

# CURRENT WISDOM

## Nation

Proof that before his untimely demise Soviet Interior Minister Boris K. Pugo was an active if lonely *Nation* reader:

Seeking Attractive Woman, 55, Marxist, Leninist, Stalinist, Maoist. Wm. Bess, 2 Athenia Ave., Clifton, NJ 07013.

[July 29/August 5, 1991]

## Los Angeles Times

Ellen Goodman, the celebrated dramatist, reports on how Boston's fierce night-riders are preying on that fated city's post-prandial ladies:

It is a midsummer night and the two women are strolling back from dinner along the main street of their city-suburb. They are carrying with them the leftovers of an amiable dinner table conversation about their world and their families—the mix of subjects that animate their lives and friendship.

In the midst of this after-dinner glow, a car fully loaded with young men pulls up beside them. Swiftly and with great hilarity, the four men spew out a sequence of lewd suggestions and vague threats. Then, like a dump truck that has unloaded toxic waste on illegal turf, they take off.

The two women are left standing in these fumes, breathing deeply. Finally, one says to the other, "Where are Thelma and Louise when you need them?"

It has been that kind of summer.

[August 2, 1991]

## Washington Post

At the twentieth national gathering of something called the Rainbow Family of Living Light, one of Washington's movers and shakers, Mr. Eric Sterling, appears to tell a reporter from the incomparable *Post* of a high point in his spiritual development:

Sterling is the president of the Criminal Justice Policy Foundation in downtown Washington, which promotes such ideas as alternative sentencing and drug policy reform. He's a former Capitol Hill staffer (assistant counsel, House Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on crime).

He's also an ex-hippie. He says his life was changed at a gathering of the counterculture in 1970, the Vortex rock festival in Portland, Ore., a precursor to the Rainbow gatherings.

"I had a fear of dogs," Sterling says. At Vortex, despite the presence of dogs, he decided to go with the flow and walk around naked. "And the dogs would come up and sniff [me]. And I realized that all they were doing was being friendly. I realized they were not going to bite me. It was a meaningful part of my spiritual development. I saw them as part of the environment that was benign."

[July 4, 1991]

## USA Weekend

The quotable Mr. Michael Clement loses another round to his budding bore:

For Michael Clement, the memory of a recent encounter with his 6-year-old is still vivid. "One morning I was in the bathroom brushing my teeth. Carolyn walked in and quietly shut off the water. Then calmly, she said, 'Daddy, don't you care about the Earth?'"

The Arizona father and doctor, equal parts amused and amazed by his daughter's eco-awareness, had no good answer. Now he has taken to wondering each day what orders await him from the girl he and his wife have begun calling "Miss Ecology 1991."

The bottom line: He's stopped running water unnecessarily. "It's hard to argue with a charming little girl, especially when you know she's right."

[August 9-11, 1991]

## New York Times

Ho, ho, ho. Sports columnist William C. Rhoden, writing from the last Stalinist hoosegow even as the roof collapses back in Moscow, still sees Cuba in the rosy hues of the late Herbert Matthews—change this idiot's software:

It is not quite 8 A.M., but Havana is a bustling, rumbling ocean of noise and fading pastels. Red and yellow buses spewing billows of black smoke are packed with Cubans going every which way to work. Monday's news of the Soviet Union's political upheaval faded with Monday's sunset. This is a new day and a new adventure.

A group of women in their 60's and 70's sits on concrete benches in Antonio Maceo park near central Havana. They chat quietly and prepare for their daily exercise class in a ritual that is being duplicated in parks throughout the island.

If sports are the people's right in Cuba, fitness is regarded as a national responsibility.

One woman, perhaps in her mid 50's, has suffered a stroke. She is partly paralyzed on her right side, holds a cane with her left hand. She will lay it down when it comes time to exercise.

[August 21, 1991]

## San Francisco Chronicle

Spotted on the correspondence page of the *Chronicle*, a fossil from the lost Age of Brezhnev:

While looking up a word in the dictionary, I stumbled across the word "Fascism." The definition is as follows: "A system of government that exercises a dictatorship of the extreme right, typically through the merging of state and business leadership, together with a belligerent nationalism."

Goodness, it sounds like we're almost there.

