

# editorial opinion

# Eccentricities



by HANK HOGAN

## Constitution lives

On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence. It included the phrase, "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal . . ."

On March 1, 1789, the Constitution of the United States was declared to be in effect, since nine states had ratified it.

What happened to the spirit of democracy between 1776 and 1789? If you read the original Constitution carefully, it was not a document written for the common man. The government was separated into three branches: The judicial, the executive and the legislative.

THE CONSTITUTION provided that the federal judiciary be appointed by the executive branch.

It provided that the chief executive be elected by what is now called the Electoral College, which could be appointed (not elected) in such manner as the state's legislature wished to direct.

The Constitution also provided that in selecting the legislative branch the U.S. Senators shall be chosen by the state legislatures, and the members of the House of Representatives shall be elected by the people.

ALL OF WHICH means that if all men were created equal, the framers of the Constitution were not convinced that the equal man was very trustworthy.

They permitted the people to elect only the mem-

bers of the House of Representatives, which could be checked by the U.S. Senate, or checked by the executive branch through veto, or interpreted by an appointed judiciary.

America has been looked upon as a model of democracy, with the Constitution its foundation.

FORTUNATELY, over the years, through amendment and liberal interpretation by the judiciary, it has become a living document, correcting what the founding fathers did not necessarily believe — that power should be in the people and not in a select group of political officeholders.

In 1913 the Constitution was amended to provide for direct popular vote of the U.S. Senate, but the federal judiciary is still appointed and the president is still elected by the artificial body called the Electoral College. This somewhat reflects the wishes of the people, since the Electoral College delegates are now elected as a slate by the people, rather than appointed by the state legislatures.

BUT WE STILL have a long way to go to be the democracy we think we are.

We must provide for direct election of the president and we must somehow get the American people to want to use their inherent right to influence government by getting out to vote.

I have heard an awful lot of people who are critical of the direction in which our ship of state is drifting, and that ship will continue to drift until the American people make their voices heard to change its course.

## Mother's arms not safe?

It seems like almost an affront to motherhood to suggest that being in its mother's arms is not, under all circumstances, the safest place for baby. This is exactly what the president of Physicians for Automotive Safety does suggest.

What Dr. Seymour Charles of Irvington, N.J., is getting at is that in an automobile the baby is in danger when protected only by its mother's embrace. To sharpen the point he says that taking a newborn infant home from the hospital that way constitutes well-intentioned child neglect. He recommends that, instead, the baby be bundled into a special infant carrier strapped to the front seat.

The soundness of the recommendation is borne out by accident figures. Last year 370 babies less than a year old died in auto accidents. Some might have been killed no matter what precautions had been taken. Yet it is a reasonable conclusion that many of them died because, without proper restraints, they were hurtled forward like projectiles on impact.

Child carriers in which an infant rides in a restraining harness are inexpensive. Use of such a carrier may make the difference between life and death for the baby in a crash. Who can afford not to take such a precaution?

## Unscientific study

A reported decline in scientific knowledge among elementary and secondary school pupils makes one wonder if this may herald a significant change in American attitudes. We are inclined to think not, if only because there is not yet enough evidence on which to judge, but it is an interesting subject for speculation.

Under auspices of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, some 10,000 pupils aged 8, 13 and 17 were tested in the 1972-73 school year for scientific knowledge and ability to solve scientific problems. They did less well than a similar group given the same tests three years earlier. On the face of it such a deterioration in scientific achievement is deplorable, in part because an industrial society

relies heavily on science for its technological progress.

But suppose it could be shown that the decline signifies a corresponding rise of interest in other areas — history, literature, the arts, government, and so forth. Would that be such a bad thing?

Not necessarily. For some years our society has been involved in a fumbling but persistent reappraisal of values long taken for granted by most of its citizens. Among these values one finds the common view that science can come up with answers to all problems, if only enough money and know-how are brought to bear. We are not persuaded that the school tests reflect a rising tendency to reject this idea. But it is, as noted above, an interesting thing to think about.

## Bicentennial response

Earlier talk of huge, commercialized fairs or exhibitions as the core of American Revolution Bicentennial activity has pretty much given way to the grass roots idea. Now, though, Congress has authorized a 20-million-dollar grant to be divided equally among the states, the emphasis is on planning and funding at the state and municipal levels.

