



The Sentinel

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A Home for Youth

The youth home project of the Northwest Committee on Advocacy for Children and Youth is a worthwhile proposal for a long-needed facility. The committee and the four-county nonprofit corporation that would operate the proposed home in Stokes County deserve the backing of the many government agencies, civic groups and individuals who are concerned with the plight of the community's "problem" children.

Approval of the youth home idea in principle by the Forsyth-Stokes mental health board this week is an important first step towards making the home a reality. Equally vital, however, are the understanding and acceptance of the home's basic concepts by area people who are less familiar with the special needs of moderately disturbed, aggressive, withdrawn and mildly retarded youngsters.

Attitudes toward people with such mental, emotional or behavior difficulties all too often are shaped by ignorance and fear. The first reaction of many of us is to shrink away from a child or an adult who looks different or acts strangely.

For years, the typical community response to these troubled people has been to send them "away" — to a medical, mental or correction institution, whether they needed such drastic treatment or not. That is why the state's mental hospitals are crammed with patients who do not really need their services, and why the youth correc-

tion centers are full of youngsters whose "worst crime" are running away, playing hooky or not getting along with their families.

Such inappropriate treatment is bad enough to contemplate. Worse yet is the thought of lives ruined not so much by the original mental or emotional problem, as by the feelings of hostility and rejection fostered by callous and misguided handling.

Facilities such as this city's Youth Opportunity Homes and the proposed Stokes County home offer a far better alternative. Youngsters can be helped by professional counselors in a stable, secure, homelike setting, without having to suffer the physical and psychological misery of being shuttled about the state like unwanted baggage. Just the awareness that somebody in the community cares about them and wants to help is a valuable therapy in itself.

The community is the key to such community-based treatment, however. Residential facilities of this type have been established elsewhere in the state, only to suffer the hostility and rejection of people in their neighborhoods. Such situations, paradoxically, make the community facilities necessary, and can work against their effectiveness when they are established. We hope the people of Stokes and the Northwest will be able to welcome this youth home as a necessary and desirable community asset worthy of their wholehearted support.

School Space Need

For a good many years, the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County schools have looked forward to padlocking the doors of Central High School and transferring the alternative education programs there to new quarters. That move will come this fall with the opening of a specially designed vocational rehabilitation center on South Main Street. It is a remarkable building, as yet unnamed, for teaching mentally and physically handicapped students.

The opening there, though, will be clouded somewhat if the decrepit facilities left behind are merely taken over by other optional education programs for which the school system has lately found itself short of space. Going back a number of years, the school system has been advised that Central High should be renovated, not fit for use and should be built. Built way back in 1924, the structure has deteriorated further because repairs were waived in anticipation of its closing. Even with a little fixing up, it is scarcely a congenial place for students who, for one reason or another, are not in conventional classrooms.

At the last school board meeting, several board members objected to a staff proposal to assign the learning center, the continuing education program, and others to Central High this fall. As board member Henry C.

Laumer commented after a tour of the school, "It's an old, broken-down, rattletrap building. It was considered basically unsuitable for our remedial program, and so we're moving them. Now we're putting another group of disadvantaged children right back in here." He noted an apparent lack of planning in the school building program for the needs of all children requiring special facilities.

Since the board meeting, the school staff has been looking for alternatives to present to a building and finance committee meeting next week. We hope this search can turn up something more than human storage space. What is needed is a building that suits the programs well and is adaptable to their needs. One possibility that comes to mind is the N.C. Advanced School. Some of that school's work will be continued, fortunately, but its building, the old city building, has empty classrooms and lots of space that may be vacant. It is also a good location.

The students who will be leaving Central High for their spanking new quarters suffered a stigma of being second-class citizens, because of the deteriorated building in which they worked. That same image will plague other students assigned there. Least of all should these new victims be the school's disadvantaged students and others in need of special help.

'Crackpot' Warning

Not many years ago, people who worried about things like CIA plots, cancer from pollution and apocalyptic nuclear power plant disasters were generally regarded as paranoiacs or crackpots. Their claims and warnings generally were given no more serious consideration than Chicken Little's alarms about the sky, or a bearded sidewalk prophet's sign proclaiming the imminence of the world's end.

But yesterday's paranoid delusions are today's current events. Last week, for example, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission ordered Carolina Power and Light Co. to study the possibility that a nuclear generating station at Southport, touching off a radioactive spill of massive and disastrous proportions.

