American announcers appeared less attentive to athletes' responses than to addressing the already scripted media scenarios. Although athletes from both

countries resisted the stereotypical cliché of doing battle with foreigners, the media elevated nationalistic differences. Many of my fellow Canadian viewers conjured negative images of American athletes as portrayed on NBC's *The Globe and Mail* [newspaper], and CBC. Throughout, the selling job persists—much the way it does with the World Wrestling Federation—essentializing difference. This represents one of the most onerous aspects of cultural imperialism as it is practiced by large national and multinational corporations that peddle sport as their product.

Malcolm MacLean: I'm struck by how the Canadian media coverage of the Games reflects a response to globalization. Perhaps we might all agree that the various national coverages occupy a liminal place in an increasingly globalized world. Yet, despite the current popularity of globalization, nationalistic sentiments remain resilient. In a world defined by global and local identities, rampant chauvinism is, indeed, grating and disturbingly obvious. I suspect that we'll see more of the same at Sydney 2000 when the Aussies will, no doubt, go nuts.

Dwight Zakus: I would like to elaborate on Bob's and Malcolm's observations about the Canadian media coverage. The CBC's publicly funded national network plays a critical role in sustaining an imagined national identity. Similar to NBC's well-publicized, scripted vignettes, the CBC highlighted the personal stories of Canadian heroes and heroines, predicated, I suspect, on those who were likely to win medals. Such features were created ostensibly to put a human face on the victors; but unlike America's insular, chauvinistic approach, Canadians are conspicuously hesitant (if not tentative) about how and when to blow their own horn. CBC's *The Maple Leaf Forever* historical reminiscences exuded a decidedly cautious optimism of athletic greatness for a culturally and politically divided country. Interspersed with such nationalistic features was live action of events with limited jingoism—many of which didn't include Canadian athletes. Finally, the CBC's distinction from the French Radio Canada broadcast was reverential to the myths and ideologies of the Olympics with studio backdrops of Greek and IOC symbols (staged at a considerable expense). In all, there were a plethora of nationalistic images surrounding the CBC's media coverage—all of which promoted an imagined Canadian community and a historical connection to the glory of Olympics past.

John Nauright: It seems in Australia that every non-Australian who has ever trained here, been coached by an Aussie, or even those who row a boat designed or built here gets a mention in our incredibly nationalistic media coverage. In this sense, the most interesting aspect about our coverage is not its quality, but its poor ratings. Not surprisingly, Australian media coverage has focused on the problems of the Atlanta Games in the hopes that Sydney 2000 will do better. I must admit that after seeing Olympic coverage in several countries, that the CBC has done the best of an overall poor lot. Here in Australia, we see virtually nothing live, and even some of the live events are not live at all. Given that the Games are on for nearly 15 hours daily, it would be possible to see virtually all of the events rather than 50 repeats of native Kieran Perkins' gold medal performance in swimming. Moreover, our media was rife with criticisms of the swim team that allegedly failed to live up to the hyped expectations. As a result, Australian

swimming is in crisis despite the team's impressive showing at Barcelona.

**John Nauright:** Before I start on another Guinness, permit to extend further. Our [Australia] reliance on U.S. opinions and news coverage is striking. We were shown on air the USA Today article of the Australian softball team's win over the USA as well as other mentions of the Aussies in the U.S. media. Do we really need to validate our success or opinions of ourselves with reference to the American media? It would seem so.

**Tara Magdalinski:** John's comment on the Australian media's focus on native athletes raises an important point. The media's obsession with the failures of Australian swimmers merely perpetuated the tall poppy syndrome whereby our national success is supposedly hampered by fellow Australians. The popular notion of the Aussie battler is created by a mass media intent on portraying heroes and anti-heroes with a decidedly ideological (and chauvinistic) twist.

