

# LET'S CELEBRATE!

by MARTY ZUPAN

**I** *magine if REASON could throw a 20th anniversary party, with all of you readers invited...*

Ladies and Gentlemen, it's an honor and a pleasure to be here with you today and to be the one to kick off this celebration.

My life has been so tied up with REASON's for the last 10 years that it can seem self-serving to dwell on what a feat it is for this magazine still to be alive and kicking at 20. But truly, it is quite a feat. I read once that magazines and restaurants compete for the dubious distinction of having the highest failure rate among businesses. (Wouldn't you know it, these are the two enterprises that stand the greatest chance of claiming my affection!)

And that's just regular old magazines. A magazine of ideas is evidently a particularly difficult venture—not one think magazine in this country operates at a profit. And when you consider that we're talking about a magazine of radical individualist rationalist ideas—not exactly the *Zeitgeist* in our time...well, you can understand the urge to shout from the rooftops, "Look at us! We're 20 and going strong!"

As we know from the letters you occasionally write, some of you have been with REASON from the first years. You can remember first-hand its beginnings as a six-page mimeographed campus publication at MIT, Harvard, and Boston University. It sold for 10 cents and offered an Ayn Rand-inspired, reasoned alternative to the often-violent, often-collectivist student opposition of 1968.

From where we're standing now, REASON's life divides rather neatly into the first decade and the second. In the first 10 years, REASON evolved into the leading forum for discussion of libertarian ideas, mostly by libertarians and for libertarians. Debate raged fast and furious

about the implications of taking individual liberty seriously as a principle. As individualist ideas gained a hearing in academic circles that had for years been dominated by New Deal liberal and even socialist premises—Robert Nozick's landmark *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* was published in 1974—REASON bridged the academic and popular worlds.

It was heady and fun, but the debates are ones that must in a sense be argued anew by each generation. By the late '70s the people at REASON were ready for a new challenge.

By this time, your numbers had grown to 17,000 (from 400 subscribers at the end of 1970, when a partnership took over publication from the magazine's founder). And yet the magazine was still brought out mostly as a labor of love! It wasn't until 1977 that an editorial staff—Bob Poole, at half-time—was actually paid.

In 1978, as REASON began its 10th year, plans were being laid to give the magazine a firmer financial footing and expand its horizons. A nonprofit foundation was set up to publish the magazine. Still committed to reason as the means of exploring and analyzing the world around us, and to liberty as a necessary condition of individuals' pursuit of happiness, the magazine would reach out to a broader audience, taking up the issues of the day from a libertarian editorial perspective.

And so we arrive at 1988, with a product that is remarkably different from its 1968 and 1978 incarnations while firmly attached to its roots. You subscribers now number 35,000 plus, and you are joined by an increasing number of newsstand browsers. What a party! And what a line-up we have for the occasion.

Our idea was to bring you together on this occasion with a wide array of people from "the REASON community"—writers

who've contributed over the years, figures we've interviewed, contributing editors, staff members past and present. I won't delay the proceedings at this point with a list of what we have in store for you—you can consult the printed program on page 5. There's a whole lot there, from Vintage Brickbats to closing words from P. J. O'Rourke.

But before I relinquish this platform, I'd like to publicly offer a word of thanks to staff and near-staff who during my 10 years at REASON have poured their energies into the mini-book that is slipped into your mailbox each month—Don, Gloria, Christine, Anna, Nanette, Cathy, Matt, Eric, Jan, Lynn, Paul, Eric (again), David, Laura, Bill, Lucy, Nanette (the other one), Virginia, James. And, of course, Bob. Thanks a whole lot. It's been a helluva lot of hard work—but also a gas.

Thanks also to you readers, who buy it, read it, tell us what you think, and often support us morally and financially.

And now, let's celebrate!



---

Congratulations on Your  
Twentieth Anniversary and  
Your Pioneering Efforts  
in Privatization

---

**BCC**  
**BENEFIT**  
**CAPITAL**  
**COMPANIES**

---

Investment Bankers Specializing in Employee Stock Ownership Plan  
(ESOP)

Financing

Los Angeles (213) 820-ESOP

Newport Beach (800) 537-ESOP

---

**E**ndangered feces: For the last nine months the National Park Service has been trying "to put out a fire in a 25,000 year accumulation of giant Shasta sloth dung in a remote Grand Canyon cave." The deposit, five feet thick, is one of "only ten known caves of sloth dung in the world," according to the *Washington Post*, and is considered a "treasure trove" for scientists. By February 1977 the cost of fighting the blaze had passed \$50,000.

May 1977

**A**ccording to the Knight news service, the U.S. Supreme Court will soon rule on that burning issue: "When people flush their toilets in one state and the product winds up in another, is that interstate commerce?"

February 1978

**G**reat Moments in Political Philosophy: "Persons who rely on the Supreme Court test that something is obscene only if it has no redeeming value are 'depraved, mentally-deficient, mind-warped queers,' the Utah Supreme Court said in upholding a Salt Lake City obscenity ordinance" (*Los Angeles Times*).

April 1978  
—Bill Birmingham

**T**eachers on the public school payroll are incensed by a growing reliance on competency tests for instructors. Little wonder the panic. During a recent teachers' strike in New Orleans, one gifted public school professor proudly paraded a picket: "We are striking for descent wages." A printed study guide for Virginia's third-graders asks, "What did the sculpture told the archologists?" But the prize for this semester must go to the conscientious civil servant in the Mobile, Alabama, learning institution who wrote a letter to the parents of a youngster in trouble: "Scott is dropping in his studies he acts as if he don't care. Scott want pass in his assignment at all, he had a poem to learn and he fell to do it." Poor Scott.

August 1979



**T**om and Jane Fonda-Hayden are really getting screwed. I mean, they've got this nice little piece of property up in Santa Barbara, and they paid good money for it—500,000 big ones—back in 1977. And now they want to put a magnificent children's theater up there so as to entertain all the swell youngsters who will be going to their super summer camp in years to come. It's *their* land, and they *own* it, and they aren't hurting anyone else, and why can't they do what they want. Right?

Wrong, Tom and Jane. You can't. Tough taco. No way. See ya later. It's just like this: There are these things called "land-use controls." And they give local politicians the right to decide what people can do with the land they own.

Now, Tom and Jane, y'all thought it was pretty nifty when scummy developers and low-income people were bounced right out of those really pretty suburban hideaways you \$500,000 ranch people like to hang out in. But the same scoundrels you gave the power to decide land use then, they've got it now—right when *you* need a permit just to let kids have a theater. And these politicians, neighbors of

yours, they don't like you. They think you're Reds! They think you're gonna "brainwash" those kiddies! And so they can stop you from putting that theater in. They are The People, and they have The Power. Thank you, Tom and Jane!

March 1981

**T**he Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has scored still another blow for the dignity of man. In the Christmas just past, merry proletarians celebrated the Joy of Marx with a blissful new holiday gift sensation: toilet paper subscriptions. Due to the responsibilities of international leadership, the USSR's resources are a bit strained lately (like the past 64 years, approximately), and the traditional T.P. is rather tough to come by. This is a small sacrifice that socialist workers for brotherhood and justice are happy and honored to make so as to advance the cause (and Red tanks in Kabul). Yet, a nice wipe would be a great gift idea. And so...voila! Sovietland's "toilet paper futures" now grant the bearer of such card to be the first in line whenever any store actually has a supply. "My mother enrolled for a subscription," proclaimed one Russian revo-