

No winners in this race

The White House and Congress are in a race to see which can be the first to cut the most from the federal food stamp program. Last week Pres. Ford announced his dissatisfaction with Congress' attempts at food stamp reform and threatened to bypass Congress and have the Agriculture Department change its own regulations to reduce the amount spent on the program.

Ford wants to chop \$1.2 billion a year from the program. Associated Press sources estimate that such a reduction would eliminate 5.3 million to 6 million recipients.

Not to be outdone, the Senate Agriculture Committee approved its own plan Tuesday that would drop three to four million persons from the program and reduce food stamp funds by \$309 million a year.

The food stamp issue is politically hot this year. With both presidential and congressional races coming up this year, candidates are sifting the issues for ones that look safe. Middle America, despite some signs of economic recovery, is still feeling the pinch of inflation, especially in the supermarket. The stereotyped image of freeloaders wolfing down steaks frustrates them even more.

The emotionalism attached to the program makes it a safe issue. Even "liberal" politicians, while defending the idea of the program, attack the "abuses" and call for reform.

At the moment there are several different reform plans filtering through the congressional system of committees and hearings. All of these plans are playing the numbers game. This plan will eliminate so many million recipients. That plan will save so many millions of dollars.

Lost in the middle of these numbers are the persons who will have to live with these "reforms." One proposal presently moving through Congress will, according to the Agriculture Department itself, place an unfair burden on the elderly. Another popular idea is to cut students from the program. This proposal would unfairly discriminate on the basis of occupation. A third plan, the one passed by the Senate Agriculture Committee Tuesday, would reduce the amount of deductions that the working poor could claim and thus increase the cost of the stamps to them.

Because of the pressure of the stereotyped images and the rush to cut by Congress and the President, persons who legitimately need the assistance of the program are going to suffer. It may be too much to expect in an election year, but Congress is going to have to step back from the emotionalism of the issue and reevaluate its attempt to reform the program. It's going to have to remember that it's dealing with people, not dollar figures and numbers.

Letters

They'll listen

If the tuition hike is indeed "necessitated," then instead of forcing us to shell out more, why shouldn't the administration in this institution take in less? Make them "pay" — not us! They are the ones with 76 model Buicks and Cadillacs coming out their ears!

Remember what a fuss, in fact near panic, the administration gets into every September of late over possible drops in registration (receipts)?

Let's organize, through RSB and/or as many others as possible, a "demonstration" that actually gets something done right at registration, this spring term!

Have a petition like the following mass-circulated among students waiting in line at Mac Court for their time slot, and elsewhere:

Re: Tuition Hike:

I intend to strike this September's registration if the hike is not called off.

Also have signs, posters, blowhorns, etc. at both registration days at Mac Court and the new business office building to get the message out: Strike this September!

They'll listen to this!

Robert C. Nordahl
RPM, senior

Look for yourself

Concerning your article on Moonies on Wednesday, Feb. 25, I feel an injustice was done to the Unification Church. It was, frankly, biased and one-sided with no substantial foundation for its accusations against the Church. I am grateful for this opportunity to present the other side.

There is no mention of the thousands of members who are quite happily living a new meaningful life centered upon God through the Divine Principle. In this life we are striving to fulfill an ideal: a very real, ideal world, emphasizing a person's value and unique personality. The purpose of the Unification Church is to offer greater fulfillment in our lives through a life of goodness and service to others. I, myself, have been a member for over a year and have seen none of that which we are accused. I am not offering a rebuttal, but I am asking for an open-minded, sincere investigation. All I ask is that you look for yourself in this strange and most bizarre phenomenon.

