

A Quantum of Sanctity ... or It's Your Turn

By Roosevelt Fitzgerald

I stayed up all night several months ago to watch the Space Shuttle blast off. There were several hundreds of thousands of people there on the scene to witness it first hand. I, like millions of others, watched it from the comfort of my living room without having to deal with the traffic problems. It was quite a sight. Dan Rather gave a splendid play-by-play of the action. It almost seemed as though he'd rather have been a member of the astronaut team.

I watched it all. They told us about the thrust of the engines, fuel con-

sumption, height of orbit and speed around the planet once orbit was attained. I listened and watched with rapt attention. I neither answered the door, the phone or the "call of the wild." After all, it was a historical occasion. Who could forget it?

Almost a year ago, in Indianapolis, Indiana, a speed record, of sorts, was achieved at the "INDY 500." Additionally, the winner was disputed because of certain irregularities which took place during a time when the drivers were under the caution flag. No one was to pass during that time. Someone

did and went on to come in first. It was that first place which aroused the anger of at least one of the other drivers. He lodged a complaint and ultimately persevered and had the winner's position go to him.

As much media coverage as that episode received, I can neither remember the winning time and average speed nor the names of the two drivers involved in the ultimate decision.

You may be wondering what the INDY 500 has in common with the space shuttle. Not much — on the surface. One was in space and the other was on Earth. But, you know, they each went around something — the shuttle around the world and the formula cars around the track. Both, in their element, achieved unbelievable speeds.

On land and in the air, few can touch the U.S.A. in technological development. Unbelievable. Who would believe that what those scientists,

technicians and mechanics believed was believable? Believe it or not, more than a few believed and because they did, they put up money and time to make those beliefs, in both instances, realities.

Speed. It's something to almost see. I say almost because usually it happens so fast that you really cannot conceive of it. More often than not, we can only imagine how fast things are going. Every now and then we do get an opportunity to see speed in action. Sometimes, speed is of such a nature that we can not only open the door, answer the phone and the "call of the wild," but we can also go on vacations, raise families, bury parents and/or loved ones, go to the Moon, breed numerous mass murderers, send hundreds of people off to life sentences and back again, send "other" people — for similar offenses — to the "chair" or to the gas chamber and on and on and on.

Finally, the children. They seem to always come out on the bottom because someone has said that "the next generation" would solve all of the problems. I refuse to believe that children and those yet unborn are more capable of solving things than we are. Sure, I know its crazy but so am I. So integration meant that they would have to leave their neighborhood schools and go to schools far, far away and sit in classrooms which were, mind you I said were, merchandising a culture substantially different than theirs. Well, one moment please. Enough's enough but this is too much.

Almost twenty-eight years ago to the day, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the public schools of the country were to integrate "with all deliberate speed." Twenty-eight years ago, merchandising a culture substantially different than theirs. Well, one moment please. Enough's enough but this is too much.

It is commonly believed that integration within the schools was something which would only be beneficial to black people. Because of that perception, black people were expected to pick up the entire tab. Well, in 1954, black people, even though they realized the error of that perception of value, were willing to do that. It was realized, by them, that integration was the one needed ingredient necessary to bring the United States closer to its target of democracy.

So we picked up the tab. We did it all. Okay. So integration meant that former black high

schools would become junior high schools and lose their traditions. Fine. We made the sacrifices. So integration meant that black principals would be demoted to assistant principalships with the accompanying loss of salaries and prestige. Fine. We made the sacrifices. So integration meant that black teachers would lose their jobs because of the perceived lack of qualifications to teach white children. Fine. We made the sacrifices. So integration meant that black secretaries, clerks, cooks and custodians would find their rank riddled with lay-offs. Fine. We made the sacrifices.

That one last school is snatched away. All we need or have ever needed it seems is just a minimum of fairness. Why we have been very patient in waiting for democracy to arrive is beyond me. But we are. In a way, we are almost in cahoots with our oppressors. We sanction what they do by going along with it or tolerating it or ignoring it or just simply making do with whatever we have. It reminds me of the way things are in Poland or in Hungary or in ... you name it.