—Tom Silva  
Napa

[July 18, 1991]

## Rolling Stone

Historical revisionism from the lucid Mr. Duff McKagan of the rock group Guns n' Roses, arch enemy of the copulating and ponderous Romans and unexpected friend of the Pharisees:

And finally, if you ask Duff McKagan about his views on religion, this is what he'll probably tell you: "I think the Bible's a good story, you know? I mean Jesus was . . . back in those times, the Romans were just squashing everybody, and here came this guy who had positive thoughts. I think that's all there was to it. And he turned all these people on to these positive thoughts. All of a sudden all the people were going, 'This guy's f---ing groovy.' And the Romans were like 'Not *that* groovy, because he's f---ing taking over all of our people we're squashing, so we're gonna kill him.' And there's no such thing as the Immaculate Conception. . . . Come on. He was just a positive guy who wanted to spread love and goodness. And the Romans did not dig that. And they f---ing squashed him like a grape."

[September 5, 1991]

## Washington Post

Personal revelations, hortatory in nature and agreeably weird, from Mr. Herb Moses, "a financial analyst for the Federal National Mortgage Association" and much, much more:

I am the only member of the congressional gay spouse caucus. While this makes meetings a breeze, it presents its own set of definitional and etiquette problems for which I have not yet found a solution.

Straight and gay friends know us as Barney and Herb, but introductions to strangers require a fast read on the audience. The accepted gay term is "lover," but to me that sounds like we are always hopping in and out of bed. For two years of our four-year relationship I was in business school in New Hampshire and Barney was either in Washington or Boston. Now, I work a lot, he works a lot, and we both travel, so that is certainly not an accurate description. I also think the term conveys a lack of permanence and seriousness. Equally, "boyfriend" sounds too jaunty and too transient. . . .

The longer we are together, the less inclined I am to fudge a response to guard the feelings of the inquirer. Shopping for clothes, I was steered to a different size by a clerk. I informed him it was not for me, it was for my boyfriend. Okay, I could have lied and said it was for my brother, right? And the longer we are together, the less inclined I am to mute my behavior for the benefit of others. We recently attended a charity ball in Washington. After dinner, everyone danced. Barney looked at me and asked, "Should we?"

"Yeah," I said. "It's a ball. You're supposed to dance."

[July 21, 1991]

## Akron Beacon Journal

The recent Soviet coup, explained by a prodigy of the rising generation:

I think this is just the New World Order Part 2. I think this is all a part of Bush's plan to put a puppet in office so that he can control the Soviet Union. Russia is the second-largest power in the world. He (Bush) needs them to keep people in African countries down.

—Barbara Miller  
sociology major

Kent State University

[August 20, 1991]

## New York

Joseph Papp heaves up another of his dizzy marvels, best viewed by English language audiences after a session at the beer garden:

Joe Papp's upcoming production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which came under criticism when it was revealed that the play would be performed in Portuguese, is destined to cause more controversy: Some of the actors will appear nude.

Many of the female characters are topless, the men sometimes wear costumes that are little more than G-strings, and, in one scene, Titania wears nothing at all. It would mark the first time in the 30-year history of the Central Park's Delacorte Theater that Shakespeare was presented in the buff. The play, performed by the Brazilian theater company Teatro do Ornitórrinco, has its world premiere on July 30.

"The director conceived it with the idea that most people here do not understand Portuguese," says New York Shakespeare Festival spokesman Richard Kornberg. "With that in mind he has made the production shorter and highlighted the visual qualities. Even though the language might be a problem, nudity is international."

[July 29, 1991]

## Washington Post

An appropriately lurid vignette from the social life of Weimar Washington, dutifully reported by the esteemed *Post*:

The 21-year-old go-go dancer pitches and rolls, a storm of sexual energy, an explosion of sweat, wanton locks, spike heels, pink kisser, strong thighs. Lace from Victoria's Secret, powder blue and white, clings to her hips, which sway to the rhythms of the music.

A patron, eyes a-gaga, approaches Holly Glass on her podium. The dancer crouches. Her arms beckon. A dollar bill is slipped down her cleavage. The crowd whistles, cheers, screams as the couple embraces.

The patron backs away, flushed, excited. Her face is brightened with sable eye shadow, coral lipstick, framed with blond curls, a flowery shirt. This is Rebecca, a beautiful 22-year-old woman. . . . Rebecca and some 250 other lesbians are mingling Tuesday night at Lesbo-A-Go-Go, Washington's first lesbian erotic-dancer nightclub.

[July 25, 1991]



## How many public sector union employees does it take to change it? One. And twenty-five to supervise.

Unbelievable. From 1980-89, the number of workers on state payrolls grew twice as fast as the population at large. In Illinois, 4 times as fast. 6 times as fast in Massachusetts. 7 in Connecticut. And 14 in New York.

