



Prof. Alan Gribben

Professors Fight Radicalization of English Course

A tumultuous struggle throughout the summer has stymied, at least temporarily, an effort to radicalize the required freshman English composition course at the University of Texas at Austin and convert it into what one professor calls "Oppression Studies."

In April 1990 the Lower-Division English Policy Committee voted to require all graduate student Assistant Instructors of English 306, Rhetoric and Composition, to adopt Paula Rothenberg's social sciences textbook, *Racism and Sexism: An Integrated Study*, and to teach a standardized topic, "Writing About Difference." Critics had charged that the sociology book is inadequate for an English course and unfairly distorts race-class-gender themes in American culture. A sociology professor at William Paterson College in Wayne, New Jersey, Rothenberg gained notoriety in her field by sending her students on a "class analysis" of the various toilet papers used in shopping mall bathrooms.

University professors, joined by numerous other academics, students, and citizens, wrote a series of letters to newspapers in the community and the state protesting the mandated readings and methodology for the course. On June 25th, Joseph Kruppa, the chairman of the English Department, abruptly canceled the book order for the controversial Rothenberg textbook, but still vowed to "do the same thing with the class, ... working with a packet."

Because the topic and intention remained unaltered, 56 University of Texas faculty members in fields as diverse as psychology, chemical engineering, and library and information science signed "A Statement of Academic Concern." It was published in the campus newspaper on July 18th as a quarter-page advertisement. The statement expressed concern "that the new curriculum for Freshman English distorts the fundamental purpose of a composition class — to enhance a student's ability to write — by subordinating instruction in writing to the discussion of social issues, and, potentially, to the advancement of specific political positions."

On June 23rd, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts reluctantly issued a memorandum

Continued on page 4

People for the American Way Issues 'Attacks'

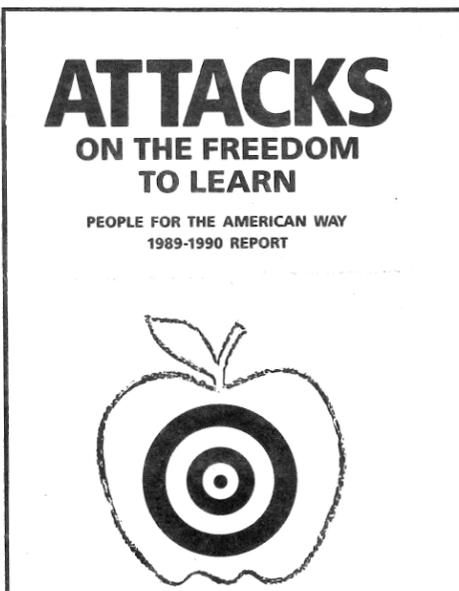
People for the American Way (PAW) recently released *Attacks on the Freedom to Learn*, its 8th annual report on what it calls "censorship and other challenges to public education." It complains that parents won approximately one-third of 244 cases in 39 states involving controversial school curricula.

The report defines censors as "The Far Right" who "prefer that schools narrowly enforce parental and scriptural authority by teaching simple right/wrong answers to complex questions" and who want to "instill in children an unquestioning acceptance of received wisdom." People for the American Way sums up their objections as being against "Swear Words, Satanism and Sex."

The report notes that there has been a drop in parents' success rate against objectionable programs; last year parents won nearly 50% of the cases. People for the American Way attributes this decline to school systems being "increasingly prepared for the challenges" and having adopted written review policies which make it more difficult for parents to win. PAW does not mention that it has sometimes helped schools to counterattack against parents by giving them financial resources, legal advice and political backing.

Here is a sampling of some of the cases parents have won, as detailed in PAW's 105-page *Attacks on the Freedom to Learn* report:

• **Alabama** — Parents in the Mountain Brook school district succeeded in protecting their children from the New Age religious practices of guided imagery, meditation, progressive muscle relaxation and deep breathing



exercises. The school board established a policy barring these techniques from the classroom.

