



“New Age” Ed in Alabama

Huntsville, Alabama parents discovered that relaxation techniques associated with the New Age are being used with their children. The elementary schools use “Apple Relaxation Tapes” that employ hypnotic techniques which produce altered states of consciousness and trance states.

The schools are using *Peace, Harmony, Awareness: A relaxation program for children*. “The Secret Place,” Program 11 of *Peace, Harmony, Awareness*, “explains the development of inner wisdom and the benefits of learning to trust and use this inner knowledge.”

The tape leads the child through deep breathing and guided fantasy to “feel strong and sure of yourself.” Then the child is introduced to “a very wise rabbit” who has the answers to all the child’s questions.

In this guided fantasy, the child is taken to a “secret place” where he sits in “a white beam of light” and can get more answers to his questions “from deep underground springs within you.” Parents felt the closing statement, “many grown-ups don’t know these secrets,” discourage children from sharing about the tape with them.

The *Peace, Harmony, Awareness* curriculum is funded through the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act-4C and is therefore subject to the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) which requires schools to obtain prior, written, parental consent before administering any test or program in which a primary purpose is to change behavior or attitudes. The *Peace, Harmony, Awareness* manual states that it was developed “to help children deal effectively with everyday stress so that they will be able to enjoy more satisfying and creative lives. As children change some of their behaviors and learn to cope more effectively with life’s demands, they will ultimately develop a more positive self-image.”

Meanwhile, in Birmingham, Alabama, other parents discovered that New Age courses were being advertised and given as a part of the Community Education program. The courses were funded by the City of Birmingham and Birmingham Board of Education.

The description of available courses provided by the school boards to the public included a list of “Lodestar’s Esoteric Tuesdays.” (See page 2.) Midway during the series of “esoteric Tuesdays,” a citizen called this to the attention of school board members who first said that the courses did not conflict with board policy because they did not promote a religion. When the board learned that the course material includes basic tenets of Hinduism, Buddhism and New Age religions, the series was terminated. ■

“Drug-free Schools” Efforts At Odds with Reading Book

The book, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, is scheduled for reconsideration as instructional material in the Lodi Unified School District in California. The book is listed on the State Matrix of literature as support material.

Ranai Jones, the Lodi parent who brought the complaint, is a member of the health task force for the Lodi district and in that capacity completed an education conference by the CareAction program, “A School Approach to Adolescent Chemical Dependency,” in August 1988. She recently was chairman for Red Ribbon Week at her school, which was a nationwide effort to create “positive peer awareness” to combat chemical addictions.

Mrs. Jones became aware of the book when a friend, whose daughter needs assistance in



reading, asked Mrs. Jones if she had read the book their children were reading. The friend told her the characters get drunk at the end of the story. Mrs. Jones then read the book and became concerned.

She went to her daughter’s teacher. According to Mrs. Jones, the teacher said she thinks the book is “just fine” and feels that Mrs. Jones’ concern is “groundless.” Another teacher, who is also a member of the health task force, uses *Fantastic Mr. Fox* as part of his curriculum, but told Mrs. Jones that he points out the characters’ wrong behavior to the class. He is also piloting the *Here’s Looking At You Two* drug education curriculum.

Mrs. Jones asked him how he feels about other teachers using the book without warning them about the characters’ behaviors. Accord-

ing to Mrs. Jones, he said they have a “first amendment right” to use whatever materials in whatever manner they choose in their classroom.

In her complaint, Mrs. Jones stated, “This book contains a positive presentation of alcohol use by adult and little animals, and depicts behavior patterns of alcoholics as legitimate.” *Fantastic Mr. Fox* also describes farmers as “crude and offensive. The farmers are characterized as such terrible men that Mr. Fox easily rationalizes his own stealing.” Lodi is a farming community.

To support her analysis, Mrs. Jones cited passages from the book. In the adjacent box is printed a passage where Mr. Fox and friends are in a farmer’s cellar to steal his alcohol depot.

Mrs. Jones notes that the book depicts symptoms of alcoholism as described by CareAction materials. The materials state, “If 4 or more of the 10 criteria are fulfilled, this constitutes a pathologic or non-social drinking pattern and a positive diagnosis of alcoholism.”

