

EDITORIALS

Press Gives What Readers Want?

Twenty percent of the nation's adults deeply distrust the media, according to a recently completed study sponsored by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE).

The study revealed, too, that three-fourths of American adults question the credibility of newspapers and television news reporting and that public skepticism arises largely from what the study called "media explosion."

Delivered at ASNE's annual convention in Washington, D.C., the study points out that nearly two-thirds of the 1,600 respondents agreed that "the press often takes advantage of victims' circumstances who are ordinary people" - particularly from the standpoint of invading the privacy of victims of tragedy or disaster.

The study conclusion, in part, urged newspapers to "enhance their role as a populist institution" so the public will develop an attitude and feeling of "my newspaper" instead of "that newspaper" in order to regain their position as a "peoples' advocate."

The irony of the study's findings is that it is the reading and news viewing appetite and desires of the nation's adults that primarily influences and determines what newspapers print and what television news shows present. It is in fact the somewhat sadistic and nosy attitude of most American news readers and viewers that lead newspapers and television news reports to feature stories on tragedy, misfortune and petty gossip about the personal lives and lifestyles of famous people.

Thus, on any given day most news feature stories deal with the national deficit, bank failures, war or the threat of war somewhere, major tragedy and death such as from forest fires and the Union Carbide gas leak in India. While these may all be "news worthy" there is too much emphasis on the misfortune that befalls people. In this regard, too, most people don't mind the news media taking advantage of the other guy - just not me. For example, in the "nosy" category, it was bad enough that

just because Chris Washburn happened to be an N.C. University basketball player, much news copy was made over his theft of another student's stereo equipment. Worst yet, his very low college entrance board score was included in the new stories, yet it was in no way related to the criminal charge against the young man.

Media Explosion

The American adults' news appetite for gossip is very evident by the major sales and popularity of such gossip newspapers as the Inquirer and the Star. It takes little reading of stories in such news accounts to determine the shallowness of such stories

that are often developed from totally misleading captions under a single picture.

The relatively low rating of news reporters and newspaper editors with regard to honesty and ethical standards arise from the sometimes unfortunate consequences of the competition in news reporting. Too often, the haste to be first in releasing a news story leads to the so-called "media explosion" in which the public gets conflicting news reports. For example, when presidential press secretary Jim Brady was shot during the attempt on President Reagan's life a few years ago early news

reports were that Mr. Brady had been killed. This occurred because reporters were competing to be first in releasing their stories and, therefore, did not fully research the facts. This is a justifiable criticism of the media because false or incorrect information about people or events can often result in the same consequences as if the reports were accurate.

Except for "media explosion" competitive news reporting factors which justifiably generates some criticism, we believe that David Lawrence Jr., chairman of the ASNE's credibility committee, spoke truthfully when he told his convention colleagues "some good journalists would argue that all this talk about credibility does our craft no good and maybe some damage." We agree for the reasons we gave about the hunger newspaper readers and television news viewers have an appetite and desire for.

Adult Appetite

The news reporting industry is in part a victim of its collective success in providing news that people want to read, see and hear about and yet often having to face the criticism of individuals or groups who at times are reported on unfavorably.

We certainly don't want to leave the impression that the news media never offers any good news or happy ending stories. Leaving the possible ethical questions aside, recent news reports on heart transplants, cancer research and longer life expectancy are positive and should offer some sense of happiness.

Undoubtedly, too, when a news story of a family facing hunger - loss of a loved one or job - often brings response of support from many sources. This reminds us all that even in our sadistic and nosy madness we are a nation of somewhat compassionate, loving people.

For this reason, we are certain that with all and whatever shortcomings the news reporting industry has, and presumed credibility notwithstanding, a free, less than perfect press is better than any form of a regulated or suppressed news media. Under the latter the study referred to in this editorial would have never been allowed to be developed.

From Capitol Hill

Reagan Fighting Rights Battle All Over Again!

By Alfreda L. Madison
Special To The Post

The Reagan Administration, in its accommodation to the Heritage Foundation - to make getting rid of civil rights a top priority, is pulling out all the stops. It succeeded in blocking passage of the 1984 Civil Rights Act, through a combination of the Administration, Howard Baker, Orin Hatch and Jesse Helms' strategy.