• **California** — Parents in many school districts fought to get the controversial *Impressions* reading series removed from the classroom because they feel it contains themes of fear, violence, child abuse, negative images, the New Age, and witchcraft, and also because it teaches reading by using the "whole language" method instead of phonics. Parents were victorious in getting *Impressions* replaced in the Castro Valley, East Whittier City, Hacienda La Puente, and San Juan Capistrano school districts.

Texas Self-Esteem Curriculum Angers Parents

A controversial self-esteem curriculum widely used in Texas public schools is angering many parents. The program, called "It's Up to Me," is supposed to "help youth improve their self-concept" through "personal assessment, skill development," and "growth and change." It is being used in approximately 25% of the state's 245 counties.

"It's Up to Me" was developed with local, state, and federal funding by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, which is a non-profit organization affiliated with the Texas A & M University System. It is sponsored by the Texas 4-H Club and is sold at a minimal cost for materials for use by public and private schools, churches and reform schools. It is designed to be used in various classes, such as home economics, English, or health. According to Dr. Lynne Thibodeaux, one of the program's developers, it has been in use for two years and over 30,000 teachers and leaders have been trained to use it.

Dr. Thibodeaux asserted that "It's Up to Me" is devoted to "youth development service" and designed to help teachers "enhance self-esteem in conjunction with academic achievement." On the other hand, critics of the program charge that the course can be very harmful to impressionable children.

The first objection to "It's Up to Me" is the privacy-invading exercises in which the teacher requires the child to reveal personal and family information. The child is required to "describe your family," tell "what don't you like about your family," and "what would you like to change about your family."

The child is required to check which of a list

of 36 ways he might react to "stress." These include: "smoke ... hate myself ... think about suicide ... take drugs ... shoplift ... lie about things ... drink ... skip school ... vandalism ... stay away from my family ... feel like running away ... steal."

Children are asked to write "your innermost desires, your personal problems, your health problems, your pet likes and dislikes." They are also told to write what is "the hardest thing for me to discuss with others" and why it "is hard for me to tell another person how I really feel inside."

The course requires that students reveal their "attitudes, beliefs, actions, convictions, interests, aspirations, likes, dislikes, goals and purposes — in other words, their value indicators." The child must complete the following sentences: "If I had 24 hours to live," "If I had a gun I would," "People can hurt my feelings most by," "I am afraid to," "I feel most mistreated when."

Very young children are asked who they would tell if "you had a scary dream ... that you had taken money from your mother's pocket-book ... that there is a superstition that you have ... that you once saw something you think you shouldn't have seen."

Parents' second objection is to the use of "self-concept," "human potential," and "tuning into yourself" objectives in the "It's Up to Me" program. Children are required to recite mantras such as "I am me," "Because I own all of me, I can become intimately acquainted with me," "I own me, and therefore I can engineer me," "I am me and I am okay." Students are instructed to make "my declaration of self-esteem" by reciting declarations such as "I own all of me

Parents were victorious in Bridgeport in getting the Quest drug and self-esteem program removed from the classroom. They objected to it because it teaches values clarification and tells children to make their own decision about using drugs.

In Rialto, high school English classes no longer show *Excalibur*, an R-rated movie about King Arthur which shows explicit violence and a rape scene. Parents who fought the screening of the movie pointed out that the motion picture industry does not allow children under 17 to see R-rated movies without being accompanied by a parent.

• **Florida** — Another R-rated movie, *Harlan County*, a film about rural coal miners, was removed from a Clearwater high school social studies class after objections by parents to the film's repeated use of profanity.

The De Land school board established a new policy regarding the showing of videos in the classroom after complaints by parents against the use of films with immoral sexual content. Schools are now prohibited from showing any film not rated G unless a review committee approves the film and teachers send permission slips to parents which describe the movie.

• **Idaho** — After a lengthy battle, parents in Coeur d'Alene finally succeeded in getting *Impressions* removed from the K-6 classrooms because its stories were "excessively morbid, crude and negative," "promoted the Wiccan religion," and had selections on "reincarnation and other weird experiences." In a "last-minute, unannounced agenda item at the end of a late

Continued on page 4

—my body, and I can do with it what I choose."

