

Buffett's Letters To Berkshire Shareholders 1999	巴菲特致股东的信 1999 年
<p>Our gain in net worth during 1999 was \$358 million, which increased the per-share book value of both our Class A and Class B stock by 0.5%. Over the last 35 years (that is, since present management took over) per-share book value has grown from \$19 to \$37,987, a rate of 24.0% compounded annually.*</p>	<p>本公司 1999 年的净值增加了 3.58 亿美元，每股 A 股或 B 股的帐面净值皆成长了 0.5%，累计过去 35 年以来，也就是自从现有经营阶层接手之后，每股净值由当初的 19 元成长到现在的 37,987 美元，年复合成长率约为 24.0%*。</p>
<p>*All figures used in this report apply to Berkshire's A shares, the successor to the only stock that the company had outstanding before 1996. The B shares have an economic interest equal to 1/30th that of the A.</p>	<p>*1 在年报中所谓的每股数字系以 A 级普通股约当数为基础，这是本公司在 1996 年以前流通在外唯一的一种股份，B 级普通股则拥有 A 级普通股三十分之一的权利。</p>
<p>The numbers on the facing page show just how poor our 1999 record was. We had the worst absolute performance of my tenure and, compared to the S&P, the worst relative performance as well. Relative results are what concern us: Over time, bad relative numbers will produce unsatisfactory absolute results.</p>	<p>首页上的数字完全显示出我们 1999 年的成绩是如何的不理想，这也是个人历年来表现最差的一年，不管从绝对数字或是与 S&P 指数比较皆是如此，当然相对数字是我们比较在意的，只不过时间一久，相对较差的数字其绝对数值肯定也不会理想到哪里去。</p>
<p>Even Inspector Clouseau could find last year's guilty party: your Chairman. My performance reminds me of the quarterback whose report card showed four Fs and a D but who nonetheless had an understanding coach. "Son," he drawled, "I think you're spending too much time on that one subject."</p>	<p>即使是顽皮豹探长也知道谁是去年真正的犯人：没错！就是我本人，而我个人的表现让我想起一位成绩单上满是 F 跟一个 D 的四分卫，偏偏又遇到一个体谅人的教练轻声说到：“孩子，我想你把太多的时间摆在单一的科目之上了。”</p>
<p>My "one subject" is capital allocation, and my grade for 1999 most assuredly is a D. What most hurt us during the year was the inferior performance of Berkshire's equity portfolio -- and responsibility for that portfolio, leaving aside the small piece of it run by Lou Simpson of GEICO, is entirely mine. Several of our largest investees badly lagged the market in 1999 because they've had disappointing operating results. We still like these businesses and are content to have major investments in them. But their stumbles damaged our performance last year, and it's no sure thing that they will quickly regain their stride.</p>	<p>我所指的单一科目就是“资金的分配”，而很显然的我在 1999 年所获得的成绩就只有 D，除此之外表现最惨的要算是伯克希尔的股票投资组合了，至于该为这件事负责的，除了少部份的投资是由 GEICO 公司的 Lou Simpson 管理外，其余全部都要归咎于我本人，我们几件大型的投资标的，由于本身 1999 年的经营情况不佳，导致公司股价表现远落后于大盘，不过我们仍然对它们所处的产业情有独钟，同时也愿意继续与它们同在，只是它们的挫败严重影响到我们去年的表现，而且也不确定何时才能够回归正轨。</p>

<p>The fallout from our weak results in 1999 was a more-than-commensurate drop in our stock price. In 1998, to go back a bit, the stock outperformed the business. Last year the business did much better than the stock, a divergence that has continued to the date of this letter. Over time, of course, the performance of the stock <i>must</i> roughly match the performance of the business.</p>	<p>伯克希尔 1999 年积弱不振的表现，更导致公司的股价大幅下滑，相较之下，1998 年的股价反而表现的比本业还好，去年可说是刚好相反，直到年报发布之日止仍是如此，当然就长期而言，公司股价的表现大致上还是会与本业的表现相当。</p>
<p>Despite our poor showing last year, Charlie Munger, Berkshire's Vice Chairman and my partner, and I expect that the gain in Berkshire's intrinsic value over the next decade will modestly exceed the gain from owning the S&P. We can't guarantee that, of course. But we are willing to back our conviction with our own money. To repeat a fact you've heard before, well over 99% of my net worth resides in Berkshire. Neither my wife nor I have ever sold a share of Berkshire and -- unless our checks stop clearing -- we have no intention of doing so.</p>	<p>尽管去年表现不佳，不过伯克希尔 主要的合伙人-查理孟格，跟我本人仍然预期伯克希尔未来十年实质价值的成长率应该可以略微超越 S&P 指数同期的表现，当然这种事没人敢打包票，不过我们依旧愿意以我们所有的身家作为担保，大家应该都知道，我个人的身家有 99%以上都摆在伯克希尔，我跟我内人从来就没有卖过一张伯克希尔的股票，而且除非哪一天真的不够钱花，否则我们永远不会考虑出售任何一张股票。</p>
<p>Please note that I spoke of hoping to beat the S&P "modestly." For Berkshire, truly large superiorities over that index are a thing of the past. They existed then because we could buy both businesses and stocks at far more attractive prices than we can now, and also because we then had a much smaller capital base, a situation that allowed us to consider a much wider range of investment opportunities than are available to us today.</p>	<p>请注意我说的是“略微”超越 S&P，因为对伯克希尔来说，大幅超越 S&P 指数的情况已经成为历史，当初能够有这样的成绩，主要是因为那时不管企业或是股票的价格都相当低廉，而我们的资本规模相对也较小，那使得我们比现在有更多的投资机会可供选择。</p>
<p>Our optimism about Berkshire's performance is also tempered by the expectation -- indeed, in our minds, the virtual certainty -- that the S&P will do far less well in the next decade or two than it has done since 1982. A recent article in Fortune expressed my views as to why this is inevitable, and I'm enclosing a copy with this report.</p>	<p>此外我之所以对伯克希尔未来的表现如此有信心的原因在于，我认为 S&P 在未来一、二十年的表现将远远不如过去十几年的表现，在最近的财星杂志我发表了一篇文章解释这种无可避免的缘由，在年报后面我也附了一份供大家参考。</p>
<p>Our goal is to run our present businesses well -- a task made easy because of the outstanding managers we have in place -- and to acquire additional businesses having economic characteristics and managers comparable to those we already own. We made important progress in</p>	<p>我们的目标是把现有的事业给经营好 -- 这点对于现有优秀的经营阶层来说是件很简单的事，同时再设法取得具有相同竞争优势与优秀经理人的新事业，去年我们在这方面大有进展，不但买下了 Jordan 家具，同时还签约买</p>

<p>this respect during 1999 by acquiring Jordan's Furniture and contracting to buy a major portion of MidAmerican Energy. We will talk more about these companies later in the report but let me emphasize one point here: We bought both for cash, issuing no Berkshire shares. Deals of that kind aren't always possible, but that is the method of acquisition that Charlie and I vastly prefer.</p>	<p>下了 MidAmerican 能源大部分的股权，在报告的后段我还会详加介绍这两家公司，不过有一点我要强调的是，这两项购并案伯克希尔全部皆以现金进行交易，没有发行任何新股，虽然这样的交易方式可遇不可求，但却也是查理跟我比较偏好的。</p>
<p>Guides to Intrinsic Value</p>	<p>实质价值简介</p>
<p>I often talk in these pages about intrinsic value, a key, though far from precise, measurement we utilize in our acquisitions of businesses and common stocks. (For an extensive discussion of this, and other investment and accounting terms and concepts, please refer to our Owner's Manual on pages 55 - 62. Intrinsic value is discussed on page 60.)</p>	<p>在接下来的这一段，我要谈谈常常提到实质价值的观念，这是一个我们在进行企业购并与股票投资时，很重要但却很难明确界定的标准，(有关这个议题的广泛讨论，也包含其它投资与会计名词观念，请参阅股东手册)。</p>
<p>In our last four reports, we have furnished you a table that we regard as useful in estimating Berkshire's intrinsic value. In the updated version of that table, which follows, we trace two key components of value. The first column lists our per-share ownership of investments (including cash and equivalents but excluding assets held in our financial products operation) and the second column shows our per-share earnings from Berkshire's operating businesses before taxes and purchase-accounting adjustments (discussed on page 61), but after all interest and corporate expenses. The second column excludes <i>all</i> dividends, interest and capital gains that we realized from the investments presented in the first column. In effect, the columns show how Berkshire would look if it were split into two parts, with one entity holding our investments and the other operating all of our businesses and bearing all corporate costs.</p>	<p>在最近四年的年报中，我们提供了我们认为可以最能够估计伯克希尔实质价值的一张表，在今年刚刚更新资料的表中，我们以拟制的方式将通用再保的数字加入其中，也就是假设该公司自年度一开始就为我们所拥有，第一栏的数字代表我们拥有每股的投资金额(包括现金与约当现金，但扣除财务金融单位持有的证券)，第二栏则是每股在扣除利息与营业费用之后，伯克希尔来自本业的营业利益(但未扣除所得税与购买法会计调整数)，当然后者已经扣除了所有来自第一栏投资所贡献的股利收入、利息收入与资本利得，事实上，从这张表可以看出若是把伯克希尔分拆成两部份的话会变成怎样，其结果就等于是一家持有我们投资部位的控股公司，以及另一家经营旗下所有事业负担全部成本盈亏的营利事业。</p>
<p>Here are the growth rates of the two segments by decade:</p>	<p>下表是这两个部份每十年的成长率：</p>
<p>In 1999, our per-share investments changed very little, but our operating earnings, affected by negatives that overwhelmed some strong</p>	<p>1999 年，我们每股投资金额变化不大，但是每股营业利益却因为几个重大的负面因素而大幅滑落，我们大部</p>

<p>positives, fell apart. Most of our operating managers deserve a grade of A for delivering fine results and for having widened the difference between the intrinsic value of their businesses and the value at which these are carried on our balance sheet. But, offsetting this, we had a huge -- and, I believe, aberrational -- underwriting loss at General Re. Additionally, GEICO's underwriting profit fell, as we had predicted it would. GEICO's overall performance, though, was terrific, outstripping my ambitious goals.</p>	<p>分的经理人都得到 A 级以上的评价，大幅增加各自事业的实质价值与显示在资产负债表上的帐面价值，只不过可惜的是这一切的努力通通都被通用再保异常的承保损失给抵消掉了，此外 GEICO 的承保利益也一如预期地下滑，虽然其整体表现仍然远远超越当初我订下的严格目标。</p>
<p>We do not expect our underwriting earnings to improve in any dramatic way this year. Though GEICO's intrinsic value should grow by a highly satisfying amount, its underwriting performance is almost certain to weaken. That's because auto insurers, as a group, will do worse in 2000, and because we will materially increase our marketing expenditures. At General Re, we are raising rates and, if there is no mega-catastrophe in 2000, the company's underwriting loss should fall considerably. It takes some time, however, for the full effect of rate increases to kick in, and General Re is therefore likely to have another unsatisfactory underwriting year.</p>	<p>展望今年我们并不预期承保获利能够大幅改进，虽然 GEICO 的实质价值应该还是能够以一个令人满意的幅度增加，但其承保成绩却一定会滑落，原因在于车险业者在 2000 年整体的表现肯定不佳，也因为我们将投入大笔的行销经费，至于通用再保，我们已开始调高保费，只要 2000 年不要再发生重大的意外灾害的话，该公司的承保损失应该会大幅减少，不过保费调整的效果要完全显现，可能需要一段时间，所以可以预期的是通用再保明年的承保成绩肯定也不会好到哪里去。</p>
<p>You should be aware that one item regularly working to widen the amount by which intrinsic value exceeds book value is the annual charge against income we take for amortization of goodwill -- an amount now running about \$500 million. This charge reduces the amount of goodwill we show as an asset and likewise the amount that is included in our book value. This is an accounting matter having nothing to do with true economic goodwill, which increases in most years. But even if economic goodwill were to remain constant, the annual amortization charge would persistently widen the gap between intrinsic value and book value.</p>	<p>财报中有一个叫做商誉摊销的费用项目是大家要特别注意的，伯克希尔每年固定提列的金额大约在五亿美元左右，这个动作使得资产负债表上商誉的会计数字逐年递减，但却与实质经济稳定成长的现况背道而驰，而就算是实质的经济商誉价值维持不变，每年固定提列的商誉摊销费用也会使得帐上的商誉与实际上的商誉价值间的差距日益扩大。</p>
<p>Though we can't give you a precise figure for Berkshire's intrinsic value, or even an approximation, Charlie and I can assure you that</p>	<p>虽然我们无法给各位一个伯克希尔实际价值的确切数字，这实在是很难去估算，不过查理跟我可以向各位保证，</p>

it far exceeds our \$57.8 billion book value. Businesses such as See's and Buffalo News are now worth fifteen to twenty times the value at which they are carried on our books. Our goal is to continually widen this spread at all subsidiaries.	实际的数字绝对远超过 578 亿美元的帐面价值，许多事业包含水牛城新闻报与喜斯糖果在内的实际价值大概是帐面价值的十五到二十倍之间，不过我们的目标是继续让子公司扩大这样的差距。
A Managerial Story You Will Never Read Elsewhere	别处读不到的经营故事
Berkshire's collection of managers is unusual in several important ways. As one example, a very high percentage of these men and women are independently wealthy, having made fortunes in the businesses that they run. They work neither because they need the money nor because they are contractually obligated to -- we have no contracts at Berkshire. Rather, they work long and hard because they love their businesses. And I use the word "their" advisedly, since these managers are truly in charge -- there are no show-and-tell presentations in Omaha, no budgets to be approved by headquarters, no dictums issued about capital expenditures. We simply ask our managers to run their companies as if these are the sole asset of their families and will remain so for the next century.	伯克希尔的经营团队在许多方面与众不同，举个例子来说，这些先生女士大部分都已经相当有钱，靠着自己经营的事业致富，他们之所以愿意继续留在工作岗位上，并不是因为缺钱或是有任何合约上的限制，事实上伯克希尔并没有跟他们签订任何契约，他们之所以辛勤工作，完全是因为他们热爱自己的事业，而我之所以用“他们”这个字眼，是因为他们对这些事业完全负全责，不需要到奥玛哈做演示文稿，也不需要编预算送交总部核准，对于任何开支也没有繁复的规定，我们只是简单地要他们就像是经营自己祖传百年的事业一样来对待即可。
Charlie and I try to behave with our managers just as we attempt to behave with Berkshire's shareholders, treating both groups as we would wish to be treated if our positions were reversed. Though "working" means nothing to me financially, I love doing it at Berkshire for some simple reasons: It gives me a sense of achievement, a freedom to act as I see fit and an opportunity to interact daily with people I like and trust. Why should our managers -- accomplished artists at what they do -- see things differently?	查理跟我与这些经理人保持互动的模式，与我们和伯克希尔所有股东保持的互动模式一致，那就是试着尽量站在对方的立场为大家设想，虽然我本人早就可以不必为了经济因素而工作，不过我还是很喜欢现在在伯克希尔所做的这些事，原因很简单，因为这让我很有成就感、可以自由的去做我认为应该做的事，同时让我每天都有机会与欣赏及信赖的人一起共事，所以为什么我们旗下的经理人-在各自产业卓然有成的大师，一定要有不同的想法呢？
In their relations with Berkshire, our managers often appear to be hewing to President Kennedy's charge, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." Here's a remarkable story from last year: It's about R. C. Willey, Utah's dominant home furnishing business, which Berkshire purchased from Bill	在与伯克希尔母公司的关系上，我们的经理人通常恪守甘乃迪总统曾说过的名言，“不要问国家为你做了什么，问问你为国家做了什么？”以下就是去年一个最明显的例子，这是有关 R. C. Willey-犹它州家具业的霸主，伯克希尔是在 1995 年从 Bill Child 家