**Bob Rinehart:** I cannot imagine a country in the modern (or should I say, postmodern) world electronically capable where the media failed to glorify its athletes. If a country's athletes were expected to win, that was glorification before the fact; if they were not expected to win, they are revered for their determination; if they actually win a medal, they are celebrated as heroes. They may even be glorified for an extraordinary failure and are endowed with a hero/antihero celebrity status. At any rate, media coverage would not spin the results to antagonize its viewers to the extent that they turn off their sets. Thus, any antiheroes of the 1996 Games were encapsulated within a larger celebrity framework.

**Adam Hornbuckle:** A case in point is NBC's contrived rivalry between Carl Lewis and Michael Johnson. The only event in which their careers actually converge is in the 200 meters and each of their respective achievements are separated by a decade. If Lewis were presently a major contender in the 200, NBC's scenario would be justified; but since that wasn't the case, they should focus on Namibia's Frank Fredericks, who has a chance to double in both the 100 and 200 meters. Given Peter Diamond's (who headed the research) historical perspective, one would have thought that NBC would do justice to the contemporary history of sprinting.

**Bob Rinehart:** From an historical perspective, perhaps one of the most blatantly cozy relationships between a government and their Olympic team was Nazi Germany. It is well-known that Hitler hired the brilliant filmmaker, Leni Riefenstahl, to enhance the German image at home and abroad so as to promote Nazi Germany as an aesthetic and athletic world power. Riefenstahl's Olympia was a marketing and ideological tour de force. I would argue that while the means and actors may be different, the 1996 Games followed the same lines.

**Dwight Zakus:** The CBC was not blind to historical perspective and imagery. Whatever one might say about their juxtaposition of the modernist origins of the Olympic movement and its postmodernist embodiments, the CBC shamelessly draped their televised coverage in the garb of Courbertin and ancient Greek architectural ruins. The CBC downloaded the romantic, safe historical images of ancient times for an audience eager to click onto a plethora of neat web sites

for information about events, merchandise, and the like. It is a postmodern attempt to bring viewers closer to the liminal experience that the IOC markets. With much of the commentary focusing on how commercialized sport detracts from the glory of the spectacle, one can only wonder how long the IOC can maintain its own schizophrenic personality.

**Malcolm MacLean:** Permit me to craft a hypothesis from my mates' deft comments. If Eric Hobsbawm is correct in arguing that with the emergence of citizenship, people claim the nation as their own, then it seems to follow that in so doing, they must also claim the symbols of their nations as well. Under such circumstances, where our identity on the international stage is becoming, in part, our nation's sporting success, then nonpartisanship is at best very difficult (if not impossible). In short, as our individual identities are defined through our sports teams' performances, nonpartisan spectatorship is an act of treason that denies self-identification.

**Steve Pope:** Malcolm, with all due respect to your enticing argument and Hobsbawm's work that informs my approach to sport and nationalism, what are we to make of the phenomena that national medias often lionize foreign athletes? In the United States, for example, journalists admired and idolized Olga Korbitt, Nadia Comaneci, and Katrina Witt during the height of the Cold War when such embraces were all but taboo. Transnational partisanship is neither exceptional nor as elusive as Malcolm claims.

**Malcolm MacLean:** Steve, I suspect that those instances were exceptions to the rule. We admired their grace, skill, and erotic appeal. We were awe-struck at their abilities as mediated by our televisions. Korbitt and Comaneci were so young and perfect; Witt, well, was becoming one of us. In years past we have adopted them, became infatuated with their accomplishments and have followed their careers religiously (look at the coverage of Comaneci's marriage several years ago). But who are the stars from the other side with whom we have become infatuated this time around?

Maybe it's the nationalism of Australian coverage and the manufacturing of local athletic crises that has obscured this invention, but apart from the odd doffing of the cap to athletes successfully defending their medals over two, three, or four Games, I can't recall seeing anything approaching those melodramatic stories of the Cold War era. Perhaps the Cold War enabled us to invent the star from the enemy. Perhaps, in the New World Order there is no longer an enemy worth the West's effort and national chauvinism has become more intense and insular. Perhaps it's only at times of major multi-national rivalry such as the Olympics that states become our Others. For the rest of the time the language is one of the many other identities we share—class, ethnic, gender, locality, etc.

