

Phoenix Nest

Edited by Martin Levin

Unfair to Feet

Mistreated feet can make you grouchy. Feet cause a big percentage of avoidable man and woman hours of suffering in the world.—Dr. Abe Rubin in a news story.

TWO DECADES AGO it was estimated that U. S. industry lost \$100 million a year in man-hours because of foot ills. However, this cannot be a dead loss, because it is now estimated that Americans spend about \$350 million a year for arch supports, lifts, plaster pads, and corrective shoes. In any case, industry has really nothing to complain about when you consider what your feet have to stand under.

If you are an average male with an average job, your feet carry you seven-and-a-half miles a day and take a pounding of more than 1,000 tons daily. In a lifetime, the average American walks about 65,000 miles, or enough distance to take him back and forth across the U.S. twenty-six times. As if that is not enough punishment, feet are subject to rubbing, scuffing, scraping, and kicks, as well as being exposed to the elements—rain, snow, heat, and cold. Daily friction builds up heat inside shoes, and flexing averages well over 100,000 times a month.

As usual in the area of statistics the female of the species outdoes the male. If you are a woman around the house, in one day, just doing household chores you walk roughly ten miles and give your feet 1,500 tons of jolts! Researchers remind us that women's feet change in size from time to time, and the change should be noted when buying footwear. No doubt shoe salesmen often note this phenomenon when their lady customers' feet go from size 5AAA to 6½C in the course of a few minutes when trying on shoes.

The fascinating facts about the foot itself are almost guaranteed to take your mind off the troubles of the world. For instance, did you know that each foot contains twenty-six bones, intricately linked through thirty-three joints, and lashed together with ligaments? The heel sits solidly on the ground with the other six-dovetailed metatarsals arching in front of it. These tarsals meet with five long metatarsals whose heads form the ball of the foot. The heel and the metatarsal heads are the weight bearers, the five toes are the launching pads; in short, the foot is "a structural masterpiece unexcelled in design and durability."

Surely this part of the body which bears up under so much deserves better treatment than it has been getting. Next time you start to say: "My feet are killing me!" remember the shoe may be on the other foot—you may be killing your feet. Perhaps a Be Kind to Your Feet Week might solve a lot of the knotty problems that beset us, because the experts assure us that while bad feet aren't responsible for fatalities, they can produce a myriad of disorders—backache, headache, fatigue, poor posture, *irritability* and a *grouchy disposition*. (The italics are mine.)

—A. J. MARKLE.

Has Everything Already Been Invented?

I KEEP HAVING this dream. I call it my 1969 nightmare. In it I walk into the White House, wearing white tie and tails, and sit down to dinner with the President and two dozen other distinguished people. It is a State Dinner, given as a tribute to me for having won the so-called Triple Crown: the Nobel Prize, the Pulitzer Prize, and a Marmon roadster raffled off by the Moses Taylor Post of the American Legion. It is a dinner of great importance to me. I want it to go well.

Right in the midst of the soup course a pepper mill goes berserk. It is a handsome pepper mill about a foot-and-a-half tall, and it has batteries in it. When it runs amuck, it is on the table midway between me and the Secretary of Commerce. It starts off by trembling slightly, as if it were having a chill; then it begins tipping drunkenly from side to side and, before anybody can stop it, it is off on a wild and noisy tarantella up and down the long table. It leaps and bobs and weaves and knocks over wine glasses, and has a frenzied Greco-Roman encounter with a platterful of asparagus stalks. It kicks out at prominent guests, all the while clacking and whirring and snarling like a mad thing. Several of the handsome women guests scream and clutch their bosoms and faint, and one man—a wealthy career diplomat whose name is a household word in a few households—tries to flog the raging thing into submission with a long silver candlestick. Then the batteries give out



and the pepper mill falls over on its side, pooped, and all present have a jolly laugh.

What could be the strange motivational quirk behind that dream? Could it be this business of the airplanes opening the garage doors? I had just recently installed an electric door-opener on my garage and was loudly basking in the glory of it, when I heard that electrical impulses from the sky, quite clearly originating in passing airplanes, are opening such doors—especially in the middle of the night when blizzards are raging across the land. The mere fact that airplanes are flicking mysterious rays at my garage door and throwing it open to the wintry blasts is enough to keep me tossing uneasily in bed for hours. Let's face it—if God had meant for us to fly, he'd have put feathers on us.

Or it might have been the matter of that electric shoe-polisher. A New York City woman bought one of these gadgets for her son, who was in service overseas. She wrapped it securely and mailed it, and in the New York post office it suddenly came to life inside its paper cocoon. A dull buzzing, whirring noise came from the package, and the post office people hurled it into a bucket of water and after it had been thoroughly soaked, they beat it to death with crowbars.

