

troops who search out the enemy and now suffer more than half of all casualties, light body armor, and telecommunications that allow foot soldiers to see and talk to their units.

Most important, Scales argues,

the Pentagon should pay infantrymen better. Compensation should reflect the risks soldiers face, not just their technical skills. Foot soldiers should also be allowed to retire earlier than other personnel. The infantry, he

says, should be manned by the military's best and brightest, because mature, intelligent, well-led, well-trained, and motivated soldiers are "far more effective in the close fight and far less likely to die."

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

The Court's 'Right' Track

THE SOURCE: "A Tale of Two Justices" by Linda Greenhouse, in *Green Bag*, Autumn 2007.

PRESIDENTS RICHARD M. Nixon and George W. Bush had similar goals in appointing Harry Blackmun and John Roberts to the U. S. Supreme Court more than 30 years apart: to move the Court away from what they considered egregious liberalism.

Their choices were Republican sons of the Midwest and brilliant graduates of Harvard College and Harvard Law School with almost unassailable legal credentials.

But Blackmun traversed the ideological spectrum to become the Court's most liberal member by the time he retired in 1994. Is a similar ideological journey in store for Chief Justice Roberts?

Substantial recent scholarship suggests that the answer is a resounding *no*, writes Linda Greenhouse, the Supreme Court correspondent for *The New York Times*. Modern-era Republican-appointed justices who came from outside Washington have drifted to

the left on the bench, while those who were already Washington insiders with service in the executive branch when they were appointed to the Court stayed put on the liberal-conservative spectrum. Chief Justice Earl Warren, considered a conservative when he moved from California after his appointment by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1953, issued some of the landmark liberal rulings of the 20th century, including *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). By contrast, Chief Justice William Rehnquist, elevated to the Court from service at high levels in the Justice Department, never veered from his conservative views.

Why? A move in midlife to such a prominent position in Washington,

Ideological drift is unlikely to infect Supreme Court justices such as John Roberts who have served in the executive branch.

an unfamiliar place and culture, is a profound personal disruption that fosters receptivity to new ideas and influences, Greenhouse thinks. Working in the executive branch in Washington, by contrast, is the "product of a process of self-selection and political dues paying that both reinforces and demonstrates loyalty to a set of principles."

So ideological drift is unlikely to infect the current chief justice, who is a veteran of the Justice Department, the White House, Washington private practice, and the District of Columbia federal courts, no matter how long he serves.

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Granny Goes Left

THE SOURCE: "Population Aging, Intracohort Aging, and Sociopolitical Attitudes" by Nicholas L. Danigelis, Melissa Hardy, and Stephen J. Cutler, in *American Sociological Review*, Oct. 2007.

WILL THE GRAYING OF AMERICA produce a more conservative electorate, resistant to liberal ideas about minorities, atheists, political dissenters, and gays? Not likely, say sociologists Nicholas L. Danigelis and Stephen J. Cutler, of the University of Vermont, and Melissa Hardy of Pennsylvania State University.

Americans over 60 are as likely as those under 40 to hold different views

on hot-button social issues from those of their predecessors at the same stage of life. More surprisingly, these older Americans' opinions are more likely have shifted left than right.

Opinion surveys of nationally representative samples of the English-speaking population show that the over-60 generation's responses to questions about minority groups, civil liberties, and privacy changed substantially between 1974 and 2004. The shifts occurred because of two factors—older members died and were replaced by new seniors, and beliefs gradually changed within the

surveyed group. The authors used complex statistical techniques to separate the two. Their findings concentrate on the changes that occurred because people changed their minds.

When asked questions about civil liberties for gays, members of the older generation are more likely to have altered their views—in the direction of increased tolerance—than those under 40. On the question of whether individual failings—such as a lack of motivation or ability to learn—are responsible for black Americans' problems, seniors are nearly three times more likely to have changed

their minds to disagree, blaming the gap instead on discrimination and poor education.

Older Americans haven't become more liberal in everything, or more liberal than the under-40s overall. Like their younger counterparts, they have grown more conservative in their view of premarital sex and divorce. And because so many older Americans started out with far more conservative views than those under 40, as a group they are hardly lefties. But the notion that age breeds conservatism is as outmoded as TV rabbit ears and maps of Upper Volta.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Annals of the Cubicle

THE SOURCE: "Birth of the Office" by Nikil Saval, in *n + I*, Winter 2008.

IF WILLIAM H. WHYTE WERE alive today to rewrite his 1956 book *The Organization Man*, he might well call it *Cubicle Being*. Nothing epitomizes the modern American office economy like the flimsy, fabric-covered partitions that enclose millions of employees throughout their working lives.

Ironically, cubicles started life as the Great Leap Forward of the white-collar world. An explosion of office jobs after 1945 had created battalions of jobholders doing new kinds of tasks—"knowledge work." But the bullpen layout of the 1950s workplace was a "wasteland," declared Robert Propst, an exuber-

ant art professor hired to head the research wing of Herman Miller, one of the biggest office furniture companies in the world. "It saps vitality, blocks talent, frustrates accomplishment. It is the daily scene of unfulfilled intentions and

failed effort." Propst set to work, writes Nikil Saval, assistant editor of *n + I*, to create flexible, open offices intended to promote communication among coworkers, flatten office hierarchies, foster individuality, and free what Saval calls the "ceaselessly inventive potential of the white-collar mind."

Propst's first design flopped when it debuted in 1965. Three years later came "Action Office II," designed for a smaller space, featur-



First free-range chickens. Then cows. Now a call from the cubicles for free-range workers?