

Needs of big institutions satisfied to the detriment of family units

By Nicholas Von Hoffman

An interesting thing occurs in the Mary Tyler Moore episode during which Ted, the anchor man, and his wife, Georgette, the angel puss, have their baby. Angel Puss goes into labor while they're having dinner at Mary's. There's not time to get her to the hospital so she has the kid in Mary's bedroom after which the doctor and ambulance arrive so that mother and child may be shipped to the hospital.

Why? There's no medical reason that 99 out of 100 babies have to be born in a hospital. Given the free and easy way that drugs, anesthetics and overpowered equipment is used in the maternity wards, the most that's accomplished by having a baby in the hospital is to increase the risk of subliminal, hard-to-detect brain damage.

sidewise

But there are economic reasons, having nothing to do with the baby's welfare, for making it practically impossible to have a kid at home.

Missing heirlooms

From birth onward, the family is reduced, ignored, minimized and damaged. Law, public policy, the health insurance giants combine to see that an American child's first days of life are spent in an impersonal environment among strangers.

Next, kiddo, comes the day-care center because granny has been carted off to a senior citizen's center. Early disorientation and depersonalization is useful preparation for busing to school. Whether or not this procedure aids learning or promotes interracial respect and amity, it should manufacture a person without any loyalty, tradition or sense of community, a humanoid who ought to make an ideal employe.

We've been wounded by the process which has turned the homes of America into orphan asylums and parents into domestic bureaucrats.

Many of us go about paying money to jack-leg shrinks and evangelist therapists so that we may "get back in touch" with our misfiled selves. But there are also many millions who still have a strong center and who refuse,

to the irritation of their employers, overtime so they can go home to their families.

Jimmy Carter has been campaigning on the promise that he'll do something for our families. Maybe that's just more glib politician talk. Certainly he has yet to indicate he realizes that family health and the ambitions and practices of our largest and most powerful institutions are antagonistic. Overtime is a good example of the opposing interests.

Members detached

What gets priority in our society? The use of human beings to fit organizational needs, i.e. mandatory overtime, or families? In a million ways we've elected to go the overtime route and to build yet more large organizations staffed with more and more varieties of newly invented professions to perform the services families once did.

Instead of having a system of family allowances we've chosen to build "housing for the elderly" and equip it with physiotherapists, social workers, recreation directors, nutrition advisers, gerontologists and thanatologists.

The same set-up is rapidly being created for our children. Day-care centers are obvious, but stop and think about school breakfast and lunch programs. The decision was made not to use public money and resources to help families continue to perform these functions but to turn two-thirds of the feeding of millions of children over to professionals.

By any standard of judgment the paid help does a poorer job at a higher cost.

Ford isn't interested and Carter will find out that there is no way the Department of Health, Education and Welfare can be reorganized to do the job "responsively," to use the vogue word.

The mixed partnership of government and private-sector enterprise works no better as shown by the recurrent hospital and nursing home scandals. Wherever government has contracted out to have any of these services performed the most we've gotten is an absence of outright provable theft, and mediocre quality. That's the best.

It is far, far cheaper to have some sort of direct family grant-FHA program to build a mother-in-law apartment in the rear than to pour it away for housing for the elderly. The family is the cheapest and the best administrative unit, so let's keep Georgette's kid out of the day-care center.

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crossword puzzle

Edited by WILL WENG

ACROSS

- 1 Canada's Grand
- 4 S. A. rubber
- 8 Protected, as a castle
- 14 Cuba libre ingredient
- 15 Experts
- 16 Seem
- 17 Chill
- 18 Examine minutely
- 19 Specialized garden
- 20 Art masterpieces
- 23 Weird
- 24 Adjust again
- 25 Goddess: Lat.
- 28 Paintings that deceive the eye
- 31 Bleat
- 34 Tennis-tourney drawing
- 35 Deep cut
- 36 Relieved
- 38 Dieter's concern
- 41 Ivan or Peter
- 42 Bravo!
- 43 Longing
- 44 Out of action
- 50 Watch stealthily
- 51 Huge, to poets
- 52 Puccini opera
- 56 Restaurant V.I.P.
- 58 Slow movers
- 61 Penna. city
- 62 Like King Cole
- 63 Lodging house
- 64 Phone part: Abbr.
- 65 Beverage
- 66 Stick to
- 67 Affirmatives
- 68 Rocky peak

- 9 Iberian wine city
- 10 Building recess
- 11 Beverage
- 12 Attention
- 13 Kind of goods or run
- 21 In good health
- 22 Employ
- 25 Intimate record
- 26 Miss Dinsmore
- 27 Pallid
- 29 Scottish grand-child
- 30 Kind of maniac
- 31 Spa offerings
- 32 Stewart or Joseph
- 33 Wing-shaped
- 37 Letters
- 38 Cabinet office
- 39 Vestment
- 40 Morocco and suede
- 45 Wheeler's counterpart

- 46 Place apart
- 47 Dormitory item
- 48 Planetarium
- 49 "Me —?"
- 53 Ermine
- 54 Stringed instrument
- 55 Northern tree
- 56 Small bit
- 57 Miss Callas, for one
- 58 Asian sheep
- 59 Show agreement
- 60 Kind of blonde

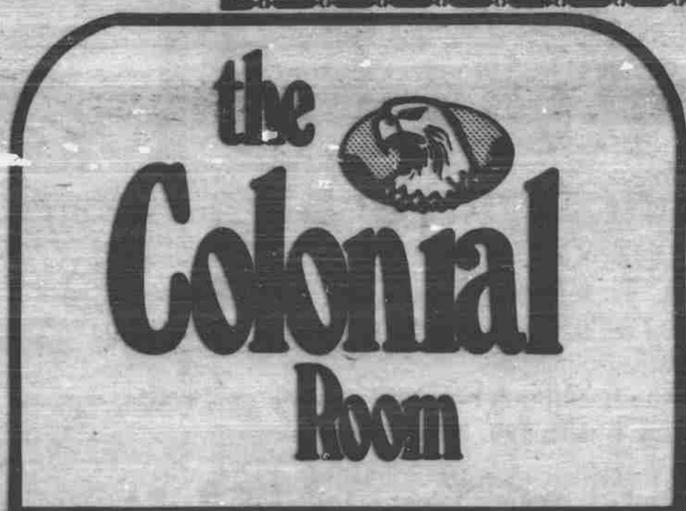
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HEN LINES ARIA
ORD ULAR OUTSET
AMP WARE
SPAIN COATI WAD
LAYSITON THE LINE
ICEE RACES AMIS
MESE ITER POLK

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

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66							67					

DOWN

- 1 Leontyne
- 2 Pleated trimming
- 3 Arabian ruler
- 4 Sidewalk user
- 5 Sour
- 6 Turned over a new leaf
- 7 Soaking
- 8 Wender



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