The third main objection to the "It's Up to Me" course is that it attacks moral standards by using the process called Values Clarification. The course material states that "the goal of values clarification is to choose his own value system by starting from the premise that there is no one particular set of values," so the child can "choose from alternatives." Parents assert that the teaching of values clarification, also known as situation ethics, is a direct attack on the First Amendment rights of those who believe in eternal values and absolutes.

The course teaches children that the "origin of values" is their "own experiences." Students are taught that "everyone is entitled to his/her opinion about abortion" and that "there are no right or wrong answers, only opinions." Parents believe their First Amendment rights are violated when the course teaches children that values are merely "dilemmas" or "discussion items."

The course tells children that "it's up to me" to decide: "Is it all right to take drugs, is it O.K. to watch R-rated movies, is it O.K. to read pornographic magazines, is anyone hurt if I steal little things, is it really important to go to church, do little white lies really hurt, should I respect what my parents say and do?" "It's Up to Me" redefines the family as "those people with whom you live."

A fourth objection to the "It's Up to Me" program is that the course presents children with a "decision making process" which tells them they need not accept the authority or

Continued on page 2

EDUCATION BRIEFS

7-Eleven convenience store executives have discovered a unique way to keep teenagers from loitering in front of their stores. At 10 stores in the Pacific Northwest, easy listening music is now piped over the store's loudspeakers, and the young people have fled in droves. "None of these kids want to hang out in a place that plays elevator music," says store executive Ron Conlin. "We call it a non-aggressive deterrent."

School officials throughout the nation have banned the wearing of Bart Simpson T-shirts. Administrators say that the contraband shirts, which feature the cartoon character proclaiming that he is an "Underachiever and proud of it, man!" are detrimental to a learning environment. The American Civil Liberties Union opposes the measures, saying that the right of children to wear the T-shirt is "what free speech is all about."

Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos is under fire from Hispanic activists after saying that children who do not speak English are "not ready to learn." The Secretary made his comments in Laredo, Texas, where the population is largely Mexican-American. Robert Zamora, superintendent of the La Joya school district, charged that Cavazos' remarks were "a disabling comment" and claimed that students didn't need to know English to succeed in school.

At least 71 persons were shot to death and 201 severely wounded in schools during the past four years, according to a recent survey. Of the killings, 65 were of students. Males were the offenders in 93% and the victims in 76% of the cases. The report is available from the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, 1225 Eye St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20005.

South Carolina homeschoolers charge that a test which a new state law requires them to pass in order to teach their children at home is "insensitive, insulting, and unjust." Lawyers for the Home School Legal Defense Association, which represents 369 South Carolina families, have filed suit for an injunction against further use of the exam. Parents are not objecting to the toughness of the test but to its relevance and propriety.

In a sweeping victory for parental rights, the Georgia state textbook committee voted 13-8 to reject the controversial reading series known as Impressions. The series has come under fire from parents throughout the nation for containing what some consider to be an overwhelming amount of negative, frightening, and anti-American images. The state's school board will vote in November whether to approve the state's textbook committee's rejection of Impressions.

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Classics Can Stimulate Students' Minds

by Jean Patton

The works central to our literary tradition, besides our great poets, are The Bible, Aesop's Fables, the Greek and Roman myths, the *Odyssey*, the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, Plutarch's *Lives*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*, Shakespeare's plays, and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Excerpts from the complete texts should be introduced in the ninth grade. L'Estrange's *Aesop*, Bulfinch's *Mythology* (not Edith Hamilton's), North's *Plutarch*, Roger Lancelyn Green's *King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table* (though a Puffin Story Book and hence a little young) are good junior versions. Andrew Lang's 1898 *Arabian Nights Entertainment* [Dover] is a good abridgement of the lengthy original work.

Some of today's pretentious and unrealistic reading lists ("Great Books") include Plato's work and the classical Greek tragedies. This is sheer affectation. Without a thorough grounding in Greek history, American students find these meaningless. Unfortunately, the *Aeneid* falls in the same category. Fielding conjectured that the *Iliad* was written to teach the art of war, but the *Odyssey*, written (he suggests) as a guidebook for merchant-seamen, is more various. There is unfortunately no general agreement as to the best translation of either. Precise verbal translation and acceptable English meter cannot be reconciled; metrical versions are unacceptable to purists, and prose translations are pedestrian, as also with Chaucer.