The criteria are:

“**Preoccupation with alcohol** or the next opportunity to drink;

“**Gulping Drinks.** He usually drinks a double or downs the first couple of drinks rapidly;

“**Increased tolerance for alcohol.** The alcoholic can usually drink much more than others and still function relatively well;

“**Drinking alone.** This includes drinking in bars, but alone;

“**Use of alcohol as a medicine** for relief of tension or anxiety or as an aid to sleep;

“**Blackouts.** Drinking sufficiently such that the next morning brings amnesia for some of the events of the previous evening;

“**Secluded bottle.** Having a bottle hidden in the home or somewhere in case a drink is needed;

“**Unpremeditated drinking.** Drinking much more than planned, or drinking differently from what one had planned;

“**Morning tremors.** Fine tremor of fingers from overindulgence;

“**Morning drink.** To help one over a hangover.”

Mrs. Jones requests that the book not be used in the district. To the question, “In its place,

what material addressing the same topic or of equal literary quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of our civilization?” she responded, *Ben Franklin: Boy Printer* from the Childhood of Famous Americans series by Aladdin Books. She concluded, “*Fantastic Mr. Fox* does not convey a valuable picture or perspective of our civilization.” ■

“Take a good look round,” said Mr Fox. “Don’t you see *anything* that interests you? . . .

They went closer. They *were* jars. There were hundreds of them, and upon each one was written the word CIDER. . . .

While they were talking, the Smallest Fox had sneaked a jar off the shelf and had taken a gulp. “Wow!” he gasped. “Wow-ee!”

You must understand this was not the ordinary weak fizzy cider one buys in a store. It was the real stuff, a home-brewed fiery liquor that burned in your throat and boiled in your stomach.

“Ah-h-h-h-h-h!” gasped the Smallest Fox. “This is *some* cider!”

“That’s quite enough of that,” said Mr Fox, grabbing the jar and putting it to his own lips. He took a tremendous gulp. “It’s miraculous!” he whispered, fighting for breath. “It’s fabulous! It’s beautiful!”

“It’s my turn,” said Badger, taking the jar and tilting his head well back. The cider gurgled and bubbled down his throat. “It’s . . . it’s like melted gold!” he gasped. “Oh, Foxy, it’s . . . like drinking sunbeams and rainbows!”

“You’re poaching!” shrieked Rat. “Put that down at once! There’ll be none left for me!” Rat was perched upon the highest shelf in the cellar, peering out from behind a huge jar. There was a small rubber tube inserted in the neck of the jar, and Rat was using this tube to suck out the cider.

“You’re drunk!” said Mr Fox.

“Mind your own business!” shrieked Rat. “And if you great clumsy brutes come messing about in here we’ll all be caught! Get out and leave me to sip my cider in peace.”

NIH Sex Study Raises Concerns

A request for federal funds for a new sex survey is causing controversy on Capitol Hill. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, which was already awarded \$400,000 for Phase I of the study, is requesting another \$1.6 million to complete Phase I. The “Social and Behavior Aspects of Health and Fertility-Related Behavior” study, colloquially known as the NIH Sex Study, is presently awaiting final approval from Health and Human Services Secretary Louis W. Sullivan.

In Phase I of the project, which is expected to be completed by July, researchers are asking 2,300 Americans when they last had sex, their partner’s sex, what acts they performed, and what devices they used in the act. Under Phase II, which would require an additional \$13

million, another 20,000 Americans would be asked similar questions.

Proponents of the study say it is needed to combat AIDS and that the study is needed for “science” and “public health.” They say that those opposed to the study “are just engaging in politics.” Opponents feel the money would be better spent trying to find a cure or treatment.

Opponents note that research in sexual behavior is methodologically flawed because of the survey audience. In research, a refusal rate higher than 15% is considered enough to skew results by at least 50%. The refusal rate in surveys of sexual behavior typically ranges from 40% to 60%, even after a first screening produces samples of people who say they will answer a questionnaire.

Another concern is that the researchers may be

unduly influenced by personal bias. The study’s researchers include Stuart Michaels, the newly elected chair of the Lesbian and Gay Caucus of the American Sociological Association and a prominent homosexual activist, and John Gagnon, who has been active in the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws and authored a book in which he appears to condone sex between adults and children.

Critics are concerned because the study requests the respondent to give sexual partners’ name, sex, age, race, ancestry, education, marital status, children, and religion. Other critics fear that these results will be used to define “normal” sexual behaviors and that the new definitions will then be used to guide the formation of new sex and AIDS education materials. ■

EDUCATION
BRIEFS

In an article in *The Principal*, Education Secretary Lauro Cavazos said that 27 million young adults are functionally illiterate and another 40 to 60 million are only marginally literate, which means they cannot read above a fifth-grade level.

