

opinion

Gifted child's life often a dilemma

by Children's Express

United Press International
 (Editor's Note: Children's Express, a privately funded news service, is real world journalism reported entirely by children 13 years of age or under whose tape-recorded interviews, discussions, reports and commentary are edited by teenagers and adults.)

NEW YORK — Many gifted children shut themselves out and others become juvenile delinquents.

Mark Krueger, who is a Director of the American Association for Gifted Children, says, "It's real hard for a bright kid who may be in the fourth grade but who reads at a ninth grade level and likes being around sixth or seventh graders. There are very real emotional and adjustment problems, and the problems are all the more serious when there's only one gifted kid in the classroom."

"Studies have been done which show most dramatically that there's any number of bright kids who don't get the sort of attention that they need in school."

Everyone is gifted in some sense. But the gifted we talked about in our interview with Krueger is another kind. It's not a typical thing. According to his figures, only 3 to 5 percent of all kids are gifted with "an unusual ability."

The way he broke it down was into intellectual overall, specific intelligence in a certain area, psychomotor ability — which means ability to express things with your body very well, like with your hands — leadership ability, or creative ability.

Krueger feels that "the kids who are very talented in the arts, who are very talented in their schoolwork, should be treated just as specially as the kids who are in the first-string football team."

The Association is concerned about these gifted children because "their potential to make very significant contributions to our society, to our world, is what will make a great deal of difference."

A lot of teachers are intimidated by gifted kids. It happens when the teacher doesn't know something and the child will correct his or her mistakes. There are cases where parents are threatened, too.

"You find bright kids in every type of home," Krueger said, "and some parents don't care. Some parents are not necessarily all that bright themselves. They're very frightened of the kids."

We also talked with Krueger about gifted kids who all of a sudden take dive

in school. He told us how "a woman at John Hopkins University found out that the achievement of girls with mathematical ability suddenly took a big dive at about the age of 12 or 13.

When she talked with these girls, she discovered it was the fear they had about being different, that girls don't become scientists or mathematicians. To conform, they started not to achieve.

"Or imagine what it's like for a 14-year-old boy at an inner city school," Krueger added, "where it's hard enough to get people to come to school, much less to create a thriving atmosphere, and to have serious aspirations of going to college."

Being considered gifted creates such problems for the kids socially. When Krueger asked us if we would want our friends to think of us as gifted, we told him, "No," because we'd probably be treated differently.

As Krueger said, "Most people, regardless of their age, want to blend in. In 'On Being Gifted' — a book we sponsored in which for the first time kids came together to talk about what it's like to be gifted — the most important feeling these kids had was their uncomfortableness with being singled out. One of them said, 'Call us nifty, call us talented, but don't call us gifted.'"

"The other thing," Krueger pointed out, "is that you can't tell if a person is very good at something until you give him an opportunity. So the idea that there are not gifted kids in black communities, on Indian reservations, or among women is absolutely ridiculous. In many of those places, there are no art programs, no programs that allow kids to solve problems, to think creatively, to take chemistry. We feel very strongly that you've got to give every kid a chance before you can say he's not gifted."

A child should do what he's capable of doing. Gifted children should be able to go at their own level and do what they can do and not have to follow what everyone else does so they can learn. However teacher training works, teachers should be taught how to handle gifted children, at least a little.

"Maybe in the some classrooms you'll have kids working at different levels and on different things," Krueger said, "and it may very well be that a kid who is three years ahead of his class in reading is working at his grade level in math. One thing we find is that bright kids are not uniformly bright."

"There are a lot of ways of teaching gifted kids. The point is that something has to be done to address gifted kids' needs, that they just not be ignored in the regular classroom."

"It's also part of the teachers', administrators' and parents' responsibility to make sure that bright kids don't feel superior to everyone else, that they understand they have a responsibility to use their talents to help other people," Krueger said.

Healthy veggie burger lacks fast food appeal

by Dick West
 United Press International

WASHINGTON — Militant vegetarians claim they are enjoying some success at pressuring fast food franchises to offer meatless alternatives to burgers with all-beef patties.

Good luck to them, but I do wish the anti-meat protesters would make the alternative names a bit more appetizing.

It's not that I have anything against the health food movement. Nor does my aversion reflect some misguided sense of macho, such as a feeling that real men don't eat bean sprouts.

Fast food customers should have "a hot, satisfying and quickly prepared transition alternative available."

