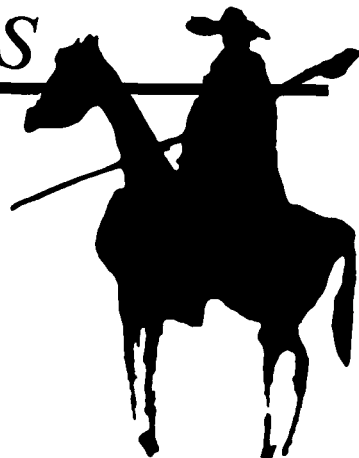


TILTING AT WINDMILLS



Charles M. Carberry, the prosecutor who has led the government's investigation on insider trading on Wall Street, is resigning in the middle of the investigation to join a private law firm. Would Pete Rose desert his team in the middle of the World Series?...

It may not be the Invasion of the Body Snatchers, but if I were Japanese I would be apprehensive about this report:

"Tokyo, May 21 (AP)—Three Americans today became the first foreign lawyers permitted to practice in Japan."

Since I am American, however, I must confess to being delighted by the news. This could be our secret weapon in the trade war. If the Japanese people can be induced to spend half their time in court suing and arguing, as we Americans do, they'll produce only half as many of those Sonys and Hondas....

Who are the biggest welfare cheats? No, the correct answer is not unwed mothers. It's doctors, according to Richard Kusserow, the inspector general of the Department of Health and Human Services. Among the examples he recently gave Amy Bayer of *The Washington Times*:

- An ophthalmologist in Ohio who billed Medicare \$90,000 for eye operations he did not perform.

- Ohio podiatrists who billed the government \$500,000 for 'foot surgery' that consisted of nothing more than cutting the patients' skin and sewing it closed."

Further heartening news about the medical profession comes from a recent study of the records of more than 2,000 autopsies that found, according to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, that 34 percent of the patients had been misdiagnosed. This helps explain why physicians are

requesting fewer autopsies these days. They don't want to be sued for malpractice....

I invite you to ponder the implications of the fact that the following tax tip appeared not in the *The Wall Street Journal* or *Business Week* but in the July 1987 issue of *Progressive Farmer*:

"Many couples write spousal wills that leave their entire estate to the surviving spouse. That frees \$600,000 of an estate from taxes. But on the death of the surviving spouse, only the \$600,000 remains tax free.

"There's a simple way to double that for the second beneficiary. Each spouse's will leaves all to other beneficiaries. Result: \$1.2 million can pass tax-free from the second spouse's estate."

I'm certainly willing to concede that there are some family farmers who need and deserve our help, but if American farmers in general

are in the bad shape they've been telling us they're in, why does *Progressive Farmer* think its average reader is interested in how to pass along \$1.2 million estates?...

Rep. Jack Brooks told Admiral Poindexter, "You wanted to exclude all the elected officials from knowledge of some of the most important and far-reaching areas of foreign policy.... Is this not precisely the kind of thing that our Founding Fathers were trying to prevent when the Constitution placed the authority and the accountability for these decisions in both the Congress and the president?"

My fear is that a large number of Americans will not see that what Poindexter did was wrong. They see politicians as objects of scorn. On the other hand, they see career military officers like Poindexter and North as dedicated patriots. Those in the career service—civilian or military—are generally thought of, and think of themselves, as morally superior to politicians. This attitude, which, in the cases of North and Poindexter, is now deeply painful to liberals, can in considerable part be traced to the contempt for politicians that has for many years been manifested by most liberal journalists and political scientists....

Bork is another case where liberals' arguments may come back to bite them. When a president appoints a conservative like G. Harold Carswell, liberals argue that he should emphasize

intellectual competence, not ideology. So when the president nominates a conservative who happens to be intellectually competent, the liberals have difficulty knowing what to say next. The fact is that the president does have a right to nominate judges whose ideas he likes. But the Senate also has the right not to confirm judges whose ideas it doesn't like. It is perfectly proper for the debate to be in ideological terms. If the president wants

to be sure to win, he should help his party gain control of the Senate....

Veteran readers of the *Monthly* will know why I was delighted to see this headline in the July 22 *New York Times*:

Abrams Is Asked
To Take Oath
at House Hearing

For new readers, I can explain why simply by citing an exchange that took place on July 8 when Oliver North



Where Is SDI Taking Us?

From Deterrence to Defense

The Inside Story of Strategic Policy

Michael Charlton

Courtesy, Department of Defense

Can President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative really disinvent The Bomb? Or will it simply tip the balance of power in new and more dangerous directions?

In this unique oral history of the nuclear predicament, Michael Charlton interviews twenty-three eminent American and European strategists: the very men whose policies shaped the evolving debate.

