

# Opinion

## Lawyer in emergency room: the other side of malpractice

It had to happen sooner or later. Lawyer Dobbins was wheeled into the emergency room on a stretcher, rolling his head in agony. Doctor Green came over to see him.

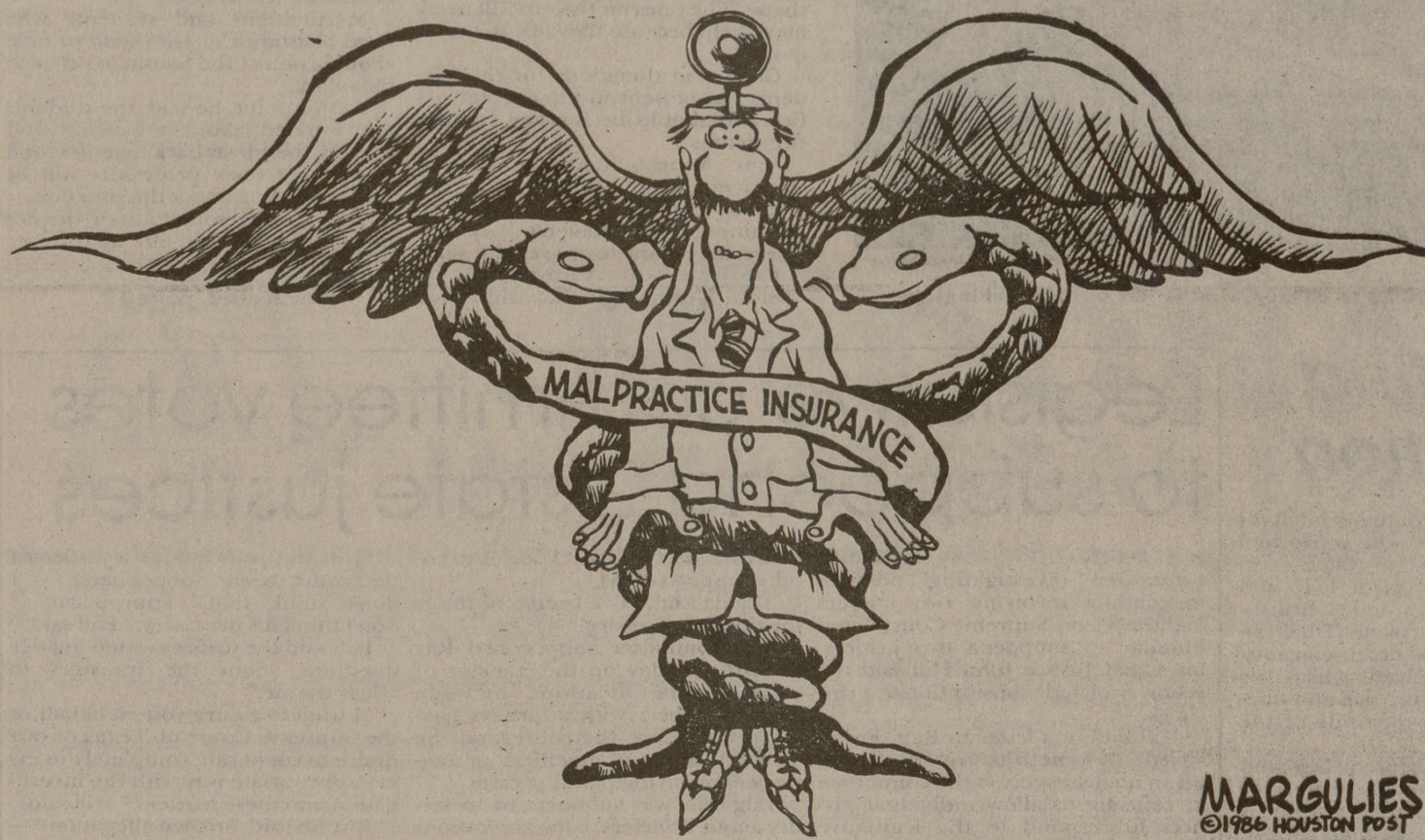


Art Buchwald

"Dobbins," he said. "What an honor. The last time I saw you was in court when you accused me of malpractice."  
 "Doc, Doc. My side is on fire. The pain is right here. What could it be?"  
 "How would I know? You told the jury I wasn't fit to be a doctor."  
 "I was only kidding, Doc. When you represent a client you don't know what you're saying. Could I be passing a kidney stone?"  
 "Your diagnosis is as good as mine."  
 "What are you talking about?"  
 "When you questioned me on the stand you indicated you knew everything there was to know about the practice of medicine."  
 "Doc, I'm climbing the wall. Give me something."  
 "Let's say I give you something for a kidney stone and it turns out to be a gallstone. Who is going to pay for my court costs?"

