

Yes, your mind can play games

MAYBE I DIDN'T show Pestilence enough respect. I should have known better.

It will be 41 years the night of April 1 since I told a downtown Detroit cop after an evening of noisy revelry, "You can't do this to me." He could and he did. Thus did I learn that those six words never should be spoken to anyone in authority, not even in jest.

But six weeks ago in this column I sort of scoffed at the fear of disease, particularly among hypochondriacs who imagine their ailments.

Even though admitting the body beautiful is not such a temple against creeping decrepitude as pretended through seven decades of keeping the meat filled, I joked about the heart being on the wrong side and taunted the scorekeeper about borrowed time.

Immediately my lungs were designated as the temporary abode for a homeless family of pneumonia bacteria, some of whom liked the warmth and coziness so much they paid little heed to eviction notices from medical professionals.

ONE NIGHT I even dreamed that the boss germ led the choir in a chorus of "You Can't Do This to Me," set to the tune of "The Saints Go Marching In."

However, my biggest protest is that there was no reason for my bride, Mother Goose, to be attacked in such a debilitating way and for such a prolonged time. There's no reason for the pain and misery inflicted on her in recent weeks, if whoever's in charge wants me to admit that we're mere mortals, I'll do it.

I'll even say I'm sorry we sold arms to Iran, if that will help put her back on her feet.

And speaking of being mere mortals, I have a suggestion concerning President Ronald Reagan and his memory or lack thereof. First, however, it should be recognized that fancy trappings of office aside, we really do have a common man in the White House.

Here's a person who wears two hearing aids, not one. He also has gone through prostate surgery, and no doubt the demeaning rectal examination which precedes it.

THE SECOND time they used that camera on me, the nurse looked at the



through bifocals
Fred DeLano

screen and said, "I think we've met before." I replied that I hoped she wasn't as old as her shopworn joke, laughing and smiling all the time of course.

Mr. President, I hope your sense of humor was as good, particularly when they gave you that do-it-yourself enemy kit.

But about this memory thing. Many of us are forgetful, all the more so the older we get. How many people have you heard complain about not remembering where they left the car in the parking lot of a shopping mall? Does the senior member of your family open the refrigerator door when intending to dump used coffee grounds? Do you quickly run through the alphabet trying to recall your best friend's last name?

I wish ABC newscaster Sam Donaldson would give this one-question memory test to the president of the United States at the conclusion of a televised press conference.

"MR. PRESIDENT: In 1928, after the football teams of Army and Notre Dame had played through a scoreless first half at Yankee Stadium, Coach Knute Rockne inspired the Fighting Irish with the story of George Gipp's deathbed wish. Some time, Rock, when the team's up against it, when things are wrong and the breaks are beating the boys — tell them to go in there with all they've got and win one for the Gipper."

"Dutch, what was the final score of that game?"

Dollars to doughnuts, Ronald Reagan is the one man who would immediately and correctly answer, "Notre Dame 12, Army 6."

And with that, Donaldson could say, "Mr. President, you have perfect recall."

On the other hand, what if the president hesitated and fumbled with the reply and said, "Wait a minute, I'll have to ask Rock . . ."

Farmington readers' forum

Letters must be signed, original copies and include the address and telephone number of the writer. None can be returned. Names will be withheld from publication only for sufficient reason. Letters should be limited to 300 words in most cases. We reserve the right to edit them. Send letters to Readers' Forum, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River Ave., Farmington 48024.

Blues never hosted suite

To the editor:

A recent column by Rich Perilberg contained an error of fact that deserves correction.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan never was a host to a "beer garden" hospitality suite during the Michigan Press Association's annual mid-winter meeting at Kellogg Center at Michigan State University.

Last year for the first time, BCBSM participated in the mid-winter meeting by sponsoring a non-alcoholic coffee and juice room for MPA meeting participants. This year, the corporation sponsored a dessert following the meeting's closing dinner.

Rudolph J. Difazio, director media relations

Poetry corner very readable

To the editor:

Thank you for the delightful poetry column and children's poetry.

As a former teacher and mother of two, I can really appreciate this. The snowman poem by Victoria Day Nijjar was a happy thing to read at this time of year.

Deborah Friedman Farmington

Put Pope's visit into perspective

To the editor:

I wish to respond to Helen Tarkowski's letter of March 5, asking for public mass when Pope John Paul II visits Detroit.

As a Presbyterian, pro-choice Christian feminist, and as a member of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, I take issue with Ms. Tarkowski's expressed wish to have the public sector underwrite a proposed "public mass" (other than the Pontine Silverdome) as a part of the Pope's September appearances in Metro Detroit.

