

Monday's Commentary

Future of sports equality seen through crystal ball

Nov. 25, 1982

I walked into the school and toward the gym where the boys' basketball game was just getting underway. A group of people were crowded around the ticket taker, so as I waited my turn I peeked into the gym to see what all the noise was about.

Strange, I thought. The visitors side of the gym was jammed with screaming fans, while the home side was only a quarter full.

The people in line in front of me turned around and, with puzzled looks on their faces, headed for the exit. Guess they didn't want to see the game, I figured as I walked to the entrance with my press pass ready.

"Hold it — where do ya think you're going?" The ticket taker had his burly hand planted squarely in the middle of my chest, holding me in place even though I was "walking," which made me look quite a bit like Marcel Marceau—doing his walking-without-moving routine.

"I'm with the press," I answered, flashing my pass while I still attempted to walk.

"Just a minute," he said, eying me suspiciously. "Hey, Charley! Does a guy from the press count toward the total?" he yelled to his comrade who was stationed just inside the door.

Charley turned around to look at me.

"Yeah, but just make sure s' his him," he yelled back to the ticket taker, who still held me in place with his hand.

He checked and re-checked my ID a second and a

third time, glancing at my facial features to make certain the picture was, indeed, me.

"HEY, WHAT'S GOING on?" I asked. I pointed at the press pass and inquired, "Who do you think that is, my mother? Do you think I just like to come to basketball games on Tuesdays to see if I can fool guys like you? I mean, I do have better things to do than sneak into high school basketball games."

"It's not so strange," he answered with a straight face. "People have tried more extreme methods than that."

"What are you talking about?" I was more puzzled now than ever.

"It's Title M. Haven't you heard?"

"I've heard of Title IX — equal sports opportunities for women. But what's Title M?"

"Equal everything for girls and boys in sports. I thought you were the writer. Don't you know about it?"

"I was on vacation for the last month," I answered feebly. "So what does all this include? What is Title M?"

"Everything in the boys' sports programs has to be exactly the same for the girls."

"Everything?" I asked. I suddenly began to realize just what this might mean.

"Everything," he said emphatically. "Just look at the crowd!"

"So?"

"Last Tuesday's girls' basketball game only drew



a crowd of 52 people. So only 52 people could come to tonight's game."

"You're kidding!" I was incredulous. "Don't people object?"

"THAT WHAT I'm here for," he said, thumping his chest. "It's my job to make sure only the same number of fans get in tonight. Can't have more fans for one sport than another."

"They try," he explained further. "That's what he's for (he pointed at Charley) — second line of defense."

"It gets that bad? People actually get that violent?"

"Are you kiddin'? They'll stop at nothing! Extortion, blackmail, threats against my life. The newest method is mass attack."

"What's that?"

"A large group — 50, sometimes 100 — just

charge the gate. We catch most of them, but a few get in."

"It's a tough business," he said with a sigh.

"What else does Title M include?" I asked.

"Uniforms."

"You mean," I stammered, "girls wearing supporters?"

He nodded. "And guys with bras. Really takes something off a jump shot."

"But if you control the size of the crowd, how come the other team has such a big number?"

"That's because they're a Birmingham school."

"Well, Birmingham schools can afford the best programs. You see, with Title M, a lot of high schools had to cut their junior varsity programs because of the extra cost of the girls sports. So parents pay extra money to send their kids to a school that has a complete program. And Birmingham does."

"They recruit the best talent in the area," he continued. "More people go to watch their games, both boys' and girls'. So they get bigger crowd allowances."

"This is crazy," I said in a somewhat shocked tone. "I mean, girls deserve the sports guys have, but isn't this taking it a little far? What's next?"

"Don't you know?" the ticket taker asked, finally removing his hand from my chest. "You guys — the sportswriters. Pretty soon, the same amount of ink for both boys and girls, measured down to the last inch."

"I mean, it's the American way."

tinkering around

by LOUISE OKRUTSKY

It ain't running; it's my car

A pox has descended upon the Farmington Observer office. The cars of at least two staff members have gone to that big assembly line in the sky. My car comprises half of the casualty list. I'm not saying it died in a big way. Let's just say when it made that last trip down the highway of eternity, it had to be towed.

And while the editor of the Observer is casting covetous eyes and lusting in his heart after a big car, I'll take anything that's relatively inexpensive and runs with a certain amount of dependability.

And somewhere out there, just at the very moment I write this, a chorus of heavenly car salesmen are gearing up to say: "That's nice, young lady, but of course you want these options. You deserve these options."

Take the salesman who pitched me his car the other day. I was alone. The first thing a car salesman says to a woman alone in a car showroom is, "What color do you want, dear? I have something in a pretty powder blue for you. It's just the thing for a young lady to drive. It's not too flashy."

I might be mistaken but I think I missed a whole chapter in charm school. The one that dealt with color coordinating your car.

IT MUST HAVE BEEN the lesson after color coordinating your wardrobe. I missed it.

As a result I never thought much about the color of my car. Maybe I should give it more thought. Should it match my eyes or my hair? (That's a moot point, they're both brown.)

Of course, the salesman leads you up to this nifty little car with plush upholstery and persuades you to slide into the front seat.

"My, you have such long legs," he coos as he tries to help you slide the seat forward.

"This car has power steering. Just the thing for a lady," he coos, without missing a beat.

It also has an motor that looks like it powers the sewing machine in my living room.

"See, it has a motor that looks like a sewing machine," he says, repeating the obvious. "Just the thing with rising gas prices."

I was tempted to ask if it did button holes, too.

As I walked out of the showroom with the company pamphlet in my hand, the salesman told me in consoling tones, "In 10 years, your husband will buy you a \$10,000 brougham."

"No," I answered. "He better not."

