

(except in a few fields, notably the social sciences). This book is a long complaint about the science policy that is emerging. Dickson traces the Pentagon's increasing control over basic science and the way private corporations are being encouraged (through exclusive patents and sweetheart deals) to profit from publicly funded research. Work that used to be published openly is now kept secret to please colonels and sales managers. A new elite is hoarding scientific knowledge at the expense of the American people and the rest of the world, Dickson argues, and researchers have happily gone along with the arrangement because it pays well and shields them from the pestering public. After fighting off activists in the sixties and seventies, scientists are safe once more in their ivory towers.

You can't argue with Dickson's call to action: make scientists accountable to the taxpayers footing the bill. But the book doesn't offer many new insights into the problem or the solution. It's a tedious compendium of anticapitalist rhetoric, policy-paper jargon, and vague cud-chewing about an "alternative science policy" based on "community-controlled decision-making." Instead of showing how research actually gets done today, Dickson prefers to report the president's science advisor's testimony to Congress. Instead of giving examples of how the Reaganites have affected real people in and out of the laboratory—the great public for which Dickson expresses concern—the book quotes stacks of "Whither Science?" reports blathered forth by one official committee or another. Dickson spent four years ably covering Washington for the British science journal, *Nature*, but he doesn't seem to have realized that there's a big difference between what policymakers here say and what the rest of the country does—and what people want to read.

—John Tierney

Splash of Colors: The Self-Destruction of Braniff International. John J. Nance. *William Morrow*, \$16.95. On October 25, 1978 at 8:30 a.m., the Civil

Aeronautics Board opened its doors to a horde of waiting lawyers and, in so doing, ushered in the era of airline deregulation. More than a week earlier, the CAB had announced that, thanks to deregulation, it would be parceling out over 1,300 routes on a first-come, first-serve basis. For most of the intervening time, messengers from law firms all over town had stood in line outside the CAB, shivering in the cold and looking for all the world as though they were lined up for World Series tickets. The law firm representing Braniff Airlines was sixth in line. When the doors finally swung open, most airlines applied for ten routes, or maybe 20. Braniff applied for 626.

Corporate disintegrations usually begin in subtle ways. It's often impossible to put a finger on the precise moment when things start going wrong. But such is not the case with Braniff. Braniff's long fall from grace began when it applied for those routes. Braniff, which had been successful as long as the government shielded it from serious competition, simply was not equipped to cope once that shield was removed.

According to John J. Nance, a former Braniff pilot who has written this exhaustive account of the airline's troubles, Braniff president Harding Lawrence did have a strategy of sorts. He assumed that after a year or so the government would come to its senses, reimpose regulation, and all of Braniff's new routes would instantly be profitable. But it never happened, and Lawrence, who wanted so badly for Braniff—his Braniff—to become a major player in the industry, could never bring himself to give up all those routes until they had drained the company of its cash.

Braniff's attempt to swallow more than it could chew was only one of its mistakes, and the most obvious at that. Before deregulation, Braniff had a reputation as a surly, unhelpful airline whose on-time percentage was low and whose penchant for losing baggage was high. Its pilots and most of its staff were paid well beyond what the market would have borne. But it didn't matter then because most of

its routes were monopolies. After deregulation, Braniff still had the same reputation, only now it did matter. People could choose to fly other airlines and they did.

Lawrence was both a soft touch and a tyrant, but each trait surfaced at exactly the wrong time. He was a soft touch when it came to his own employees, particularly middle managers, many of whom, says Nance, were deadwood. He quotes Lawrence as saying he could never bring himself to fire these people even though he knew they were incompetent. On the other hand, he was a tyrant in meetings with his top staff. So harsh was he, so unrelenting, that the day came when they simply stopped telling him what he didn't want to hear. You can blame the staff for cowardice, especially as things got bad and Lawrence wasn't given information he desperately needed, but you also have to blame Lawrence for fostering that cowardice.

