

New rules for importing parrots will drive travelers crackers

By DICK WEST

If you are one of those people who have a feeling life is growing evermore complicated, better leave your birds at home the next time you travel abroad.

Birds make delightful traveling companions, sure. I know people who wouldn't go anywhere without one. But if I were about to embark on a world tour, I would seriously consider hiring a bird-sitter.

Here's the question: Is the pleasure you might derive from the bird's company worth the both of learning the new regulations just issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In my opinion, no. And if you happen to own a parrot or a parakeet, it probably will tell you the same thing.

Nevertheless, there are always some people who can't bear the thought of going off and leaving their birds behind, no matter what. For their benefit, I shall endeavor to present a coherent summary of the rules that took effect this week.

To begin on a bright note, "Persons who take pet birds out of the United States and return with them within 60 days will not have to put them in quarantine." I'm quoting here from a government press release.

However, such persons "should keep in mind that they will be able to bring only two hookbilled birds back into the country during any one year."

Also remember to obtain veterinary health certificates before departing and to have the birds banded or tattooed for identification purposes.

Suppose, for example, you are off for a month in Spain with an albatross, an osprey and a snowy egret. Fine. No problem.

But if you are taking along a falcon, toucan and flamingo, you've got trouble. The shape of their beaks is such that only two can come back with you. Which means you have to find someone willing to board a strange falcon, toucan or flamingo for the next 12 months. No easy task. Can put a heavy strain on friendships.

The new regulations further provide that if you are out of the country more than two months, or if you acquire, say, a Spanish pelican while you are gone, then the birds must be quarantined at a port of entry for 30 days.

But not just any port of entry. The quarantine facilities are available at New York, Miami, Brownsville, El Paso, Negales, San Ysidro, Los Angeles and Honolulu.

All don't forget that quarantine is a must be reserved in advance. "Well, that's a nuisance," the Agriculture Department says. Plus you will need a \$40 deposit to meet quarantine charges, which will range from \$80 for a single bird or \$100 per bird in cases of multiple occupancy.

So there you have it, bird lovers. Less, of course, you are only going to Canada. In which case the rules are a bit different.

Hope you have a nice trip anyway. Don't forget to write.

OPINION

Fuel program is federal fiasco

Washington bureaucrats excel at overkill... The latest example lies in the issuance of federal fuel assistance checks.

Most of the poor who receive Supplemental Security Income payments also are receiving a one-time payment ranging up to \$250 under the new "energy crisis assistance program." But in at least one state where figures are available, Michigan, 15 percent of the recipients live in institutions where they do not incur separate heating costs.

When questioned... a spokeswoman for the Social Security Administration, which administers the fuel assistance program, said it was not a mistake; the checks were mailed deliberately without regard for the recipients' living arrangements — in the interest of speed of delivery.

The fuel assistance program is expected to cost \$1.35 billion. Of that total, \$1.2 billion is being distributed by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare as energy allowances and \$400 million is allocated to recipients to Supplemental Security Income.

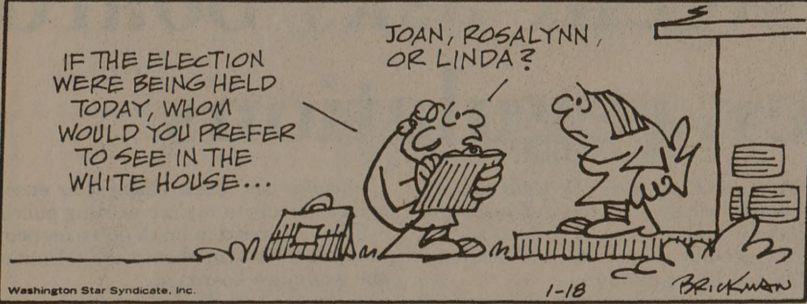
If the number of recipients living in institutions in other states is anywhere near the number in Michigan — and it probably is — there is reason to send up a cry of dismay and anger.

As one local wag put, "With taxes the way they are, the government might as well take out a second mortgage on my house — and it won't pay my heating bills."

Durham, N.C., Morning Herald

the small society

by Brickman



Soviets should listen to Americans

By JIM ANDERSON

The roof of the Soviet embassy on 16th Street is a jumbled forest of antennas — shortwave, microwave and even television.