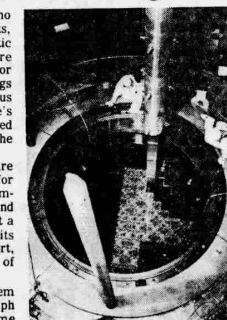
The threat and the precaution seem like exaggerated figments of Ralph Nader's imagination, or extreme scenarios concocted by radical environmentalists. Unfortunately, however, the risk of earthquake and its attendant nightmare results are all too real, as independent outside studies show, and deserve full and thoughtful consideration.

It is regrettable only that the earthquake danger was not recognized — or that the "crackpots" were not heeded — soon enough to permit a thorough study to be made and proper safety precautions to be taken before the plant was built.

Earthquake dangers are usually associated with the geography and geology of places such as Alaska and California. But one of the worst quakes in America's history occurred on the coast of New York, when Charleston, S.C. was virtually leveled by a massive shock that was felt as far away as the Lake Erie region.

Now, 89 years later and less than 150 miles away, University of North Carolina and Duke University scientists have found a number of ominous indications that a quake may be building up where CP&L's own studies showed a firm geological foundation for the plant.

FUELING A CP&L NUCLE ... on shaky ground? ...



Earthquake prediction is scarcely a precise science, but the consequences of a major quake near the Southport nuke are too horrible to let the risk go uninvestigated. A reactor containment vessel shattered by a quake would release enough deadly radiation into the atmosphere to wipe out most of the people in nearby Wilmington and beyond. The NRC has wisely ordered a seismic watch to be kept in the region. Intense seismic activity thought to be leading to a quake would be a signal for a plant shutdown.

The lessons of the Southport nuke should be clear. Outside investigation of financed studies. Clear guidelines must be set up to establish criteria for reactor shutdown in cases where it is too late to avoid undue risk by relocating plants away from danger zones altogether. Most important of all, the NRC and the industry it regulates should realize that they cannot make "crackpots" too lightly, for their prophecies may turn out to be all too horribly true.



We just consider that fertilizer for democracy.

For What Do We Live?

By William V. Shannon
New York Times News Service

WASHINGTON

Alexander Solzhenitsyn steps into American life out of the pages of a Dostoyevsky novel, a deeply religious man and a moralist, he is preoccupied with fundamental questions of what is truth and what is justice. He sees every issue, large and small, personal and political, in terms of good and evil. He is a victim who became a hero, a teller of tales who became a symbol, a uniquely Russian prophet who became an exile in the wilderness of the West. He speaks of sin, shame, and redemption, concepts which our neo-pagan society with its secularized atmosphere and deeply corrupt popular culture can rarely comprehend. It is no wonder that although he seeks to warn and instruct us, we are bemused and baffled.

As well as a powerful novelist and a moral prophet, Solzhenitsyn is also an informed, uncompromising critic of Communist theory and Soviet practice. In this third role as political critic, Solzhenitsyn has recently been provided with lessons by AFL-CIO president George Meany who underwrote the cost of large public banquets here and in New York for invited audiences. Meany regards these appearances as useful demonstrations against the Nixon-Ford-Kissinger policy of détente with the Soviet Union.

Solzhenitsyn does indeed make a powerful argument against the moral equities of détente as it is now being practiced. He indicts the greed of businessmen who are prepared to sell in anything to the commissars including police security devices. He throws on the defensive those politicians and intellectuals who confuse conciliation with appeasement.

Despite the clarity and force of Solzhenitsyn's analysis, however, his speeches are unlikely to produce firm political action. Although the trade unionists and their guests applauded his words and some reactionaries urged him to attack the concept of détente, there is not in American life



SOLZHENITSYN ... looking in ...

today among trade unionists or conservatives or liberals the moral energy and political will to mount a campaign to put his ideas into effect. Nearly 30 years of political struggle with communists and two costly wars in Korea and Vietnam have exacted their toll on Americans. For the moment at least, we as a people have a need to regroup and rethink our alternatives. Moreover, to Americans across most of the political spectrum, détente is morally acceptable because it lessens the chance of a nuclear war occurring on account of a failure of communication between the opposing leaders. Secondly, it opens up the hope — fragile and speculative though it is — that increased trade and travel may lead to some reform of the Soviet system.

