

EDITORIAL

A not-so-happy birthday to Bomb

This July the Bomb turned 40 years young.

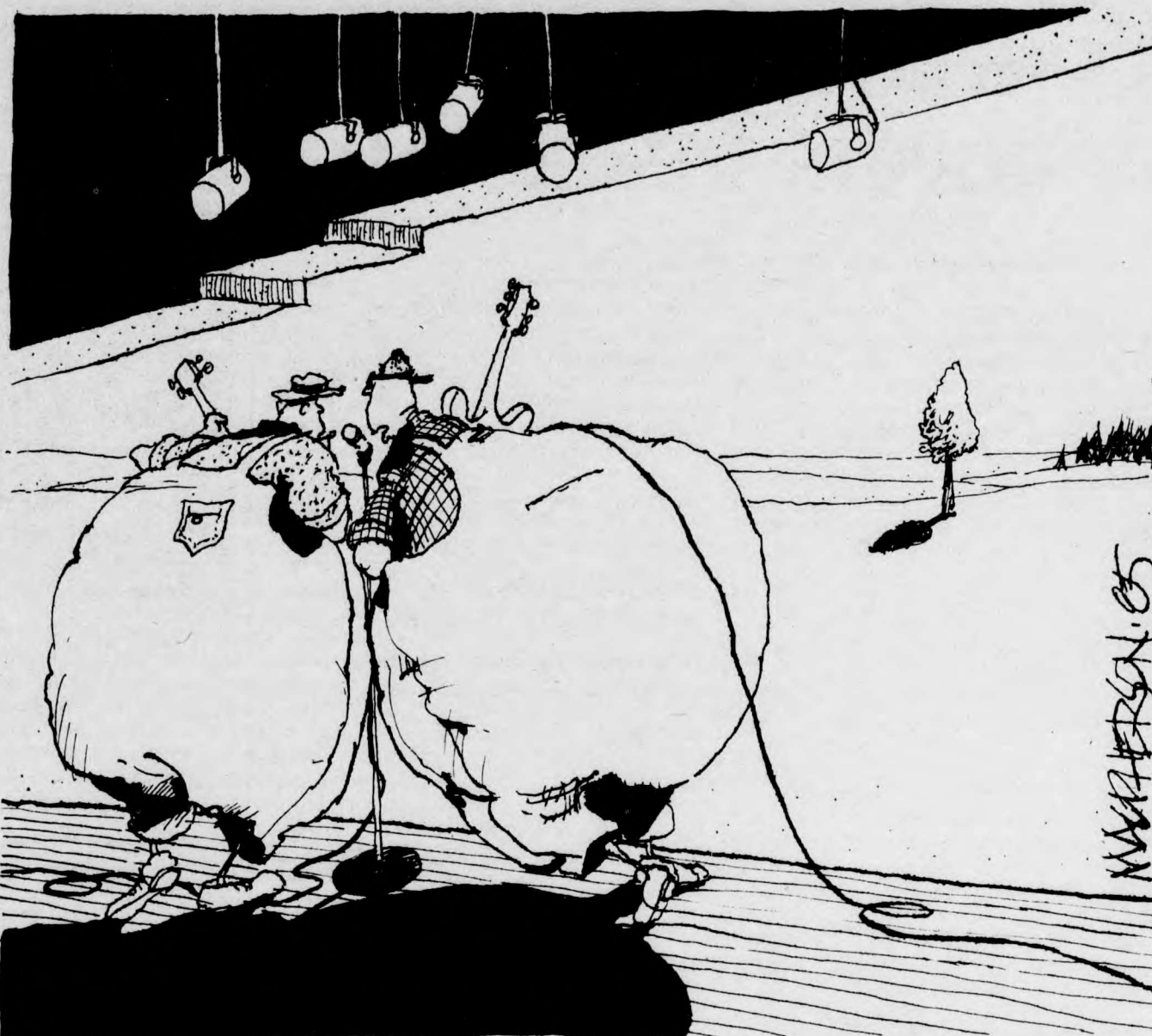
Before the detonation of the first atomic bomb in the New Mexico desert on July 16, 1946, pessimists long thought that human nature, well known for making war, would eventually come to no good. On that day it may be that we stumbled onto the brilliant and paradoxical means to our self-destruction.

Human nature, well known for dividing into strong differing opinions, then divided over the ethics of the Bomb. Some people, like J. Robert Oppenheimer, the mind behind its creation, believe that nuclear weapons should be made to go away. Oppenheimer felt so strongly that the Bomb was a mistake that he is recorded as having recalled a disturbing line from the Bhagavad Gita—"I am become death"—when he witnessed that first atomic blast.

Other people, like Edward Teller, who was a colleague of Oppenheimer's, and who went on to build the hydrogen bomb to outdo the Soviets' atomic bombs, argue for the need to develop increasingly more sophisticated weaponry—now the American "Star Wars" system.

Given our perpetual differences of opinion and the power now at our disposal, the future looks bleak. Today the destructive power of nuclear weapons is estimated equal to 20-billion tons of TNT. A single Trident submarine, armed with just a fraction of that, could level the major cities in the Northern Hemisphere. It seems reasonable to be pessimistic.

Then again, the Bomb is only 40 years old. Perhaps in time the enormity of its implications will be clearer. Maybe in 10 or 100 years people will find that cooperation, not competition, is the only practical choice we have left.



American farmers sing for their supper

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Olympic athletes turn back the clock

York University professor Marina Van der Merwe has built a reputation as one of the most demanding coaches in Canadian sports. She has taken the Canadian women's field hockey team from 16th in the world to make it one of the world's premier squads. Her reward for these efforts, just two years after being named Canada's amateur coach of the year, is dismissal from her job, largely because she was disliked by her senior players.

Shelly Andrews, a member of the senior team, illuminates part of the reasoning behind the players' dislike of Van der Merwe in a quote that appeared recently in the *Ottawa Citizen*: "Marina has high expectations and demands a lot; maybe it's time for a change."

The main reason for the team's success has become the reason for Van der Merwe's downfall—she demanded excellence from her athletes.

According to Jan Meyer, the CWFHA president, the team needed someone with a greater concern for the individual. But in any team sport an athlete has to relinquish most of his or her individual rights and adopt the goals of the team. This gaffe on the part of the board members clearly shows a serious lack of understanding of the nature of the sport.

By firing Van der Merwe, the executive board has awarded the selection process and training method to the athletes. This (in Van der Merwe's words) "bastardization of the coaching situation" has thrown the whole function of the coach into flux. If the athletes are

to make the coaching decisions, what then is the point of having a coach anyway?

By shifting some financial support to the junior team, Van der Merwe hoped to improve the overall quality of Canadian field hockey to justify the expensive (\$500,000) project for Sport Canada and keep one step ahead of other improving nations. In the process of following sound business practice and team strategy, Van der Merwe alienated the members of the senior team whose benefits (i.e. carded status) had been taken away and those who were fearful of the implications. These senior team members, selfishly looking out for their own interests, fought back the only way they knew how—they had Van der Merwe fired.

What the players have managed to do is to turn back the clock on the development of field hockey in Canada. By firing one of its most successful amateur coaches, doubts have been cast on the future success of Canada's Olympic teams.

This worrying example of the executive pandering to the athletes is an unfortunate precedent that has already been adopted by the senior members of the Canadian Volleyball team as who walked off the team and will return only if coach Paul Brasson is fired.

If executive boards continue to knuckle under to threats of this nature Canadian teams will soon find themselves in the same position they occupied just a few short years ago—comfortable in the celebrated mediocrity of 16th place.

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