"Excellent... Charlton's line of questioning could hardly have been bettered... A series of personal glimpses into the evolution of American nuclear strategy from the doctrine of mutual assured destruction (MAD) in the 1960s to the projected 'defensive' emphasis of today. The interviewees include McNamara, who speaks about his disillusion with strategic defence in the late 1960s; Henry Kissinger on *détente* and the meaning of military superiority; Paul Nitze on the rise of the Committee on the Present Danger (first home of the strategic fundamentalists); Jimmy Carter on his move towards nuclear war-fighting... and Caspar Weinberger on the future of strategic defence." — *Times Literary Supplement*

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was questioned about his previous lies to Congress:

"Why are you telling the truth now and not then?"

"I wasn't under oath then."...

One other observation about the Iran-contra hearings: I can't understand why Congress permits lawyers to coach witnesses. If you have ever been in a courtroom, you know a lawyer cannot walk up to the witness stand and interrupt a question or answer to whisper advice in his client's ear. The practice should be no different in congressional hearings....

“What sense does it make for the United States government to pay the medical bills of people like Armand Hammer, David Rockefeller, George Burns, and Richard Nixon?” That sensible question was recently put to readers of *The New York Times* by Harry Schwartz. There is an answer to the problem Schwartz is identifying. Remember Pay As You Go? It is my friend Barbara Torrey's idea for how to deal with the cost of medical care for the affluent aged: If the patient's relatives want the government to pay for his medical care, let the cost be taken out of his estate. It seems like a beautiful idea to me, but it has attracted so little support. There are two reasons for the lack of enthusiasm. One, argued by a few economists, is that people are motivated to work by the desire to leave an inheritance. But that is so obviously not the main

motive of most people that I don't think the argument can possibly be the principal ground for the resistance to Torrey's idea. My best guess as to the real reason she is getting nowhere is that the people in the government, both on the Hill and in the executive branch, who make new policy are mostly between the ages of 30 and 50. They are the inheriting class. It's in their interest to have the government pay Uncle Money Bags's medical bills so that they can have his estate to pay for their new Jaguar and that trip to Hong Kong....

A few months ago we lauded the Packard Commission's proposal to abolish Defense Systems Acquisition Review Councils (DSARCs), Pentagon administrative bodies that supposedly existed to stop bad procurement ideas but over the years had been bureaucratically transformed, by virtue of limiting membership to those with a stake in seeing a project approved, into committees of yea-sayers that routinely sprinkled blessings on even the most outrageous misuses of defense resources. Packard recommended that DSARCs be replaced with a Joint Requirements Management Board (JRMB) on which would sit several Pentagon officials with no direct interest in the outcome of procurement decisions. To our delight, Caspar Weinberger assented to Packard's plan. This is the kind of reform that is deadly dull to all but the participants, yet may in the long run be a hundred times more important than the

toilet seat scandals that get so much play.

Does this sound like the first Pentagon story of the eighties with a happy ending? Alas, one of the first actions of Weinberger's new "procurement czar," Undersecretary Richard Godwin, was to abolish the months-old JRMB and replace it with a Defense Acquisition Board (DAB).

Godwin's DAB is organized as a junior joint chiefs of staff. Its five members are Godwin, JCS vice chairman General Richard Herres, and the top procurement officers from each of the three services. This serves two purposes. First, Godwin himself becomes more important. Second, the council is returned to its desired function, namely the applying of the rubber stamp. The procurement czar's incentive within a DAB will be to insure that none of the projects over which he rules is ever canceled; the service acquisition chiefs will dedicate their efforts to the traditional goal of slicing the pie exactly three ways; only the JCS vice-chief will be in a position to question whether the weapons actually work, and he will be outvoted four-to-one.

The JRMB member Godwin was most anxious to reorganize out of the action is David Chu, director of the Pentagon's office of Program Analysis and Evaluation (PA&E). Within military circles Chu has a reputation for speaking his mind about technology that is unreliable or doesn't fit any coherent plan: he is the last person you would want at a pie-dividing party. Chu is also

something of an enigma to institutional Washington because he is a devoted team player who disdains both congressional investigations and the press, never speaking to reporters and insisting that the entire PA&E staff do likewise.

According to *Aviation Week*, when Godwin tried to hold the first meeting of his spineless new board, several designated JRMB members, including Chu, showed up anyway. Following a bureaucratic confrontation, Godwin allowed them to stay but refused to let them sit at the same table with him. The silver lining here is that perhaps Godwin's power grab will move Chu to go public. He could become a powerful spokesman for the cause of a military that actually works....

You may remember Richard Neely, the West Virginia supreme court justice who fired his secretary because she refused to babysit for his child. The justice is back in the news. It seems he used \$2,575 from his political campaign fund to pay for a trip to China for himself, his wife, and his child. Neely's spokesman explained that the trip was taken to gain publicity for the justice's campaign for reelection....