**John Nauright:** What I find interesting is the way in which the IOC tries to promote itself as the ultimate international organization in the New World Order, all the while promoting nationalism and national identification. Despite all of the theorizing about the erosion of the nation state, the very context of international sporting competitions means that sport is perhaps the most crucial contemporary site for the maintenance and promotion of national identities. There

are numerous ways to construct 'others' through nationalistic coverage, but what we are seeing now is perhaps the postmodernization (I can't believe I'm using this term) of the construction of otherness in international sport to a polymorphous collection of national stereotypes.

Stephen Hardy: Malcolm says that in the New World Order, it is really only at times of major multi-national rivalry, such as an international sporting spectacle, that states (nations) become our Others. For the rest of the time it is one of the many other identities we hold. I think that he is correct on much of this; but I'm not sure how new any of this is. In many ways, the same dynamics existed 100 years ago and helped to build interest in international amateur sport. For some time now, it has appeared to me (and I'm limited by my American focus) that the rising amateurists (to use Warren Goldstein's term) like James E. Sullivan found the Olympics and other international expositions, the amateurists to build their ranks by attacking the corruption of the domestic professional. This was a negative strategy. With the Olympics, however, they could turn their movement into positive forces of nationalism. For Americans anyway, such international competitions became moments to transcend the other identities that churned and clashed in America's cultural caldron in the decades before WWI. In short, we all have to be careful to clarify what is really new in the New World Order.

Malcolm MacLean: Point well taken. Steve Hardy is quite right when he asks what is new in the New World Order. His examples from the American sporting scene prior to WWI confirm Eric Hobsbawm's argument that as people became citizens of nation states, they increasingly claimed the nation as their own, and thereby, claimed the symbols of that nation as theirs as well. Under such circumstances, when identity was linked with a nation's sporting success on the international stage, nonpartisanship was (is) very difficult for anyone who claimed citizenship. The early Olympiads fed on this development.

Tara Magdalinski: I suggest that the contemporary media is less insular than Malcolm imagines. No doubt, national medias tend to elevate the accomplishments of their own countries' star athletes, but given the New World Order and the new technology, contemporary media coverage is fundamentally different from Riefenstahl's 'Olympia' that Bob referred to earlier. Whereas in early times, the world had only one image of the Games, now each nation can pick and choose the events, images, interpretations to suit themselves and their own particular agendas. Even televised 'feeds' that come from other nations can be re-edited, re-commemorated, etc. What's interesting about this is the possibility for contradictory messages. Despite their best intentions, sometimes the national media's coverage unconsciously blows up.

Steve Pope: Examples?

Tara Magdalinski: I have several noteworthy ones. Australia's first gold medalist was in shooting, a sport that is difficult for Aussies to warm to, particularly since, due to the Port Arthur massacre (itself portrayed in world record terms as the most people ever shot by a lone gunman), we're in the midst of banning automatic and semi-automatic guns. Moreover, the traditional images of Australians were turned back on themselves.

The 'Bronzed Aussie' which typically refers to the surf-life-saving, outdoorsy, beachy type of stereotypical Australian character was the pool where we had not lived up to the hyped expectations of 'gold, gold, gold for Australia.' The portrayal of these (and other) events might best be understood in terms of sport as drama, and more pointedly, sport as soap opera. As viewers become increasingly dependent on the raw sporting event in itself, the drama is accentuated to such an extent that it is almost incidental. This is not to suggest that all viewers accept this sort of presentation. Indeed, there were enough grumblings to suggest otherwise; however, the packaging of sporting events have become the norm (rather than the exception) for Australian television stations.

