

opinion/editorial

Rescuing Chrysler would protect U.S. economy

The continuing debate on whether American taxpayers should help the Chrysler Corp. out of its self-induced financial mess is an interesting one.

After several years of concentrating its production on large cars rather than on now-popular compact economy models, Chrysler has found itself far behind Ford and General Motors in sales. Then years ago Chrysler held an 18 percent share of the American new-car market, but now reports that its share is less than 10 percent. As a result of misjudging changing market conditions and consumer needs, Chrysler's share of red ink, on the other hand has increased dramatically.

Now, Chrysler wants the American people to bail them out. Since knowledge of Chrysler's troubles has become known, opposition to simply giving Chrysler money has been great, but support for guaranteeing loans made to Chrysler has been equally great.

Reasons for that support are simple. If Chrysler goes under, they say, 500,000 jobs will be lost—those of 130,000 directly employed by Chrysler and those of parts suppliers, dealers, and others, etc. The impact on the economy would be great—especially in this time of recession. We need Chrysler, we are

told, to insure competition, to keep our economy strong. But do we?

If Chrysler would indeed fold, yes, people would lose jobs and related industries would be hurt. But at the same time competitors would expand to take that market share Chrysler previously controlled, or new companies would be set up to acquire that share. Some of those who lost jobs would be rehired. The related industries may still suffer, but new industries would benefit. And if these new industries are productive, the public has gained. The public does not gain when a

poorly managed corporation is subsidized.

If the new industries are not productive, they, like Chrysler will suffer. This has been the basis for a previously successful American economic system. The system is harsh on some individuals and companies, but is good for the nation as a whole.

To adjust the system for one company, would require a revision of our entire economic philosophy. We would be rejecting a free market system in favor of a government-controlled economy—a less than desirable proposition.

Fair is down payment on buying back past

BRIDGEWATER, Conn.—During the Oxen Draw contest, which came as the high moment for about a thousand spectators on the second day of the Bridgewater Fair, I made the mistake of thinking the animals were the stars of the show.

colman mccarthy

Teams of yoked oxen—the immense, muscled beasts that Russian weight lifters model themselves after—were led to the center of a fenced field to be hitched to slabs of cement. On command, the oxen pulled the weights six feet along the earth. After each round, more slabs were added. In the end, the winning teams had moved more than 3,200 pounds.

It is true that until tree stumps found their match in bulldozers, much of the land in the fertile Housatonic Valley of western Connecticut was cleared by oxen. But the Oxen Draw is a celebration less of the animals' power than the masculinity of the men who own them.

This manly presence establishes a role by which identities are established. The difference between husband, wives and children are respected.

At the Bridgewater Fair, as well as the 40 other town fairs that draw crowds to the Connecticut countryside from July to October, all the supposedly corny sights are available: the 4-H kids taking afternoon naps next to their prize Jerseys and Holsteins, bulging pound cakes baked that morning by mothers who would never think of freezing them the week before, chairmakers, tomatoes the size of cantaloupes and cantaloupes larger than bowling balls, loomed rag rugs and butter from a churn, not a factory vat.

AS QUIANT as this rusticity may seem, the country fair, at its essence, is a down-payment on buying back the past when what a person grew, carved, baked or seated over was part of his psychological and cultural grounding.

At the Bridgewater Fair, when women talk about their quilting they speak of patterns learned as children from their mothers. In the cities, when a woman sews a quilt and shows it to a friend, she is asked, "How many courses did you take?" Men who give their working lives to corporations and who may be transferred 10 to 15 times may want to break free. But what will their women think? They as Tim Hardin asks in the popular song *If I Were A Carpenter*.

*If I were a Carpenter
And you were a lady
Would you marry me anyway,
Would you have my baby? ...
If I worked my hands in wood
Would you still love me? ...*



KEMO SABE, IT JUST HASN'T BEEN THE SAME SINCE THAT COURT ORDER...

The song doesn't tell us whether this is a forlorn IBM manager in a crisis before a transfer from the east coast to the west. But the potential woodworker who was passionate about carpentry would probably be a steadier man and more attentive husband than the corporate paper pusher. He would be free, at least, from what Herbert Marcuse called "alienated labor," the king that satisfies the needs of his employers or the market, but not his own.

It would be comforting to think that all the men who own the oxen teams at Bridgewater were contented farmers happy in the pastoral way. But they aren't. Some work in nearby industrial centers like Waterbury or Danbury. Others still own their land but are waiting for the right offer from a buyer. Even the fair itself has lost something of its appeal. Commercialists are threatening to turn it into a technological trade mart.

But enough of the authentic remains for a momentary immersion into the pleasures of self-identity; pride in your work or your animals. This stimulation bolsters the noticeable community spirit in towns like Bridgewater.

This belief also can be dismissed by the sophisticated as corny. Except that one of these years, the adult ed programs in the big cities are going to be offering courses in community spirit—the way they now teach quilting and country cooking.

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Pet peeves include disco, sport-fiends

Pet peeves are like underwear. Everybody has their own. Hopefully. Putting a definition on a pet peeve is difficult. So I won't bother to define it. It's kind of like the Supreme Court's ruling on obscenity. They don't know how to define it, but they know it when they see it.

tom prentiss

Pet peeves are the same way. Anything that bothers you or rubs you the wrong way I guess could be classified as a pet peeve.

I've come up with a listing of a few of the things I find enjoying. Some you may share. Some you may not.

— Total Disco Freaks. Very touchy subject. People don't like to have the music they like criticized. I'm not criticizing the music as much as I'm criticizing the people.

Seems phony to boogie in those weird outfits that everybody from K-Mart to Halston designs. Disco cannot last. That pulsating music. Those neon floors. Disco is probably the number one cause of the energy crisis.

— Lifetime procrastinators should be shot. Tomorrow. These people try to fix their bad habit every year. Often say, "A couple of years ago I decided to stop putting off so much." They fail to realize it has been two years since they started and they still haven't changed.

— Some fraternities and some people in residence halls who assume that just because it's Friday afternoon, you want to listen to the same music they do. It may be the International Year of the Child but that doesn't mean they have to play music so the children in Uganda can hear it.

— People who hate Nebraska football. People who think Nebraska football is the only purpose in life. Could both of you take a middle of the road approach?

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