The Maryland Court of Appeals ruled against the National Education Association's attempt this spring to strengthen the role of the local school board. The union wanted veto power over the decisions of the Montgomery County School Board on matters such as school calendars and job classifications. According to the *Save Our Schools* newsletter, the court said that "school boards would be seriously hampered if they had to get union approval for such decisions."

Tourists at Disney's Epcot will "witness the actual birth of a baby" if plans for the Fall 1989 exhibit go according to schedule. The Wonders of Life Pavilion will feature a film that follows a married couple from "their decision to have a baby" to the delivery room, according to the April 3 issue of *Newsweek*. Metropolitan Life Insurance is "spending several million dollars to sponsor the attraction," but is concerned about possible difficulties like an episiotomy or a breech birth. According to *Newsweek*, Disney CEO Michael Eisner's response was: when sex finally rears its head at Disney World, "the lines will be two hours long." He predicts that this exhibit will sell because of a combination of "the average American's quest for truth" and "discreet camera angles." The article also states that, "Booze and tobacco are hard to come by on the property, and night life is virtually nonexistent, at least until Pleasure Island is completed." Pleasure Island, also scheduled to open this fall, is a "cluster of 'themed' nightclubs for teens and adults."

A federal court decided that New York's practice of awarding "scholarships on the basis of SAT scores was unfair to girls because they consistently scored lower on the test than boys." The SAT was legislated as the basis for the scholarships last year after charges that high schools were altering grades when they were the sole basis for awarding scholarships. Next year, New York plans to use a combination of test scores and grade points to award the scholarships as recommended by federal Judge John Walker.

Lean on Me, the movie about Joe Clark, is encouraging teachers to believe they can make a difference even if the administration and teaching staff have quit trying. Mr. Clark's get-tough approach to school safety in a New Jersey school has created a safe learning environment for his students that is working and thrust him into the national news.

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Republican Group Endorses Board Candidates; Causes Controversy

For the third year in a row, a Republican group in St. Louis created controversy by endorsing candidates for the Parkway School Board, one of the largest in the St. Louis metropolitan area. The March 1989 issue of the *Missouri River Republican II* announced that the endorsements by the Missouri River Township Republican Organization (MRTRO)



Diane Huyer

were made after "careful examination of the candidates and pursuant to the township organization's policy of encouraging voter interest and participation in the electoral process."

The MRTRO newsletter contends that their endorsement engendered controversy because of the criticism reported in local newspapers from "Democrats and NEAers, neither of which seem to understand the nature of the electoral process in a representative democracy or the idea that newspapers do not have a monopoly on First Amendment rights."

The newsletter states that the MRTRO provided the newspapers with press releases and lengthy statements regarding their policy on endorsements in local board elections, but that this information was not included in the news-

Students Test History IQ

A group of Marquette High School seniors in Alton, Illinois are developing an American history and current events test to increase awareness of the importance of these subject areas. The test, entitled "What Every American Should Know," will have 100 questions.

The students' inspiration for the development of such a test came from an article in *U.S. News and World Report* which listed the results of a quiz/survey given to people of all ages. They found the results, which indicated that many people were ignorant of important information that relate to the U.S., alarming. "Our intent is to make people aware of what is going on around them, and we feel the items on the test reflect issues and events pertinent to our heritage," commented Joe Miller, one of the authors.

The students' aim is to allow people to take the test while waiting for a doctor's appointment and at other opportune times in waiting rooms. Sample questions from the test are listed below:

2. On what date was the Declaration of Independence signed, who was the author, and who was the first person to sign it?

18. In 1823, what U.S. document warned that there would be no further colonization in the Americas by European powers and no interference with independent nations in the Western Hemisphere?

33. What tragic event took place on December 7, 1941 that will "live in infamy" in U.S. history?

paper reports. This information is the MRTRO belief that the foundations of good government are: maximum voter registration, face-to-face contact between candidate and voter where possible, and maximum voter turnout.

According to the newsletter, MRTRO efforts created a 17% increase in new voters in the area, which in turn produced an 85% voter turnout in the last election. The MRTRO contends that their critics do not like the effects of these increases: "The NEA was very content to see low voter interest and low voter turnout in Parkway School Board elections since these circumstances permitted the NEA to dominate School Board elections."

