

# Imprimis

December 2002 • Volume 31, Number 12

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## Thirty Years of the Best of *Imprimis*

**H**illsdale College is a fighting school. In its early years it was known nationally for its anti-slavery views, and its professors and students played a significant role in founding the Republican Party and saving the Union. In recent years Hillsdale has returned to national prominence. It waged a long legal battle with the federal government. It adopted a policy of refusing even indirect federal aid, in the form of taxpayer-funded student grants and loans, and replaced that money with privately funded student aid. In that way it retained its independence.

Now, as at its inception, the political ideas the College promotes – natural rights, free enterprise, limited government and moral responsibility – are inseparable from the mission set out in its Articles of Association: to provide the education necessary to preserve free government.

Imprimis is one of the pillars of Hillsdale’s modern-day outreach efforts. It began with a readership of just over one thousand. Ten years ago, when it turned 20, its circulation stood at 335,000. Today, at 30, it has over 1,100,000 readers. There is nothing else like it anywhere.

For this issue, we have selected excerpts from Imprimis issues covering the past three decades. Some readers will remember all or most of them. Others will recall very few. All, we hope, will enjoy a look back.

–The Editors



Vol. 1, No. 2, August 1972



### What’s Going On?

-Philip M. Crane

Hillsdale College Class of 1952 and Member of Congress (R-Illinois), 1969-present



The Gulliver in our private enterprise economy is being strangled by the proliferation of Lilliputians in all phases of government. Witness the endless stream of entangling legislation, implemented by an ever-enveloping bureaucracy, and enforced by a multiplying cast of alphabet agencies. A time may soon come when Gulliver will be unable to rise again. And, if that day arrives when freedom is but a memory, will you and I be able to explain to our grandchildren what, when our people were truly at a crossroad, we found more important than understanding the blessings of liberty? Let us hope we never have to face that question. 🍷

Vol. 5, No. 12, December 1976



### The Something-for-Nothing Syndrome

-Leonard E. Read

(1898-1983)  
Founder and President, The Foundation for Economic Education



Is thievery a short-run gain for the thief? Most thieves think it is or they would not steal. Having a stunted perception, they fail to realize that the loss in life-values far exceeds the gain in loot. Were the thief capable of time-lapse thinking, he would clearly see that a population of thieves would perish. . . .

Direct theft is practiced by comparatively few of the total population. Most people find it unnecessary to do time-lapse thinking to put thievery in its proper place. However, millions of these same people not only



condone but participate in legal plunder, that is, they urge government to do the looting for them. They see nothing wrong with this; indeed, they regard the loot as a gain. Perhaps the only way for them to set their thinking straight is a resort to time-lapse thinking. . . .

Many farmers get paid for not farming and regard the payments as gains. Apply this political nostrum to all productive activity, not only getting paid for not farming but getting paid for not generating electricity, not drilling for and refining oil, not making clothes and autos, and so on. Project such practices into the future and observe the self-evident consequences. Time-lapse thinking will reveal the fallacy; it will serve as an eye-opener, a needed shock treatment.

Reflect on the businessmen who seek political protection against competition, domestic as well as foreign. Assume the universality of this craving for short-run “gains” and then assess the future. What would be the economic picture? It would look like ancient feudalism or medieval mercantilism or modern communism. 🍌

Vol. 6, No. 11, November 1977



**The Little Platoon We Belong to In Society**

**-Russell Kirk (1918-1994)**

Historian and Author, *The Conservative Mind*



Once upon a time, the family provided much besides affection and a common domicile. It was the means for defense against sturdy beggars and masterless men, for education and training of the young, for maintaining the old and infirm, for securing material sustenance. Nowadays the family has not altogether ceased to fulfill these other functions, but the scope of these activities has been reduced – not always to the advantage of the person and the republic. . . . For the alternative to the vigorous family is the universal orphanage. If the family disintegrates, there remain only two modes of human existence. The first of these is an atomic individualism, every man and woman isolated and self-seeking – suffering, as did Rudyard Kipling’s orangutan, from “too much ego in his cosmos.” . . . [But] total individualism is the negation of society. . . . In such a condition, there exists freedom of a sort, but it is what John Adams called the freedom of the wolf, as distinguished from the moral freedom of the truly human person. License of that sort, if prolonged, would put an end to the human race. So it is that if the family structure dissolves in an irresponsible solitary individualism, such a phase is

