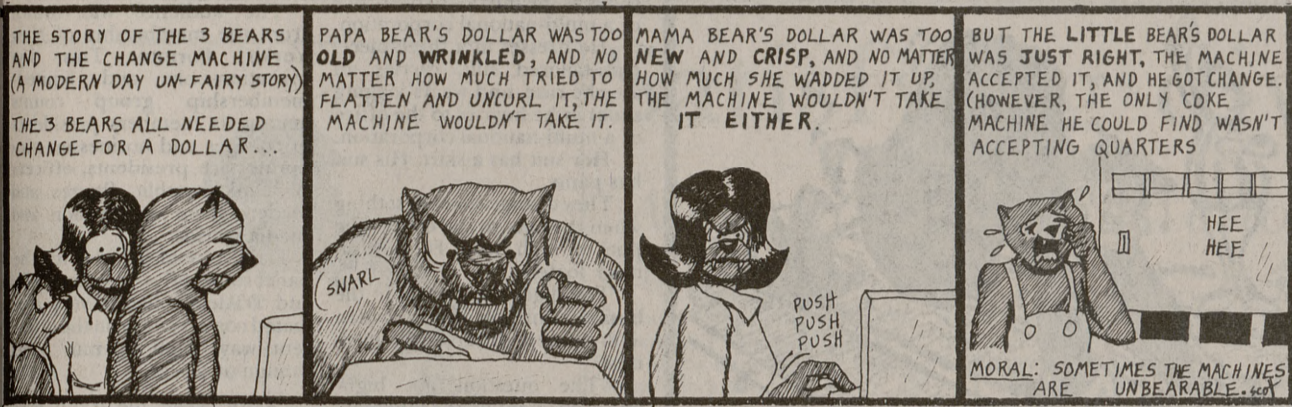


Warped

By Scott McCullar

Bounty put on food stamps



United Press International
WASHINGTON — In an effort to encourage states to recover food stamp overpayments, the Agriculture Department said Monday that states will be able to keep 25 percent of the money they recover from people who get too many stamps.

The department estimated that the change authorized last year by Congress would allow states to keep about \$1 million this fiscal year. That would be their share of recovered overpayments of benefits that were issued as a result of mistakes.

In the past, states had little incentive to recover money because all of it was turned back to the U.S. Treasury.

Supreme Court sidesteps appeal of Abscam tactics

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court, acting on its first Abscam appeal, avoided for the time being an examination of the FBI's undercover operation in which agents posed as bribing representatives of bogus Arab sheiks.

Although the justices left intact the conspiracy convictions of two former Philadelphia City Council leaders, they are not likely to sidestep the explosive issue indefinitely.

The legal controversy over Abscam centers on whether the FBI created an unconstitutional "climate of temptation" that unfairly trapped politicians into accepting illegal payments.

Several other Abscam cases are still pending in lower courts. Six House members and one senator, Harrison Williams, D-N.J., were found guilty of Abscam charges by federal juries.

In other actions today, the court:

- Refused on a 5-4 vote to set free a man who was sentenced to die in Florida's electric chair, but whose murder conviction was later overturned.
- Avoided a major water-rights controversy testing whether people in desert regions own groundwater under their land. The court let stand an Arizona ruling declaring residents do not own the water until it is pumped to the surface.
- Refused to take up a major challenge to the complex and controversial federal law that controls natural gas prices, rejecting an appeal by Texas, Louisiana and Oklahoma.
- Said it will decide whether airport narcotics agents can — without a search warrant — detain the luggage of a suspected drug courier to have the bags sniffed by a specially trained dog.
- Agreed to study another drug smuggling controversy, focusing on the power of U.S. Customs agents to board foreign

ships sailing on inland waterways.

- Accepted for argument a dispute over whether a court-appointed attorney failed to do his job because he ignored his client's suggestions on how to handle the case.
- Voted 9-0 to block federal court intervention in labor relations between local public transit workers and their managers.
- Upheld 9-0 a practice in Puerto Rico and more than a dozen states of allowing a political party to retain and fill a midterm legislative vacancy.

The Abscam appeal, brought by former City Council President George X. Schwartz and former Council Majority Leader Harry P. Jannotti, focused primarily on the issue of entrapment by agents.

During Abscam, undercover agents offered bribes to public officials in exchange for political favors. Schwartz and Jannotti were recorded on videotape taking cash from agents who told them a wealthy Arab sheik needed their political assistance to build a \$35 million hotel complex in Philadelphia.

Schwartz took \$30,000 and Jannotti \$10,000.

A jury found them guilty in September 1980. But presiding Judge John Fullam threw out the convictions, concluding that "the rights of all citizens not to be led into criminal activity by governmental overreaching will remain secure only so long as the courts stand ready to vindicate those rights."

Illinois pro-ERA protesters removed from Statehouse

United Press International
SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — A team of police officers Monday cut the chains of 15 Equal Rights Amendment backers locked for more than four days to the doorway of the state Senate chamber and removed them from the Capitol.

The pro-ERA demonstrators had been chained to the brass rail of the chamber entrance since early Thursday. They unchained themselves for food, periodic exercise and visits to the bathroom.

Secretary of State Jim Edgar said he ordered the women removed to prevent them from disrupting the business of the Statehouse. He said the state fire marshal was concerned that the blocked entrance was a fire hazard.

"It was the time to take action and the removal from the Capitol Building was done in a smooth and orderly fashion," Edgar said. The Senate was scheduled to reconvene Monday. It adjourned shortly after the demonstration began last week.

Officials said last week the women could remain chained to the chamber "as long as they behave." But they also said they would review the situation on a daily basis.

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