A major criticism levied against the MRTRO is that they are turning a non-partisan election into a partisan election by endorsing a candidate for school board. The newsletter notes that for years "no one was elected to the Parkway School Board without the NEA's endorsement" and that the NEA endorsement was very partisan since its goals are aligned with those of the Democrat party. The MRTRO also states, "Those who say political party organizations may not legally participate in school board and municipal elections should read the state statutes — there is no such prohibition."

Two years ago, the first MRTRO-endorsed candidate "won big because the public turned out at the polls and voted for the candidate who best represented their views" against the NEA-endorsed candidate. Last year, the MRTRO endorsed two candidates who again won over the NEA-endorsed candidates.

The newsletter asserts that, since those losses, "the NEA has been re-thinking its strategy." That strategy was two-fold. According to the newsletter, the NEA tried to elect its members to the post for Republican committeeman and committeewoman, but these NEA candidates were both defeated. The NEA also announced that it "will make no public endorsements of candidates in this year's school board election."

Concurrently, a school board candidate announced he would accept no endorsements from any group. Last year, this candidate's wife ran an unsuccessful race for school board under NEA endorsement and said, according to the newsletter, that the NEA is not a political organization and, therefore, is entitled to endorse and work in school board elections, whereas the Republican party has no interest in public education and should stay out of school board elections.



Howard McClellan

The MRTRO newsletters also notes the formation of a new citizen's group organized to combat "partisan politics in non-partisan elections." The MRTRO notes that this group "has been silent on the NEA's prominent role in school board elections" and that the "first meeting of this group was held in the home of the then-president of the NEA."

The two MRTRO-endorsed candidates for the office this year were incumbent Diane Huyer who has "been a good Board member" and who "supports, in concept, merit pay for teachers and opposes collective bargaining and strikes by public school teachers" and Howard McClellan who "holds some strongly conservative views on education" and supports a more rigorous academic curriculum in our schools, merit pay for teachers, and a board that is not afraid to stand up for traditional values. Diane Huyer was elected to the board. ■

Lodestar's Esoteric Tuesdays

September 27th — Anderson Hewitt leads a class on Spirit Journeying. Participants have an opportunity to open their own spiritual guidance through guided meditation.

October 4th — Psychic development and awareness is available to us all! Join B'ham psychic, Larue Jolly, for her presentation of this topic and her experience with psychic readings.

October 11th — Astral travel and the ways in which we can benefit from accessing information/teaching skills from the outer plane are infinite. Gary Bonnelle and Myron McClellan, experienced teachers, will discuss their ideas and personal journeys.

October 18th — Roger Watkins *LOVE*. A discussion of the most important emotion of all. Learn the different kinds, the emotions connected to it, the intent, the ways we feel loved and things we do to get loved, and the skills of loving. Based on Training In the Art of Loving by Gerald J. Judd.

October 25th — Lightening!! A process of releasing emotionally bound energy. Lucy Destin will share this process and a Cosmic Fairytale with us.

November 1st — Ginger Chalford, astrologer and synergistic psychologist, will discuss

astrology and metaphysics. She is the author of *Pluto: Planet of Magic and Power and Inner Personalities of the Chart*.

November 8th — Whitefeather. "I have been a wholistic nurse for 16 years, having studied shiatsu with Ohashi, acupuncture with Dr. Dale, wise woman herbs with Susan Weed and Seneca traditions with Twylah Nitsch. I offer you guidance and assistance on your earth walk."

November 15th — Self Healing with Pierre Siead. For 30 years Pierre has been helping people connect with themselves and the finer energies that are available.

November 22nd — An evening with Proes and Serena. Iranschannelers, they will discuss their experience communicating with spirit beings. Serena will share information from her recent trip to Medugorje, Yugoslavia.

November 29th — Rhonda Bloomston will guide us on Soul Journeys, opening us to our own love and truth.

December 6th — Radiance Technique. Katie Reich has received the fourth degree of Radiance and is a teacher of the first and second degrees. She will share her knowledge of accessing the universal energy surrounding us all.



Board Drops Counseling Program

On March 15, 1989 the Putnam City school board voted 3-2 to stop using an elementary counseling program called the *Pumsey* program, an 8-week course taught by the school counselor. The vote was taken in response to parents' concerns that the program taught children to rely on "self" in a way that conflicts with parents' teachings and religious beliefs taught in the home.

Elementary counselors and the local teachers' union are concerned that the board's action has set a "dangerous precedent." The teachers' union president was particularly upset that the board "would vote to censor material that had gone through the complaint process and had been accepted." One dissenting board member noted that "only a small group of parents had been upset" and feels that the materials are needed to build self-esteem in children coming from disadvantaged homes.

