

## Remarks continued

I rented a new car and drove 128 miles round trip to join Ed in his brave stance against the god-monsters of that F.O.P. lodge. I was late in my arrival of the opening prayer invocation for which Ed bravely refused to stand. A letter was read by a presiding officer concerning Ed's refusal to stand, however surprisingly there were in fact a few Christians that supported Ed in his position against the lodge dictating to him in partaking in a religious ritual. At the end of the meeting a call to stand for prayer was made. Only Ed and myself remained seated. When a woman lodge member made a sarcastic remark to me about Ed, I defended him and spoke highly of him and his position. I also let it be known that I too was an atheist. I am awaiting to see if there will be a conspiracy to oust Ed from his high ranking official position of his local lodge. I have spoken to Ed and suggested that we do a press release/interview on this matter to expose this discrimination publicly. Time will tell.

Although my car was in the shop, to stand for prayer was made. Only

## Those who can't, teach (can't think, that is)

their immorality.

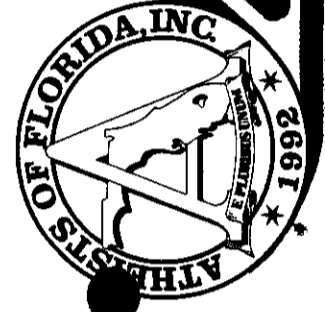
When a student in the class brought up the subject of friends dying from AIDS, another student complained to the school principal about the religious opinions offered as explanation by the teacher, which also included comment on abortion and prayer in schools. The student urged that the teacher be removed.

The principal at Northeast Community wrote a letter of reprimand for the teacher's personnel file and plans to assign her to another class upon completion of this term.

Teachers can't be fired for first-time indiscretions because of state-protected due process rights of teachers. But first offenses usually warrant a reprimand. If the teacher repeats the offense, then a charge of insubordination may result and even lead to suspension or dismissal.

not always true, but we did spot one example where it is. In a July issue of the *Times* we spotted an article about a teacher at Northeast Community School who told her health class that AIDS is God's punishment for homosexuality.

She also drew parallels between the disease and the Biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah which, according to superstition, were destroyed because of



# ATHEISTS of FLORIDA

"Dedicated to the absolute separation of State and Church"

"This would be the best of all possible worlds if there were no religion in it."

— John Adams

Newsletter of Atheists of Florida, Inc.  
Volume I Number 08

Chapters in Miami and Tampa Bay  
October, 1992

## Where we stand

MIAMI — Atheists of Florida President Christos Tzanetakos will attend the second annual Atheist Alliance board of directors meeting, scheduled for Los Angeles the week-end of October 17-18. A full report will be included in next month's newsletter.

Since its inception in September, 1991, Atheist Coalition has added three new mem-

ber organizations. In addition to Atheist Coalition, Atheists United (Los Angeles), Atheists of San Francisco Region, and Atheist Network (Houston), Minnesota Atheists (Twin Cities) and Atheist League of Washington have joined. Atheists of Florida is the most recent addition to the roster.

Both chapters of Atheists of Florida have held elections for officers and preparations are under way for a state convention in 1993, location still to be determined.

## Millions in federal funds for Catholics

From St. Petersburg Times,  
Wednesday, September 30

TAMPA — The Department of Housing and Urban Development has awarded nearly \$8-million in federal grants to build two apartment complexes—one in Tampa and one in St. Petersburg. In the midst of a four-trillion dollar national debt, here is our government handing out money to, of all institutions, the wealthiest tax-free organization in the world!

The complexes are designed for low-income, elderly residents age 62 or older and persons who are permanently disabled. Rental fees will be no more than 30 percent of a resident's income.

Construction is scheduled to begin in the fall of 1993. The project will consist of an 82-unit building next to St. Patrick's Church, 4522 South Manhattan in Tampa, and a 76-unit complex next to Holy Cross Church, 7851 54th Avenue North in St. Petersburg. Both buildings will be three-stories and consist of one-bedroom apartments with a living-dining area, a kitchen and one bathroom. Together, the cost will be \$7.9-million.

Here's how it works, according to a spokeswoman for the Catholic Diocese. The land is first sold to the

federal government for a value determined by HUD. Then the diocese acts as sponsor for the projects and will pay any development costs that exceed the amount of the grants.

The buildings will be owned by separate non-profit corporations that the diocese will establish for each facility. Each corporation will be served by diocesan representatives. The corporations will hire the contractors, build the complexes and either hire companies to operate them or operate the facilities themselves. Residents do not need to come from within the city limits or be Catholic.

