



Kansas City Star

Columnist Yael T. Abouhalkah demonstrates why newspaper circulation is going in the right direction:

The excellent idea of taxing soda appears to have a new and huge ally—President Barack Obama.

He gets it: The excessive consumption of fizzy drinks is weighing down American kids, packing on pounds during their youthful days, and ultimately leading to a more obese and more unhealthy America.

How to combat this problem? Tax soda and cola drinks, make them more expensive and try to curb consumption....

The tax would hit low-income families harder than others. So some of the revenues should be used to bolster the U.S. food stamp program, making more vegetables and fruits especially available to those families.

(September 8, 2009)

The Nation

Left-wing feminist ranter Katha Pollitt tries out her impersonation of the curvaceous Sarah Palin on the otherwise graceless pages of TN:

There were many thing I loved about Nora Ephron's clever and affectionate *Julie & Julia*, the feel-good hit of the summer for foodies and nonfoodies alike. Meryl Streep radiated warmth, excitement and cheer as Julia Child, learning to cook and writing *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* in 1950s Paris. Amy Adams was vulnerable and endearing as Julie Powell, the drifting secretary-hipster who finds a purpose in life (and fame and fortune) when she spends a year cooking all 524 recipes from *The Book* and blogging about it. I loved that the most violent moment was....

(September 21, 2009)

New York Times Book Review

While reviewing Taylor Branch's latest opuscul, Joe Klein, one of the Clintons' most sedulous Episodic Apologists, cites still more evidence contributing to his thesis that the Boy President is a virgin:

Branch's friendship with Clinton does have significant advantages, though. It makes possible a remarkable portrait of White House life. Clinton's relationship with the first lady seems incredibly strong (Branch even interrupts them when they are smooching, as I did once).

(September 27, 2009)

American Prospect

Another ill-conceived stab at humor from the editors of the agelastic AmPro:

The Question: *What will Dick Cheney give trick-or-treaters this year?*

"A playful waterboarding, followed by threats, if they don't tell him which house is handing out the fun-size Snickers."

—Megan Carpentier, *Air America*

"An unexpectedly warm and firm hug."

—Baratunde Thurston, *The Onion*

"70,000 dead salmon from Oregon's Klamath River."

—Michael Grass, *Dcist.com*

"Buckshot in the face, naturally."

—Eric Alterman, *The Nation*
[Not bad, Eric. Keep trying!]
(October 2009)

Washington Post

In reviewing the novel Blood's a Rover, by the deranged James Ellroy, belletrist Bill Sheehan provides still more evidence that the consumer of contemporary fiction must be a masochist:

Blood's a Rover, like the volumes that precede it, is clearly not a conventional thriller. It is, rather, a rigorously constructed, idiosyncratic novel that uses the materials of crime fiction to examine the forces that have shaped—and warped—our recent history: racial tension, ideological warfare, greed, corruption and unbridled fanaticism in all its forms. Ellroy's bleak, brooding worldview, his dense, demanding style and his unflinching descriptions of extreme violence will almost certainly alienate large numbers of readers. But anyone who succumbs to the sheer tidal force of these novels will experience something darker, stranger and more compelling than almost anything else contemporary fiction has to offer.

(September 22, 2009)

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The Nation

Left-wing historian Eric Alterman, in a fever to diminish modern-day conservatism, even slanders the late Senator Eugene McCarthy. Calm down, Mr. Alterman:

Irving Kristol's sophisticated, multi-front war against liberalism succeeded well beyond anything achieved by the drunken hayseed McCarthy. He helped provide the (slender) ideological bal- last for Reaganism via his promotion of supply-side economics in *The Public Interest*, which he co-founded and co-edited, and the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, where he regularly appeared and with whose editor, Robert Bartley, he regularly consulted. So too, the ideas promoted a decade and a half later in the so-called Gingrich revolution. The former House Speaker said after Kristol's passing on September 18 that "Our Republican 'Contract With America' in 1994 was in many ways built on Kristol's insights." But far more important than the ideas themselves was the intellectual infrastructure—the think tanks, the magazines, the op-ed pages and the conferences—that Kristol helped build to provide support for arguments that otherwise would have been considered banal, dangerous or both. Kristol paid inadvertent tribute to his own achievement when, in moving from New York to Washington in 1988, he explained, "Today Washington seems to give birth to a new think tank every other month or so." It took liberals nearly four decades to realize what they were up against.

(October 12, 2009)

The Great Books Series

Senator Jean-François Kerry demonstrates his flare for soap opera even at 2:30 a.m. with a drunk at his door:

Almost at the same moment, Fox News called the election for Bush.

In the silence that followed, people began to leave the apartment to go home to bed. Soon Vicki and I were alone. It was well after midnight. I made a decision. "We're going to Louisburg Square," I told my wife, "to see John and Teresa."

