Opinion

Off and running

In politics, the early bird rarely gets the presidential nomination — a fact that didn't deter California's Democratic Sen. Alan Cranston from being the first candidate to formally declare for 1984. The balding, lanky 68-year-old's strong advocacy of a nuclear freeze during his Feb. 2 announcement also signals an attempt to secure the party's left wing vacated by Sen. Edward Kennedy last December.

Neither approach has been particularly successful in recent elections. Going back to the 1964 race, the "first-to-announce" candidates have been Rep. Morris Udall, D-Ariz. (1976), Sen. George McGovern, D-S.D. (1972), Michigan Republican George Romney (1968) and New York Republican Gov. Nelson Rockefeller (1964). Only McGovern, whose "peace candidate" strategy Cranston appears to be emulating, was successful and he led the Democratic Party to its worst defeat in this century.

Much can happen in the 21 months between now and the next presidential election. For example, eight years ago, Jimmy Carter's presidential forays were taken about as seriously as those of Cranston's.

Yet at least six other senators, a number of ex-governors and former Vice President Walter Mondale all publicly, if not formally, share Cranston's dream of a home at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. The republic probably will survive the expense of time and money in that pursuit, though the same probably can't be said of Cranston's fledgling candidacy.

No one has the right to tell Cranston or any of the others not to run for president so early. By the same token, those bitten by the presidential bug shouldn't expect the public to find it contagious.

Oppose pay freeze

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff says the chiefs were not consulted on the military pay freeze issue.

Gen. John W. Vessey Jr., the nation's top military man, told the Senate Armed Services Committee recently that the five chiefs would have preferred a pay increase for the troops and a cut in weapons procurement.

But Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger chose to ignore professional opinion. He decided to freeze pay instead of cutting arms purchases as a way of trimming the military budget.

The chiefs are right and Weinberger is wrong. Congress should find weapons programs to cancel or stretch out in order to cut defense costs. Then the men and women in uniform can continue to look forward to anticipated increases in pay and benefits, needed to keep up with inflation and to maintain comparability with the civilian sector.

Weapons programs involve large sums of money poured into the civilian economy. Defense contractors make campaign contributions to help elect local congressmen; they hire lobbyists to make sure the congressmen vote right.

Military people do not have any political action committees or lobbyists.

But the congressmen should listen to the Joint Chiefs, who speak for the active military and who know that no weapon is more important to victory than morale.

You can't buy courage, devotion to duty, nor patriotism with money. But you can certainly destroy military morale by trying to hire a fighting force on the cheap.

Civil service retirement

Time is running out for the federal Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund.

The contributions to the fund from the general treasury of the United States have been increasing steadily and sharply. Beginning in 1970, with $221 million, they reached nearly $15 billion a year in little more than a decade.

The fund is liquid and financially sound, but it will continue to be so only if the federal government continues to contribute generously to cover the unfunded liability, now estimated at $500 billion.

It is not the fault of current employees or retirees that the fund has incurred such a huge liability. Congress raised the benefits too high without counting the cost, and in the past the federal government failed to appropriate enough money to make up the difference between what was paid into the fund and what was being taken out.

Retirement expenses now amount to 36 percent of the government's payroll, of which 30 percent is a cost to taxpayers.

Reform is imperative. It must not prejudice existing benefits paid to retirees or promised to present employees of the federal government. But future employees must be covered by the Social Security system, as recommended by the Social Security study commission. And the scale of federal benefits promised to them, in addition to Social Security benefits, must be adjusted so that it is more in keeping with pension benefits paid in comparable private employment.

"DO YA KNOW WHAT'LL HAPPEN TO YA IF OUR 'SURE THING' OVER THERE DON'T WIN?"

Agree or not

Van Curon exposes state contracts

by S.C. Van Curon

It's strange how the demand for photogrammetry services have ballooned since former Transportation Secretary Frank Metts abolished the state's own highly rated division in this field in 1981.

Private firms now have contracts with or contracts in negotiation with the state for $1,099,169.75 according to an interdepartment memo dated Feb. 23, 1983.

In a letter to Ms. Libby Walthall dated April 13, 1981, vice chairman of the state's personnel board, Metts said, "With the abolishment of this division, it was estimated there would be an annual savings of $935,000.