Boys should read *Robinson Crusoe*, *Treasure Island*, and *Huckleberry Finn*. Girls should read *Little Women*, *Anne of Green Gables*, and *The Secret Garden*. *The Swiss Family Robinson* and *Lorna Doone* may also give pleasure.

Charles Dickens should be read at this age. His characters — more than 1,500 of them — are alive today. Dickens was the first great reformer. Unlike today's reformers, he wrote at a level and in language suited for families, and he knew what he was talking about. Perhaps it is not an exaggeration to claim that Dickens did more good and gave more pleasure than any novelist who ever lived.

Nicholas Nickleby will make a Dickens fan of every reader, start here; then *David Copperfield*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *A Tale of Two Cities* can follow. *Oliver Twist* and *The Old Curiosity Shop* are rather too lachrymose for this age, *Hard Times* and *Great Expectations* too sombre. Those who hope to attend law school should read *Bleak House*, the famous attack on the Chancery Courts.

Julius Caesar and *Macbeth* are satisfactory Shakespeare choices. *Timon of Athens* (rarely mentioned) is timely in these days of collapsing fortunes. *Twelfth Night* and *Taming of the Shrew* are great fun. If *Richard III* is read, Josephine Tey's famous detective story, *Daughter of Time*, should follow. *Othello* should be read; it is necessary to recognize Iago, who is always among us. George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* is another recommended play.



Self-Esteem Curriculum

Continued from page 1

wisdom of their elders, but should use the following formula: "recognize a decision needs to be made, gather information, identify alternatives, examine potential alternatives, consider personal values and goals, make the decision, evaluate the outcome." Parents assert that this process encourages children to make their own decisions, without parental guidance, about drugs, alcohol, sex, and other high-risk behavior, and that this process makes children easy prey for drug dealers and peer pressure.

The fifth objection to the "It's Up to Me" program is its use of guided imagery, a New Age technique. Students are encouraged to "close your eyes and take a journey in your mind to a mountaintop, a castle or some other imaginary place."

Parents criticize the course for being full of other psychological techniques. For example, the teacher blindfolds half the class, then has the children walk around and feel everything. After ten minutes, they discuss what their feelings were like when blindfolded.

One "game" used in the course has children sit around in a circle and each one says "something sad or ugly" to the child next to him. In another psychological game, the class makes up a "Time Line Floor Board" on which different ages are written. The children are given cards with "responsibilities or behaviors" which are to be placed on the floor next to the appropriate age. These include: "first marijuana cigarette, begin smoking, midnight curfew, first can of beer, first kiss, first sip of wine, first love relationship/alcohol at parties, experience being drunk."

Children are told to go home and "open communication with parents" by asking them such questions as, "Have you ever taken a sex education course, have you ever participated in a demonstration, would you be upset if organized religion disappeared, do you watch your weight?"

Parents object to the depressing nature of many of the exercises. The children are asked: "Which would you least like to be: very poor, very sickly, disfigured?" "Which would you rather be: an only child, the youngest child, the oldest child?" Children are asked in a "lifeline exercise" to answer: "How long do you believe you will live? At what age do you think you'll die? Guess how many years you will live. Write your estimated date of death."

Recommended High School Reading

General List

E.E. Hale, "The Man Without a Country"
John Burnett, *Annals of Labour* (alt. title: *Useful Toil*)
Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*
Booth Tarkington, *The Magnificent Ambersons*
Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt*
Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery*
Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*
J. B. Priestley, *The Good Companions*
O. Henry, short stories
Victor Hugo, *Les Miserables*
P. G. Wodehouse, *Jeeves* and sequels
Edmund Gosse, *Father and Son*
Seniors should read "The Inner Ring" by C. S. Lewis