adventitious and transitory merely. It is succeeded, ordinarily, by the second alternative mode. . . compulsory collectivism. 🍌

Vol. 7, No. 1, January 1978



**Whatever Happened to Free Enterprise?**

**-Ronald Reagan**

Former President of the United States



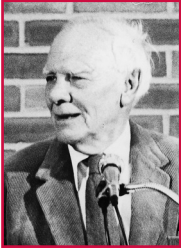
Beginning with the traumatic experience of the Great Depression, we the people have turned more and more to government for answers that government has neither the right nor the capacity to provide. Unfortunately, government as an institution always tends to increase in size and power, and so government attempted to provide the answers.

The result is a fourth branch of government added to the traditional three of executive, legislative and judicial: a vast federal bureaucracy that’s now being imitated in too many states and too many cities, a bureaucracy of enormous power which determines policy to a greater extent than any of us realize, very possibly to a greater extent than our own elected representatives. And it can’t be removed from office by our votes. . . .

More than anything else, a new political economic mythology, widely believed by too many people, has increased government’s ability to interfere as it does in the marketplace. Profit is a dirty word, blamed for most of our social ills. In the interest of something called consumerism, free enterprise is becoming far less free. Property rights are being reduced, and even eliminated, in the name of environmental protection. It is time that a voice be raised on behalf of the 73 million independent wage earners in this country, pointing out that profit, property rights and freedom are inseparable, and you cannot have the third unless you continue to be entitled to the first two.

Even many of us who believe in free enterprise have fallen into the habit of saying when something goes wrong: “There ought to be a law.” Sometimes I think there ought to be a law against saying that there ought to be a law. . . . It is difficult to understand the ever-increasing number of intellectuals in the groves of academe, present company excepted, who contend that our system could be improved by the adoption of some of the features of socialism. 🍌

Vol. 8, No. 5, May 1979



## The Great Liberal Death Wish

-Malcolm Muggeridge  
(1903-1990)

Journalist and Author;  
*Confessions of a 20th  
Century Pilgrim*



What happened in Germany was that long before the Nazis got into power, a great propaganda was undertaken to sterilize people who were considered to be useless or a liability to society, and after that to introduce what they called “mercy killing.” This happened long before the Nazis set up their extermination camps at Auschwitz and elsewhere, and was based upon the highest humanitarian considerations. You see what I’m getting at? On a basis of liberal humanism, there is no creature in the universe greater than man, and the future of the human race rests only with human beings themselves, which leads infallibly to some sort of suicidal situation. . . . The efforts that men make to bring about their own happiness, their own ease of life, their own self-indulgence, will in due course produce the opposite, leading me to the absolutely inescapable conclusion that human beings cannot live and operate in this world without some concept of a being greater than themselves, and of a purpose which transcends their own egotistic or greedy desires. Once you eliminate the notion of a God, a creator, once you eliminate the notion that the creator has a purpose for us, and that life consists essentially in fulfilling that purpose, then you are bound, as Pascal points out, to induce the megalomania of which we’ve seen so many manifestations in our time. 🍌