Her suggestion that "Leaders from

the Catholic Church, the community and all levels of government should work together . . . certainly imposes a financial responsibility for a single religious (Catholic) event upon the majority of our citizens. Mayor Coleman Young's offering of Hart Plaza does exactly that!

Please, Ma. Tarkowski, present your views for such a "public mass" to Bishop Szoka with the request that the use of a public place, extra security, extra Detroit police, firefighter and EMS protection be paid by the Archdiocese of Detroit for such a massive event.

Maryse E. Long Farmington Hills

IRS must go back to drawing board

To the editor:

As many taxpayers are finding out, the complexity of the IRS's new W-4 withholding form has been highly controversial. Somehow, though, the worst part of the story has gone nearly unnoticed.

Although I have received numerous complaints about the form's complexity, the new law's requirement that taxpayers be far more accurate in their estimated withholding in order to avoid financial penalties is even more troublesome. It is most unfortunate that at the same time the government is making it tougher for taxpayers to figure out their withholding, the government is also making the estimating requirements tougher.

In order to remedy this situation, I am joining Congressman Bill Archer of Texas in cosponsoring H.R. 1117, a bill that would repeal the new withholding requirements and return to the requirements of the prior law.

Under the prior law, taxpayers could avoid under-withholding penalties by withholding an amount at least as great as either 1) 100 percent of the taxpayer's prior year tax liability or, 2) 80 percent of the current year's liability. If the taxpayer satisfied either test, no penalty was imposed. The new tax law changed the "80 percent test" to a "90 percent test" — a far more difficult standard in any case, but especially given the current W-4 form confusion. H.R. 1117 replaces the new 80 percent

test with the 80 percent test of the prior law.

Those who make a good-faith effort to deal with the added complexities of the new code should not be penalized when they are not even given the tools they need to meet the law's demands. Yes, the IRS needs to go back to the drawing board.

William Broomfield, U.S. representative 18th Congressional District

Libertarian views upbeat

To the editor:

It was a pleasure to read Libertarian views so accurately stated in your opinion piece, "Libertarians back with chicken soup," which appeared on Jan. 29.

You were right in saying we believe in a free market economy, freedom of choice in personal actions and that we ask basic questions about the role of government in our society.

Libertarians believe, as do many other Americans, that government should protect an individual's right to live and work in whatever way he chooses. As long as a person takes responsibility for his actions and doesn't forcibly take that same right away from someone else, he should be left alone.

AS A presidential campaign approaches, Libertarians must again promote these views because government has long ago overstepped its function of protecting us and our property from violence.

Our ever-expanding government is still over-taxing and over-regulating, so it now monitors every aspect of our lives imposing a tremendous financial burden on society, not to mention great costs to our personal freedoms.

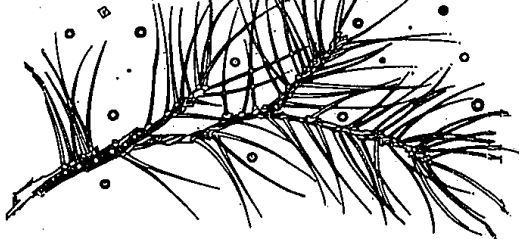
Different soups come and go on our grocer's shelves, but chicken soup is always there because it's basic!

Libertarians are here to stay because we believe in a basic idea called liberty. You'll be hearing more from us in this campaign and future ones until our government gets back to its basic job of recognizing our freedoms and protecting them.

Emily H. Salvette, organizational coordinator, Metro-Detroit Libertarians

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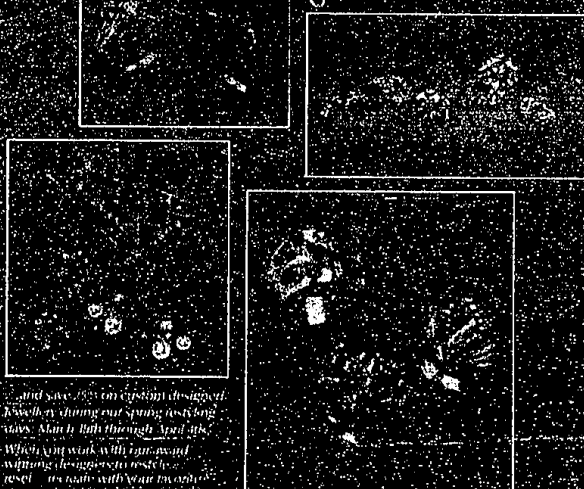
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