

EDITORIAL

MR. NONE-OF-THE-ABOVE WINS AGAIN

A few years ago, during a presidential election campaign, I saw an editorial cartoon that depicted a man standing outside a voting booth with a bemused expression on his face. Over the door to the booth was a quotation from Dante: "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here." Unfortunately for all of us, the grim jest is just as timely now. Once again, when we make our choice for president this year, the pick seems to be between Mr. Well-He's-Not-Actually-Awful and Mr. At-Least-He's-Not-The-Other-Guy. A candidate who can arouse truly positive and hopeful feelings in the electorate is once again not on the ballot.

Governor Dukakis bills himself as a new kind of Democrat—one who understands business, one who will be fiscally responsible, one who can produce a "miracle" for the country similar to the one he produced for Massachusetts. But a closer look reveals that the Massachusetts miracle may be as much blue smoke as economic recovery; and such recovery as has taken place has been financed by the largest tax increase in Massachusetts history. Having MIT and the hi-tech Mecca of Route 128 in Massachusetts didn't hurt any either.

Unfortunately, Mr. Dukakis' smug, puritanical moralizing, coupled with his ineffectual responses on some campaign issues, remind too many people of another governor with no experience in national government, Mr. Carter. I've been struck by the number of people from his own state and the rest of New England who speak with some skepticism about his attempts to shed this image and present the country with a "new" Michael Dukakis. The memories they have of the old one are not so pleasant, and they have doubts about how much of the "new" is real, and how much is convenient cosmetic change for the sake of the campaign.

The question on the minds of many people is, "Who really is Mike, and can he do any of the things he says he can?"

George Bush, Mr. Dukakis' Republican opponent, has his own problems with both his record and his image. He suffers from a bad case of foot-in-mouth disease and a tendency to lean too heavily on non-issues, like his opponent's opinion of the Pledge of Allegiance and his membership in the ACLU. There are many—some would say too many—unanswered questions about Mr. Bush's role in the Iran-Contra business and his switch from a critic of "voodoo economics" to a true believer in the Reagan brand of economic recovery financed by a huge national debt. His ability to choose advisors and team members who are not liabilities to him and at least some of his constituency is also open to question.

Perhaps more serious is a pervasive sense that we don't really know who Mr. Bush is either. A study of his record in government service shows us a possibly competent administrator and an expert at keeping a low profile. His performance has always been "adequate." Nothing awful has ever happened on his watch, but nothing outstandingly good either.



The answer to the Democrats' question, "Where was George?" seems to be, keeping his head down and staying out of trouble. That might be an admirable trait in a mid-level bureaucrat. It is not such a desirable position for the man who wants to be the leader of the free world. When sitting across the table from Mr. Gorbachev, arguably one of the most dynamic and brilliant Soviet leaders of the 20th century, Mr. Bush must be able to do better than "stay out of trouble."

This feeling of electoral malaise extends to the vice-presidential candidates as well. There may have been a time when we could say that the job didn't matter that much; that it was a ticket to four years of well-paid obscurity. Unfortunately, in a world increasingly dangerous and complex, being a heartbeat from the presidency is no casual matter. It does make a good deal of difference who holds that office—and neither of the vice-presidential candidates inspires the strong sense of security one would like to feel about the person who occupies it.

Lloyd Bentsen, Mr. Dukakis' running mate, is a tough, experienced Texas politician, but he is ideologically incompatible with the Massachusetts governor. One wonders if he could or would actually carry out Mr. Dukakis' programs if he had to assume the Presidency. Mr. Bentsen's personal and political finances also raise some troubling ethical questions. He is the owner of a legally required blind trust that watches his affairs with one eye open, and the inventor of the "Eggs McBentsen" breakfast, at which lobbyists, for a mere \$10,000, could share toast and coffee with him. Do we wish

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to give presidential access to the national treasury to this man? One has the nagging feeling, on studying Mr. Bentzen's record, that he could put himself first, Texas second and the country third — not exactly the priorities we'd like to see in a potential president.

Mr. Bush's running mate, Dan Quayle, seems much more a liability than an asset to the campaign and has a long way to go to achieve presidential stature. It's not his youth that's a problem; both Theodore Roosevelt and John Kennedy were within a year of his age when they assumed the presidency. It's the sense that he is untried, unaccomplished, inexperienced and, yes, immature.