Do you think there will be any question of a potential resident's religion? Would an atheist resident be admitted? Who will make up any shortcomings in rental income to operate the buildings? Will the complex buildings pay any property tax revenues to the respective cities of Tampa and St. Petersburg?

But of course the blatant question is begged: How can the federal government be giving money to a religious institution without violating the separation clause of the Constitution?

The money is awarded through the Title 202 program of the Housing Act of 1959. As of this writing, we have been unable to inquire into the Act, but will continue to gather information about this issue.

Three other diocese-sponsored projects for low-income elderly residents are 100-percent occupied. The King's Manor and King's Arms, both in Tampa, and Casa San Miguel in Clearwater.

# Atheists of Florida CHAPTER MEETINGS:

## MIAMI

The Miami Chapter meets once a month at the Ft. Lauderdale Main Library, 100 S. Andrews Ave. For date and time, call the "Atheist Hot Line" at (305) 936-0210.

## TAMPA

The Tampa Bay Chapter meets monthly and we are experimenting with different weekdays in an effort to maximize turnout. This month we will meet Sunday, October 18, at 4:00 pm at Chi-Chi's restaurant, 4020 Park Blvd. in Pinellas Park.

## A-theist = A-political?

Among the various discussions recently among board members and officers has been the topic of just how political, or apolitical, we must be to keep our tax-exempt status. Some contend that we should be apolitical in every way, shape, and form because our membership includes, or may include in the future, Republicans, Democrats, Socialists, Independents, or what have you. My contention, however, is that our function as an educational organization is intrinsically tied into political discourse. In 1846, Jules Michelet said, "What is the first part of politics? Education. The second? Education. And the third? Education." Thomas Mann took this even further when he said in 1924, "The friend of humanity cannot recognize a distinction between what is political and what is not. There is nothing that is not political."

Of course, the IRS would have us believe that we must remain at least apolitical to the point where we avoid losing our tax-exempt status. Supposedly, this means we cannot endorse one politician or political party; we can only talk about the reasons to vote against someone that has demonstrated a direct bias against atheism, or we can play word games as do the Christian right-wingers. A recent article in the *Chronicle* (I'm not sure of the exact location of this publication; it was sent to me sent to me courtesy of Ken Poulsen who is in Wisconsin at the moment so I'll assume it's from that area) discusses how rally speaker Monty Johnson of the Christian Coalition (Robertson's right-wing retroverts) tiptoes into endorsing a political party without ever saying anything directly partisan. "It's not that you can't work for a Democratic candidate, but it just so happens that one party is more closely aligned with Christian values."

Well, it's obvious that there is another party more closely aligned with atheist values, although not nearly as close as we'd like. I cannot imagine that any self-respecting atheist would vote for a candidate who has personally stated that he doesn't consider atheists to be either citizens or patriots, as did Mr. Bush in 1987 (a statement he has never retracted). However, his Democratic counterpart is certainly not an advocate of atheist rights, at least not if his own home state is an example. There is no recorded protest (to my knowledge) from Bill Clinton about the Arkansas law, pointed out to me by Victor St. John, which states, "No person who denies the being of God shall hold any office [in] the civil departments of this State, nor be competent to testify as a witness in any court."

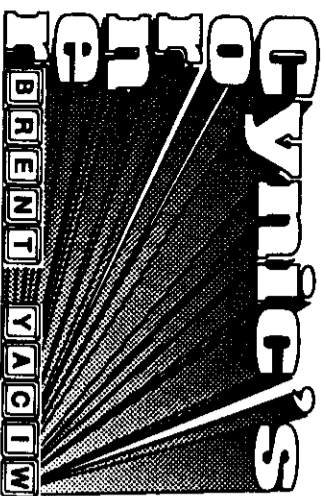
## Starke's Remarks

That's just what I thought!  
No, I'm not suggesting that we go out and get on a radical bandwagon, nor am I advocating that we become raving militant atheist terrorists. I am in fact saying to my fellow atheist that we have strength in unity and in planned detailed organization. Our struggle needs action and deeds—not talk or lip service among ourselves. Yes, we even need to sacrifice. We need to sacrifice our time, money, labor, and expertise.

Every exploited and suppressed group in history has gained ground only by vigorous fighting for their rights, standing their ground and insisting that they are not going to be pushed around any longer. They aggressively faced the adversary or tyrannical foe. We are not going to "breeze" through this predicament with ease.

