

EDITORIALS

National Youth Service—No; Youth Employment Programs—Yes

BY R. P. GUS HAWKINS
Guest Editorial

A number of House and Senate members have introduced versions of "national youth service" legislation, a proposal which links volunteer duty to government benefits. The bill receiving the most attention is the McCurdy-Nunn bill, named after the respective House and Senate authors. While the proposal may be well intentioned, there are many problems regarding equity, worker displacement, and program administration which need closer examination.

In the McCurdy-Nunn proposal government aid would be tied to either military or civilian service. In other words, young people could serve in the Marines or work in a public facility, such as a mental hospital. For each year spent in the military, at a reduced wage of about \$100 a week, the youth would receive a \$12,000 voucher to be used for student aid, job training or a down payment on a home. For each year of civilian service, again at a reduced wage, the youth would receive a \$10,000 voucher to pay for government benefits. The intention of the bill is to foster the ideal of civic duty and public service, while at the same time meeting community social needs.

The victims of these youth service proposals, however, would be the poor. It is a regressive concept which turns youth into indentured servants. Similarly, in the 17th century people would trade passage to America to work for another for a definite period of time. Surely, we have progressed from the days of this practice.

One of my major concerns is based on the question of how equity and equality of sacrifice can be guaranteed. The proposal would eliminate existing forms of student aid and condition receipt of postsecondary educational assistance on participation in national service. This would undoubtedly result in a national service composed primarily of low-income youth who would have no opportunity to go to college unless they served their time in national service. On the other hand, their middle and upper-income counterparts could enter college without similar service.

In addition, there are numerous other questions related to labor standards which can be raised. What protection would existing public service employees, particularly those who earn low

wages, have from displacement? Would they be replaced from the influx of federally subsidized volunteers? What would protect the volunteers from exploitation by employers? What would it cost to maintain strong labor standards for a large national program?

Currently, we are not adequately addressing the needs of our nation's youth. This is a bad time to experiment with dubious youth service proposals when we have left behind millions of unserved children and young people by not fully funding Head Start, Chapter 1, Pell Grants, the Job Corps, the Job Training Partnership Act, and other programs.

The thinking which drives these national service-type proposals is based on a perception that the public will support this program (cost estimate is more than \$5 billion) if you make people "work for it"—no matter how discriminatory it may be. This same type of attitude enlisted conservatives to support a sweeping welfare reform bill last year, which included a punitive workfare provision. Everybody supports the concept of the "work ethic," yet at the same time many of the national service supporters don't understand the agony and burden of the poor. It is also work to rear children as a single parent on a bare-bones budget. It is also work to live from paycheck to paycheck in substandard and crime-ridden housing. It is work for many of our youth and poor to experience the constant hardships of poverty.

Instead of national youth service we should be developing a national youth job program, which includes remedial education assistance, job training for decent-paying occupations, job counseling (resume and interview preparation), special programs for juvenile delinquents and teenage parents (with child-care assistance).

The concept of community service is an honorable one, but it must be developed on a fair and equitable basis. Ironically, the proposed national service concept, which supposedly is intended to teach our youth the value of civics, fails this important lesson by treating one class of citizens differently from another. An agenda to help our youth is badly needed... but the current concept of national service is a wrong-headed and divisive approach.

The White Girl Wins

The mainstream Hollywood film industry is notorious for its lack of relevant subject matter and significant employment opportunities for Blacks and other people of color. From D. W. Griffith's "Birth of a Nation" to Allan Parkere's "Mississippi Burning," Blacks in films have been portrayed as everything from destroyers of White women's virtue to nameless, one dimensional individuals whose only salvation is in the White man.

but as we plunge into the final decade of the century many Blacks feel that large scale success for them in this industry is still "dream deferred."

Tony Brown has taken matters into his own hands. With \$2 million of his own money, a mostly Black cast and crew, and an important story that Hollywood has no time for, he has produced and directed his first motion picture. The White Girl, from his own script the First Black Freedom Motion Picture.