Child and his family in 1995. Bill and most of his managers are Mormons, and for this reason R. C. Willey's stores have never operated on Sunday. This is a difficult way to do business: Sunday is the favorite shopping day for many customers. Bill, nonetheless, stuck to his principles -- and while doing so built his business from \$250,000 of annual sales in 1954, when he took over, to \$342 million in 1999.	族买下这家公司的, Bill 跟他大部分的经营团队都是摩门教徒, 也因此他们的店星期天从来不开张, 这样的惯例实在是不适合用在做生意上, 因为对大部分的顾客来说, 星期假日正是他们出外血拼的大好时机, 不过尽管如此, Bill 还是坚守这项原则, 而且将这家店从 1954 年他接手时的 25 万美金营业额, 一路成长到 1999 年的 3.42 亿美元。
Bill felt that R. C. Willey could operate successfully in markets outside of Utah and in 1997 suggested that we open a store in Boise. I was highly skeptical about taking a no-Sunday policy into a new territory where we would be up against entrenched rivals open seven days a week. Nevertheless, this was Bill's business to run. So, despite my reservations, I told him to follow both his business judgment and his religious convictions.	Bill 认为 R.C. Willey 应该也能够在此在犹它州以外的地区成功开拓市场, 因此在 1997 年我们在 Boise 设立一家分店, 不过我还是相当怀疑这种星期天不营业的政策能否在陌生的地区抵抗每周七天无休的对手强力的竞争, 当然由于这是 Bill 负责经营的事业, 所以尽管我对这点持保留的态度, 但是我还是尊重他的商业判断与宗教信仰。
Bill then insisted on a truly extraordinary proposition: He would personally buy the land and build the store -- for about \$9 million as it turned out -- and would sell it to us at his cost if it proved to be successful. On the other hand, if sales fell short of his expectations, we could exit the business without paying Bill a cent. This outcome, of course, would leave him with a huge investment in an empty building. I told him that I appreciated his offer but felt that if Berkshire was going to get the upside it should also take the downside. Bill said nothing doing: If there was to be failure because of his religious beliefs, he wanted to take the blow personally.	Bill 后来甚至提出一个非常特别的提案, 那就是他愿意先花九百万美元, 以私人的名义买下土地, 等建筑物盖好, 确定营运良好之后, 再以成本价卖回给我们, 而要是营运不如预期, 那么公司可以不必付出一毛钱, 虽然这样他必须独力承担庞大的损失, 对此我告诉 Bill 很感谢他的提议, 但若伯克希尔想要获取投资的报酬, 那么它也必须同时承担可能的风险, Bill 没有多说什么, 只是表示如果因为个人的宗教信仰而使得公司经营不善, 他希望能够独力承担这个苦果。
The store opened last August and immediately became a huge success. Bill thereupon turned the property over to us -- including some extra land that had appreciated significantly -- and we wrote him a check for his cost. And get this: <i>Bill refused to take a dime of interest on the capital he had tied up over the two years.</i>	这家店后来顺利于去年八月开幕, 立即造成当地的轰动, Bill 随即就将产权办理过户, 另外包含一些地价已高涨的土地, 并收下我们以成本价开出的支票, 还有一点必须特别说明, 对于两年来陆续投入的资金, Bill 婉拒收取任何一毛钱的利息。
If a manager has behaved similarly at some other public corporation, I haven't heard about it. You	从来就没有一家公开发行公司的经理人会这样做, 至少我个人没有听说过,

can understand why the opportunity to partner with people like Bill Child causes me to tap dance to work every morning.	所以各位不难想象能够与这样的经理人共事，让我每天早上上班时都雀跃不已。
* * * * * A footnote: After our "soft" opening in August, we had a grand opening of the Boise store about a month later. Naturally, I went there to cut the ribbon (your Chairman, I wish to emphasize, is good for <i>something</i>). In my talk I told the crowd how sales had far exceeded expectations, making us, by a considerable margin, the largest home furnishings store in Idaho. Then, as the speech progressed, my memory miraculously began to improve. By the end of my talk, it all had come back to me: Opening a store in Boise had been <i>my</i> idea.	附带一提的是，在八月简单的开幕仪式之后，一个月后我们在 Boise 举行了盛大的开幕仪式，自然我也受邀参加开幕剪彩，(我必须强调看来你们的董事长还是有点用处的)，在致词时我告诉在场的来宾销售状况远超过我们当初的预期，让我们成为 Idaho 地区最大的家具店，远远将其它同业抛在脑后，而等到致词快结束时，我突然想起来，当初决定在 Boise 开店的，正是我的主意。
The Economics of Property/Casualty Insurance	产物意外险的经营
Our main business -- though we have others of great importance -- is insurance. To understand Berkshire, therefore, it is necessary that you understand how to evaluate an insurance company. The key determinants are: (1) the amount of float that the business generates; (2) its cost; and (3) most critical of all, the long-term outlook for both of these factors.	保险是我们最主要的本业，当然其它事业也相当重要，想要了解伯克希尔，你就必须知道如何去评估一家保险公司，其中主要的关键因素有(1)这个行业所能产生的浮存金数量(2)以及它的成本(3)最重要的是这些因素长期的展望。
To begin with, float is money we hold but don't own. In an insurance operation, float arises because premiums are received before losses are paid, an interval that sometimes extends over many years. During that time, the insurer invests the money. This pleasant activity typically carries with it a downside: The premiums that an insurer takes in usually do not cover the losses and expenses it eventually must pay. That leaves it running an "underwriting loss," which is the cost of float. An insurance business has value if its cost of float over time is less than the cost the company would otherwise incur to obtain funds. But the business is a lemon if its cost of float is higher than market rates for money.	首先浮存金是一项我们持有但却不属于我们的资金，在保险公司的营运中，浮存金产生的原因在于保险公司在真正支付损失理赔之前，一般会先向保户收取保费，在这期间保险公司会将资金运用在其它投资之上，当然这样的好处也必须要付出代价，通常保险业者收取的保费并不足以因应最后支付出去的相关损失与费用，于是保险公司便会发生承保损失，这就是浮存金的成本，而当一家公司取得浮存金成本，就长期而言低于从其它管道取得资金的成本时，它就有存在的价值，否则一旦保险事业取得浮存金的成本若远高于货币市场利率时，它就像是一颗极酸的柠檬。
A caution is appropriate here: Because loss costs must be estimated, insurers have enormous latitude in figuring their underwriting results,	有一点必须特别注意的是，因为损失成本必须仰赖估算，所以保险业者对于承保结算的成绩有相当大伸缩的空

<p>and that makes it very difficult for investors to calculate a company's true cost of float. Errors of estimation, usually innocent but sometimes not, can be huge. The consequences of these miscalculations flow directly into earnings. An experienced observer can usually detect large-scale errors in reserving, but the general public can typically do no more than accept what's presented, and at times I have been amazed by the numbers that big-name auditors have implicitly blessed. In 1999 a number of insurers announced reserve adjustments that made a mockery of the "earnings" that investors had relied on earlier when making their buy and sell decisions. At Berkshire, we strive to be conservative and consistent in our reserving. Even so, we warn you that an unpleasant surprise is always possible.</p>	<p>间，连带使得投资人很难正确地衡量一家保险公司真正的浮存金成本，估计错误，通常是无心，但有时却是故意，与真实的结果往往会有很大的差距，而这种结果直接反映在公司的损益表上，有经验的行家通常可以经由公司的准备提列情形发现重大的错误，但对于一般投资大众来说，除了被迫接受财务报表的数字之外，别无他法，而我个人常常被这些经过各大会计师事务所背书的财务报告所吓到，1999年有许多保险业者宣布对先前不当提列准备而导致投资人形成错误决策的骗术进行调整，不过在伯克希尔，我们在提列准备时，都尽量采取最保守的做法，不过我还是要警告大家，保险业所发生的意外，通常都不会是什么好消息。</p>
<p>The table that follows shows (at intervals) the float generated by the various segments of Berkshire's insurance operations since we entered the business 33 years ago upon acquiring National Indemnity Company (whose traditional lines are included in the segment "Other Primary"). For the table we have calculated our float -- which we generate in large amounts relative to our premium volume -- by adding net loss reserves, loss adjustment reserves, funds held under reinsurance assumed and unearned premium reserves, and then subtracting agents balances, prepaid acquisition costs, prepaid taxes and deferred charges applicable to assumed reinsurance. (Got that?)</p>	<p>下表中所显示的数字是，伯克希尔自取得国家产险公司经营权，进入保险事业 33 年以来所贡献的浮存金，(其中传统业务包含在其它主险项下)，在这张计算浮存金的表中，(相对于收到的保费收入，我们持有的浮存金部位算是相当大的) 我们将所有的损失准备、损失费用调整准备、再保预先收取的资金与未赚取保费加总后，再扣除应付佣金、预付购并成本、预付税负以及取得再保业务的相关递延费用，得出浮存金的数额，弄清楚了吗??</p>
<p>Growth of float is important -- but its cost is what's vital. Over the years we have usually recorded only a small underwriting loss -- which means our cost of float was correspondingly low -- or actually had an underwriting profit, which means we were being <i>paid</i> for holding other people's money. Indeed, our cumulative result through 1998 was an underwriting profit. In 1999, however, we incurred a \$1.4 billion underwriting loss that left us with float cost of 5.8%. One mildly mitigating factor: We enthusiastically</p>	<p>浮存金持续成长虽然很重要，但是取得它的成本却更关键，多年以来，我们的承保损失一直控制在相当低的限度，这代表我们浮存金的成本也非常的低，有时甚至还有承保的利益，这等于是由别人付费来保管他们的钱，就像是我们 1998 年结算下来就有承保利益，只不过很不幸的，我们 1999 年发生了 14 亿美元的承保损失，这使得我们浮存金的成本一下暴增到 5.8%，令人庆幸的是，其中有一笔 4</p>

welcomed \$400 million of the loss because it stems from business that will deliver us exceptional float over the next decade. The balance of the loss, however, was decidedly unwelcome, and our overall result must be judged extremely poor. Absent a mega-catastrophe, we expect float cost to fall in 2000, but any decline will be tempered by our aggressive plans for GEICO, which we will discuss later.	亿美元的损失，将可以在未来十年内提供给我们一笔高额的浮存金，当然其它的损失就让人觉得不太愉快，这样的成绩很明显的让人无法接受，除非再发生重大的天灾人祸，我们预期2000年的浮存金成本将会下降，不过任何的下降都必须面临 GEICO 强力行销计划的阻拦，关于这点在后面我还会再详细叙述。
There are a number of people who deserve credit for manufacturing so much "no-cost" float over the years. Foremost is Ajit Jain. It's simply impossible to overstate Ajit's value to Berkshire: He has from scratch built an outstanding reinsurance business, which during his tenure has earned an underwriting profit and now holds \$6.3 billion of float.	能够取得这笔免成本的浮存金要归功于许多人，这其中贡献最大的当属 Ajit Jain，他对于伯克希尔贡献的价值实在是难以估算，在他的任期间，从无到有一手建立起伯克希尔的再保险事业，如今不但持有 63 亿美元的浮存金，同时每年还维持稳定的承保获利。
In Ajit, we have an underwriter equipped with the intelligence to properly rate most risks; the realism to forget about those he can't evaluate; the courage to write huge policies when the premium is appropriate; and the discipline to reject even the smallest risk when the premium is inadequate. It is rare to find a person possessing any one of these talents. For one person to have them all is remarkable.	在 Ajit 的身上，我们看到一位核保人员如何运用智能将风险合理的订价，能够理性回绝无法衡量的风险，同时又能勇敢地接受高额但合理的保单，纪律地拒绝任何不合理订价的微小风险，我们很难在一般人身上找到这类的特点，而要三者合一更是绝无仅有。
Since Ajit specializes in super-cat reinsurance, a line in which losses are infrequent but extremely large when they occur, his business is sure to be far more volatile than most insurance operations. To date, we have benefitted from good luck on this volatile book. Even so, Ajit's achievements are truly extraordinary.	而自从 Ajit 全心全力投入巨灾的再保业务之后，这是损失发生及不稳定，但一旦发生即非常惨重的险种，可以肯定的是，Ajit 绝对将面临比其它险种变动更大的状况，所幸到目前为止，伯克希尔在这类业务的运气还算不错，但即便如此，Ajit 的表现依然可圈可点。
In a smaller but nevertheless important way, our "other primary" insurance operation has also added to Berkshire's intrinsic value. This collection of insurers has delivered a \$192 million underwriting profit over the past five years while supplying us with the float shown in the table. In the insurance world, results like this are uncommon, and for their feat we thank Rod Eldred, Brad Kinstler, John Kizer, Don Towle and Don Wurster.	其它规模较小但同等重要的“其它保险”营运一样为伯克希尔增添了许多实质价值，总结过去五年来，这群保险公司为我们贡献了 1.92 亿美元的承保利益，外加下表所显示的浮存金，在保险世界里，能够有这样的成绩实属不易，这都要感谢 Rod、Brad、John、Don 等人。

