

## Lines, shares, games, and bases

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I write this note in October 2004, a year and a bit after our nominal publication date. Two of this issue's papers we published online — with proper 2004 dates — before printing them way back in the quasi-current issue, meaning September 2003, 22:2.

“Biodefense crossing the line,” by Milton Leitenberg, James Leonard, and Richard Spertzel, appeared 17 May 2004. It describes audacious new American activities easily seen as skirting signatory obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention, the BWC. The second author was Head of the United States Delegation to the Biological Weapons Convention Negotiations in 1972, and the third author was Deputy Director, USAMRIID, and Senior Biologist on the Staff of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), 1994–1998.

“Embryo disposal practices in IVF clinics in the United States,” by Andrea D. Gurmankin, Dominic Sisti, and Arthur L. Caplan, reports the first-ever systematic description of its subject — and did so officially on 9 August 2004, the third anniversary of President G. W. Bush's announcement of a federal stem-cell policy. The paper is short and clear, perfectly objective but inherently provocative. And it presents quite a paradox, really. Disposing of embryos — “extras” — lovingly created yet destined never to be implanted, tossing them out with the trash by the thousands, either unceremoniously or after a prayer or a secular routine of some sort, while they might arguably still do humanity great good. An analogy to the burying of transplantable organs is hard to escape. Robert H. Blank has added a companion commentary.

Each of these two early-release papers received considerable press attention, and each was posted as a free-

for-all download at [www.politicsandthelifesciences.org](http://www.politicsandthelifesciences.org), with thousands served. And, by the way, in the stem-cell section of his Election 2004 “town hall” debate with the President, Senator John Kerry pulled from his mental bag of policy-pertinent items a point sounding quite like it may first have appeared in *PLS*.

Peter A. Corning, fresh from the publication of *Nature's Magic: Synergy in Evolution and the Fate of Humankind* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), presents a major new thesis, “‘Fair Shares’: Beyond capitalism and socialism, or the biological basis of social justice,” in which he attempts a Darwinian reconciliation for an old political-philosophical antagonism.

Peter Stone contributes a well wrought critique of a paper published in the March 2002 *PLS*, “Cognitive requirements for hawk-dove games: A functional analysis for evolutionary design,” by Tomonori Morikawa, James Hanley, and John Orbell. These three gentlemen then reply that Stone's critique is not *quite* well enough wrought, in their view. Gamers will decide.

A new Graduate Student Award winner, Aleksandr Rabodzey of MIT, offers “Biosecurity implications of the synthesis of pathogenic viruses,” with particular attention to the variola virus, the agent of smallpox, making original arguments and intriguing suggestions.

Finally, with our Harrison Symposium team taking an issue off, Richard Sherlock in compensation has solicited and edited an extraordinary number of book reviews. Well done to all.

**R. H. Sprinkle**  
*Editor-in-chief*