"On Aug. 1, 1980, I wrote a memorandum to the Department of Transportation management personnel requesting that they advise me in writing of any needs within the Department for photogrammetric work. Since this memorandum, and as of this date, I have received no requests from within the department to contract for these services. However, in anticipation of responding to requests for such services within time frames of short duration, I have instructed my staff to determine the availability of qualified providers of these services and negotiate open ended contracts that allow for immediate response."

An informant tells me that a request from within the department was made well before April 13, 1981 for photogrammetric services. The request was made in writing, but the person who made the request was informed by one of Metts' assistants, "there better not be any more requests," indicating the request would be ignored.

Metts used the estimated $935,000 savings figure as the basis for abolishing photogrammetry. The airplane, cameras and much expensive equipment brought a total of $334,155.09 for the state.

Now, the state has outstanding contracts or potential contracts in the works for $1,099,169.75 when the last budget for the photogrammetry division was operational in 1980 was $373,000. Other costs that could have been added totaled only $695,500. With this in mind, this column asked last week how the state could save $935,000 annually.

The state retained its files and some laboratory equipment that is now useful.

The latest inter-office memo lists these current contracts as of Feb. 23, 1983: Riley, Park, Hayden & Associates, $970,935.49; GRW, $1,158,122.92. These figures include a present request to the Legislative Research Commission for an additional $500,000 for each contract. A contract is now in negotiation with Dickerson Aerial Survey Inc. under the statewide contract for a fee not to exceed $3,099,169.75."

The memo went on to explain, "In addition to the above statewide contracts, we also have contracts for photogrammetric services for the AA (Alexander to Ashland) Highway with two consulting firms. These are GRW Engineers Inc., for $342,798.00 and Niles and Associates $227,310.34. All of the above services total $3,099,169.75."

A source within the Highway Department says, "This does not include photogrammetric services that are incidental to various design contracts."

In addition to Transportation, other divisions of state government contracted services from photogrammetry, inter accounting costs which reduced actual operational costs for Transportation.

For example Natural Resources is getting a very large program reclaiming abandoned strip mine lands. This operational cost comes through the federal government from taxes levied against the coal industry.

Natural Resources currently has 15 price contracts which are open ended to be charged on an hourly basis for personnel and planes or price per piece, such as an established figure for a picture print and a charge for negatives, etc.

For example, the uniform contract calls for $46.58 per hour for the principal of the firm; 45.45 for an engineer; $46.85 for a certified photogrammarist; $33.15 for a land surveyor; $32.28 for a supervisory technician; $29.25 for engineer-in-training; down to an hourly minimum of $14.25 for rodman, chainman, laborer.

Payments for flight time: single engine aircraft, $200.00 per hour; multi-engine, $275.00; payment for standby time, $40.00 and $85.00 per hour.

Price for delivered film, per frame, color, $10.50; black and white $11.20; infrared color, $11.20; infrared black and white, $8.80; positive to positive in color duplicating film, $8.75; negative to positive $10.25; and black and white duplicating film, $5.50.

Price for contact prints delivered, first-color print, $27.00; each additional color print $4.40; first black and white print, $18.00; each additional black and white $2.33; first color infrared print $35.30, each additional $6.50; first black and white $18.00, each additional $2.33. There are three and a half pages of these itemized charges. All of this is done in the name of saving money.

Down Memory Lane

To purchase new county fire truck

Thursday, March 7, 1963

There will be a county-wide meeting in the courthouse Monday, March 11, for the purpose of completing plans for the purchase of a county fire truck and its operation. Harold Letton was elected chairman at a committee meeting Monday night, sponsored by the Nicholas County Farm Bureau.

Having served as Carlisle's police chief for eight years, Eugene Purvis Monday submitted his resignation effective April 1, to Mayor Bill Power.

W.D. McCarty, night lineman for the past several weeks, also submitted his resignation.

At a meeting of the Carlisle-Nicholas County Chamber of Commerce, Estil Noffsinger, county agent, was elected president; A.V. Allison, vice-president; Morris Whiteley, secretary, and Frank Stone, treasurer.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. C.B. Ritchie, a daughter, Teresa Marie, March 3 at Nicholas County Hospital.

— To Mr. and Mrs. James Smoot, a daughter, March 3 at Nicholas County Hospital.

