

Reviving the draft with justice for all

by Mike Royko

That politically dreaded "D" word is finally being uttered in Washington. "D," as in draft. Draft, as in grab those young people, put them in uniform, teach them how to aim a rifle, and ship them out.

Military experts are now saying that if we're going to hurry up and fight Iraq, as President Bush wishes, we'll need more able bodies.

Simple arithmetic. We're putting a vast army in Saudi Arabia, so we're shorthanded elsewhere. If we have to replace those in the desert because they die, are wounded, or are rotated, someone has to take their place.

And since young men and women aren't rushing to enlistment offices these days, the only way to fill the manpower gap is to restore the draft, which ended in 1973.

If it must be, OK, it must be. But if we're going to have a draft, it should be done fairly.

The question is, what is fair? We all have our own ideas about fairness, so here's mine, in the order that draftees should be called.

(1) The first group should be

the draft-age sons, daughters, nieces, nephews and grandchildren of all members of the Bush administration. And not for any typewriter or filing duty. No, they should be given a crash course in fighting against naked aggression and shipped directly to the front.

That's fair, I believe, because this rush to war is Bush's idea. He didn't ask the American people, he didn't ask Congress, and maybe didn't even ask the guy sharing his golf cart. And at this point he still hasn't asked.

Yes, he asked the U.N., but I'm not sure how many Americans want their kids to get their marching orders from our old pals, the Soviet Union and China.

(2) The next draft-age group to be called should be the sons, daughters, grandchildren, etc., of those members of Congress who are Bush's cheerleaders. If they believe we should go charging into Iraq, let their kin lead the charge.

(3) The sons, daughters, etc., of the top executives of any American corporations that sold Iraq any of the military gadgetry and hardware that has helped make it possible for Saddam to

become a pain in the international behind. You helped give him more bang for his buck. Now go here the bang.



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(4) The offspring of the chief executive officers of the Fortune 500 companies. I have nothing personal against them, but I'm sure that if they have any thoughts about the advisability of a war, they can get Bush's attention a little easier than the guy who changes the oil in my car.

(5) The young members of the

100,000 wealthiest families in America. Once again, it's nothing personal. But my guess is that a hell of a lot more of these families voted for Bush than, say, the 100,000 poorest families in America. So if he's their guy, they should show their enthusiasm and support for their commander in chief by shoving junior into the arms of the drill sergeant.

(6) This might be difficult, but in the modern age of technology, not impossible. A special task force should read every letters section of every newspaper published since the war crisis began. They should look for letters that say things like: "Let's get in there and get this thing over with...." or "Let's blast that Saddam back to...." or "Let us support our commander-in-chief in this..." The names of the letter writers should be noted and if they are not lame or infirmed, they and their entire families should be sent draft notices.

(7) While the task force is scanning the letters, it can check out the editorials and columns. Anybody who wrote anything indicating an eagerness for the shooting to start--off to boot

camp, killer.

(8) Bush's son, Neil. He might be overage, but the lad still looks young and spry. And being drafted would teach him that the pen might be mightier than the sword in a back-room S&L deal, but not on a battlefield.

(9) Vice President Dan Quayle. During lulls in the shooting, he could work on his sand wedge game.

Have I missed anyone? Probably. I wonder how Henry Kissinger would look in a gas mask.

Some advocates of a fair draft say that there should be no deferments, as there were to the point of scandal during the Vietnam War.

But I disagree. I would grant an automatic deferment, upon request, to anyone whose father was killed or wounded in the Vietnam War. In fact, the deferment would apply to anyone whose father served in Vietnam.

They should have the right to say: "No thanks, Mr. Bush, our families provided all those names for one memorial wall in Washington; why don't you and your crowd fill in the next?"

Reader Forum

Values education needed

Recently, in English class, we were discussing an essay by Richard Mitchell entitled, "The Columbus Gap." It's from a chapter in his book, "Less Than Words Can Say," written in 1979. The preface states that "Mitchell blames the public schools for producing a population of muddled speakers and thinkers." He goes on to "ridicule educators emphasis on teaching 'values clarification' rather than language skills."

Sitting in the college classroom eleven years after this was written has compelled me to voice why I strongly believe values education classes should be taught.

The shrill cry of a young student at least twenty years my junior still echos in my brain, "I don't know why they force you to take things you don't care about and I'll never use in my career. I didn't come here for therapy."

It was all I could do to prevent a knee jerk response by yelling out, "not therapy, but examination of yourself and the world around you, and how and why you come to believe the things you do."

But I restrained myself from proselytizing. Then I headed off to my class in developmental psychology and discovered that less than sixty percent of all adults ever reach level three of Kohlberg's moral stages of development which includes abstract emphatic reasoning. It states that cognition is a

prerequisite of moral behavior. How ever will there be hope for a better world if people aren't engaged in the act of process of knowing?

While Mitchell and I agree "you just can't go and teach values," you can teach the process that allows self confrontation. Concrete models provide an analytical way of looking at what you believe and why you believe it.

Dr. Roger Sweetening's book, "A Values Approach to Health Behavior," describes the self actualizing person as "the one who comes closest to fulfilling human potential and such core values as truth, justice and freedom." When we look around us and see a nation whose attention has turned toward an uprising in racism, homophobia and war, we can't help but think the country could use a good swift kick in the shift from the absence of core values.

A recent example at school brings to light my point. While discussing the last film in the women's series, I was encouraging a young black woman to see the film and stay for the discussion that followed.

As soon as she heard that the topic was about homosexuality, her eyes widened, her body stiffened, and while shaking her head she said, "uh uh! I don't care what those people do, just keep them away from me." You would have thought I was coaxing her into swallowing a glass of

arsenic.

Instead of thoughtfully responding and trying to acquire knowledge outside her egocentric world, she reacted defensively and emotionally. I then posed a question that required self confrontation. I asked her if she was ever bothered with that same attitude some whites have about blacks.

Her hesitant look indicated a moment of self reflection. No, I didn't change her mind, and she didn't come to the movie. But I believe questions like that in response to ourselves are the beginning of the process that takes place in a values education class.

That cognition increases a self awareness and better understanding of the encompassing world. That process can be used in our continuing, evolutionary development throughout life. It contributes to establishing a belief in core values such as truth, justice, and freedom. In this way, we come closest to fulfilling human potential by self actualizing.

The words of Chet Wolford speaking at this year's Behrend convocation ring ardently in my mind: "Instead of always looking for the right answer, we should be seeking to ask the right questions."

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Communication

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