The complaint was brought to the board by Trena Brand who cited portions of the curriculum to support her assertions, such as "I am me and I am enough." Mrs. Brand also described an activity in which children are told to relax and imagine walking in a meadow and gazing into a pond. She told the board that using "mind pictures" is a tool used by New Age believers. Mrs. Brand had previously pulled her second grader from the program.

A board member, who said such teachings are surfacing all over the district, made a motion to require teachers to receive two hours of instruction on New Age beliefs so that they can recognize them in the curriculum. That motion

was defeated 4-1.

One board member voted against the *Pumsey* program because he believed it violates the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) in giving "instruction unrelated to academics that affects students' beliefs, attitudes and emotions," according to one news report. However, school attorney William Bleakely said "the material is related to academics because it is designed to improve students' performance by raising self-esteem."

Parents are now working to encourage the

Children's Book Club Adds Titles

Last month, the Troll Book Clubs wrote Florida parents that they will include "selections that will please all religious beliefs." The letter was in response to a complaint by Mr. and Mrs. Emmett Dykes of Davie, Florida.

Mrs. Dykes' children, who are in the Ft. Lauderdale schools, brought home the Student Book Club K-1 Order Brochure produced by the Troll Book Clubs of Mahwah, New Jersey. Mrs. Dykes then wrote the Clubs:

"It has come to my attention several times that there is obviously a prejudiced choice of offered books. In the winter we noted that even though you had books regarding Hanukkah (a religious holiday) the only books you had on Christmas (a Christian holiday) were of the secular world, such as Santa or of snowmen, none of Christ which is where "Christ" comes from.

"I note again in the March, 1989 brochure

board to adopt a "policy of prior written consent" for nonacademic programs that are "designed to affect behavioral, emotional, or attitudinal characteristics of an individual or group." In a letter seeking support for such a policy, Mrs. Brand wrote, "We are not requesting that any material be discontinued . . . just that parents be informed of its implementation in the classroom and for prior written consent by parents."

Putnam City is a suburb of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Occult Recurs

In Hays, Kansas, a controversy has erupted over *The Headless Cupid*, by Zilpha Keatley Snyder. The book was read out loud in a 4th grade classroom.

Stephen LeClair learned about the book when his daughter asked him about its content. Mr. LeClair read the book and became concerned because it dealt with many aspects of the occult and could encourage children to become involved. (See November 1988 *Education Reporter*.)

Last year in Hays, a student committed suicide. According to Mr. LeClair, many people believe Satanism of some sort was a factor in that death. Because of this literature that fostered more occult activity and suicide, he initiated procedures to remove *The Headless Cupid* from the public school and town libraries.

At an April meeting of the library board, the book was taken out of circulation pending a final decision. The board expressed concern about the "freedom to read" section of an American Library Association (ALA) position statement called the Library Bill of Rights which was adopted in 1948 and amended 1961 and 1967.

The ALA statement, which members assert "should govern the services of all libraries," states that library materials "should be chosen for values of interest, information and enlightenment of all the people of the community." What is needed, according to this ALA assertion, is "the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that can be thought and said." The parents ask, "what is enlightening" for the community about encouraging occult activities through this type of children's literature.

The "freedom to read" section of the ALA statement reads that "there is no place in our society to . . . confine adults to reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents." However, the parents note, their concern is protecting children from materials which is not age-appropriate.

The parents are now working to get these materials placed on a shelf available to young children only by parental permission. The ALA document encourages librarians "to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large." The parents note that they are not trying to force their beliefs on the community, but are trying to oversee the education of their own children. They believe this is consistent with the ALA statement and the rights granted parents under the U.S. Constitution.

The parents want libraries to respect their right to oversee the education of their children, a right reaffirmed in many U.S. Supreme Court cases. Parents note that an abundance of legislation confirms the fact that minors need guidance. Minors cannot vote or drink, marry, or watch certain movies without parental consent, and cannot drive until they are 16 and obtain a license.

The parents also request that the school require parental consent for each child to listen to books dealing with the occult before they are read aloud in the classroom. In the classroom, they note, children are a captive audience, unlike in the library where children are free to read or not read selections.

FOCUS: Hypocrisy in "Book Banning"

by Jean Patton

The National Council of Teachers of English has long been sabotaging literature instruction in the public schools and degrading the prestige of all teachers (not only English) by furiously maintaining a presumed "First Amendment" right to use any printed material in the classroom, no matter how obscene, blasphemous, disgusting or illiterate, choosing to label us, their critics, as "censors."

