

Opinion Moderate approach

For those of us with a little faith around the middle, the news from Washington was scary. A panel convened by the National Institute of Health recently concluded that any amount of overweight—even five pounds—is a disease and that "obesity is a killer."

But that report shouldn't prompt you to stock up on low-cal from foods or start a binge diet. There's far less in its findings than meets the eye: No new evidence against obesity, only a highly problematic reinterpretation of what's already known. The NIH panel members were initially prepared to set the limit of what's safe at 40 percent over ideal weight when members of the audience talked them into cutting it to 20 percent.

But 20 percent over weight? The panel listed its ideal weights from those familiar height and weight tables. Yet the tables themselves are far from ideal. They are derived from an archaic sample of the population and use "frame sizes" with no scientific basis. That's why the

Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., which publishes them, no longer refers to them as tables of "desirable" weight and cautions against relying on them for making individual medical determinations.

Substantial overweight, however it is defined, plainly affects more than one's vanity. It is associated with heart disease, arthritis, diabetes and gallstones, among other maladies, and that's reason enough to take the problem seriously. What the panel didn't report was that some diseases, particularly hypertension, are more likely to be caused not by fatness, but by the familiar cycle of gorge and starve. That's the very behavior the NIH report will encourage.

Far wiser would be the familiar counsel to lose from all this is the familiar counsel to lose. There's a lesson for the scientists, too: Trying to turn a little knowledge into national policy is a dangerous thing. — The Sacramento Bee

A second opinion

Absent major reforms, the federal health insurance program for 30 million Social Security recipients, will get of more in the late 1990s.

To remain solvent during the next 25 years, Medicare will need to reduce expenditures by 19 percent or increase revenue by 24 percent.

No one in Washington disputes these bleak projections. Yet administration officials are opposing a simple reform that would save Medicare up to \$1.2 billion a year.

That's how much a Senate study says would be saved if Medicare required patients to obtain second opinions before undergoing certain elective surgeries. According to the study, second opinions reduce the rate of some surgeries by as much as 45 percent, without threatening the health of patients.

Indeed, the inspector general of the Department of Health and Human Services has recommended a mandatory second-opinion program. But he apparently has been rebuffed by officials in the Health Care Financing Administration, the HHS agency that oversees Medicare. HCA's officials argue that peer-review regulations are adequate safeguards against needless surgery and oppose even a simple reform that would save Medicare up to \$1.2 billion a year.

This internal battle must end. Secretary of Health and Human Services Margaret M. Heckler should explain to her HCA underlings that there is not one opinion on this issue—the second opinions and the savings they can produce are long overdue.



"We were 5700 short on our taxes, so I mailed in a pair of pliers and a hammer with our return."

Agree or not A low profile administration

By R.C. Van Curen
Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration has been a housekeeping effort with a few major projects that have been little fanfare about the acquisition of new industries for the state, no proliferation of ground breaking, renovation for new buildings, and no major programs to build major projects that were fully funded by a public information department.

There has not been a continual program of reform for the past 10 years, but there has been a continual program of reform for the past 10 years. It has been a program of reform for the past 10 years. It has been a program of reform for the past 10 years. It has been a program of reform for the past 10 years.

Op-Ed page Have a heart... a deluxe Cardiac model or a tinny imitation ticker from Taiwan

The day is not far when the wearing of artificial organs will be as common as dental bridges in the United States.

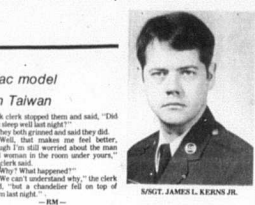
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Sgt. James L. Kerns Jr.

Kerns won AFB honors for his outstanding performance while assigned to the Accounting and Finance Branch, Major William W. Winkler, Chief, Computer Division since a letter to his parents.

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A parsnip, dam and Eleanor

What just might be a record size wild parsnip was dug last Wednesday in a hay field on the farm of Candy (17) Creek Road resident Herbert L. McClanahan.

The tuberosity topped measure 12 inches in diameter and was eight inches long, even longer coating the longest root.

Herb said last Father's Day he dug the biggest one he'd seen in all his 30 years, so that's a pretty good authority.

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Wild parsnip usually get no bigger than a foot or so long, and usually are just a few inches in diameter. Some of the roots are as thick as the latter this spring.

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Down Memory Lane

Mussolini, mistress executed; Junior Honor Society formed

Thursday, April 25, 1965
The Nicholas County High School students who participated in the state speech festival at the University of Kentucky April 22-24 received an analysis of public address. Card Carter, speaker, has excellent in prose reading and group discussion. Robert Talbot and David Moore, in analysis of public address, were also excellent.

The Carlisle Mercury

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EVERY DAY IS SUN DAY.

Garrett arrives in West Germany
Army Spc 5 Naval A. Garrett, son of Norman A. Garrett and Josephine A. Whaley, Carlisle, has arrived for duty in Schweinfurt, West Germany.

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We Salute * Linda Ritchie Carlisle Drug	We Salute * Helen Hopkins Kentucky Utilities	We Salute * Patty McClure Conley & Conley, Attorneys
We Salute * Libby Clark Gerold Hammons, N.C. Elementary Principal	We Salute * Dorothy Wootley Gerold Hammons, N.C. Elementary Principal	We Salute * Brenda Day Wilma Donathan, N.C.S. Librarian

HERBERT McCLANAHAN... record wild parsnip?

Special thanks to Alex Marie Frank... for her photo of the parsnip.

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