

and community concerns it was originally intended to serve.” He suggests revising estate tax laws and using other tax incentives to encourage “socially cohesive forms of [corporate] ownership—family, local, and employee,” instead of ownership by thousands of scattered and unrelated stockholders. The largest corporations, Rowe argues, should be chartered by the federal government—or, at the very least, there ought to be a federal minimum standard for state charters. “That standard should

include individual responsibility for corporate officials, of the kind that existed before Delaware’s lax and permissive regime. Charters should specify particular kinds of business, the way they used to. And charters should expire after a given period of years, for review under fair standards that ensure renewal except for egregious bad behavior,” he says. That, Rowe believes, should ensure that corporations exhibit “a minimum level of decent conduct—without a multitude of new regulations.”

SOCIETY

First Feminists

“American Women’s First Collective Political Action: Boston 1649–1650” by Mary Beth Norton, in *Arts & Sciences Newsletter* (Spring 1996), Cornell University, Binenkorb Center, Goldwin Smith Hall, Ithaca, N.Y. 14853–3201.

Women banding together to state their views about an issue related to reproduction is a familiar sight in modern America. And it has a longer history than many people imagine. Cornell University historian Norton has discovered evidence of what she believes is the first such political action by American women. It occurred nearly 350 years ago.

In 1649 and 1650, six petitions, four from women in Boston and two from women in Dorchester, Massachusetts, were submitted to colonial authorities in behalf of a midwife named Alice Tilly, who was accused of the “miscarrying of many wimen and children under hir hand.” No account has survived of the precise charges against her, but the male authorities apparently thought she had taken some unwarranted action in the course of her medical practice.

Three of the petitions, asking that Mistress Tilly be allowed to leave jail to attend her patients, were submitted before her trial. The fourth petition, written after she had been

convicted, renewed the request. “Led by the wife of the chief pastor of the Boston church,” Norton says, “26 female Bostonians begged the judges to ‘heare the cryes of mothers, and of children yet unborn.’ This time the court acquiesced, allowing Mistress Tilly to leave prison whenever she was needed at childbeds.” Then, in the spring of 1650, after her husband had threatened to move the family elsewhere unless, in his words, “‘her innocencie may be cleared,’” the women of Boston and Dorchester again submitted petitions, urging that she be entirely freed from custody.

“The astonishing aspect of the petitions,” Norton says, “was the total number of signatures (294), ranging from a low of eight and 21 on the first petitions to a high of 130 on the last.” Most of those who signed were women in their prime childbearing years or their mothers or mothers-in-law. In the end, the women apparently prevailed; the authorities seem to have released Mistress Tilly.

Psychoanalysis off the Couch

“Freud and the Culture Wars” by Yale Kramer, in *The Public Interest* (Summer 1996), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 530, Washington, D.C. 20036.

The two decades after World War II were the golden age of psychoanalysis in America. Sigmund Freud was a cultural hero and every analyst had a full case load—“and those with middle-European accents had two-year wait-

ing lists” regardless of professional competence, recalls Kramer, a practicing psychoanalyst and a clinical professor at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Then, in the mid-1960s, something happened. “Analysts’