Brown started the Buy Freedom campaign three years ago to promote economic development among blacks. The White Girl is the first film in that campaign which is called "Buy Freedom." In the past year, Brown has made the film available to community groups for fundraisers prior to its commercial release, slated for summer, 1989, at which time community people can become the local distributor or Buy Freedom Partner for "The White Girl." For information: (212) 575-0876.

The Buy Freedom campaign was designed to plow Black dollars into the Black community by stimulating Black businesses and creating new jobs. Brown hopes to recoup his investment and continue to make films with relevant social messages. We believe that his success will be an example for all people of color and money-making opportunities for those who would share in it as a fundraiser.

Concerned About Something In
YOUR Community...
Write A Letter To The Editor!

Miller Says

BY SHERMAN N. MILLER
CREATIVITY COMMUNICATES VISION

"I want a kinder and gentler nation," proclaimed President George Bush. Although this proclamation is often mocked, it is Bush's vision of the future.

Bush's statement suggests that he is a covert hawk who will opt for the appearance of negotiation over an immediate armed confrontation. But Bush's communication problem points out the difficulty that corporate America can expect in disclosing its visions to its employees and customers.

Multinational corporations are using creativity to transcend media problems in communicating their vision statements. The DuPont Company's dinner-show at the 1989 Society of Automotive Engineers Congress and Exposition was a unique vision statement. This show was held at Detroit's famous Fox Theater, featuring Peter Nero and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. It also included a pictorial history of automobile style from the 1920s to 1990s. Yet the rise and fall and the reincarnation of the U.S. automobile industry was the nonverbal message that underpinned DuPont's show. But, what was DuPont's assessment of this dinner-show?

Henry B. Milligan, director of sales and development in DuPont's Automotive Products Department, says, "I doubt that there has ever been an event in Detroit that more than 2,000 customer/spouse teams shared an evening."

Milligan was asked to tell whether this special dinner-show met DuPont's objective. "Without question, we met our objective," he replied.

Milligan's reply begged the question, what was DuPont's objective? Milligan saw the show allowing DuPont to develop a positive image and an opportunity to share and build on customer relationships.

Terms like "image," "share," and "build" are abstract vehicles that politicians exploit to skillfully maneuver around thorny issues. Business people are pragmatic, so Milligan offered some feelings that quantified his reply.

Milligan claims DuPont is trying to earn the right to be viewed as an important part of the community. He says they do not want to give the impression that they are just passing through.

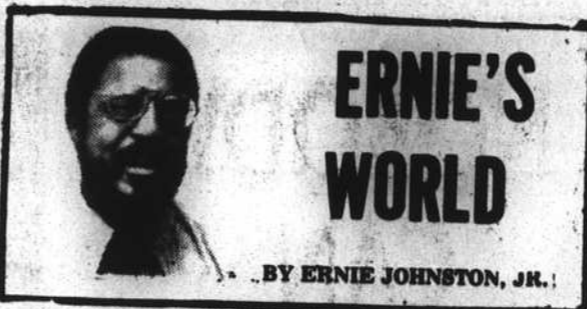
It is common knowledge that DuPont has been a stodgy, ultra-conservative company. Yet Milligan argues they are now undergoing a cultural change.

"Young people feel the change," claims Milligan. "(We are) creating an arena that very talented people can excel in."

On the other hand, Milligan said, "[The] culture is changing so fast some [people] are left behind."

Milligan was then requested to give a DuPont mission statement to the nation.

(See MILLER, P. 8)



ERNIE'S WORLD
BY ERNIE JOHNSTON, JR.

HAVE PATIENCE WITH SUMMER HELP

The other day I was shopping in this store and the clerk at the counter took some time in counting the change that I had coming to me.

At first I was getting a little annoyed but then it suddenly dawned on me that this is the time of year for part-time summer help.

Every year this time, students out of school seek work in the various businesses, corporations, fast-food spots and department stores.

For the most part, many are inexperienced and this is their first time in the job market. Therefore they are expected to make a lot of blunders and this is the time when we as a public must be understanding and sympathize with summer help as best as possible.

Probably most of us can relate to the question that is often asked when applying for a job and that is, "Do you have any experience?"

And my answer to that is how can you say you have experience when you are not given the opportunity for experience? Of course most summer jobs may not be the route to a lifetime goal but it does help in terms of having built up some work experience.

