

# Take another look at liberty and justice for all

"Believe in America," the signs exhort us.  
"Real Americans drive American cars."  
"I'm proud to be an American."

This year it's not just Fourth of July hoopla. A wave of patriotic zeal has been swelling throughout the year to meet the overwhelming problems in this country. But real solutions do not come packaged in red, white and blue.

Flying the flag won't reduce unemployment or help the handicapped escape institutionalized living. Buying an American car won't change corporate structures that blame government regulations for inefficiency or worker production for inferior products.

Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance won't convince Iranian leaders to send home the hostages or curtail inflation.

Boycotting the Olympics won't save the Cambodians from starvation or prevent senior citizens from being forced out of their communities for lack of housing.

INCREASINGLY, it's difficult to get excited about Independence Day when there are so many in this country and abroad who depend for survival on political tides that threaten their foundations.

The party conventions every four years become just another piece of advertising designed to persuade Americans that they have a choice in the electoral process.

Ronald Reagan calls for a \$20 billion tax cut, but no one seems to worry about where that cash in the budget will be made.

Jimmy Carter bides his time, hoping for a Democratic surge of unity in the face of California conservatism.

The Republican delegates will party it up in Detroit, spending enormous sums of money to confirm Reagan's ascendancy to the GOP throne this year, while those out of work will stand in unemployment lines.



Lynn Orr

The Democratic delegates will struggle over a party platform in New York, while no one remembers what the platform was four years ago.

But real Americans are expected to live it up tomorrow, celebrating the birthday of independence and the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

REAL AMERICANS, however, don't necessarily twirl sparklers.

Real Americans believe and even live by real American ethics — not baseball, hot dogs, apple pie and Chevrolet, but ideals such as racial and sexual equality, open housing and equal education.

Real Americans are concerned about the clash destined to take place as the gap widens between the haves and the have-nots.

Real Americans are worried about the conceit that has captured the spirit of America. Call it the "me generation," but the only thing new about selfishness is its intensity.

Real Americans will have to turn our leaders' attention to problems smoldering in our system.

The fight before us is not independence from foreign oil or Communism. The outcome of the battle will not be determined by nuclear missiles.

The real war will not be fought on foreign soil. Real Americans will have to decide if it's more important to have snowmobiles and second homes for a select few or food and shelter for everyone.

Real Americans will have to face down racism, elitism and exaggerated self-interest.

Real Americans will have to make sacrifices. Happy Birthday, America. Here's one to grow on.

— LYNN ORR



## A health fad for swim buffs is guts work

Never one much for trends, I've found myself inextricably mired in one, nevertheless.

Americans adopt trends like rabbits have babies. For every type of person there is an exercise fad — racquetball, jogging, roller skating, softball — that sort of thing.

But ever so quietly a new trend is creeping up on the American public. It's called swimming.

Swimming? Yes, swimming, that most ancient of sports.

Oh, this isn't your everyday let's-lay-on-the-beach swimming. Rather, it's the let's-bust-a-gut type.

IN GUTS swimming, participants daily climb into a swimming pool and maddly stroke away for an hour. The object is to see how many lengths you can swim in that hour.

The benchmark for most novice swimmers is one mile. A few weeks back I broke a mile and, like most trends, was totally obnoxious about it.

There's nothing worse than a trendy announcing to everyone within ear shot that he's "broken a mile." Nobody else really cares, but you've got this irresistible urge to tell them anyway.

Guts swimmers look down their noses at joggers. There are fewer of us than them so the natural inclination for snobbery enters into the equation.

SECONDLY, guts swimmers believe joggers to be sweaty exhibitionists, prone to shin splints and heat prostration.

After all, what sensible person dresses in a pair of jogging shorts with matching sweat band and jogging shoes just so he can go out and sweat?

To make it worse, joggers display their sweaty bodies on television and are unashamedly lauded by the national media.

