

## Never on Sunday

Tom Bethell, in "Darwin in the Dock" (*TAS*, June 1992), flatteringly says that I am one of three (with Bill Bennetta and Kevin Padian) who are "passionately committed to the evolutionist cause, and to naturalism in general. For years they have been trying to stamp out impure thoughts in areas where religion and science show signs of overlapping."

I was not aware that I have been trying to stamp out impure thoughts in *any* areas. I would hesitate to attempt this. Even President Carter has disclosed how difficult it is to prevent the intrusion of such fantasies. My "passionate commitment" to the evolutionist cause is channeled mainly into the task of editing manuscripts for the *Journal of Molecular Evolution*: a job that calls for much reading and is arduous rather than passionate. If only Bethell, Phillip Johnson, and others who proclaim incessantly that they don't believe in evolution would read the *Journal of Molecular Evolution*, they might learn something of a subject of which they have but little understanding.

For Bethell to place Darwin in the dock, as some kind of prisoner, requires considerable temerity. Erwin Chargaff has said, "That in our day pygmies throw giant shadows only shows how late in the day it has become." Bethell quotes Johnson as blaming Darwinism for the "atheistic domination of intellectual life," which reminds me of the young soldier's mother who blamed the army for inventing sex. In blunter terms, the baseball evangelist Billy Sunday said the same thing as Johnson sixty-seven years ago: "The consensus of scholarship can go to hell for all I care. Old Darwin is in hell." He then passed the collection plate.

Bethell's final paragraph alleges that Johnson thanks God that his overtures for a judgeship in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals were turned down. Here, finally, is a point on which we can agree with Johnson. We, too, are thankful that he is not a federal judge.

—Thomas H. Jukes  
Professor of Biophysics  
University of California  
Berkeley, California

## Sexual Self-Determination

I am emboldened to write by a letter you published in the June issue from a loyal reader who is a male homosexual, who wrote in to protest a gratuitous negative characterization of gays in your April issue. He said, "There are many more of us quite conservative poofs than you could possibly imagine."

I am a loyal conservative reader who is female, and who believes absolutely in women's reproductive self-determination (read: pro-choice). Your magazine is great except when someone goes off on an anti-abortion or "family values" rant. Don't you realize how many people are "conservative" precisely *because* we want the government out of our lives? Get out of my bed, Dan Quayle! Nobody invited you!

Why not leave the politicizing of sex to the feminists and other liberal "ists" who have done such a great job staking out that territory? There are more of us quiet conservative believers in sexual self-determination than you could possibly imagine!

—Tama Starr  
(author, *The "Natural Inferiority" of Women*)  
New York, New York

## Currents of Wisdom

I read the May 1992 installment of "Current Wisdom" with special interest. I usually skim the excerpts simply to savor the unintentional self-parody, but the selections from male feminists praising Gloria Steinem offer material worthy of further study. . . . The tone of the comments from Bill Porterfield in particular suggests a type of sado-masochistic encounter. He and his fellows were "on [their] knees in the fetal position" as Steinem "flailed away." Later, he referred to a series of wives who passed on the "billy club of rectitude." This violent imagery, as pathetic as it is ridiculous, becomes his metaphor for liberation.

The imagery suggests a kind of pathology at work. Perhaps Steinem does not intend to generate such a response, but in her recent autobiography she emphasizes her own lack of self-esteem. Is it possible that she is trying to exorcise

her own private demons? What better way to establish her own sense of worth than by stripping others of their self-worth—and making herself the agent of their recovery.

Some such process appears to be one of the engines that drives feminism, although I prefer to think that it is not the only source. Steinem gains an illusion of freedom. Even for Steinem, it is a dangerous illusion since it allows her to evade any true self-knowledge. What illusion compensates the male feminist who joins in this exercise?

—Joseph Bator  
Evanston, Illinois

## Not So Passive

Christopher Caldwell's article on smoking ("Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," *TAS*, May 1992) is worthy of a certified first-class government bureaucrat, i.e., full of claims and supposedly sophisticated study results, but of course totally out of touch with the real world.

He also continues *TAS*'s misguided practice of belittling smoke sufferers and, while I would wish this affliction on no one (except maybe those on P.J. O'Rourke's Enemies List), be assured that if Mr. Caldwell would experience only a day or so of the intense disabling sinus and head pain induced in some people by second-hand cigarette, cigar, or pipe smoke, he would then have all of the insight and qualifications—indeed, all the necessary inspiration—to write a refutation of his own article. (And please don't take my word on this—ask other sufferers.)

Of all publications, *TAS* ought to recognize that smoking is an intrusive act that should be subject to the same kind of civilized constraints as there are on those who, say, wish to swing their fists.