Vol. 9, No. 7, July 1980



## The Poor as First Victims of the Welfare State

-Walter Williams

John M. Olin Distinguished  
Professor of Economics, George  
Mason University



The most unique feature of the United States is that we are a nation of minorities. Virtually all of these minorities arrived penniless and uneducated. To add to our uniqueness, all of these immigrants faced varying degrees of hostility; none were welcomed to our shores with open arms, often not even by their own kind. But these people were able to melt, *en masse*, into the mainstream of American society. They did it in many ways. They worked in sweatshops; they were hucksters and ped-

dlers; whole families, including children, worked. Indeed, the conditions were rough – but they made it. Today, through numerous so-called progressive laws, these harsh conditions have been removed. And, ironically, it turns out that the very people that we saved from the harsh conditions are having the greatest difficulty in entering the mainstream. The reason is that jobs for the lowest skilled person have all but been destroyed. In this sense, we have cut off the bottom rungs to the economic ladder.

What today’s poor lack that yesterday’s poor had is a free economic system. Today’s poor have subsidies that flow from the welfare state; yesterday’s poor had economic opportunity. Poor people today need just what the poor of yesterday had: a life with government off their backs. 🍌

Vol. 11, No. 12, December 1982



## The Only Way to Peace

-Winston S. Churchill II

Former Member of the British  
Parliament



I’ve yet to meet anybody who would dispute what we all know about the horror of nuclear war. It must be the prime objective of all of us to do all we can, as individuals and jointly, to see that we never have a world war in the nuclear age. But I believe it is vital that we should be ruled in these matters by our head and not by our heart, by our reason and not by our emotions.

I have been to Hiroshima. I don’t believe anyone can go there without coming away with the most powerful feelings. I came away with a determination to do all in my power as an individual and as a member of the British Parliament to see that we never again have a world war. But I also came away with a very strong determination that never would the British people be naked in the face of a nuclear attacker in the way that the Japanese were in 1945. That is why I disagree with those in Western Europe who advocate unilateral nuclear disarmament. This would leave the Soviets with their infantry intact while completely getting rid of our own nuclear weapons and requiring all U.S. nuclear weapons to be withdrawn from Western Europe. This could set the stage for World War III, and it would be catastrophic.

“The idiot child has the matches now.” These were my grandfather’s words when he heard of the successful testing of the first atom bomb. Today we must eliminate any chance of nuclear war. But this can only be done through strength, not through weakness. 🍌

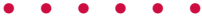
Vol. 13, No. 1, January 1984



## Idea Fashions of the Eighties: After Marx, What?

-Tom Wolfe

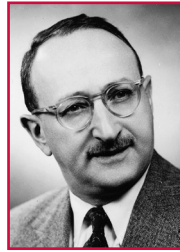
Journalist and Author,  
*Bonfire of the Vanities*



In 1974, I attended a conference at a university in the Great Plains, a conference called "America in the Year 2000" . . . We were treated to a parade of speakers, each of whom filled in more dreadful details about American society. . . . After 36 hours of this, it was all that I could do to bring myself to the last symposium in the conference, entitled, "The American Environment in the Year 2000." The prognosis was, as you might imagine, not altogether salutary. The first speaker was a young ecologist, who rose up and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I am not sure that I want to be alive in America in the year 2000." He looked pretty lively at the time. He was about 37, he had on a magenta turtleneck disco jersey and a Madras jacket and a lot of other marvelous gear. The explanation of his dour prognosis was that due to the rape of the upper atmosphere by aerosol can users, a certain ion would no longer be able to come through the atmosphere to the earth, and this particular ion was indispensable for bone formation.

No more bone formation! Suddenly I had a vision that was worse than any that had come to me in the preceding 36 hours. I could see these marvelous women that I enjoyed watching walk down Lexington Avenue near where I live in New York City with their five-inch, pyramid-heel, three-color, patent-leather, platform-soled shoes, and their blue jeans smartly cleaving the declivities fore and aft, and I could suddenly picture them dissolving into blobs of patent leather and denim on the sidewalk, inching and suppurating along like amoebae. I could see the blind news dealer down at the corner of Lexington and Sixty-First Street trying to give change to a notions buyer from Bloomingdale's, and their hands run together like fettuccine over a stack of *New York Posts*. It was worse than anything I had ever imagined in my life. 🍄

