

points of view

Technology aims at a hero

I ALWAYS WANTED to be a superhero, but I'm not that physicist. I mean, all those "ZAPS" and "POW"s may be fine for Batman and Robin, but in real life they translate into pain.

Besides I've never been able to figure out who paid the superguy's salary. And whatever they were paid, it couldn't have been enough, just the upkeep on the uniforms had to cost a fortune.

So I'd pretty much decided to let the proper authorities deal with the villains and arch criminals and I'd continue being a mild-mannered newspaperman. Then I started reading about all those videos.

You know, the one in California that showed the cops beating up on some guy. Another one in Fort Worth, Texas, showing a similar incident. The one in Detroit that showed some suburban women getting stomped by a group of teenage guys.

The people who took the videos didn't try to stop what was going on, you understand. They just stood there, video cameras at the ready, and recorded it all on tape — presumably using a telephoto lens. Then they turned the tape over to the authorities and let them handle the messy details.

EVERYWHERE YOU turn, people are dragging out the video cameras. Police in Fort Worth have reported several incidents of responding to calls and being taped by passersby armed with the recorders.



Jack Gladden

A couple of other videotapes have made the news lately that add a whole different perspective to a crime fighting tool.

A defense attorney for a Rochester man accused of sexually assaulting a Center Line woman and recording it all with a hand-held video camera got the OK from a judge this week to use the tape as evidence at the trial. He claims the tape will indicate "consent" on the part of the woman.

And down in Florida, a man and a woman were engaging in sexual activity inside a first-floor condominium. The blinds were partially open and neighbors in a swimming pool less than 10 feet away were able to see through the blinds and witness the act.

One neighbor said he yelled at the man involved to close the blinds, but the man said later that he didn't hear anyone yell or know that anyone was watching. Another neighbor told him that just watch.

He grabbed his video camera, aimed it through the blinds and recorded the activity on tape. He turned the tape over to sheriff's deputies.

uties who watched it and later arrested the couple for lewd and lascivious behavior in front of a child younger than 12.

The fact that the couple was inside their own condo and the neighbors who "witnessed" the act had to look through the windows to do it didn't deter the deputies from upholding their sworn duty. The man and woman were charged and released on \$15,000 bail each.

SO I DECIDED. I'm going out and buy myself a video camera, a pair of red long Johns and a blue sweatshirt. I'll get my mother-in-law to embroider a big white "V" on the front of the shirt and — Ta! Ta! — "Videoman."

"I'll prow! the neighborhood-looking for partially open blinds and questionable activity going on inside. I'll cruise the city streets in the Videomobile, seeking out muggers and robbers. If I spot someone getting stomped by a street gang, I'll capture it all on VHS.

No one will be safe from the electronic eye of Videoman. And all those "ZAPS" and "POW"s? Leave them to Batman and Robin. Videoman won't do anything to stop a crime. He'll just watch it and tape it and turn the tape over to the authorities.

Yeah, that's my kind of superhero.

Jack Gladden is a copy editor with Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

Left wing ignores truth



Tim Richard

"THE 1950S." Ask an Ignoramus or a left-wing propagandist to describe the decade, and you'll hear "Elvis Presley" or "the McCarthy Era and the Red Scare."

In truth, Elvis was the darling of the C students, the greasers. A poll showed B and A students preferred Pat Boone.

Elvis' rise came in the '50s, as scholastic aptitude scores plummeted.

SEN. JOE McCarthy, R-Wis., chaired an investigating committee from 1952, when the GOP won Congress, to 1954, when it lost control. Two years. Some "era."

Before the decade ended, McCarthy, not yet 50, died of cirrhosis of the liver, a malady associated with the ingestion of prodigious quantities of grain alcohol.

In short, McCarthy was a drunk. Drunks are sick people. Drunks don't deserve to be canonized by the right wing, which — no longer honors McCarthy. Drunks don't deserve to be vilified by the left wing, which continues to do so.

Yet McCarthy's name still pops up in any discussion of the '50s and the recent University of Michigan flap-doodle over whether to exonerate three faculty members bounced in 1954.

HERE'S A POP quiz for leftists who babble about "McCarthyism." Identify:

1. "Amerasia."
2. The Smith Act.
3. Igor Gouzenko.
4. Louis Budenz.
5. Elizabeth Bentley.
6. Judith Coplon.
7. The Rosenbergs.

ANSWERS:

1. A magazine circulated to Asia diplomatic specialists and scholars, "Amerasia" admired the Chinese Communists. Early in 1945 a federal intelligence specialist found in "Amerasia" whole paragraphs of a top-secret document he had written. Federal raiders found 300 documents from British, U.S. Navy and U.S. Army intelligence — and our plans to bomb Japan.

The editor plea-bargained down to a charge of possession of government documents. Many felt Truman administration prosecutors were too lenient.

2. In 1951 a New Deal/Fair Deal Supreme Court affirmed the conspiracy convictions of top Communist Party officers under the Smith Act for plotting the overthrow of our government.