As I mentioned earlier, the General Re operation had an exceptionally poor underwriting year in 1999 (though investment income left the company well in the black). Our business was extremely underpriced, both domestically and internationally, a condition that is improving but not yet corrected. Over time, however, the company should develop a growing amount of low-cost float. At both General Re and its Cologne subsidiary, incentive compensation plans are now directly tied to the variables of float growth and cost of float, the same variables that determine value for owners.	就像是先前我曾提过的，通用再保 1999 年的承保绩效相当的惨烈，（虽然投资利益足以让这家公司免于赤字），我们的保费订价实在是过低，不管是国内或海外业务皆是如此，虽然目前情况已有改进但却尚未完全矫正过来，不过就长期而言，我认为这家公司应该还是能够稳定地贡献低成本的浮存金，目前在通用再保以及其位于科隆的子公司，经理人的绩效奖金多寡完全取决于浮存金成长速度以及其取得成本，这同时也是股东们最重视，也是决定公司价值的几项主要数据。
Even though a reinsurer may have a tightly focused and rational compensation system, it cannot count on every year coming up roses. Reinsurance is a highly volatile business, and neither General Re nor Ajit's operation is immune to bad pricing behavior in the industry. But General Re has the distribution, the underwriting skills, the culture, and -- with Berkshire's backing -- the financial clout to become the world's most profitable reinsurance company. Getting there will take time, energy and discipline, but we have no doubt that Ron Ferguson and his crew can make it happen.	虽然再保业者都有一套相当明确、合理的奖励计划，但实在是能保证每年都能够有亮丽的成绩，再保业是变动相当大的产业，不管是通用再保或甚至是 Ajit 都很难免除业者杀价竞争的不当行为，不过通用再保拥有行销通路、承保技巧、企业文化等优势，加上在伯克希尔强大的财务支持之下，极有潜力成为全世界获利最佳的再保公司，当然要达到这样的目标绝对需要时间、精力以及纪律，相信 Ron Ferguson 及其经营团队绝对能够完成这个目标。
GEICO (1-800-847-7536 or GEICO.com)	盖可保险 (1-800-847-7536 or GEICO.com)
GEICO made exceptional progress in 1999. The reasons are simple: We have a terrific business idea being implemented by an extraordinary manager, Tony Nicely. When Berkshire purchased GEICO at the beginning of 1996, we handed the keys to Tony and asked him to run the operation exactly as if he owned 100% of it. He has done the rest. Take a look at his scorecard:	盖可 1999 年的成长十分惊人，原因很简单：一个绝佳的经营想法由最优秀的经理人-Tony Nicely 加以落实，当伯克希尔在 1996 年初买下盖可时，我们立刻把钥匙交到 Tony 的手上，请他把这家公司当作是自己拥有的一样的心态去经营，接下来就看他的表演，大家可以看一看他的成绩单。
"Voluntary" only; excludes assigned risks and the like. ⁽²⁾ Revised to exclude policies moved from one GEICO company to another. In 1995, GEICO spent \$33 million on marketing and had 652 telephone counselors. Last year the company spent \$242 million, and the counselor count grew to 2,631. And we are just starting:	1995 年，盖可花了 3,300 万美元在行销活动之上，旗下拥有 652 位电话咨询顾问，去年公司预算提高为 2.42 亿美元，咨询顾问的人数增加为 2,631 位，这还只是刚起步而已，展望 2000 年还会大幅的成长，行销预算预计会突破 10 亿美元，只要我们确认

<p>The pace will step up materially in 2000. Indeed, we would happily commit \$1 billion annually to marketing if we knew we could handle the business smoothly and if we expected the last dollar spent to produce new business at an attractive cost.</p>	<p>每一块钱都花在刀口之上，同时自信有能力顺利处理蜂拥而至的生意。</p>
<p>Currently two trends are affecting acquisition costs. The bad news is that it has become more expensive to develop inquiries. Media rates have risen, and we are also seeing diminishing returns -- that is, as both we and our competitors step up advertising, inquiries per ad fall for all of us. These negatives are partly offset, however, by the fact that our closure ratio -- the percentage of inquiries converted to sales -- has steadily improved. Overall, we believe that our cost of new business, though definitely rising, is well below that of the industry. Of even greater importance, our operating costs for renewal business are the lowest among broad-based national auto insurers. Both of these major competitive advantages are sustainable. Others may copy our model, but they will be unable to replicate our economics.</p>	<p>就目前而言，有两项因素会影响到保单取得成本，不利的是现在每增加一通询问电话的单位成本比过去大大提高，媒体曝光率虽然增加，但询问的响应却相对减少，也就是说在我们与竞争对手同时卯足全力加强宣传时，每家业者每段广告所贡献的询问电话也同步递减，所幸这种负面效果因为我们成交率(每通询问电话真正成交的比率)稳定地增加而减少，总的来说，我们新保单的取得成本虽然增加，但还是远低于同业的水准，而更重要的是，我们续约保单的营运成本更是全美保险业者当中最低的，这两项极重要的竞争优势应该可以继续维持下去，别人或许可以抄袭我们的营运模式，但他们绝对没有办法复制我们的经济规模。</p>
<p>The table above makes it appear that GEICO's retention of policyholders is falling, but for two reasons appearances are in this case deceiving. First, in the last few years our business mix has moved away from "preferred" policyholders, for whom industrywide retention rates are high, toward "standard" and "non-standard" policyholders for whom retention rates are much lower. (Despite the nomenclature, the three classes have similar profit prospects.) Second, retention rates for relatively new policyholders are always lower than those for long-time customers -- and because of our accelerated growth, our policyholder ranks now include an increased proportion of new customers. Adjusted for these two factors, our retention rate has changed hardly at all.</p>	<p>上表显示 GEICO 的保单续约率正在下降当中，这其中有两个原因造成此种假象，第一，过去几年来，我们的产品组合重心已从原先续约率本来就比较高的指定保户，转成续约率普遍比较低的标准与非标准保户，(虽然名称不同，但三者的获利水准差异不大)，第二，新保户的续约率通常都比长期保户的续约率来得低许多，而因为近年来我们的业务成长快速，所以新保户的比重相对提高，在扣除这两项因素之后，我们的续约率其实变化不大。</p>
<p>We told you last year that underwriting margins for both GEICO and the industry would fall in 1999, and they did. We make a similar prediction for 2000. A few years ago margins got too wide,</p>	<p>去年我就曾向各位表示 1999 年 GEICO 以及整个保险业界的承保利润率将会下滑，事后证明确是如此，过去几年来由于意外发生的频率与严重</p>

having enjoyed the effects of an unusual and unexpected decrease in the frequency and severity of accidents. The industry responded by reducing rates -- but now is having to contend with an increase in loss costs. We would not be surprised to see the margins of auto insurers deteriorate by around three percentage points in 2000.	性出乎意料的低，所以整个业界得以享有不错的利润率，而业者也因此陆续反应调降费率，只是好景不常，最近损失又有逐步上扬的趋势，所以要是2000年的承保利润率再下滑3个百分点的话，我们一点都不会感到意外。
Two negatives besides worsening frequency and severity will hurt the industry this year. First, rate increases go into effect only slowly, both because of regulatory delay and because insurance contracts must run their course before new rates can be put in. Second, reported earnings of many auto insurers have benefitted in the last few years from reserve releases, made possible because the companies overestimated their loss costs in still-earlier years. This reservoir of redundant reserves has now largely dried up, and future boosts to earnings from this source will be minor at best.	除此之外保险业还有两项因素可能使得意外发生的频率与程度加剧而受到伤害，第一是费率的反应通常需要一段时间，一方面是法律规范的限制，一方面是新费率要等到旧合约到期后才能开始实施，第二，许多保险同业由于几年来损失成本普遍高估，所以损失准备回冲的结果，使得财务报表上盈余看起来还不错，不过这些额外多出来的准备已损耗的差不多了，后续能够支撑盈余数字的准备数量将极其有限。
In compensating its associates -- from Tony on down -- GEICO continues to use two variables, and only two, in determining what bonuses and profit-sharing contributions will be: 1) its percentage growth in policyholders and 2) the earnings of its "seasoned" business, meaning policies that have been with us for more than a year. We did outstandingly well on both fronts during 1999 and therefore made a profit-sharing payment of 28.4% of salary (in total, \$113.3 million) to the great majority of our associates. Tony and I love writing those checks.	为了慰劳同仁们的辛劳，从 Tony 以降，GEICO 都利用两项，惟二的两项数据当作评估绩效与奖金分红的标准，1)是保费收入增长的比率；2)是续约保户(泛指投保超过一年的客户)的承保获利表现，1999 这两年两项数字都十分优异，因此我们加发了相当于28.4%年薪的奖金(金额合计 1.133 亿美元)给公司所有的同仁，Tony 跟我一向很乐意签发这类支票。
At Berkshire, we want to have compensation policies that are both easy to understand and in sync with what we wish our associates to accomplish. Writing new business is expensive (and, as mentioned, getting more expensive). If we were to include those costs in our calculation of bonuses -- as managements did before our arrival at GEICO -- we would be penalizing our associates for garnering new policies, even though these are very much in Berkshire's interest. So, in effect, we say to our associates	在伯克希尔，我们希望奖励规定不但明了易懂，且与我们希望同仁努力完成的目标方向一致，签发新保单的成本相当的高(而且如同刚刚提到的，还有越来越贵的趋势)，也因此如果将这部份的成本列入计算奖金的公式当中，这正是我们在入主 GEICO 前公司经营阶层的做法，此举无异让员工认为取得新保单是对他们的一种变相惩罚，虽然这明明对伯克希尔来说是很有益处的一件事，所以我们站出来告

that we will foot the bill for new business. Indeed, because percentage growth in policyholders is part of our compensation scheme, we <i>reward</i> our associates for producing this initially-unprofitable business. And then we reward them additionally for holding down costs on our seasoned business.	诉员工，请大家放心公司会为新保单所付出的成本买单，甚且把保户成长率也当作是奖励公式的一部份，同仁得以因为这类新增加但不赚钱的保单而获得奖励，当然要是有人能够降低续约保户维持成本的，同样也能获得奖励。
Despite the extensive advertising we do, our best source of new business is word-of-mouth recommendations from existing policyholders, who on the whole are pleased with our prices and service. An article published last year by <i>Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine</i> gives a good picture of where we stand in customer satisfaction: The magazine's survey of 20 state insurance departments showed that GEICO's complaint ratio was well below the ratio for most of its major competitors.	虽然我们大举投入广告活动，但我们新保单的主要来源还是来自于原来保户的口碑相传，因为他们对于我们的服务与价格感到满意而向其它人推荐，去年私人理财杂志 Kiplinger 曾经发表一篇文章，贴切的说明 GEICO 在消费者心中满意的程度，该杂志总计在访问了 20 个州立保险部门后发现，GEICO 的申诉比率最低，而且远低于主要竞争同业的平均数。
Our strong referral business means that we probably could maintain our policy count by spending as little as \$50 million annually on advertising. That's a guess, of course, and we will never know whether it is accurate because Tony's foot is going to stay on the advertising pedal (and my foot will be on his). Nevertheless, I want to emphasize that a major percentage of the \$300-\$350 million we will spend in 2000 on advertising, as well as large additional costs we will incur for sales counselors, communications and facilities, are optional outlays we choose to make so that we can both achieve significant growth and extend and solidify the promise of the GEICO brand in the minds of Americans.	由于我们已建立了不错的口碑，所以很有可能我们每年只要花 5,000 万美元的广告费就可以维持既有的保单数量，但那仅仅是大胆的猜测，永远没有人知道其正确性，因为 Tony 仍然会持续地踩着强力广告的油门，(而我也会插一脚)，不过有一点我必须强调的是，在 2000 年的 3 亿到 3.5 亿广告预算以及更多投资在销售顾问、通讯设备等花费当中，有绝大部分并非必要支出，但我们之所以仍然愿意投入，主要就是希望在提升保费收入成长的同时，还能维持甚至加强美国人心目中 GEICO 对于承诺付诸实现的形象。
Personally, I think these expenditures are the best investment Berkshire can make. Through its advertising, GEICO is acquiring a direct relationship with a huge number of households that, on average, will send us \$1,100 year after year. That makes us -- among all companies, selling whatever kind of product -- one of the country's leading direct merchandisers. Also, as we build our long-term relationships with more and more families, cash is pouring in rather than	就我个人观点而言，我认为这是伯克希尔能够做的最好投资，经由大量广告，GEICO 可以直接与更多的美国家庭建立起直接的关系，年复一年每个家庭平均提供 1,100 美元的资金给我们运用，这使得我们在众多销售各式各样产品的公司当中，成为全美最畅销的直销产品之一，而随着我们与更多的美国家庭建立起长期的关系，现金更将源源不绝的流入(在这里完全

going out (no Internet economics here). Last year, as GEICO increased its customer base by 766,256, it gained \$590 million of cash from operating earnings and the increase in float.	不靠网络), 去年随着 GEICO 的客户数量增加到 766,256 人, 包含营业利润以及浮存金增加就贡献了 5.9 亿美元的资金。
In the past three years, we have increased our market share in personal auto insurance from 2.7% to 4.1%. But we rightfully belong in many more households -- maybe even yours. Give us a call and find out. About 40% of those people checking our rates find that they can save money by doing business with us. The proportion is not 100% because insurers differ in their underwriting judgments, with some giving more credit than we do to drivers who live in certain geographic areas or work at certain occupations. Our closure rate indicates, however, that we more frequently offer the low price than does any other national carrier selling insurance to all comers. Furthermore, in 40 states we can offer a special discount -- usually 8% -- to our shareholders. Just be sure to identify yourself as a Berkshire owner so that our sales counselor can make the appropriate adjustment.	过去三年以来, 我们在汽车保险的占有率从原先的 2.7% 提高到 4.1%, 无疑地我们属于全美许多家庭的, 甚至可能是你们家的, 打个电话给我们试看看, 大约有四成的人在看过我们的费率之后, 会发现可以为他们省下一大笔钱, (我只所以没说 100% 的原因在于, 每家保险业者对于风险的估计都不同, 有些保险公司对于居住于某些特定地区的居民与从事某些特定职业的客户有偏好, 不过我仍然坚信我们提供给一般民众的费率通常都低于其它全国性的业者, 在随年报附赠的 GEICO 资料中, 大家将可以看到我们提供给来自全美 40 州股东最高 8% 的折扣费率, 至于其它州的股东也接受开放申请取得不等的折扣。
It's with sadness that I report to you that Lorimer Davidson, GEICO's former Chairman, died last November, a few days after his 97 th birthday. For GEICO, Davy was a business giant who moved the company up to the big leagues. For me, he was a friend, teacher and hero. I have told you of his lifelong kindnesses to me in past reports. Clearly, my life would have developed far differently had he not been a part of it. Tony, Lou Simpson and I visited Davy in August and marveled at his mental alertness -- particularly in all matters regarding GEICO. He was the company's number one supporter right up to the end, and we will forever miss him.	在这里很遗憾地向各位报告, GEICO 前董事长-Lorimer Davidson, 于去年十一月去世, 享年 97 岁, 对于 GEICO 来说, 大卫是带领公司跃上台面的企业巨人, 而对我个人来说, 他是我的偶像, 亦师亦友, 在过去年度的报告中, 我不只一次的提到他对我个人的关照, 很显然的要是没有他, 我个人的一生可能要完全改观, Tony、Lou Simpson 与我在去年八月还曾经去拜访他, 对于他当时的记忆力还佩服不已, 尤其是有关 GEICO 的点点滴滴, 一直以来, 他就是 GEICO 公司的头号支持者, 我们将会永远地怀念他。
Aviation Services	航空服务业
Our two aviation services companies -- FlightSafety International ("FSI") and Executive Jet Aviation ("EJA") -- are both runaway leaders in their field. EJA, which sells and manages the fractional ownership of jet aircraft, through its NetJetsR program, is	我们旗下两家航空服务公司-国际飞安(FSI)以及企业主管飞行服务(EJA)都是各自产业的领导者, EJA 所推出的 NetJets 计划, 专门出售并为客户管理其拥有的专机部份所有权, 目前的占有率超过其它两家主要竞争业者