The American Library Association (which also receives heavy taxpayer subsidies through "institutional dues" paid by public libraries) annually puts on a little show called Banned Books Week.

The fundamental issue is not "freedom of speech" but social class. Parents have a right to expect that the grammar, vocabulary, standards of propriety and respect for religion are at least equal and if possible superior to those they maintain in their homes.

Teachers and librarians who deplore their plighting status inspect the social level of their materials. No responsible parent sends children to school to be de-classed.

Censorship is indeed a problem today. No one can doubt that. The widely publicized ignorance of history and geography is one result; these essential and fascinating subjects have been replaced with pureed "across the curriculum" verbiage. Vocabulary has been diluted and the young victims are thus denied the understanding they require to venture on their own into real books. Pleasure has been censored out: readers and anthologies are heavy on gloom, sorrow, fear and vice.

As a former reviewer of high school world geography texts, I learned about selective political censorship: the silence about the prison camps of Soviet Russia, wartime Japan, the

North Vietnamese, the full-scale attack on South Africa and of course the Nazis. Not one of the texts I reviewed credited the United States with having raised Japan from the ashes to become a world power. This selective political censorship apparently was engineered through the Japan/United States (Social Studies) Textbook Study Project headquartered in Bloomington [Indiana].

Christian-bashing in required school reading, though not so blatantly as in film and television. It made a notable appearance in 1951 when John Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* was rammed into the curriculum. No such attack on minority religion would be tolerated, but Christian blasphemies are called "censors."

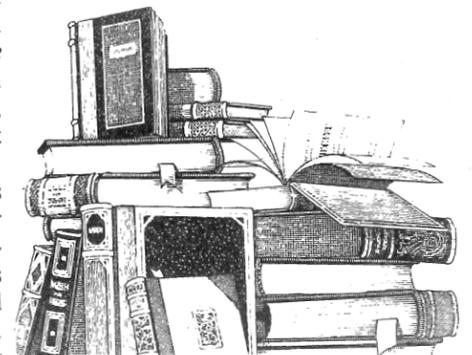
Until 1986 all reviewing done by volunteers was pooh-poohed by "educators." But Professor Paul Vitz, with impeccable academic credentials, vindicated us amateurs when he did his study of 90 widely adopted texts and established not only what is in them, but what is not. *Censorship: Evidence of Bias in our Children's Textbooks* is a short, well-written guide for would-be textbook analysts. Every church should have a copy, and it should be reviewed before parents' groups.

Librarians' activities are less scrutinized than those of teachers because library patrons are not required by law to be present, so public librarians can take some of the pressure off schools.

When did librarians join the attack against traditional American standards of behavior and language? An inside look at library schools is informative. In 1977 I received a letter inviting me to address one session of the Indiana University Library School seminar on "Intellectual Freedom and Censorship." The then instructor, describing himself as a "knee-jerk

liberal," said it had occurred to him that "the conservative side" should be presented.

Considering the number of Library School faculty members, one might expect one of them could provide the conservative side. How revealing that it was necessary to go off campus to invite a bookish housewife! I participated again in 1979, 1984 and 1985. Two or three outside anti-censors are invited each semester, but no other conservative has been invited.



The word "disingenuous" means "wanting in candor or frankness, deceptively simple or frank." It applies to the America Library Association and all its cronies in the National Coalition Against Censorship. Freedom to read is not endangered. Banned books may be read by all who wish.

It is we, the school patrons of America, who are the victims of censorship. It is we whose taxes buy books used to destroy the "decencies and charities of Christendom," the traditional social standards of America. It is we who use our time and money to monitor these enemies of all we hold dear.

Yes, there is censorship. The censors promote "Banned Books Week" with our taxes.

Parental "Choice" Flourishes

"Choice" is viewed by many as the most significant reform in education today. Yet it is vigorously opposed by most teachers' unions, many school boards and school administrators.

Choice refers to the policy of allowing enrollment in any public school by any student, rather than the system of mandatory assignment of each child on the basis of his residence or to the school selected by district administrators.

Parental choice in public schools has elements of appeal to both conservatives and liberals. Conservatives see school choice as a way to break up what critics such as Xerox Corporation chairman David Kearns call "a failed monopoly," and liberals see school choice as a way of letting the poor have the same opportunity as the well-to-do. Supporters of choice say the question about choice in schools ought not to be why, but why not?