DIED — Robert Hedrick Hudson, 75, Millersburg, March 2 at home. — Teresa Marie Ritchie, infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. C.B. Ritchie, March 3 at Nicholas County Hospital. — Charles Westfall, 47, Lexington, March 3. — Charlie Ed Frederick, 76, March 2 at Bourbon County Hospital. — Mrs. James B. Ross, 89, March 2 at Nicholas County Hospital. — Stanley Russell Trumbo, 61, March 1 at Harrison Rest Home in Cynthiana. — Mrs. Carrie Armstrong Hamilton, 66, wife of Albert Hamilton, March 4. — Glenn C. Linville, 42, Robertson County, March 5 at Nicholas County Hospital. — The Rev. Alexander Franklin Shields, 90, Feb. 28 at Mary Chiles Hospital, Mt. Sterling.

Thursday, March 11, 1943

James Patrick Cooley, junior in the College of Commerce at the University of Kentucky, was recently selected for membership into Lamp and Cross, honorary organization for senior men.

Lt. Allen V. Hopkins has received his fourth decoration, the Distinguished Flying Cross, for completion of 200 hours of combat duty. Other decorations are the Silver Star, Purple Heart and Airman's Medal.

M.P. Nichols resigns as County Agriculture Agent and William T. Straw of Warsaw will be his successor.

MARRIED — Miss Lorena Hutchison, 18, Sharpsburg, and Lloyd McCarty, 19, Paris, on March 6.

DIED — Mrs. Lucy Holland Laughlin, 77, Tuesday at Johnson Memorial Hospital. — Mrs. Louise Shaw Snapp, 84, Wednesday at home in Barterville. — Mrs. Lucy Gaunce Jefferson, 69, Sunday at home on the East Union Road. — Mrs. Elizabeth Shrout Woodward, 72, Thursday at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Charles Irvin. — Bruce M. Hamm, 73, Tuesday at home on the Maysville Road.

Thursday, March 8, 1900

At a meeting of the city council Monday night, the city tax levy for 1900 was fixed at 40 cents on each $100 worth of taxable property.

P.P. O'Neill of Lexington is making a survey of Carlisle for sanitary sewers.

E.C. Hawkins has purchased the Robert Overbey store at Ellisville and taken charge of the business.

MARRIED — Miss Kate Lee Sanford and James L. Monson, both of Hookstown, on the 8th. — Mrs. Sallie Watkins and G.T. English, both of the county, on the 5th.

DIED — Mrs. James McClanahan, 69, at her home near Ellisville on the 3rd. — Timothy Welch, 25, at his home in Carlisle on the 6th. — Bruce Hollar, 42, at his home near Barterville on the 2nd. — Infant of Mr. and Mrs. William Asbury at their home near Blue Licks on the 5th.

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Letters from our readers

Centel cites improvements to cable tv

Following is a letter delivered to Mayor Frankie Hughes, outlining cable television improvements that justified their rate increase:

Thank you for the opportunity for Centel to once again address the Carlisle City Council. We are proud to report that projects undertaken in Carlisle to improve the system and make cable television available to more citizens have been successful. In fact FCC Proof of Performance testing of the system indicates that the technical standards of the Carlisle system are superior to most Central Kentucky cable systems.

We feel we have lived up to the informal agreement made in August of 1982 which tied increased monthly rates to higher performance standards. In short the company has undertaken the following projects:

— C-SPAN, the Congressional affairs network had been placed on Channel 6. This channel will continue to be used as a public access channel when local programming is available.

— KET, Channel 46, is now operating at peak efficiency.

— To improve reception on Cincinnati's channels 9, 12, 5 and 19 new antennas have been ordered and will be in place within 60 days.

— The Disney Channel, a new pay-TV service featuring original productions, the famous films, and animated movies will make its debut in Carlisle April 18.

— Cable is now available to more residents of Carlisle. Extensions of plant to Liberty Heights, Moorefield Road, etc. have proven highly successful.

— Reports of cable trouble have been greatly reduced.

— Stand-by power supplies have been installed at the company's water tower headend. These facilities have already been used during a power failure to ensure uninterrupted cable services.

Perhaps the best testimonial of Centel's improvement of the Carlisle system lies in the customer satisfaction indicated by increased subscribers. When Centel purchased the Carlisle system in April of 1981, only 250 customers were paying for seven basic channels. Today over 500 subscribers have their choice of 14 channels (15 in April).