Solzhenitsyn, of course, regards both reasons for détente as pathetic hopes. He would return to the full rigors of the cold war and hope to see the Soviet system fall further behind the West, eventually changing because of its own stultifying inefficiency and ar-

ERA for the States

By James J. Kilpatrick

Washington Star Syndicate

So much attention has been paid to Section 1 of the pending Equal Rights Amendment that little note has been taken of Section 2. It's something for state legislators, editors, lawyers, and interested citizens to think about.

By this time, almost everyone who cares about such things has heard of Section 1 of the ERA: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." We tend to pass over Section 2: "The Congress shall have the power to enforce by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article."

The same language appears in half a dozen other amendments to the Constitution. It is the implementing clause, vesting legislative power in the Congress to enact "appropriate" laws. We are seeing the exercise of this power these days in the Voting Rights Act, implementing the Fifteenth Amendment. Here Congress, by federal law, is overriding state laws that deal with election procedures. The Equal Rights Amendment now has been ratified by 34 states, though three of these have rescinded their

approval. If prior to March, 1979, another 16 states should ratify (depending on how Congress treats the rescissions), the ERA will become part of the Constitution. What then? The States traditionally have had the responsibility for laws relating to marriage and the family. Such laws deal with every aspect of divorce, including the grounds for divorce, alimony, child custody, community property, and the like. The laws vary widely, but many of them tend to discriminate in favor of women. Under ERA, such laws would be forbidden. At a meeting in Washington last week of Parents Without Partners, a suggestion came from the floor: Wouldn't it be a great idea to have one national, uniform law of divorce? Parents Without Partners is an organization of parents who have been widowed or divorced. A single federal law would assure identical treatment for men and women, making certain that no discrimination remained "on account of sex."

Another traditional field of state responsibility is education. The field has been much invaded by federal authority in recent years. Exercising the implementing power of the Fourteenth Amendment, Congress has forbidden the states to discriminate by reason of race in any educational institution supported by public funds. Thus far, the states have retained considerable authority in such matters as dormitories, athletics, sororities and fraternities.

Under the pending amendment, "equality of rights" (whatever the phrase may mean) could not be stated in terms of sex. It is useful to reflect upon what "rights" the male or female student now enjoys. Would the freedom to choose a "men only" or a "women only" dormitory be a "women only" amendment? Could state sanction be extended to fraternities that discriminated against women, or to sororities that banned membership to men? Congress would have power to enforce the amendment "by appropriate legislation."

Over the past 20 years, many private colleges, once limited to men or to women students only, have gone co-educational. Even so, at least 100 such institutions remain. All of them are affected in some way by state and federal laws. The question may fairly be raised: How would they be affected by the Equal Rights Amendment?

Laws that sanction discrimination "on account of sex" are far more pervasive and complex than laws that used to discriminate on account of race. For one thing, racial laws always discriminated against the Negro, never in his favor, and such laws were largely confined to the southern and border states. The situation as to women is quite different.

Do we want national legislation in all these fields? To those of us reared in the old-fashioned doctrines of federalism, the answer is no. There is little to be said for the notion that superior wisdom lies in the Congress. But under this amendment, that is where the superior power would lie. It would be to enforce by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

At the moment, ERA languishes. Next year the movement for ratification will resume. In the interim, it will do no harm to keep this in mind: In the name of creating rights, this amendment would achieve a massive transfer of powers.

Lying as a Way of Life Sentinel Letters

By Anthony Lewis

New York Times News Service

Ron Nessen, the President's press secretary, complained recently that the White House press was not treating his word with due respect. Some reporters had even accused him of lying. President Ford has been in office for ten months, he said, and it was time "to end this blind, frenzied, irrational cynicism and distrust."

If Nessen sincerely wants, as he says, to know the reasons for cynicism and mistrust of what he says, he might consider a single episode. That is the disclosure last April that President Nixon had made secret commitments in writing to Saigon at the time the Vietnam peace agreement was signed in 1973.

A onetime assistant to President Thieu of South Vietnam disclosed a number of letters from Nixon to Thieu. One, dated Jan. 5, 1973, Nixon wrote: "You have my assurance . . . that we will respond with full force should the settlement be violated by North Vietnam."

Now what did Nessen have to say about that startling disclosure of a secret commitment to military intervention? He said it was old stuff, it did not go beyond what had been said publicly at the time. Was it really possible that he had forgotten such a thing? No, it was not. When checked, the 1973 statements turned out to be true. Nixon had given generalities of support for our noble ally.