Daryl Adair: I'd like to expand on Tara's observations. As an Australian living in England during the Games, I was challenged to formulate a new perspective. As Tara and John have already suggested, the Australian media have long been nationalistic in their coverage—a tendency reflected in urgent daily reports of medal successes and failures that is, allegedly, symptomatic of a small nation measuring its international status by athletic performance. Despite the place of Australians as a nation of 'battlers' and 'honest toilers,' while residing in England, I discovered that the real 'battlers' were not the Aussies, but rather, the poorly funded athletes representing Britain.

Eavesdropper from a nearby table: We've always been led to believe that England fostered the growth of modern, global, amateur sport. How do you explain the country's marginal status within the international athletic community? What was the British spinmeisters' take on this during the Games?

Daryl Adair: When the Games began, the major British papers—*The Times*, *The Observer* and *The Guardian*—provided astute commentary and analysis. True to form, they portrayed the Atlanta Games as 'typically American'—glitzy, glamorous, and catholic in focus. Gymnastics received excellent coverage in Britain, despite the fact that local athletes were not in serious medal contention. In this respect, it is important to appreciate that the British really consider themselves connoisseurs of sport, so much so that when the American audience appeared to support its gymnasts stridently (and not give due credit to their great Russian rivals), the Brits considered it poor form indeed.

Dwight Zakus: I'm curious, Daryl, how influential was Andrew Jennings's book [*The New Lords of the Rings*] in shaping the British media's commentary?

Daryl Adair: Prior to the Games, the BBC television program 'Panorama' presented stinging allegations about drug use in Olympics past and present. The show interviewed well-placed experts to confirm various medal winners from the 1984 and 1988 Games had been under the influence of 'performance-enhancing' drugs—and insinuated an IOC cover-up of the damning results. Dr. Michael Turner [a medical practitioner connected to the British Olympic team] predicted that 75% of athletes in the 1996 Games would have taken illegal substances as part of their preparation and suggested that the existing procedures for detection would be ineffectual. Such exposes came on the eve of several noteworthy confessions of drug use by British athletes. Responding to the crisis, the media scrambled to put a positive spin on the dilemma by conjuring up the British

tradition of fair play and playing with a straight bat. After all, when Coubertin revived the Olympics in 1896, it was the English public school model that was his inspiration. As such, so the story goes, to cheat by using underhand tactics is allegedly distasteful to Britons.

Dwight Zakus: I realize that the British are adept at laughing at themselves, but do such self-effacing exercises make it easier to be humiliated by the global media? Should we follow Jennings's suggestion and relegate the Games to the global/cultural junk-heap?

Daryl Adair: The BBC radio and television concentrated upon performances of prominent British athletes like Sally Gunnell, Kelly Holmes, Colin Jackson, Linford Christie, and the seemingly invincible rowing crew of Steve Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent. By the second week of competition, the media coverage dwelled on the failed performances of these revered athletes. The news was not exactly startling. For the British, the Coca-Cola Games fizzled and became the Monty Python Olympics. Britain finished 35th in the medals tally—a lamentable outcome from the country where sports in their modern form were first codified and exported. Since that earlier golden age, however, the British government has shown little interest in actively funding sport, leaving the running of physical culture to amateur associations, or in the case of professional sports, to the clubs themselves. There is no centre of excellence to promote sport, and British Olympic athletes are barely supported financially by the state. Thus, it is easy to see why Britain has floundered while France and Australia, for example, have flourished. All this was seized upon by the British media which, in cacophonous fashion, raised serious doubts about the way sport is structured and how it ought to be modernized in the future.

Daryl Adair: Please waiter, one final round. To continue, journalists schemed ways to improve Britain's medal count through the introduction of distinctly British sports: rugby, cricket, croquet, lawn bowls, snooker, darts, fox-hunting, train-spotting, drinking pints, etc.—after all, the Americans had managed to have spurious sports like synchronized swimming and beach volleyball, so why not? The exclusion of golf from the Olympics is particularly puzzling since it is played on every continent. And why not squash? Pakistan would likely dominate. Just think if Gaelic football, hurling, or Australian Rules football ever made it to the Olympics? We would have Irish and Aussie Dream Teams much like the American basketball Dream Team. Perhaps the obvious answer is that neither Australia nor Ireland have the cultural empire capabilities to export and popularize such sports. But the deeper, subaltern issue concerns the selection process itself, which would illuminate why certain sports are included and others excluded. Does anyone know the national, institutional, or financial interests at play in this process?