Many cities have instituted summer work programs whereby students are given the opportunity to work in businesses and companies, thereby gaining experience and at the same time making extra money.

The attitude toward summer help should be that this is the future workforce and they will be the people who will be in the forefront of our businesses when we are retired and long gone.

At the same time, fellow employees of summer help should be willing to go out of their way to teach young people the ins and outs of the job and serve as a role model to them and not become annoyed or angry at their mistakes.

All of us can no doubt look back at the time when we were new to a job and we, too, sought guidance and help in trying to make it.

A call should also go out to successful African-American businesses to give young students jobs for the summer. I say successful because there are many minority businesses that simply cannot afford the extra help but on the other hand there are those who are successful enough to hire summer help and hire part-time help all year round for that matter.

With the number of African-American businesses that are increasing their sales and their volume of business, there should be no reason why young African-American students should be out of a job during the summer months.

If those African-American businesses cannot fulfill the hiring pool of unemployed students, then their network should be wide enough to extend to other groups in our society who will be able to provide some meaningful jobs.

That should be the challenge for summer '89: to get jobs for young people who want to work and make some money and gain some experience.

That experience can be varied given the fact of this time of modern technology. No longer do we have to depend on summer jobs of mowing lawns, doing manual labor and performing unskilled jobs.

There are the computer stores, the ever-expanding video market plus the many junior management level positions that are open to young people.

With those opportunities available to young people, they will be able to learn some skills that can be marketable in the future.

OPINION

What Chinese students teach us

By Chuck Stone

Graduating seniors head out into the real world, convinced their class is special, their year historical, their members unique. But the class of 1989 can lay claim to membership in one of Western civilization's most exciting moments — the Chinese students' revolution.

The ability of millions of students to bring China's communist dictatorship to its knees has awed the world. A million people in any kind of demonstration, as there were in Beijing, boggles the mind. (Only seven cities in America have more people.) But people (over 1 billion) are China's biggest resource.

As American students did 20 years ago, Chinese students are pressing for moral change and the right, as Mao Tse-tung once put it, to let "a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend." When you think about it, that's a fairly accurate interpretation of the First Amendment.

In their demonstrations, the Chinese students have melded the intrinsic gentleness of Confucian morality and the non-violent tactics of Gandhi and King. They are teaching a watching world that non-violence can still stop armies, a lesson that rock-throwing Palestinian students have forgotten in their freedom struggle against Israel.

The Chinese students' revolution for democracy exalts other lessons of history.

When they pasted a few unassuming posters six weeks ago on the walls of Beijing University, they were following the path of an Augustinian monk who nailed 95 Theses to the door of the castle church at Wittenberg 473 years ago and launched a religious revolution.

When a young Chinese leader of the hunger strike wistfully longed for "a beautiful, perfect system," he seemed to replicate Alexis de Tocqueville's praise of Americans for their "lively faith in the perfectibility of man."

The ideas behind our American Revolution still inspire the world. As Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes so accurately predicted, "Every idea is an incitement."

In 1919, ideas incited Chinese students when they orchestrated the May Fourth Movement, a massive protest



CHUCK STONE

against the Treaty of Versailles' cession of Chinese territory to Japan. The editor of a magazine, *New Youth*, had called on the students to forego old traditions and follow the ideas of "Mr. Science" and "Mr. Democracy."

Seventy years and two generations later, Chinese students have gone beyond mere protest. They are calling for massive changes in the system. But the system has resisted change for 3,500 years. China is a history of dynasties — Shang, Ming, Ch'ing, Nationalist and now Communist. Whether ruled by Dowager Empress Ts'u Hsi, the Japanese puppet Wang Ching-wei, the American ally Chiang Kai-shek or Communist Premier Li Peng, China has managed to absorb with almost paradoxical nonchalance the convulsions of violent change.

Students may be reacting to that cultural intractability as they teach another lesson that Americans unlearned two decades ago — respect for one's elders.

The lesson's symbol is a student hero, a frail-looking 71-year-old editor with unruly white wisps of hair, Qin Benli. As he has threaded his way through groups of chanting demonstrators in Shanghai, many have cheered him.

