

Here's some surprising news from the affirmative action front. According to Forbes magazine, women make up more than 38 percent of the banking officials and managers at America's biggest one hundred banks. Women accounted for only one banker in seven 11 years ago.

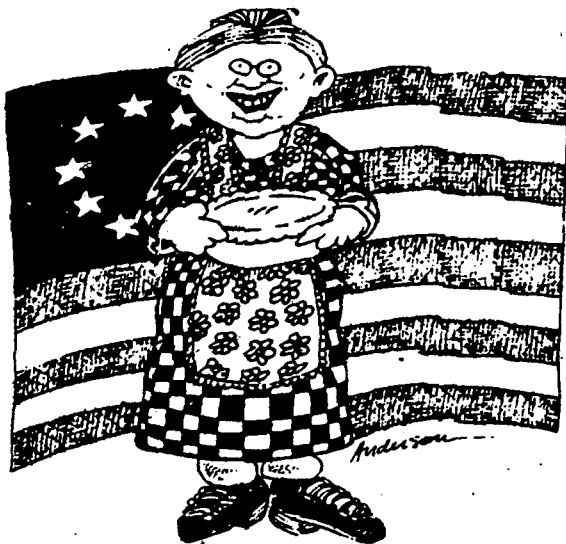
A New York law firm has told Jack Gimbel of Boothbay Harbor, Me., that his general store was doing "irreparable damage" to the Gimbel Brothers department store chain. The lawyers demanded that Jack Gimbel turn over the profits from Jack Gimbel's General Store to the big chain. The matter will apparently be settled in federal court. Gimbel, the one in Boothbay Harbor, says, "They're so damn callous because of their size. They think they can order anybody around."

It seems Americans really don't mind helping the needy unless it's called "welfare." Last summer, a government-sponsored poll showed 1000 people a list of programs and asked which should bear the brunt of state and local budget cuts. Thirty-nine percent selected "public welfare programs." But when the poll was repeated two months later, with the words "aid to the needy" instead, only nine percent said that was where the axe should fall. "It is possible," said the pollsters, "that the public perception of 'needy' is so altruistic, and the term 'public welfare' so negative that each produces an over-reaction."

The state which gave us Spiro Agnew and Marvin Mandel continues to come up with creative approaches to government. A Maryland legislator has suggested that annual lie detector tests be given all 188 members of the state's general assembly. Under the plan put forward by Baltimore County Delegate William Rish, every December 1st the lawmakers would be lined up, strapped to a polygraph and interrogated by members of the opposing party. So far the idea has attracted little support in the assembly. Meanwhile, the State Senate Tax committee has adopted what it calls the Undeleted Expletive Revenue Enhancement Bill, or as it's better known, the Cussin' Tax. Committee members are assessed fines for foul language, with penalties ranging from 25 cents for mild obscenities up to a dollar for The real doozies. the money goes into a party fund for the end of the session.

The International Species Inventory system provides a computer dating service for 150 zoos and wildlife refuges around the world. The system, headquartered at the Minnesota Zoo, keeps tabs, including vital statistics and sexual records, on more than 50,000 animals, and sends out listings twice a year. Research analyst Larry Grahn says the zoos themselves do the actual matchmaking -- a difficult task, even with the help of a computer. For instance, Grahn says, even when a partner is found for a male chimpanzee, the animal must still be "literally taught how to mate" with her.

The Prudential Life Insurance Company in Princeton, New Jersey, is getting ready for summer by dumping ice, snow and slush into an insulated pond nearby. The theory is that the cold water from the pond will cool the building. Although some experts predict the ice will melt long before Labor Day, Prudential engi-



Apple Pie

neers say they're convinced the cooling system will save the company about \$12,000 in air conditioning bills.

Officials of Goodwill Industries of Arkansas say a flood of complaint have forced them to cancel plan to donate a dress to the first lady as a symbol of "quality merchandise and bargain prices" available at Goodwill. If the deal had gone through, Nancy Reagan would have received a three dollar knee-length floral print dress from Goodwill's Little Rock store.

After announcing that it would no longer provided free help for taxpayers, the IRS has relented and made three exceptions: it will continue to aid the blind, the illiterate and members of Congress.

If you've wondered what ever happened to John Reed's friend, Louise Bryant, help is on the way. Berkeley Books has reissued Barbara Gelb's 1973 biography of Bryant and Reed, titled *So Short a Time*. Meanwhile, the New American library is hurrying out a new paperback edition of *Living My Life* by Emma Goldman, friend of Bryant and Reed. Bryant married an American diplomat three years after Reed's death in 1920, but the marriage failed. Bryant later developed drug and alcohol addiction and died of a cerebral hemorrhage at the age of 49.

