

PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

NEW YORK—What will be the role of children and youth in an aging society and in an increasingly childless one? Will they get better or worse schooling and services as their numbers diminish? Will parents and taxpayers be more generous toward the fewer children there are, or will the needs of young people be seen increasingly to conflict with adult personal goals?

These are some of the questions posed for the 1980s and 1990s by Alan Pifer, president of Carnegie Corporation of New York, in his essay entitled "Perceptions of Childhood and Youth," appearing in the foundations's 1978 annual report.

The essay explores the impact of recent demographic, economic, and social changes in American life on emerging public attitudes toward the young. It states that, among other "deep and far-reaching" developments, the dramatic fall in the birthrate following the baby boom of the 1950s is serving to shift public and private attention away from children toward adults.

Since 1970, the population under age 14 has shrunk by 6.4 million, while that of 25-to-34 year-olds has swelled by 7.9 million. "One would think," comments Pifer, "that in the face of the steady decline in the numbers of young people being born today, we would be more favorably disposed to do our best by those we have. The irony is that just the opposite seems to be the case: as the numbers have declined, public attitudes have turned to indifference or even outright antagonism."

As evidence of changing attitudes, Pifer cites the widespread exclusion of families with children from rental housing, the growth of single life styles, the reluctance of many parents to stint themselves on behalf of children, the "massive shift that has already taken place in the allocation of public spending toward the elderly," and mounting taxpayer opposition to spending on the schools and on aid with dependent children.

Other evidence, he says, can be found in erosion of the political base for the social programs of the 1960s, so many of which were designed to benefit children, and in the lackluster performance by government in pressing for children's legislation.

The consequences of ignoring the needs of children could be serious, he suggests, for "Every child alive today or born in the years just ahead...will be a scarce resource and a precious asset as an adult in the early part of the next century," adding, "At that time, the nation's standard of living, its capacity to defend itself—perhaps its very viability as a nation—will be almost wholly dependent on the small contingent of men and women who are today's children."

The start of the next century will be a time of "unprecedented opportunity combined with maximum responsibility" for young adults, ac-

ording to Pifer. Not only will they have to produce the nation's cadres of professional, administrative, technical, and skilled workers, but they will have to ensure the well-being of the generation behind them as well as provide assistance to the 15 to 20 percent of the population of elderly people the nation will have by then.

Much of this responsibility, he points out, will fall upon members of minority groups, particularly Blacks and Hispanics, who are expected to make up a larger percentage of the population by then.

In calling for measures to prepare today's children for the world they will face tomorrow, Pifer asks those "who are concerned about children" to "place less emphasis on an appeal to the nation's finer instincts—the perception of young people as a special part of humanity deserving of adult love, protection, and nurturing—and more emphasis on a frank appeal to adult self-interest based on demographic considerations."

Such an approach, he suggests, "would say that we must invest in children now to assure our own well-being as elderly people a few decades hence."

While agreeing that such an argument might seem "cynical and unworthy of us as a people with a great humanitarian tradition," it would be justified "provided it directs public attention back to the needs of children and serves thereby to make their lives happier and more fruitful."

Pifer concludes by saying, "No nation, and especially not this one at this stage in its history, can afford to neglect its children. Whatever importance we attach as a people to expenditure on armaments, to programs for old Americans, to maintaining high levels of consumption and to a hundred other purposes, the welfare of children has to be our highest priority. Not only are they our future security, but their dreams and ideals can provide a much-needed renaissance of spirit in what is becoming an aging, tired, and disillusioned society. In the end the only thing we have is our young people. If we fail them, all else is in vain."

Related to demographic trends, Pifer writes, are other changes that are helping create problems for children and families, including:

- * Continued high inflation and sluggish economic growth, which have increased financial pressures on the family, undermined confidence in the economy, and made many Americans fearful of the future.

- * The increased cost of raising children, to the point today that a family with an annual income of \$10,000 must spend more than \$50,000 to raise a child to the age of 18, not including savings set aside for higher education.

