

Editorials & Comments

Reflections And Perspectives

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.
Executive Editor

As the Bicentennial reached its climax on July 4, many Americans glorified our past, some questioned it, a few ignored it, and still fewer condemned it. Nevertheless, whatever our choice in considering these past 200 years and now that the hoopla and commercialization of the celebration has reached its peak, it appears time for all Americans to reflect and attempt to put in perspective these 200 years of the world's nearest sustaining democracy.

As we reflect on the past we must begin by saluting our Founding Fathers, men who wrote a Constitution that has endured longer than any other in the world's youngest democracy.

We must recognize too that it has been the strength of the Constitution which has enabled black men to elevate themselves from slavery to positions of power, yet, with the realization that complete equality is not yet theirs.

We must recognize further, that with all of its shortcomings, America is nevertheless the greatest land of opportunity to have existed in the

annals of human history.

As significant as these reflections are in terms of what they symbolize for the nation, it is even more significant that we view them from a perspective for a look to the future.

Watergate, landing on the moon, and Martin Luther King appear to symbolize America of the past decade - in many ways the 20th century and more, clearly than anything else, - should remind us of what the future can and should hold for our nation.

Again, because of our Constitution, and in spite of the frailties of men, we survived Watergate. In addition, while we mastered the science of outer-space, we failed to grasp fully the ethics of the teachings of Martin Luther King.

Therefore, as a nation looking toward its 300th birthday we should, as Vernon E. Jordan has reminded us, "re-examine the ideals that led to the founding of this nation and the gap between those ideals and the reality of today. And (this year) should be a time of national debate to formulate goals for the next century."

To do less would be to jeopardize our chance to have a Tricentennial.

Courts Abandon Blacks

Last week the U.S. Supreme Court imposed strict limitations on the power of federal judges to make year-to-year changes in school desegregation orders.

By a six to two vote - Justices Marshall and Brennan the dissenters - the High Court said that once school officials have complied with the "affirmative duty to desegregate" its school system the authority of the courts is over.

The majority opinion of the Supreme Court said that once a satisfactory desegregation plan has been approved, the court has "fully performed its function of providing the remedy for previous racially discriminatory attendance patterns."

The POST takes strong exception to this decision. The Court, in our opinion, has focused its attention only on "previous" racial discrimination and has totally ignored the fact of present and future shifting population patterns that will eventually result in re-segregating the schools. The Court obviously disallowed the fact that only in cases where re-segregation is caused by some official actions can federal judges intervene.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board Chairman William E. Poe confirmed the POST's reason for opposing the High Court's decision. He said the Supreme Court's ruling could have "a tremendous impact down the road" on the local schools. He said further that the ruling "relieves the pressure" on the school board to avoid letting some schools become re-segregated.

We believe the Supreme Court decision to be wrong for two very

simple but factual reasons. First, the Court's concern with only "previous" racial discrimination incorrectly implies and assumes that the forces opposed to integrated

schools have ceased to exist and function. Secondly, the Court has left for future legal consideration the fact that most of the shifting population housing patterns that will result in re-segregating the schools are

caused by both official and unofficial actions. We hope that the Court will find it wise and necessary to consider and act on these points in the very near future.

Something

On Your Mind?

Something on your mind is the name of a column devoted to our readers of this newspaper-as long as it relates in some way to young people, regardless of age.

It will be written by you and about whatever is on your mind!

So, if you have something to say...WRITE ON!

Some subjects that may be of special interest to you are: Drugs, Generation Gaps, Welfare, Gangs, School, Going Steady, Police Revolution, Whites, Blacks, Integration, Busing, Draft, God, Negro churches, etc.



REPORT FROM Washington

Government Procedures For Using A Ladder

By Jim Martin, 9th District Congressman

With the help of the federal government we now know how to properly build and use a ladder. That's right, a ladder. For those who aren't sure what a ladder is, the definition can now be found in the Federal Register, that helpful publication of rules and regulations issued each day in Washington. Last year, the Register helped us by publishing 60,000 pages of rules and regulations and complicated definitions generated by government agencies.