I wonder how many people share my reaction to *The New York Times*. In the past year, the front page of the Metropolitan News has become must reading. During the same period the Washington page has become dull and lifeless and I no

longer look at it regularly....

AIDS has produced a bizarre change in the sexual attitudes of liberals and conservatives. It used to be that conservatives were strict about sexual morality while liberals tended to be, if not in favor of free love, a good deal more tolerant of expressions of physical affection. Now the conservatives, in their desire to bash the homosexuals by proving AIDS is a gay disease, seem to be arguing that non-drug-using heterosexuals have nothing to fear from sex, with the implication often being that it's okay to have fun as long as it's between male and female. Liberals who don't want the gays bashed emphasize that AIDS is a threat to everyone and that you'd better think twice about any kind of fooling around....

My old friend Jim Dent of the *Charleston Gazette* has reflected on two lines the bankers love to peddle and asks this question: "If 18 percent interest on credit card accounts is 'reasonable,' how come 5¼ percent interest on deposits is 'generous'?"...

A long-standing White House practice, regardless of which party is in power, is to use employees of other agencies to work in the White House to keep down the number of people it officially employs. Congress became concerned enough about this dodge to require that the White House report the number of such employees who worked there more than 180 days a year

while officially employed by another agency or department. The results suggest somewhat different standards of honor in the Carter and Reagan administrations. In 1980, three such employees were not reported to Congress. The figure for 1985 was 33....

A very important Supreme Court decision in May upheld the pretrial detention provision of the Bail Reform Act of 1984. This will upset the conventional liberals, but it is just good common sense to permit the safety of the community to be considered in determining whether a suspect should get bail. Incredibly enough, even in the case of the most dangerous criminal, this was not previously the rule in federal courts....

Could you believe that picture of smiling congressional Democrats holding Weinberger's hand aloft from the last day of the Iran-contra hearings? They were so pathetically grateful to Weinberger and George Schultz for making the case against Poindexter and North that they embraced two men they should be criticizing.

Weinberger, the father of the 600-ship, three mine-sweeper Navy, and Schultz, the architect of the policy that led to those 200 Marine deaths in Lebanon, both supported the unilateral American commitment to escort the Kuwaiti tankers, which is as dangerously stupid as anything Poindexter or North were guilty of.

While the Russians have built 125 mine-sweepers, Weinberger has squandered money on weapons that don't work and that we don't need. And, as the man responsible for both the Defense Intelligence Agency and Naval Intelligence, he has presided over the loss of critically important submarine secrets to the Russians. The result is that in this crucial area, America has lost its lead on Cap Weinberger's watch....

The Technical Corrections Act of 1987, which is now wending its way through Congress, may have escaped your attention, but you can bet your boots that the big-time lobbyists know about it. It is their chosen instrument for undoing the damage to their clients perpetrated by the Tax Reform Bill of 1986. It is therefore important that the daily papers like *The Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*, which did such good reporting on the 1986 bill, not fall asleep on this one....

A small victory was won last month in the struggle against mindless credentialism. This question was dropped from the District of Columbia's examination for taxi drivers:

"All but one of the following words describes a person who displays a low dominance: 1) a follower; 2) agreeable; 3) competitive; 4) persuasive."

Someone finally realized that knowing about low dominance has nothing to do with knowing that it takes a left turn from Key Bridge to

get to Canal Road. So how did the question get into the test in the first place? And how many others like it are keeping good people from getting jobs in the many fields where such tests are used?...

Moscow was the Marines's equivalent of Butte, Montana, to which, you will recall, J. Edgar Hoover would assign FBI agents who had fallen out of favor. Some friends of ours who are in the Foreign Service say they had heard this for years and personally saw it happen when a Marine who had misbehaved at a post where they were serving was sent to Moscow as punishment....

For years, we've complained about the insanity of having hospitals staffed at night exclusively by bleary-eyed interns and residents who work 36-hour shifts. So I was pleased to hear that New York was planning to reform this system. Then I learned what the "reform" was. The shift will be reduced to 16 hours—12 in the emergency room. That's still going to leave them bleary-eyed toward the end. Remember *The Washington Monthly's* simple answer to this problem: require all doctors to work a few nights a year as a condition to having hospital privileges. There are enough of them to mean that if this were done interns and residents could lead sane lives and the rest of us would be spared the consequences of their fatigue.

