

Life is beautiful



Alicia Tenuta Cohen

A few years ago I had brain surgery. Although it was rather traumatic, nothing malignant was involved and my life is subsequently richer for it. I noticed a poster the other day for a 5-K run in Washington, D.C., to support brain cancer research and thought perhaps I might take part. These events are always inspirational, with survivors and their families — or even the brave family members of (how do I say it?) non-survivors. It is also exciting to glide by the Lincoln and the Jefferson Memorials or the Capitol unencumbered by tourist buses, honking cabs, and impatient commuters.

So, early this morning I wake and am wired. Recalling the poster I saw the other day, I go to the Metro station to take the train down to the nation's capital. What a way to start the day. Indeed.

As I exit the train in Metro Center, I cannot move for the crush of people donning bright colored tee-shirts with stickers and buttons, fiercely gripping their professionally-printed placards or homemade signs: "There is no 'YOU' in uterus," they say, or "Get out of my womb!" Oh boy, this is not what I had in mind.

"Once I escape up an escalator, I will be safe," I thought. I was wrong. Hordes of people, mostly women and children, and some men, are flocking toward some destination unknown to me. Block after city block: "pro-choice, pro-choice, pro-choice." They were in every shape and size. I reach the plaza where the race registration is supposed to be — but it isn't taking place, something I started to suspect several hordes earlier.



"We're supposed to get over a million," I heard a man exclaim as he handed out water bottles. The thought that I had probably misread the 5-K poster was overwhelmed by impressions of moms walking by, hand-in-hand, with their children, to a pro-abortion rally. This is our slavery. Plantation owners told their children the blacks

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were not really people, so owning them was all right. Today, children are told that it is a woman's body and it's her right. What about the baby's rights? Any PSAT student could tell you that the opposite of pro-life is anti-life.

What baffles me is how all these people can think a baby is not a baby. Why is Scott Peterson being tried for two murders when his wife was merely pregnant?

What if Mary were "pro-choice"? You know, the mom of that Jesus guy. A lot of these people probably just spent a lovely Easter with their families. What if He were never born?

Every baby book I have seen in the past 10 years begins with "The Early Days" — sonogram pictures neatly tacked to champagne pink or baby blue pages. Baffling.

"Taking care" of an unwanted pregnancy does not take care of the lifetime of guilt and loss that a woman eventually feels. Expected due-dates are spent mourning, rather than celebrating with too much cake and melted ice cream. Does anyone have a placard that says this?

I did not get the inspirational run I was expecting this morning, but I did figure out the euphemism of the century: "pro-choice." It's just plain anti-life.

CPR



McClintock

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ment once they are in possession of all the facts. The problem is, all they currently hear is the propaganda of the mass transit lobby.

Change will not originate from within the Capitol building. In order for change to occur inside a capitol, it must first change outside.

So I must ask you, and your companies, and your organizations, and your clients: What are you prepared to do?

Are you prepared to educate every Californian that in the decade since our road taxes doubled and our driving increased 30 percent, our highways have increased just one percent? Are you prepared to confront the MTA and its clones over the misuse of our highway money?

Are you prepared to undertake a steady campaign until every voter is as aware as each of us in this room of the condition of our highway system and how we got there?

Because until you are prepared to do so, things are not going to change. And once you do, it might be years before we see results. That is not an easy answer. It is a hard and expensive and uncertain answer. But it's the truth and it is time we learned the truth and acted on it.

RESTORE WHAT WE THREW AWAY

What I can promise is that I will continue to press on these issues at every opportunity. And every voice that is raised will bring us closer to the day when all Californians can again enjoy high-speed transportation that is perfectly individualized to meet their precise needs: that picks them up at their doorsteps and whisks them to their destinations in safety and comfort, whenever they need to go, wherever they need to go.

In short, what we once had, what we foolishly threw away, and what we must restore for our children and grandchildren: the finest highway system the world has known.

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In the Hurricane's Eye

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it all spent on job training? Yes? Well, then, OK, end of audit. Assemblyman Ray Haynes says inquiries directed to these multifarious "auditing" agencies on such substantive questions as what, exactly, is the program supposed to do? (place people in real jobs, say) How successfully is it doing it? (how many placements?) How much are we spending for each success story? How much would alternative approaches cost? — all such questions find almost no information available. "They don't do that," Haynes said.

Finance Director Arduin wants to alter this Sacramento budgeting culture by moving toward "zero-based" budgeting — requiring justification for each dollar to be spent — and real audits of programs' efficiency and effectiveness. This project, fully supported by the governor, aims at nothing less than forcing a tectonic shift in the Sacramento budget culture from its current emphasis on how much is spent to more consideration of results achieved. In layman's terms, that means making the bureaucrats justify their spending in terms of the public interest. Zero-based budgeting also implies what the governor has called a "new mentality" for spending: the starting place is not how much we spent last year or how much we would like to spend, but how much we have *available* to spend, followed by decisions on how to divide up the revenue. It takes, apparently, a political newcomer to dream up such an over-the-top idea. When he heard about it, Democrat Assembly Speaker Fabian Nuñez retorted that the Leg-

islature would "tell the governor what we really want in this budget, what we think is important, what we think is socially responsible. Then the governor can tell us how he plans to see to it that the revenues are there to fund those programs" — thereby pegging the personal responsibility quotient and connection to reality setting of the majority Party just about where we thought it was: around age 15 or 16, with over-indulgent parents.

