

The Garden City Telegram *Opinion



Kate S. Polymers
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Jim Bishop



Nervous time on a carrier

At midnight, the sea was flat. There was a rim of pale gray around the horizon, as though daylight wanted to leave a memory. I left my cabin under the flight deck when I felt Midway's giant propellers turn up. She had loafed out of Guantanamo, a big, awkward looking aircraft carrier, and had turned into Windward Passage at 20 knots.

bombers, as swift swallows of the sky flying CAP to protect Midway from flying enemies.

silence among the senior officers watching. The jets, one by one, slowed to 110 miles per hour. The LSO officer wiggled and wagged from his well.

another chance." Williams (not his name) was begging for another shot at it. The plane wasn't damaged. No one could land until that clothes line was repaired. The deck crew—heroes themselves—took long needles and sewed the bits and pieces into a taut line in under three minutes.

Now, northbound into the Atlantic, Midway was ready for night carrier operations. A new squadron of fighter jets would be taken aboard tonight. A warship is just an expensive threat in peacetime, so the skipper decreed lights out. The new pilots would have to find Midway.

They had their first assignment: find the carrier at midnight. It was a cloudless night. On the deck, a couple of hundred men in tight jumpers and head masks strung a colored line, like a thousand hankies, from the island to the port rail. The Landing Signal Officer and his assistant were in a well deck aft.

Each needle nose came in at speed, landing gear and hook down, and flopped on the deck. The trip wires brought the plane to a stunning stop. The deck crew ran to each plane and pointed to the portside elevator. They disappeared, one every two minutes.

Williams was spun off the bows. I saw his hot-coal tail pipe disappear into the sky. He had a tougher assignment now. He had to find the line of waiting jets and get to the rear of it. He had to conserve fuel so that he wouldn't fall into the sea.

She was protected by four destroyers, who were moving faster and faster as the carrier was. I got on the flight deck, a civilian writer crouching in the wind. When she hit 33 knots, with a breeze of 8 knots pouring over the bows, anyone on flight deck would brace against a 41-knot gale.

He carried fluorescent bats. With them, he became a ballet master, signaling "You're too high," "Too far left," "Cut your engine now" or, crossing the bats before his face, signaling: "Give her power. Get out of here and come around again."

Then one didn't make it. He came in high. The LSO waved him off. A jet does not respond to a power surge instantaneously. The pilot decided to cut power and drop. He half engaged two wires, then plunged forward into the colored clothes line and chewed it to shreds.

And when it came time to try to land on Midway a second time, he would have to forget his own fears and obey the LSO. The others came in, one by one. By the time we spotted Williams climbing our wake, there was a dead silence everywhere.

I hit my shin on a guy wire. Midway had three AD-4s tied up near the bows. This, bear in mind happened a long time ago. I got to the island and crept up to Primary Fly. The skipper, a chubby man who chewed cold cigars, looked aft. He saw nothing. On the deck above, an admiral decided to come down and join the captain.

We heard the jets before we saw them. They came up the starboard side aft like little water bugs hugging the horizon. They flew ahead, turned one at a time, and flew over the portside destroyer. From behind, they looked like red hot coals.

The chubby captain spoke on the phone. Klaxons were sounding two dismal notes. A voice shouted "Foul deck!" The captain got off the phone. "If he's all right..." the admiral whispered. The captain nodded gloomily. "The flight surgeon will examine him. If he's in condition, and wants to, I told the exec to give him

He made it. There was no cheer. The admiral patted the captain on the arm. "I knew that boy could make it," he murmured. He was lying...

Editorial

Flood talk

The damaging flood at Great Bend has revived memories about our big one in June, 1965, and the possibilities of it happening again.

Springfield, west and south of Holly, got 3 and 5 inches, respectively.

Bob Wells, KIUL editorialist, mused about it the other morning and wondered out loud how much rain it would take for a rerun of '65, which has been called the worst flood in the city's history.

If that happened again, given the condition of the river bed clogged with brush, trees, sand bars and assorted junk, who knows how bad the flooding would be? And the US83 spur bridge east of town, built since the big flood, adds another question mark. What would its damming effect be?

It was, of course, a rhetorical question. No one has an answer to that.

We bring all this up because it is timely and to point out again that not much, if anything, has been done since 1965 to improve flood control here.

But it is something to think about. And should the situation that led to the '65 flood be duplicated, the city conceivably could suffer an even worse experience because of the poor condition of the river bed and a new structure that would divert water flow.

Bill Brown, Telegram editor back in those days, and others surveyed the flood damage and renewed pleas for a dam at Hartland or Syracuse and for a general cleaning of the channel to prevent water from spreading out.

Sixteen years ago torrential rains along the Arkansas river valley between here and the John Martin Dam triggered Garden City's flood. (John Martin, incidentally, saved us from a worse inundation, impounding thousands of acre feet of water from heavy rains west of there.)

The dam has been a dead issue for years and no one seems interested in doing anything about the river bed, which resembles a jungle and hasn't carried water in years.

