

American Association for the Advancement of Science

Science serves its readers as a forum for the presentation and discussion of important issues related to the advancement of science, including the presentation of minority or conflicting points of view, rather than by publishing only material on which a consensus has been reached. Accordingly, all articles published in *Science*—including editorials, news and comment, and book reviews—are signed and reflect the individual views of the authors and not official points of view adopted by the AAAS or the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

Publisher: Richard S. Nicholson

Editor: Daniel E. Koshland, Jr.

News Editor: Ellis Rubinstein

Managing Editor: Patricia A. Morgan

Deputy Editors: Philip H. Abelson (*Engineering and Applied Sciences*); John I. Brauman (*Physical Sciences*); Thomas R. Cech (*Biological Sciences*)

EDITORIAL STAFF

Assistant Managing Editor: Monica M. Bradford

Senior Editors: Eleanor Butz, Martha Coleman, Barbara Jasny, Katrina L. Kelner, Phillip D. Szuromi, David F. Voss

Associate Editors: R. Brooks Hanson, Pamela J. Hines, Kelly LaMarco, Linda J. Miller

Letters Editor: Christine Gilbert

Book Reviews: Katherine Livingston, *editor*; Teresa Fryberger

Contributing Editor: Lawrence I. Grossman

Chief Production Editor: Ellen E. Murphy

Editing Department: Lois Schmitt, *head*; Patricia L. Moe, Barbara P. Ordway

Copy Desk: Joi S. Granger, Margaret E. Gray, MaryBeth Shartle, Beverly Shields

Production Manager: James Landry

Assistant Production Manager: Kathleen C. Fishback

Art Director: Yolanda M. Rook

Graphics and Production: Holly Bishop, Julie Cherry, Catherine S. Siskos

Systems Analyst: William Carter

NEWS STAFF

Correspondent-at-Large: Barbara J. Culliton

Deputy News Editors: John M. Benditt, Jean Marx, Colin Norman

News and Comment/Research News: Ann Gibbons, Constance Holden, Richard A. Kerr, Eliot Marshall, Joseph Palca, Robert Pool, Leslie Roberts, M. Mitchell Waldrop

European Correspondent: Jeremy Cherfas

West Coast Correspondent: Marcia Barinaga

Contributing Correspondents: Joseph Alper, Barry A. Cipra, Robert Crease

BUSINESS STAFF

Fulfillment Manager: Marlene Zendell

Business Staff Manager: Deborah Rivera-Wienhold

Classified Advertising Supervisor: Amie Charlene King

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES

Director: Earl J. Scherago

Traffic Manager: Donna Rivera

Traffic Manager (Recruitment): Gwen Canter

Advertising Sales Manager: Richard L. Charles

Marketing Manager: Herbert L. Burklund

Employment Sales Manager: Edward C. Keller

Sales: New York, NY 10036: J. Kevin Henebry, 1515 Broadway (212-730-1050); Scotch Plains, NJ 07076: C. Richard Callis, 12 Unami Lane (201-889-4873); Hoffman Estates, IL 60195: Jack Ryan, 525 W. Higgins Rd. (708-885-8675); San Jose, CA 95112: Bob Brindley, 310 S. 16th St. (408-998-4690); Dorset, VT 05251: Fred W. Dieffenbach, Kent Hill Rd. (802-867-5581); Damascus, MD 20872: Rick Sommer, 11318 Kings Valley Dr. (301-972-9270); U.K., Europe: Nick Jones, +44(0)64752918; Telex 42513; FAX (0647) 52053.

Information for contributors appears on page XI of the 30 March 1990 issue. Editorial correspondence, including requests for permission to reprint and reprint orders, should be sent to 1333 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005. Telephone: 202-326-6500. **Advertising correspondence** should be sent to Tenth Floor, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. Telephone 212-730-1050 or WU Telex 968082 SCHERAGO, or FAX 212-382-3725.

The New Puritanism

This communication received by Science was signed by John Winthrop, formerly of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, now on Cloud Nine.

"It is particularly gratifying for me to look down from my celestial orbit and see the return of Puritanism to the United States. Years ago I was active in a colony that outlawed smoking, drinking, and dancing, but in subsequent times I have observed a most unseemly loss of enthusiasm for these pioneering ideas. My colleagues and I realized long ago that people could not manage their own lives, and it is good to see an emergence of scientific support for this intuitive understanding. However, warning labels on cigarettes and liquor bottles, and education as to the inevitable consequences of dancing, will not be enough. Strict laws will be needed to protect people from themselves, analogous to the brilliant principle of destroying a village to save it.

In addition to the meager list above, modern society must vastly expand the measures it provides for the safety of its hapless members. Because loud noise impairs hearing and causes psychological stress, young people must be enjoined to listen to rock music at the whisper level instead of the ear-splitting level. Consider skiing, boating, and hang gliding; they are easily more hazardous to one's health than passive smoke and should be abolished. Radiation hazards at 30,000 feet require that airlines protect their passengers by flying at lower altitudes. Flying at treetop level would cause a noise problem, but computers indicate that restricting air travel to 35 miles per hour at 11,547 feet would minimize all danger. At this rate passengers on the Seattle to New York flight might die of old age, but that is a minor tradeoff in the battle against involuntary risk.

Because extrapolation from people living downwind from three-pack-a-day smokers suggests that passive smoking results in an increased cancer rate, designated smoking areas in office buildings, football stadiums, and wind tunnels will not reduce risk to zero and must be declared illegal. With improvement in technology, calculations will show that a smoker in Iowa causes measurable risk to a pedestrian in Los Angeles, and therefore either smoking in Iowa or pedestrianism in Los Angeles will have to be outlawed, whichever is cheaper. Because a martini before dinner is orders of magnitude more dangerous than passive smoking, this too will have to go. Those whose personalities require a happy hour will become more churlish to their employees, more abusive to their children, and less likely to lend a lawnmower to their neighbor, but that is a small price to pay for progress.

A recent report from sleep researchers indicated that most people get far too little sleep. Furthermore, there is a tendency for hard-driving individuals to brag about how few hours of rest they need while maintaining heroically busy schedules. Actually, they are lowering life expectancy and doing their jobs poorly, according to the sleep researchers. Like 9-year-olds, most individuals just cannot be trusted to go to bed on time, and a national curfew will be needed.

There will, of course, be people who advocate commonsense approaches, such as outlawing only behavior that endangers others at risk levels higher than driving to work, but allowing freedom of choice for those who, properly warned, endanger only themselves. This alluring pragmatism will dilute and endanger the entire campaign; an integral part of Puritanism is its disdainful view of the behavior of others. Appropriate dress is a subject for future legislation, because affronts to the eyes should rank with those to the ears and lungs in any orderly world.

The implementation of these necessary and admirable injunctions may, of course, stimulate some irrational rebelliousness. Obnoxious civil liberty fanatics may make the claim that people should be allowed to die as they wish, or even more outrageously, to live as they like. Such a lack of discipline can only lead to chaos and will yield horrible consequences such as loud laughter in subways or jogging without a helmet. We must face the fact that humans inherit a regrettable instinct to have fun, and therefore severe deterrents are needed. Capital punishment seems too strong, but the stocks, a device invented by us Puritans, seem appropriate for those who need protection from themselves. They work very effectively up here in our idyllic Puritanical society, which may explain why some new arrivals are bewildered about whether they have entered heaven or hell."—DANIEL E. KOSHLAND