

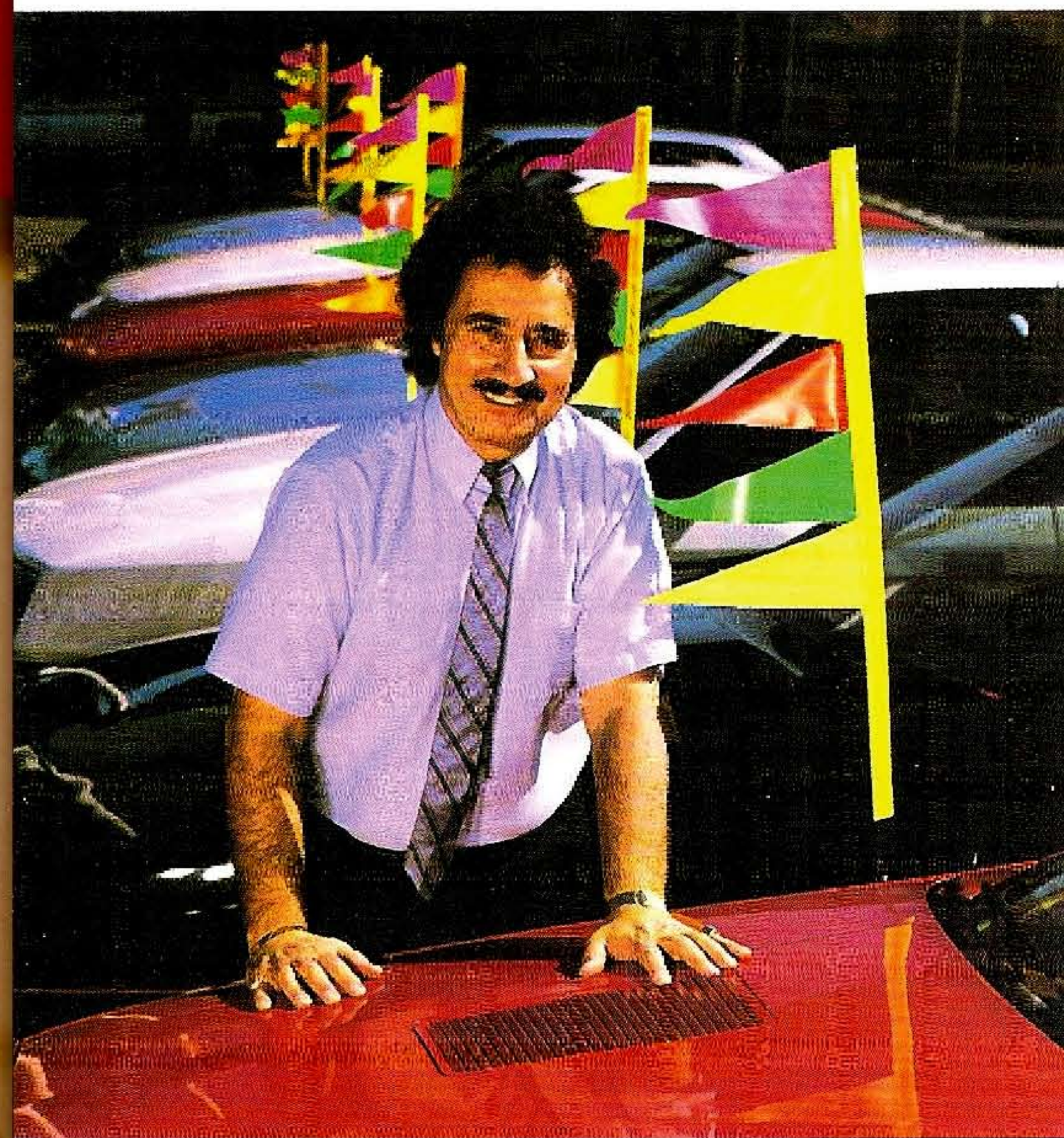
# FORTUNE

## WHY GREENSPAN IS BULLISH

**What the Fed Chief Thinks About Inflation, Recession, and the Dollar**



## SELLING



**Stan Smith of Del Amo Dodge in Torrance, California, is the nation's No. 1 Dodge salesman. Despite the higher prices of fancy foreign cars, Smith earns more than rivals at the biggest Porsche and BMW dealerships.**