There has been a strong response to this from around the country. The Bicentennial Administration reports that as of

the end of June it had received word of some 2,000 projects planned in roughly 1,000 communities. More are expected within the near future.

A great many proposals are focused on a historical theme. Our hope is that there also will be projects which look to the future in light of the nation's experience thus far, emphasizing ways in which the great doctrines of freedom and equality can be better implemented over the next century.

## Observation Point

by PHILIP H. POWER



## England's suburbs

LONDON — The suburbs in England developed earlier than ours in America. Moreover, in contrast to ours which were called forth by the mass availability of the automobile and good roads, their suburbs were a restrictive expression of deep class divisions in the society. They consisted of securely paid middle class enclaves, placed far enough from the urban working class to avoid unseemly contamination.

Today the suburbs in England and, indeed, the entire middle class are under pressure more seriously than during the Great Depression. In fact, they feel so much under threat that reasonable people last week were talking quietly and matter of factly about the desirability of a counter-revolution from the right.

For anyone who knows the unique role the middle class has played for centuries in setting those particularly nonviolent, flexible and civilized qualities of English society, this situation is very sad. It is as though the basis of an entire society were rather quickly flowing down the drain.

Just why this is happening is interesting, not only for England but for us here in our own suburbs.

THERE ARE TWO driving engines hammering out trouble for England: Inflation, currently running at around 20 percent per year, and the deep divisions between social classes which have never been resolved and hence have called forth storms of fear and hate.

For a time, these forces were held in check because the total economic output of the society was growing, allowing most people in each class to get a little more each year. But the Arab oil boycott stopped the energy-dependent English economy in its tracks, and the subsequent massive price increases in oil drove up the price of manufactured goods for export so much that many of the country's foreign markets dried up. Economic growth stopped, requiring that if one class were to get more, some other class would have to get less.

The strike by the coal miners last year settled who was to get more. The miners — underpaid by any standards — were the country's only source of energy and brought the economy to its knees in demanding and getting a wage settlement far, far in excess of the law limiting pay increases.

THE CONSEQUENCES of this pattern of events have been dramatic. The hand of the "socialism at all costs" segment

of the Labor Party was much strengthened, and most socialist theoreticians I met here are saying that the major item on the political agenda over the next five years will be a massive redistribution of economic and political power to the working class from the middle class.

For example, late last week, the national hospital employees union struck the hospitals with a demand that all treatment to private patients (most people are covered by national health care) be ended. Some journalists I met said they expected this was only the beginning.

With inflation continuing and international payments running a negative balance of many billions of dollars, most economists think that by the time England's big new oil and gas fields in the North Sea start giving the nation some income it will have been mortgaged to pay for the programs envisioned by the theoreticians and the balance of payments deficit.

And in the background, a new political party — the National Front — has started up, advocating a tough government and no nonsense about wage demands. This is in parallel with the National Socialists in Germany after its terrible inflations of the 1920's, and it may be equally dangerous.

SO AN ENTIRE society is in spasms, and we in America can only look on in sympathy and worry for ourselves.

Obviously, England is not America. The American tradition has been to turn the working class into the middle class, rather than to promote class antagonisms in the English manner. The American economy continues to grow, so there is a little more for everybody rather than less for somebody. The oil boycott hurt our economy, but we were not totally dependent on foreign energy as the English were.

But the corrosive effect of inflation run rampant is terrifying to see. If allowed to continue unchecked here, it could set white against black, labor against management, city against suburb. Our great defense against such a terrible outcome, I would guess, is that our political tradition and economic strength have been such as to enable everybody to earn a little more and to provide opportunity for those willing to work to get ahead without an over rigid class structure to impede their progress.

I only hope that we can manage it, for tonight there is something very close to terror abroad in the calm, green suburbs of England.

# Farmington Observer & Eccentric

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### Praise for police

To the Editor:  
As a resident of Farmington Hills, I wish to thank officers Fitzpatrick and Havner, two of Farmington Hills finest.  
Too often in our society you hear nothing good about a policeman, only the bad.  
These two gentlemen took the time and patience to lend a helping hand to a senior citizen.  
After taking routine information on a vandalism call at our father's house, the officers provided him with a mail box complete with post and lettering, without compensation.  
We want it brought to the attention of the public that there are officers on the force that are concerned with mankind.