Vol. 15, No. 2, February 1986



## Between Democracy and Despotism

-Sidney Hook  
(1902-1989)

Philosopher and Author,  
*Out of Step: An Unquiet Life in the 20th Century*



Professor Chester Finn reports that there are areas in this country in which American history is taught as a history of Indian oppression, as a history of the oppression of Blacks and Chicanos, as a history of the exploitation of immigrants, of the degradation of women and children. The whole history of America is sometimes presented to the minds of the young as a history of oppression which makes the present position of these oppressed groups incomprehensible. Much of what is said in this litany of horrors is, of course, true. But it only illustrates the fact that selected truths can be woven together to communicate a thunderously false tale. It is comparable to a survey of American social problems which, because of the indisputable presence of current problems, fails to mention that any has ever been adequately met.

Not infrequently when we protest misleading accounts, and even outright distortions, of American reality, we are accused of nationalism, of sacrificing the truth on the altar of a mindless patriotism. But there are many ways of sacrificing the truth. One way is to insist that some special truth is the only truth there is. Not long ago, when I protested the unceasing propaganda in the classrooms of elementary schools about the horrors of a nuclear holocaust which was producing nightmares in sensitive children, I was taxed unfairly by some pacifists with denying that war is an evil. They were wrong. Not only do I believe that war is an evil, I believe it is always an evil. What is wrong is believing that war is the *only* evil, or that it is the worst. Were we to believe that, why would we have resisted Hitler or the Japanese warlords? Why would the Civil War have been fought? To the many truths that are relevant, here we must add the truth that often the will and ability to fight in defense of our freedoms is the best insurance against war. 🍄

### A GREAT GIFT IDEA FROM HILLSDALE COLLEGE PRESS



#### Educating for Liberty: The Best of *Imprimis*, 1972-2002

A collection from the first three decades of *Imprimis*, the national speech digest of Hillsdale College. Authors include Larry P. Arnn, Lynne Cheney, Clarence Thomas, George Gilder, John Stossel, Malcolm Muggeridge, Michael Medved, Margaret Thatcher, William Bennett and Jeane J. Kirkpatrick. Edited by Douglas A. Jeffrey. 2002 330 pages \$25 (hardcover)  
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Vol. 17, No. 8, August 1988



## Who Speaks for Science?

-Dixie Lee Ray  
(1914-1994)

Scientist, Former Governor of the State of Washington and Author, *Environmental Overkill: Whatever Happened to Common Sense?*



While the respected scientific community judges very strictly those at the top of their profession, they simply ignore the incompetents and no-goods at the bottom.... Dr. Ernest Sternglass, much quoted by the media on radiation matters, has never published his claims about the effect of low-level radiation in a peer-reviewed journal. In an article in *Esquire* magazine published in 1969, Dr. Sternglass predicted that all children in the United States would die as a result of fallout from nuclear tests. Twenty years have passed and unfortunately for his credibility but fortunately for children, he was, and is, wrong. But his opinions, long since dismissed by knowledgeable scientists in his field, are still actively sought and quoted by the popular press. Until respected scientists, perhaps through their professional societies or through the National Academy of Science, identify the purveyors of misrepresentation, we have only ourselves to blame for fear, misunderstanding, and the rejection of technology. 🌱

Vol. 18, No. 12, December 1989



## Hollywood vs. Religion

-Michael Medved

Film Critic, Radio Talk Show Host and Author, *Hollywood vs. America*



Moviemakers can't stay away from religious themes because of their deep-seated desire to be taken seriously; religion offers one subject which everyone acknowledges as fundamentally serious. If writers and directors take a swipe at religion in one of their films, no matter how clumsy or contrived that attack may be, they can feel as if they've made some sort of important and courageous statement....