However, there does not appear to be a citizens band receiver in the embassy. If there were, the Soviets might have a better understanding of the depth of feeling in this country about the Iranian crisis and, therefore, they wouldn't have been so surprised at the strong reaction by American political leaders to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

If the Soviet intelligence analysts had been listening to CB Channel 4 around 9 a.m. the other day instead of trying to intercept high-level telephone conversations they would have heard, intermingled

with the commuter traffic reports, the following riddle:

"What is covered with sand and glows in the dark?"

"Iran — if the Iranians hurt our hostages."

That was followed by a chorus of "right on's" and "That's a big 10-4." Middle Americans, at least those who express themselves in the grass-roots medium of CB, are angry and frustrated by the twin crises of Iran and Afghanistan.

Pent-up emotions about the helplessness of the United States to rescue the hostages, held by the Iranians since Nov. 4, merges into the outrage about the massive Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Even if they were not monitoring the CB channels in Washington, the Soviet

analysts might have picked up some clues from more sophisticated commentators on the editorial pages of the New York Times and the Washington Post which are not the usual nesting spots for hawks in international relations.

The Washington Post carried a column by its former Moscow correspondent, Robert Kaiser, who argued, "For the Soviet Union, the Olympic Games are a matter of legitimacy, and that makes them a matter of grave concern."

"Participants in the debate... should realize that no other non-military move could so directly challenge the Soviet leadership, or so startle the Soviet public."

That column was seen by Vice President Walter Mondale, who picked up that theme of "legitimacy" and called it to the attention of President Carter. Within

hours, administration spokesmen were saying that a U.S. boycott of the Moscow games, and sponsorship of alternate games, "is an open question... depending on Soviet behavior."

Mondale is probably correct in detecting a widespread American public unwillingness to forego the games. It would be a form of sacrifice, a sense of something meaningful in a situation where nothing else seems to have much effect.

But an Olympics boycott — the single-shot musket that is fired — loses its persuasive effect. Once executed, it has more ability to affect Soviet behavior. The Soviet Union's leadership will suffer embarrassment and a loss of prestige; but the Soviet Union would survive and so — most likely — would its present leadership.

LETTERS Waggies free from most Corps pranks

Editor:

We are writing in reference to the continuing controversy of women joining the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets and its varying organizations such as the Band, the Ross Volunteers, etc. We feel very strongly that the women who are presently in the Corps should re-examine what they feel to be "discriminating treatment" — women are not the only members being subject to traditional pranks. The male members of the Corps have been victims of these pranks for almost a century, long before women were ever admitted to the University.

Nevertheless, women were admitted to the University and later the Corps and are now shouting for equality. We feel these women Corps members should have

equality, but this equality includes a shaved head, and all the century-old pranks that go along with being a member of this prestigious organization. Just how many women cadets do you see with shaved heads? None! Is this their so-called equality? It sounds very much like the very discrimination these women are against. If they want equality, fine, but they have to take total equality or quit complaining about the so called discrimination they feel they are being subject to.

Evelyn VanPelt and Graceanna Todaro

Iran devoted to Islam?

Editor:

After reading several pieces of prose

pertaining to our present predicament with Persia, a peculiar problem has prevailed as prominent, in my opinion. I've noticed that all of the letters to the editor I've read have been written by American students at TAMU (yes, real students). Why don't the Iranians ever reply? Can it be that they are afraid. Can it be that, without a weak and dying scapegoat, their revolutionary spirit escaped them? Can it be that they are just a mob of illiterates (including those here at TAMU) commenting on complicated affairs of state by burning flags, throwing rocks and yammering in some sort of jibberish that chimpanzees can't even understand?

Noo-o-o-o!

The Iranians are a very brave and intelligent people, devoted to the holy laws of

Islam. Why else would they detain 50 diplomats? Why else would they threaten to put them on trial — threaten and threaten — for 76 days? Gosh, could anyone mistake these stances for creases as empty and cowardly threats? Could anyone mistake these fine, religious people as a bunch of cowardly hypocrites yapping dogs? After all, if their "incarceration" of the 50 Americans is kidnapping, wouldn't they be subject to the Islamic law they rave so much about. Let's see now... if one steals, he loses his hand, one lies, he loses his tongue. I wonder what a country would lose for kidnapping and violation of international law? Oh well, that's for the Russians to decide.

Ronnie Bucher

THE BATTALION

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