- * The breakup of traditional family patterns, including the high divorce rate, numerous unmarried

couples living together, an increased percentage of children born to unmarried women, and such a growth in single-parent families headed by women that they now comprise one out of every five families.

- * The dramatic rise in the labor force participation of women with young children.

- * The growth of the two-worker family, serving to widen drastically the income disparity between this group and single-worker or single-parent families.

- * A radical shift in social values and conventions, including the appearance of self-centered, inward-turning attitudes among the more affluent and a growing tendency among Americans generally to live for the present rather than defer immediate gratification in hopes of ensuring a better future for themselves and their children.

The problems of the young, which show up in the high rates of juvenile crime, drug and alcohol use, suicide, academic failure and unemployment among youth, and in the widespread abuse and neglect of children and other symptoms of troubled family life, are exacerbated by the lack of adequate public policy response to changing family patterns, according to Pifer.

Targets of action, he states, are reform of a welfare system that presently "humiliates and demoralizes the so-called beneficiaries yet penalizes their efforts and dulls their desire to work themselves out of their predicament."

Needing help almost as much as families on public assistance, he says, are "those single-parent or single-worker families which do not live below the official poverty line but which, nonetheless, cannot afford certain necessities such as decent housing, adequate health care, and a nutritious diet."

For working women, especially those heading families, Pifer calls for efforts to break down the sex division of labor that "prevents many qualified women from gaining access to the better-paying jobs with more opportunity for advancement—jobs that traditionally have been available only to men." These need to be matched by more nontraditional vocational training opportunities for women. Pifer also urges the wider provision of maternity and paternity leave and more flexible work scheduling to allow parents to combine work and family life with greater ease.

Lack of adequate child care arrangements is another major problem for single working parents and two-worker families. The issue is "not whether women should work but how to make this possible with the least harmful consequences for children," Pifer emphasizes. The nation's institutions, "from government to employers to the family itself, simply have to recognize the permanently changed circumstances under which children are growing up today and make the necessary

adjustments."

In addition, Pifer stresses the need for renewed efforts and reforms aimed both at raising the school achievement levels of educationally disadvantaged children and keeping them in school. "No longer can the educational system be allowed to function as if substantial numbers of youngsters can be considered expendable."

Finally, Pifer calls on women, "joined by their husbands, to organize and work for reforms that would ease pressures on the family." Such efforts "could go a long way toward solving some of the problems of children that are caused by anachronistic assumptions about the nature of the family life today."

During the year ended September 30, 1978, the trustees of Carnegie Corporation appropriated \$12,166,856 for grants. This figure includes \$877,000 for the International Program. The Corporation made a total of 94 grants or appropriations, including 30 to schools, colleges, and universities and 64 to other organizations. Three appropriations were made for programs administered by the officers.

The charter of the Corporation provides that all funds are to be used for "the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding." Grants must be broadly educational in nature but are not necessarily limited to the formal educational system or to educational institutions. The foundation has made it a policy to select a few areas in which to concentrate its grants over a period of years. Currently these areas fall under the headings of *higher education, early childhood, elementary and secondary education, social justice, and the International Program.*

Fire Burns Smokehouse Again; Inspector Smith Gives Prevention Hints

By Pat Bryant

It pays to keep an eye on the smoke house, Mrs. Henrietta Stanback learned last weekend. Her smoke house, filled with hams and bacon, caught fire and cooked the expensive meats before Mrs. Stanback was ready to serve them. Homeland Avenue again was with reasonable excitement.

Ten public safety officers zoomed onto the usually quiet street, attached their hoses, and after a brief delay with their new pumper truck, began dousing with water the flames that could be seen for several blocks.

As the fire smothered, the aroma of cured pork filled the air. An inquisitive public safety officer nosed into the wood framed smoked house and found the goodies.

Fire losses included blistered paint on Mrs. Stanback's house and an oil storage tank, plus ruin of the large smoke house, and the six hams and bacon. One fireman said that he had known fire to burn Mrs. Stanback's smoke house on two previous occasions.