It was a drizzly, dreary, humid, cold night in Boston, and close to 2:30 a.m. when we arrived. Gabby, the Kerrys' household assistant, met us at the door and told us that John and Teresa had gone to bed. We offered to leave, but Gabby told us not to. "The senator will be upset if he knows you're here and he wasn't told." She went upstairs. A few

minutes later the defeated Democratic candidate for the presidency came down into the living room to greet us. Vicki spotted him first. "Gosh, Vicki, what a drag. This is a drag, isn't it?" he said as Vicki hugged him and said, "Boy, is it ever." I gave John a warm handshake and then an embrace. "My friend, how are you doing?" I asked him. He replied, "There are so many things I wanted to do for this country."

I was deeply moved by the reaction of this war hero....

(From: True Compass: A Memoir, by Edward M. Kennedy. Twelve, 532 pages, \$35)

From the Archives

Timeless Tosh from Current Wisdoms Past
(November 1989)

Cat Fancy

Into the purring pages of a right-of-center cat-owners' review, the screech of social conscience is heard:

I was surprised to read in the June 1989 "Editor's Notebook" about the discrepancy in adoption fees charged for female and male animals at the Pittsfield SPCA....This policy of charging different fees reflects our society's chauvinistic assumption that it is a woman's own fault for getting pregnant. Regardless.

(September 1989)

Sydney Morning Herald

What happens when a 1960s kid confronts four men of the cloth down under:

Don't worry, be happy—we're all on a winner called capitalism.

Little problems such as the greenhouse effect and human poverty should not get us down. Capitalism has the answer for these hiccups in the system and much, much more.

This was the message delivered in Sydney yesterday by four of the world's high priests of capitalism here to extol the "triumph of democratic capitalism" in a series of conferences beginning at the Hilton Hotel tomorrow.

But the greatest message of joy from the right-wing columnist Bernard Levin, historian and journalist Paul Johnson from Britain (a country with about 2.3 million people unemployed), scholar and columnist Michael Novak and columnist and author Robert E. Tyrrell, Jr. from the United States (where about two million citizens are homeless) is that capitalism has won the economic war over socialism and communism.

(July 10, 1989)



Two Weddings and a Demerol

by Jeremy Lott

PERHAPS IT WASN'T THE GREATEST IDEA to try to breeze into Reagan National Airport on September 11 with just over a half hour to spare. Thanks to the awful events of that day eight years ago, air travel has become far less forgiving of time shavers and stragglers—as I've learned from painful personal experience. The days of late arrivers racing down the terminal to just barely make their flight is now the stuff of comic movies. There now exists an inflexible 30-minute cutoff before each flight. Miss that, even by a minute, and you, my friend, are in serious trouble.

It sure seemed I was in for it that day. A combination of meetings and last-minute work and uncooperative taxi drivers delayed my arrival at the airport that Friday until just after cutoff. The automated check-in said I could fly standby on a flight six hours later or purchase another ticket for an even later flight. The lady at the other end of my usual booking service kept me on hold for 10 minutes, then said she could book a new flight—the next day. And for a few primal scream-inviting minutes, I believed I had somehow left all my credit cards and driver's license in the cab.

When the cards finally surfaced (wrong pocket) I decided to try the checkout machine again and see about that standby flight. Then the good Lord smiled and delayed my original flight just long enough so I could print the boarding pass and make it through Orange Alert-level security. The plane managed to snag the first available takeoff and the flying conditions proved perfect and picturesque. We arrived at the St. Louis airport within kissing distance of on time. Take that, Osama.

I wasn't the only resident of my Fairfax, Virginia, townhouse to go away to a rehearsal, bachelor party, and wedding that weekend. Two friends and former townhousers had planned on getting married this year and they didn't consult each other before setting the dates on the same day. In their limited defense, they must have figured, "Who in their right

mind would pick the day after September 11 to tie the knot?" Just a few years ago, the likely travel headaches alone would have made that unthinkable.

So my roommate headed to Poughkeepsie, New York, and I went to the Butterfly House in Chesterfield, Missouri, to witness the nuptials of sometime *AmSpec* contributor Robert VerBruggen and his bride, the former Jackie Stewart. Through the modern miracle of text messaging, we kept each other apprised of the goings-on at the other wedding. At 8:23 Saturday night came the coda: "They're married." My party was well into the reception by that point, somewhere between toasts and dancing. After the married couple's first slow dance, to a love song Robert had written and recorded for Jackie, the pace of the music picked up. That was my cue to vamoose: I am a lousy dancer and tuxedos only add to the horror. So I looked out on the duck pond and thought for a minute about how odd this was: two weddings the day after September 11.

Weddings are chock-full of symbolism. The rings, the dress, the candles—the old, the new, the borrowed, the blue—are there to acknowledge the past while signaling a transformation. And maybe, I thought, the date can point to something new as well. For a while there, most Americans wouldn't dare consider holding a wedding that close to that wretched day. But now, we're a little more hopeful. The sentiment that is slowly forming isn't so much "move on" as "move forward."

Was I right about that? Who knows, but it was one of those smiley notions that you just can't shake—even if you are normally a devout pessimist. I rejoined the party, danced like there was no yesterday, and clapped so hard that I burst a blood vessel in one hand. I was smarting the next morning but it was worth it. ☞

Jeremy Lott is an editor at Capital Research Center and author of *The Warm Bucket Brigade: The Story of the American Vice Presidency*.