We would like to implement a rate increase on March 1 of $1 on both the basic and additional outlet rate. The new rate would be $9 monthly and $2 for an extra outlet. Installation would remain at $10, the lowest fee among all Centel systems. We would be prepared to inform all subscribers by letter immediately of any rate increase.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We feel our main investments have enhanced the value of cable in Carlisle. Centel appreciates the opportunity to serve this fine community and welcomes your participation in building a better cable television system for Carlisle.

Sincerely,
Roger L. Kehrt
Vice President, Operations

Rejoice over court victory

To The Carlisle Mercury:

It's with deep gratitude, humility and reverence that we rejoice with those involved in the recent church school victory, but isn't it a shame that we, the people of this commonwealth and nation have set back on our do nothings and allowed the public school system to drift from all that's sacred, become so politically motivated and dictatorial as to take God's people to task.

In these troubled perilous times, let us pray that more people will stand up for their rights and that God will make church schools more available, free from government meddling. There is much hard evidence that seldom if ever, does the public school system and/or government know what's best in any situation.

Mrs. Fred H. Gray
Route 4, Box 216
Cynthiana, Ky. 41031

Op-Ed page

Fuzzify, stupify . . . but never clarify to ultimately satisfy

Jim Boren, publisher of a newsletter and author of Fuzzify, offers these rules for meeting planners:

✓ To control a planning session, thunderate. More arguments are won by thunderating resonance than by the quiet voice of logic.

✓ Fuzzify the objectives of your meeting. Fuzzified objectives guarantee flexibility of evaluation.

✓ Profundify simplicity. If people can understand what is being said and done, they may want to take control of their own meeting.

✓ Trashify all reports. People evaluate reports by their weight rather than their content.

✓ Intervoid all meetings. Through the skillful use of intervoidal technology (interface avoidance) participants will go home with a warm glow of comradery, a sense of satisfaction, and a feeling of real or imagined accomplishments.

✓ Develop a sound program of public hype and media flackification. Image is more important than performance.

— RM —

The Wall Street Journal reports that a wholesale pizza supplier billed the Defense Department $34,000 for pizzas he never delivered. I'll bet when he does they'll be plain when the Pentagon ordered pepperoni and mushrooms.

Computer fraud has resulted in people being paid by the Pentagon who never did any defense-connected work whatsoever. This proves my theory that the check for the M-1 tank was made out to a little old seamstress in Ohio.

It leads you to wonder how many robots are on an Army pension.

The Navy discovered that it didn't have $174 million worth of items it had paid for, including 2,500 pounds of lobster. Maybe the lobsters went AWOL.

With such Howdy Doody management, it's a miracle that we ever won a war. We can appreciate how close the Battle of Midway must have come to being staged on the Mississippi.

— RM —

Quoting some comedy club comics:

"My mother was the worst cook. She used to season everything with road salt. Her best dishes were fried Jell-O and soup-on-a-stick."

I went to the Oktoberfest and asked a vendor how much the beefy-boppers cost. He said $2 a pair. So I had my head pierced and bought some."

"I'm the kind of guy that when the alarm goes off in the morning, I think, if I eat my cornflakes in the shower, I can sleep an extra 30 seconds."

"When I was a kid, I was so bad one day my mother wouldn't touch me. She said I had to go to my room and wait for my father to come home. It was a job for the desperately bitter."

"You've seen the Southern version of 'That's Incredible'? It's called, 'Well, Gaw Damn.'"

"I'm 33 years old. That's one year old Celsius."

— RM —

I was delighted to hear that Frank Rizzo is going to run once again for mayor of Philadelphia. He's great copy.

He represents the old-style politician—much like the late Mayor

Daley of Chicago—who does not believe in fancy speeches, fancy grammer or even the English language.

Rizzo is to English what a depth charge is to a submarine.

Here is Rizzo in 1975, trying to explain to a TV reporter why he gave his wife's hairdresser a city job:

"I would answer, Andrea, by saying that in any profession, even in a political profession, people because they happen to be my wife's hairdresser or some fellow that I met at Palumbo's that needs a job, I never met my wife's hairdresser, but my wife one day told me that this is a man who has three children who is out of work. I would not know him if I fell over him and I gave him a job. Not because he was my wife's hairdresser, he wasn't any good to her anymore, he was no longer her hairdresser so I hired him and I'm proud of that . . ."