We are at war—a cold war maybe, but nonetheless a war. We are in a struggle—a fight. The religious zealots have launched an all out campaign to radically spread their religious superstitious brainwashing and propaganda not only in America, but worldwide. It is up to us to reverse this mass subjugation of the human mind.

Let's get cranking! Let's start communicating more often with our fellow atheist (although not to the point of being a pest or nuisance). Let's keep in contact with our fellow atheist. Let's recruit others to our meetings. Let's encourage our fellow atheists to get involved politically and if they choose not to then at least contribute monetarily to their chosen atheist organization. We (atheists) are indeed the last minority.  
*(more Remarks next page)*

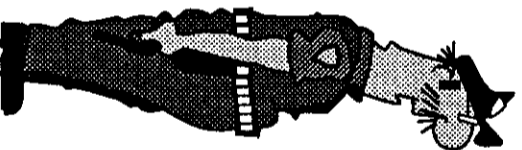


Atheists Of Florida, Inc., is a non-profit, educational organization designed to heighten public awareness about atheism and atheism, and to provide intellectually stimulating contacts for the membership.

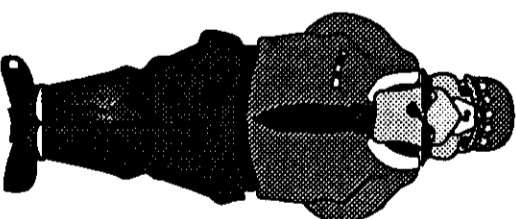
Membership dues should be sent to the chapter of interest. General correspondence should be directed to the Miami Chapter, P.O. Box 530102, Miami, FL 33153-0102. Contact Phone is (305) 936-0210. Annual dues are: \$9.00 - Sustaining; \$30.00 - Couple; \$25.00 - Individual; \$5.00 - Student (under 25 yrs.). Dues are pro-rated quarterly, with annual renewals due by January 1.

Newsletter correspondence and chapter inquiries should be sent to the Tampa Bay Chapter, P.O. Box130753, Tampa, FL 33681-0753. Deadline for newsletter items is the 15th of each month. The A.O.F. newsletter is provided free of charge to our members as a medium of exchange. Letters are published from members on a space-available basis. In general second world guidelines set out in Vol. I, No.6, Atheists Of Florida, Inc., is affiliated with the national Atheist Alliance for purposes of information exchange.

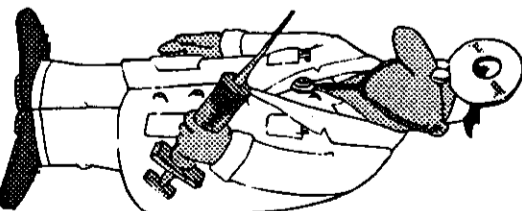
Chairman	Albert E. Lyngzeidson
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Newsletter Editor	Ed Golly
Assistant/Letters Editor	Brent Yachw



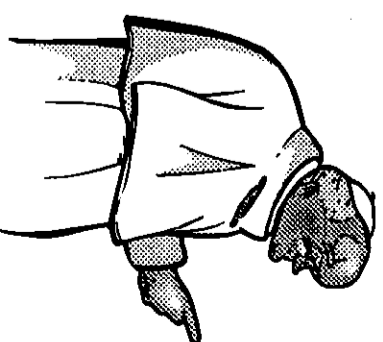
Uniform of Law Enforcement



Uniform of Military Strategy



Uniform of Scientific Inquiry



Uniform of Superstition

# Hurricane Andrew ---Act of God?

Undoubtedly the impact of Andrew inspired ponderance among all of us about the obvious contradictions we perceived as we viewed survivors lamenting about how thankful they were to god for their lives while ignoring the notion that if the god did exist it was he who sent the hurricane in the first place.

One woman was shown giving a tour of the remains of her apartment to a television reporter. It was in total ruins. The reporter observed that there were numerous religious artifacts about the house and the victim confirmed that indeed she was quite pious. When asked how she now felt about her faith having endured the tragedy, she admitted it had generated serious doubt.

Isn't it interesting that in spite of catastrophe occurring in all forms around the world at just about any given time, not until it struck her personally did she begin to question her superstition.

You've read and seen enough to know how severe the destruction actually was in the Homestead area. The god of the Christian superstition seems to have it in for the "meek" of the world. Whether in third-world countries facing starvation and famine or the migrant workers of Homestead, it seems almost always to be the

The Readers' Forum  
The Miami Herald  
1 Herald Plaza  
Miami, FL 33132-1693

Dear Editor:

What baffles me is the irrationality of reasoning that no one questions.