Mark Dyreson: Apropos to everything discussed thus far, I found the American media's coverage of the Games to be for the audiences and imagined communities they sought. Televised Olympic sport imagines a community that is a mixture of progressive and regressive tendencies. Perhaps it merely reflects (or refracts) the class, racial and gender dynamics of post-industrial (or dare I say,

postmodern) society. I believe that the IOC cooperates with this. I was struck by the 'Californication' of Olympic sport. As Daryl points out, the Brave New Olympic World seems to have settled in a North American or Australian or Brazilian beach community with temperate breezes, post-industrial economies and lots of leisure time where people ride mountain bikes to work and play volleyball during lunch hour. With surfing perhaps slated for the Sydney Games, the power of California and international beach culture becomes nearly complete. This is a world where class disappears from view because no one ever sees the working class in beach volleyball-land. Here, everyone shares the same suburban values and springs from the same ethnic cultures. Certainly women seem, at least on the surface, to be empowered by suburban sporting dreams; whether or not they really are in fact remains to be seen. What happens to the hammer throw, modern pentathlon, and even the ultimate American urban game of basketball, in the next millennium of California-style Games?

Dwight Zakus: Mark's biting humor and sarcasm is more exacting than I had ever imagined. I love his postmodern label—the 'Californication' of Olympic sport—which in my mind, illuminates the contradictions inherent in media culture. Whereas in Canada, the mass media brings together a varied population, perhaps as a political science colleague once said to me, the same is impossible in the United States—an ungovernable nation. There are simply too many contradictions within popular cultural formations to deal with effectively. Perhaps we might say that the media opts out of community for camp. Maybe all of this reflects how the liminal nature of sport is losing its strength. Given the crass commercialism and circus theatrics surrounding the Games, the IOC's rhetoric and idealism have lost their ability to ensure the liminal nature of Olympic sport.

Mark Dyreson: When the Winter Games come to Utah in 2002, the world will confront a different strain of nationalism. In many ways Utahans, like Germans in 1936, are desperate to sell their 'peculiar' place to outsiders as a clean, safe, efficient version of the modern (or postmodern) suburban utopia. No crime, no drugs, no poverty, no minorities—just the Osmonds and the Mormon Tabernacle choir. That desire has already produced some strange happenings in Utah. Local coverage of the 1996 Games was shaped by constant criticism of Atlanta and the assumed superiority of the Utah lifestyle. Local law enforcement officials promise that they will do a much better job than their Atlanta counterparts. After all, in totalitarian societies, such as Utah, 'security' is easier to mount. Salt Lake officials have also promised that the 2002 Winter Games will not be as 'commercial' as the Atlanta Games. This seems an odd promise coming from the conservative Chamber of Commerce entrepreneurs who procured the Games by promising every state resident that there was big money to be made in the Olympics. Such contradictions were ignored by the media, who promised that the Games would be an opportunity to sell Utah culture. One of the big debates in Utah is what to do with liquor laws, which are the most stringent in the industrialized world, during the Olympic 'party' of 2002. Advertising alcoholic beverages is strictly forbidden in Utah—despite the recent Supreme Court cases declaring that commercial speech is protected under the First Amendment. Budweiser recently

threatened the state by pointing out that if they couldn't put up advertising banners, they probably would not provide the huge sums of corporate money upon which the Games now depend. The state beverage control commission reacted angrily to Budweiser's pronouncement. This will be one of the major culture wars fought in the state as Utah prepares for 2002.

[Dyreson proposes a toast. Although the participants remained full of additional insights and observations, they all agreed to end the conversation and go their separate ways