Books on jogging are even more obnoxious. Tons exist. "A Better You Through Jogging," "Jogging to Health," "Jog until You're 100," and "Jogging, You and Jesus."

Guts swimmers, on the other hand, are basically loners. At noon, we quietly sneak out of the office, climb into the car and drive to the pool. Paraphernalia includes trunks, towel, soap and, most importantly, goggles.

All guts swimmers wear goggles. Naturally, there is a debate over which kind of goggles is best. But even that is a rather limited controversy since there are only about three different types.

As far as the rest of the gear, nobody really cares about your trunks and the least thing on anybody's mind is the kind of towel with which you dry yourself.

Guts swimmers would never think of having a marathon. Could you imagine 1,000 persons swimming the English Channel at once? Never happen. We compete against ourselves, not others.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, we don't have magazines and books toting the glories of swimming and Zen Buddhism and other such nonsense. In truth, there just isn't that much about it to write.

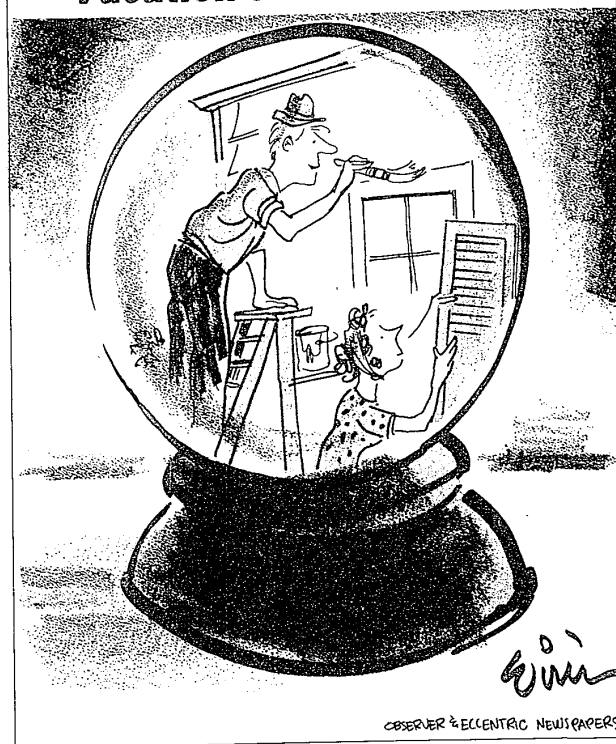
So if you've got the guts, come and join us down at your local swimming pool.



discover Michigan  
Bill Stockwell

Did you know that University of Michigan students in aerospace engineering have proposed a method for disposing of nuclear waste by projecting it outside the solar system? The materials would not reach any other celestial body for at least a million years, by which time the radioactivity will have dissipated.

## Vacation of the future?



## A July 4 touch of liberty

Well, here we are at another Fourth of July. It is officially known as Independence Day — a day set aside for the signing of the Declaration of Independence that ended our ties with the British and delivered us from the yoke of the king.

Across the land, in every town, city and hamlet, there will be parades, fireworks and all manner of activities that will be part of the celebration.

But while The Stroller will be riding in a parade, his mind will go back to the days of his youth when he learned more of American history in one day than he could have learned in a month in school.

And he only wishes he could take some of today's youth with him on an imaginary trip to Independence Hall in Philadelphia where the declaration was signed the United States was born.

IT SO happened that The Stroller was born a few miles from Philadelphia, and it became a custom to visit Independence Square every July 4.

There, in that old brick building, we would walk through the halls that once were travelled by the members of the Continental Congress. We even would see the pegs on the wall on which the members would hang their coats and hats during sessions.

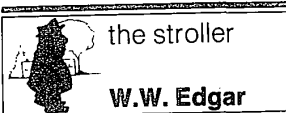
And as The Stroller looks back now, he can't forget his first trip there with his Aunt Fanny as a guide. She volunteered to take us on a tour that left a lasting impression.

