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# LETTERS

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## Start Me Up

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Mr. Schlosberg's identification of risk capital acquisition as the biggest problem for small businesses is right on target ["The Start-Up Blues," January]. The problem is common to just about all businesses below the Fortune 1,000, though not just people with new venture ideas.

One type of federal program that might make some sense to look at is the loan guarantee business. When young families needed houses after World War II, a lot of agencies and mechanisms (FNMA, GNMA, etc.) were set up to make them bankable by pooling the risks of a lot of loans and taking the risk off the bank's hands. When the vet's kids needed college, student loan guarantees (and Sallie Mae to resell them) made the exercise somewhat easier. The SBA does some of this but, as you have noted, is often closer to the process of lending than necessary.

WILLIAM A. PRICE

Wheaton, Illinois

President Bush should read "The Start-Up Blues" before he submits his capital gains tax proposal to the Congress. His sweeping and ill-considered campaign promise to cut capital gains tax rates will make it even harder for start-up firms to obtain the capital they need to survive and prosper.

I have proposed that capital gains tax rates be reduced but only for new and direct investments in small businesses and only if the investments are held for four years. These investments are risky because start-up firms do fail, and in many cases there is no possibility for any return while the firm is getting off the ground. These are precisely the type of high-risk, long-term investments we need if America is to compete in international markets.

In contrast, President Bush would reduce capital gains tax rates for any old or new investment. There are thousands of "capital assets," including paintings, antique cars, and vacation homes.

It does not provide any "incentive" for investors to include more investments in start-up firms. Start-up firms are starved for capital, and when they starve, we will all feel the hunger pangs in time.

DALE BUMPERS  
Washington, D.C.

*Senator Bumpers is chairman of the Senate Small Business Committee.*

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## Michelin Men

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Daniel Farber's review of Richard Neely's book ["You Little Tort," January] overlooked the most important reason for America's wasteful and destructive product liability law: our lack of national health insurance. French judges are never forced to choose between victimizing Michelin Tire with an unjust verdict and leaving a paraplegic to beg in the streets; they know the paraplegic will be provided for in any case.

In those relatively few injury cases genuinely caused by unsafe products, the government should have the right to sue the manufacturer for reimbursement of medical treatment expenses.

HUGO S. CUNNINGHAM  
Omaha, Nebraska

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## Turf Wars

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Let me suggest that you investigate further the nature of the nursing-RCT controversy ["Tilting at Windmills," January]. Your superficial analysis surprises me.

It is clearly a "turf" issue. In response to the nursing shortage, a committee of physicians from the AMA House of Delegates has decided to create a new category of health care worker who would in fact practice nursing but whose training and supervision would come from physicians.

A nostalgia on the part of some physicians for the good old days when nurses were hospital-trained by MDs (and not so uppity), has spawned this hare-brained scheme.

The nursing shortage is real and critical. Animosity between medicine and nursing is approaching an all-time high. The unbelievably arrogant and poorly thought-out RCT proposal will only make a deteriorating situation worse.

LIN BASSETT SCHAYE  
Chicago, Illinois

I can assure you from my own experience that this is *not* the first time that nurses object to a new group of paramedics to be created. When I immigrated to the United States in 1950, I got myself a job as orderly in the operating room in Hackensack, New Jersey. The surgeons noticed that after my eight-hour shift was over I kept hanging around the OR watching surgery. One of them asked me after a few months whether I would like to be trained as a "surgical technician"—otherwise also called a "scrub technician."

In those days, this being a new specialty, formal courses were unknown, and the few hospitals that experimented with the idea sort of grew their own by teaching their scrub technicians. The screaming and hollering of the registered nurses (over my dead body!) when the ORS first told them that I would learn the job had to be heard to be believed. As one of them told me: We have nothing against you personally, but we don't want technicians, period. Well, little by little they reconciled themselves to the inevitable, and today there are formal courses for scrub technicians and every hospital is using them. I've a strong hunch it will be the same for the RCT's if they don't give up.

ERWIN FUCHS  
Seattle, Washington

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## More on Denial

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I was quite surprised, perhaps shocked would be a better word, when I read "The Case For Denial" [December]

by Paul Glastris. Surprised and shocked because in my ten years as a Shriner and my eight years of work at the International Shriners Hospitals' Headquarters, I have been continually impressed—no, amazed—at the commitment and dedication of the physicians, nurses, and therapists at all Shriners Hospitals to do “whatever it takes” to help their young patients overcome their disabilities.

Paul Glastris recounts his experience at a Shriners Hospital saying, “It seemed the whole point of Shriners was to get kids used to the idea of being handicapped . . .” In actuality, the entire approach at Shriners Hospitals is founded upon helping children to rise *above* their physical problems.

I expect the recollection of Mr. Glastris's experience at a Shriners Hospital may have been shaped by the tremendous frustration it sounds as if he felt from losing his arm at such an early age. I feel his assessment was neither fair, nor accurate. Most of the patients leave our hospitals believing that there isn't anything they *can't* do.

MICHAEL C. ANDREWS  
Tampa, Florida

*Mr. Andrews is director of public relations for the International Shriners Hospitals' Headquarters.*

*The author replies:*

I guess you had to be there.