In this context, I will never forget an astonishing private conversation concerning the motivations behind the notorious 1985 fiasco, *King David*. This Godzilla-sized turkey cost \$28,000,000 and attracted less than \$3,000,000 in ticket sales. It featured Richard Gere in the title role — a bizarre casting choice that led industry wags to refer to it as *An Israelite and a Gentleman*. Most peculiar of

all, the film advanced the radical — and totally unsupported — notion that the biblical king freed himself from his religious “delusions” at the end of his life. The concluding sequence shows a suddenly enlightened David violently rejecting God as he smashes the scale model of the temple he had previously intended to build.

A few weeks before the film's release, one of the people who created it spoke to me proudly of its fearless integrity. “We could have gone the easy way and played to the Bible belt,” he said, “but we wanted to make a tough, honest film. We don't see David as a gung-ho, Praise-the-Lord kind of guy. We wanted to make him a richer, deeper character.”

In his mind, in other words, secure religious faith is incompatible with depth of character. 🌱

Vol. 19, No. 5, May 1990



## Why We Need a Core Curriculum for College Students

-Lynne V. Cheney

Second Lady of the United States and Former Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities



A 1989 survey funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and conducted by the Gallup Organization showed 25 percent of the nation's college seniors unable to locate Columbus's voyage within the correct half-century. About the same percentage could not distinguish Churchill's words from Stalin's, or Karl Marx's thoughts from the ideas of the U.S. Constitution. More than 40 percent could not identify when the Civil War occurred. Most could not identify Magna Carta, the Missouri Compromise, or Reconstruction. Most could not link major works by Plato, Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton with their authors....

To the task of learning about oneself and the world, a required course of studies can bring needed order and coherence. At one midwestern university where there is no core, students choose from almost 900 courses, with topics ranging from the history of foreign labor movements to the analysis of daytime soap operas. The result is all too often “a meaningless mosaic of fragments,” in naturalist Loren Eiseley's words. “From ape skull to Mayan temple,” he wrote, “we contemplate the miscellaneous debris of time like sightseers to whom these mighty fragments, fallen gateways, and sunken galleys convey no present instruction.” A core of learning shows the patterns of the mosaic. It provides a context for forming the parts of education into a whole. 🌱

Vol. 29, No. 9, September 1992



**Public Policy:  
Some Personal  
Reminiscences**  
-Thomas Sowell

Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution



There is a story. . .that the French police were chasing a criminal who fled into a building in Paris. Their first thought was that they would surround the building. But then they realized that the building was so large, and had so many exits, that they didn't have enough policemen on the scene to do that. So they surrounded the building next door, which was smaller and had fewer exits.

Much of the academic research in the social sciences follows exactly this pattern of reasoning.

Often we don't have information on the variables that matter, so we surround other variables, using statistics that the Census Bureau, or the Congressional Budget Office, or someone else has supplied to us. Last year, for example, both the media and the politicians seized upon statistics which showed that blacks received less prenatal care, and had higher infant mortality rates, than whites. The obvious answer was more government spending on prenatal care. Yet the very same study showed that Mexican Americans received even less prenatal care than blacks and had slightly lower infant mortality rates than whites.

Prenatal care was the building next door. 🍷

Vol. 23, No. 11, November 1994



**A Case Study in  
Liberal Bias**  
-L. Brent Bozell

Founder and President, Media Research Center



In the 1980s, there was a consensus among the members of the national media that Ronald Reagan was going to fail and that he was going to bring on economic disaster. But. . .the economy didn't collapse. In fact, it soared to unprecedented levels.

The media stubbornly refused to admit that "Reaganomics" was responsible. The drumbeat of negative opposition to the president's policies continued through the 1980s. By 1986. . . the ratio of negative to positive stories was seven to one. In other words, as the economy was improving, media reports on the economy were becoming increasingly negative.