Fire Prevention Inspector, Milton Smith gave THE CAROLINA TIMES some helpful hints to homemakers who want to cure meat and diminish the possibilities of fire.

First, he says, the structure should be earthen. A pit should be dug and reinforced with stone wall. Only hams and bacon should be hung in the structure, and chips should be used for fuel. The structure should be inspected regularly, and watchful eye should be kept, and a garden hose should be handy.

Most important, Smith is a free inspector from the City's Fire Prevention Department. During the fire, Smith and other inspectors can be reached at 683-4233.

At the Stanback house, the floor was wood, smoldering wood should have been kept galvanized tub.

You don't have to burn your neighbor's copy. THE CAROLINA TIMES Call 682-2913

Powerful anti-itching drug you can use without a prescription.

Stop itching fast of your face, neck, chest, vaginal, rectal, and other conditions. Doctors find severe itching can be relieved with a special drug. Now get this anti-itching ingredient with no prescription in BICOZENE®. Use as directed. The medically proven cream for itching. BICOZENE

City Department Heads' Residences Requested; Report Due By June

by Pat Bryant

A proposal to make the city workforce more reflective of Durham's population surfaced last week at a meeting of the City Council Finance Committee. If the proposal is enacted, top level administrators, department heads, and division heads, would be required to live within the city's limits. The proposal was referred to the City Manager for study and concurrence by the City Attorney's office. A report is due by June 7.

C.D. Hunt, representing the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People presented the proposal which would require current top level administrators to become residents after six months, and future administrators within two months. Similar policies have been enacted in Charlotte and Richmond, Va.

City Councilman William Smith asked for copies of the Charlotte and Richmond ordinances. "I am in favor of it in principle, and was last year when it came up", an instance when former City Councilman Howard Harris suggested that all city employees be required to reside in the city limits.

However, City Manager

Dean Hunter, who the council asked to make the report, questioned distinguishing between top level employees and lower level workers as a stipulation which would cause some constitutional problems. Lower level employees who buy homes outside the city and then move up to higher administrative jobs would experience some hardships, said Hunter.

Although at the helm of city government for more than seven months, Hunter and his family officially reside in Kentucky, where he last worked. He hasn't been able to find a

suitable house, according to published reports.

Distinction between policy makers and administrators doesn't bother Councilman Margaret Keller, remarked that "a person who holds a high position in the community can indicate commensurate to the community residency."

Supporting the proposal, Sam Reed, president of the Durham Chapter of the National Council of Citizens, raised eyebrows calling for a redefinition of "residence."

Continued on page 19



DURHAM, N.C.

Antique Show And Sale

MAY 17 - 19, 1979

THURSDAY thru SATURDAY

SOUTH SQUARE MALL

DEALERS IN QUALITY ANTIQUES FROM THROUGHOUT THE EASTERN AND MIDWESTERN STATES

FREE ADMISSION FREE PARKING

A Jeff Stewart Promotion

SOUTH SQUARE MALL

CHAPEL HILL BLVD & ROUTE 15-501, DURHAM

BELK-LEGGETT • J.C. PENNEY • MONTGOMERY WARD PLUS 110 OTHER FINE STORES & SERVICES

OPEN MONDAY THRU SATURDAY 10 AM TO 9 PM Some Stores Open Sundays 1-6

Lauch Henry helped find the missing ingredient to educate minority engineers. Money.

Lauchland Henry is a teacher. And a scientist. And an engineer. He's genuinely concerned about other people. And he has expressed some of that concern in his participation with the National Fund for Minority Engineering Students.

The fund is a non-profit organization attempting to increase the number of Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, Mexican-Americans and American Indians enrolled in engineering schools.

These under-represented minorities constitute a rich untapped resource to help fill the growing need for engineers, a need that is expected to continue through the mid-1980's.

IBM's social leave program enabled Dr. Henry to take a year's leave to assist the fund. And IBM continued to pay him his full salary.

The National Fund for Minority Engineering Students is a very worthwhile program. We think so. Lauchland Henry thinks so. But most important of all, lots of minority engineering students enrolled at colleges and universities all over the country think so. **IBM**