It's now a 12-year jail sentence for anyone possessing a coin-operated video game. In the Phillipines. Government newspapers call video game parlors "breeding grounds for petty corruption." In 1974 the government issued a similar ban on pinball machines.

What's your favorite junk food? It seems to depend on where you live. A survey by Restaurants & Institutions magazine indicates that, while McDonalds is the most popular fast food chain nationwide, there are some big regional differences. In the south and west, for example, the Golden Arches are ranked number four. Wendy's reigns supreme in the south, but is not even in the top ten in the Northeast, where Friendly's Ice Cream has scooped the competition. Baskin-Robbins is number one in the west. Among different income groups, Kentucky Fried Chicken scored highest among families earning less than \$15,000 a year. Baskin-Robbins and McDonalds were the top contenders in middle-income groups and those with incomes of \$30,000 tend to prefer Baskin-Robbins and Burger King.

The newest program on Manhattan cable TV is the "Commercial Show" -- a weekly offering of nothing but old TV commercials. Advertisers buy time to lace their new commercials in between the old ones.

It turns out that most of the Army's manual typewriters are made in East Germany. The GSA, which coordinates government procurement, says they are by far the cheapest on the market, and while the disclosure has raised some congressional hackles, the Treasury Department points out it gives the East Germans more dollars to buy American grain.

Rod Carew has purchased ads in a sports hobby magazine offering to sell his autograph for ten bucks a signature. He's also peddling autographed baseballs, and for \$99.50, a personally autographed Rod Carew bat. A letter from a baseball fan, in the same publication shows Carew means business; the fan says he sent Carew three baseball cards to sign, and not only did Carew refuse to do it for free, he kept the cards.



LIFE & RELATED SUBJECTS

One of the most useless classes I ever took in high school, ranking right up there with calculus, was French. I took several years of French, and I learned hundreds of phrases, not one of which I would ever actually want to say to anybody. For example, my French teachers insisted that when I met a French person I should say "Comment allez-vous?". It turns out that this means "How do you go?", which is not the kind of thing you say when you want to strike someone as being intelligent. Your average French person already thinks most Americans are idiots, and you're not going to improve his opinion much if you barge up to him on some Paris street and start spewing high-school-French phrases:

You: Comment allez vous? ("How do you go?")

French Person: Je vais a pied, evidentment. Vous devez avoir les cerveaux d'une truite. ("I go on foot, obviously. You must have the brains of a trout.")

You: Ou est la bibliotheque? ("Where is the library?")

French Person: Partez, s'il vous plait. J'ai un fusil. ("Please go away. I have a gun.")

My wife didn't do any better in high-school French. She learned to say "Je me suis casse la jambe" ("I have broken my leg") and "Elle n'est pas jolie" ("She is not pretty"). What on Earth is she supposed to do with these phrases? I mean, suppose she does go to France and break her leg:

My Wife: Je me suis casse la jambe. ("I have broken my leg.")

French Bystanders: C'est dommage. ("What a pity.")

My Wife: Elle n'est pas jolie. ("She is not pretty.")

French Bystanders: Bien, excusez-nous pour vivre. Vous n'etes pas un grand prix vous-meme. ("Well, excuse us for living. You are no great-prize yourself.")

My wife would never get an ambulance that way. She'd be lucky if the bystanders didn't spit on her.

Despite the fact that the teacher insisted on making me speak like a fool, I stuck with high-school French, because at the time the only alternative was Latin, which is even more worthless. For one thing, everybody who speaks Latin is dead. For another thing, all you ever read in Latin class is Caesar's account of the Gallic wars, in which Caesar drones on and on about tramping around Gaul. These had to be the dullest wars in history, which is why finally the Romans got so bored that they let the empire collapse and quit speaking Latin. In fact, they gave up on spoken language altogether, and today their descendants communicate by means of hand gestures.

When I got to college, I briefly considered taking Chinese or Russian, but I abandoned this notion when I discovered that the Russians and the Chinese use Communist alphabets. I also rejected German, because it is too bulky. For example, the German word for "cat" is "einfuhrungaltfriesischenspraakuntwerterbuchgegenwart." It can take up to two days to order lunch in German.

The result of all this is that I know very little of any foreign language, and what I

do know is either useless or embarrassing. Most Americans are in the same situation. Fortunately, you don't really need another language, because, as you know if you have ever traveled abroad, virtually all foreign persons speak English. In fact, I sometimes suspect that there are no foreign languages, that foreign persons really speak English all the time and just pretend to speak foreign languages so they can amuse themselves by conning dumb American tourists into saying things like "How do you go?"

