

Metric push leads to McClellan's interest

Written by Steven McClellan

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It has been two weeks since the publication of my letter to the editor. In that letter I requested that the citizens of Holyoke adopt the metric system as our official system of measurement.

With cock-eyed optimism, I expected to see our gas stations switch their prices to dollars per liter by now. Realistically speaking, I concur with my uncle who told me that even though he agreed with me, I had only 17/64th's of a snowball's chance to succeed in my mission of conversion. I believe he is correct. How depressing is that?

The United States is joined by only two other nations (Burma and Liberia) that have not officially adopted the metric system; if we work hard enough at it, we can be the last nation to switch.

The proper time for us to change has long passed us by, but the opportunity for us to change has not. We must change now; how long can we justify calling ourselves leaders of the free world while we concurrently strive to be the last nation to adopt the metric system?

I was hoping to hear a response in last week's paper regarding my article and was disappointed not to see one. Perhaps one will run alongside my follow-up. I am excited to start a dialog here in Holyoke and hope to see more conversations nationwide.

I have had the honor to speak with folks from the U.S. Metric Association and they are delighted to see more people become interested in metrication. I look forward to chatting with people here in town and hearing what you have to say whether it be pro, con or indifferent.

My last letter also touched on my profound interest in education. Since I wrote it, the president addressed our youngsters on national television. I believe it was a politically benign, nonpartisan speech. He challenged our youth to strive harder to educate themselves to help secure the future success of our nation. It focused on our students and, in turn, his call to excellence was directed toward them.

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I found it to be inspiring; I have it recorded on my television and would be happy to show it to anybody that is interested. I am sure you can watch it on the internet as well. Either way, it is worth taking a look at. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you want to come over and watch it. I ask that kids come along with their parent(s) to ensure parental approval.

I have called our schools and some of the educational board members inquiring about tutoring opportunities here in Holyoke. From what I understand, there is not currently an official tutoring program set up in either the elementary or jr./sr. high schools. I believe that a little help often goes a long way and would love to see a program become implemented.

I also encourage students to form study groups and to collaborate with one another to help ease the achievement of their educational goals. Teamwork works, it really does. I would also like to volunteer to help in any way that I can. I encourage community members to help as well. Again, I would love to open up a dialog to discuss any ideas that people may have.

It is not my intention to step on anybody's toes. I mean not to offend or to blame anyone; America's educational decline is as much everybody's fault as it is nobody's fault—blame gets us nowhere. The data continues to show that American students, collectively, are falling behind their global counterparts. Correction of this trend is necessary and I am willing to help.