The article about the Key West Shrine that storms have not hit since a grotto was built contrasts to the Wayside Baptist Kendall Church that lies in ruins after the wall collapsed during the hurricane gives me a dim view of people's mentality attributing the shrine as a protector of the Keys.

Ironically I did not pray and my Condo fortunately was spared damages. I attribute the causes to Nature and not to a deity that would cause casualties to one object and preserve another.

people who can least afford it who are struck heaviest by tragedy. But the superstitious mind proves itself incapable of reason regardless of events. Atheists of Florida member Celia Glantz spotted a stupefying article in the Miami Herald of August 29 from Key West about a supposedly hurricane-protective shrine.

It seems that a nun living in the convent at St. Mary's in the early part of this century was witness to several devastating hurricanes which hit Key West. As a result, she designed a grotto modeled after an original in Lourdes, France. She claimed at the dedication that as long as the grotto was there, it would protect Key West from the ravages of a major storm. Coincidentally, Key West has been spared a direct hit by a major hurricane since completion of the grotto.

I suppose it's too far fetched to ask why the Catholics don't simply build such a shrine along every 20 miles of hurricane-prone coastline around the world to spare anyone anywhere the impact of any other hurricanes? Then we'd be done with it. But if you know any Catholics, don't bother to ask that question....you'll be struck dumb with disbelief at any answer they give.

At any rate, the story prompted a letter by Celia to the Readers' Forum of the Miami Herald. The letter speaks for itself. Another Andrew-inspired comment follows:

If you would explain the logic of the headline, "We must all keep the faith" and look below at the photo of a weeping woman who lost her modest mobil home in South Dade, I'd be eager to gain this wisdom. In the words of Bruce Calvert, "Believing is easier than thinking; hence so many more believers than thinkers".  
Yours truly,  
Celia Glantz

## Another hurricane note from Mike Perdomo Thanks, God (and Hitler and Stalin and Fidel!)

After the catastrophic visit of hurricane Andrew, I went to the drug store of my neighborhood for some routine supplies. There was

Is it not simpler to realize there is no god?

## Cynic continued

Clearly he has not gone out of his way to protect the rights of atheists.

So is there an alternative? Well, there's always the option of one of the "other" parties. Even if you see there platforms as viable and their candidates as worthwhile, the simple fact is that unless they have funding similar to H. Ross Perot, they aren't likely to make much of a dent in the vote tallies of the big two. Voting for anyone who is not either Democrat or Republican in a presidential election has sadly become identical to throwing away your vote, almost as if you never voted.

I'm afraid we're stuck with the lesser of two evils. Given the choice between a candidate who has identified himself with the right-wing, anti-atheist groups who favor destroying our rights and spending tax dollars on private (read: religious) schooling for children, and a candidate who has at least attempted to demonstrate respect for other minority groups and may be merely needing some education, I know where my vote is going. Whichever way yours is, I suggest that you at least take the time to vote; the lesser of two evils is still preferable to an avowed religious bigot.

As far as the politicizing of this organization is concerned, I certainly have no intention of turning it into a political party. Be aware, however, that the Christians have no such concerns, but they do love stealth. One of their favorite targets is school boards; often the candidates sponsored by groups like Citizens for Excellence in Education (a deceptive name if ever there was one) deny any connection to fundamentalist groups. Once in office, their agendas include censorship of "offensive" texts, abolition of abortion as an option in counseling, curtailment of gay rights, curriculum changes to show

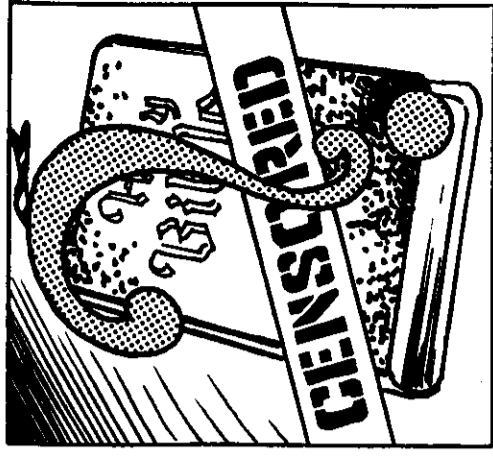
religious events in a more positive light, budget cuts for public schools combined with tax support of private or home schooling, nixing sex education or cultural awareness programs, and prayer in schools. They have succeeded in some areas in removing Little Red Riding Hood from schools because granny drinks wine, axing AIDS education, and cutting spending on school lunch or counseling programs. As long as school boards are elected bodies (a ludicrous idea in itself, but that's another column), those groups are susceptible to majority domination by a well-financed few. These groups often use church vans to ferry voters identified as sympathetic to the polls. Technically this is illegal, but they "rent" the vans for nominal sums to avoid violation. They estimate that only 60% of eligible voters are registered, 50% of those vote; so if 16% of the population is right-wing Christians in a given area, they can take over.