years no one had ever come in and asked for a pontoon boat. I said, 'Well, I bet no one has come in for a haircut, either. But I've got a barber pole in my trunk, and I bet if you put it out, within two weeks someone will come in here and ask for a trim.' " Mason sold him a trailer-load of four pontoon boats on the spot and has sold him plenty more since.

**W**IN OR LOSE, Mason doesn't dare stop. On the road about two-thirds of the time, he covers around 75,000 miles annually. He is constantly cooking up pitches and promotional schemes to help his dealers—and thus himself—sell

more. Like the time he brought a man in a gorilla suit along to a trade show. Mason's theme: "People go ape about Charger boats." The monkey's finest moment came when he sat down at the bar and ordered a banana daiquiri.

Linda Anderson is a petite blonde who does just fine without an ape costume. She operates in Waldorf, Maryland, a semirural suburb with an overturned boat and a big barking dog in almost every backyard. Until February, Linda, 40, had never worked as anything but a housewife and a secretary, but now she is a Rexair Colonel Ace. Rexair Corp. is a private company headquartered in Michigan; in its lexicon a Colonel Ace is a person who sells 30 Rainbows in one month. A Rainbow is a vacuum cleaner, made of plastic, that sells for \$800. Linda prefers to describe it as a hydro-cleaning system made of Cyclocac, but it still sells for \$800. No matter what

you want to call it, this is an expensive machine.

Since February, Linda has sold 82 Rainbows and recruited ten new Rainbow salesmen. Her commissions so far: \$30,000. You're not impressed? Wait until you see Linda and her Rainbow in action.

Linda says that the Rainbow does everything but turn itself on and off, and before she's done with you, you are likely to believe her. The Rainbow uses a basin of water to catch dust, and it runs on a 1.3 horsepower motor that makes the machine sound like a supersonic jet taking off. The Rainbow, Linda says, will shampoo your carpet, suck up the water in your leaky basement, defrost your freezer, spray paint your shed. It's an air purifier, a vaporizer, a carpet shampooer. You can scrub your floor with it. Why, the Rainbow even *aromatizes!* Just pour a little perfume in the water, turn on the Rainbow, and suddenly your living room smells like apple blossoms.

I smelled it. I heard it. I saw it all in the living room of Nancy and Dennis Babcock; Nancy is an unemployed bookkeeper, Dennis a police detective. Linda has a big high-wattage lamp she brings with her on sales calls, and she smacks the rug, smacks the cushions on the living room couch, all the while shining her bright light as the air clouds up with dust. And the supersonic motor is whining and she's shouting, "Now see? See how much dust your vacuum cleaner left behind?" Then she takes the cushion and sticks it into a big plastic bag along with the Rainbow's hose. She turns on the machine and—whoosh!—the darn thing sucks so much air it flattens the cushion into a pancake. Then Linda shifts her Rainbow into reverse and the cushion reinflates—and when she smacks the cushion under the lamp this time, why, all the dust is gone!

This goes on for 2 1/4 hours.

Halfway through, Nancy and Dennis want to buy the Rainbow, but Linda makes them wait. Only after the full 2 1/4 hours of standing up, bending down, getting on her hands and knees, aromatizing, deodorizing, and vacuumizing—only then does Linda stop. Dennis is already paying off a \$42,000-plus mortgage, two car loans, and musical instruments for his two daughters. But he has been anxious to buy that Rainbow ever since Linda got to the part about using it to clean leaves out of the storm gutter and winterize your boat. There's not much left to say.

LINDA: "Now, would you like to know how you can get your Rainbow?"

DENNIS: "Where do I sign?"