Especially For Boys

Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*
Richard H. Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*
Josiah Slocum, *Sailing Alone Around the World*
Rudyard Kipling, *Captains Courageous*
Kinglake, *Eothen*, especially the chapter on "Greek Mariners."
John Masefield, *Sea Life in Nelson's Time* (1905), U.S. Naval Institute (1971)
Richard Ford, *Gatherings from Spain*
George C. Solley and Eric Steinbaugh, *Short Stories of the Sea*
Arthur Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes*
Nordhoff and Hall, *Mutiny on the Bounty*
Ronald Blythe, *Akenfield*
Edward Eggleston, *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*
Hamlin Garland, *Son of the Middle Border*
Clarence Day, *Life with Father*
Marco Polo's Travels
Anne Morrow Lindbergh, *The Spirit of St. Louis*
Robert Trumbull, *The Raft*
Alexandre Dumas, *The Three Musketeers*
Ewen Montagu, *The Man Who Never Was*

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Kidnapped* and *David Balfour*

Especially For Girls

Flora Thompson, *Lark Rise to Candleford*
Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*
Elizabeth Gaskell, *Cranford*
Fanny Burney, *Evelina*
Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*
R.D. Blackmore, *Lorna Doone*
Arnold Bennett, *Old Wives' Tale*
Mark Twain, *Tom Sawyer*
Booth Tarkington, *Alice Adams*
Sir Walter Scott, *The Talisman*
Etsu Sugimoto, *Daughter of the Samurai*
Agatha Christie, *They Came to Baghdad* and other mysteries
William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*
Peter Quennell, *History of Everyday Things in England*

Poetry

Sir Walter Scott, "Breathes there a man . . ."
Oliver Wendell Holmes, "Old Ironsides"
Alfred Lord Tennyson, "The Charge of the Light Brigade," "The Passing of Arthur"
Rudyard Kipling, "The Last of the Light Brigade," "The 'Mary Gloster'"
Hood, "Song of the Shirt"
Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Nun's Priest's Tale"
Oliver Goldsmith, "The Deserted Village"
Thomas Gray, "Elegy in a Country Churchyard"
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "The Bell of Abri"

Classics from Other Cultures

Italian—Manzoni, *The Betrothed*
Hispanic—Cervantes, *Don Quixote*
French—Balzac, *Pere Goriot* and *Eugenie Grandet*
Philippine—Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere* (*The Lost Eden*)
Hindu—Premchand, *The Gift of A Cow*

FOCUS: Interview on 'Choice' with Rep. Polly Williams

Interviewed by John H. Fund, an editorial writer for the *Wall Street Journal*.

This fall the Milwaukee Public Schools begin the nation's first experiment in educational vouchers for low-income children. Polly Williams, the Wisconsin state representative who made it happen, was inspired by an idea proposed three decades ago by Nobel Laureate Milton Friedman and promoted in recent years by conservatives in the White House and state legislatures. To gain approval for the plan, Williams formed a coalition with her Republican colleagues against the liberal establishment. Yet Jesse Jackson's campaign manager.

Under the choice plan, a five-year pilot project, about 1,000 low-income children will receive vouchers of up to \$2,500 that can be used at nonsectarian private schools. The money, which will be subtracted from the city's public-school budget, will mean new opportunities for students and greater competition for the state system. If the program works, other states — some of which already allow students to choose among public schools — can be expected to follow suit.

kids halfway across town so they can sit next to white kids. The average ride for a Milwaukee kid is 45 minutes. That has nothing to do with education.

Question: Why is busing still used in Milwaukee after all these years? I understand the court order has lapsed.

Williams: They have destroyed or failed to build new schools in the inner city. If busing ended tomorrow, there would be 40,000 kids downtown and 20,000 places in school for them. They have built new, fancy magnet schools next to the suburbs to entice white kids from one black elementary district in this area to 104 different schools. A group of African-American parents is going to propose we modify this busing madness and start building schools kids can walk to again.

"We want self-sufficiency, self-determination, and self-reliance, not a handout."

Question: These magnet schools — can blacks go to them?

Williams: Not many. Even if they are in African-American neighborhoods they are largely filled with white from the suburbs. People attack my plan for subsidizing private schools. Well, these magnet schools are private education at public expense. I simply say that my black parents want the same choice they do. None of the people who oppose my plan lack choice in education themselves. They have no idea what the lack of choice in education means, the danger it does when you have to go to an inferior school that will trap you for life.

