

Mediocrity

By Hap Hansen

High School Graduation month is here again. Our graduating class is about to go make their mark in the world, whether it be college, trade school or work. Congratulations.

It is unfortunate that less than 50 percent of our high school graduates will go on to college or trade school. Many of the rest of them will be digging in the dirt, at menial jobs, just to make a meager living. What is happening to our success system? I read some time ago about a school in Los Angeles that declined to name a single valedictorian for fear it would hurt other students' feelings. So they simply named every student a valedictorian. Quoting from the article, one teacher said, "If one person got singled out for that honor, we might be saying they are better than other kids. And we can't have that!"

What? We can't have everybody absolutely equal or they will all be digging in the dirt. In my opinion, what we can't have are teachers with such asinine ideas. Why don't we carry this idea to the rest of the school? In a class of 100, we would have 100 valedictorians, 100 salutatorians, 100 football captains and 100 presidents of the class. We would also have 100 cheerleaders and 100 homecoming kings and queens. But let's not discriminate between sexes. I wonder how many girls would want to be the football captain and how many boys would want to be the cheerleader?

Let's go national with this idea. Just think how many Miss America's there would be and how many gold medal winners at the Olympics? We couldn't grant a silver medal because it might hurt that person's feelings. So let them all dig in the dirt then, because everyone would be absolutely equal.

Let's take a gigantic leap forward to real life. A corporation with 100 employees would have 100 Presidents; every clerk, janitor and manager would carry the President's title. One problem. Who would do the work? Many years ago, at a Congressional hearing to appoint a new Supreme Court Judge, it was discovered that the nominee was a mediocre judge and should not be appointed to the bench. A Midwestern Senator said something to this effect, "Most Americans are average, and therefore, we should have somebody with average ability on the Supreme Court." The Judge was not appointed. Hurt feelings or not, we must distinguish superiority from mediocrity. As Daniel Webster once said, "There's always room at the top." And we should say, "But one has to work for it." If some of those graduating Seniors are willing to do menial laborer's work and never try to get above mediocrity, then we'd better get used to those graduates digging in the dirt.