Even after Dennis has signed up, Linda warns him and Nancy not to put the Rainbow into reverse when they scrub the floors, lest they end up with a fountain of dirty water spraying all over the kitchen. "I'm not just going to sell them an \$800 machine and walk away without making sure they know how it works," she says.

**T**HAT, BROADLY speaking, is what all supersalesmen do. For reasons that may spring from responsibility, professionalism, personal insecurity, or a simple wish to profit, they worry and worry about making you happy. Think of that the next time the phone rings or the door opens and you are confronted with—egad!—another salesman. Show some respect. This might be someone with whom you could have a mutually satisfying relationship, and from whom you could learn something. If you are lucky enough to hear Dick Greene's broad New England vowels or Roy Wagner's deft patter on the other end of the line, or see Linda Anderson and her Rainbow waiting to cross your threshold, take a deep breath: You are in the presence of greatness. **E**



**D**OUSE THE lights! Grab your flak jacket! You are about to be bombed and strafed again:

*"Hi, I'm calling from Interstate Stock Swindles with an investment idea that has proved to be of great interest to people like yourself. Now, do you have \$25,000 available to invest? Oh. Well, have you got \$10,000?"*

*"Good afternoon, Madam. I'm from Ohno Tinmen Inc. How would you like to make your home a maintenance-free home?"*

*"What do you mean you don't have life insurance? So what if you're only 23? So what if you're not married? I'm tellin' you, boy, you are still gonna die. And if you go leavin' a pregnant girlfriend, you go leavin' one hell of a mess."*

This is what you dread. The nightmare voice on the telephone that won't release you even after you've explained that you really *must* go: Your spouse is dividing up the community property with an ax. Maybe you think such boorish bull-doggedness is what salesmanship is all about. If so, I am happy to report that you're profoundly mistaken.

I have scoured the land in search of America's very best salesmen. Not necessarily the ones with the biggest incomes—as Wall Street's thick crowd of boy millionaires demonstrates, megabuck earnings are no sure measure of sales skill. Some of the best salesmen in this country—like Linda Anderson, the accomplished woman at right—work for what some might call peanuts. My quest was for the true masters of the selling art, people who go belly-to-belly with their customers day after day and brush off buyer resistance as if it were lint. I have found them, I have looked them in the eye, and I can tell you flat out that the most effective salesmen—the men and women who consistently outsell their industry

REPORTER ASSOCIATES *Stephen J. Madden and Lori Lesser*

rivals—turn out to be strikingly ethical and considerate people. To this age of one-minute marriages and consumer loyalties measured in milliseconds, the supersalesmen bring good news: Relationships can still endure. And relationships are what it's all about.

Trust me.

Both parties are satisfied and no one gets hurt.

Virtuoso vendors deserve to rank among a corporation's most valuable assets. Always in demand, they are easy to spot, hard to hire, and almost impossible to replicate through conventional training. If only he could, some ambitious manager

# AMERICA'S BEST SALESMEN

**They want you to be happy. They know how to make you like them. If you're both lucky, you'll know each other a long time. ■ BY MONCI JO WILLIAMS**

Salesmanship is the cutting edge of commerce. Without it, capitalism would be minimalism; the mighty FORTUNE 500 might never have grown beyond a scrawny FORTUNE Five. An ancient, eternally mysterious skill, it somehow transforms inventories into shipments and costs into profits. Salesmanship is more art than science: the art of turning human relationships to advantage. Reassuringly, its most expert practitioners depend on relationships that last. According to the supersalesmen I've met, good selling is a lot like good sex as defined by Dr. Ruth:

would surely go in through the supersalesman's ear with a small syringe, extracting a sample of bioessence for cloning in a petri dish. Such feats of genetic engineering being still a few years away, anxious companies spend millions of dollars on pricey consultants who try to dismantle the supersalesman's inner workings the way

**More captivating than a Broadway show, Linda Anderson demonstrates the \$800 Rainbow vacuum cleaner to the Fowler family in Mechanicsville, Maryland.**



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