So if you plan to travel abroad, you should not waste your time learning some foreign language that could well turn out to be fraudulent. Instead, you should practice pronouncing, in a very loud, clear voice, certain useful English phrases for travelers. Here are the main ones:

— "Do you speak English?"

— "Thank God. Where can I find a bathroom?"

— "Is that one of those bathrooms where you wind up standing on some street corner in a structure that offers no more privacy than a beach umbrella?"

— "Thank God. Will the bathroom have a squat female attendant who will watch my every move lest I leave without giving her a tip, even though the bathroom has obviously not been cleaned once since it was built by Visigoths more than 12,000 years ago?"

— "Thank God. Say, you speak pretty good English, for a foreign person."

These phrases will take care of your basic needs abroad, and the fact that you have taken the time to learn to pronounce them loudly and clearly will leave a lasting impression on your foreign hosts.

Dave Barry

AMERICAN JOURNAL

You know, a lot of people in this country don't like uppity women. Maybe you're one of them. Maybe you've been waiting for an organization to gestate that would articulate what *you* feel about women's liberation. Namely, that it's gone too far, that even Phyllis Schlafly is too busy speaking and lawyering to spend time with her family. Is that what's bothering you, sir or madam?

Then you should know about the newest, nicest anti-women's lib group, Ladies Against Women. Not that they're demanding your attention, or anything. They know their place. The Ladies are merely suggesting that you may want to join their campaign to (in their own words) "nip Womanhood in the bud, and prevent the Feministic blight of bluejeans, flat shoes and female facial nudity from spreading."

Well, OK, you think, I know what they're against, now what are they for? The Ladies—again, in their own words—want to "make America a man again" by getting a good healthy war going somewhere. They'd also be pleased as punch if Congress would amend the U.S. Criminal Code to incorporate a national dress code. And to make sure those long-overdue reforms stick, LAW supports the establishment of HULA—the House committee for the investigation of Un-Ladylike Activities.

A promising beginning, you figure, but what else? The Ladies were too shy to speak up about the rest of their agenda for America, but they did jot down some of their ideas for me. They include:

- "Suffering, not suffrage—out of the voting booths and into the maternity wards."
- "Recriminalize sex—restore virginity as a high school graduation requirement."
- "Fifty-nine cents is too much—it's un-ladylike to accept money for work."
- "Procreation, not recreation—close your eyes and do your duty."



According to LAW's spokesman, Virginia Cholesterol, the group is also vitally concerned about the male gender's distressing habit of self-abuse. Many, many innocent gametes lose their lives that way, she explained, and future taxpayers, voters and draftees are unnecessarily prevented. To counter this wanton disregard for life, Cholesterol and her colleagues in LAW have spawned a sister group called The Voice of the Unconceived.

Cholesterol blushed prettily when I asked her to tell me something about herself ("background" we jour-

**David
Armstrong**

nalists call it), saying only that she is the widow of a wealthy margarine rancher. She got into politics back in 1980 by helping to politely but firmly guide the Reagan for Shah campaign.

After taking their soft-spoken slogans to the Republican and Democratic conventions, the Reagan for Shah Committee joined forces with a number of like-minded groups. Among them were Another Mother for World Domination, the National Association for the Advancement of Rich People and The Moral Monopoly. When the coalition decided that an organization was needed to work specifically on girls' issues, LAW was born, and the pert Cholesterol was chosen to chair it.

While LAW has a core group of only seven or eight girls, their sympathizers are legion, so the group has decided to give in to popular demand and expand. A contingent of LAW members marched in the Pasadena, California, Doo-Dah Parade—an alternative Rose Bowl parade—just before New Year's Day, and were written up in several major daily papers for their trouble. They even snared what Cholesterol describes as "six glorious seconds" on the CBS-TV news.

I can attest to the group's media savvy. Their press releases are sent out on shocking pink paper, adorned with feminine curlies and accompanied by handwritten notes in pink ink. True, this makes it a teensy-bit tough to read the messages, but the medium is the message, and, besides, they're the funniest press releases I get.

Ladies Against Women don't want to be pushy, but they're considering starting a chapter in your town. If the prospect of putting that uppity feminist down the block in her place appeals to you, you may contact LAW (get your husband's permission first, of course, if you're female) directly. They're at: 1600 Woolsey St., Box 7, Berkeley, CA 94703. You may also phone them at: (415) 841-6500, ext. 331. Remember, the girls may be at home ironing or volunteering at a bake sale, so you may have to leave a message.