### Thanks but no thanks

To Robert A. McConnell:  
Thank you for your invitation to attend Tuesday night's Farmington Republican Revival meeting.

I'm sorry that previous commitments — working day and night to elect Democrats, prevents me from attending.  
We do offer your efforts moral support, however, in hope that the two party system can be restored to Farmington. The Farmington Democratic Club can use all the help it can get in moving the Farmington Hills government toward a path of progress.  
Once you are organized, may we suggest a joint meeting — possibly on the site of newly-paved Gill Road, to work out plans to help elect more Democrats to office.  
Aldo Vagnozzi, Chairperson  
Only Established Political Club In Farmington

### Vacant office space

To the Editor:  
I have just arrived back home and while driving around Southfield, I was amazed at how many buildings have offices for lease, yet more are being built.  
For example, the Pountainside Office Center on Twelve Mile was built three years ago and it still has vacant offices. Could you please tell me why

three other buildings are under construction in that immediate area?  
I feel that the available building space should be utilized until all constructed building will house productivity — not empty offices.  
Barbara Heller  
Southfield  
June 27, 1974

### Early counseling

To the Editor:  
I enjoyed your article on the need for good counselors. I would like to suggest that we really should have our counselors in the elementary systems.  
Basically, a teacher can identify a potential dropout at a very early age. These kids need immediate attention and a counselor would or could develop specific programs and personal help.  
This preventive effort would save many young people before it's too late to help.  
Your comment about placing students in name institutions is in fact what is happening too.  
Carl Pursell  
State Senator (R-14)  
May 30, 1974

### Birth control

To the Editor:  
Your June 20 article explaining the philosophy of and medical services provided by Planned Parenthood League, Inc. was excellent although it contained several ambiguities.  
It was stated that patients at PPL's Pontiac Clinic "are given birth control pills or information." Often, the careful medical interview and physical examination taken prior to the selection of a method for each patient contraindicates the use of "the pill." When this happens, or if a patient prefers not to take an oral contraceptive, she is offered an alternative method such as an IUD or diaphragm where there is minimal risk of accidental pregnancy. Instruction in the Rhythm Method is also offered if requested.  
While "no one is ever refused service for lack of funds," PPL's patient enrollment is limited by the extent of private support. The Pontiac Center requires approximately \$20,000 annual operating income just to maintain its present level of services. It is one of

four clinics wholly supported by contributions.  
Planned Parenthood League will welcome inquiries about its services and community education programs. Your readers may write to 3750 Woodward, Detroit 48201 or call 832-7200 between 8:30 and 4:30.  
Mary Shapiro  
Planned Parenthood League Inc.  
Chairman of the Board  
Detroit  
June 2, 1974

### Wisdom, peace

To the Editor:  
Rabbi Korff speaking and traveling on behalf of Richard Nixon leans heavily on his antecedents, claiming to be a lineal descendant of some 20 centuries of rabbis. He carries a message of faith.  
Faith in the President, in the constitution, that what emanates from the White House is the truth. From what I have read, the Jewish teachings have nothing to say of faith, but much to say of wisdom. "We unto the disciples of the law who possess wisdom and do not practice virtue." And what is virtue?  
Filial piety, charity, hospitality

and the establishment of peace among men."  
But this peace is not a metaphysical peace of grace wrought by a miracle. It must be achieved within the actual world by love.  
Rabbi Korff cannot go around asking that faith be substituted for wisdom and remain true to his heritage. Neither can his benefactor Richard M. Nixon buy a lasting peace.  
Warren M. Klein  
Franklin Village  
June 17, 1974

### Run for fun

To the Editor:  
On behalf of the sponsoring committee of the Birmingham Open Six-Mile Run, I want to express to you our deep appreciation for the article you recently published about our upcoming event. It has generated a lot of new interest in this general area, in the event itself, and hopefully, in "running for fun" in the future.  
Michigan "has been tabbed as one of the future boom areas for long-distance running, and you may just have helped to make the Birmingham-Bloomfield area the capital."  
Robert K. McKenzie Jr.  
Birmingham  
June 17, 1974