"I'll sign a paper that I won't sue."  
 "Can I read to you from the transcript of the trial? Lawyer Dobbins: Why were you so sure my client had tennis elbow? Dr. Green: I've treated hundreds of people with tennis elbow, and I know it when I see it. Dobbins: It never occurred to you my client could have an Excedrin headache? Green: No, sir. There were no signs of an Excedrin headache. Dobbins: You and your ilk make me sick."  
 "Why are you reading that to me?"  
 "Because, Dobbins, since the trial I've lost confidence in making a diagnosis. A lady came in the other day limping..."  
 "Please, Doc, I don't want to hear it now. Give me some Demerol."  
 "You said during the suit that I dispensed drugs like a drunken sailor. I've changed my ways, Dobbins. I don't prescribe drugs anymore."  
 "Then get me another doctor."  
 "There are no other doctors on duty. The reason I'm here is that after the malpractice suit the sheriff seized everything in my office. This is the only place I can practice."  
 "If you give me something to relieve the pain I'll personally appeal your case to a higher court."  
 "You know, Dobbins, I was sure you would be wheeled in on a stretcher someday."  
 "How did you know that?"  
 "At the trial I made a mental note

that you were a prime candidate for a kidney stone."  
 "You can't tell a man is a candidate for a kidney stone by just looking at him."  
 "That's what you think, Dobbins. You had so much acid in you when you addressed the jury I knew some of it eventually had to crystallize into stones. Remember on the third day when you called me the 'Butcher of Operating Room 6'? That afternoon I said to my wife, 'That man is going to be in a lot of pain.'"  
 "Okay, Doc, you've had your ounce of flesh. Can I now have my ounce of Demerol?"  
 "I better check you out first."  
 "Don't check me out, just give the dope."  
 "But in court the first question you asked me was if I had examined the patient completely. It would be negligent of me if I didn't do it now. Do you mind getting on the scale?"  
 "What for?"  
 "To find out your height. I have to be prepared in case I get sued again and the lawyer asks me if I knew how tall you were."  
 "I'm not going to sue you."  
 "You say that now. But how can I be sure you won't file a writ after you pass the kidney stone?"  
 Art Buchwald is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate.



## Smiles, handshakes not enough for next superpowers summit

The nation's capital has moved splendidly into spring. The forsythia and daffodils are in bloom, and so are the precious Japanese cherry blossoms, a prime attraction for the tourists who have returned with their cameras, strollers and street maps.  
 But as far as U.S.-Soviet relations are concerned, it might as well still be winter. Hopes raised at the "fireside summit" meeting in Geneva for a thaw are dwindling. If President Reagan is to host a second session with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev here in late June or late July, as the White House prefers, Moscow had better RSVP quickly.  
 "Time is getting close," Larry Speakes, the presidential spokesman, observed Monday. "It is getting critical to begin to set a date where you can do effective planning for a summit."  
 Last November's meeting was an ice-breaker, the first U.S.-Soviet summit in more than six years. Smiles and handshakes won't be enough to satisfy worldwide expectations this time. So, most analysts agree, it will take at least six weeks to reconsider the many conflicts between the superpowers and try to find solutions Reagan and Gorbachev could adopt.  
 But Moscow still hasn't said it is coming.

Barry Schweid  
AP News Analysis

Arms control talks, meanwhile, are at a virtual standstill except for some movement toward reducing U.S. and Soviet medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe. The Soviets do not want to talk about trimming their arsenal in Asia, and unless they do the Reagan administration is unlikely to agree to even an interim cutback in Europe.  
 Gorbachev tried last weekend to coax the president into another summit to ban underground nuclear tests. But the proposal was brushed aside. U.S. officials, evidently doubting the Soviet leader was sincere, grumbled that the offer was never transmitted through diplomatic channels.  
 Rep. Les Aspin, D-Wis., the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said even if Gorbachev was "demagoguing," Reagan should have called his bluff and seen if the Soviets were serious about a negotiated ban. U.S. and Soviet nuclear test blasts, except those conducted underground, were prohibited in a 1963 treaty. But the two sides have not moved from there to the comprehensive ban they committed themselves to seek 23 years ago.  
 Secretary of State George Shultz and Paul Nitze, the president's senior arms control adviser, questioned whether a publicly announced proposal by Gorbachev was the way to conduct serious negotiations. Their skepticism is impor-