The Civil Rights Commission, which has become the Reagan Administration anti-civil rights advocate, appeared before the Joint Education and Labor Committee and the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Law, to testify on the '85 Civil Rights Restoration Act. Muzzling the President's views were commission chairman Clarence Pendleton and staff director Linda Chavez. Civil rights commissioner, Dr. Mary Berry, who opposes the Administration's determination to return to the pre-civil rights days, also testified.

Committee chairman Representative Augustus Hawkins called the entire panel of witnesses to the table at once. Mr. Hawkins called on Dr. Berry to be the lead-off witness. She stated that she would like to speak after Bill Taylor, Center for National Policy Review and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. Mr. Taylor responded that he had just testified recently on the bill that he would rather wait until after the other witnesses had testified, so that he could shed some light on their testimony. So Mr. Pendleton became the first witness. He cited the six principles adopted by the Commission at its retreat in San Diego in January. The panel mem-



Alfreda

bers who spoke at the retreat, on the Grove City decision were, Eva Auchincloss, executive director, Women's Sports Foundation of San Francisco; Ronald Vera, Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund; Bruce Hafen, president of American Association of Presidents of Independent Colleges; the president of Ricks College of Idaho; and Patrick Boyle of the National Grocers Association of Reston, Va. The Commission's office informed me that the January meeting was a planning retreat and that Grove City was discussed. Dr. Mary Berry said that no real hearings were held on the '85 Civil Rights Act with the usual Commission variety panel from around the country.

Pendleton spoke of the March 5, 1985 Commission adoption stand on legislation to overturn Grove City. Dr. Berry, Ms. Ramirez and Mr. Guest dissented from the majority report. In his dissension, Mr. Guest stated that the majority Commission has abdicated its responsibility and objectivity of responding to civil rights. He says they are

talking out of both sides of their mouths by saying on one hand that they are for civil rights and on the other hand they are for a loose construction of civil rights. Dr. Berry and Ms. Ramirez concurred with Mr. Guest's statement.

Pendleton's six points were as follows: first, "some are seizing upon the Grove City decision to seek a vast expansion of federal authority in the guise of merely restoring such authority. The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1985, which is the subject of this hearing, may more aptly be called the Civil Rights Expansion Act of 1985." Second, he believes coverage of the Act should be limited to the federal agencies which implement the four statutes. Third, the Commission really believes in states rights for implementation of anti-discrimination laws. Fourth, Grove City legislation should differentiate between public and private entities. Fifth, federal financial assistance should be limited to the particular political entity that receives the funds. Sixth, Congress should provide an effective religious exemption in Title IX.

Linda Chavez, read a 27-page statement, in which she highly expressed her anger over the opposition's stand. She referred to the Leadership Conference which is composed of 166 cross ethnic, religious, race, sex and national origin lines and its executive director, Ralph Meas, as radical right schemers using scare tactics to try to tar those who dare question a bill labeled civil rights.

Gordon Jones of the Heritage Foundation and Mark De Bernard of the Chamber of Commerce are opponents of the '85 Civil Rights Act.



Sabrina

generation whose education levels are the highest. Twenty-five percent of those 25 to 35 have college degrees (only nine percent of Americans over 65 years of age have a college degree). Affluence is the name of the game for this generation; boomers have real incomes higher or as high as their parent generation. Nineteen ninety will find itself dominated by boomers in the labor force comprising 54 percent of all workers.

Diversity is their mode of consumerism. They reshape the marketplace as they go from jeans to suits and back pack to homes. Boomers

are the first generation to be reared on television. Across the country television has been the bond that pulled together boomers with common experiences and symbols, from the disturbances at Kent State in the 1970s to soft drink commercials geared toward a new generation. Boomers are the first generation to grow up under the concept of nuclear war.

A new ethic comes with the aging of the baby boom. A survey done by the American Council of Life Insurance revealed that boomers believe and want stronger family and religious ties and more respect for authority. But by the same token boomers are a great deal more tolerant of diversity and uniqueness than the parent and grandparent generations. One major difference in values is their ideas on marriage and the changing roles of men and women (a majority favor women working).