This would finally put an end to the terrible cycle of

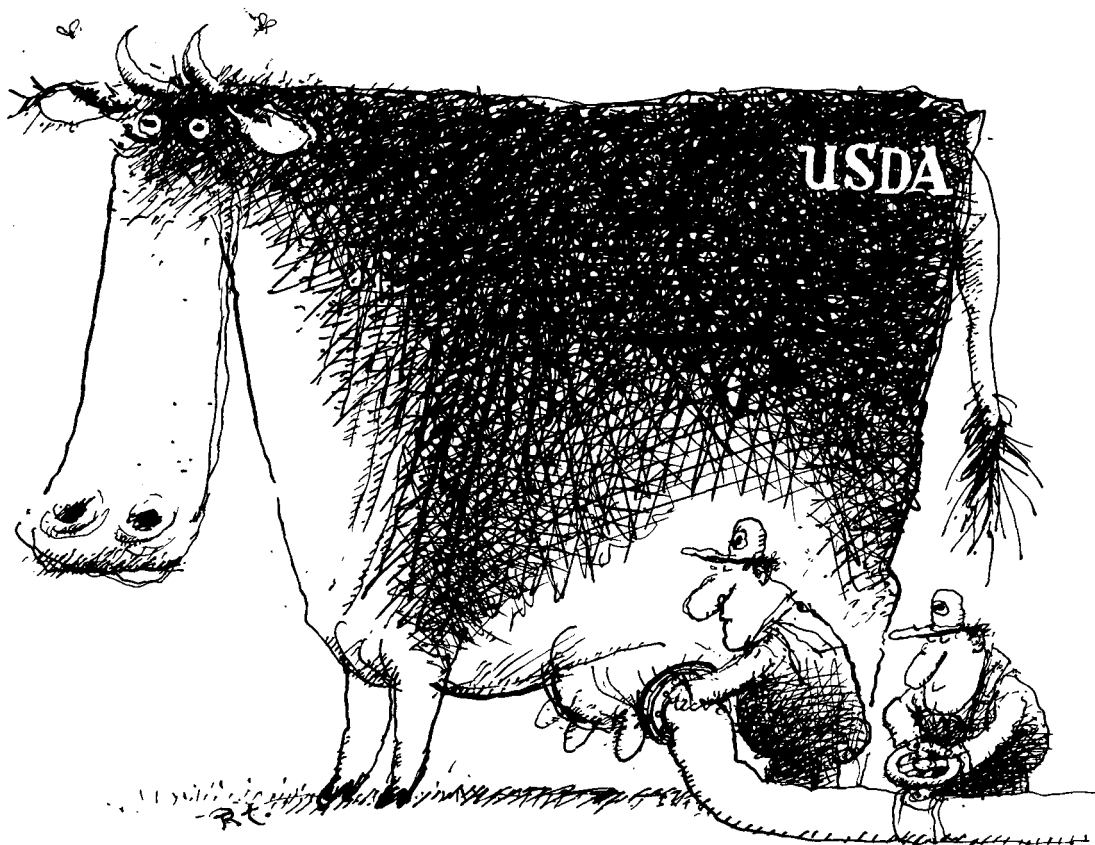
self-pity that begins with older doctors exploiting younger doctors who then feel they have the right to exploit the next generation. This self-pity also contributes mightily to their conviction that they have the right to charge the rest of us whatever they can get away with....

What kind of clothes are the Yuppies buying their children? Little girls are wearing David Charles dresses priced at \$225 to \$500; boys, suit jackets and pleat-front trousers by Bagatchi-Bambini for \$300. When I attended the public schools of Charleston, West Virginia in the thirties and forties, we wore clothes that everyone could afford. The result was that no one had to feel ashamed or inferior....

Integrating schools does not, researchers have found, automatically decrease racial prejudice. What does seem to reduce bigotry is interracial sports teams, bands, and clubs where groups are small enough for members to get to know one another and to see one another contribute to the group's performance. "Teams get students to care about each other's achievement," says Robert Slavin, a psychologist at Johns Hopkins. "Improved race relations are a byproduct. When you ask the students to list their best friends before a and after the teams, you almost always find the students have made friends outside their own racial groups."

This sounds thoroughly sensible to me. I hope teachers and principals will take note....

—Charles Peters



Drawing by Richard Thompson

GREEN THUMBS: THE PIK AND ROLL AND OTHER SCAMS FROM THE FARM BELT

The ingenious ways farmers milk government subsidy programs

by Jeffrey L. Pasley

The Future Farmers of America wants its young members to have the rich experience of tilling the soil. So in its classrooms across rural America, 416,000 high-school-aged students learn the right time to sow, the best ways to reap, and the skill that every modern farmer needs—how

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to harvest cash from the federal till.

Today's FFA concentrates on the business side of agriculture, according to spokesman Jeri Matatics. In Princeton, California, the local FFA chapter enrolled their 60-acre rice field in the federal price support program—and received \$7,087 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture,