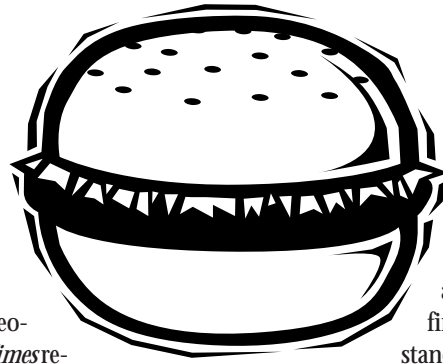


Sidelights



Two beers for the newly single: Royal Divorce Ale from England (“The taste? Bitter.”) and Alimony Ale from California (“It’s irreconcilably different”). . . . Nashville’s Bongo Coffee Shop proudly displays a cinnamon roll that bears a striking resemblance to Mother Teresa. (No word on whether anyone is flocking to buns resembling her nemesis, **Christopher Hitchens**.) . . . McDonald’s first non-beef restaurant opened in India, featuring the Maharaja Mac. ☞ Tax cuts will be “at the top of our agenda” says the incoming Senate Finance Chairman, while the President, asked if he foresees tax hikes, replies, “No.” . . . Two weeks after the last election, Americans told Survey USA they prefer across-the-board tax cuts to “targeted” tax cuts by 66 to 28 percent, but they also thought any tax cuts unlikely. ☞ The Girl Scouts must sell over 80,000 boxes of cookies to pay their liability insurance, says economist **Ralph Reiland**. ☞ The Centers for Disease Control say the three most frequently reported infectious diseases are sexually transmitted. STDs are responsible for 87 percent of the sickness caused by the top ten maladies. . . . A prescription drug that helps prevent genital herpes flare-ups is now being advertised in several general circulation magazines. . . . Pro-choice Sen. **Arlen Specter** (R-Pa.) says that “with abortion being such a divisive issue in this country, there’s one thing we can agree on, which is abstinence.” . . . According to its annual report for 1995-96, Planned Parenthood saw its number of clinics drop by 38, its staff and volunteers fall by 4,000, and its birth-control customers and sex education participants decline, yet its total income rose 5 percent, largely on the strength of a \$9 million rise in federal funding. ☞ North Carolina parents are appalled by an election worksheet given to fifth-graders that says Democrats “stand up for the poor, factory workers, farmers, women, and minorities,” while Republi-

cans “watch out for owners of large businesses. . . and wealthy people,” the *Washington Times* reports. Principal **Tim Ellengerger** said he’s satisfied there was “no political bias” in the worksheet.

President Clinton’s honeymoon is likely to last as long as **Michael Jackson’s**, warns political scientist **Norman Ornstein**. . . . Professional misanthrope **Florence King** predicts Clinton will not face trials on **Paula Jones’** suit or the Whitewater affair because “he’ll talk us all to death and **Ken Starr** and the Supremes know it. If he starts testifying, it’ll be like an inaugural address without end and we’ll all go mad.” ☞ **Ralph Nader** praises Republican budget hawk **John Kasich** of Ohio: “He’s leading the fight against corporate welfare. There’s no Democrat leading the fight. . . . We’re talking about \$200 billion.” . . . The *Wall Street Journal* scores Nader “hypocrite of the year” for failing to release his tax returns, donor lists, or income, while his Green Party made “independent expenditures” on behalf of his presidential campaign. ☞ Prize-winning composer-organist **Frederick Stocken** calls himself “Britain’s most backward-looking composer,” embraces traditional melody and Thatcherism, and abhors government arts subsidies. The 29-year-old musician also founded “The Hecklers” to encourage boos at concerts of “modernist plink-plonk.” ☞ Geneticists have discovered strong evidence that Jewish men thought to be descended from **Aaron, Moses’s** older brother, “may indeed be members” of a single lineage passed down from father to son that has “endured for thousands of years,” the *New York Times* reports. ☞ Nature apparently abhors a macho vacuum: The bluehead wrasse fish can change from female to male, especially if “dominant males” are scarce. . . . “What many

women want is simply a more subtle and refined version of a double standard: We want men to be the providers and to regard us as equals,” writes revisionist feminist **Kate Roiphe**. ☞ Saying “crime is a state and local issue,” former attorney general **Edwin Meese** complains that “although the Constitution gave Congress jurisdiction over only three crimes, now there are more than 3,000 federal crimes on the books,” including “disrupting a rodeo.” ☞ Economist **Julian R. Betts** studied the educational effects of class size, teachers’ advanced degrees and experience, parents’ education and socioeconomic status, and 30 minutes of extra homework. Not only did additional homework bring the most benefits, but A students gained as much as D students.

“A lot of the rap they have out here is filthy, and I don’t think music should be filthy,” says **Ray Charles**. “I’ll never make a record like that. Never, as long as I live.” . . . “The reason we cannot get smut or vagrants off the streets is not because of the Constitution but because of the judges. Censorship of such pornography and the arrest of vagrants was permitted for generations under the Constitution,” writes economist **Thomas Sowell**. . . . Wal-Mart has been attacked for refusing to stock records it considers obscene. A spokesman asks, “Newspapers will not print certain words. How many of the lyrics we won’t accept would be printed in the newspapers that call us ‘censors?’” ☞ In Georgia, a robber beat a motel security guard to death with a Bible. ☞ **Colin Powell** recently quipped that President Clinton’s *Between Hope and History* is being sold “as a fire log.” The *Washington Post* added that the book’s current wholesale price of \$1.50 makes it “cheaper than good kindling.”

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