The book itself is much worse than it has any right to be. There is no question that Nance knows just about everything that happened to Braniff along its road to destruction. But he buries a lot of his best stuff in impenetrable footnotes. That's where we actually see Lawrence's legendary temper tantrums, and where we also find such nuggets as the role of the Teamsters in refusing to take a pay cut that might have saved the company. What's worse is that because Nance worked for Braniff, he is quick to trot out the bad apple excuse—as in Braniff's reputation for rudeness was the result of a few bad apples.

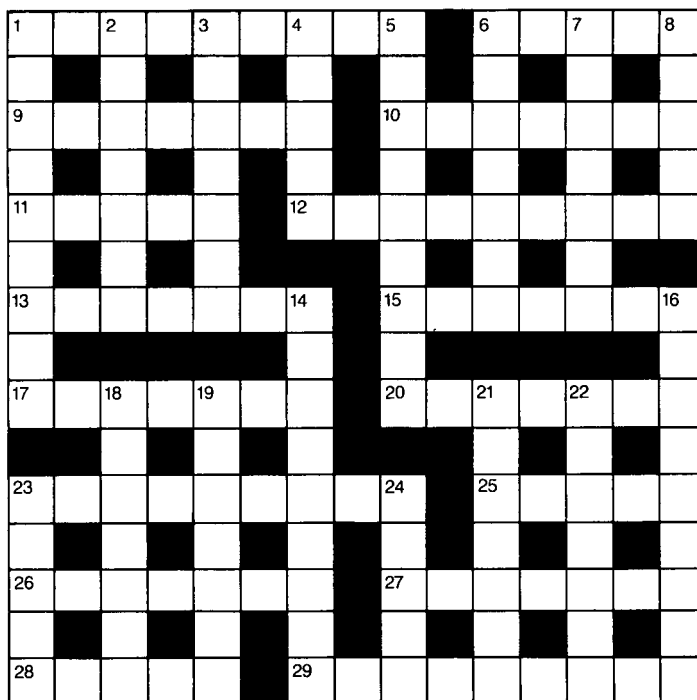
A footnote of my own. Yes, this is the book American Airlines paid \$25,000 to recall and then reissue because the author agreed to tinker with one of his footnotes. An act of corporate lunacy if you ask me. The book still says American played dirty tricks on Braniff (a plausible allegation), and there is still that delicious phone call in which the president of American is making what sounds suspiciously like collusive noises to the president of Braniff. All the recall did was give the book gobs of publicity it would not have received otherwise.

—Joseph Nocera

POLITICAL PUZZLE

by John Barclay

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g., (2, 3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g., USA, are treated as one word.



This month's puzzle was inspired by the Democratic convention.

ACROSS

1. San Francisco Transport clears cab organization. (5, 4)
6. Suit young animals around fifty. (5)
9. Dry point in West is not at all dry. (7)
10. Clients lined up for copying device. (7)
11. Approximately one fight? (5)
12. Leader, if leaderless, would be mere inhabitant. (9)
13. Claims a reverse stress. (7)
15. Replace guard in street for housemaid's helper. (4, 3)
17. Greek figure stirring treacle. (7)
20. Stand up awkwardly for another housemaid's helper. (7)
23. Brought out new version re: trip end confusion. (9)
25. Live lewd reversal before fifty. (5)
26. Middleman for Hubert Humphrey? (7)
27. Metal lit him taking in Uranium. (7)

28. Buffalo set bin around thus. (5)
29. San Francisco figure rarely seen in fit. (9)

DOWN

1. Intimidate friend and fight a pilot in San Francisco. (3, 6)
2. Vegas travellers rob test results. (7)
3. For whom we will all vote in November. (7)
4. Put California in reverse to cause trouble. (3, 2)
5. Sentence or animation. (9)
6. Believes mistakenly SEC dirt. (7)
7. Nuclear explosion is hard to understand. (7)
8. Left Yugoslavian resort? (5)
14. Inaugurates improvised fast forts. (6, 3)
16. Respectable type does mangle ten badly. (9)
18. Ships out of former harbors? (7)
19. Opera figure confused artists on point. (7)

21. Pacifies with Southeastern fruit. (7)
22. Mere sip formed basis for conclusion. (7)
23. Produce new from old bear running around Hawaii's leader. (5)
24. Where Indians live in model highrise apartment. (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:

