

Editorials

NFP... Its Time Has Come

NFP. As with so many initial organizations, this combination took a while to catch on, much as the group for which they stand. And in a similar and parallel vein, they are now as readily used and understood. Yes, Natural Family Planning is making strides here and elsewhere across the nation.

Frankly, not even all the method's firmest supporters are that happy with the title; they feel it has too sterile a connotation — probably because of the word "planning" which may sound too much like some secular, contraceptive-based, anti-birth organizations.

But such a problem is minor when compared to other misconceptions about NFP and its adherents. Perhaps because sex is still a difficult topic for many, it hasn't been easy for NFP leaders to generate discussion about their method to erase some ill-founded ideas.

Probably foremost among these is that NFP and the rhythm method are synonymous. This a fallacy probably arising from the fact that both shun abortion and contraceptives. There the similarity ends. NFP

does not use the calendar but relies on a woman's observations of day-to-day bodily changes.

Another false notion is that some think they can read a book on NFP and then use the method successfully. Then, if they have an unplanned birth, they blame NFP. Therese Petracca, NFP director here, strongly cautions against such procedure. All official NFP instructors use the method themselves and have been trained and certified to teach it to interested couples in courses. Following those norms, the success rate is 99 percent, Mrs. Petracca says.

Perhaps the simplest error is that NFP is used only to prevent births. Not so. It is effective in bringing about births as well and has even been successful for couples who previously had trouble conceiving.

And if that is the simplest myth to be dispelled then perhaps the most difficult is that the abstinence makes it unacceptable. Ardent NFPers dispute that contention. Their experience is that the abstinence period enhances their sexual enjoyment and has the further virtue of deepening their personal relationship.

Some problems come from without. Make no mistake about it, the contraceptive industry in the United States is huge. If NFP were to become even moderately accepted among all segments of American society, not to mention among overpopulated nations elsewhere, think of the ramifications for the manufacturers of everything from IUDs to the pill —

not to mention doctors who constantly prescribe and monitor such material. It is in the best interests of some very big interests to discredit, perhaps not openly, but subtly, NFP and its effectiveness.

NFP has the full and enthusiastic support of the official Roman Catholic Church. But, sadly, it has not had such fulsome support from all priests, nor from other professionals. Why? Probably because of some of the false notions already mentioned. Also because many have seen it as a fad. Indications are that it is not. NFP began here here in 1973 and since then has gathered some 1,200 to 1,300 couples all trained by certified instructors.

Cardinal Terence Cooke, speaking for the U.S. bishops, has urged all dioceses to generate NFP programs. In Rochester, while the diocese has been positive about NFP, it has not offered public support. It has been hesitant to promote it openly.

No one, it should be made clear, wants NFP to be forced upon any couple. But its practical effectiveness as well as its non-contraceptive nature should be explained at all diocesan Pre-Cana meetings, for example.

The organization has United Way support, an active board of directors, inspired leadership and enthusiastic adherents. All of this will be evident at its fourth official yearly meeting Feb. 5, an event sure to be an annual fixture in the diocese.

and Opinions

Revitalizing Capital Assets

Editor:

During the past 15 years, long-term needs and benefits have been sacrificed to meet what was thought to be pressing short-term needs. Maintenance schedules on roads, bridges, water and sewer systems were cut back by local governments.

Federal and state government, meanwhile, began a long-term policy of disinvestment in public works. Through 1979, total U.S. capital spending actually dropped by 53 percent as a share of the gross national product.

As a result of this history of neglect, and the added effect of budget cuts made this year by the Reagan administration, the "Infrastructure Dilemma" I referred to last February is rapidly becoming the "Infrastructure Crisis." A few examples will illustrate this disturbing trend.

• About 8,000 bridges in New York State are considered structurally deficient.

• More than 200 sewage treatment plants in the state will reach their design life expectancy in the next five years. The total construction need for wastewater treatment is estimated at \$18 billion by the Department of Environmental Conservation.

• In Buffalo, Corning, Watervliet, Niagara Falls, Norwich, Poughkeepsie and Syracuse, water supply systems are aged and losing nearly half their water. Rochester faces a water system rehabilitation bill of more than \$200 million, or more than \$900 for every man, woman and child in Rochester.

New Yorkers must make hard choices in the coming year or two about what kind of a future they want. We cannot do the whole job alone. The federal government must recognize that many of the budget cuts it has enacted are shortsighted and potentially disastrous. Per-

sistently high interest rates also make it difficult for state and local governments to finance the level of investment which is needed just to keep our facilities from getting worse.

First, in order to know where to go we must know where we are and to that end the legislature has established financial management reforms which will help inventory and monitor the condition of our existing assets. Additional legislation will be introduced to reform our capital budgeting system.

Second, we must devise a mix of financing alternatives in order to raise financing strategy should include:

• Equitable user fees could be used to put certain facilities, such as water and sewer systems, on a self-sustaining basis for maintenance and operation. The reason there are no potholes in the George Washington Bridge is because toll revenues have been sufficient to maintain it in top condition.

