Instead of teaching our young women and men that we can ``erase'' our mistakes and make it all go away, let's teach them to look ahead and make wise choices. Instead of teaching that empowerment comes from being able to kill, let's teach that it comes from knowledge, self-discipline, and personal responsibility.

James Clay

Sunnyvale

A victory for consumers

Written during the final proceedings on the 2000 Microsoft antitrust suit.

BILL Gates should never have dropped out of Harvard. Had he stayed, he might have studied George Santayana's admonition that if you don't know what happened to others yesterday, it will happen to you tomorrow. And, if young Bill had taken a few hours off to visit Fenway Park when the Yankees came to town, he might not have missed the lesson contained in Yogi Berra's uniquely personal French.

The breakup of Microsoft will move the computer industry faster and farther ahead than ever. (For starters, imagine having a fully loaded Word that runs under Linux at one-fourth the current price!) The impending decision of Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson will generate immediate benefits to users, and eventually for Microsoft's employees and stockholders as well.

The legal cure about to be administered Microsoft has been dosed out to many past monopolies from Standard Oil to recently AT&T. Once the initial disruptive side effects subsided, consumers gained enormously in choice. Eventually, the combined capital value of the companies created far exceeded that of their parent.

Can the pace of this digital age afford to wait for market forces to finally have their day that for IBM took over a decade to arrive? Not anymore. Microsoft's champions, those who chant, ``leave success and `innovation' alone,'' just don't get it. They and we stand on the threshold of a monumental windfall. The technological and economic sum of Microsoft's competing derivatives will surely be greater than the original whole. Buy Microsoft now while the price is right.

Paul M. Grant

San Jose

Threat is in Washington