

Among Friends

I have been an enthusiastic reader of Ben Stein in *AmSpec* for many years, and I must note that the amazing friendliness of most Americans that so surprises and delights Ben ("Liberty Weekend," *TAS*, July/August 2009) is, I believe, the way it is for most "ordinary" Americans in most places. I have to think that Ben is a product of Washington, D.C., and Hollywood, two of the worst places in the country to get a balanced reading on normal behavior or anything else, and I'm very glad he travels the way he does so that he can see and relish the way "the folks" live.

Keep up the good work, Ben, and, by the way, your eulogies for your departed Mom and Pop were and will remain your very best work ever.

TIM SHEVLIN
Anaheim, California

More Mythbusting

Excellent article ("The Matter With Myths," by Philip Klein, *TAS*, July/August 2009). There are two topics that I wish the author had expanded to areas that are seldom mentioned in this discussion.

(1) Preventive health care. Of course the administration is fantasizing about this. The really big preventive things have been in place for a long time: chlorinating the water, vaccinations, sewage disposal, things like that, but these don't depend much on individual responsibility. Aside from these public health measures the greatest unmet needs of preventive health care are entirely in the

hands of the populace: obesity, smoking, drinking, drugs, STDs, violent gangs, and other behavioral problems. There is basically nothing the medical profession can do about these. The health dangers have been well publicized for decades or generations. The government won't allow pricing health insurance according to individual behavior, which might be an effective incentive.

There is also the understandably unspoken issue that there is no such thing as a life saved, only a life prolonged—everybody eventually dies. So the calculus of money saved by preventive medicine has to take into account the productivity of extended life and the health care costs of that extended life (to be very cold about it). How much money is saved by preventing deaths from heart disease so there are more deaths from Alzheimer's disease and just plain old age? It is the end-of-life medical costs that are the greatest. That is why Daschle's health plan would have cut off coverage for the "dying." A lot of money could be saved that way. Let's call it involuntary euthanasia. Like the Lord High Executioner in the Mikado, we can all make a list of people who "won't be missed," or are too expensive. Not every one's list would be the same, but, hey, there will still be lots of us left to enjoy the savings (assuming I'm not on someone's list).

(2) The uninsured. There seems to be a general assumption that City-County Hospitals around the United States only provide emergency room care. I have worked at a metropolitan county hospital for

the past 30-plus years. Yes, there is an emergency room which is very busy with trauma, along with all the other medical problems seen in an ER, but all the medical and surgical specialties also have outpatient clinics, diagnostic services, and inpatient services that are busy all the time. The numbers are not available to me but I know from personal experience that a large percentage of the patients in our clinics do not have, and are not eligible for, insurance. Of course, many of the patients are simply illegal aliens or indigent residents, but we have cared for patients from Europe who came for cancer chemotherapy not available in their own country and for patients who own a small business but do not want to pay for health insurance. No problem, we take care of everybody.

As Philip Klein documents in his article, the promoters of universal health insurance, i.e., socialized health care, cleverly avoid full disclosure. Why be transparent? They don't care about care or cost, what they care about is expanding government control.

C. PAUL MORROW
Chino Hills, California

The Mind Numbs

I read your subject article ("The Triumph of Fantasy," by James Bowman, *TAS*, July/August 2009) with much interest. Until last week, my wife and I had not been to a movie since *The Passion of the Christ* but my wife wanted to see the new *Transformers* on the big screen. I guess she just had fun watching the first *Transformers*

over and over with the grandkids. At any rate, sitting through the multitude of previews of coming attractions, I was overwhelmed with clip after clip of non-stop action and violence, presented at mind numbing volumes. I don't normally get worked up over today's youth culture, but the barrage gradually became a bit irritating and I was happy to see it all end. But then it was followed by two and a half hours of almost zero dialogue or acting, with the same mind-numbing decibel barrage.

In the end, I found myself wondering how a young person could ever be expected to slow down to read *Trees* by Joyce Kilmer or any of the classics. For that matter, how can we ever expect them to be motivated to learn math, English or history? Perhaps I am late recognizing this but nonetheless, I

now find myself shaking my head at what it takes to stimulate the minds of today's youth. I cannot imagine a culture able to successfully navigate the waters of real life when anything other than mind-numbing fantasy bores them stiff.

PATRICK WEIR

Chatsworth, California

Old Soldiers

I enjoyed and appreciated Mr. Bethell's article ("Perilous Path for Obama," *TAS*, July/August 2009) on Obama's future or lack thereof. As to the quote about not getting in a land war in Asia, I have always thought that came from Gen. MacArthur, not Eisenhower.

MATT KREMER

San Diego, California

I believe the quote—and it apparently is not really a quote—is from

MacArthur's personal conversation with LBJ after JFK's death. MacArthur died in April, 1964 so this would have been a six-month window well before the Gulf of Tonkin.

It was a chestnut my dad referenced when I was growing up (b. 1954) in the Vietnam era.