Rizzo often joked about his own limitations.

"The first thing I did after becoming mayor was make my brother Joe the fire commissioner," he once said. "A lot of people said that was nepotism. I didn't know what that was.

"So I called my brother and said, 'Joe, did you pick up anything when you were stationed in Japan?'"

— RM —

Tidbits from what Webster never told you:

✓ Arithmetic: An obscure art no longer practiced in the world's developed countries.

✓ Meteorologist: One who doubts the established fact that it is bound to rain if you forget your umbrella.

✓ Neutron bomb: An explosive device of limited military value because, as it only destroys people without destroying property, it must be used in conjunction with bombs that destroy property.

✓ Quark: The sound made by a well-bred duck.

✓ Theory: System of ideas meant to explain something, chosen with a view of originality, controversialism, incomprehensibility, and how good it will look in print.

✓ Serendipity: The process by which human knowledge is advanced.

✓ Universe: The problem.

✓ University: Institution where people incapacitated by an intellectual disposition can be put out of society's way.

✓ Weapon: An index of the lack of development of a culture.

✓ Zeal: Quality seen in new graduates — if you're quick.

— RM —

"I've decided it's time we faced a few truths about children that I have never seen or heard mentioned on television's 'The Brady Bunch'," says Janet Cool in the Chicago Tribune.

For example: If the kids are all carrying in groceries from the car, the only one who will trip and fall is the one who is holding the bag with the eggs, glass jar of pickles and volatile soda pop.

It is never anyone's turn to take out the garbage. Even if the plants are dying and your eyes water as you near the kitchen none of the children will be affected. They save their tender sensitivities for such things as broccoli casserole ("phew, what stinks!"). Four-week-old garbage bothers them not a whit.

Teenagers can tolerate music played at such levels that the plates vibrate in the cupboard and dogs for a one-mile radius run yelping for cover. They can sit at drag races or rock concerts with a sweetly benign smile on their faces. They can bury themselves under a car revving up to its highest level of noise without even a whimper. However, if you come home and vent your feelings about finding someone's dirty underwear in the middle of the living room floor they rush out into the night, their tender ears outraged at "all that noise!"

If you have only one child, that child will have a period of years when he spills his milk or other beverage at every single meal. If you have two children, figure on doubling the spills. More than two children? Keep a pump handy.

Relax. Everyone with teenagers reacts this way. Take two aspirin and call me when they hit 21.

Onward, upward.

This that and 'tother

by Warren R. Fisher Sr.
June 14, 1928

The hills of Nicholas are white with the blossoms of the blackberry, forecasting a bumper crop of that ebon-hued fruit. Potential cobblers lurk beneath the snowy blossoms, jars of jam and glasses of jelly, ranged in neat rows on the shelves of corner cupboards or stored in the cobwebby coolness of dim cellars, are waiting there. And for our ungodly neighbors in Bourbon, et al, the purple juice, to be squeezed lovingly into stone jars, to be sweetened and tended and "racked off" and finally bottled, so that when the wind howls dismally without and the hare, which now nests warmly in the depths of the protecting briars, "limps slowly through the frozen grass," a bit of the mellow beauty of June may be glimped across the dreary wastes of winter, the Fires of Spring be lit for a brief moment in the heart. Ah! Here's how.

...

If the weather is propitious (and who can count upon its vagaries this spring?) we can "eat out on the porch" by the time cobblers are ripe. And the drowsy hum of bees in the honeysuckle, busy replenishing the supply of honey stolen from their hives to adorn the toothsome morsel and thus "paint the lily," will drift to us as undertones in the magnificent Orchestration of June. It is one of the compensations of village life to eat out on the porch, to go coatless and in slippers, if one chooses — to be comfortable. One who casts his lot in a village misses much, no doubt. Perhaps he may be said to lack ambition, but then ambition may be "a grievous fault," as 'twas with Caesar. There is a compensation, a balance, we think, evident in the plan of nature always and life in a country town, when the Symphony of Summer reaches its fullness of tone; when the fruits of the field are brought to table and one rises to bird song and falls asleep to the soothing, quavering plaint of the little brown owl, does not lack for compensations. The balances are level poised, it seems to us, between the snowy napery and faultless service of the dining halls of the rich and the coatless ease of a dinner served out on the porch, where Nature sets up her incense censers of fragrant honeysuckle and provides an orchestra of her feathered folk to "maken melodye" — in cobbler time — in June.