larger than its next two competitors combined. FSI trains pilots (as well as other transportation professionals) and is five times or so the size of its nearest competitor.	的总和, FSI 则专门训练机师(也包含其它专门运输人员),其规模是其它最大竞争业者的五倍。
Another common characteristic of the companies is that they are still managed by their founding entrepreneurs. Al Ueltschi started FSI in 1951 with \$10,000, and Rich Santulli invented the fractional-ownership industry in 1986. These men are both remarkable managers who have no financial need to work but thrive on helping their companies grow and excel.	这些公司另外还有一项特点就是到目前为止, 都是由原来的创办人在经营, Al Ueltschi 在 1951 年以 10,000 美元创立 FSI, 而 Rich Santulli 则是在 1986 年开创部份所有权事业, 这两位都是相当杰出的企业家, 目前他们早已不需要为了钱而工作, 不过现在依然在自己的岗位上兢兢业业地让自己创立的公司继续发扬光大。
Though these two businesses have leadership positions that are similar, they differ in their economic characteristics. FSI must lay out huge amounts of capital. A single flight simulator can cost as much as \$15 million -- and we have 222. Only one person at a time, furthermore, can be trained in a simulator, which means that the capital investment per dollar of revenue at FSI is exceptionally high. Operating margins must therefore also be high, if we are to earn a reasonable return on capital. Last year we made capital expenditures of \$215 million at FSI and FlightSafety Boeing, its 50%-owned affiliate.	虽然两家公司所领导的产业相当类似, 但却有很不相同的竞争形态, FSI 需要相当密集的资金, 光是一台飞行仿真器就要耗资 1,500 万, 现在我们拥有 222 台, 而且每一台仿真器, 一次只能训练一位飞行员, 这意味着每一元营收所要投入的资本支出相当的高, 也因此要维持一定的投资报酬, 营业毛利一定要够高, 去年 FSI 与其持股 50% 的国际飞安-波音的资本支出达 2.15 亿美元。
At EJA, in contrast, the customer owns the equipment, though we, of course, must invest in a core fleet of our own planes to ensure outstanding service. For example, the Sunday after Thanksgiving, EJA's busiest day of the year, strains our resources since fractions of 169 planes are owned by 1,412 customers, many of whom are bent on flying home between 3 and 6 p.m. On that day, and certain others, we need a supply of company-owned aircraft to make sure all parties get where they want, when they want.	相对的由于 EJA 的设备所有权属于客户, 当然我们也必须投资一部份资金取得核心机队的所有权以维持高档的服务水准, 举例来说, 在 EJA 每年最忙碌的感恩节后的那个星期天, 简直就把我们给忙坏了, 由于 169 架飞机分别属于 1,412 位所有权人, 许多人都想要在当天下午三点到六点使用飞机, 所以我们绝对有必要准备额外自有的飞机, 好让每个客人在任何时候到达任何他想要到的地方。
Still, most of the planes we fly are owned by customers, which means that modest pre-tax margins in this business can produce good returns on equity. Currently, our customers own planes worth over \$2 billion, and in addition we have \$4.2 billion of planes on order. Indeed, the limiting factor in our business right now is the	当然大部分的飞机还是属于客户所有, 意思是说在这行只要有合理的税前毛利, 股东的投资报酬就相当可观, 现在我们客户拥有的飞机价值超过 20 亿美元, 后续我们陆续又下了许多飞机订单, 金额总计 42 亿美元, 确实目前限制公司营运成长的主要因素就

availability of planes. We now are taking delivery of about 8% of all business jets manufactured in the world, and we wish we could get a bigger share than that. Though EJA was supply-constrained in 1999, its recurring revenues -- monthly management fees plus hourly flight fees -- increased 46%.	在于飞机数量，现在我们的订单约占全世界飞机制造交货量的 8%，我们希望能够再提高这个比重，虽然 EJA 在 1999 年增加的供给量有限，但其固定的营收，也就是客户每个月固定按飞行时数缴交的管理费仍然成长了 46%。
The fractional-ownership industry is still in its infancy. EJA is now building critical mass in Europe, and over time we will expand around the world. Doing that will be expensive -- very expensive -- but we will spend what it takes. Scale is vital to both us and our customers: The company with the most planes in the air worldwide will be able to offer its customers the best service. "Buy a fraction, get a fleet" has real meaning at EJA.	专机所有权的产业还在刚起步的阶段，EJA 目前在欧洲尚在累积经济规模当中，长期而言我们将计划进军全世界的市场，当然要这样做，必须再投入相当大的资本，相当相当的大，不过只要值得，我们都愿意，对于我们与客户而言，规模经济是最关键的因素，只有在全世界各地拥有最多飞机的公司才能提供给客户最好的服务，“买下部份所有权，你就能拥有全部的机队”，在 EJA 将不只是个梦。
EJA enjoys another important advantage in that its two largest competitors are both subsidiaries of aircraft manufacturers and sell only the aircraft their parents make. Though these are fine planes, these competitors are severely limited in the cabin styles and mission capabilities they can offer. EJA, in contrast, offers a wide array of planes from five suppliers. Consequently, we can give the customer whatever <i>he</i> needs to buy -- rather than his getting what the competitor's parent needs to sell.	EJA 还享有另外一个非常重要的优势，那就是它的两家主要竞争对手都只是国际飞机制造业者的子公司，所以它们被迫只能提供母公司制造的飞机，虽然这些都是好飞机，但竞争对手却因此大大受限于机舱形式以及能够提供的机种用途，相较之下，EJA 则能够提供由全世界五大飞机制造公司所生产的全系列飞机，所以我们可以给客户任何他想要的飞机形式，而不是被动接受其母公司的飞机。
Last year in this report, I described my family's delight with the one-quarter (200 flight hours annually) of a Hawker 1000 that we had owned since 1995. I got so pumped up by my own prose that shortly thereafter I signed up for one-sixteenth of a Cessna V Ultra as well. Now my annual outlays at EJA and Borsheim's, combined, total ten times my salary. Think of this as a rough guideline for your own expenditures with us.	去年在年报当中，我曾经形容我的家族自从 1995 年来买下四分之一的（也就是每年 200 小时）的霍克 1000 型飞机所有权的愉快经验，不久之后，我又再接再厉签约买下一架 Cessna V Ultra 型六分之一的所有权，现在每年我在 EJA 以及波仙珠宝的花费大概是我年薪的十倍，如此大家可以据此推算你可以负担的底限在哪里。
During the past year, two of Berkshire's outside directors have also signed on with EJA. (Maybe we're paying them too much.) You should be aware that they and I are charged exactly the same price for planes and service as is any other customer:	去年，伯克希尔有两位外部董事也与 EJA 签约买下部份所有权，（可见我们付给他们的酬劳过高），我可以向大家保证我们付出的价格与得到的服务和其它客户并无二致，在 EJA 我们推行”

EJA follows a "most favored nations" policy, with no one getting a special deal.	最惠国待遇"政策,没有人可以得到特别的对待。
And now, brace yourself. Last year, EJA passed the ultimate test: <i>Charlie signed up</i> . No other endorsement could speak more eloquently to the value of the EJA service. Give us a call at 1-800-848-6436 and ask for our "white paper" on fractional ownership.	\现在赶快加入我们的行列吧!因为EJA 已经通过最严格的考验,连查理都已经签约了,再也没有比这个更能说明EJA 提供的服务所代表的价值,记得打电话 1-800-848-6436 索取申请部份所有权的表格。
Acquisitions of 1999	1999 年的购并活动
At both GEICO and Executive Jet, our best source of new customers is the happy ones we already have. Indeed, about 65% of our new owners of aircraft come as referrals from current owners who have fallen in love with the service.	不管是 GEICO 或者是 EJA, 我们新客户的来源主要还是来自于现有客户的介绍,事实上,在专机部份所有权计划中有 65%的新客户是来自于现有满意公司服务的老客户所推介。
Our acquisitions usually develop in the same way. At other companies, executives may devote themselves to pursuing acquisition possibilities with investment bankers, utilizing an auction process that has become standardized. In this exercise the bankers prepare a "book" that makes me think of the Superman comics of my youth. In the Wall Street version, a formerly mild-mannered company emerges from the investment banker's phone booth able to leap over competitors in a single bound and with earnings moving faster than a speeding bullet. Titillated by the book's description of the acquiree's powers, acquisition-hungry CEOs -- Lois Lanes all, beneath their cool exteriors -- promptly swoon.	我们的购并行动发生的形态一向很类似,在别的公司,高阶主管通常亲自与投资银行家一起寻求可能的购并机会,所运用的拍卖程序相当制式化,在过程中银行业者准备的帐册让我想到童年时代读到的"超人"漫画,只不过在华尔街版,换成一家本来平淡无奇的公司进到了银行业者特地准备的电话亭后,摇身一变成了一跃升天,盈余成长飞快的超人,而抵挡不住卖方帐册所叙述的神力,购并案饥渴成痴的买方,就像是具有冷艳外表的露易丝,立刻融化在其膝下。
What's particularly entertaining in these books is the precision with which earnings are projected for many years ahead. If you ask the author-banker, however, what his own firm will earn <i>next month</i> , he will go into a protective crouch and tell you that business and markets are far too uncertain for him to venture a forecast.	而在这其中最有趣的是,这些资料所显示未来几年的盈余预测都相当明确,不过要是你问问编造这些报表的银行业者,他们自己银行下个月的盈余预估,他会马上露出警戒的神色告诉你,产业与市场的状况是如何变化多端,以致于他无法妄下定论。
Here's one story I can't resist relating: In 1985, a major investment banking house undertook to sell Scott Fetzer, offering it widely -- but with no success. Upon reading of this strikeout, I wrote Ralph Schey, then and now Scott Fetzer's CEO, expressing an interest in buying the business. I had never met Ralph, but within a week	以下有一则故事我忍不住想补充,故事发生在 1985 年,有一家非常大的投资银行受委托负责出售史考特-飞兹公司,然而在经过多方的推销后却仍无功而返,在得知这样的情况后,我立即写信给史考特-飞兹当时的总裁-Ralph Schey 表达买下该公司的意

<p>we had a deal. Unfortunately, Scott Fetzter's letter of engagement with the banking firm provided it a \$2.5 million fee upon sale, even if it had nothing to do with finding the buyer. I guess the lead banker felt he should do something for his payment, so he graciously offered us a copy of the book on Scott Fetzter that his firm had prepared. With his customary tact, Charlie responded: "I'll pay \$2.5 million <i>not</i> to read it."</p>	<p>愿，在这之前我从来没有与 Ralph 见过面，不过在一个礼拜之内我们便达成协议，可惜令人遗憾的是，在该公司与投资银行所签订的意向书中明订，一旦公司顺利找到买主便须支付 250 万美元给银行，即便最后的买主与该银行无关也要照付，事后我猜想，或许是该银行认为既然拿了钱，多少都应该办点事，所以他们好心地将先前准备的财务资料提供一份给我们，收到这样的礼物时，查理冷冷地响应说：“我宁愿再多付 250 万美元也不要看这些垃圾。”</p>
<p>At Berkshire, our carefully-crafted acquisition strategy is simply to wait for the phone to ring. Happily, it sometimes does so, usually because a manager who sold to us earlier has recommended to a friend that he think about following suit.</p>	<p>在伯克希尔，我们精心设计的购并策略很简单—就是静静地等待电话铃响，可喜的是，有时还真管用，通常是先前加入我们集团的经理人，甲好道休报，建议其周遭的好朋友可以如法炮制。</p>
<p>Which brings us to the furniture business. Two years ago I recounted how the acquisition of Nebraska Furniture Mart in 1983 and my subsequent association with the Blumkin family led to follow-on transactions with R. C. Willey (1995) and Star Furniture (1997). For me, these relationships have all been terrific. Not only did Berkshire acquire three outstanding retailers; these deals also allowed me to become friends with some of the finest people you will ever meet.</p>	<p>在这里我不免要提到我们的家具事业，两年前我回想到当初在 1983 年我是如何买下内布拉斯加家具店，以及如何透过 B 太太家族与 R. C. 威利家具 (1995 年) 及星辰家具 (1997 年) 结缘的经过，就我个人而言，这些经验实在是棒极了，伯克希尔不但得到了三家杰出的零售事业，同时也让我得以认识全天下最好的朋友。</p>
<p>Naturally, I have persistently asked the Blumkins, Bill Child and Melvyn Wolff whether there are any more out there like you. Their invariable answer was the Tatelman brothers of New England and their remarkable furniture business, Jordan's.</p>	<p>因此自然而然地，我就不断地询问 B 太太家族、Bill 及 Melvyn 身旁有没有像你们一样好的人，他们异口同声的回答都是住在新英格兰州的 Tatelman 兄弟，以及他们优秀的事业—乔丹家具。</p>
<p>I met Barry and Eliot Tatelman last year and we soon signed an agreement for Berkshire to acquire the company. Like our three previous furniture acquisitions, this business had long been in the family -- in this case since 1927, when Barry and Eliot's grandfather began operations in a Boston suburb. Under the brothers' management, Jordan's has grown ever more dominant in its region,</p>	<p>终于在去年我见到了 Tatelman 兄弟—Barry 以及 Eliot，很快地我们就签下由伯克希尔买下乔丹家具的契约，如同先前的三次购并案，这也是一家家族企业，时间要追溯至 1927 年，当时由两兄弟的祖父在波士顿市郊创立，之后在两兄弟戮力经营下，不但成为当地家具业的龙头，更进一步跃</p>