We have not demanded or asked for a quantum sanctity. No. We don't mind a reasonable amount of trouble or hard times and deprivation and debasement. But now — now everything is taken away. Nothing is left. Look around. What do you see?

Oh well. They've just decided that bussing will no longer be used to achieve integration. Great. What's going to happen to us now? There are no junior high schools on the westside. There are no high schools on the westside. How are the children going to get to those places for all of those years that they must, without bussing? Maybe they'll just

For twenty-eight years we've made the sacrifices. And what happens? I'll tell you — as though you didn't already know. Everytime we look around, they want us to make even more sacrifices. Seems that there is no end to it.

We haven't minded doing our part even though our part was all of it. But, gee whiz, sports fans, you're rubbing that bit of dignity we have left into the dirt. Only one thing stood between us and total humiliation — one last school for the neighborhood. Well, I guess that was too much to expect. I guess someone thought we were standing up on our hind legs too much and not on our knees nearly enough.

Even if they did, they wouldn't be able to put gas in them. Remember, the overwhelming majority are unemployed and gas costs money. Oh, woe is us. I don't see any solution. Maybe we should just let them go ahead and build a high school and a few junior high schools on the westside. Then again, they probably wouldn't do that. There are not enough zone variances, for our young black men and women who help win championships all over town, to go around. Maybe we should sit out a year and negotiate for a better contract. Everyone else goes on strike when things are to their detriment. Airline traffic controllers, musicians, culinary workers, firemen, pilots, policemen, teachers, baseball players, football players and everyone else. It's the American way — or so it seems.

It seems that everyone is understanding of those strikes which take place — especially if they're involved. A lot of people got ticked off when the airline controllers went on strike — interrupted their vacations. A lot of airline controllers got ticked off when the pilots went on strike — interrupted their work schedule and salaries. A lot of people got ticked off when the teachers went on strike

— how dare they. A lot of people got ticked off when the culinary union went on strike — interrupted tourism. A lot of people got ticked off when someone else, anyone else, went on strike. So what? They went on strike anyway. Just a thought. What

do I know? I'm just an old country boy from the "sovereign" state of Mississippi.

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Professor Fitzgerald is director of ethnic studies at University of Nevada-Las Vegas

LIBRARY NEWS

The West Las Vegas Library, 1402 North "D" Street, is now open all day Friday and Saturday. The hours of the library are:

Monday & Thursday 1 p.m. - 9 p.m.
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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Save money and have fun by baking and/or growing some of your food. These cookbooks can help:

Tassajara Bread Book by Edward Espe Brown (Shambhala, 1970).

Good Housekeeping Complete Book of Cake Decorating (Hearst Corporation, 1973).

Homemade Foods & Drinks (Consumer Guide, 1977).

Easy Art of Smoking Food by Chris Dubbs and Dave Heberle (Winchester Press, 1977).

Jams, Preserves and Pickles by Rosemary Hume and Muriel Downes (Henry Regney Co., 1972).

The above books can be checked out from the West Las Vegas Library by anyone possessing a Clark County, or University, or Community College, or a North Las Vegas library card.

Social Security Cuts Support Dies in Budget Meeting

The Senate Budget Committee faces an uphill battle in their effort to cut \$40 billion from Social Security costs over three years.

Senate Budget chairman Pete Domenici, R-N.M., conceded Monday there is not enough support in the Republican Senate to pass the proposal.

"It would appear there is not going to be enough support for precisely the guaranteed solvency language that we put in," Domenici said. "I don't understand why we don't have

the courage to do it."

The Senate, in its second day of debate on the \$779 billion budget for fiscal 1983, had agreed to allow only general debate and to postpone any amendments until their Tuesday meeting.

The budget approved by the Senate Budget Committee earlier this month and backed by President Reagan includes \$40 billion in proposed Social Security savings. But Democrats and some maverick Republicans strongly oppose that idea.

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Bob Conner

Bob came to Las Vegas from Phoenix, several years ago and resides with his wife Jo Ann. He serves his clients and customers in real estate as vigorously as he serves his tennis, which is one of his many sports activities. Bob has been associated with Toler Realty for two years and his specialties include residential and land sales.

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