

opinion

Fountain preacher's message lost

I saw one again last week. As I was leaving the Memorial Student Center, I passed the fountain outside Rudder. There he stood — a fountain preacher with a microphone in one hand, a crowd before him and a message to spread.

His message was the familiar one about living a good, clean life for God. And his delivery was like most others who preached there before him.

Just as I walked by, the preacher and a young man in the crowd began to bicker about government funding for AIDS — or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome — research. The whole scene was one which I didn't care to participate in. So I walked on.

But as I walked across campus, I pondered the scene I left at the fountain. I'm a Christian, but I didn't agree with the preacher's tactics. Maybe I'm too much a religious pacifist, but arguing over what men say God thinks seems useless.

I found myself rejecting everything the preacher said. Even though some of his ideas did have merit, his delivery was a complete turn-off. Surely, I thought,



hope e. paasch

there's a better way to spread the same message. I have never met anyone who said he gained any sort of spiritual insight from a fountain preacher.

This particular preacher seemed more concerned with telling people how wrong the whole college world is than with leading people to God. And the people who passed the fountain showed much the same attitude that I felt.

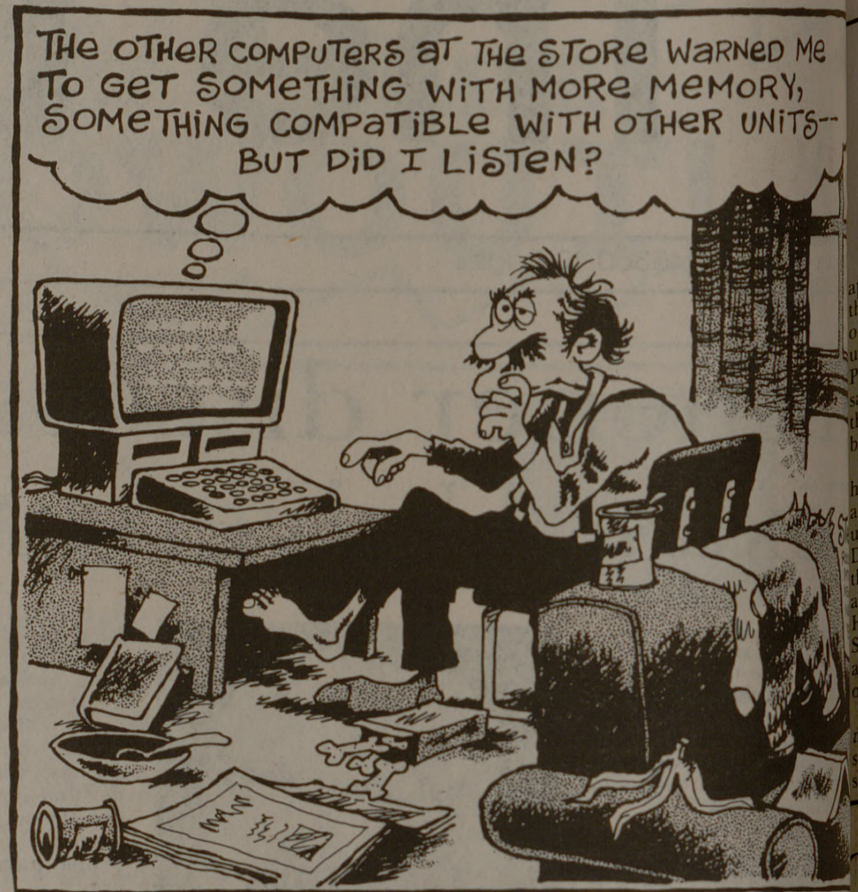
Just as I was becoming completely involved and frustrated in my train of thought, I noticed a nice, normal-looking student. He sat alone on the shady edge of a brick wall near the Chemistry Building. His backpack sat at his feet while he peeled an orange. And in his lap was an open pocket-size Bible.

The serenity of that moment isn't something that disappears after the moment passes.

That young man's peace and devotion to God was infinitely more contagious than the message the fountain preacher was trying to spread.

As I entered the newsroom after my pilgrimage across campus, I found my hostile feelings toward the preacher were gone and the vision of the young man still filled my mind.

Maybe the fountain preachers and their sponsoring groups should reconsider their strategy. Communication is more than words, after all. Perhaps the preachers could spend their time more effectively by showing how they live rather than arguing the finer points of Christianity.



Backstairs at the White House

Reagan still witty

by Helen Thomas
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Maureen Reagan says "I hope so" when asked if her father is going to run again.

"I've already put in my word and he said, 'noted,'" she reported in a brief chat at the White House during a recent overnight visit.

President Reagan still is batting .500 in the humor department. The president and first lady Nancy Reagan recently hosted a state dinner in honor of Ivory Coast President Felix Houphouet-Boigny. The entertainment for the evening was the Lincoln Center Chamber Music group, which evoked bravos from the audience for a super performance. After the last number the Reagans walked us to a small platform in the East Room to shake hands with each musician. They separated going to opposite ends of the platform and came full face with each other. Reagan stuck out his hands and shook hands with his wife. Then he went to the microphone and said, "We've got to stop meeting this way."

The concert of the Young Artists in Performance at the White House was staged in two segments because of heavy rain on the south lawn when the concert was first taped. Only 40 minutes of the hour-long show, which features Broadway tunes, was taped before the clouds opened up. Guests made a mad dash for the residence and went up to the State Rooms where ushers and waiters had hastily moved the food and drinks from the outdoor refreshment stands inside.

