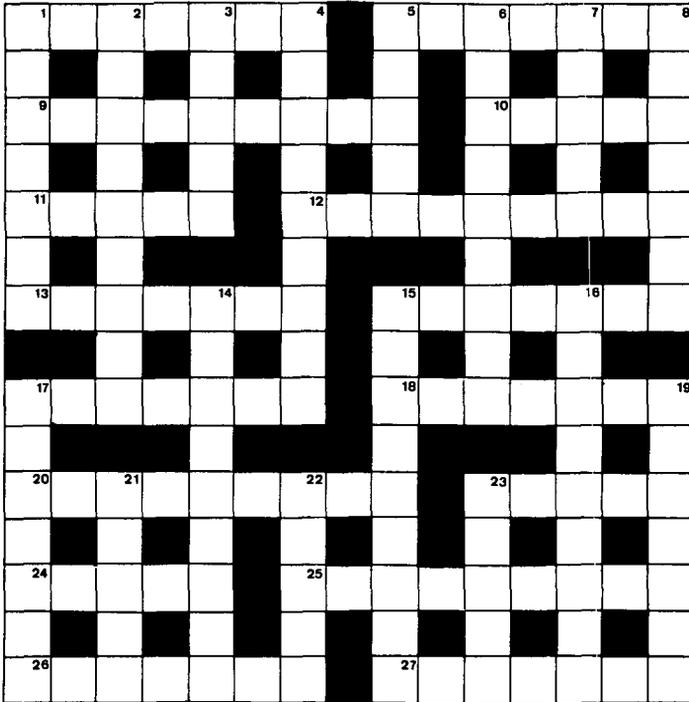


the political puzzle

by John Barclay



ACROSS

1. Heard sounds of Spring here. Mona did. (7)
5. With these, strong men get wish. (7)
9. In April, Parisians enjoy short emperor in pictures. (9)
10. Radio tells about nut back home. (5)
11. If young, male, and French, in dream our thoughts there turn. (5)
12. Long tale of railroad in the country. (9)
13. This realm's assets are time and sound. (7)
15. One of sisters fights back. (7)
17. Help on holidays? (7)
18. All Washington knows of Ted sect. (7)
20. Odd animal park in Michigan? (9)
23. Rivet eyes on Roman fountain. (5)
24. Pig sounds as if sin OK. (5)
25. Way to set right suit pleat. (9)
26. Pushes ahead on short main routes. (7)
27. Erred toward the end of yesterday. (7)

DOWN

1. Pale end of Kissinger trip. (7)
2. Toy is main cause of ill will. (9)
3. Route to Mongolia and space. (5)
4. Nixon dines more often to wield power. (9)
5. Sadder man crosses wires. (5)
6. Tin trains on the move. (2, 7)
7. This city is in more than oil business. (5)
8. River bed water sources? (7)
14. They get us excited about star's mail. (9)
15. Neither flowers nor brides are better Spring signs. (3, 6)
16. DOT head creates railway. (9)
17. Come through describes Wm. Peace Thackeray. (4, 3)
19. If you get it, you can spend it. (7)
21. It's hard to get him to enrol. (5)
22. In prizes, tsar's enthusiasms show. (5)
23. It's more likely in first part of return. (5)

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g., (2, 3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g., USA, are treated as one word. Answers to last month's puzzle are on page 48.

The Watergate story: why Congress didn't investigate until after the election

by Marjorie Boyd

One of the untold stories of last year's presidential race was the behind-the-scenes narrative of Rep. Wright Patman's attempt to have his House Banking and Currency Committee probe the Watergate case in the closing weeks of the campaign. Not just a footnote to an electoral debacle, the story contains a few handy lessons on "How to Scuttle a Congressional Investigation" and provides an historical backdrop to Sam Ervin's current Senate probe of the Watergate affair and its many peculiar ramifications.

When Patman, that obstreperous 79-year-old Texas populist, announced last August that his committee was about to hold public hearings on the controversial break-in, partisan Democrats imagined that the closing weeks of the presidential campaign would be filled with daily banner headlines and nightly television news specials conveying the horrors of the Watergate break-in. The hearings raised the possibility that the Banking Committee could successfully subpoena documents and bank records, constructing a paper trail to the President's door before election day.

Perhaps the election was already decided by late August; perhaps nothing could have changed the outcome or even significantly reduced

the size of Nixon's impending landslide. But a month earlier the Eagleton affair had shown the tremendous impact that one dramatic event can have on a presidential campaign in this media age, and few have shown greater sensitivity to the expanding role of the media in politics than the energetic Madison Avenue team in the White House. They grasped immediately the hearings' potential to create "negative image distortion"—the vision of a large bird-dropping falling through the air directly above the confident, statesmanlike countenance of their leader.

But an umbrella was quickly opened and disaster averted. When Patman called his committee together on October 3 to approve the subpoena power necessary for the hearings, a surprise awaited him. As expected, the 14 Republicans present voted unanimously to block the investigation, reaffirming the historic supremacy of party politics over public curiosity. But party politics broke down among the Democrats. Patman lost the votes of six of the Committee's 21 Democrats, and his request for subpoena power to conduct the hearings was defeated by a vote of 20 to 15. Any congressional attempt to probe the Watergate case was thus postponed until after the election.

What motivated the six Democrats

Marjorie Boyd is a Washington writer.