In March, the Iowa and Arkansas legislatures approved open enrollment measures so that students can attend any public school in the state. Both states followed the trail blazed by Minnesota, whose "access to excellence" program passed last year includes open enrollment across district lines, post-secondary options for 11th and 12th graders, and a broad range of choices for at-risk students.

The key to a successful parental choice program is legislation that requires state funding to follow the student to his new school. Open enrollment bills have been introduced in 15 states this year. Six other states are considering choice proposals with more limited options for students.

"We're talking about reasserting the right of American parents to play a vital — perhaps the central — part in designing the kind of education they believe their children will need."

Ronald Reagan



The pioneers in the parental choice concept were Community School District 4 in East Harlem of New York City and Cambridge, Massachusetts, where parents can send their children to any elementary and junior high school within the district. Both districts say the choice program has contributed to higher test scores across the board, more parental involvement, and a general enlivening of the school system.

Other districts that allow parental choice include Irvine, California and Montclair, New Jersey. In Buffalo, parents are given the choice of having their children attend neighborhood schools or one of 22 alternative elementary schools.

The Vermont Experience

One of the best kept secrets in education is that Vermont has had a parental choice plan in public education since the mid-1800s. It has worked well and has become a way of life in the Green Mountain State. Efforts to change it have been unsuccessful.

The Vermont plan is called "tuitioning." It gives parents of more than 7,000 secondary school students the right to choose a school for their children from among a variety of public or private (but not church-affiliated) schools. The local school board pays the average tuition charge for state high schools, which was \$3,425 in 1988. The parent pays any costs in excess of that amount.

Tuitioning started in 1869 when a Vermont statute allowed public school districts that did not have their own high school to pay the tuition of students to local private schools. Later

amendments to the law extended the parents' rights to choose any nonsectarian private or public school, even those outside of the state.

According to a 1985 survey, 95 of Vermont's 246 towns "tuitioned" 7,633 students, or 24 percent of the state's high-school-age population. Of that number, 4,312 attended public high schools in Vermont, 560 attended public high schools in adjacent states, and 2,761 attended private schools in Vermont, eight other states and even Canada. In addition, 39 of the tuition towns send some or all of their elementary school students to public (but not private) schools out of the district.

The state education department has tried to limit tuitioning, especially for elementary school students. But state law still specifically allows this.

White House Conference

At a White House conference on "Choice in Education" convened in January as one of President Reagan's last official acts, then President-elect Bush told educators that parents need to be able to choose the best public schools, not necessarily the ones nearest their home. Bush described choice of public schools as "perhaps the most single promising" new idea in American education.

He said that choice programs "give parents back their voices and their proper determining roles in the makeup of children's education, and they give schools a chance to distinguish themselves from one another." Bush said that

the present system "can perpetuate mediocrity" because "poor schools have no incentive to improve. Their students are captive clients."

"Almost without exception," Bush said, "wherever choice has been attempted — Minnesota, East Harlem, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and in a hundred other places in between — choice has worked. . . . Bad schools get better; good ones get better still. . . . Any school reform that can boast such success deserves our attention, our emphasis, our effort."

In his keynote address, President Reagan said, "Choice in education is the wave of the future because it represents a return to some of the most basic American values." Continuing, Reagan said, "Choice is the most exciting thing that's going on in America today. We're talking about reasserting the right of American parents to play a vital — perhaps the central — part in designing the kind of education they believe their children will need."

"Choice works," said Reagan, "and it works with a vengeance. Choice recognizes the principle that there is no one best way for all of us." With educational choice, he said, "parents are in control."

Opposition to Choice

Prior to 1989, when President Reagan talked about school choice, he included the choice to attend private schools (through a tuition tax credit or voucher system), and Secretary of Education William Bennett talked about vouchers usable in private schools for recipients of Chapter I compensatory-education funds.

Opposition by the education establishment, the teachers' unions, and the anti-religious advocacy groups was so powerful that those types of choice were deemed politically unrealistic.

The National Education Association (NEA) has been adamantly opposed to giving parents any kind of choice about their schools. Because of the growing public support of parental choice, however, observers feel the NEA is being forced to reappraise its position.

At the Choice seminar Secretary Lauro Cavazos said, "We must try to reconcile them [the NEA and other groups opposing choice] with the majority [who favor choice] or we will never have peace in the American educational system." Some observers inferred that he believes parental choice should not be attempted unless support for it is unanimous.

In July 1988, Governor Michael Dukakis vetoed a proposed open enrollment plan for Massachusetts two weeks after the NEA endorsed Dukakis for President. However, in April, Dukakis endorsed a choice proposal for Massachusetts.