Boomers are marking the marketplace as they enter peak spending years. It is estimated that by 1990 most households will be headed by those born between 1946 and 1964. At present, boomers have more purchasing power than the parent generation did at the same age.

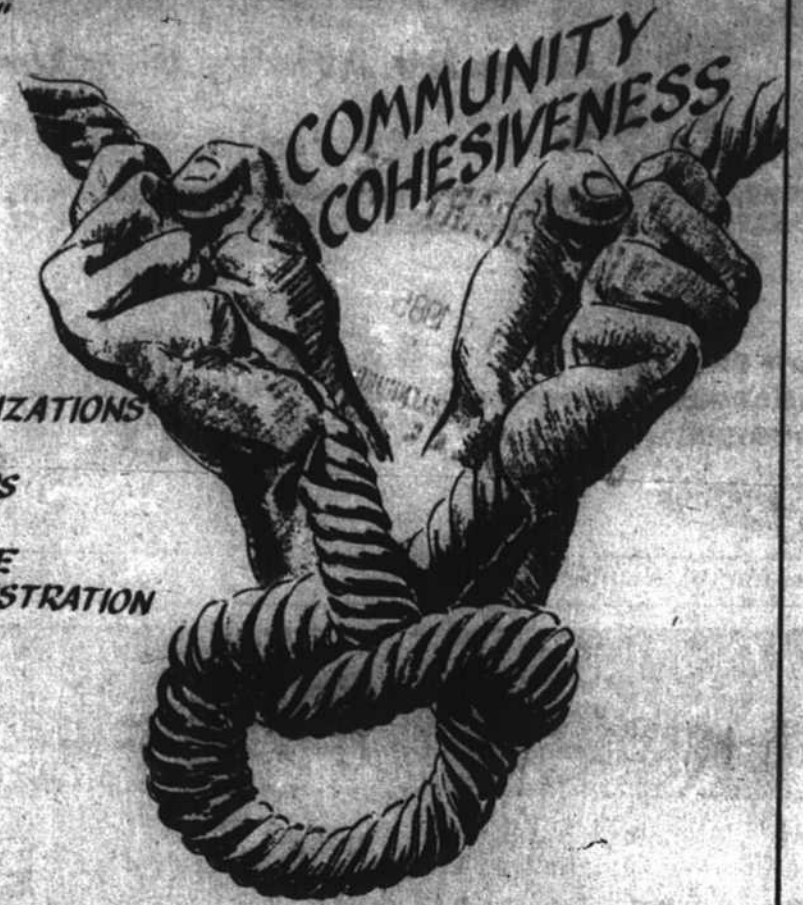
In 1984 the median income for those aged 25 and 34 was \$22,776; and nearly 25 percent of the boomers earned a minimum of \$35,000; with 60 percent of the total boomer population owning homes.

By the close of the 1980s, it is expected that the baby boom generation will account for more than 50 percent of consumer expenditures. Since consumer spending represents approximately 75 percent of all United States economic activity, executives are reshaping and redesigning all of their consumer products to appeal to the aging generation. Their main objective is to capture the yuppies with their goods and services because their salaries are rapidly approaching the \$30,000 plus range.

The housing industry is showing tremendous profits from this generation. During the next 10 years those people 35 to 55 years of age will account for 40 percent or more of total new home purchases. Compared to the 1970s, when it was less than 25 percent. While this is occurring, the youngest of the generation are finding it difficult to purchase new homes because of high interest rates and slow appreciation.

"BLACKS' RETICENCE TO SEIZE THE INITIATIVE TO ORGANIZE THEIR COMMUNITIES" SAID DOUGLAS G. GLASGOW, DEAN OF HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, IS A MAJOR FACTOR AND AN IMPORTANT FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO OUR COMMUNITIES' UNDEVELOPED STATUS"

- POLITICAN
- BUSINESS MAN
- DOCTORS
- LAWYERS
- ARTISTS
- TEACHERS
- MINISTERS
- WORKERS
- COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
- SOCIAL WORKERS
- FRATERNAL GROUPS
- FINANCE
- COMPUTER SCIENCE
- INSTITUTION ADMINISTRATION
- ENGINEERING
- PLANNING
- ARCHITECTURE
- BLACK PRESS



Baby-Boom Generation Taking Charge!