When the Communist Party put Qin's weekly paper, *The World Economic Herald*, under the censorship fist of a "rectification committee," scores of Chinese journalists publicly supported him.

"We are just one little newspaper," declared the septuagenarian Qin, "but if we win, we can contribute to a free press in China." Faith is a powerful elixir.

In a country with a religious tradition of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, a Christian prophet's words seem exquisitely appropriate for this 1989 student revolution. *And a little child shall lead them.*

© 1989 NEWSPAPER ENTERPRISE ASSN.

CHILD WATCH

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN
SOUNDING THE ALARM ABOUT HOUSING

For some in affluent America, the only housing crisis is deciding where to install the Jacuzzi. In poor black America, people are clinging desperately to the roof over their heads.

Black Americans are taking a shattering blow from the nation's housing crisis, says "A Place to Call Home," a new report from two Washington-based groups, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Low-Income Housing Information Service. It is time to sound the alarm about our housing problems before more black Americans are pushed out into the streets or the homeless shelters.

• **Housing Costs are Devouring Our Income.** Black households are more likely than white households to have "unaffordable" housing—housing that eats up more than 30 percent of the income they must live on. Anyone who has ever balanced a household budget would be appalled to know that one out of every five black households is now spending half their income or more just to pay the rent or the mortgage.

• **We Are Less Likely To Own Our Own Homes.** It's the American dream: owning your own home. But the dream is considerably dimmer in black America. Less than half of all black households own a home, while more than two-thirds of white households do. This drives our housing costs up, because among households with incomes below \$40,000 rent takes a bigger bite out of incomes than mortgages.

• **It's Getting Worse.** Black America's housing costs have gone up dramatically since 1978. Why? Because, on average, we are paying more for our housing now while we are not bringing home more income.

• **We Are More Likely To Live in Poor Conditions.** Not only are blacks fighting to keep a roof overhead, but the roof is leaking. A black household today is more than twice as likely as a white household to live in "substandard" housing. This does not mean housing that doesn't look pretty. It means living without adequate plumbing, shivering through spells without any heat, or sharing space with mice and rats.

What can we do about our housing crisis? The first step is to bring it to the attention of every politician we can, from Housing and Urban Development Secretary Jack Foy to our senators or our council members. We need to get the ear of the press by sending letters to the editor, pointing out what is happening. There is only one way out of this housing crisis: putting back the billions of dollars that President Reagan slashed from our federal housing programs with such devastating results.

OTHER VIEWPOINTS

BY REV. MARK C. OLDS
THE SOCIETAL ENDORSED KILLER DRUG

More drug-related deaths are attributed to alcohol than all other drugs combined. It cannot be stated any other way. Alcohol is a greater killer than the scourge of societal illegal drugs.

City, county, state and federal legislators campaign vigorously to impose capital punishment for drug dealers. Dealers and users face loss of properties and profits under the federal statute 989 Continuous Criminal Enterprise and the RICO act. Long prison terms and confiscation of possessions result from trafficking in deadly drugs. But the deadliest of all drugs has a safe haven for its industry. These peddlers and merchants of death enjoy protection and immunity from prosecution, since the failure of Prohibition. This industry maintains powerful lobbyists on Capitol Hill.

Companies (domestic and foreign) should be indicted for distributing poison in what is recognized as a civilized nation. With the war on drugs intensifying and the words of the former First Lady's "Just Say No" campaign persistently sloganized, irony and sarcasm mark Customs officials' nonexistent efforts to detect, expose, or seek entry denial to these mass killer imports.

This killer drug crosses all ethnic groups. Alcohol fights inflation better than any other product in America. It steadfastly remains in the price range of all low-income and impoverished people—all races and sexes. No affirmative action quota system needed by the U.S. Supreme Court to administer the disproportionate consumption of alcohol by economic deprived citizens.

The African-American community is drenched with liquid poison. The designated leaders are very often captured on film holding (clutching) an oversized check (sometimes, the check size is larger than the dollar value). Big smiles surround this gigantic (physically) size check—most often

(See VIEWPOINTS, P. 8)