

Editorial

'Mary Poppins' gimmick wastes taxpayers' money

It's a pencil! It's a pen! It's a teacher in space! President Reagan's latest public relations coup reaches new heights of absurdity.

Everything about it smells of a cheap election-year gimmick. How do you get the teachers' vote, when the Democratic candidate Walter Mondale has the endorsements of the teacher's unions?

You pick a teacher and say, with a tear in the corner of your eye, "When that shuttle lifts off all of America will be reminded of the crucial role teachers and education play in the life of our nation."

It seems like an expensive way to say that when Hallmark has something equally sentimental and flowery for 49 cents, complete with an envelope.

Reagan's gesture was made more absurd by the grade of teacher he seeks — elementary or secondary. What good could

an elementary or secondary school teacher do in space? Why not send one of our college professors, who might be able to accomplish something in the way of constructive experiments?

The shuttle program costs taxpayers more than \$1 billion annually. Time in space is far too precious and expensive to be squandering it on one teacher just to remind Americans of education's importance.

Teachers probably would appreciate a pledge of more money from our president, instead of a one in 80,000 chance at being the first teacher to use chalk in orbit.

Reagan has again caught the limelight, but his pledge rings of misguided priorities. Our money should not be spent on a modern-day Mary Poppins.



SHE FIT ALL OF REAGAN'S REQUIREMENTS... A GOOD TEACHER, WORKS WELL WITH KIDS AND SHE'S HAD FLYING EXPERIENCE.

Black females have limited futures

Birth evokes mixed emotions for mother

Having a child can change your perspective on many things in life. Clarièce Elisabeth, my first child, was born Aug. 27; this event led to the

Elizabeth Burden

birth of two new people. Clarièce, and a new, reflective me.

College students tend to be thought of as a future-oriented lot, but it's their futures that they are primarily concerned with. Becoming a parent forces one to look beyond the consequences an action may have in a lifetime — which is really short-term thinking — to what will happen in kids' and even grandkids' lifetimes. The thoughts are frightening.

Clarièce's birth evokes mixed

emotions. I cry tears of joy in celebration of a new life that has 10 perfect little fingers and toes, a million-dollar face and endless potential. I shed tears of sorrow thinking about the world that she has just entered that limits the potential.

Being a working mother and a student means that my daughter will spend time in some type of childcare in a society that is misogynistic, racist and that, at best, dislikes children. All, of course, limit potential. Some may think that is a harsh assessment of this society. But given some historical facts coupled with recent occurrences, this is substantiated.

Historically, life has been difficult, at best, for women, blacks and children — three characteristics that my daughter possesses. Women, for those who have forgotten their history, were considered chattel, as were children.

Blacks were physically and emotionally enslaved. The fights for the rights for all three groups were arduous. Children were finally taken out of the sweatshops, women finally given (some) rights — to vote and the like — and blacks eventually were "freed." The struggle for rights for all three groups continues.

While some gains have been made in these areas, some "new" obstacles replace the "old" ones. Physical and sexual abuse of women and children and the economic and social lynching of blacks top the list of current foes. My daughter will have to face these problems since little progress has been made on solving them. In fact, it appears that we are taking steps backward.

Although Clarièce is less than one month old, I already worry about the type of childcare that

she will receive. Given the recent reports of sexual abuse of children in another's care (even in Lincoln), I'd be a fool not to worry. These reports, to me, are the most blatant example of how Americans feel about their children. Not the fact that they are in someone else's care, but the fact that these reported incidents can be only a fraction of what occurs, as with other crime statistics. I worry about what our standard of living will be under four more years of Reaganomics — four years of Democrats in the White House doesn't paint a much better picture.

At this point some readers may retort that life wouldn't be so bleak if I were not a working parent. However, I must disagree with such thoughts. Even if my daughter never spent one hour in outside childcare, she still would be subjected to "the new foes" in

her schooling and encounters with teachers and peers. The texts that will be mandatory for her to study will contain historical inaccuracies, racism and sexism.

The workforce she will enter is dominated by and set up for a type of person that she can never be — a white man. Even if I was a "full-time" mother (a misnomer in my opinion — it's impossible to be anything but), things still would not be peachy. Life would not be so bleak for her were she not a woman and black.

College students are oriented toward graduating and quietly blending into the workforce, keeping the status quo. We are, for the most part, concerned with Big Red football, F.A.C.'s parties and maybe studies. The important priorities are former within the educational context. But I guess that's what education is for.

Campus Quotes

Is pornography a "victimless crime" or does it violate the civil rights of women and contribute to violent crimes against women?



Jeff Lonowski
Senior
Advertising

"I think that as long as pornography isn't forced on an unwilling audience, then it's victimless. Besides, women are big enough now to defend their own civil rights."



Shawn Lambert
Freshman
Fashion Merchandising

"I think it violates women's rights. It exploits their sex, I guess. It also could be a factor in causing violent crimes. I haven't done many studies on it so I really don't know."



Dianne Chrisman
Sophomore
Art

"I'm definitely against all pornography that denotes violence. Anyone who gets their kicks out of that is definitely sick. I'm also against child pornography. Both of these should be outlawed. It could do nothing but promote violent crime."



Loren Kusy
Junior
Actuarial Science

"I think it's all a matter of opinion depending on the girl herself. Overall, though, it violates the rights of all women... I do think that it contributes to crimes and sexual abuses."



Penni Andersen
Sophomore
Business

"If there are innocent women that it makes look bad, then it does... I don't really know if it contributes to violent crime or not."

Joel Sartore