becoming the largest furniture retailer in New Hampshire as well as Massachusetts.	升为新罕布什尔州以及麻州最大的家具零售店。
The Tatelmans don't just sell furniture or manage stores. They also present customers with a dazzling entertainment experience called "shoppertainment." A family visiting a store can have a terrific time, while concurrently viewing an extraordinary selection of merchandise. The business results are also extraordinary: Jordan's has the highest sales per square foot of any major furniture operation in the country. I urge you to visit one of their stores if you are in the Boston area -- particularly the one at Natick, which is Jordan's newest. Bring money.	Tatelman 兄弟不光只是贩卖家具或者是管理店面，他们还提供上门的顾客一种全新的消费经验，他们称之为“血拼秀”，合家光顾的客人不但可以见到各式各样的商品，同时还可享受一段愉快的时光，这样的经营成果无疑让人印象深刻，乔丹家具拥有全美每平方英尺最高的营业额，如果你家住在波士顿地区，衷心建议你可上门看一看，尤其是位于 Natick 新开幕的那一家，记得要带钱！
Barry and Eliot are classy people -- just like their counterparts at Berkshire's three other furniture operations. When they sold to us, they elected to give each of their employees at least 50¢ for every hour that he or she had worked for Jordan's. This payment added up to \$9 million, which came from the Tatelmans' own pockets, not from Berkshire's. And Barry and Eliot were thrilled to write the checks.	Barry 与 Eliot 堪称为谦谦君子，就像是伯克希尔旗下其它三家家具店一样，当他们顺利把公司卖给伯克希尔之后，他们决定至少为店里的每位员工加发每小时 50 美分，乘以他们在该店任职时间的薪水，总计最后的金额是 900 万美元，全部由两兄弟个人而不是伯克希尔的口袋支应，记得当时两兄弟在签支票时手还会发抖。
Each of our furniture operations is number one in its territory. We now sell more furniture than anyone else in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Texas, Nebraska, Utah and Idaho. Last year Star's Melvyn Wolff and his sister, Shirley Toomim, scored two major successes: a move into San Antonio and a significant enlargement of Star's store in Austin.	我们旗下每一家家具店都是当地首屈一指的业者，目前我们在麻州、新罕布什尔州、德州、内布拉斯加州、犹它州以及爱达荷州等地的市场占有率都是第一，去年星辰家具的 Melvyn 连同他姊姊 Shirley 又再下两城，成功在圣安东尼奥以及奥斯丁大展身手。
There's no operation in the furniture retailing business remotely like the one assembled by Berkshire. It's fun for me and profitable for you. W. C. Fields once said, "It was a woman who drove me to drink, but unfortunately I never had the chance to thank her." I don't want to make that mistake. My thanks go to Louie, Ron and Irv Blumkin for getting me started in the furniture business and for unerringly guiding me as we have assembled the group we now have.	世上没有一家家具业的经营能够像伯克希尔一样，这是我个人的乐趣，也是各位获利的关键所在，W. C. Fields 曾经说过：“是女人让我沈于酒国，可惜我从来没有机会得以好好地谢谢她”，我不想犯下相同的错误，在此我要感谢 Louie、Ron、Irv 等人，是他们让我得以与家具业结缘，而且毫无疑问地引导我组成现今的梦幻组合。
Now, for our second acquisition deal: It came to us through my good friend, Walter Scott, Jr., chairman of Level 3 Communications and a director	接下去要报告的是第二个购并案，这件案子系透过我多年的好朋友，Level 3 通讯公司董事长，同时也是伯克希

of Berkshire. Walter has many other business connections as well, and one of them is with MidAmerican Energy, a utility company in which he has substantial holdings and on whose board he sits. At a conference in California that we both attended last September, Walter casually asked me whether Berkshire might be interested in making a large investment in MidAmerican, and from the start the idea of being in partnership with Walter struck me as a good one. Upon returning to Omaha, I read some of MidAmerican's public reports and had two short meetings with Walter and David Sokol, MidAmerican's talented and entrepreneurial CEO. I then said that, at an appropriate price, we would indeed like to make a deal.	尔董事-Walter Scott 牵线而成，Walter 个人也拥有相当多的人脉，其中他在一家能源事业-中美能源公司拥有相当多的股份，同时也担任该公司的董事，去年九月我们共同出席一场在加州举行的研讨会，Walter 不无意地问我是否有兴趣投资中美能源公司，在当时我就直觉地认为这应该是一个很好的主意，回到奥玛哈之后，我看了一下中美能源的相关资料，并与 Walter 及中美能源才能兼具的总裁 David Sokol 短暂地见了两次面，当场我就表示，只要价位合适，我想成交的可能性很高。
Acquisitions in the electric utility industry are complicated by a variety of regulations including the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935. Therefore, we had to structure a transaction that would avoid Berkshire gaining voting control. Instead we are purchasing an 11% fixed-income security, along with a combination of common stock and exchangeable preferred that will give Berkshire just under 10% of the voting power of MidAmerican but about 76% of the equity interest. All told, our investment will be about \$2 billion.	购并电力能源事业由于牵涉到包含 1935 年订定的公用事业控股公司法在内的各种行政法规而显得有些复杂，因此我们必须设计一个交易，以避免伯克希尔取得多数的控制权，最后决定由我们出资购买 11%固定收益的证券，加上部份普通股与可转换特别股的特殊组合，把伯克希尔对中美能源的表决权压在 10%以下，同时又能持有该公司 76%的权益，总计全部加起来的投资金额超过 20 亿美元。
Walter characteristically backed up his convictions with real money: He and his family will buy more MidAmerican stock for cash when the transaction closes, bringing their total investment to about \$280 million. Walter will also be the controlling shareholder of the company, and I can't think of a better person to hold that post.	而 Walter 也以具体的行动来支持这项合并案，他与他的家人同样投入了大笔的资金买进更多的中美能源股份，累计投资的金额超过 2.8 亿美元，这使得他成为拥有该公司控制权的大股东，我想再也找不到比他更适合这个职位的人了。
Though there are many regulatory constraints in the utility industry, it's possible that we will make additional commitments in the field. If we do, the amounts involved could be large.	虽然在能源事业有许多法规的限制，但我们极有可能在这个产业投入更多的资金，如果真的实行，这个数字铁定十分可观。
Acquisition Accounting	购并案的会计处理
Once again, I would like to make some comments about accounting, in this case about its application to acquisitions. This is currently	再一次，我要对会计原则发表一些看法，这次是有关购并案的会计应用，到目前为止，这也是一项争议性相当

<p>a very contentious topic and, before the dust settles, Congress may even intervene (a truly terrible idea).</p>	<p>高的议题,在所有事件尘埃落定以前,甚至连国会议员都有可能会介入干涉(这听起来令人感到不寒而栗)。</p>
<p>When a company is acquired, generally accepted accounting principles ("GAAP") currently condone two very different ways of recording the transaction: "purchase" and "pooling." In a pooling, stock must be the currency; in a purchase, payment can be made in either cash or stock. Whatever the currency, managements usually detest purchase accounting because it almost always requires that a "goodwill" account be established and subsequently written off -- a process that saddles earnings with a large annual charge that normally persists for decades. In contrast, pooling avoids a goodwill account, which is why managements love it.</p>	<p>当一家公司被购并,通常一般公认会计原则(GAAP)容许两种截然不同的会计处理方法:一种是购买法;另一种是权益合并法,要运用权益合并法,交易的标的必须是股票,至于购买法则使用现金或股票皆可,但无论如何,管理阶层通常很排斥使用购买法,因为在大多数的情况下,公司的会计帐上会因此多出一项叫做“商誉”的会计科目,而此商誉日后还要分年摊销,意思是说在合并完成后,公司每年都要提列一笔为数庞大的商誉摊销费用列为损益数字的减项,而且时间可能长达数十年,相对地,权益合并法就没有这样的麻烦,可想而知这种方法广受一般高阶经理人的欢迎。</p>
<p>Now, the Financial Accounting Standards Board ("FASB") has proposed an end to pooling, and many CEOs are girding for battle. It will be an important fight, so we'll venture some opinions. To begin with, we agree with the many managers who argue that goodwill amortization charges are usually spurious. You'll find my thinking about this in the appendix to our 1983 annual report, which is available on our website, and in the Owner's Manual on pages 55 - 62.</p>	<p>如今财务会计准则委员会(FASB)有意取消权益合并法之运用,此举让许多高阶经理人为之跳脚而群起反对,可以预见双方将会有一场激烈的纷争,为此我们必须站出来发表个人的意见,首先我们同意许多经理人认为商誉摊销根本就不切实际的说法,大家可以在1983年年报的附录(已公布于本公司网站)以及股东手册55-62页,找到我个人对这件事的看法。</p>
<p>For accounting rules to mandate amortization that will, in the usual case, conflict with reality is deeply troublesome: Most accounting charges <i>relate</i> to what's going on, even if they don't precisely measure it. As an example, depreciation charges can't with precision calibrate the decline in value that physical assets suffer, but these charges do at least describe something that is truly occurring: Physical assets invariably deteriorate. Correspondingly, obsolescence charges for inventories, bad debt charges for receivables and accruals for warranties are among the charges that reflect true costs. The annual charges for these expenses can't be exactly measured, but the</p>	<p>对于强制规定摊销的会计原则,通常导致与现实严重不符,从而引发相当麻烦的问题,因为大部分的会计原则虽然无法准确地反应出实际状况,但最起码差异不大,举个例子来说,折旧费用的提列虽然无法完全地反映出实体资产价值减损的真实情况,但这种做法至少与现实发展的方向相一致,实体资产本来就必然会逐渐减损,同样的存货提列跌价损失、应收帐款提列呆帐费用以及保固责任提列准备都是反映潜在成本的合理做法,虽然这些费用成本难以准确的计算出来,但确实也有加以估计的必要。</p>

necessity for estimating them is obvious.	
In contrast, economic goodwill does not, in many cases, diminish. Indeed, in a great many instances -- perhaps most -- it actually grows in value over time. In character, economic goodwill is much like land: The value of both assets is sure to fluctuate, but the direction in which value is going to go is in no way ordained. At See's, for example, economic goodwill has grown, in an irregular but very substantial manner, for 78 years. And, if we run the business right, growth of that kind will probably continue for at least another 78 years.	但相对的，经济商誉在许多情况下，并不会减损或消失，事实上在大部分的案例中，商誉不但不减反而会随着时间的累积而增加，在某些特质上，经济商誉反而类似土地，两者的价值都会上下波动，但何时会增加，何时又会减少却不一定，以喜斯糖果的例子来说，在过去的 78 年来，其品牌价值以不规则但快速的速度成长，而只要我们经营得当，其品牌价值增长的态势很有可能再继续维持 78 年。
To escape from the fiction of goodwill charges, managers embrace the fiction of pooling. This accounting convention is grounded in the poetic notion that when two rivers merge their streams become indistinguishable. Under this concept, a company that has been merged into a larger enterprise has not been "purchased" (even though it will often have received a large "sell-out" premium). Consequently, no goodwill is created, and those pesky subsequent charges to earnings are eliminated. Instead, the accounting for the ongoing entity is handled as if the businesses had forever been one unit.	为了避免商誉不当的摊销，伟大的经理人们宁愿选择拥抱不当的权益合并法，这项会计创意源自于两条河川在汇流后就不必分彼此的概念，在这种观念下，一家被另一家更大公司购并的公司并不算是被“买下”的（虽然他们通常会得到相当的合并溢价），从而推论合并的过程并没有商誉会产生，自然而然也就没有随后令人感到麻烦的商誉摊销发生，反而应该要把这两家公司当作一开始就是一体的来看待。
So much for poetry. The reality of merging is usually far different: There is indisputably an acquirer and an acquiree, and the latter has been "purchased," no matter how the deal has been structured. If you think otherwise, just ask employees severed from their jobs which company was the conqueror and which was the conquered. You will find no confusion. So on this point the FASB is correct: In most mergers, a purchase has been made. Yes, there are some true "mergers of equals," but they are few and far between.	有点咬文嚼字，事实上这与合并背后所代表的事实真相却大不相同，毫无疑问的，既然有交易，就一定有购并方与被购并方，不管你如何修饰交易的条件细节，一定有一方是被另一方买下，其实很简单，只要你问问交易双方的员工，谁是征服者，而谁又是被征服者，就知道是怎么回事了，绝对不会搞混，所以从这个角度来看，FASB 的坚持绝对是正确的，在大部分的购并案中，绝对有买卖的性质存在，当然确实也有对等的合并个案发生，但出现的机率实在是少之又少。
Charlie and I believe there's a reality-based approach that should both satisfy the FASB, which correctly wishes to record a purchase, and meet the objections of managements to nonsensical charges for diminution of goodwill. We would	查理跟我始终相信应该有一个与现实相接轨的方法可以同时满足 FASB 想要正确的反应买卖交易实质的看法，以及经理人反对商誉不当摊销的呼声，我认为首先购并公司应该要以公