Anyone who dealt as Nessen did with that episode has forfeited the right to have his word taken seriously. To tell us that when direct American involvement in the Vietnam war ended in 1973 we all knew of a solemn pledge to re-enter it insulted the public intelligence. One must be a fool or a knave to say such things. Or a hireling, carrying out orders from above.

The last is really the point about Ron Nessen. He did not invent that particular feeble evasion of the truth. President Ford said about the same thing when he was asked about the secret Nixon commitment. And the original falsifier in this case, as in so many others over the last six years, was Secretary of State Kissinger. In March, 1974, Kissinger was asked by Sen. Edward Kennedy to state American commitments to South Viet-

nam. He replied by letter of March 25: "The U.S. has no bilateral written commitments to the government of the Republic of Vietnam." When he wrote that, he of course knew all about the Nixon promise to Thieu; Kissinger had probably traded it.

The example of the Nixon letter makes clear that official concealment and deception do damage to more than moral sensibilities or an abstract concern for truth. They profoundly injure the premises of democracy. The Congress made Congress an equal partner in the federal government, but how can it be effective if the basic facts of policy are withheld from it or covered over with lies? And our system assumes not only an effective legislature but an informed public.

Official falsehood has become so serious a problem, so corrupting of our constitutional process, that there are now numerous proposals for corrective action. An interest one is set out in a recent paper by Peter D. W. Heberling, a law student at Columbia University and researcher at the Center for Policy Research in New York, and Amati Etzioni, professor of sociology at Columbia and director of the center.

This proposal is for a statute making it a felony for any employee of the executive branch to make a "materially false statement" to Congress or one of its committees. The law would also apply to an employee who orders another to falsify. And the plea that one was told by a superior to testify falsely would not be a defense.

The Heberling-Etzioni draft, like others, would give a permanent special prosecutor responsibility for enforcing the law. He would be chosen by Congress.

Clarifying the difficult existing statutes on perjury and false statements in a law focused squarely on government officials is an idea worth exploring. The principle that obeying superior orders is no excuse for official crimes was followed in the Watergate trials but could usefully be re-emphasized in a statute. Congress may need a new mechanism to help enforce its right to truthful information, whether or not it is a special prosecutor.

Glowing Remarks

Recently readers of your paper have been treated to several stories about businessmen at utility hearings testifying on behalf of higher rates for electricity.

In view of the nearly 50 per cent excess capacity now in the Duke generating system and the fact that both households and businesses used less electricity last year than they did the year before, the Foothills Group of the Sierra Club would like to have neither the rate increase nor the dangerous nuclear power plants Duke proposes to build with the additional revenue.

The Sierra Club, however, not wishing to impose its views on others, would like to suggest that anyone who wants to pay 25 per cent more for electricity be allowed to do so. Additionally, Duke should provide radiation facilities, on an individual basis, for any of these same voluntary higher rate payers who also want to glow in the dark.

—MILES O. BIDWELL
Chairman,
Foothills Group
of the Sierra Club
Winston-Salem.

A Grave Injustice

A misstatement of fact in one of James J. Kilpatrick's recent columns hurt me very much. He was discussing President Ford's appointments to the board of directors of the newly created Federal Legal Services Corporation and the current difficulties over confirmation in the U.S. Senate. He pointed out that there was con-

siderable "thunder on the left" concerning some of the "conservatives" on the President's tentative list of appointments. I am myself, whom the President had slated to become chairman of the new board. He went on to state that I "backed out under fire."

This statement is completely incorrect. I did not back out under fire. I am not built that way. I asked the President to drop my name from further consideration immediately when, after thorough testing and reevaluation by the best experts in the field, I was forced to the conclusion that my hearing ability, a longstanding problem, had deteriorated to the point where I could not perform in this proposed assignment with the complete effectiveness I would require of myself. As a result, my name was never sent to the Senate.

It was tough enough to turn down an opportunity for public service of this sort — something I wanted greatly, and fully intended, to do — because of mere deafness, a sometimes laughable and always commonplace infirmity of the aging. But now to have to answer a flat statement from a reputable source that I "backed out under fire" is too much. There is no way in which I can reach my friends in his national audience. I have no forum.

He has done me a grave injustice. DENISON KITCHEL, Phoenix, Arizona.

Letters to the editor must include full names and addresses in order to be printed. Because of limited space, letters must be 300 words or less. We reserve the right to edit any contribution.



Asleep in the Deep