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Readers Say

Telltale looks

SIR: Re "How to know you're growing older" (*Fact and Comment*, Feb. 16). A patient recently told me. A few years ago, the first books he looked at in a bookstore were sex manuals. Now the first ones he looks at are on hemorrhoids.

—Steven Lebrer, M.D.
New York, N.Y.

We're going to thrive

SIR: Re "Trouble in the Heartland" (*Mar. 16*). I refer you to a noted journalist of another age:

"There are Croakers in every Country always boding its Ruin. Such a one then lived in [my city], a Person of Note. This Gentleman asked me if I was the young Man who had lately opened a new Printing House: Being answer'd in the Affirmative, he said he was sorry for to survive, because the Expence would be lost; for [the city] was a sinking Place. And he gave me such a Detail of Misfortunes, now existing or that were soon to exist, that he left me half-melancholy."

The writer was Benjamin Franklin, the city Philadelphia. We are too prone these days to get caught up in the percentage growth game, forgetting about underlying size, strength and quality.

We out here in the Heartland are going to survive. And not only survive, we're going to thrive.

I hope to have the pleasure of seeing the croakers about mid-America come back in future decades looking for our coal, our water and our markets.

—M. Brock Weir
Chairman,
Ameritrust Corp.
Cleveland, Ohio

SIR: You include Pittsburgh in this group of ailing cities. But Pittsburgh is undergoing a very dramatic change. Some \$4.5 billion worth of private investment will occur in Pittsburgh between now and 1986. The Pittsburgh unemployment rate is currently at 7.2%, which is beneath the State of Pennsylvania, as well as the U.S. average. Although the population has declined against the 1970 figures, the work force has grown from 1.1 million to 1.2 million.

—Jay D. Aldridge
Executive Director,
Penn's Southwest Assn.
Pittsburgh, Penna.

SIR: Our state was the only one that lost population since 1970, but your Mar. 16 cover has done away with us altogether.

Are we to be called Connecticut Island? We'd prefer Rhodecticut!

—Peter C. Cotton
East Greenwich, R.I.

Environmentalist abuse

SIR: Re your remarks concerning the Ronald Reagan National Forest cartoon (*Mar. 16*), I hate to see the good word "conservationist" used in reference to an "environmentalist."

A conservationist is interested in prevention of soil erosion, forest management, protection of wildlife, etc., to the end that the soil will produce more crops, the forests more and better lumber and that the wildlife will not be destroyed by exploitation.

An environmentalist merely wants land and their resources placed in a deep freeze—preferably forever. God gave man the earth to use, not abuse. Nonuse is abuse.

—Paul E. Raps
Hamilton, Ohio

A draft would do U.S. good

SIR: You have called several times for a resumption of the draft, but I believe that I am more productive learning the ins and outs of Wall Street at the present time than I would be in the armed services. If our national security were being threatened I would gladly enlist, but I truly believe that I am doing this country more good by learning the market.

—Kacey Konars
Columbus, Ohio

You'd learn much in a year's service stint—and our national economy as well as security is threatened because we don't have a draft.—MSF

Old idea

SIR: Your Mar. 16 *Fact and Comment* suggests using West European highways for runways for aircraft.

Did the man who wrote that really think it through?

—Roy W. Nettleton
Salamanca, N.Y.

SIR: This idea is already proven. In World War II, the Germans used their magnificent autobahns for many of their squadrons near front lines. The center grass and bushes section was paved, painted green and provided with pipeholes in which were temporarily inserted artificial bushes for camouflage. In the wooded areas on each side of the auto-