

opinion/editorial

Bryne's clean-up move merits encouragement

Politicians in America long have been known for making symbolic gestures they hope will benefit them in the political arena come election day.

But Chicago Mayor Jane Byrne recently announced a political gesture that makes all previous political gestures diminutive in comparison.

She announced she and her husband, Jay McMullen, will take a residence in a housing project that has been the site of a violent crime wave during the last year.

The Cabrini-Green housing project is on the Near North Side of the nation's second largest city. Within its 70 acres live some 15,000 residents; and the recent crime statistics may make many wonder about the sanity of the mayor's move.

Twelve people have been killed in the project this year. Thirty seven more have been wounded by the violence.

Much of this stems from the pervasive control of street gangs who have clamped onto the project and are a powerful, yet hidden problem that is hard to eradicate.

The project also suffers because many ex-convicts from the Joliet State Prison make Cabrini-Green their new base of operations upon release.

This prompts the old Chicago joke of asking someone what is

the difference between Stateville Prison in Joliet and Cabrini-Green in Chicago? Answer: Stateville has uniforms.

So now Mayor Byrne has signaled that she will not tolerate crime and violence to rule any area of Chicago.

It is symbolic in many ways but it may also yield results. City services often follow the mayor and it is hoped the Cabrini-Green residents will begin getting the maintenance they need.

Firemen and paramedics have refused to enter the project in the past out of fear for their lives.

Byrne has told her critics who charge political opportunism that they are welcome to take the apartment next door.

But Mayor Byrne's move will not be an unrestrained leap into life with the common folk. The huge security detail she will bring with her from the police force will clearly distinguish her from the average resident.

Her good china will stay at her apartment in the ritzy Gold Coast area, too.

And she has reneged on her earlier vow to stay in Cabrini-Green until the problems are cleared up. Now she says she will only spend some of her nights there.

So after Mayor Byrne returns from her vacation in Florida this week, Chicago will see how true

the mayor is to her word.

Many other large cities with low-income housing problems will be waiting to see if her plan works. Everybody talks about cleaning up violent areas such as Cabrini-Green, but finally action is being taken.

Whether it reduces crime or just serves to get Byrne votes in her re-election efforts in two years re-

mains to be seen. But let's not dismiss the idea immediately because it may be self-serving.

Perhaps the mood of Chicago may best be summarized by a man, when told of the mayor's plans to move to Cabrini-Green, said, "Well, there goes the neighborhood."

Tom Prentiss



Viewers should 'turn off' television smuttiness

Sometimes I think there are dozens of coaches out there, all trying to recruit us, all trying to get us to root for their side of a social issue, by offering us a big chance to join the "pros."

goodman

On the abortion issue they're either Pro-life or Pro-choice. On the regulation issue, they're either Pro-free enterprise or Pro-consumer. On the pornography issue they're either Pro-mortality or Pro-First Amendment.

The latest grasp for our allegiance comes over sex on television. One group is encouraging us to join a boycott

Reagan increases nuclear subsidy

Washington Two years ago last weekend, the fiasco at Three Mile Island scared the wits out of everyone, including nuclear industry executives who through atomic power had hit the rocks.

While there hasn't been a domestic order for a nuclear power reactor since that accident, industry advocates have become justifiably optimistic about their futures under the Reagan administration.

Domestic nuclear energy programs, already heavily subsidized by the government, are slated for a 10 percent boost in the generally lean Reagan budget.

shearer

Federal nuclear programs will top \$1 billion at the expense of alternative energy projects. Ronald Reagan prefers that "exotic" experiments in synthetic fuels, alcohol fuels and solar energy be tested in the private sector.

But not nuclear. Reagan, for example, is seeking a whopping \$230 million from Congress for the experimental Clinch River Breeder Reactor, which former President Carter had all but killed for safety reasons.

The president also plans to double the Energy Department's nuclear arms research and development budget.

And he has vowed to speed up the licensing process for 90 reactors planned or currently under construction. To help with the job, he's reinstated pro-nuclear Joseph Hendrie as chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

of advertisers and another group is enlisting us to fight censorship. It's hard to know the right team without a program.