One of the most common allegations in these reports was that the poor got poorer under Reagan, even though the actual number of poor declined—from 14 to 13 percent during his administration, and the average income for the lowest one-fifth of Americans rose from \$7,008 to \$9,431.

Inflation declined 48 percent, from 8.9 to 4.6 percent. Unemployment declined 71.9 percent, from 7.5 percent to 5.2. Twenty-one million new jobs were created. The so-called "greedy '80s" witnessed the largest peacetime economic expansion in our nation's history, yet the media remained deaf, dumb and blind. 🍷

Vol. 27, No. 3, March 1998



**Ethical Leadership**  
-H. Norman Schwarzkopf

U.S. Army,  
Retired



The true rewards of leadership come from striving to look up to a higher moral standard. . . . Some people get into the "leadership game" for the next tangible reward — the next promotion, the next pay raise, the next headline. But these individuals are inevitably doomed to disappointment. At the end of the day, they cannot point to these things and say that they are the stuff of which genuine happiness and pride are made. Good leaders sometimes — in fact, quite often — lose in the material world. They go right ahead anyway, knowing that they are going to lose. Are they tilting at windmills? Do they have a "can't do" instead of a "can do" attitude? Of course not. They are committed to defending the right values. And the right values are seldom safe, easy or advantageous. 🍷

Volume 28, No. 10, October 1999



**The Challenge of  
Educating for 21st  
Century Leadership**

-Margaret Thatcher

Former Prime Minister of  
Great Britain



Human nature, by definition, doesn't change. That isn't to minimize the effects of culture, circumstance or individual differences. . . [but] the basic instincts of the human being are constant. On one level, this is cause for optimism. No matter how complicated our domestic problems are, no matter how tense our relations with other nations are, we can be sure that, deep down, there is some spark of humanity, some urge to do what is right,

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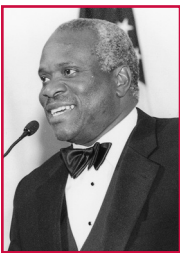
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to which we can always appeal.

On another level. . . there is an equally important and equally unchanging darker side of human nature. Without law, without the institutions of civil society, without religion, without the values that promote. . . self-restraint, that darker side will prevail. Half the countries of the world claim to be democratic, but being democratic is not enough, for a majority cannot turn what is wrong into right. In order to be considered truly free, countries must also have a deep love of liberty and an abiding respect for the rule of law. 🦋

Volume 29, No. 11, November 2000



### **“Never Give In” -Clarence Thomas**

Associate Justice, United States Supreme Court



**T**he founders of [Hillsdale] College opened its doors to “all persons, irrespective of nation, color, or sex,” just as America’s Founders committed our nation to the idea that all human beings are created equal. . . . [They] did not adopt this position, like so many of our elite institutions in later years, under legal compulsion, or because it was the fashionable thing to do. They adopted it

because it was right. But how did they know this? How, indeed, can we know it? How can we confidently assert that the principles of Hillsdale and America are right, and that opposing principles are wrong? That, it seems to me, is [a vital part] of Hillsdale College’s mission. Its traditional liberal arts curriculum introduces its students to the greatest books of both ancient and modern times. By studying these books, students become confident of the existence of permanent standards of right and wrong, and are led to discover through their own thinking the same truths that formed the basis of our nation, the “laws of nature and of nature’s God” that underlie our unalienable rights and our tradition of limited government.

This curriculum, the great books of the western tradition, and the ideas it upholds are under attack today, just as the principles of 1776 were besieged [when Hillsdale was founded] in 1844. The assault is a massive one, and Hillsdale College is a small place with very few allies. But the ideas that Hillsdale represents and defends are not small. They are great and they are timeless. They can withstand the temporary setbacks that result from our human imperfections. But their long-term practical success is by no means guaranteed. That success requires our constant vigilance, our constant study, our constant devotion. 🦋

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VOLUME 31 • NUMBER 12

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Imprimis (im-prī-mis), [Latin]: in the first place

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