—E. Martin  
Williamsburg, Virginia

. . . As a scientist, I also oppose the use, quite common it seems, of factual data skillfully misinterpreted or incompletely reported to support the preconceived notions and biases of those who interpret or report them.

Thus, the article "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" attracted my attention. The article

begs the question, "What is the hidden agenda behind the insistence of those who abhor 'passive smoke'?" The hidden agenda, quite simply, is that smoking is profoundly annoying to non-smokers. In short, it stinks. In deference to the comment attributed to Stanton Glantz, our concerns need not be "legitimized." They are intrinsically legitimate. We are annoyed by the noxious fumes that we often cannot avoid in public places. We are annoyed by the smoker's insistence on the quiet enjoyment of his habit, at the expense of our quiet enjoyment of an expensive restaurant meal, airline transportation, or any of a variety of other endeavors during which we may be involuntarily seated near him. . . . I am not in the least concerned about contracting pulmonary adenocarcinoma by exposure to passive cigarette smoke. I am concerned about the liberal behavior of those who smoke publicly, in disregard of others' comfort. You may question my description of this as "liberal behavior." That label is demanded by RET's conclusion in *The Liberal Crack-Up* (page 223) that, fundamentally, liberals feel "enjoined by high principle to disturb their neighbors." You see, if I persist in poking the smoker in the ribs with my index finger, that is an unconscionable intrusion upon his right to quiet enjoyment. If he is my neighbor and I persistently intrude upon his environment with the noise from my parties or my stereo, that is "disturbing the peace." But if he persistently intrudes upon my enjoyment of a smokeless environment on an airplane, I am diminishing his "personal liberty" by objecting. I fail to see the logical difference.

The smokers have none but each other to blame. . . .

—John M. Turnbow, M.D.  
Lubbock, Texas

I think Christopher Caldwell missed the point. I don't have any love for the dictatorial fiat generated by the EPA, but I consider myself somewhat of a non-smoking activist. As an engineer, I have no respect for bad science either. But, like so many other subjects that have become politicized, the EPA is reacting to smoking with a backlash mentality. People who smoke seem to be a somewhat inconsiderate breed, at least as a group. If I chewed tobacco, and I came into a restaurant and spit into your water glass

or onto your plate, the management would at the very least ask me to leave. Yet smokers seem to believe that they have the "right" to smoke anywhere and anytime that they please, without regard to anyone around them. . . . If, for the last ten years, smokers had taken their habit outside restaurants and other public places, the ecoidiots at the EPA would probably not be using pseudoscience to force the issue.

—Stuart R. Ball  
Yukon, Oklahoma

### Common Cents

Regarding the June 1992 *American Spectator* article, "Common Sense 1992": I'm not certain whether Michael Ledeen is pulling our leg. . . . The 50 percent of the bureaucracy that would be sacked under his plan "will be guaranteed full salary (complete with step increases) until retirement age, and the pension [each worker] would have received had he continued in his job." Thus, a displaced 28-year-old GS-12 making \$40,000 per annum with five years on the job has a lifetime guarantee of not only his \$40K per year but step increases, cost-of-living

increases (each October 1), and full pension.

Seem excessive? Don't worry. You see, Mr. Ledeen writes, most of the sacked federal troughers, "given the Calvinistic angst that drives most Americans," will choose to work and take a job that pays less than their former government posts. In which case, Mr. Ledeen would pay them the difference between their former federal employment and the jobs most would . . . subsequently take.

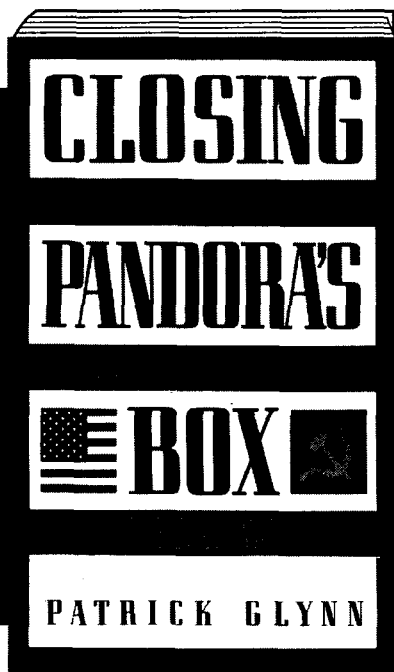
Calvinistic angst? In the federal bureaucracy?! If John Calvin himself had been offered that deal, he'd have spent his life windsurfing on Lake Geneva. . . .