Mr. Quayle is a charming and attractive man, apparently one of Nature's darlings. Thanks to a cushion of family wealth and influence, he has coasted easily to the right places at the right times to get into college and law school; to get the good jobs and make the right acquaintances; and to have the best chances without having to have the backup credentials demanded of others. He has also benefitted from the generosity of lobbyists, being ranked 15th in the Senate in the amount of money earned from honorariums for speeches, articles, travel expenses and lobbyists' golf outings. This puts him well above the amount earned by numerous more experienced, better known politicians — including his running mate and his two opponents, who take no such fees at all. For a man to whom much in life has come easily, the remark that he should not be judged harshly for a decision made when he was young and under pressure is both

disturbing and revealing. He needs to be reminded of the sign on the President's desk that says, "The buck stops here."

Fairness demands that we remind ourselves that an unpromising candidate does not necessarily make a bad president. Popular wisdom in 1860 was that the man from Illinois was a rube and an amateur, a good choice for the bosses because he could be easily manipulated. Abraham Lincoln proved popular wisdom wrong, and he is not the only man of less-than-obvious presidential stature to grow into the job. Maybe the country will be as fortunate again.

But the disturbing question remains, why is it that in the last twenty years, our national search for presidential timber too often seems to yield nothing but twigs? The people with real character, leadership ability and vision for the future don't seem to want to run. Those who do want to run seem less than the best.

I don't know what the answer is. Maybe there isn't one—or at least not a simple one. I do know that it is demoralizing for individual citizens and bad for a country to have election after election where the best candidate is "None-of-the-Above."

Michael Goldstein
Editor/Publisher

on the reverse side and mounting cutters on vertical extensions, the chariot-linkage system performs operations on the outside surfaces of shells, wheels and shafts. If the platform is tilted like a swash plate about a horizontal axis, JK for example, P can machine a toroidal surface.

The chariot rotating about a pole as in Figs 8 and 9 can be used

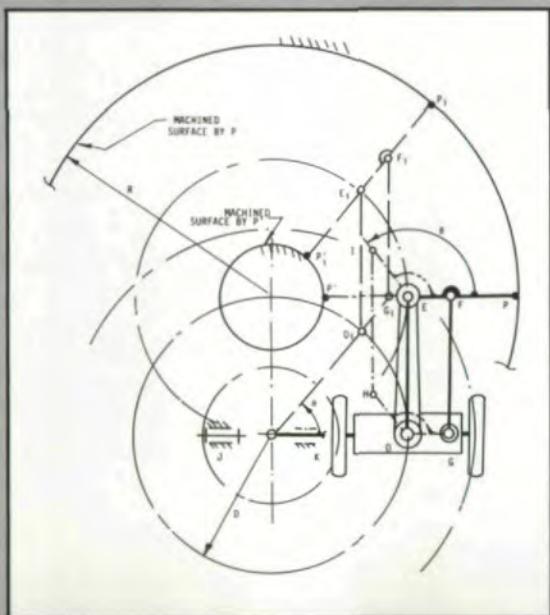


Fig. 9 – Chariot with parallelogram linkage loops performing tasks on cylindrical and toroidal surfaces.

in rotating roller coasters in which the passengers always look in one desired direction.

Conclusions

In the foregoing discussion, the simple equations of motion for the ever-puzzling constant-direction-pointing chariots are given. They can easily be designed for machining, robotics, roller coaster and instrumentation applications. The parameters that must be observed are as follows: $r = L/2$, $N_3 = N_4 = N_9 = N_{10}$, $N_1 = N_2 = N_{11} = N_{12}$. The differential gear train driven with gears 4 and 9 has train value of (-1). Although the bevel gear planetary gear train differential is shown in Fig. 5, one can replace it with the spur gear planetary gear train differentials shown in Figs. 3 and 4, where gears 4 and 9 in Fig. 5 are connected to the C and D shafts of the first and last gears of the spur gear differentials. Chain and crown gear driven planet arms are connected to the pointer. Chariots with parallelogram linkage loops and tilting platforms offer precision task performing systems on cylindrical and toroidal inner and outer surfaces. Many other industrial applications of the constant direction pointing chariots are limited only by the ingenuity of the designer.

References

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