One of the latest helpful projects of the government has been the issuance of 72 pages of regulations defining a ladder, how it is to be constructed and what weight it should be able to bear. If it is a wooden ladder, the Register carefully defines "knots, as found on trees, and tells you how many and how large they can be in the struts of a ladder.

It is a wonder how we ever managed before

these regulations were promulgated by OSHA, the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration. OSHA, you may recall from earlier Washington Reports, is charged with overseeing worker safety and health in business and industry. That's a good objective, certainly. I realize that there are areas of work where OSHA is justified in setting guidelines for employee safety, but I think the taxpayers' money could be better spent than having a group of OSHA employees sitting around drawing up regulations defining a ladder and its use, and deciding how to define a knot on a slab of wood.

OSHA left no stone unturned in describing the functions of a ladder, and how it is to be stored, and what to do if it becomes damaged. They have taken 72 pages in the Federal Register to tell us that "a ladder is an appliance usually consisting of 2 siderails joined at regular intervals by cross-

pieces called steps, rungs, or cleats on which a person may step in ascending or descending." Then there are definitions of single ladders, step ladders, extension ladders and a catchall special purpose ladder. If you own a metal ladder, the Federal Register dictates that "all metal parts shall be made of aluminum, steel, wrought iron, malleable iron, or other material adequate in strength for the purpose intended." In other words, don't use gold, lead, copper or mercury. In case you do not know how to use a ladder, the regulations say, "when ascending or descending, the user should face the ladder." Incidentally, these regulations make no provision for the bad luck that follows if you walk under a ladder.

No self-respecting house painter will want to be without the ladder section of the Federal Register.

All of this may seem a little ridiculous to you, but your tax dollars are paying for such trivia.

...DOWN TO BUSINESS

One Monopoly That Works

For a number of months, Black Americans have been reading about overbearing regulatory commissions, and how this country could function better with less regulation, not more. In 1976, the anti-Washington, anti-big government rhetoric has grown louder and louder.

One area, however, where pervasive government regulation has helped the American people is being threatened by regulatory "experiments" contrary to the public interest. That area is telephone service. While we've all had our "horror stories" about a call that didn't go through the first time or a call billed to Taiwan when we weren't even home, there's no doubt in my mind that telephone service in the United States is the best in the world.



Now, these self-serving Washington bureaucrats are trying to change that. In the name of what they call "competition", they are in fact putting policies into effect that will raise the cost of telephone service for the vast majority of Americans while reduction costs for privileged few.

Many Americans-myself included-have taken telephone service for granted because day after day, it is there when we need it-and at reasonable cost. But the Federal Communications Commission, through its recent decisions, has opened my eyes to the danger inherent in tampering with a system that has worked and is working well.

Let's look at the record. In the early 1900's literally thousands of telephone companies sprang up, resulting, in some cases, in three or four companies in a single town. If you wanted to talk to everyone, you needed three or four telephones in your home or business. In addition, this wasteful, costly duplication of facilities and service resulted in much higher prices for telephone service.

But a series of wise decisions on the state and federal levels eliminated these problems by establishing telephone service as a regulated "natural" monopoly with regulators replacing competition. The goal: the widest availability of high-quality communications service at the lowest cost to the entire public. That is, one company in a given area would provide quality telephone service at a price virtually everyone could afford. In return, that company's profits would be limited to a reasonable amount.

The result? More than 95 percent of all people in the United States have telephone service, and while the cost of most things has skyrocketed over the years, telephone charges to customers have risen at a much lower pace.

But competition, not monopoly, has been the "American Way" for 200 years. How can a monopoly be in your interest?

Cyrus J. Colter, Professor of African-American Studies at Northwestern University, is an attorney and, for 22 years, was a commissioner on the Illinois Commerce Commission, which regulates telephone service. In testimony before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Antitrust, Professor Colter addressed the question of monopoly versus competition.