Holly, Co., 70 miles west of Garden City, got a toast-strangling 6 inches, Syracuse, 4 inches. Granada and

The truth is that no one gets interested in flood control until after the flood. And then everyone wonders why something wasn't done.

Distaff Side



Little Blue Schoolhouse (2)

by dolores hope

IN APRIL James Coleman, one of the nation's leading sociologists, added a full round to the shots already being fired at public schools.

He released a study, based on a representative sample of more than 58,000 students in 1,000 high schools, which concluded that students learn more in private high schools than in public high schools.

DEFENDERS OF public schools, already threatened by the possibility of government subsidies for non-public schools, were hit hard.

A COUPLE of weeks after the report was released Coleman said that the most significant finding of his study was misread. He pointed out that effective schools in both the public and private sectors had common characteristics. These characteristics simply were more often found in the private schools than in public schools. When they were found in public schools, student achievement reflected the difference.

IN A report in 1966, Coleman concluded that the family background of students was more important than anything schools did. This popularized a belief that "schools don't make a difference."

His new report clearly holds that school policies DO make a difference and directly effect student achievement.

THIS IS encouraging news. "His (Coleman's) findings contain important lessons for those who are responsible for public schools which contain 90 percent of our schoolchildren," Diane Ravitch of Columbia University wrote in The Washington Post in May.

"IN EFFECTIVE schools, whether public or private, there is more homework, higher enrollments in advanced courses, better attendance, less class-cutting, a better disciplinary climate, and stronger teacher interest in students. The best schools ask the most of their students—and get it," Ravitch wrote.

COLEMAN'S REPORT points to improvements needed and it demonstrates that it is possible for schools, public and private, to make them.

Art Buchwald



Togetherness in flight

Anyone who has been flying tourist class these days has noticed that the airlines are placing their rows closer and closer to each other, making it more difficult to get your entire body into a seat.

had to be placed under your seats. The man next to me called her over and said, "What do I do with my knees?"

passenger's knees?" "Because the airlines have been deregulated to increase competition. They can now put the rows as close together as they want. The government is no longer concerned with leg room."

either." "Well, let's give it a try," he said.

I was on a shuttle to New York City the other morning, and the stewardess announced that all carry-on luggage

The stewardess said, "I beg your pardon?"

"My seatmate said, 'I'm in the cattle business and the government still has strict regulations as to how many cattle may be shipped in a car. You'd think we would have the same rights as animals.'"

"Try not to take the crease out of my pants," I begged him. "I have to speak at a lunch today."

Public Pulse
Why should bosses be paid more?

"Neither do I," I told her. "Could I put my knees in the overhead rack?" he wanted to know.

"I'm just a stewardess. If you have any complaints, why don't you make them to management?"

"I'll be careful." We put our legs across each other's laps.

(The following letter responds, more or less tongue-in-cheek, to a Staff Soapbox by Carol Crupper complaining that principals' salaries here are out of proportion to the pay of teachers.—Ed.)

"Why don't you put them on your chest?" I suggested to my seatmate. "I was hoping to read my newspaper," he replied. "It's almost impossible to turn a page if you have your knees on your chest."

"Could I check my knees in the baggage compartment?" he asked. "I'm sorry, we're just about to take off and we can't check anything."

The pilot announced we were third in line for takeoff. The stewardess came down the aisle to check if our safety belts were fastened.

(To: Messrs. Brooks, Frazier and Allman Garden City Telegram) Dear Sirs:

The stewardess said, "FAA regulations forbid you to put your knees on your chest while the safety belt sign is on."

"You're not gay are you?" he wanted to know. "Heck no, and I assume you're not

"That's not permitted," she said sternly. "Where does it say so in the regulations?" my seatmate demanded. "Look what you've started," she said. "Everyone is putting his legs in the person's lap next to him."

On behalf of the staff writers of the Garden City Telegram, I would like to urge you to raise the level of compensation of the aforementioned "front line" professionals to a level at least equal to your paper shufflers. You are no doubt well aware that advances in the newspaper profession seldom take place in your offices. The public sees the staff writers far more often than they see you. The better the staff writer, the better informed our public will be. If staff writers' salaries were more attractive, perhaps they would not have to be booted up to the position of business manager or editor in order to get a hefty pay raise.

The stewardess went away. I turned to the man and said, "I have a suggestion, if you don't mind. Why don't you put your knees on my lap and I'll put my knees on your lap. In that way we'll both be more comfortable."

"You're not gay are you?" he wanted to know. "Heck no, and I assume you're not

It actually wasn't a bad trip, and when we got to La Guardia we shared a taxi into New York. Fortunately it was a Checker cab and we could both stretch our legs as far as we wanted. The ride put shuttle airline to shame.

You have a job to do and I'm sure some editors are even good journalists. Who came up with the idea that you should be paid more than staff writers, anyway? For my newspaper dollar, I'll go with the staff writer. Then perhaps you can attract and keep quality journalists who will refrain from making less than sagacious comparisons or at least, get the facts straight before ascending the soap box.—CHARLES F. GANT, Assistant Principal, Garden City Senior High School.