There was something about Independence Hall that fascinated her more than any other building. For that reason, she knew every board in the place.

Once she got The Stroller in the meeting room around the old table where the Congress met, she knew where each member sat. And she often quoted them.

BUT IT wasn't the visit to the meeting room that The Stroller got his greatest thrill. That came in the room in which the Liberty Bell was housed.

The first sight of it was a thrill. But as we walked around the bell, we came to the famous crack in it, and Aunt Fanny made us stop.



Then, very solemnly, she asked us to place our hand over the crack, bow our heads, and then pray for the safety of the country. It was a spine-tingling moment — and possibly would be for any one.

Since those days, the Liberty Bell has been moved across street and now is encased in glass where it no longer is possible to place your hand on it. But just the sight of the old bell is a thrill.

ONCE WE left the bell and Independence Hall on that first trip, we walked along the Quaker section of the city to the home of Betsy Ross, who is credited with making the first American flag.

It is a small house, and one has cause to wonder how anyone could travel the narrow stairways to the basement or to the upper floor. But it still was a memorable moment just to see the chair in which she sat while making the flag.

From Betsy Ross' home we journeyed to Old Christ Church where the members of the Continental Congress worshipped. And this, too, was a thrill.

As we walked down the aisle of the famed old church, we could see the name plates on the side of the pews that designated the exact place where our forefathers sat.

And then on to Valley Forge, where General George Washington and his Continental Army survived the ravages of a hard winter — a time when it appeared, according to history, that the war would be lost and we would be forced back under the yoke of Great Britain.

## Fight is on: vacation vs. big housing

The housing industry talks as if all we need are lower interest rates and a plentiful supply of mortgage funds, and things would be back to their urban sprawl normal.

It's apparent, however, that we are in the process of turning a corner in housing, which for many years has been the most inflationary industry in America.

One fact speaks volumes: Less than a generation ago, an American family was spending 20 percent of household income on housing. Today it is spending 40 percent on this basic need. (Today's household income, incidentally, most frequently includes a wife's earnings.)

One of two things must happen. Either folks must get ready to spend 50 or 60 percent of their household incomes on housing, or else they must move toward more compact housing — smaller houses, mobile homes, apartments, row houses and the like.

EXACTLY THE same thing is likely to happen in housing as happened with automobiles.

The natural gas-guzzling, electricity-guzzling, tax-guzzling, paint-guzzling, fertilizer-guzzling large house on a spacious lot will be less and less affordable as construction and energy prices continue to soar.

The housing industry will fight back, of course. In the same way the auto industry scoffed at and deprecated small cars and called its own offerings subcompacts, the housing industry will fight to keep folks buying the behemoths.

How? Well, if we are to continue to buy big houses and maintain what we have, we must sacrifice somewhere. Don't send the kids to college? No. Cheaper clothes? That won't save much. Eat more fish and turkey and less beef? We're already doing that.

THE VACATION is the one big ticket item where folks can scrimp in order to pump money into housing.

Over at the builders' association, some members are freely predicting (praying?) that we will continue to prefer big houses and take our vacations at home.

The Western Wayne Oakland County Board of Realtors is subtly selling the idea. Here is its news release from last week:

"Rising travel costs may encourage many homeowners to spend at least part of this year's summer vacation restoring their property to peak condition.

"For many, particularly those readying a home for sale in the near future, renovation will include repainting of all exterior wooden surfaces. According to the Western Wayne Oakland County Board of Realtors, this is a job generally needed every five to seven years to protect surfaces against Michigan's weather extremes . . .

"Cost of the paint job then is generally considered a worthwhile investment, especially if the work can be performed by the homeowner. However, the Realtors advise allowing plenty of time for proper preparation of surfaces and the use of good quality paint." (Emphasis added.)

As any accountant knows, paint is a maintenance cost, not an "investment," as the handout contends. But "investment" is such a pretty word.

The battle is on: housing vs. the vacation. There's a lot of money at stake. How will you spend yours?