<p>first have the acquiring company record its purchase price -- whether paid in stock or cash -- at fair value. In most cases, this procedure would create a large asset representing economic goodwill. We would then leave this asset on the books, not requiring its amortization. Later, if the economic goodwill became impaired, as it sometimes would, it would be written down just as would any other asset judged to be impaired.</p>	<p>平市价认列其投资成本，不管是支付现金或是股票，当然在大多数的情况下，公司帐上会出现大笔的经济商誉，但我们应该让这项资产继续保留在会计帐上，而不是分年摊销，嗣后若公司的经济商誉真得有减损的情况，这不是没有可能，那么就按一般判断资产价值是否减损的方式去评估。</p>
<p>If our proposed rule were to be adopted, it should be applied retroactively so that acquisition accounting would be consistent throughout America -- a far cry from what exists today. One prediction: If this plan were to take effect, managements would structure acquisitions more sensibly, deciding whether to use cash or stock based on the real consequences for their shareholders rather than on the unreal consequences for their reported earnings.</p>	<p>如果我们提出的方案获得采用，预计将会追溯适用，以使得全美的购并会计处理原则都一致，而不是像现在一样乱象纷呈，可以预见的是，一旦这项方案开始施行，经理人一定会更审慎地处理购并案，小心评估到底应该使用现金或是攸关股东长远利益的股票，而不光只是看合并后的会计帐面损益而已。</p>
<p>In our purchase of Jordan's, we followed a procedure that will maximize the cash produced for our shareholders but minimize the earnings we report to you. Berkshire purchased assets for cash, an approach that on our tax returns permits us to amortize the resulting goodwill over a 15-year period. Obviously, this tax deduction materially increases the amount of cash delivered by the business. In contrast, when stock, rather than assets, is purchased for cash, the resulting writeoffs of goodwill are not tax-deductible. The economic difference between these two approaches is substantial.</p>	<p>在买下乔登家具的过程中，我们采用能够让伯克希尔股东未来的现金流量极大，而帐列盈余最小的方式，为此伯克希尔决定使用现金买下资产，此举让我们可以在分十五年摊提商誉费用时得到租税的抵减，而减税的效益，等于是让公司未来几年的现金流量明显的增加，相较之下，使用股票进行购并就没有这项好处，一次打销的商誉损失是无法用来抵税的，两者之间的经济实质差异再明显也不过了。</p>
<p>From the economic standpoint of the acquiring company, the worst deal of all is a stock-for-stock acquisition. Here, a huge price is often paid without there being any step-up in the tax basis of either the stock of the acquiree or its assets. If the acquired entity is subsequently sold, its owner may owe a large capital gains tax (at a 35% or greater rate), even though the sale may truly be producing a major economic loss.</p>	<p>从购并者的经济角度来看，最不划算的交易方式就是以股换股的做法，不但租税上没有任何好处，买方还要付出高额的购并溢价，而若买方之后再把这家公司卖掉，即使实际上公司承担庞大的经济损失，卖主还是要负担高额的资本利得税（税率往往高达35%以上）。</p>
<p>We have made some deals at Berkshire that used far-from-optimal tax structures. These deals</p>	<p>不过在伯克希尔我们也曾用过非租税最佳化的方式，主要的原因在于卖方</p>

occurred because the sellers insisted on a given structure and because, overall, we still felt the acquisition made sense. We have never done an inefficiently-structured deal, however, in order to make our figures look better.	基于某种原因的坚持，当然基本上我们也认为这样的规划还算合理，但是我们绝对不会因为要让帐面数字好看而牺牲任何的租税利益。
Sources of Reported Earnings	帐列盈余的来源
The table that follows shows the main sources of Berkshire's reported earnings. In this presentation, purchase-accounting adjustments are not assigned to the specific businesses to which they apply, but are instead aggregated and shown separately. This procedure lets you view the earnings of our businesses as they would have been reported had we not purchased them. For the reasons discussed on page 61, this form of presentation seems to us to be more useful to investors and managers than one utilizing generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), which require purchase-premiums to be charged off business-by-business. The total earnings we show in the table are, of course, identical to the GAAP total in our audited financial statements.	下表显示伯克希尔帐列盈余的主要来源，在这张表中商誉的摊销数与购买法会计调整数会从个别被投资公司分离出来，单独加总列示，之所以这样做是为了让旗下各事业的盈余状况，不因我们的投资而有所影响，过去我一再地强调我们认为这样的表达方式，较之一般公认会计原则要求以个别企业基础做调整，不管是对投资者或是管理者来说，更有帮助，当然最后损益加总的数字仍然会与经会计师查核的数字一致。
Almost all of our manufacturing, retailing and service businesses had excellent results in 1999. The exception was Dexter Shoe, and there the shortfall did not occur because of managerial problems: In skills, energy and devotion to their work, the Dexter executives are every bit the equal of our other managers. But we manufacture shoes primarily in the U.S., and it has become extremely difficult for domestic producers to compete effectively. In 1999, approximately 93% of the 1.3 billion pairs of shoes purchased in this country came from abroad, where extremely low-cost labor is the rule.	回顾 1999 年，我们旗下的制造、零售与服务业务的表现几乎接近完美，Dexter 鞋业除外，不过该公司的的问题不在于经营管理，就工作上的经验、活力与认真而言，Dexter 与其它子公司优秀的经理人毫无二致，主要的原因还在于我们的制造据点位于美国本土，缺乏竞争优势，总计 1999 年，在美国 13 亿双的鞋子消耗量中，93%来自于进口，廉价的劳工成本是主要的因素。
Counting both Dexter and H. H. Brown, we are currently the leading domestic manufacturer of shoes, and we are likely to continue to be. We have loyal, highly-skilled workers in our U.S. plants, and we want to retain every job here that we can. Nevertheless, in order to remain viable, we are sourcing more of our output internationally. In doing that, we have incurred	若再加上 H.H.Brown，我们是美国本土最大的鞋类生产者，我们仍将尽力维持这样的局面，我们的美国工厂拥有最忠诚，且最有经验的工人，我们希望能够保留每一个职位，但尽管如此，为了保持弹性，我们不得不开始从海外寻找潜在的代工来源，也因此在下表年度帐上提列部门调整的损

significant severance and relocation costs that are included in the earnings we show in the table.	失。
A few years back, Helzberg's, our 200-store jewelry operation, needed to make operating adjustments to restore margins to appropriate levels. Under Jeff Comment's leadership, the job was done and profits have dramatically rebounded. In the shoe business, where we have Harold Alfond, Peter Lunder, Frank Rooney and Jim Issler in charge, I believe we will see a similar improvement over the next few years.	几年前，在全美拥有 200 家分店的贺兹柏格钻石，为了恢复原有高毛利而在营运上做了许多调整，在 Jeff Comment 的领导下，目标顺利达成，利润率快速的回升，同样的在鞋业，我们拥有 Harold、Peter、Frank 以及 Jim 担纲，我相信在未来几年内也能有相同的成果。
See's Candies deserves a special comment, given that it achieved a record operating margin of 24% last year. Since we bought See's for \$25 million in 1972, it has earned \$857 million pre-tax. And, despite its growth, the business has required very little additional capital. Give the credit for this performance to Chuck Huggins. Charlie and I put him in charge the day of our purchase, and his fanatical insistence on both product quality and friendly service has rewarded customers, employees and owners.	此外在这里要特别提到喜斯糖果，因为它去年的营业利润高达 24%，自从我们在 1972 年以 2,500 万美元买下该公司以来，它已为我们贡献了 8.57 亿美元的税前净利，而尽管公司营运维持高成长，本身却不需要额外的资金加以支应，有鉴于 Chuck Huggins 过去优异的表现，我们在买下该公司的第一天起就把公司交给他负责，而他对产品品质与亲切服务的坚持，让顾客、员工与股东都受益良多。
Chuck gets better every year. When he took charge of See's at age 46, the company's pre-tax profit, expressed in millions, was about 10% of his age. Today he's 74, and the ratio has increased to 100%. Having discovered this mathematical relationship -- let's call it Huggins' Law -- Charlie and I now become giddy at the mere thought of Chuck's birthday.	Chuck 的表现一天比一天好，记得他接手喜斯时的年纪是 46 岁，公司的税前获利(单位百万美元)大概是他年纪的 10%，如今他高龄 74 岁，但这个比率却提高到 100%，在发现这个有趣的数字之后，我们把它称之为 Huggins 定律，现在查理跟我只要想到 Chuck 的生日快到时，就暗自窃喜不已。
Additional information about our various businesses is given on pages 39 - 54, where you will also find our segment earnings reported on a GAAP basis. In addition, on pages 63 - 69, we have rearranged Berkshire's financial data into four segments on a non-GAAP basis, a presentation that corresponds to the way Charlie and I think about the company.	有关其它关系企业的信息大家可以在 39-54 页找到，包含依照一般公认会计准则编制的部门别信息，此外在 63-69 页，你还可以找到经过重编，依照伯克希尔四大部门编排的信息(非按一般公认会计准则编制)，这是查理跟我认为最能够完整呈现伯克希尔现况的模式。
Look-Through Earnings	完整透视盈余
Reported earnings are an inadequate measure of economic progress at Berkshire, in part because the numbers shown in the table presented earlier include only the dividends we receive from investees -- though these dividends typically	我们认为帐列盈余很难表现伯克希尔实际的营运状况，部份原因在于列示在本公司帐上的股利收入，事实上仅占被投资公司收益的一小部份，其实我们并不要求盈余一定要分配，事实

represent only a small fraction of the earnings attributable to our ownership. Not that we mind this division of money, since on balance we regard the undistributed earnings of investees as more valuable to us than the portion paid out. The reason for our thinking is simple: Our investees often have the opportunity to reinvest earnings at high rates of return. So why should we want them paid out?	上对我们而言，我们更重视未分配的那一部份，因为他们极可能为我们创造出更高的价值，原因很简单，因为我们的被投资公司往往比母公司更有机会把资金投入到高投资报酬的用途之上，既然如此又何必一定要强迫他们把盈余分配回来呢？
To depict something closer to economic reality at Berkshire than reported earnings, though, we employ the concept of "look-through" earnings. As we calculate these, they consist of: (1) the operating earnings reported in the previous section, plus; (2) our share of the retained operating earnings of major investees that, under GAAP accounting, are not reflected in our profits, less; (3) an allowance for the tax that would be paid by Berkshire if these retained earnings of investees had instead been distributed to us. When tabulating "operating earnings" here, we exclude purchase-accounting adjustments as well as capital gains and other major non-recurring items.	为了要更真实的反应伯克希尔实际的经营状况，于是乎我们运用了完整透视盈余的观念，这个数字总共包含(1)前段所提到的帐列盈余，加上(2)主要被投资公司的保留盈余，按一般公认会计原则未反应在我们公司帐上的盈余，扣除(3)若这些未反应的盈余分配给我们时，估计可能要缴的所得税。在这里我们所谓的营业盈余系已扣除资本利得、特别会计调整与企业其它非常态的项目。
The following table sets forth our 1999 look-through earnings, though I warn you that the figures can be no more than approximate, since they are based on a number of judgment calls. (The dividends paid to us by these investees have been included in the operating earnings itemized on page 13, mostly under "Insurance Group: Net Investment Income.")	各位可以从下表看出我们是如何计算出 1999 年透视盈余的，不过我还是要提醒各位这些数字只不过是估计数，很多都是基于简单的判断，(被投资公司所分配的股利收入已经列在 13 页的营业利益之内，大部分包含在保险事业的净投资收益项下)。
Investments	投资
Below we present our common stock investments. Those that had a market value of more than \$750 million at the end of 1999 are itemized.	下表是伯克希尔 1999 年市价超过七亿五千万美元以上的股票投资。
* Represents tax-basis cost which, in aggregate, is \$691 million less than GAAP cost. We made few portfolio changes in 1999. As I mentioned earlier, several of the companies in which we have large investments had disappointing business results last year. Nevertheless, we believe these companies have important competitive advantages that will endure over	1999 年我们只做了些许的变动，如同先前我曾提到的，去年有几家我们拥有重大投资部位的被投资公司其经营状况令人不甚满意，尽管如此，我们仍然相信这些公司拥有相当的竞争优势，可协助其继续稳定经营下去，这种可以让长期投资有不错成果的特点，是查理跟我还有点自信可以分辨

<p>time. This attribute, which makes for good long-term investment results, is one Charlie and I occasionally believe we can identify. More often, however, we can't -- not at least with a high degree of conviction. This explains, by the way, why we don't own stocks of tech companies, even though we share the general view that our society will be transformed by their products and services. Our problem -- which we can't solve by studying up -- is that we have no insights into which participants in the tech field possess a truly <i>durable</i> competitive advantage.</p>	<p>得出的地方，只是有时我们也不敢百分之百保证一定没问题，这也是为什么我们从来不买高科技股票的原因，即使我们不得不承认它们所提供的产品与服务将会改变整个社会，问题是一就算是我们再想破头，也没有能力分辨出在众多的高科技公司中，到底是哪一些公司拥有长远的竞争优势。</p>
<p>Our lack of tech insights, we should add, does not distress us. After all, there are a great many business areas in which Charlie and I have no special capital-allocation expertise. For instance, we bring nothing to the table when it comes to evaluating patents, manufacturing processes or geological prospects. So we simply don't get into judgments in those fields.</p>	<p>不过我必须强调，不懂高科技一点都不会让我感到沮丧，毕竟在这个世界上本来就有很多产业是查理跟我自认没有什么特殊的经验，举例来说，专利权评估、工厂制程与地区发展前景等，我们就一窍不通，所以我们从来不会想要在这些领域妄下评论。</p>
<p>If we have a strength, it is in recognizing when we are operating well within our circle of competence and when we are approaching the perimeter. Predicting the long-term economics of companies that operate in fast-changing industries is simply far beyond our perimeter. If others claim predictive skill in those industries -- and seem to have their claims validated by the behavior of the stock market -- we neither envy nor emulate them. Instead, we just stick with what we understand. If we stray, we will have done so inadvertently, not because we got restless and substituted hope for rationality. Fortunately, it's almost certain there will be opportunities from time to time for Berkshire to do well within the circle we've staked out.</p>	<p>如果说我们有什么能力，那就是我们深知要在具竞争优势的范围内，把事情尽量做好，以及明了可能的极限在哪里，而要预测在变化快速产业中经营的公司，其长期的经营前景如何，很明显的已超过我们的能力范围之外，如果有人宣称有能力做类似的预测，且以公司的股价表现做为左证，则我们一点也不会羡慕，更不会想要去仿效，相反的，我们会回过头来坚持我们所了解的东西，如果不幸偏离轨道，那也一定是不小心的，绝非慌张莽撞想要得到合理的解释，还好可以确信的是伯克希尔永远有机会找到它能力范围内可以做的事。</p>
<p>Right now, the prices of the fine businesses we already own are just not that attractive. In other words, we feel much better about the businesses than their stocks. That's why we haven't added to our present holdings. Nevertheless, we haven't yet scaled back our portfolio in a major way: If the choice is between</p>	<p>目前我们拥有的这些好公司的股票价格其实不甚吸引人，从另外一个角度来看，我们认为它们的本质比起股价表现要好得多，这也是为什么我们并不急着增加持股，尽管如此，我们也没有大幅降低持股部位，如果要在股价令人满意但有问题的公司与股价有</p>