...

This week, while Nature comes into the full blossom of her fecundity, the grown men will wrangle and shout and perspire and smoke and scheme to choose at Kansas City, him who shall be leader amongst them. And this unfortunate fortunate, crowned chief amid the travail of great turmoil, will be him to the hustings with "messages" and slogans and platitudes to please the people. And whether he please them or not, if he please those who sit in hotel rooms far into the night, who smoke and scheme and hold the purse strings, he may be successful over the other fortunate unfortunate to be chosen amid greater turmoil, no doubt, at Houston, later in the month of June. Heights! Men have chosen themselves kings, since tribal life began — kings with claws, of old time. But now they draw the claws and those who sit in the seats of the financially mighty and hold the keys to the Vaults of Mammon hold likewise the scepter. An empty honor, that of being President of these United States may be, if those who travel to conventions in private cars choose to make it so. And yet, none of us but would be an eager recipient of such emptiness and have.

...when the original is dust,
A name a wretched picture and worst but.

Even those who "do not choose to run" in December might succumb to the song of the sirens — in June.

***See This that 's 'tother, page 4**

In this corner...

Of lambs, lions, horses and cows

by Jim B. Wanke

"March will come in like a lamb and go out like a lion." How many times have you heard that old tale? Or the reverse — "March will come in like a lion and go out like a lamb."

This refers to the weather, of course, and means that if the first day of March is a stormy, blustery, winter day, the last day of March will see a calm, warm spring-like day.

In our case, March came in like a lamb and so, if the old saying is true, will go out like a lion. That means there'll be stormy weather and winds on March 31, so don't plan any trips or outdoor work for that day!

It's my belief that buried back in the history of our country and indeed Europe, these sayings were founded in a truth at that time, it's just that these sayings get blown out of proportion and misunderstood down through the years.

"Opening an umbrella inside the house brings bad luck." It does, of course. However, you open an umbrella in close, confined quarters you take the chance of poking somebody's eye out with one of the spokes...so it can be bad luck.

Cows laying down

There is one I never have been able to figure out. And that is the old tale of when the cows lay down in the pasture, it means it's going to rain. I have been watching cows for about 25-30 years trying to see if there's any truth to that old story and I have finally given up. I have seen cows standing up in the rain, laying down in the sun, walking in the snow and every-other-which-way you want to name, and I have not seen any continuing connection between an impending rain and cows lying down.

Of course, this old story comes from the fact that cows do lay down ahead of a storm sometimes, to keep a warm dry spot underneath them. But I have also seen cows get up in the middle of a rain, walk over to some grass, chew for a while and lay down on the wet ground.

Changing horses

"Don't change horses in the middle of the stream" is another one. It has obvious meanings, of course. If you're going to change a horse in your team, the time to do it is ahead of the danger, before you get into the middle of the crossing. Or, in other words, use some preventive maintenance in your life and don't always wait 'til the last minute.

The only problem with this one is that I've never seen anyone change horses in the middle of a stream. Not even on the old Wagon Train TV program. I've seen them cut horses loose and I've seen them float downstream and the more I think about it, the more I believe it would be impossible to change horses in the middle of a waist deep stream. You would be lucky enough just to get one horse out of the harness, much less hook another one in.

"You can't get blood out of a turnip," is another one. Have you ever really squeezed a turnip in a press to see what comes out? Maybe it is blood. Of course, this refers to the difficulty of getting water out of a log but it still doesn't have any money...no blood, in other words.

I am mentioning all these sayings for the benefit of our young people who hear their parents and grandparents saying them, but never know what they mean.

"Where there's smoke there's fire." This has come to apply to just about everything down through the years. When the story is told of the married man seen walking down the street in Lexington with another woman, it is said, "where there's smoke there's fire."

"Just because there's snow on the roof doesn't mean the fire's out." This refers to the fact that if there's snow on the roof it doesn't mean it's cold inside the house. Down through the years, it has come to apply to older men who have grey hair, and they use the saying to indicate they have plenty of fire left in the furnace, whether they do or not. I know several men in this category.

Of course, young people have trouble understanding this, because they usually have a fire going themselves that is close to being out of control all the time.

The one I like the best is Murphy's law — "If it can get worse, it will." The older I get the more I believe it!

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