

America aging rapidly

For years Americans have waged a youth crusade.

Dishwashing liquid for younger looking hands, dyes to get rid of gray hair and facelifts every three years are part of the crusade.

Americans seem to be afraid of growing old. Turning 30 is a major tragedy for some people, although for others the crisis comes at 50.

Fortunately, the attitude that young is always better seems to be lessening. People are realizing that turning 30 or turning 40 doesn't mean the end of youthful activities.

That's fortunate because the latest Census Bureau predictions show rapid increases on the average age of Americans.

By the year 2000, according to the bureau's report, the average American will be 36 years old. The median age of the U.S. population will increase rapidly after that.

"The report shows the nation is about to start aging rapidly," the Census Bureau said. "In 1982, the median age of the U.S. population was at an all-time high of 30.6 years. In none of our projection series would the median age ever again be so young."

It's a good thing turning 30, 40 or 50 isn't a crisis anymore. If you're a 21-year-old college student now, guess what? You'll be 37 in the year 2000.

But at least you won't be alone.

—The Battalion Editorial Board



Business value changes spell 21st century turmoil

By RENE ZENTNER

Columnist for United Press International

As society's values change, the operation of U.S. business organizations come to reflect the new standards. This is a slow process; the pace is rarely sufficient to keep an organization's values current with those of the society in which it operates. Will this slow pace be adequate for the rapid social change expected in the 21st century?

In the past, when social change was slow, the disparity between social and business values was not especially important. The 21st century, though, promises rapid change in social values, spurred by affluence, rapid communications, increasing levels of education and high individual mobility.

The U.S. of the 21st century will be as different from that of the 20th as we are today from the U.S. of the 19th century. It is likely that the next century will find the U.S. playing the role of research and development center for the world. Instead of manufacturing and exporting capital and consumer goods, it may be that our national mission will be the provision of services: Education, technology, development, scientific research. Our exports will be information: new processes, ways to do old things better, consultants, software.

The growing disparity will cause challenges to corporate legitimacy. It therefore is appropriate to ask what the values of business enterprises will be, and how they will be formed.

The imposition of values from the top of the organization has been the traditional way in which the values of the American business enterprise were formed. The values of the founders — the John D. Rockefellers, Andrew Carnegies and Henry Fords — were followed and accepted by their subordinates and, later, by their successors. Not all senior executives, though, have altered their personal values as social values have changed around them. Does this mean that their own organizational values will be impervious to change? That is doubtful, because, like it or not, change will come.

Every year, graduating men and women, fresh from debates over values in classrooms and dormitories, bring into their new organizations the current values of their society. Once into the organization, they find they are part of an organization in flux, one in which the new entrants of the last few years have brought values which are different from those of their managers and seniors.

As the inevitable compromises are reached, the values of the overall organization change. This process is far slower than one in which values diffuse from above, but it is inexorable.

Will society, with its rapidly emerging values, tolerate business organizations whose value systems stem from the past, even if the fairly recent past? The question of whether business will be permitted to exist in its present form, now being debated in this country and abroad, will continue to be argued. Already a substantial and convincing literature exists suggesting that capitalism is incompatible with democracy.

Americans, as observers from Benjamin Franklin through de Tocqueville have noted, are pragmatic people; we value results more than means. We are at home with compromise and we're convinced that for every problem a solution can be found. Applying this pragmatism to the business enterprise of the future, we can anticipate how the issue will be resolved.

We value the business enterprise, and the enterprise of business, too much to sacrifice them in the name of social conformity. Though we may continue to criticize business values and the values of businessmen, business is too much a part of the American character to forego.

Although its products and services will change, as they have changed for the last century, business will continue to be the principal institution of American society in the next century, as it has been in this. As it has done in this century, the 21st century business will reflect many of the best aspects of the American character, and, very likely, many of the worst.

What then, is the challenge posed by American business to American society? It is the challenge of confrontation. The values of American business are the values of American society, magnified a thousand-fold. We may not like them when we see them on so large a scale, but they are nevertheless our own.

In the future, business may serve to embody values no longer current in the greater society. It may not be as compassionate as society might wish, as parochial or as international as society might wish, or as generous as society might wish. On the other hand, business is the engine that has produced this society, the vehicle that has given us access to the heavens and the bottom of the sea, that has enabled us to communicate instantaneously with each other and with others at the ends of the earth.

Americans know the value of compromise, and they will come to terms with the business of the future as we have come to terms with business in the past. As Winston Churchill said of democracy, it's not very good but no one has come up with anything better.

Towers to greet U.S. air travellers

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

The new trend in commercial real estate is to construct tall buildings as close to airports as one possibly can. Washington's National Airport is a perfect example to this imaginative way of using what were once vast wastelands of air space.

Just across the Potomac River, in the small town of Rosslyn, is a silver tower reaching up to the sky; a beacon of welcome to all pilots attempting to land and take off from one of the busiest terminals in the country. A twin building is now going up next to it, so that soon there will be two towers instead of one to greet passengers arriving in Washington.

The father of airport skyscrapers is Alf Klagstrom, a developer who started out with \$50 and a dream.