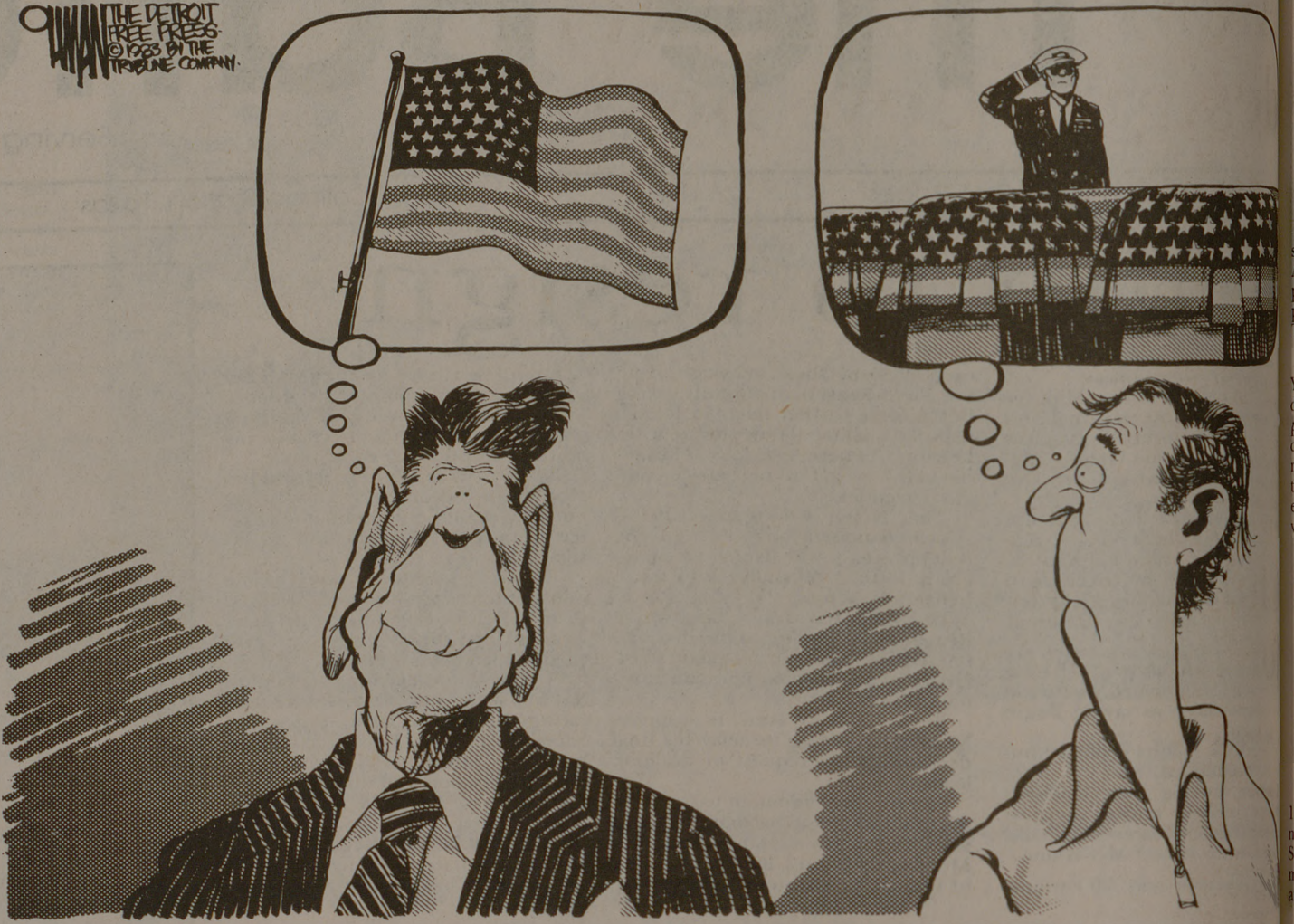
I simply resent the apparent reluctance of the "eat no meat" crowd to let vegetables stand on their own roots, so to speak.

The campaign to bring the world more fast food fruit and vegetable dishes is being pushed by a coalition of health and humane organizations.

Fast food customers, they insist, should have "a hot, satisfying and quickly prepared transition alternative available."

Although I can sympathize with their basic objective, do they have to call the transition alternative a "veggie burger?" I'm sure I try as diligently as you and your gourmet friends to stay abreast of the culinary trends sweeping across our

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FLAG SHOWING IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Backstairs at the White House

First lady keeps low profile

by Helen Thomas
 United Press International

LOS ANGELES — The Reagan's have been catching up with the carriage trade during their stay in California.

The president and his wife, Nancy, are part of a closely knit group of friends called the "Kitchen Cabinet" that, socially speaking, few outsiders are allowed to penetrate.

The wives of the all-male members of the Kitchen Cabinet are Mrs. Reagan's chums, and when they are 3,000 miles away, they talk by telephone.

The first lady has stayed out of the limelight during her August days in Los Angeles, but she made one public appearance in honor of her late father, Dr. Loyal Davis.

Mrs. Reagan unveiled a plaque at the John Tracy Clinic for the Deaf in Los Angeles in her one public outing. Tracy is the deaf son of the late actor Spencer Tracy, who was a good friend of Mrs. Reagan's mother, Edith Davis, when they were both in show business.

In her remarks, Mrs. Reagan said Dr. Davis played an important part in helping get the clinic started "in its early precarious days."

Otherwise, the first lady has been very private, but she undoubtedly has been in touch with her two designers, Galanos and Adolfo, to make her fall selections. Mrs. Reagan has to prepare her wardrobe for the two-week Asian journey she will take with the president in November.