tant since they probably are the two most influential members of the administration on arms control with the exception of the president himself.  
 Shultz lectured the Soviets to stop grandstanding. "We will get somewhere in our relationship with the Soviets when we're able to have some discussions that are relatively quiet and direct," he said.  
 That opportunity may come in a couple of weeks when former Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin, who was promoted recently to a top Communistparty post, returns for farewell calls.  
 Shultz and Kenneth Adelman, the U.S. arms control director, indicated that the United States would not make new proposals on either offensive weapons or space-based defense systems when the fifth round of talks opens May 8 in Geneva.  
 The U.S. strategy is to stick with the American proposals already put on the table and wait for the Soviets to give ground. That could happen. When the Soviets broke off negotiations in late 1983 the U.S. side did not blink. Reagan waited. And the Soviets returned to the bargaining table in 1985.  
 Evidently, Reagan and his senior advisers are convinced the strategy will work again.  
 Barry Schweid covers U.S.-Soviet diplomacy for The Associated Press.

## Mail Call

### More harm than good

EDITOR:  
 This letter is in regard to Ian Yanagisawa's letter on helmets in Thursday's Battalion.  
 I've been riding for eight years and have enjoyed every minute of it. I certainly do not plan on giving up my life either. However, when I ride in heavily populated areas, I do not wear a helmet.  
 I do believe that people who are just beginning to ride or the 120-mph "razor riders" should wear one. As for myself, an experienced, sub-sonic rider, I am not worried about my own skills, but the lack of skills of everyone else on the road. I believe it is much more important to be able to hear clearly and have an unrestricted field of vision to avoid accidents in the first place.  
 I have never been in an accident, but there have been a few situations that could have been very hairy had I not been able to hear the car before I was able to see it.  
 So next time Ian sees a helmetless rider he should realize the rider also believes that a helmet can do more harm than good.  
 David Disheroon

### Journalistic excellence

EDITOR:  
 Bravo! Your journalistic excellence is unsurpassed!  
 The caption on Friday's front page picture "Going Bananas" is SO informative. Who is Michael Adams (Jamie Stewart's roomie)? Where can we get a banana split like Mike's? Why is he fixing one? Why is this on the front page?  
 Wendy, Steve and Jill are to be applauded. Collectively, they used the pronouns he and/or she to begin eleven of the 26 paragraphs in their mayoral article.  
 Ah yes, literary and editorial excellence, alive and well in *The Battalion*.  
 Craig Bain  
 Class of 1986

### Letters from professors

EDITOR:  
 I have been an avid reader of *The Battalion* for over a year now, and I am surprised that in all that time I have seen only one or two letters from professors published in your "Mail Call" column.  
 They have as much right as students to voice their views in *The Battalion*, and I think they should be allowed to do so. And protected from any repercussions as might result, if they chose to discuss new ideas.  
 William H. Clark II  
 EDITOR'S NOTE: Letters from professors, as well as any other non-students, are handled in the same manner as student letters. However, fewer faculty members submit letters.

### 'Gay Week' not for everyone

EDITOR:  
 Last week the secretary of the Gay Student Services submitted a letter to *The Battalion*. In that letter, he kindly thanked the University for the recognition of the GSS on campus. I believe they deserve this recognition, but he went on to declare last week "Gay Week" — at Texas A&M University. This could be considered rather offensive to those of us who don't wish to participate in "Gay Week". Perhaps next time they could call it "Gay Week" — at the GSS, and they could carry on whatever activities or celebrations they had planned.  
 Jeff Martin  
 Wayne Simmons

### Hard to stomach

EDITOR:  
 I am writing this letter of appreciation in response to the presence of the "armed unit of elite soldiers" who dined in Sbisa on Saturday, March 29. Words cannot express the feeling of security I experienced as I ate my meal. I am sure my emotions were shared by others as we were inspired by a "gallant infantry" marching to the ice cream dispenser. Then, as a final display of valor, this group of Texas A&M's finest defenders of tradition whistled a merry tune as they marched from our presence, leaving us with a feeling of awe and satisfaction that in these troubled times we live in, there is someone to protect us!  
 I feel certain I am not the only "Sbisa regular" who would rather the Corps of Cadets save its antics for Duncan Dining Hall. We have a hard enough time stomaching Sbisa as it is without such pathetic displays of "discipline."  
 Paul Brinkley  
 Jeff Fox  
 Harry Garwood  
 Tom Rowell

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