



# RUBY SAYS

by  
**Ruby Duncan**

The Declaration of Economic Independence won't appear this week because the welfare issue is again so important that the next few columns will be donated to it. We will get back to the Declaration. . .

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### NEVADA'S WELFARE FIASCO

Does the Nevada State Welfare Division serve the needs of the poor? The answer, very simply, is no. Nevada's welfare system is slow in acting, low paying, punitive, and administratively wasteful. While people in Nevada generally enjoy one of the highest levels of income in the nation, welfare assistance for the poor in Nevada ranks near the bottom as compared to other states. To make matters worse, in recent months the Nevada Welfare Administration has tightened the belt even more. George Miller, Nevada's state welfare administrator, has argued that the welfare budget simply does not have sufficient funds to allow previous levels of assistance to continue. Thus, the average recipient has recently seen major cutbacks in his level of medical and financial assistance. At the same time, the Welfare Division currently demands greater responsibility on the part of the recipient.

George Miller has boasted that over the period of the last year Nevada's benefits for welfare recipients has increased by 12% of need. But his statements are misleading. As Mark Twain once put it: "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damn lies, and statistics." Such is the case with figures showing across the board increases in welfare assistance payments. While it is true that the legislature has increased the amount of money that is allowable to a recipient, it is also true, that not nearly as well publicized, that a recipient has simply not seen the benefit of the legislature's actions. In many cases changes in the welfare policies have all but taken back the money that the legislature allowed for a cost of living increase.

But what does all this mean in terms of dollars and cents? It means that many persons taking care of needy children — such as grandparents, who were living on fixed incomes of their own and were themselves considered non-needy — saw decreases in their ADC grants of over \$70 per month last Oct. The Welfare Division, according to its manual, felt that \$41 per month per child was sufficient to take care of the following needs: "Food, clothing, recreation, personal incidentals, fuel for heating, cooking and water heating, electricity for refrigeration and lights, household supplies, medical chest supplies, and shelter." Other budgetary changes have meant that welfare recipients who were working and trying their best to support their families, lost valuable work-incentive disregards of \$5 per month per child.

In the area of health care, the results of administrative welfare policy has been even more tragic. Medicaid cutbacks have, in some cases, actually endangered the health and well being of some recipients. This is especially true with those persons suffering from terminal cancer and diabetes. Additionally, Medicaid cutbacks are going to cost the taxpayers more money than it is claimed they will save. When the state cuts its medical assistance program for the poor, medical costs were transferred to the counties and federal dollars were lost.

**What are YOU doing to help YOUR community?**

## \*\*V\*A FACTS

Q — How many VA pension programs are there?

A — Two. The protected Pension Law for the veterans and dependents who were receiving benefits on June 30, 1960 and the Current Pension Program for veterans who have filed since.

Q — Would I be eligible for a VA widow's pension based on the fact that I loved with a World War II veteran as his common-law w After his death I learned

that he was previously married?

A — Common-law marriage cannot be recognized unless the prior

marriage was dissolved by death, divorce or annulment.

Q — Must I submit my original separation paper to the VA to obtain a Certificate of Eligibility for a GI home loan?

A — Any legible copy of a separation paper covering active military service will suffice.

Q — The VA is paying me \$270 a month while attending school full time under the Dependents Educational Assistance Program. Will this be increased if I marry?

A — No. There is no additional allowance for dependents under this program.

### Free Phone for Vets

Veterans or their dependents seeking information on benefits are to be reminded that the VA maintains 960 toll free telephone lines across the country for that purpose.

VA Administrator Richard L. Roudebush said the toll-free question-answering service is available to an estimated 90% of the nation's veteran population.

The telephone numbers can be found in the "U.S. Government" section of the local telephone books under "Veterans Administration — Benefits information and Assistance."

In cases where a "U.S. Government" listing is not included in the local directory, telephone operators can supply the toll free number, Roudebush said.

"Because the service is so popular," Roudebush said, "veterans should have at hand as much VA-related information about themselves as possible when making a call. If you can give the counsellor your VA claim number, or your military serial number or Social Security number, for example, you will get faster service — which is what the VA is striving for."

The VA administrator said 32 states now have statewide toll-free service and 13 others have partial toll-free service between population centers and VA regional offices.

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## Health & Science Shorts

Depression was described as the most common of all psychiatric disorders, affecting people of all ages, at a symposium in Boston on the biology and the treatment of depression.

Dr. Robert W. Gibson, President-Elect of the American Psychiatric Assoc., estimated that each year some 20 million persons in the U.S. suffer from depression. However, Dr. Gibson added that "a carefully planned total treatment program is rewarded by a favorable outcome in a high percentage of patients. Psychotherapy, environmental manipulation and drug therapy should be a part of a coordinated treatment effort."

### Battered Wives

The assumption that battered wives return home to their husbands because of masochistic needs has been disputed by the results of a new study referred to at the annual meeting of the Canadian Psychiatric Assoc.

Frances Forrest-Richards, MD, a Vancouver woman psychiatrist said that the study revealed that the victims returned to their husbands and were subjected to repeated violence when alternatives were lacking. All but eight of the 35 women in the study returned because there was nowhere else to go or because the children were still in the marital home.

### Recognize "PI" and Avoid it

Picnicker, suburban gardener and hiker are particularly likely to encounter poison ivy this summer, but records show that poison ivy dermatitis is a year round problem, affecting over 60% of the population in the U.S.

Poison ivy grows primarily along fences, paths and roadways. Its leaves grow in clusters of three and vary in length from one to four inches. They are glossy green or reddish brown, according to the season.

More than a thousand different remedies have emerged over the centuries to ease the agonizing burn and itch of poison ivy. These have ranged from chewing on the leaves of the plant to rubbing the affected area with banana skins.

More recently, excellent success has been reported in mild cases with products which produce a soothing, analgesic-anesthetic effect. Available in cream, spray, lotion and gel form there is a Rhulicream, Rhullispray, Rhulihist, and Rhuligel. (The medical name for poison ivy is "Rhus." Plants of the Rhus genus include poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac.) Severe cases should be treated by a physician.

### Take Two Aspirin and Your Temperature Under Your Arm

Most European and South American countries use the axillary method for taking body temperatures. Writing in "Medical World News," Lucia Fischer-Pap, MD, proposes that we follow the example of other nations and that physicians recommend checking a patient's temperature by this underarm method. "I've found it easier, safer, and more accurate," she writes, "and many others agree."

Among the advantages she lists: it is easier to keep sterile and less likely to transmit viruses and bacteria from one to another; it is more comfortable than the oral type when the patient finds it difficult to keep his mouth shut; it is better accepted than the rectal thermometer; it is not affected by hot foods and beverages; and under certain situations is more accurate.

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