Question: Why do white liberals insist on busing instead of choice?

Williams: It's more feel-good politics for them. They think their kids are having a neat cultural experience by going to school with African-American kids. But they don't want to really relate to them; they just want to take them out to the playground with their kids so they can point to some black kids and say, "See, those are different people you should be nice to." It reminds me of a zoo. It has nothing to do with education. The theory is that if black kids sit next to white kids, they will learn better; it's insulting. I thought these people were liberals!

Question: You castigate liberals a lot. But aren't you a liberal Democrat?

Williams: Labels do not tell you much about me. I'm not a liberal; I believe in what works. I often vote against the state budget because there are things in there I don't think should be funded.

White liberals feel guilty about blacks, and they do things to convince themselves that they are helping blacks. It's feel-good politics, which is really just helping themselves. Poor people become the trophies of white social engineers.

We have to be saved from our saviors. They have been feeding us pabulum for so long, we are finally tired and demand some real meat. We want self-sufficiency, self-determination, and self-reliance, not a handout.

Question: How do you get along with your colleagues in the legislature?

Williams: I am respected and listened to, but I must tell you that I have a better rapport with conservative Democrats and Republicans than I do with my liberal colleagues. We all agree on self-determination for minorities, and they aren't

so obsessed with guilt and giving away money. I get along fine with Jack Kemp and Newt Gingrich.

Question: The Milwaukee papers have been very critical of your plan. So has most of the white establishment and the NAACP. Why do you think that is?

Williams: The Milwaukee papers used to be among my biggest supporters. I was their darling. Then I started asking questions and speaking up in the legislature. They didn't like that. They have been awfully unfriendly lately. A cartoon in the paper showed me with a bandit mask on holding up a public school official and demanding he surrender money to this fat, white guy from the private schools. If that isn't a cheap stereotype, I don't know what is.

The NAACP — I don't know why they oppose the plan. I guess they are just too tied in with the old system and way of doing things. This choice plan does nothing for the local power structure. It helps the people that everyone forgot — poor, inner-city kids who want a better life.

Question: What do you say to those who think you are out to destroy the public schools?

Williams: I want the public schools to work. I think they should work at \$6,000 a year per student. Maybe if they had some competition they would have an incentive to work better. But if teachers and school bureaucrats are so worried about losing their jobs, why don't they just go out and do them a little better?

Question: Tell us about the private schools that will participate in the choice program.

Williams: There are about six to eight schools that want to join. For many it is a sacrifice, since we had to compromise and make the voucher only \$2,500 a year, and parents cannot supplement the voucher with their own money. Many of these schools have costs of \$3,000 or \$3,300 a year.

My kids went to Urban Day School, which was started as a nonreligious school by some Catholic sisters. All of these schools are non-religious, so there is no separation of church and

state problem. They all have different races going to them.

Urban Day and the others go up to the eighth grade, and there is real discipline and learning there. Many kids who leave them and go on to public high school are shocked at the differences. Still, some 90 percent of kids who go to any of these schools finish high school, and most go on to college. They also tend to stay out of trouble.

"Money isn't going to the kids. It's going to a system that doesn't educate them and to a bunch of bureaucrats."

And these schools do more than provide a good education. They help instill pride in the African-American heritage through history and other courses the public schools aren't interested in.

Question: Why did you insist on a plan to let kids attend private schools? Why not just improve the public schools?

Williams: We've tried to do that for years, and the best we get is, "Well, we're the experts; you are just parents." We're tired of that excuse. Look, if you go to a doctor and you stay sick, at some point don't you have a right to a second opinion? The choice plan is our second opinion. The folks who run the poverty industry in this town are worried that kids will get a better education at schools that cost half the amount they spend on the public schools. In their shoes, I'd be worried too.

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Wisconsin Rep. Polly Williams

Question: What obstacles did the education establishment throw up to stop your choice plan?