Eisenhower had little on-the-ground experience in Asia despite being MacArthur's chief of staff for six or seven years, and none in combat operations. MacArthur had plenty—87 amphibious landings in WWII, all of which were successful, and Korea until relieved by Truman for wanting to take the war into China and making his disagreement with Truman very public.

The genesis of the remark is that life is *not only cheap but plentiful*.

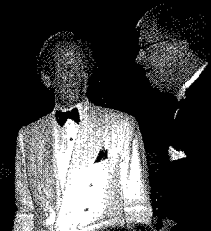
JIM GRAVES

via the Internet

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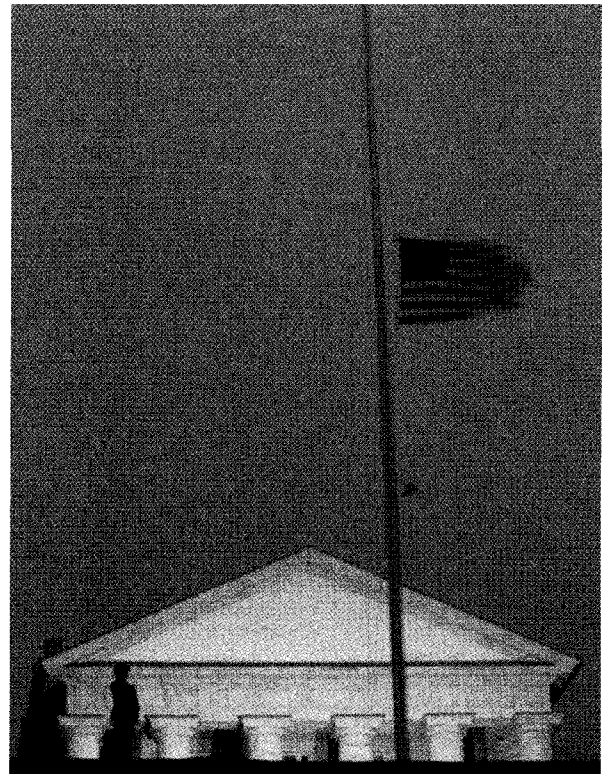
THE CONTINUING CRISIS

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.



August passes, but not before our Nation's liberals gave themselves over to another of their pagan rituals. Senator Edward (Teddy) Kennedy assumed room temperature in the late hours of August 25. Apparently he was completely sober at the time and properly dressed. Nor was he behind the wheel of an automobile or besetting a bartender in the raucous company of his drinking buddy, Senator Christopher Dodd. In fact, Teddy was in bed, pretty much alone; and the family had called in a priest. No lawyers from Yale Law School were needed or any political troubleshooters, speechwriters, or even scuba divers. Senator Kennedy was 77 and approximately 100 pounds overweight.

Almost immediately, hysterical liberals began lighting bonfires in the nearby hills and wailing. The wailing spread to the mainstream moron media, where it became incessant and lasted into September. Actually, on the national television networks the threnodizing received dismal ratings, finishing behind such primetime fare as ABC's *Wipeout*, a recap of *America's Got Talent*, and a rerun of *Bones*. In all the coverage, very little attention was paid to the senator's transient relationship with the deceased Miss Mary Jo Kopechne. Mr. Theodore Sorensen, a longtime Kennedy cultist, laid down one template for handling her ordeal, crooning in *Time* magazine thusly: "Both a plane crash in Massachusetts in 1964 and the ugly automobile accident on Chappaquiddick Island in 1969 almost cost him his life...." That neatly greased sentence never mentioned Miss Kopechne, though a Miss Melissa Lafsky demonstrated that there were even more ignoble ways of treating the Kopechne death. In the *Huffington Post* she wondered "what Mary Jo Kopechne would have thought about arguably being a catalyst for the most successful Senate career in history...." Miss Kopechne is dead, you idiot, having spent the last three or four hours of her life depleting an air pocket in the back seat of Senator Kennedy's submerged Oldsmobile while he salvaged his political career with the aforementioned Mr. Sorensen and dozens of political fixers. Yet, contrary to the mainstream moron media's lamentations about "The End of Camelot," it might



continue. On August 25 Mr. James L. Auchincloss, 62, the half-brother of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, was indicted in Medford, Oregon, on 25 counts of child pornography.

Otherwise August was a weirdly ghoulish month, with the Prophet Obama traversing the country discussing "end of life issues," "death panels," and something about swine flu. Americans got a respite at the end of the month when the whole Obama family vamoosed to posh Martha's Vineyard. There the president followed the harum-scarum regime scripted for Democratic presidents since JFK, energetically sightseeing, golfing, and pretending to read five books—2,300 pages! 300 pages a day! By month's end his poll numbers were below 50 percent, and the Indonesia Constitutional Court certified the electoral victory of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Step aside, Ms. Cindy Sheehan, the international peace movement may have a new leader. He is India's