Diana Jansyn
Alder St., Eugene



So...Robert Redford I'm not

opinion

'Off-shoot' segments struggle

Jeanine Holly, in the Feb. 25 opinion column, states that although she "largely supports" the Women's Movement, she is "outraged and somewhat embarrassed by the off-shoot of the Women's Movement which is trying to reform the English language." Her reasons for these feelings are that: (1) She has enough difficulties communicating ideas without having to "consciously assess" everything she says, and that the language is difficult enough without throwing in new forms, such as "s/he" and "personhood." (2) No sexism exists in words like "mankind" or "chairman" because they are universals, taking in both men and women, and that, "The word is merely a symbol, reflection of the speaker." Ms. Holly states that sexism is figuratively, but not literally, erased in the word by the erasure of sexism in the mind.

Ms. Holly is misinformed on two major issues, which I arbitrarily assigned the numbers one and two in the preceding paragraph. These issues concern the nature of the English language, and the inherent power of spoken language. Let's look at the first point. Ms. Holly does not want to consciously assess every word she says in order to communicate. But what else is communication than the conscious assessment of words in an attempt to precisely convey that which we think? Granted, the communication continuum covers degrees of fluency from unconscious, stereotypical utterances to precise, well-defined styles of speech. Does Ms. Holly really believe that we should exclude changes in our language that make us have to think about the way we talk? Or, to put it another way, is a form of language usage in which we are not required to think when we speak that to which we should aspire? No. The outrage to a language is not the attempt to change it, but rather the lack of precision — laziness — using it.

When Ms. Holly dismisses the semantics of sexism as an "off-shoot of the Women's Movement," she is segmenting the common struggle of women for equality in a way that it can not be segmented. Women have been second-class members of the human race for thousands of years. The forces that have kept women in a subjugated position are interwoven in every aspect of almost every society. Language is not an exception. Yes, we have been taught that the word "mankind" is universal; that it also includes the subcategory, women. But remember that we first had to accept the concept of woman as subcategory to accept the definition. A woman, until the twentieth century, (and even now, in many societies) could lay no claim to her own property, her children, her name or her body, except through the proprietorship of father or husband, neither could she lay claim to personhood except

through the proprietorship of mankind. Women, in language, were included in the general category of "man," because women were owned by man.

Even more startling is Ms. Holly's confusion about the word as symbol. In supporting her position that words do not need to be changed to change concepts of ourselves, she states, "The word is merely a symbol, a reflection of the speaker." Perhaps the major cognitive ability that differentiates people from other primates is the ability to use symbols: the power of abstraction. This is the root of our supreme talent — the gift of reason. To dismiss words as "merely symbols" is to miss the entire basis of one person's attempt to communicate with another.

Ms. Holly states that first we must educate the speaker and then "the words will follow suit." This is a questionable assertion, for considering Ms. Holly's outrage at the attempted change in the English language towards non-sexist language, she would give her educated speaker no words to follow suit with.

Yet let's take this point one step further. Perhaps the essence of what Ms. Holly is saying is that changing words will not change attitudes. Yet our experience as people, the animals capable of creating symbols and forming abstractions, has taught us otherwise. Young children only begin to understand their emotions when they are taught words for them. Until the young child is taught (through caretaker feedback and modeled symbol-usage) that what she/he is feeling is "anger" or "sadness" or "fear," she/he cannot define, and consequently cannot deal with, the constricting, unpleasant feelings that are going on inside. By learning the words (the symbols), the child expands cognitively — pushes out the limits of thought and comprehension.

Susan Langer, in her essay, "The Prince of Creation," published in *Fortune*, January, 1944, states that "what (wo)man cannot express, (she) he cannot conceive..."; in other words, our ability for thought is directly influenced and limited by our vocabulary. When my little girl tells me she can't be a mailman because she is a girl, I understand that the word has limited her thought — in this case, her self-concept. When she hears a general statement about "mankind," and says, "women, too!" I do not place her (and me) in a subordinate position by telling her, "Oh, women fall under that general classification, too," for to do so would be to tell her that she is important only in relationship to men. We think of ourselves in terms of the words we speak; that is the reason elimination of so-called "universal" male-gendered terms to signify the whole species is necessary.

Eva Hunter-Forsyth
English, soph.