Williams: They tried everything to stop me. After they were convinced choice couldn't be stopped, they tried to hijack the issue and came up with their own version of choice. It basically created another bureaucracy which would have supervised the whole choice process and strangled it. The Milwaukee Public Schools would have selected the students for the choice program, not the parents. Students would have been picked if they met enough of the seven negative criteria they set up. If you were in a family of alcoholics, had a brother in prison and a pregnant teenage sister, and were inarticulate, you would have been a perfect candidate for their choice plan. In other words, a program they hoped would fail.

The fake choice plan was the product of a white, do-good liberal legislator named Barbara Nostein. Liberals backed her; they weren't for my bill. We finally won when we got 200 parents to testify for three hours in favor of my bill. In good conscience, my colleagues could not vote against those parents.

Question: The Milwaukee Public Schools spend \$6,000 a year per student on education. That's a lot of money.

Williams: Well, that money isn't going to the kids. It's going to a system that doesn't educate them and to a bunch of bureaucrats. I locate the money and goes out the tailpipes of buses, trucking

Per Pupil Costs Continue to Rise

1. New Jersey	\$8,439	27. Hawaii	\$4,504
2. New York	\$8,094	28. Georgia	\$4,456
3. Connecticut	\$7,934	29. Nevada	\$4,397
4. Dist. of Col.	\$7,407	30. Ohio	\$4,384
5. Alaska	\$7,252	31. North Carolina	\$4,386
6. Rhode Island	\$6,523	32. Missouri	\$4,226
7. Massachusetts	\$6,170	33. New Mexico	\$4,180
8. Maryland	\$5,887	34. Montana	\$4,147
9. Delaware	\$5,848	35. West Virginia	\$4,146
10. Wisconsin	\$5,703	36. Indiana	\$4,126
11. Pennsylvania	\$5,670	37. Texas	\$4,056
12. Maine	\$5,577	38. Nebraska	\$3,874
13. Vermont	\$5,418	39. Arizona	\$3,853
14. Wyoming	\$5,281	40. Kentucky	\$3,824
15. New Hampshire	\$5,149	41. South Carolina	\$3,731
16. Minnesota	\$5,114	42. North Dakota	\$3,581
17. Oregon	\$5,085	43. Tennessee	\$3,503
18. Michigan	\$5,073	44. Oklahoma	\$3,484
19. Florida	\$5,051	45. Louisiana	\$3,457
20. Virginia	\$5,000	46. Alabama	\$3,314
21. Illinois	\$4,853	47. South Dakota	\$3,312
22. Kansas	\$4,706	48. Arkansas	\$3,272
23. Washington	\$4,638	49. Mississippi	\$3,151
24. California	\$4,598	50. Idaho	\$3,037
25. Iowa	\$4,590	51. Utah	\$2,733
26. Colorado	\$4,580		

Per-pupil costs in the nation's public schools have reached an all-time high of \$4,890, up from last year's total of \$4,607. New Jersey spent the most on students, with a spending average of \$8,439. That total is likely to be increased since the state legislature, at the request of Governor Jim Florio, recently raised taxes \$2.8 billion.



History Magazines Entertain & Educate

A new genre of history magazines for children is offering attractive educational enrichment for classroom and homeschool. The magazines, *Faces*, *Cobblestone*, and *Calliope*, all published by Cobblestone Publishing in New Hampshire, are well-written, interesting, and (yes) educational.

Faces, subtitled "The Magazine About People," is published with the cooperation of the American Museum of Natural History. Each issue is a study of one particular culture or topic, with the main emphasis on how people lived at the time. Past subjects have included ancient Mexico, Mediterranean trade, the Iroquois Indians, the use of horses in developing civilization, and rivers. Each magazine features articles, interviews, illustrations, a glossary of terms, and games revolving around the main topic.

Cobblestone also devotes each issue to one topic, but it specializes in American history. Helen Keller, Wall Street, the Amish, and old Chicago are just a few of the people and places discussed in past issues. One of this year's issues discusses Amelia Earhart, not only her life but general aeronautic history with a glossary of terms for plane parts. A quiz at the end of each issue is designed to make sure children have understood what they read.

Calliope, the newest of these magazines, gives children a sense that "world history is a continuation of events rather than a series of isolated, unrelated occurrences." Its first issue, "Great Explorers to the East," contains articles about Marco Polo, Christopher Columbus, and other famous world explorers. It contains a list of books with additional information. The publishers promise that future issues will follow a similar format in explaining "the big picture" in world history.