VOTE. \*\*\*\*\*

On another front, we have legal activities. For those of you who haven't heard, an atheist in Brooklyn Center, MN, has filed a petition seeking removal of the Bible from public school libraries in the district. Gene Kasar is basing his petition on the Bible's "lewd, indecent, and violent" content, and claims that it is unsuitable in a school learning environment. He backs up his claims with 20 pages of examples, including concubines, explicit sex, child abuse, incest, nakedness, and mistreatment of women.

My first instinct is to say, "Yeah! It's about time those Bible-thumpers get a taste of their own medicine!" However, being a thoughtful person, which is what made me an atheist in the first place, I started having second thoughts. Do we really want to lower ourselves to the fundamentalist's

level? Do we want to ban or burn books, any books, because we disapprove of the content or use to which the books could be put? Do we want the activities the Bible justifies hidden except when taught in the approving atmosphere of a Sunday School? I say no. I agree 100% with Kasmar's



description of the Bible; it is a disgusting book, filled with horrid ideas and practices, self-contradictions, and irrational teachings. Wouldn't we be better served by exposing this in an objective setting? Shouldn't the Bible be treated in the same manner as the speeches of Adolf Hitler, the actions of the Salem judges and the Ku Klux Klan, as lessons to be learned from?

Of course, there is no guarantee that this will happen. School boards are notoriously packed with conservative Christians who fight objective portrayals of religion tooth and nail. In a response to the petition, the assistant superintendent of the district said the Bible portrays some "poor human decisions and some rather archaic social practices....just as the newspaper attempts to accurately report the evils of humankind as well as the good, the Bible appears to report about real people, real problems, real history." The problem is with the word "appears."

(continued next page)

As long as some in our society contend that the book is infallible, and that it is a product of a supernatural influence instead of human distortion and interpretation, it will be difficult to monitor how the book is used in the schools. Similarly, the writings of Hitler, Marx, or nearly anyone throughout history can be promoted by individual teachers or districts.

Only scrupulous attention to curriculum practices can prevent education from becoming indoctrination, from whatever viewpoint an unprincipled instructor or group wants to push. The term "political correctness," while often abused by the right-wing skills, has some basis in fact; there are those in the entire range of the political spectrum who advocate authoritarian measures to enforce their ideals. I'm no fan of authoritarianism; if I were, I'm sure I'd find some religious justification to back up my views as most authoritarians do. I've actually heard feminists claiming that Christianity supports equal rights for women; obviously, their exposure to the Bible was too limited!

Banning is not the answer; things don't always go away because you ignore them. The strongest argument any atheist can use against a Bible-thumper is throwing their own book at them. Show the rest of the world how evil their "good book" really is, and they lose credibility. Try to ban it, and they gain sympathy.

## Christopher Columbus: Magnificent Legend or Fraud?

Who was this man Christopher Columbus of whom so much was written but little is known? Who is this legend who led the European invasion of the "New World"? One thing is certain—he was not born in Genoa. The birth records of Genoa do not corroborate his own claim. There is a Domenico but no Cristoforo or any of his brothers. We have documentation that he served in the army against Genoa early in his life. He never wrote in Genoese nor used any Genoese idiom. He wrote to his brothers using either Portuguese or Spanish and using many Hispanic idioms but not one Genoese idiom proving he was neither born nor educated in Genoa nor anywhere in the Italian peninsula and neither were his brothers. He never signed his name Cristoforo Colombo.

When he returned to Europe from his very first voyage, he went directly to the King of Portugal to cut a deal. The King of Portugal refused to deal with him because of high hopes in the trips around Africa which yielded spice. The Columbus trip yielded unknown strange lasting food and poorly clad people. After failing to cut a deal with Portugal he claimed he

got lost and dispatched a famous letter lying about gold and riches claiming unbelievable wealth of the new land to the Spanish Court. He was unable to convince the King of Portugal with the truth so he lied to regain favor with the Spanish Throne. Although he was successful with the Spanish he was always suspect. His allegiance to both Genoa and Spain was sorely lacking and fully documented.