The day was bright and sunny when the last 20 minutes of the show was taped. Reagan looked out at the guests, mainly White House staffers filling the seats, and said, "This is a fair weather audience if I ever saw one."

Incidentally, the Young Artists series that was aired on the Public Broadcasting System, with Itzhak Perlman as master of ceremonies, will be resumed next fall with Metropolitan Opera singer Leontyne Price as the mistress of ceremonies.

President Reagan is making excellence in education in the nation a cause celebre, and probably a key campaign issue if he seeks re-election.

He has a B.A. degree from Eureka College in Illinois, where he majored in economics. But none of his children made it through four years of higher education. All dropped out of college.

His daughter, Maureen, 42, graduated from Marymount College in Arlington, Virginia, for a year; his son, Michael, 37, graduated from Arizona State and Los Angeles Community College for a time; he attended Northwestern University for one year and the University of California for a semester.

The Reagans' son, Ron, 25, graduated from Yale for one year and then dropped out to become a ballet dancer. He has the Joffrey Ballet and become a dance writer.

At the State Dinner for the Ivory Coast leader, Reagan noted Houphouet-Boigny the father of his country, and had been consecutively in the presidency for years. Would you like to do that? he was asked.

He grinned, shook his head and said, "No, I want to read a book again."

You can hardly find a White House adviser who doesn't believe that Reagan will be re-elected. All systems seem to be set for a re-election. But while he is making like a candidate and traveling like a candidate, the president is in no rush to announce his decision. But that does not mean the staff are not busy paving the way when he decides, probably in the early fall.

Ed Rollins, chief White House press secretary, is carrying the ball in the fence-mending department. His personal feeling is the president's year is enough, "I think everyone will be so decided. I think everyone will be satisfied with the time frame," Rollins said. "He hasn't told anyone what he has to do."

He recently gathered with 150 Republicans who supported Reagan in 1980 but have become dissatisfied with what they say is a lack of progressive concerns. Rollins got an earful, and afterward, "I think we're going to have an ongoing dialogue."

"We're not writing any group letters," he said, adding that includes women and minorities. "We're laying the groundwork."

The White House is well aware that Reagan has some work to do to win over the women's vote. The polls show they support him far less than do the voters.

Reagan's strong opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment and his neglect on other issues is part of the problem. There were no women on the mission on Strategic Forces and on any arms control advisory capacity.



Lots of lawyers needed to keep other ones busy

by Art Buchwald

It may be my imagination, but every young person I met this June is graduating from law school. The question is how many lawyers can the country support? The answer is that nobody really knows.

Harlan McCugh, a senior partner with McCugh, McCugh and Moore McCughs, is one of those who believes the United States will never have enough lawyers to serve the needs of the people.

"The reason why I'm so bullish on the law as a profession is that the more lawyers you have the more business you generate for each other. We're the ones who make the problems for other lawyers to solve."

"I'm not too sure I understand." "Well, there is a famous story about a lawyer in North Dakota who hung up his shingle in town and was starving to death. Then another lawyer moved in across the street. Suddenly they were both prospering. The rule of thumb in America is that it takes a minimum of two lawyers on opposite sides of the street before one can make any money."

McCugh continued, "The beauty of the American justice system is that one doesn't have to do anything wrong to need a lawyer. All somebody has to do is accuse you of doing something wrong, and then you have to seek legal help to defend yourself. Even if you aren't accused of doing something wrong, it's best to hire a lawyer in advance, just in case somebody might take a gamble that you did."

"Another reason I'm bullish on the law business is that lawyers are taught to write contracts and legal papers that can only be decoded by other lawyers. So when one lawyer draws up a contract, he or she is automatically assuring a fee for another lawyer who has to read it and see that the person signing it is not getting a raw deal."

"I had an instance not long ago where a lawyer for a motion picture studio sent a one-page contract to a screenwriter I

was representing. I took one look at it and became furious. I called up the studio lawyer and said, 'Are you crazy or something? My client could sign this contract today. Where the hell did you study law?'

"The studio lawyer apologized and said he had a paralegal draw up the agreement and hadn't realized the young man had written it in plain English. He promised to send over the studio's usual 170-page contract right away. As soon as I got it, we started haggling over it for three months, and I was able to charge my client my normal outrageous fee."

"You were smart not to let your client sign the one-page contract," I said.

"Another reason I'm bullish on lawyers," McCugh said, "is that almost every family in America has a relative who is a lawyer, and you don't even have to leave your house anymore to find one. Now when a mother calls up her lawyer son from the hospital and says, 'I fell on the sidewalk and broke my hip,' the first question he usually asks her is, 'Were there any witnesses?'

"There aren't enough lawyers in America to handle all the accidents that are happening all around us, much less the insurance companies who are refusing to pay."

"You paint a very rosy picture for young people just coming out of law school," I said.

"I'm not making it up," McCugh told me. "You've got government lawyers working day and night confusing everyone as to what the legislators had on their minds when they passed a law or repealed one. You have people being poisoned by chemicals, crime is soaring, and the simplest business transaction cannot be consummated without two legal minds in the middle screwing it up. I would say the outlook for the law class of 1983 has never been brighter."

"What a wonderful message. Can I print it?"

"Of course. Why do you ask?" "I didn't want you to sue me."

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