

## POLITICS &amp; GOVERNMENT

**WHO IS THIS MAN?**

— who keeps stumping the panel on "What's My Line"?



*Al  
Capp*

*Hubert H. Humphrey was perhaps the epitome of the old-fashioned Vice President.*

*"Bears striking resemblance to highly articulate ex-Senator" said the caption of this affectionate Al Capp caricature.*

no special budget allotment.

Now that the Vice Presidency has become a substantive office, Light believes, presidential candidates should choose their running mates accordingly, not just on the basis of ticket balancing. The rest of us, he adds, will ("alas") have to abandon the old national pastime of ridiculing the Vice Presidency.

*Policy Experts  
Are Not Enough*

"A Public Policy Paradox" by Alice M. Rivlin, in *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* (Fall 1984), John Wiley and Sons, 605 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10158.

Making public policy was once part politics, part eenie, meenie, minie, mo. During the last 20 years, however, computer-equipped policy analysts have inundated elected officials with data intended to take the guesswork out of the process. Have they improved the quality of legislation?

Not by much, says Rivlin, founder and for eight years (1975–83) director of the Congressional Budget Office—but not for lack of trying. Nowadays most U.S. universities train policy analysts just as they do lawyers, doctors, and engineers; the graduates have fanned out across the country. They aid governors and legislators "not only in Sacramento and Albany, but also in Little Rock and Santa Fe." They have made their presence most felt in Washington: Congress, for example, employed only 6,791 staffers in 1960, 26,653 in 1982. "No debate on any serious issue—the budget deficits, the breeder reactor, the 600-ship

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Navy, nutrition programs for low-income mothers—takes place without somebody citing a public-policy study,” Rivlin writes.

She believes that such specialists, deployed throughout the government bureaucracies, have vastly improved the day-to-day management of programs. They can be instrumental in forging new policies. Without analysts’ computer print-outs, for example, the bipartisan presidential commission appointed in 1982 to fashion a rescue plan for the Social Security system would have been hard put to complete its work.

Policy analysis does have its limits. For one thing, the multitude of studies churned out by specialists, many written in maddeningly arcane jargon, simply overload legislators. Moreover, such analyses often reveal just how complicated a problem really is. And analysts’ prescriptions are always subject to error. It all adds up to frustration for the recipients. Too often, Rivlin says, they either succumb to paralysis or, going to the opposite extreme, plump for unrealistically simple solutions.

In her view, that is how Congress and the White House got the nation into today’s budgetary fix—cutting taxes and boosting spending despite ample warnings of trouble. No amount of policy analysis, Rivlin concludes, can overcome human reluctance to face facts.

### *The Best Things in Politics Are Free*

“The Power of the Primary Purse: Money in 1984” by Michael J. Robinson, in *Public Opinion* (Aug.-Sept. 1984), American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-9964.

Money makes the world go ’round, especially the political world. Or so the conventional wisdom would have it. In fact, argues Robinson, a George Washington University political scientist, in presidential election campaigns, “he who spends more does not necessarily do better.”

Robinson cites last year’s Democratic presidential primaries to support his argument. Walter Mondale, the biggest overall spender (\$18 million), did indeed finally claim the nomination. But things look different when individual primaries are inspected: The biggest spenders won in only 10 of 29 primary contests. In New Hampshire, for example, candidate John Glenn outspent both Gary Hart and Mondale but still came in third. Later, when the race had narrowed to just Hart and Mondale, the Colorado Senator’s upstart candidacy was fatally damaged by defeats in New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas—states where he outspent his rival by 2 to 1. (The April 3, 1984, New York race was the most expensive, costing Hart \$1.2 million and Mondale \$554,000.)

“Money did matter once upon a time,” says Robinson. But under the federal campaign spending ceilings imposed in 1974, no presidential candidate can bury his rivals with dollars. He also discounts the value of TV advertisements, which consume the lion’s share of most campaign war chests. The typical American sees some 10,000 TV ads every year and “is well beyond the point at which commercials could deter-