

opinion

Agriculture head on food stamps?

It's usually amusing when government bureaucrats try to live within the rules and regulations of programs they head. Sometimes the bureaucrats find out the programs don't even come close to the needs of Americans.

That's why it will be interesting to keep close tabs on Agriculture Secretary John Block and his family as the Blocks test menus recommended for 22 million Americans who live on food stamps. The Blocks will sustain themselves for one experimental week on \$58 worth of food stamps. It certainly must be a hardship.

Amid a flurry of television cameras, photographers and reporters the Blocks went shopping at a suburban Maryland supermarket. The surrounding media recorded their every purchase — chicken on special, regular hamburger, beef liver, peanut butter, white bread and noodles.

The final tally for a week's worth of groceries was \$54.14 in food stamps.

Some cynical media-folks noticed that Block was in a quandary buying a few of the food items. Block bought cornflakes — saying he "had to buy them" because he produces corn on his farm in Illinois. The Blocks also bought low-fat milk and non-fat dry milk. The government, under the Agriculture department's dairy price supports program, has accumulated vast stores of surplus dairy products. In fact, the government even gave out tons of surplus cheese rather than let it mold in a dank warehouse.

Block had his biggest dilemma at the margarine counter. It seems the government is trying to dispose of its (also) vast holdings of surplus butter. But, Block resolved the problem in his own mind by buying margarine which is made from soybeans. He produces soybeans on his Illinois farm as well.

We're not really amused by the Block's week on food stamps. Block's arrogance is deplorable. He is making a mockery of the problems of 22 million Americans who must survive on food stamps. Block, with his high-paying post as secretary of Agriculture, is being a dilettante regarding the plight of the nation's poor. After the week of peanut butter and beef liver Block will announce that a family of four can live quite substantially on \$58 a week in food stamps. Then, the Blocks will probably dine out and spend triple that amount on one meal.

Craft lawsuit shames the news

The Christine Craft \$1.2 million sex discrimination suit against Metromedia points out the embarrassing state of equal rights and the more embarrassing state of broadcast journalism.

The Craft lawsuit stands on a number of legitimate points, namely equal pay for equal work and equal treatment in the workplace. Craft had neither at KMBC-TV in Kansas City, Mo.

Craft was hired to co-anchor the weekday news and was paid more than \$30,000 a year. The money sounds substantial, yet the male co-anchor who did essentially the same job was paid more than \$50,000 a year.

The embarrassing aspect of the Craft lawsuit is the one showing broadcast journalism's passion for entertainment rather than journalism.

Too many program directors dress up news-readers in cosmetics and flashy clothing to attract viewers and increase ratings. Craft says she was heavily made-up and given a daily clothing schedule. Only twice was the male co-anchor criticized for appearance — he was told not to wear a type of shirt because it did not photograph well.

What is more startling than embarrassing about the Craft lawsuit is that she was demoted from anchoring the news because a media research consultant said viewers did not get a warm feeling from her. A warm feeling from a news-reader? Unfortunately, this is strong criteria for many television stations to hire women journalists.

Still, there's something eerie about the unctuous warmth of a cosmetically made-over news-reader smiling into the camera and then hear it say: "Good evening. A five-alarm fire raced through a downtown senior citizens' hotel and killed..."

It's also eerie that an industry priding itself as a watchdog barking angrily over any instance of discrimination appears equally as guilty. It makes one wonder how rampant is discrimination in broadcast — and print — journalism.



letters

Fast for Life

On August 6, 1983, the 38th anniversary of the dropping of the first atomic bomb on human beings, nine persons will begin a fast. They are citizens of France, West Germany, England, Japan and the United States. Each in their own country is a leader in the search for peace.

This is no ordinary fast. These persons have determined, if necessary, to lay down their lives in order that the world may be led to draw back from the brink of nuclear catastrophe. Theirs is a Fast for Life. They have determined to continue without food until some significant step is taken toward ending the arms race.

For our part, we have determined to do all in our power to see that their lives are not lost, and to see that this opportunity to take a step for peace is not missed. This is why we write to you.

We believe that the most immediate danger to nuclear war arises from the European missile crisis. We also believe that the crisis offers what may be our last opportunity to avert catastrophe and move toward real disarmament. If even one nation scheduled to deploy Pershing II or Cruise missiles were to cancel or delay deployment, or if the USSR were to announce the dismantling of a significant number of SS-20's, the drift to destruction would be arrested, and the impetus to arms reduction would gain momentum. Such a step would also lead, in our judgment, to a decision to end the Fast for Life.

The power to save nine lives, and yes, to perhaps save the world from disaster, lies in your hands. Your personal call for a delay in deployment, or dismantling can tip the scales toward peace. We urge you to call for and support such a delay.

You may reply that nine lives are not important enough to sway national security policy. We reply that the Fasters symbolize humanity. If we and you stand by while they die, it is a pale reflection of our abdication of responsibility as the world drifts toward the final disaster.

We urge you to take a step now such as we have suggested. We further urge you to write the Fasters directly, expressing your concern both for their welfare and for world peace. In a real sense their lives are in your hands.

Bayard McConnaughey
biology

Neglected

This letter is in response to two articles in the Eugene Register-Guard, one on July 9, the other on July 15. Both deal with an issue I feel has been sadly neglected. This issue is the current condition of the University's main library. The July 9 article outlined four projects that have been approved for eventual construction, none of which included any financing for re-vitalizing the University's fastly deteriorating library. Ironic, since the library is the epitome of the educational integrity of any quality University.

Although some of these projects are to be funded by private means, one is not. This project is a proposed \$1.7 million worth of improvements to the ballroom of the Erb Memorial Union. It will be financed through the \$12.50 building fee that each student pays each quarter. This fact both shocked and amazed me. As a concerned student at the University, I find that such a decision shows a very serious lack of priority. A simple review of the facts will point this out.

First, the main purpose of a University is to create an environment of learning. The

ballroom funds, on the other hand, are slated for improvement in lighting, seating, sound system, and other such refurbishments — all of which hardly contribute to an atmosphere of intellectual enlightenment.

Second, an up-to-date library attracts more students, provides more information and resources, and therefore enables students to produce high caliber work and realize their fullest potential.

Third, everyone benefits from a good library — both students and non-students alike. A good library allows those who are not students or those who cannot afford a university education to further their learning personally. These people therefore improve themselves and in the end contribute more to society — especially in a time when the quality of America's education has come under a veil of increasing doubt.

Fourth, as a testimony to the serious extent this problem has grown to, the July 15 article reported that, beginning Sept. 1, the University library will have to resort to a \$25 annual fee charged to all of its town patrons. Sadly, this fee will eliminate "30-50 percent" of those non-students who currently take advantage of this town's greatest asset. Ironically, in an effort to ease financial strains and keep its resources available to everyone, the library will inevitably reduce the number of people they are trying to serve.

Finally, as a personal note, I have found that of all of the debates, dances, dinners, movies and other occasions that I have attended at the EMU ballroom over my 3½ years at the University, not one of those experiences was marred or the occasion seriously handicapped by the facility's current condition.

James Givens
senior, architecture

oregon daily emerald

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