Now though, it looks as if our legislators in Washington are waking up to the problem.

In my next column, we'll look at how Barbara Jordan and others are getting down to business to save the nation's telephone service.

as i see it

The Problems With Self Pace Education

By Gerald O. Johnson
Post Staff Writer

There is a new concept in educating our youth. This concept is termed "Self Pace Education". It differs from conventional teaching in several aspects.

Self pace advocates theorize that their method emphasizes a student learning whereas the conventional method emphasizes a teacher teaching.

Self pace works like this. A teacher prepares a list of objectives for his course. The objectives are no more than the things a student should know upon satisfactorily completing the course. The course is then divided into modules. Modules are units of instruction covering material which should meet one or two of the objectives.

The student is given modules. The teacher lectures from the modules and students can study the modules on his own time. After a given period of time, a student is evaluated on how well he met the objectives of the course.

If his evaluation is good he is

moved on to the next module. If his evaluation is poor he has to repeat that module. The student is allowed to continue at his own pace on a particular module until he meets the objectives of the course.

If the term ends before a student completes all the modules of a course, he is given a grade of "I" for incomplete. He can remain in a course and attempt completing modules for up to 4 terms at most schools. Different schools have different time limits as to when a student must complete a course. A grade of "F" for failure is given if a student hasn't completed all the modules after the given time limit.

The method looks good on paper but in reality, it stinks! The problems that the self pace method incurs are too numerous.

One problem is that most teachers are conventional by nature and they bumble the self pace method so bad it is ridiculous.

Probably the most critical problem is the management of



such a program. Imagine, if you will, having 50 or so students in a course all moving at different paces. Unlike the conventional method where a teacher prepared for all students in a course once, the teacher in self pace must prepare for every module she has a student in at that time. It is like having different classes in one. To compound this problem, you will have students starting with one module and within a term moving on to other modules. Multiply

this transition by the number of students in that course and you have a mess.

The management is the key to self pace yet all self pace programs that I have witnessed are poorly managed. The problem again is that teachers are conventional by nature.

Still other problems with self pace is that it is not characteristic to our society. It tends to make students lazy. It does nothing to motivate learning, and it de-emphasizes competition.

Our society being of a capitalistic nature is based on competition. Since jobs are the basis for education in our society (something that I don't concur with either) we should educate people to be able to do jobs in our society. Since I don't know of any jobs that is self paced, it is fundamentally wrong for education to be self paced.

Advocates of self pace also like to emphasize the fact that it gives diversification within a course. Since all students entering a course are from different learning experienc-

es, self pace will allow faster learners to move while slower learners are bored from being left behind.

It is theorized that conventional education moves too slow for the fast learners and too fast for the slow learners. Conventional education is geared for the average learner. Self pace supposedly reaches more students.

This I will agree with to a point. Also, this is the only merit for self pace instruction. But the problems incurred by a self pace program are a too high a price to pay for that merit.

Moreover, there is no concrete evidence to prove self pace instruction is better than conventional instruction. The advocates of self pace have no current means of evaluating the self pace method as compared to conventional methods.

The conventional method of teaching with a tutorial program for the slow and additional assignments for the fast learners is still in my opinion the best teaching method.

With a well prepared course plan outlining the objectives of the course, the conventional method offers far more than the self pace could ever offer.

There is a place for self pace programs, however. Students who have to take remedial courses without credit could be allowed to take self pace courses. Since the course would be given for no credit, the student could be allowed to study at his own pace. Since most students are in a hurry to graduate they would be motivated to complete the self pace so that they could go on to a course with credit.

I will say that any method of teaching is only as proficient as the teacher.

The faults that are inherent with the conventional way of teaching is not a fault with the method but rather a fault with the teacher.

Few teachers, especially at the college level, prepare properly for a course. With proper planning and an understanding of the subject a conventional way of teaching is a very effective tool.

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