This is the "old mentality" that, under Davis, created expanded eligibility for the state's Medi-Cal program, adding 1.5 million people — 23 percent of those now served — resulting in an 870 percent increase in program costs since 1999 to more than \$1.3 billion in 2004-05. Spending for the state's biggest welfare program, CalWorks, continues at about \$2 billion a year though caseloads have declined nearly 20 percent the past five years. California's prison costs have increased over five years by 41 percent though the system holds fewer inmates.

So how will Donna Arduin "finish the job"? She wants to begin systematic analyses that will permit the administration, the Legislature, and the people to see the return coming from taxpayers' dollars. Criteria for measuring programs' effectiveness will be established and results subjected to cost-benefit analyses compared to alternative approaches. *This* is the "roadmap back to fiscal stability for California." Following it will take time, but as progress is made, the specific numbers will emerge to close the deficit. Those specifics must largely wait upon reform of the anti-public interest mentality that has dominated taxation and spending in Sacramento for decades.

CFR

Correspondence

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war. If we stand with the good, evil's weakness shows.

Jim Henry
Saugus

What's up with Bill Jones?

As a 77-year-old, politically-active Republican, I would like to ask: What's up with Bill Jones? In a race against an extremely liberal fluff-head for U.S. Senate, he's waffling all over on the federal Marriage Amendment. If he can't support the cultural war in a race against Boxer, what can he do? California votes conservative on cultural issues. It voted for the Defense of Marriage initiative by 59 percent. Why can't Jones understand that? Is he trying to lose? He messed up his race for governor early-on by taking the

wrong side of conservative issues. Sometimes I believe Republicans would rather lose than get their hands dirty in a tough campaign. Other times they seem ignorant of the issues.

William O. Felsman
Woodland Hills

Betty's Bears - 9" Tall



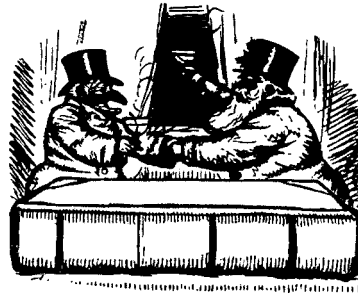
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C R I T I C U S

The Mother Hand?

B Y G . B . T E N N Y S O N

MANY YEARS ago when the world was young, summers seemed to stretch themselves out endlessly in a blur of hot, humid, carefree days. Before there were soccer moms and constantly organized activities we actually had to think of things to do by ourselves. Sooner or later the obvious ones were exhausted, so it was perhaps no wonder that one summer we took up the idea of learning sign language. The immediate impetus for this came from Betty Jean Ferguson who was best friends with Betty Lou Cooper whose mother was a deaf mute. Inspired by the rapid hand movements Betty Lou and her mother exchanged in conversing with one another, Betty Jean decided that she too must learn sign language. Soon a whole number of us in the neighborhood decided that we would also master this form of communication. Never mind that none of us had ever expressed a desire to converse with Mrs. Cooper before and would not have known what to say to her in any form of communication except perhaps "Hello, Ma'm" and "How are you today?" It was the challenge of the new.

We duly set to it and started holding afternoon ses-

As the author of a monograph on the poetics of inadvertence, G.B. Tennyson gleefully appoints himself CPR's official monde-green correspondent, a hitherto uncontested role and likely to remain so.

sions. I can't recall whether Betty Lou gave us each one of those cards with the signing alphabet on it, though I rather doubt it. Those seem to me to have come much later as persons soliciting money moved through restaurants and cafes placing such cards with a request for a contribution on each table and then returning to collect money or, in its absence, to retrieve the card. I rather think Betty Lou had a large placard with the alphabet signs on it and that she tried to lead us through them letter by letter. But here memory fails me. What I do remember is that this novel adventure soon lost its charm, at least for the boys, with the exception of Betty Jean's little brother Bobby who had the disadvantage of being about two years younger than the rest of us boys and of wearing large glasses we would today call nerdy.

So it was farewell to sign language study and off for some new adventure. My pal Francis Chipman went home and got his German Shepherd, Rex, and I went and got my Spitz, Duke, and we set out to chase Shirley Ross's black cat (name forgotten) up the outside back stairs of Shirley's house. The cat would flee to the top railing, arch up, and hiss at the two dogs that stood below her barking furiously in response to their masters' urgings. Rex would even thrust his nose right up at the cat, and the cat would reach out and claw at it, sometimes hitting the mark and drawing blood.