

Point of View

Editorial

Once again an act of God has superceded the actions of men. We refer to the activities of our politicians in their continuous refusal to provide for adequate flood control.

The recent flood in the Las Vegas area should remind us of how vulnerable we are to total destruction, while, at the same time, our local, county, state, and national leaders sit idly by and increase our vulnerability by doing nothing.

It would appear that, given the number of times we have had to pay for the numerous repairs that must be made after each flood, we have paid for proper flood control measures several times over. This is false economy when we, as taxpaying citizens, must continue to pay for temporary repairs when a one time layout for adequate flood control could be sufficient.

It is no wonder that the taxpayers are voting down the tax increases when our politicians are so shortsighted and cannot see how important an adequate flood control program would be in the Las Vegas area.

To Be Equal

TEEN PREGNANCY -- A MISUNDERSTOOD PROBLEM

by John E. Jacob

Teenage pregnancy is a serious national problem, but it's one that is misunderstood. Policy makers and the public alike deal with the issue in isolation and with a strong dose of morality, while realistic attempts to deal with the problem demand that it be seen in the context of the needs and aspirations of young people themselves.

The black community is especially impacted by the problem of teenage pregnancy because disproportionate numbers of births to young mothers occur among blacks.

In the past that has led to defensiveness, an understandable reaction given the racism that permeates our society and the smug, self-righteous and condemnatory tone in which black teenage pregnancy has been discussed.

But it is a problem the community has to face

up to. And it is not a moral issue but a socio-economic one. Children born to young mothers tend to be more susceptible to various birth disorders and to higher rates of infant mortality. They are more likely to grow up poor. And their mothers are less likely to acquire the education and the skills to become economically independent.

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The facts certainly support the case for black community concern. About a fourth of all black births occur to a teenaged mother, and four-fifths of those occur outside marriage. That results in a disproportionate rate of female-headed households and one-earner families are more likely to be poor.

The birth of a baby often means the end of

schooling for adolescent mothers. Forty percent of black female school dropouts leave school because of pregnancy. That's about 45,000 young women per year, or more than the number of black women who graduate from college each year.

About half of those young mothers never get a high school diploma.

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So it is not surprising that the majority of adolescent mothers are poor; the median income of households headed by young black women is under \$4,000.

I know full well that this is not a "black" problem -- far more white teenagers than blacks become pregnant, and this is a national issue that transcends race. But in this, as in so much else, the impact

phone books is tinier nowadays. And sometimes I have to step back to read the fuzzy numbers on the phone dial.

Television is Fuzzier!

They don't make TV sets like they used to, either. Years ago, the pictures were sharp and clear. Now the pictures are blurry unless I wear glasses.

It's a changing world. I've noticed the subway staircases are longer and steeper than they used to be.

Even sports aren't the same. Swimming and handball are much more tiring than they used to be 10 or 15 years ago. Golf is fun, but they never should have moved the greens so far apart.

Actually, I don't mind growing older--not when I think of the alternative!

Darlings, You Are Growing Old...

I MUST be getting old. Everything around me seems to be changing. I've noticed it in people, too.

Some of my friends about my age are beginning to look awfully old.

Recently I met some friends I hadn't seen in many years. They changed so much they didn't recognize me.

I was so upset. I took a long look at myself in the mirror. I haven't changed a bit in years.

The trouble is that everything else has!

For some strange reason, people talk in lower tones than they used to. I find myself repeatedly asking, "What did you say?"

And oddly enough, newspapers are using smaller print these days. Even the print in

PEOPLE, PLACES and POLITICS

By Joe Neal



A friend of mine was kidding me the other day about the position I took on last week's tax issue that was on the ballot for a vote. I was on the "yes" side of the question for reasons I will explain later. I asked this friend of mine if he had the right to pay or not to pay taxes, how much would he pay? His answer was "as little as possible."

I believe my friend's attitude to be typical of a growing number of people throughout this nation. It is an attitude, I believe, detrimental to the survival of representative government as we know it.

To maintain a representative government sufficient to address the needs of a citizenry, depends upon the financial support of those citizens. If we cannot collectively support government through the Universal means of a property tax, then government is left at the mercy of the rich and powerful. Government will become clanish and the survival of the fittest will become the new order. Whenever this occurs, the true purpose of government will be lost. We will not provide for the common good of all or insure justice and domestic tranquility, which are some of the noble purposes of a representative democracy, but rather, we will provide for chaotic conditions which would make it easy to proscribe the freedoms we have.

Last week's vote was lacking in a vision for the future. We are not simple residents of some four hundred thousands, but rather a community which invites millions of other people here each year to share our entertainment and to provide this community with an economic base. To provide for those whom we invite here, means that we have to tolerate a certain amount of growth and change. Growth increases the strain on our public safety capacity to provide a safe condition for those who are residents and invites to our community. For us to do that, we need people to work in these areas of public safety, instead of laying off people, as the governments are now faced with, because of the outcome of last week's vote.

Lonnie Chaney and I discussed what impact these lay-offs would have on the people we represented. Our conclusion was that even though many of the five hundred or so people to be laid off would be white and not black, the impact would still be felt upon the black community, because five hundred people placed in the unemployment ranks makes it more difficult for black people to acquire jobs.

Even though the tax question may have cost us money, we must be able to see the larger picture, which is the benefit to people.

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John E. Jacob

people access to health services than they are about helping young people avoid pregnancy and deal with it when it does occur.

Fortunately, there is growing support among black people for community-based efforts to See JACOB, Page 14