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## Dupe Dope

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Steve Burkholder asserts that *National Review*, in an article co-authored by J. Michael Waller, “depicted Chris Dodd, Tom Harkin, and Pat Schroeder, among others, as Soviet dupes” [“And Why They Let Anyone Be An Informant,” January]. That's not true. We labeled Dodd and Harkin leftist ideologues and cataloged a list of reasons why. We noted Schroeder's fundraising letter for the Nicaragua Network, a pro-Sandinista group, and also that she later disassociated herself from it.

Of course, it suited Mr. Burkholder's purposes to slide over the “among others,” which included Rep. George Crockett, whose long public history of communist fellow-traveling we recounted in some detail. But we wouldn't even call him a “dupe.” He's something much worse: he actually believes in that stuff.

Mr. Burkholder was trying mightily—huffing and puffing as he went along—to prove his case by exaggerating Mr. Waller's. An article “supported in part by a grant from the Fund for Investigative Journalism” should show more care in throwing around words.

WICK ALLISON  
New York, New York

*Mr. Allison is publisher of National Review.*

*The author replies:*

Noting that, for want of space, the *Monthly's* editors chose to trim my description of the article co-authored by Waller that listed several members of Congress (including George Crockett), I stand by the summary. Another torturous rereading of the article by Messrs. Waller and Joseph Sobran bears out my one-sentence reading as an accurate representation of the broad-brush charges made in that article. I note that *National Review's* editors headlined the piece “Congress's Red Army,” adorning that title with a Soviet flag.

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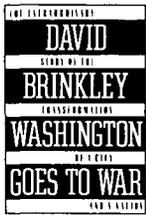
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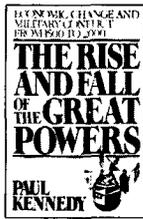
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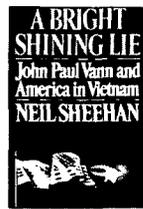
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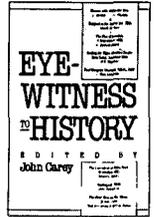
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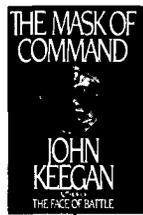
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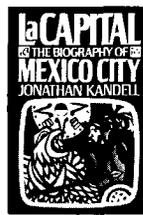
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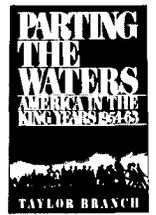
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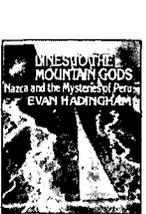
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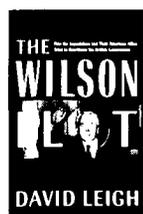
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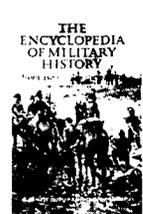
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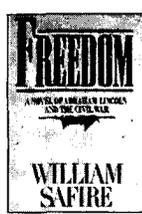
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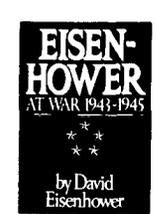
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# The Washington Monthly

Volume Twenty-One, Number Two

March 1989

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# TILTING AT WINDMILLS



**I**t's time to revive our Only in California Department. Why? The California Supreme Court recently decided that it was not moral turpitude per se for a lawyer to hire a hit man. Although the lawyer admitted that it was his intent to have a former client "seriously injured," the court ruled that he can regain his license in two years by passing a written exam on professional responsibility. . . .

Did you know that the U.S. Army is developing "brave pills" for soldiers to use in combat? I agree with the serviceman who, when told about the pill by Fred Francis of NBC News, said, "Sometimes it's good to be afraid, good to keep your head down, instead of being the brave John Wayne, running up the hill". . .

But if the Army wants to find an immediate market for these pills it might try the

pilots who fly NATO planes. According to *Jane's Defense Weekly*, NATO lost more than 100 jet fighters in crashes during just the one year ending October 31, 1988. . . .

This raises the question of what the hundreds of billions Ronald Reagan spent on defense actually bought us. News of fighters crashing in Europe is accompanied by this report by Molly Moore in *The Washington Post*: "The nation's B-1 bomber force today may not fly as far as intended, carry as heavy a load, or properly use all the weapons required to perform its full mission, and new estimates show the strategic bombers could cost \$400 million each."

Then there are the stories in *Newsweek* and *The New York Times* about the B-2 Stealth bomber. The latter, by Jeffrey A. Merkeley, is entitled "The Stealth Fiasco," while *Newsweek's* article by Gregg

Easterbrook runs under the head: "Sticker Shock: The Stealth Is a Bomb."

And then there's all the money the Navy has squandered on the wrong weapons—see Scott Shuger's article on page 10. Incredibly, the principal villain behind the Navy's extravagance, John Lehman, the man who never saw an aircraft carrier he didn't love, recently wrote an article for *The Washington Post's* Outlook section entitled, "Pentagon Rx: Cut the Fat, Build the Services' Muscle". . .

**W**hat's wrong with baseball is suggested by the fact that Claudell Washington recently signed a contract with his *seventh* major league team. How can fans have a sense of loyalty to a team as they did, say, with the Brooklyn Dodgers that Roger Kahn described in *The Boys of Summer*? The problem of