While overall union membership is down a third from its 1975 peak, public sector unions have gained 1.2 million members in the past decade. What are we getting from all these new people? Not much. Just look at the garbage piled up on our sidewalks. The crime problem in our towns and cities. Kids who can't read or write.

In a May 13th cover story, Forbes told its readers that union success in winning control of the work place has meant hiring more and more supervisors. Instead of people who actually do the work.

And it's not just happening

in big cities like New York. State and local governments everywhere must wake up to the fact that public employee union demands could eventually bankrupt them.

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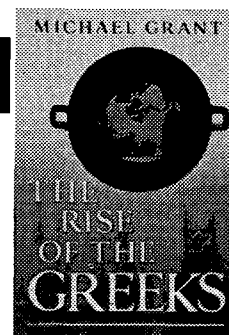
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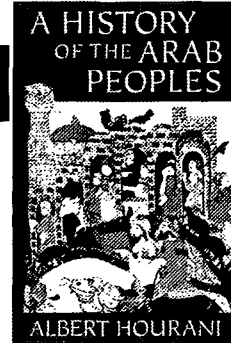
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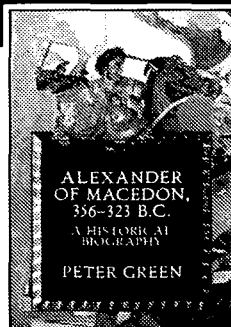
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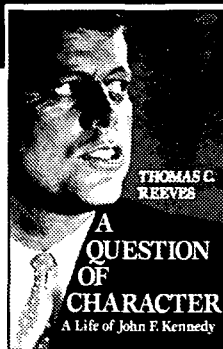
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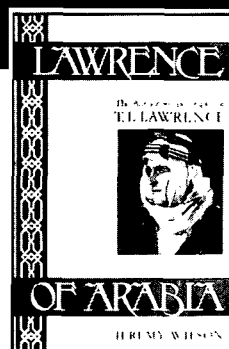
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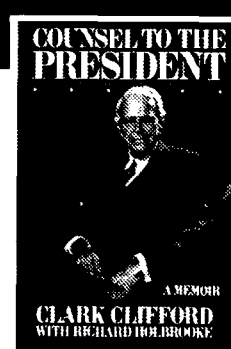
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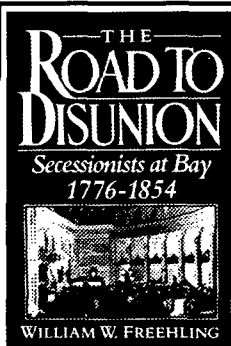
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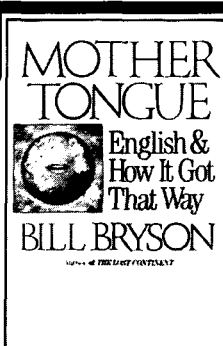
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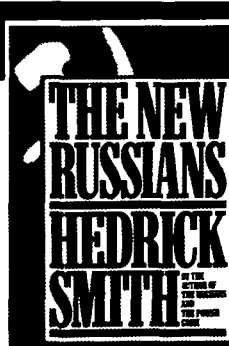
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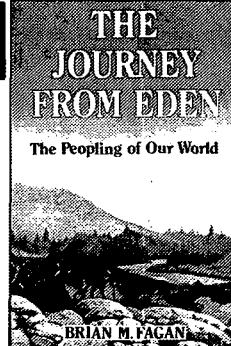
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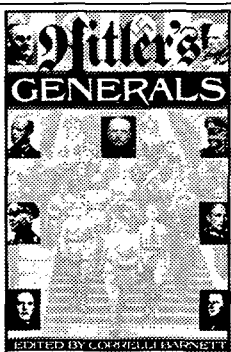
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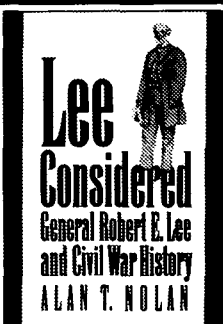
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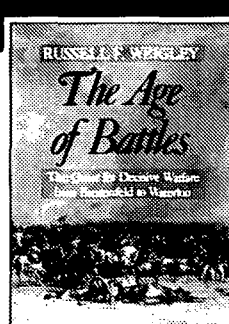
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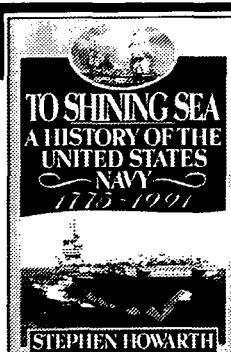
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