On the other hand, my White House nightmare may be traceable to the electric desk calendar which a relative gave me for Christmas a few years back. I didn't really want it. In fact, I had so much trouble with it that I found myself *hating* the way days of the month are arranged. It took me thirty-six hours to puzzle out the instructions; then I got it set for the right date and put it in operation on my desk and it whuzzed and gubbled along for a while and then something happened—I think it was a power failure during an electrical storm. By the time I got around to the job of resetting it, conditions had become chaotic. The more I tinkered with it, the further I threw it out of date. Then I took to worrying over the seeming fact that I was losing time. Valued hours and days were sliding swiftly past while that machine stood on my desk and said February 16. I grew mildly neurotic about it and began to think that if I ever did get it going again, it would take over my days and months and years—it would begin living my life for me. I know this makes me sound daffy, but . . . well, I *am*. That machine is now in the attic, wrapped in an old blanket, and I intend for it to stay there until I no longer have the finger strength to tear the sheets off the wall calendar once each month.

But in the meantime, I keep having this dream. . . . —H. ALLEN SMITH.

State of Affairs

Henry Brandon

Three in Bloom

WASHINGTON. "A HUNDRED blossoms are blooming in the Nixon Administration," a White House aide said to me the other day, "but only three are in full bloom." They are the Attorney General John Mitchell, the President's National Security Adviser, Dr. Henry Kissinger, and his legislative coordinator, John D. Ehrlichman.

Mr. Mitchell enjoys a kind of seniority among them all. He managed the successful election campaign; he has an iron will and strong convictions. Speaking to small, intimate audiences, he used to define his relationship with candidate Nixon as that of a senior partner of the same firm, making as much money as Nixon did. There was equality, and Mitchell implied that it was he who set the tone.

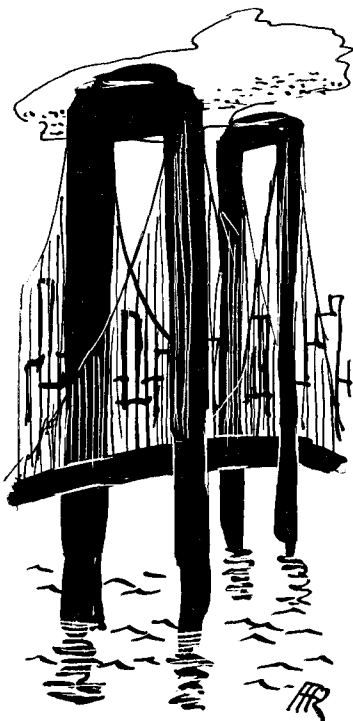
Now that Mitchell serves the President as a member of the Cabinet, he, of course, is not saying this anymore. But those who have an opportunity to observe the two at close quarters say that not much has changed. Mitchell is the President's most intimate confidant, almost, but not quite, to the degree Robert Kennedy was to his brother Jack. In other words, he is much more than Attorney General. He has wide authority; he is the eyes and ears of the President within the Administration. He is also determined

that the President live up to the promises he made in the campaign regarding "law and order," and he is convinced that the Johnson Administration's approach—putting the greatest emphasis on dealing with the causes and not enough on using repression—needs to be reversed. He is convinced that the President's political future rests on hewing to a conservative line.

Dr. Kissinger, forty-six, is not so much an intimate confidant as he is the President's oracle in foreign policy. He is a man with what the Germans call *Weltanschauung*, a philosophical and conceptual approach. His coming from Harvard and being a professor means to many that he is a liberal—but in fact he has a cautious, conservative outlook reminiscent of an enlightened British Tory. His thrust of mind, his depth of scholarship, his tidy thinking, and his ability to evaluate the effect of every major move on the long-range future no doubt have profoundly impressed the President. So has his industry and dedication, for he is one of those Presidential servants whose job has become his life.

He looks skeptically not only at the world but at himself, even if many who see him exert his power in the White House sometimes have difficulty in discerning the latter. There is, of course, always something immensely comforting for a man like Mr. Nixon, who relies mainly on his instincts and his own experience, to have an expert at his elbow who, in contrast, relies on his intellect, his studies of diplomacy and its interaction with military strategy. Nixon has, in fact, come to trust Kissinger's judgment to such an extent that he seeks his advice on many problems outside the scope of foreign policy.

With too many novices at the top of the State Department, Dr. Kissinger, backed by a small staff, continues to hold the initiative in making foreign policy, and so, at least for the time being, the State Department is more his diplomatic instrument than an independent force. This does not mean that William Rogers, the Secretary of State and an old counselor of Mr. Nixon, cannot exert his power with the President whenever he chooses. Their relations are easy; Mr. Rogers is not worried about them, but as an executive he seems detached from the operations of the State Department and husbands his influence with the Presi-



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