

The Light From A Sports Bar A Thousand Miles Away

by Sally Reno

Saturday afternoon, Michaelji calls from Gainesville. It's very loud all around him.

I can't hear him clearly. I ask,

"Where are you?"

He says he's in a sports bar, about to watch a prize fight. I add this up: Michael has had no drink, no cigarette, no illicit drug and very little illicit sex since September 14, 1989.

"You're *where?*" I ask. It seems so incongruous.

"I'm in hell," it seems that he says, "hoping that you might want to join me here."

"I'm on the balcony," I say. "I could jump and be there with you shortly." He sighs,

"That would be very nice." He says this very sweetly. And I can hear him clearly now.