Last month, something called the Coalition for Better Television (CBTV) opened up its recruitment drive in Washington. It declared a campaign to clean up the tube. It called its side Pro-morality.

For three months, the coalition announced, several hundred of its monitors would be rating prime time shows on a scoreboard of smuttiness. They would list what Donald Wildmon, a CBTV leader and head of the National Federation of Decency, called "skin scenes, implied sexual intercourse, and sexually suggestive comments."

When the scoring was over in June, he said, the coalition would list the sponsors of the worst shows and call on people not to buy their products.

Not about to blow a golden opportunity, the nuclear industry is doing its best to mobilize public support. Plant tours and neighborhood coffee hours with atomic engineers are part of the industry's new national public relations campaign.

But what most citizens have probably already seen isn't so gentlemanly. Recent advertisements in *Time* and *Newsweek*, for example, picture three petrified teenagers in Levi's and LaCoste shirts being sworn into the Army after a supposed Arab oil cutoff.

"Maybe the world won't go to war over oil," reads the ad's caption, "but who'd be foolish enough to want to find out?"

Paid for by a consortium of electrical utility companies, the ad implies that nuclear power can reduce the United States' dangerous dependence on foreign oil.

Despite their outward optimism, such scare tactics may indicate the industry's underlying anxiety. And the Reagan administration may not be too confident either. Just last week, Energy Secretary James B. Edwards ordered 12,000 copies of his department's monthly "Energy Consumer" locked up because the magazine contained an article on the still-unsolved radioactive waste problem.

Lingering concerns about nuclear power have prompted a huge coalition of organizations to sponsor a "March on Harrisburg."

A month ago, radioactive cesium was reported in groundwater near the plant at levels four times higher than was previously recorded, well above acceptable federal health standards. And three weeks ago, laboratory-tested rodent droppings found at the site raised suspicions that radioactivity may have entered the local food chain.

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Then last week at the annual meeting of 4,000 television executives in New York, the other team fielded its defense. Panelists there talked about the dangerous tactics and motives of the CBTV and labeled themselves Pro-First Amendment. They said that the monitors were actually drawing up a hit list. They accused CBTV of "censorship."

Well, I bow to no one in my scorn for the TV shows that come complete with a snicker track. I am appalled at the number of programs in which sex is the plot, the subplot, and the counterplot. I keep a private "top ten" collection of ads that broadcasters use to boost their own shows, and my latest favorites include: "Blackmail in a Sex Clinic," "Lucious Lady Truckers Behind Bars," and "Hot Bikes and Cold Bikinis!"

So, I think Wildmon was right when he told the CBTV meeting that broadcasters have ignored protests against the creeping sexualization of the airwaves and have "rather displayed an arrogance and indifference rarely matched in the history of corporate America." The networks have had a stunning lack of regard for their own long-term self-interest.

The Top Three in the Pro-morality crowd are Wildmon, Jerry Falwell of Moral Majority and Phyllis Schlafly of Stop ERA. I would probably agree with them about the content of "Flamingo Road," "Three's Company" or "Dallas" (J.R. has the moral perspective of a mushroom.) but I suspect we would part company pretty quickly after that.

One of the other things that bothers me about this campaign is the strategy. The CBTV is to put pressure on the advertisers to put pressure on the broadcasters. Well, I'm not convinced that the advertiser should be handed the star role. Some of the ads themselves are mini X-rated features.

The ad men are a big part of the problem. They'll kill for the privilege of sponsoring programs with the biggest ratings and never mind if the rating has been "jiggled" up a point or two. The CBTV plan would give the advertisers MORE power in programming and the results would be even worse for quality.

Does this mean we're impotent? I don't think so. There's room for an angry non-aligned third team. I believe in boycotts when they're focused on the right target. We should boycott the advertiser if we don't like the ads and boycott the program if we don't like the program. We should just plain turn them off.

Like it or not, the most effective way to change television and leave the Constitution intact is the play the broadcasters on their turf, and the old-time ratings game is the only one they watch.

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