Due to his vicious, indiscriminate, arbitrary and excessive and needless executions of the Spanish overseers in the New World, he was dismissed. He treated the native Indians viciously and executed all men who would not work. Although he cited the Bible and stated that God was overlooking his deeds, he showed neither kinship nor compassion. All of this is well documented. This begs the question, to whom did he owe allegiance because of cultural or blood tie?

All indications are that he was Portuguese but he had to deny it. He said he was Genoese because he needed Spanish financing and the Spanish were not on friendly terms with the Portuguese. Both the Spanish and the Portuguese were eventually pacified many years later by the Pope who divided up the new world between the two rivals. Why have historians without exception dismissed all hard evidence and created undocumented and irresponsible legends including that he was Italian when Italy was not in existence at that time? Incredibly some very famous historians like the Spaniard di Madriegada have even put forth the theory that he was Jewish based all on speculation. CRISTOBAL a Jewish name? Highly unlikely if not impossible.

All hard evidence I have used is from the Encyclopedia Britannica who has no hidden agenda 500 years later.

## CBS Boggles the Rational Mind

We were stunned to find that the network was programming two programs which had us thinking the cable company had inadvertently switched them with the religion network. "Ancient Secrets of the Bible" was aired last May 15 followed in June by "Miracles and Wonders".

Both programs maintain that the Bible is "totally accurate" while portraying "reenactments" of biblical miracles.

CBS purchased both programs from the fundamentalist filmmaking company Sunn Classic Pictures. And reportedly the network has a contract for yet another bible special from the same propaganda mill. Atheists of Florida secretary Celia Glantz was so offended she wrote the following letter to CBS:

Lawrence Tisch, President  
CBS  
524 West 57th Street  
New York, NY 10019

Dear Mr. Tisch:

It is appalling that education for our Children has taken retrogressive steps and now you at CBS have added another burden that deters developing the thinking capacity for these Children.

Programs in fables presented as truth, miracles as wonders, stifle the need to give young minds the ability to think because the 'bible' has already written the future.

Why have you collaged to the fundamentalists to present as classics this mindboggling mass of hokum?

Every other Nation that is surpassing our Country is instilling in their Youth facts, science, research skills for their development. Do we have to wait generations for religion to apologize for the vilification of "another Galileo?"

Wake up, tempus fugit!

Yours truly,  
Celia Glantz  
Freda Kernes  
Jerry Rosenthal  
Harry Kernes

If you have seen any of the programs and would like to write to CBS, use the address in the above letter and send a copy to the newsletter.

*Here Letters*

This letter was in the *St. Petersburg Times*, Sept. 19, 1992

### A 'fascist' element?

For many years, "liberal" and "conservative" identified the political philosophies of the majority of Americans. However, the recent Republican Convention at Houston revealed a dangerous and vicious philosophy that should no longer be identified with traditional conservatism.

George Will, James J. Kilpatrick, Jack Kemp, Alan Greenspan et al. are conservatives.

Pat Buchanan, Pat Robertson, Rich Bond, the religious right should be labeled for what they are—fascists.

The strategy and tactics of this element of the Republican Party should be exposed and condemned whenever they surface.

Jerry Morgenroth,  
St. Petersburg

The following appeared in the *St. Petersburg Times*, September 23, 1992  
A "vision" problem Re: "Something else to do," letter to the editor, Sept. 14.

How ironic! A pro-birther telling a pro-choicer to help solve the problems created by? you guessed it? the pro-birthers! After all, were it not for over-population in Somalia and many other countries, caused by selfish, ignorant, pro-birther attitudes like "having larger families in hopes they will have someone to care for them when they are old," there would be far less need for relief in the first place!

Next thing you know, Ms. Hines will be asking us to repair her car when she rams a tree, or glue the dishes she drops together for her. After all, why restrict us to cleaning up the pro-birther messes in other countries?

It's bad enough when people like Ms. Hines presume to force their choice on every other woman in America. It's even more disgusting when they expect others to correct the situations their attitudes have caused. Just like our current president, the pro-birthers have a problem with "the vision thing"; theirs ends before the tip of their noses.

Brent Yaciw,  
Seminole

Keep our voices heard with that mightier-than-the-sword pen of yours!

The Readers' Forum  
The Miami Herald  
1 Herald Plaza  
Miami, FL 33132-1693

St Petersburg Times  
P.O. Box 1121  
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Letters to the Tribune  
P.O. Box 191  
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