a questionable business at a comfortable price or a comfortable business at a questionable price, we much prefer the latter. What really gets our attention, however, is a comfortable business at a comfortable price.	问题但令人满意的公司作选择，我们宁愿选择后者，当然真正会引起我们兴趣的，是那种公司令人满意，同时股价也令人满意的标的。
Our reservations about the prices of securities we own apply also to the general level of equity prices. We have never attempted to forecast what the stock market is going to do in the next month or the next year, and we are not trying to do that now. But, as I point out in the enclosed article, equity investors currently seem wildly optimistic in their expectations about future returns.	我们对于目前大盘的股价表现与先前对于本身持股投资组合股价的看法一致，我们从来不会想要试图去预估下个月或下一年度的股市走势，过去不会，现在也不会，不过如同我在附录的文章中指出的，股市投资人现在对于目前持股未来可能的投资报酬实在是显得过于乐观。
We see the growth in corporate profits as being largely tied to the business done in the country (GDP), and we see GDP growing at a real rate of about 3%. In addition, we have hypothesized 2% inflation. Charlie and I have no particular conviction about the accuracy of 2%. However, it's the market's view: Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities (TIPS) yield about two percentage points less than the standard treasury bond, and if you believe inflation rates are going to be higher than that, you can profit by simply buying TIPS and shorting Governments.	我们认为企业获利的成长幅度，与一个国家的国内生产毛额(GDP)的成长率成一定关系，而我们估计目前 GDP 的年增率大概只有 3%左右，此外再加上 2%预估通货膨胀，当然查理跟我无法对于 2%的准确性做任何保证，但这至少市场上一般的共识，预防通膨的国库券(TIPS)的利率大约也是一般政府公债减 2 个百分点左右，当然如果你感觉通货膨胀可能比这个数字还高，你大可以买进 TIPS，同时放空政府公债。
If profits do indeed grow along with GDP, at about a 5% rate, the valuation placed on American business is unlikely to climb by much more than that. Add in something for dividends, and you emerge with returns from equities that are dramatically less than most investors have either experienced in the past or expect in the future. If investor expectations become more realistic -- and they almost certainly will -- the market adjustment is apt to be severe, particularly in sectors in which speculation has been concentrated.	而如果公司获利果真与 GDP 预估 5% 的成长走势相当，那么大家在对美国企业进行评价时的预期，就不可能过于乐观，若再加计配发的股利，那么你可以得出的预计股票报酬率，可能远低于大部分投资人过去几年的投资绩效以及未来几年的投资预期，而如果投资人的期望可以变得更实际一点，我相信总有一天他们一定会，则股市将会进行一波相当大程度的修正，尤其是投机气氛特别重的那些类股。
Berkshire will someday have opportunities to deploy major amounts of cash in equity markets -- we are confident of that. But, as the song goes, "Who knows where or when?" Meanwhile, if anyone starts explaining to you what is going on	总有一天伯克希尔会有机会将大量的资金再度投入股市，这点我们相当有信心，不过就像有首歌的歌词是这样：“不知在何处？不知在何时？”当然要是有人想要试着跟你解释为何现今股市

in the truly-maniac portions of this "enchanted" market, you might remember still another line of song: "Fools give you reasons, wise men never try."	会如此的疯狂，请记住另一首歌的歌词：“笨蛋总是为不合理的事找理由，而聪明人则避而远之”。
Share Repurchases	买回库藏股
Recently, a number of shareholders have suggested to us that Berkshire repurchase its shares. Usually the requests were rationally based, but a few leaned on spurious logic.	最近有一些股东建议伯克希尔可以考虑从市场上买回公司的股份，通常这类的要求合情合理，但有时候他们背后依俟的逻辑却有点奇怪。
There is only one combination of facts that makes it advisable for a company to repurchase its shares: First, the company has available funds -- cash plus sensible borrowing capacity -- beyond the near-term needs of the business and, second, finds its stock selling in the market below its intrinsic value, conservatively-calculated. To this we add a caveat: Shareholders should have been supplied all the information they need for estimating that value. Otherwise, insiders could take advantage of their uninformed partners and buy out their interests at a fraction of true worth. We have, on rare occasions, seen that happen. Usually, of course, chicanery is employed to drive stock prices up, not down.	只有在一定条件下公司买回自家的股份才有意义，首先，公司在扣除短期周转所需之外还拥有多余的资金，(含现金与银行额度在内)，其次，其股价必须远低于其实质价值，关于这点我还有一点补充：股东必须还有足够信息来对公司进行评价，否则的话，公司内部人极有可能运用信息不对称的现象占不知情股东的便宜，以偏低的价格买到公司的股份，就伯克希尔而言，符合上述条件的情形并不多见，当然一般而言，大部分的公司通常都会诱使股东把股价拉高而非压低。
The business "needs" that I speak of are of two kinds: First, expenditures that a company must make to maintain its competitive position (e.g., the remodeling of stores at Helzberg's) and, second, optional outlays, aimed at business growth, that management expects will produce more than a dollar of value for each dollar spent (R. C. Willey's expansion into Idaho).	我提到的公司资金需求大概有两种情况：首先，公司要保留维持其根本的竞争优势的基本开支(例如贺兹柏格钻石店的重新装潢)，第二，其它每投入一块钱能够创造出高于一块钱价值的那类支出(例如 R. C. Willey 家具店在爱达荷州新成立的据点)。
When available funds exceed needs of those kinds, a company with a growth-oriented shareholder population can buy new businesses or repurchase shares. If a company's stock is selling well below intrinsic value, repurchases usually make the most sense. In the mid-1970s, the wisdom of making these was virtually screaming at managements, but few responded. In most cases, those that did made their owners much wealthier than if alternative courses of action had been pursued. Indeed, during the 1970s (and,	当一家公司的资金超过前述的资金需求，一家以成长导向的公司股东可以考虑买进新事业或是买回公司自家的股份，要是公司的股价远低于其实质的价值，买回股份通常最有利，在 1970 年代，投资大众就曾大声呼吁公司的经营阶层采取类似的做法，不过当时却很少有公司响应，真正落实的事后证明大大增进了股东的利益，而为多余资金另外找出路的公司则惨不忍睹，确实在 1970 年代(以及以后断

spasmodically, for some years thereafter) we searched for companies that were large repurchasers of their shares. This often was a tipoff that the company was both undervalued and run by a shareholder-oriented management.	断断续续好几年),我们专门锁定那些大量买回自家股份的公司,因为这种举动通常暗示这是一家公司股价被低估,同时又拥有相当注重股东权益的经营阶层。
That day is past. Now, repurchases are all the rage, but are all too often made for an unstated and, in our view, ignoble reason: to pump or support the stock price. The shareholder who chooses to sell today, of course, is benefitted by any buyer, whatever his origin or motives. But the <i>continuing</i> shareholder is penalized by repurchases above intrinsic value. Buying dollar bills for \$1.10 is not good business for those who stick around.	不过这种情况已成昨日黄花,虽然现在买回自家股份的公司比比皆是,但我们认为大部分的背后都隐含有一个令人鄙夷的动机,那就是为了要拉抬或支撑公司股价,这当然有利于在当时有意出售股份的股东,因为他们能够以不错的价格顺利出场,不管他的背景或出售的动机是什么,不过留下来的股东却因为公司以高于实质价值的价格买回股份而蒙受其害,以 1.1 美元的价格买进 1 块钱美钞的生意很明显的并不划算。
Charlie and I admit that we feel confident in estimating intrinsic value for only a portion of traded equities and then only when we employ a range of values, rather than some pseudo-precise figure. Nevertheless, it appears to us that many companies now making repurchases are overpaying departing shareholders at the expense of those who stay. In defense of those companies, I would say that it is natural for CEOs to be optimistic about their own businesses. They also know a whole lot more about them than I do. However, I can't help but feel that too often today's repurchases are dictated by management's desire to "show confidence" or be in fashion rather than by a desire to enhance per-share value.	查理跟我承认我们对于估计股票的实质价值还有点自信,但这也只限于一个价值区间,而绝非一个准确的数字,不过即便如此,我们还是很明显地可以看出许多公司目前以高价买回股份的举动,等于是让卖出股份的股东占尽留下来股东的便宜,当然站在公司的立场来看,大部分的主管对于自家公司有信心也是人之常情,但他们其实比我们更知道公司的一些内情,不管怎样,这些买回的举动总是让我认为压根就不是为了想要增进股东权益,而只不过是经营阶层想要展现自信或者一窝蜂跟进的心态而已。
Sometimes, too, companies say they are repurchasing shares to offset the shares issued when stock options granted at much lower prices are exercised. This "buy high, sell low" strategy is one many unfortunate investors have employed -- but never intentionally! Managements, however, seem to follow this perverse activity very cheerfully.	有时有的公司也会为了抵消先前发行低价认股选择权而买回股份,这种买高卖低的策略跟一般投资人无知的做法并无二致,但这种做法绝不像后者一样是无心的,然而这些经营阶层好象相当热衷于这种对于公司明显不利的举动。
Of course, both option grants and repurchases may make sense -- but if that's the case, it's not because the two activities are logically related. Rationally, a company's decision to	当然发放认股选择权与买回股份不见得就没有道理,但这是两码子事绝不能混为一谈,一家公司要决定买回自家的股份或发行新股,一定要有充分

<p>repurchase shares or to issue them should stand on its own feet. Just because stock has been issued to satisfy options -- or for any other reason -- does not mean that stock should be repurchased at a price above intrinsic value. Correspondingly, a stock that sells well below intrinsic value should be repurchased whether or not stock has previously been issued (or may be because of outstanding options).</p>	<p>的理由，如果只是因为公司发行的认股权被行使或其它莫名其妙的原因，就要强迫公司以高于实质价值的代价买回股份，实在是没有什么道理，相反的，只要公司的股价远低于其合理的价值，则不管公司先前是否发行过多的股份或选择权，都应该积极买回流通在外的股份。</p>
<p>You should be aware that, at certain times in the past, I have erred in <i>not</i> making repurchases. My appraisal of Berkshire's value was then too conservative or I was too enthused about some alternative use of funds. We have therefore missed some opportunities -- though Berkshire's trading volume at these points was too light for us to have done much buying, which means that the gain in our per-share value would have been minimal. (A repurchase of, say, 2% of a company's shares at a 25% discount from per-share intrinsic value produces only a ?% gain in that value at most -- and even less if the funds could alternatively have been deployed in value-building moves.)</p>	<p>在过去，伯克希尔确实有一段期间错过了买回自家股份的机会，一方面是由于我本身对于伯克希尔的评价本来就比较保守，也因为当时我将大部分的注意力摆在如何将资金更有效地运用在其它方面之上，此外由于伯克希尔本身的交易量本来就不大，实在是很难有机会买回足够的量，也就是说想要透过买回伯克希尔股份提高公司实质价值的可能性实在是很低，举例来说，假设我们有机会以低于实质价值 25% 的价格买回 2% 流通在外的股份，也只不过是让公司每股的实质价值增加 0.5% 而已，更何况还要再考量把这些资金运用到其它更能够创造价值的其它用途之上所代表的机会成本。</p>
<p>Some of the letters we've received clearly imply that the writer is unconcerned about intrinsic value considerations but instead wants us to trumpet an intention to repurchase so that the stock will rise (or quit going down). If the writer wants to sell tomorrow, his thinking makes sense -- for him! -- but if he intends to hold, he should instead hope the stock falls and trades in enough volume for us to buy a lot of it. That's the only way a repurchase program can have any real benefit for a continuing shareholder.</p>	<p>在我们收到的这些信件中，有的仅仅是要求我们对外释放买回股份的讯息，以藉此拉抬公司股价(或阻止股价进一步下滑)，但其实一点也不关心公司的实质价值，我们认为若是这些人明天就打算出售股份，那么这样的想法还算合理，至少就他本身立场而言，然而要是他根本就没打算处分持股，则他应该祈祷公司的股价进一步下滑，好让我们有机会可以进场买回足够的股份，这是伯克希尔唯一有可能藉由买回股份以增进股东权益的情况。</p>
<p>We will not repurchase shares unless we believe Berkshire stock is selling well below intrinsic value, conservatively calculated. Nor will we attempt to talk the stock up or down. (Neither publicly or privately have I ever told anyone to</p>	<p>除非我们认为伯克希尔的股价远低于其实质价值(经过保守的估算)，否则我们不会考虑买回自家股份，我们也不会发表任何意见来影响股价的高低走势，(不管是公开或私人的场合，我</p>

buy or sell Berkshire shares.) Instead we will give all shareholders -- and potential shareholders -- the same valuation-related information we would wish to have if our positions were reversed.	从来不会告诉任何人该买进或卖出伯克希尔的股份),相反的我们会设身处地的提供信息给所有的股东,也包含可能加入的潜在股东,藉此评估公司的价值。
Recently, when the A shares fell below \$45,000, we considered making repurchases. We decided, however, to delay buying, if indeed we elect to do <i>any</i> , until shareholders have had the chance to review this report. If we do find that repurchases make sense, we will only rarely place bids on the New York Stock Exchange ("NYSE"). Instead, we will respond to offers made directly to us at or below the NYSE bid. If you wish to offer stock, have your broker call Mark Millard at 402-346-1400. When a trade occurs, the broker can either record it in the "third market" or on the NYSE. We will favor purchase of the B shares if they are selling at more than a 2% discount to the A. We will not engage in transactions involving fewer than 10 shares of A or 50 shares of B.	最近当A股的股价跌落到45,000美元以下时,我们一度曾考虑要开始买回股份,不过后来我们还是决定要等看看,至少等股东们有机会看到年度报告后再说,而如果我们真的要买进,我们将不会经由纽约证券交易所(NYSE)下单,我们只会接受那些直接找上门的卖单,因此如果你有意卖回股份,请要求你的经纪人直接打电话402-346-1400给Mark Millard,成交之后,经纪人可以第三市场或在NYSE申报,若是有B股愿意以A股2%以上的折价卖回我们也很乐意接受,但A股低于10股或B股低于50股的交易恕不受理。
Please be clear about one point: We will <i>never</i> make purchases with the intention of stemming a decline in Berkshire's price. Rather we will make them if and when we believe that they represent an attractive use of the Company's money. At best, repurchases are likely to have only a very minor effect on the future rate of gain in our stock's intrinsic value.	请大家特别注意一点,我们绝对不会为了要阻止伯克希尔股价下滑而买回股份,我们之所以会这样做,完全是因为我们认为这样的资金运用对公司最有利,毕竟买回库藏股对提高公司股份未来的报酬率的影响实在是有限。
Shareholder-Designated Contributions	股东指定捐赠计划
About 97.3% of all eligible shares participated in Berkshire's 1999 shareholder-designated contributions program, with contributions totaling \$17.2 million. A full description of the program appears on pages 70 - 71.	大约有97.3%的有效股权参与1999年的股东指定捐赠计划,捐出的款项总计约1,720万美元,有关本计划详细的信息请参阅70-71页。
Cumulatively, over the 19 years of the program, Berkshire has made contributions of \$147 million pursuant to the instructions of our shareholders. The rest of Berkshire's giving is done by our subsidiaries, which stick to the philanthropic patterns that prevailed before they were acquired (except that their former owners themselves take on the responsibility for	累计过去19年以来,伯克希尔总计已依照股东意愿捐赠出高达1.47亿美元的款项,除了之外,伯克希尔还透过旗下的子公司进行捐赠,而这些慈善活动都是早在他们被我们购并以前就行之有年的(先前的老板自行本身负责的个人捐赠计划之外除外),总的来说,我们旗下的关系企业在1999