I sat with Alf in his Cloud Suite on the 30th floor of the Klagstrom Tower, and he told me how he came up with the idea for his unique real estate development plan.

"I was selling mobile homes door to door in the early '60s," he said, "and did a lot of flying. I noticed most major airports were out in the sticks, surrounded by farmland and ugly one-story buildings. There was no decent architecture within miles of the terminals, and no one seemed to care that all this good land was going to waste. 'Why,' I said, 'can't I develop a city close to air terminals so business people would not have to buck the traffic to catch their flights?'"

"There was no godly reason for airports to be so isolated from passengers they served. So I took an option on all the land at the end of the National Airport runway and hired an architect to develop a plan to make use of the air space. I told him I wanted something that would not only be utilitarian, but also beautiful to the eye, so that people flying in and out of National would be awestruck by what they saw."

"It's amazing you were the first to think of it," I said. "very few people would have the imagination to build a skyscraper in the flight path of a commercial airport."

Alf said modestly, "I'm, sure other people thought of it before I did, but no one had the persistence to follow through. Everyone was against me at

the start. The banks laughed at me and said no one would want to rent space in a building at the end of a runway. When I told them all the footage had already been spoken for before, even brokeground, they were flabbergasted.

"Then I had to deal with the bureaucratic airport officials who complained that the skyscrapers could present a safety hazard to their flights. I told them people once said the same thing about the Empire State Building when it was proposed. I also argued the skyscrapers would make pilots more alert when they were landing at National. To calm their fears I offered to put a red light on top of all the buildings at my own expense."

"That was a very decent thing to do," I said. "Did you have any trouble with the Arlington County officials getting a permit?"

"They were the only people on my side from the start. They saw the enormous tax revenues that commercial buildings would bring to the county, not to mention the jobs it would provide for people in the community. Compared to the federal government officials, who tried to stop me at every turn, the supervisors gave me encouragement during some of my darkest hours. Their faith in me has been rewarded. Arlington, which was formerly a bedroom community, now has one of the most beautiful skylines in the country."

"It must be a great feeling to see what you have accomplished in such a short period of time."

Alf said, "It's only the beginning. I've heard from counties all over the United States who want me to build skyscrapers next to their airports. I can see the day when every runway will be surrounded by glass and concrete towers, and high-rise hotels and apartment houses, creating an environment that will enrich the life of every American."

As we were talking, a DC-8 flew by Alf's window, its wing almost touching a large Azalea plant out on the balcony. Alf waved at the passengers who could clearly be seen through the windows. He said, "I'm making money on the deal, but the real thrill for me is to see the delighted expressions on the travelers' faces every time they fly by my building."

The Battalion

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Housekeeping worse than it's cracked up to be

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

Due to an illness, my wife has been out of action and I have found myself in the role of home manager. I must admit, I never paid too much attention to what a wife did to maintain a house, and assumed it was a snap compared to solving the Iraq-Iran war.

I am now realizing there is more to housekeeping than the TV commercials would have us believe. Here are some of the things I discovered in my new consciousness-raising position:

A laundry hamper only holds dirty clothes. It does not wash them.

There is no such thing as an empty dishwasher.

Garbage disposal units do not grind up steak bones, or forks and spoons.

Appliance repairmen all have answering services but never call them for their messages.

You cannot grow food in a refrigerator. You have to go to a supermarket and buy it. No matter what you buy for dinner your bill always comes to \$49.50.

Many varieties of food have to be cooked. This requires pots and pans. Fresh fish and meat do not come with instructions. Neither do fresh vegetables. Frozen meals taste just as good as frozen meals.

A person can overdose on hamburgers and scrambled eggs in less than five days.

Garbage has to be put on the street once a week, or no one will take it away.

Grass has to be watered or it will turn brown.

After making up beds two days in a row, the thrill is gone.

A neighbor never congratulates you on your waxed floors.

Polyester-blend suits start to smother if you don't take them to the dry cleaner.

When a fuse blows in the house it has to be replaced or the lights won't go back on.

United Parcel only rings your bell when they have a package for the person next door who isn't home.

The telephone only rings when you're in the bathroom, or outside watering plants.

You never have enough cord when you're vacuuming a rug. But you always have too much when you're trying to put it back in the closet.

People who live in glass houses have to wash their windows all the time.

The one item you need to complete a chore is downstairs when you are upstairs, and upstairs when you are downstairs.

Dogs and cats have to be fed or they'll turn on you.

The best way to clean up a son's room is to close the door and pretend it is not part of the house.

Taking a headache remedy does not necessarily mean there will be less dust in the living room. No one gives you a bonus for getting a stain out of the sofa.

Illegal alien housekeepers are better than no aliens at all.

It's amazing how little comfort you get out of gearing sympathetic friends tell you they know exactly what you're going through.

I discovered, admittedly late in the game, there is no such thing as upward mobility in home management, no chance for advancement, and no opportunity for a wage increase. I now understand for the first time why wives need soap operas and "The National Enquirer" to get them through the day. It's their only link with reality. Somebody else's infidelity sure beats the hell out of getting grease off the stove with the perfect paper towel.