She will have her own solo activities in some of the countries in the five-nation tour.

An advance team will head across the Pacific this Sunday to nail down plans for Reagan's trip. The White House continues to insist Reagan will visit the Philippines, despite the assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino.

Several leading papers have said editorially that he should not go.

Reagan himself seemed to indicate that a final decision had not been made, but presidential spokesman Larry Speakes insists present plans have not changed, and he will go to Manila.

Michael McManus, assistant to the president, says the advance team will be sifting through the many invitations for presidential appearances when Reagan visits the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Japan and Korea. But many of his potential hosts will be disappointed because Reagan's time in each country is very limited.

Although the Reagan's have been on the West Coast for two weeks, aides said they knew of no plans to see his grandchildren, Cameron, 4, and Ashley, 5 months.

Michael Reagan, father of the children, has publicly complained on several occasions that Reagan has not yet met his new granddaughter and that there is no grandfatherly relationship with the tots. Observers said that during the Repub-

lican Convention in Detroit in May, Cameron was thrust in Reagan's arms. But the little blond boy began to cry.

Reagan acknowledged at the time he was a stranger to the little boy because he had been on the campaign trail so long and had not had a chance to be acquainted with him.

When Reagan speaks at big meetings, members of the audience are allowed to take pictures but are warned not to use flash bulbs. The flashes play havoc with the teleprompter mirrors Reagan uses during the lecture when he speaks.

Reporters have found that riding in the chartered White House plane can be a curious experience.

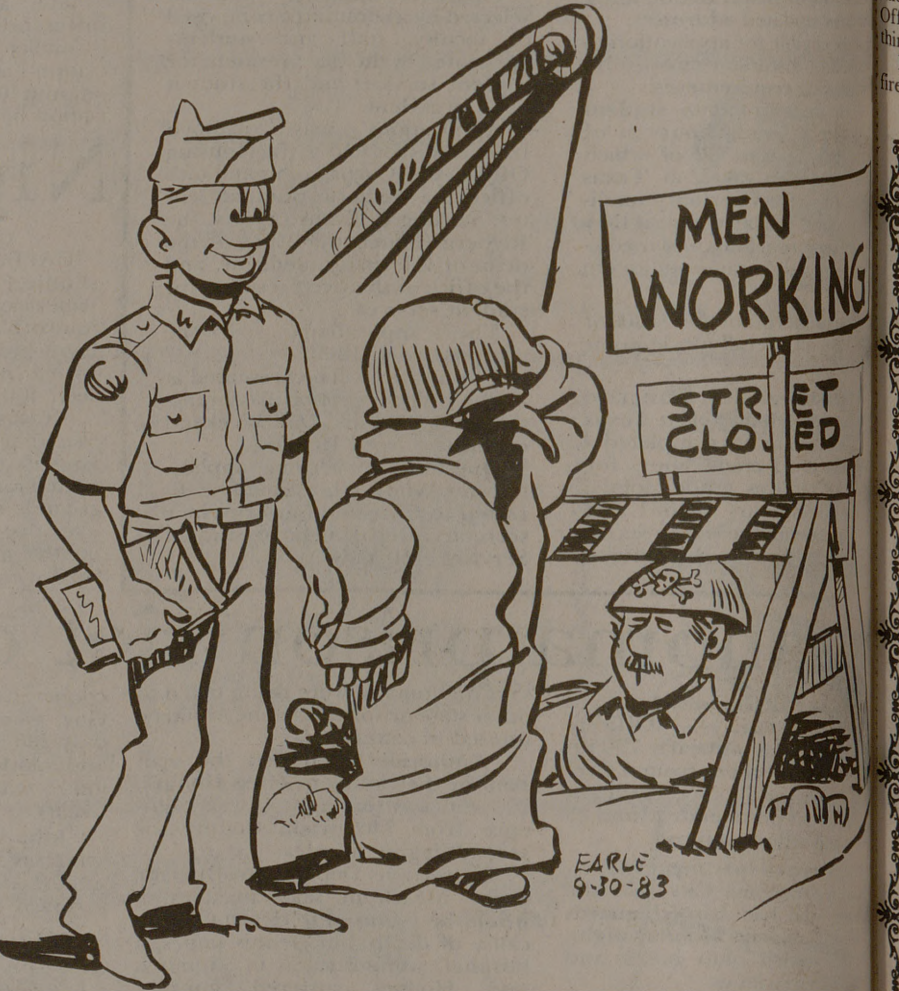
Shortly after their United Press plane took off for Seattle, the first lady announced that he would have to reverse thrusters to get the plane to land. He did and the passengers had a rough landing.

When the plane took off again to turn to Los Angeles, the pilot's brakes while still on the ground were told there might be a man on the wing.

Shortly afterward, the first lady announced they were taking off. One of the reporters aboard shouted, "We have a choice?"

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"That's a very good question, Squirt, and when you're older and more mature, you'll understand why it's necessary to tear up the roads and streets every time classes begin."

The Battalion

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