their personal charities). In aggregate, our subsidiaries made contributions of \$13.8 million in 1999, including in-kind donations of \$2.5 million.	年总计捐出 1,380 万美元, 其中包含 250 万美元等值的物品。
<i>To participate in future programs, you must own Class A shares that are registered in the name of the actual owner, not the nominee name of a broker, bank or depository. Shares not so registered on August 31, 2000, will be ineligible for the 2000 program. When you get the contributions form from us, return it promptly so that it does not get put aside or forgotten. Designations received after the due date will not be honored.</i>	想要参加这项计划者, 必须拥有 A 级普通股, 同时确定您的股份是登记在自己而非股票经纪人或保管银行的名下, 同时必须在 2000 年 8 月 31 日之前完成登记, 才有权利参与 2000 年的捐赠计划, 当你收到表格后, 请立即填写后寄回, 以免被丢在一旁给忘记了, 逾期恕不受理。
The Annual Meeting	年度股东大会
This year's Woodstock Weekend for Capitalists will follow a format slightly different from that of recent years. We need to make a change because the Aksarben Coliseum, which served us well the past three years, is gradually being closed down. Therefore, we are relocating to the Civic Auditorium (which is on Capitol Avenue between 18 th and 19 th , behind the Doubletree Hotel), the only other facility in Omaha offering the space we require.	今年资本家的伍斯达克周末将与往来的形态略有不同, 由于前几年年会固定的举办地点-阿肯萨本体育馆即将关闭, 所以今年我们将移师市立体育馆(位于首都街, 双树饭店后方), 全奥玛哈地区大概只剩这里拥有足够我们使用的空间。
The Civic, however, is located in downtown Omaha, and we would create a parking and traffic nightmare if we were to meet there on a weekday. We will, therefore, convene on Saturday, April 29, with the doors opening at 7 a.m., the movie beginning at 8:30 and the meeting itself commencing at 9:30. As in the past, we will run until 3:30 with a short break at noon for food, which will be available at the Civic's concession stands.	由于市立体育馆位于奥玛哈的市中心, 可想而知要是我们于周末期间在那里举行股东会, 铁定会造成停车与交通的梦魇, 因此我们决定在 4 月 29 日星期六举行股东会, 大门会在星期一早上七点开放, 同时电影短片照例会在八点半播放, 正式会议则从九点半开始, 扣除中午短暂的休息时间, (市立体育馆外备有各类点心摊), 整个会议将一直进行到下午三点半。
An attachment to the proxy material that is enclosed with this report explains how you can obtain the credential you will need for admission to the meeting and other events. As for plane, hotel and car reservations, we have again signed up American Express (800-799-6634) to give you special help. In our normal fashion, we will run buses from the larger hotels to the meeting. After the meeting, the buses will make trips back	后面附有股东会开会投票的相关资料, 向各位解释如何拿到入场所许的识别证, 由于预期会有相当多的人与会, 我们建议大家最好先预订机位与住宿, 美国运通(电话 800-799-6634)将会很高兴为您提供相关安排服务, 如同以往, 我们会安排巴士接送大家往返各大旅馆与会场之间, 并在会后接送大家到内布拉斯加家具店与波仙

to the hotels and to Nebraska Furniture Mart, Borsheim's and the airport. Even so, you are likely to find a car useful.	珠宝店或是到饭店与机场，当然你可能会觉得如何有一辆车就更方便了。
We have scheduled the meeting in 2002 and 2003 on the customary first Saturday in May. In 2001, however, the Civic is already booked on that Saturday, so we will meet on April 28. The Civic should fit our needs well on any weekend, since there will then be more than ample parking in nearby lots and garages as well as on streets. We will also be able to greatly enlarge the space we give exhibitors. So, overcoming my normal commercial reticence, I will see that you have a wide display of Berkshire products at the Civic that you can <i>purchase</i> . As a benchmark, in 1999 shareholders bought 3,059 pounds of See's candy, \$16,155 of World Book Products, 1,928 pairs of Dexter shoes, 895 sets of Quikut knives, 1,752 golf balls with the Berkshire Hathaway logo and 3,446 items of Berkshire apparel. I know you can do better.	今年(2001 年)由于市立体育馆的预定时间已提早被订走，所以我们被迫将时间改成4月28日，但明年(2002 年)后年(2003 年)的股东会我们仍将按照惯例在五月的第一个星期六举行，不论如何，市立体育馆应该能够满足我们的需要，因为周围拥有足够的停车位，同时提供的与会者空间将较以往宽敞许多，而我已成功克服了本身的商业坚持，我将保证各位在市立体育馆可以买到伯克希尔一系列的产品，去年的记录是大家总共搬走了3,059 磅的糖果、16,155 美元的世界百科全书与相关出版品、1,928 双 Dexter 鞋子、895 组 Quikut 小刀以及1,725 颗上面印有伯克希尔 Logo 的高尔夫球和3,446 件伯克希尔的衣服与帽子，我相信今年的成绩一定会更好。
Last year, we also initiated the sale of at least eight fractions of Executive Jet aircraft. We will again have an array of models at the Omaha airport for your inspection on Saturday and Sunday. Ask an EJA representative at the Civic about viewing any of these planes.	去年我们开始试着推出 EJA 的专机所有权，今年的星期六与星期天，在奥玛哈机场，我们仍将展示一系列的机队供大家参观，请到市立体育馆向 EJA 的业务代表洽询参观的事宜。
Dairy Queen will also be on hand at the Civic and again will donate all proceeds to the Children's Miracle Network. Last year we sold 4,586 DillyR bars, fudge bars and vanilla/orange bars. Additionally, GEICO will have a booth that will be staffed by a number of our top counselors from around the country, all of them ready to supply you with auto insurance quotes. In most cases, GEICO will be able to offer you a special shareholder's discount. Bring the details of your existing insurance, and check out whether we can save you some money.	乳品皇后也将再度在市立体育馆现场摆设摊位，同时将所得全数捐给儿童希望联盟，去年我们总共卖出 4,586 根 Dilly、雪花棒以及香草/橘子口味的巧克力棒，此外 GEICO 公司会再度派出各地区最优秀的业务员，在会场设立摊位，随时提供股东们汽车保单的报价，在大多数的情况下，GEICO 都可以提供给你一个相当优惠的股东折扣，各位记得将自己现在的投保资料带来，看看是否能帮自己省下一笔钱。
Finally, Ajit Jain and his associates will be on hand to offer both no-commission annuities and a liability policy with jumbo limits of a size rarely available elsewhere. Talk to Ajit and	最后 Ajit Jain 跟他的同事也会在现场受理巨额无佣金年金与责任保险的服务，其最高上限是你在别的地方所找不到的，记得找 Ajit 聊聊如何帮你

learn how to protect yourself and your family against a \$10 million judgment.	自己及家人规避 1,000 万美元以上的潜在风险。
NFM's newly remodeled complex, located on a 75-acre site on 72 nd Street between Dodge and Pacific, is open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. This operation offers an unrivaled breadth of merchandise -- furniture, electronics, appliances, carpets and computers -- all at can't-be-beat prices. In 1999 NFM did more than \$300 million of business at its 72 nd Street location, which in a metropolitan area of 675,000 is an absolute miracle. During the Thursday, April 27 to Monday, May 1 period, any shareholder presenting his or her meeting credential will receive a discount that is customarily given only to employees. We have offered this break to shareholders the last couple of years, and sales have been amazing. In last year's five-day "Berkshire Weekend," NFM's volume was \$7.98 million, an increase of 26% from 1998 and 51% from 1997.	NFM 位于道奇街与太平洋街, 新改装的大卖场占地 75 英亩, 营业时间平日从早上 10 点到下午 9 点, 星期六及星期日则从早上 10 点到下午 6 点, 提供各式各样的产品, 举凡家具、电子产品、小家电、地毯以及计算机, 全部都以超低的价格供大家选购, NFM 1999 年单店的营业额超过三亿美元, 以奥玛哈区区 67.5 万都会人口而言, 实在称得上是个商业奇迹, 在四月 27 日到五月 1 日股东会期间, 股东只要持随股东开会通知单附赠的优惠券到 NFM 购买各类商品, 都可获得员工价的优惠, 自从这项优惠推出以来, 销售业绩十分惊人, 以去年股东会的五天期间, NFM 的营业额高达 798 万美元, 较前两年分别增加 26% 及 51%。
Borsheim's -- the largest jewelry store in the country except for Tiffany's Manhattan store -- will have two shareholder-only events. The first will be a champagne and dessert party from 6 p.m. - 10 p.m. on Friday, April 28. The second, the main gala, will be from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday, April 30. On that day, Charlie and I will be on hand to sign <i>sales tickets</i> . Shareholder prices will be available Thursday through Monday, so if you wish to avoid the largest crowds, which will form on Friday evening and Sunday, come at other times and identify yourself as a shareholder. On Saturday, we will be open until 7 p.m. Borsheim's operates on a gross margin that is fully twenty percentage points below that of its major rivals, so be prepared to be blown away by both our prices and selection.	波仙珠宝-全美单店营业额仅次于纽约曼哈顿蒂芬妮的珠宝店, 在股东会期间将会有两场专为股东举办的展览会, 第一场是在四月 28 日的鸡尾酒会, 时间从下午 6 点到晚上 10 点, 第二场主秀则在四月 30 日举行, 从早上 9 点到下午 6 点, 当天查理跟我也会出席, 在现场接受大家凭发票索取签名, 在星期四到星期一的股东会期间, 波仙都将提供股东特惠价, 所以如果你希望避开星期五晚上到星期天的拥挤人潮, 你可以在其它的时间上门光顾, 记得表明股东的身份, 星期六我们会营业到晚上 7 点, 波仙的营业毛利要比其它主要竞争对手要低 20 个百分点以上, 所以请大家准备好席卷我们所有的商品吧!
In the mall outside of Borsheim's, we will again have Bob Hamman -- the best bridge player the game has ever seen -- available to play with our shareholders on Sunday. We will also have a few other experts playing at additional tables. In	照例桥牌界的传奇性人物 Bob Hamman 将会在星期天下午出席在波仙珠宝店外面大厅举办的一场桥牌大赛, 除此之外还会有其它桥牌高手与股东们同乐, 去年由于参加人数比预期多, 造

1999, we had more demand than tables, but we will cure that problem this year.	成牌桌不够, 今年我们将改善这个问题。
Patrick Wolff, twice US chess champion, will again be in the mall playing blindfolded against all comers. He tells me that he has never tried to play more than four games simultaneously while handicapped this way but might try to bump that limit to five or six this year. If you're a chess fan, take Patrick on -- but be sure to check his blindfold before your first move.	Patrick Wolff-美国棋两度冠军, 也会再度在会场蒙眼与所有挑战者对奕, 他向我透露, 他从来没有这样与四位以上的对手下棋, 不过他今年会试着挑战同时对付五位甚至是六位对手, 如果你也是个棋迷, 记得到现场找 Patrick 挑战, 但在下棋前记得要确定他的眼睛是否真的蒙住了。
Gorat's -- my favorite steakhouse -- will again be open exclusively for Berkshire shareholders on Sunday, April 30, and will be serving from 4 p.m. until about midnight. Please remember that you can't come to Gorat's on Sunday without a reservation. To make one, call 402-551-3733 on April 3 (<i>but not before</i>). If Sunday is sold out, try Gorat's on one of the other evenings you will be in town. I make a "quality check" of Gorat's about once a week and can report that their rare T-bone (with a double order of hash browns) is still unequalled throughout the country.	我个人最爱的牛排馆-Gorat's 为了伯克希尔股东年会破例在4月30日星期天开门营业, 从下午四点开始营业, 一直到午夜, 请记得星期天事先若没有订位的人请勿前往以免向隅, 要预约请在四月3日以后打电话(402-551-3733), 若订不到当天的位子, 也可以试试其它晚上, 每个星期我都会到 Gorat 做一次品质检查, 而我可以向各位保证它的丁骨\牛排加上双份的牛肉丸仍然是全美之最。
The usual baseball game will be held at Rosenblatt Stadium at 7 p.m. on Saturday night. This year the Omaha Golden Spikes will play the Iowa Cubs. Come early, because that's when the real action takes place. Those who attended last year saw your Chairman pitch to Ernie Banks.	按照往例棒球赛将于星期六晚上在 Rosenblatt 体育馆举行, 今年奥玛哈金钉鞋队将对上爱荷华小熊队, 记得早一点来, 因为重头戏在一开始就会出现, 去年有参加的人都知道, 本人一开球就把球砸在 Rnie Banks 的身上。
This encounter proved to be the titanic duel that the sports world had long awaited. After the first few pitches -- which were not my best, but when have I ever thrown my best? -- I fired a brushback at Ernie just to let him know who was in command. Ernie charged the mound, and I charged the plate. But a clash was avoided because we became exhausted before reaching each other.	这样的结果证明这是运动界期待已久的大对决, 在前面几次不痛不痒的投球之后, (当然是因为我还没有使出绝招, 只是不知道我的绝招何时才会出现!), 我狠狠地将球砸到 Ernie 的背上, 好让他知道谁才是老大, Ernie 立刻冲向投手丘, 我也不甘示弱往本垒板前进, 可惜的是在正面对决之前, 两人早已气力放尽。
Ernie was dissatisfied with his performance last year and has been studying the game films all winter. As you may know, Ernie had 512 home runs in his career as a Cub. Now that he has spotted telltale weaknesses in my delivery, he expects to get #513 on April 29. I, however, have learned	Ernie 对于他去年的表现感到非常不满意, 所以整个冬天都在研究比赛时的录像带, 大家可能知道, Ernie 在小熊队时代拥有生涯 512 支全垒打的惊人记录, 现在据可靠消息指出, 他已经找到我投球的弱点, 准备在 4 月

new ways to disguise my "flutterball." Come and watch this matchup.	29 日当天挥出第 513 支全垒打，不过我也不是省油的灯，准备将我拿手的上飘球加以改良，记得到现场观赏这场精彩的大对决。
I should add that I have extracted a promise from Ernie that he will not hit a "come-backer" at me since I would never be able to duck in time to avoid it. My reflexes are like Woody Allen's, who said his were so slow that he was once hit by a car being pushed by two guys.	不过我也已经得到 Ernie 的保证，不会回敬我飞奔而来的滚地球，因为我实在是没有能力躲过，我的反应神经跟伍迪艾伦一样差，据说他曾经被一辆用两人手推的车子撞到。
Our proxy statement contains instructions about obtaining tickets to the game and also a large quantity of other information that should help you enjoy your visit in Omaha. Join us at the Capitalist Caper on Capitol Avenue	股东会资料将告诉大家如何取得球赛入场的门票，以及有关本次会议期间大量的旅游信息，股东会场见！