NOT ONLY WOULD I BE TOTALLY ignorant about what color to use in decorating it, I'd probably couldn't afford to keep it running.

Besides, I don't have a husband. I don't even have a rich boyfriend.

And I like small cars. Now, I know that certain portions of the aforementioned Observer staff like to say that preferring small cars is a sophisticated ideal.

So be it, but it's the small car that finds the best parking space.

I wonder, maybe you have to color coordinate the car with those lines painted on the curbs.

Right now I'm driving a rented silver car with a red leatherette interior. Talk about color coordinating. It looks like the rental people found it on a corner near Six Mile and Woodward.

The rental agency I'm using is a bit on the obscure side. It's located in an office building on Eight Mile. The first room in the office is empty. And the room the agents use is next to empty. It looks like Sam Spade did their interior decorating. An old refrigerator, a coffee pot on a hot plate and radio blaring out hit after hit. While the his keep on coming, the agents will tell you they're out of petty cash and you'll have to pay them in correct change.

As with their petty cash, they probably ran out of straight pins and had to improvise for the middle word.

Well, the car I've been renting runs alright. And my old car refuses to run after its electrical system literally went up in smoke.

But I'm still wondering. Maybe I ought to color coordinate my new car to my spring wardrobe.

What color of eyeshadow matches chrome?

Dress for success stereotype

John Malloy has a new book out called "How to Dress for Success."

Among other things, Malloy tells his readers that if they are ever tried for a crime before a jury, they should wear blue clothing to the trial. Blue is an innocent color. Never wear black, the book warns. Black is practically an admission of guilt.

Try this one. You are approached by a man in a black overcoat and a man in a beige overcoat. Which one would you trust? Naturally, the man in the beige overcoat, Malloy says. The stranger in the black overcoat is obviously a dirty old man. So goes the stereotype.

Ever notice how many people judge others by the way they dress? Take the case of my friend, Gail. Gail is 19 and petite. When she goes shopping for clothes, she has to dress up or salespeople won't wait on her.

"If I wear jeans, they think I'm a dumb kid who doesn't have any money and isn't going to buy anything," she says.

More stereotyping.

Yellow, red and orange are "warm" colors. White is "pure" and black is "bad." Bold prints are wild, grays and tweeds are businesslike.

Sometimes dress rules border on the absurd. Sometimes our responses to those rules can be equally absurd. Like the story which told about Johnny Carson in the current issue of Rolling Stone magazine. Carson was barred entry from a fancy restaurant by a haughty maitre' d' because he wasn't wearing a necktie. Carson coolly left the restaurant, put on a tie, took off his shoes and socks and returned. The management was aghast, but he was admitted — barefoot and wearing a tie.

Getting back to Malloy, he says that a stereotype is established for every situation by the way we dress. There's a sexy look, a conservative look, a casual look and the list goes on and on. If you dare not to conform, you have to suffer the consequences.

Social mores dictate dress style more than we realize. Not many workers would show up at the office in cutoff jeans and T-shirts. Certainly not if they were bucking for a raise or a promotion.

I think I'll buy a coordinated blazer, skirt and blouse outfit and have a little talk with the boss. I hope I can find a combination hard driving, but warm, color scheme.

Humanity's needs take more than a year

Talk is cheap. You ought to know that 1979 is the "Year of the Child." More than likely you're going to hear a lot of talk about it.

Last year, as you may recall, it was International Women's Year. It, too, got mouthed to death. It was highlighted with a conference conducted in Houston where very little was accomplished except to fill up some spare time on the national news with talk from Bella Abzug and friends.

This year's concentration on children, unfortunately, will accomplish just about the same thing — nothing.

Now don't get me wrong. Women have got a lot to beef about and a mass of corrective steps are needed to rectify the injustices.

In short, the Equal Rights Amendment, a very important concept in our society, received little benefit from all the hoopla.

Now, I don't have anything against children, either. As a matter of fact, I really enjoy children. For the most part, their minds haven't been tainted with all the bias that life's experiences renders.

But the thought passes through my mind that generally we have distorted view of what will aid those in need.

Take, for instance, those advertisements you see on television and in magazines about starving, war-ravaged children in far off lands. Sometimes you're asked to send in five or 10 bucks to help out the kid. Sometimes you're asked just to sit there and feel bad.

It's a fine way to make the conscience feel a little better but, in truth, it's a cop-out. It's going to take a lot more than a 10 spot to fix what's wrong in this world.

Obviously, a year for this cause and a year for



that solves very little. If it did, all those UNICEF Christmas cards and medallions lauding the women's movement would have solved them by this time. But such hollow actions haven't.

The reason is simple if you just stop and think about it for a moment.

Ask yourself whatever happened to that little starving kid you saw in Atlantic Monthly 10 years ago. More than likely he or she is an adult living in that same war-ravaged, starving country if, of course, that child is still alive.

But a strange thing happens in the affluent western world's mind when a child grows into an adult. We don't feel sorry for them any more. Instead, many persons blame them for the problems, thinking that starving adult, once a starving child, should be more responsible.

It all goes back to the convoluted notion of the American dream which too many persons try to foist on the rest of the world.

The "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" philosophy translates into a misguided resentment of those persons who we pitied when they were children.

A Division of
Suburban Communications Corporation

Philip H. Power
Chairman of the Board
(for years of absence)

Richard D. Agnigan
President
Chief Executive Officer

John Reddy, General Mgr.
Thomas A. Riordan, Executive Editor
George J. Hagan, Advertising Director, Fred J. Wright, Circulation Director

Farmington Observer
Successor of the Farmington Enterprise

Steve Barnaby
Editor

2332 Farmington Rd.
Farmington, Md. 48024
(313) 477-5450