• We can make prudent use of the state's existing borrowing capacity by upgrading the Securities Coordinating Council and Public Authorities Control Board and giving them authority to set priorities and coordinate the state's periodic entries into the financial markets.

• We can identify selected facilities which might be attracted to private investment capital because of new investment tax credits.

• Finally, we should consider identifying certain state revenue streams which are uniquely related to facets of the infrastructure.

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Warning On 'Reds'

Editor:

"The successful Communist exploitation and manipulation



"A PRESENT? WELL, GOLLY, LET ME SEE WHAT THIS IS..."

of youth and student groups throughout the world today are a major challenge which the free world forces must meet and defeat," warned J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 22 years ago.

The free world has neither met this challenge nor seemed to recognize its existence. A fascinating documentation can be made of events which become increasingly more violent. Time lapse between these demonstrations diminishes their impact. When they are tabulated the list is long and shocking. How did this happen? There are two words which provide the key to basic cause — exploitation and manipulation. These words are keys to the assault on the minds of many.

The most important is exploitation. Propagandists exploit grievances and flaws in the social order, misrepresenting and exaggerating them beyond reason, offering utopian solutions. Virtues, too, are exploited. Idealism and fair play are virtues of youth. The propagandist uses them. An example would be a gross distortion of a social or defense problem so cleverly presented that the groundwork is accomplished for disenchantment with our form of government. People who are thus conditioned are

easily manipulated to engage in demonstrations and riots, even subversive activity.

The movie "Reds," which purports to tell the story of John Reed, one of the founders of the U.S. Communist Party, romanticizes his activities. By careful omission and through fabrication, the beginnings of the deadly menace of communism could create a false impression on youth despite what is currently happening in Poland. Benjamin Gitlow, a top-ranking Communist contemporary of Reed, tells the true story in "The Whole of Their Lives." Emma Goldman, a pioneer woman anarchist who never renounced her philosophy, broke with the Bolshevik Communists and in her memoirs also tells the true story of John Reed.

Whether the Berrigan brothers are victims of propaganda or are accredited activists is an interesting speculation. However, the comments of Judge Samuel Salus II of Norristown, Pa., which describe the Berrigans, should be applied to all who act as Pied Pipers for radical causes. Judge Salus, after sentencing them and others to prison, stated:

"Don't be fooled about the broad sweep of inner-conscience justification and

peace as asserted by these people. It is part of their policy and tactics to delude people about their good intentions, when their sole purpose is to have no master, no government and, really, no God."

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Poem Expresses Experience

Editor:

My family and I recently attended a memorial service for the late Martin Luther King Jr. at St. Bridget's. I am 17 and never before had I shared in such a beautiful religious experience. The people, the sermon and the church touched me with a tremendous spiritual uplift, which I want to express in this poem.

St. Bridget's Inspiration  
Drifting, Drifting, Drifting  
A sea of black faces,  
white faces  
No cold stares, no empty  
places  
Drifting, Drifting, Drifting  
Spiritual songs, soul  
rhythm  
Memorial words in black  
poems  
No more should we feel  
the scorn  
No more drifting, drifting  
Here is a Church alive  
and warm

Miriam C. Lynch  
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Don't Condone Hockey Fights

Editor:

Violence in ice hockey — I am not speaking to the

roughness of contact sports and the possibility of injury. What I deplore is the fist fighting and brawling that sometimes takes place in ice hockey.

Is this the type of sportsmanship we want our children to grow up with? Aren't we trying to teach them how to win or lose graciously, how to get along with peers, and how to accept authority of coaches and referees? These values are rejected in ice hockey and sometimes in other sports.

As a parent, I do not want my children to idolize an adult who punches out another adult and who rejects lawful authority. When someone makes the statement that the punching and brawling sells tickets, I wonder about the mentality of spectators to whom this appeals and the greed of owners who would condone this method.

Do you need this kind of animal behavior to be entertained? If not, let your voice be heard. Write to George Bergantz, General Manager, Rochester Americans Hockey Club, 100 Exchange St., Rochester, N.Y. 14614, and/or don't attend games until you are satisfied with their sportsmanship.

I feel this is important because, according to Mr. Bergantz's letter to the Riga Inter-church Planning Council, the box office is their voting booth. Please remember, silence is approval.

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Guidelines

The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writer's signature, full address and telephone number. They should be sent to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

Opinions should be brief, typed, double-spaced, no longer than 1 1/2 pages.

We routinely condense letters, edit offensive words and libelous statements, and reserve the right to reject letters. Generally speaking, however, only limited grammatical corrections will be made and the letters will reflect the writer's own style.

Because submitted opinions exceed the space for letters, we publish only original letters addressed to us. We will not use poetry, open letters, or copies of letters sent elsewhere. To ensure diversity, we limit each writer to one letter per month.