Cambridge school officials say that, since their choice program started in 1981, the proportion of children enrolling in public schools outside their immediate neighborhood has risen from 20 to 40 percent; at the same time, the proportion of students attending public rather than private or parochial schools has increased from 70 to 90 percent. While supporters of choice cheer these percentages, others see public school choice as an attack on private education.

An observer in Shreveport, Louisiana noted that parents in that community pulled their children out of private schools because of a combination magnet/choice plan in the public schools. When parents decided, for various reasons, that the public schools were unacceptable, they then had no alternative since the private schools had closed after their enrollment dropped.

Other critics claim choice is a new form of discrimination. They make the same arguments against magnet schools, but supporters say, "it's not the same thing. Selective schools siphon off the high achieving students, leaving the rest." In a choice program, the choice is made by the parent and student, not the school official or geography.

Variations on the Choice Theme

Since the Governors' Conference in 1986 passed a resolution endorsing the concept of choice, many forms of choice have been piloted. In the last three years, Colorado, Maine and Arizona have allowed 11th and 12th graders to complete high school by enrolling in colleges and universities.

A few small towns in Connecticut and Maine have a system like Vermont's. In Maine, about 10 private schools have about 60 percent of their enrollment publicly funded. The state department of education does not keep track of those who are tuitioned. The Maine tuition limit last year was \$2,959 for secondary school students and \$2,130 for elementary school students.

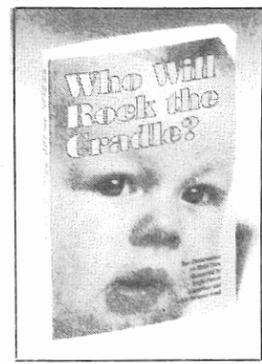
In some cases, school districts provide transportation; in others parents must arrange it. In every case, most of the public money allocated for the students follows them to their school of choice. Minnesota and Colorado have choice plans that allow dropouts and at-risk students access to a wide range of school choice throughout their state.

Another form of choice has been to create a "traditional school," which teaches the basics, within the district. In Mesa, Arizona, parents lobbied for one such school, and the Benjamin Franklin School was formed. As is typical with traditional schools, there is a waiting list for entrance.

Book of the Month



Who Will Rock the Cradle?, Phyllis Schlafly, ed., Washington, D.C.: Eagle Forum Education and Legal Defense Fund, 1989, \$14.95, 297 pp.



Who Will Rock the Cradle? is "must" reading for teachers, administrators, and others involved in education. The compilation of 18 speeches from two recent conferences on child care contains expert testimony from the fields of child development, education, medicine, public policy, international studies, and economics.

The reader will recognize positive and negative behaviors exhibited by children in their classrooms and neighborhoods and gain an understanding of the basis for those behaviors. The reader will also learn how to respond to them and to the questions those behaviors elicit from parents, counselors, policymakers and other children.

This book explores the effects daycare had on children who are now in elementary and secondary school. *Who Will Rock the Cradle?* examines recent research and seeks to determine the correlation between daycare, if any, and academic performance. It projects this evidence on the growing trend to place children in daycare in order to determine what effects this trend might have on future society.

The opening address notes that, "Unfortunately, a very worrisome pile of research is now accumulating which suggests that when the very young go into extensive non-parental care, many — possibly most of them — will suffer emotional and intellectual harm. As discussed in more detail elsewhere in this volume, symptoms found in recent studies include low self-esteem, sharply increased aggressiveness (kicking and biting, etc.), weak child-parent bonds, poor social skills, and poor academic performance."

The book discusses children who are more likely to cry, be troublemakers, withdraw and internalize, and be loners. It seeks to explain why they exhibit those characteristics and how parents, teachers and other professionals can work together to produce children who have high self-esteem and enjoy life.

Who Will Rock the Cradle? explores the "sharp increases in the number of children exhibiting psychosomatic and stress-related illnesses." It considers reasons for child suicide, drug abuse, adolescent crime, and low self-esteem.

In the area of academic performance, topics addressed are: fostering genius in children, literacy, early childhood education, reading readiness, dyslexia, Head Start, and homeschooling.

Who Will Rock the Cradle? considers the effects of single-parent families, latchkey homes, and peer socialization on children and their emotional well-being. It also addresses international competitiveness and makes comparisons between U.S., European, and Japanese daycare and the effects of daycare in each country on their educational systems.