Please don't think that I miss or am unappreciative of Mr. Ledeen's central point. Our bureaucracy is as bloated as Jaba the Hut, and if the electorate's unrealistic expectations of being aggrandized by federal programs were commensurately diminished, government could indeed be downsized by 50 percent, maybe much more. Considering the deleterious effects interloping bureaucrats and the

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## Just Whistle

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

On the day that the morning news shows broadcast word of H. Ross Perot's historic leap to the top of the presidential polls, there was an excitement fevering the reporters that I had not witnessed since the thrilling era of Watergate. Hey, ho, we've cornered another President in the White House. Admittedly, this time the scoundrel sweating it out over at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is not a "crook" or a liar or a killer of innocent Vietnamese. In fact, it is not clear what the President is, but he is getting nailed by Mr. H. Ross Perot, and it is not clear what Mr. Perot is either—aside from rich.

I think it can be said that, in this presidential campaign, the less we know about a candidate the more we like him. Certainly I like Mr. Perot, and what I know about him is his personal wealth and little else. Consider Governor Bill Clinton. We know a great deal about him, and he finished a distant third in the *Washington Post*-ABC Poll. My advice to him is that he say not one more word until November 3. Playing the saxophone on the Arsenio Hall show the other night was an excellent start.

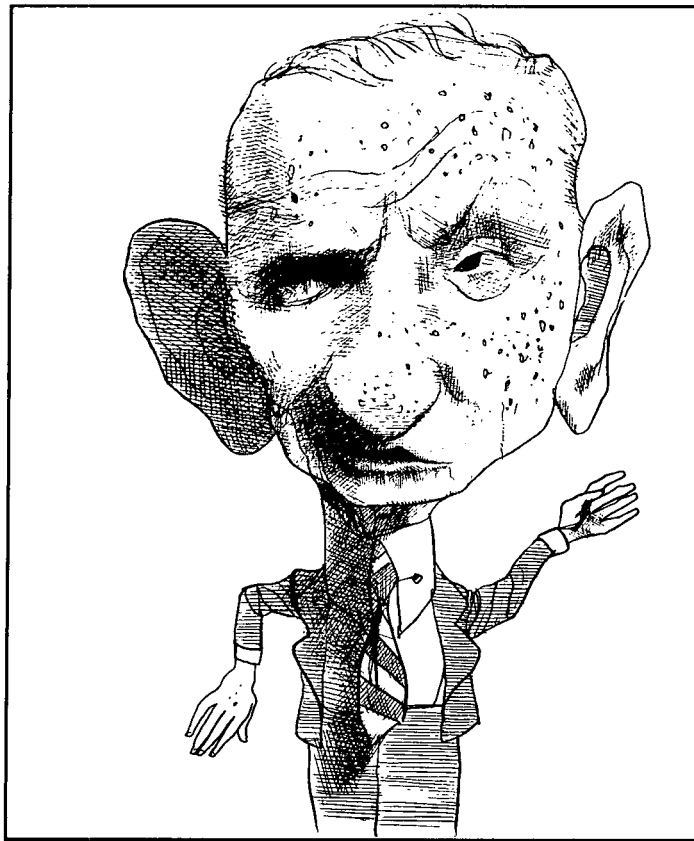
They say that music is a universal language, and my

advice to Governor Clinton is that he emulate Harry Truman's 1948 whistle-stop campaign, and at every stop just whistle. That will warm up the crowd, and when the press's questioning begins, Boy Clinton can bring out his sax. His voice has suffered horribly during the campaign, and what he has said has done him no good. Political analysts tell us that the American people are impatient with candidates who "play politics as usual" with the voters. How about one who plays the saxophone? At presiden-

tial debates, while Bush and Perot sputter, cool Bill will wail or bee-bop. Photos will show him lulling street gangs into serenity with his groovy instrument. He can play at parades, political rallies, and on behalf of local officeholders. In this year of public anger, we have been told many times that presidential candidates "lie and cheat" their way into the White House. Bill Clinton can be the first to play a musical instrument into the White House. After all, it is an odd year.

Mr. Perot has risen faster than any third party candidate in history, and he has risen higher than any third party candidate in over fifty years. What is more he has no party and, thus far, no candidacy, and he is not even a politician. Every other third-party presidential candidate has at least been a politician. Mr. Perot boasts that he is not, and that he has no ax to grind. All other third-party candidates were stupendous ax-grinders. All have based their candidacies on a deep vein of sentiment and, occasionally, ideas. In 1912 Theodore Roosevelt based his candidacy on a well-developed body of ideas called "progressivism." In 1948 Henry Wallace and Strom Thurmond based their candidacies on left-wing radicalism and states' rights, respectively. The 1968 presiden-

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