3. Gouzenko, a clerk in the Soviet embassy in Toronto, transmitted coded spy reports. He defected, bringing scores of documents and names of Canadian officials who had spied for the Soviets.

The Soviets were targeting such military secrets as the proximity fuse to anti-sub devices and radar. Their little helper was scientist Alan Nunn May, a Communist who had fed the Soviets samples of uranium 233 and 235. May got 10 years.

Fifteen Canadian officials also were caught.

4. Budenz, editor of the Daily Worker, revealed the influence of Soviet control of the Communist Party in the U.S. fingered Gerhart Eiler, who skeddaddled back to the Iron Curtain.

5. After her Russian spy-lover died, the ignored Bentley went to the FBI, pointing to a score of Soviet sources such as an assistant secretary of the treasury.

6. Coplon, a Justice Department clerk, was caught handing documents to Valentin Gubichev, a Soviet employee of the United Nations. Convicted, Coplon won an appeal because the FBI had illegally tapped her telephone.

7. The Rosenbergs went to the electric chair for revealing atomic secrets.

THESE WERE real cases the left wing forgets about.

Americans expected their World War II enemies to spy, but they were infuriated that our ally, the Soviet Union, was spying and doubly angry that the secret of the A-bomb, our war weapon, slipped away.

That "McCarthyism" stuff is, to use President Truman's term, "a red herring."

Tim Richard reports regularly on the local implications of state and regional events.

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Foster mothers restore life to sick AIDS babies

CINDY AND HER sister Tammy (not their real names) are beautiful one- and two-year-olds with big blue eyes, rosy cheeks and new happy giggles. They also have AIDS. The reason for their happy laughter is the inexcusable advocacy and support social worker Judith Urban and their foster mother offer them.

Their foster mother's own child died of cancer a year ago. The children's natural mother is HIV-positive, indiscriminately promiscuous, and a drug and alcohol abuser with a criminal record.

Recently a man called the county Public Health Department to complain that she had had sex with him without advising him of her terminal communicable illness — a felonious offense.

The natural mother repeatedly violated Ms. Urban's trust, including once when she sold for drugs the brand-new furniture and appliances paid for by the Department of Social

Services which Ms. Urban had arranged to have delivered to her.

SO THE SOCIAL worker recommended placement of the two terminally-ill children in this foster home. A serenely capable woman with a ready smile, this remarkable foster mother had nursed her son until his death and then offered her services as a foster parent as a way of feeling needed and working through her grief.

"God gave me those babies for a reason," she said. "They needed me and I needed them." If Cindy and Tammy's biological mother loses custody of them through her chronic misbehaviors, the foster mother says she will try to get permanent custody.

Those saintly and exceptional souls who take care of children with AIDS have to set their alarm clocks to get up every four hours 365 days a year to administer medicine that slows down a process of cell deteriora-



John Telford

tion that usually kills the young victim within four years.

It can cost the state beyond \$100,000 annually for institutional care for one of these kids. Foster parents, on the other hand, are volunteers who are carefully screened and have their own sources of income. They are far from easy to find — and particularly difficult to find are those willing to care for AIDS-infected children.

The insufficient funds the state had allocated to this fine foster parent for each of her charges had forced her to dig deep into her own pocket to provide for them.

BLESSEDLY, Governor Engler

has reinstated the reimbursement provision he recently had cut for heroines like this, so now they will again be able to afford to serve as foster parents. This is true of all foster parents in Michigan — not only for those caring for kids with AIDS.

If Cindy and Tammy had been taken out of this home, they would have been almost certain to die much sooner. Their foster mother, who happens to be of a different race than her two foster children, is the only person they have ever bonded with. She also is the only person thoroughly familiar with their symptoms and medical history.

Before Cindy came to her foster mother, her ribs showed, her eyes were dark-circled and sunken, and she lay in an institutional bed all day staring catatonically at the ceiling. Before Tammy came to this loving home, she was abandoned for long periods with strangers without the medication needed to prolong her life while her natural mother roamed the streets stealing and buying drugs.

I would like to invite the Governor and his staff to visit the sixth-floor north wing of Children's Hospital of

Michigan, 3601 St. Antoine in Detroit, to see the dying children. Then I would ask him to visit this wonderful foster parent's home to see what he has restored for Cindy and Tammy, and for innocent children like them who were born to die from AIDS.

John Telford, a Rochester Hills resident, most recently was a senior administrative assistant for instructional administration in the Rochester School District. He previously was executive director for secondary education in the Plymouth-Canton district.



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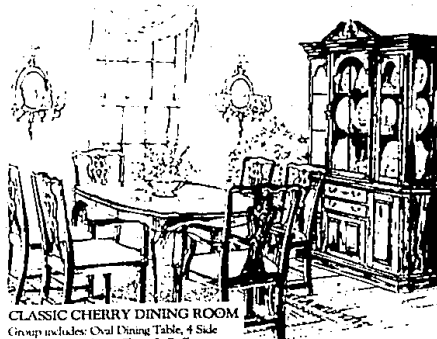
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