All three magazines are intelligently written in a way to stretch children's minds. Their formats are "kid-friendly" enough so that children won't be bored by them. Since many schools don't bother to teach traditional history any more, these magazines may be the only place where many children can read about world history on a regular basis.

These magazines can be ordered from Cobblestone Publishing, 30 Grove Street, Peterborough, NH 03548, or by calling (603) 924-7209. A year's subscription to *Calliope* costs \$17.95 for five issues, to *Cobblestone* costs \$22.95 for 12 issues, and to *Faces* costs \$21.95 for 9 issues. They contain no advertising. Back issues are also available. The magazines are designed for grades 5-9, but may also be useful to advanced children in the 3rd and 4th grades. ■

People for the American Way

Continued from page 1

evening meeting," the school board finally voted to send the grades 3 to 6 *Impressions* books back to the publisher.

Explicit Sex Ed

• *Kentucky* — A middle school sex education teacher in Stanton agreed to replace two videos, *Where Do I Come From?* and *What's Happening to Me* after numerous complaints from parents that the films are not age-appropriate because of their "graphic and sexually explicit content."

• *Michigan* — In Kalkaska, a lesson on meditation as part of a section on transcendentalism in a high school English class was cancelled after parents complained to the school principal that the lesson's hypnotic and religious techniques violated their children's First Amendment rights to freedom of religion.

• *Texas* — Educators in several states have banned students from wearing "jewelry, clothing or symbols alleged to be related to Satanism or the occult." Some of the attire that students can no longer wear in Odessa, Wichita Falls, Ector County, Grand Prairie, Pasadena, Katy, De Soto, and Baytown include the peace sign, the anarchy symbol, the hexagram, and T-shirts with Satanic messages or designs. These symbols were banned after a University of Texas student and 13 other people were killed as human sacrifices by a Satanic cult operating along the Texas-Mexico border. PAW opposes any policy that would impose a dress code in public schools.

• *Virginia* — In Fairfax, a school principal

cancelled the production of *The Children's Story*, a play by James Clavell, which contains a scene where characters mutilate an American flag. One objector said, "I spent 20 years in the Marine Corps and that flag means a lot to me."

Censorship by Schools

In some of the incidents described in the PAW report, the schools were censoring something that the parents or students wanted in the schools, but PAW still accused the parents of being censors.

• *Nebraska* — The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June in favor of Bridget Mergens, a former high school student at Westside High School in Omaha, who had filed a lawsuit against her school after she was banned from starting a Bible club on school grounds. People for the American Way classifies her victory as an "attack on the freedom to learn," even though her club was not trying to ban or censor anything; indeed, it was the school that tried to ban Bridget's club.

• *Ohio* — In Butler County, "evolution is presented in biology classes as an explanation of how species adapt to changing environments, but discussion of the theory in relation to the origin of life is avoided," leaving students to make their own decisions. PAW apparently approves of censorship of all discussion of the origin of life except evolution.

• *South Carolina* — Parents succeeded in getting *Sex Respect*, an abstinence-based sex education program, used in Beaufort County high school. PAW sided with those who tried to remove *Sex Respect* and replace it with another sex education program. ■

Book of the Month



The Book Wars by James Atlas, Whittle Books, \$11.95, 1990.

This is another addition to the recent glut of books about the sorry state of higher education (*ProfScam*, *Tenured Radicals*, *Killing the Spirit*, *Closing of the American Mind*). If you skipped all those tomes, *The Book Wars* is the one for you. Only 90 pages, it provides a good overview of academia in simple, non-academic language. James Atlas is an editor and writer who has no vested interest in the academic world other than having attended college. Since he, too, only recently learned about the fierce debates being fought over multiculturalism and deconstructionism, he shares the reader's amazement at what passes for knowledge today.

Atlas describes his shock in seeing the current curriculum at Harvard, his alma mater. The course listing for the English department now contains such selections as "The Politics of Childbirth and Childhood in Anglo-American Literature," where students study *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Land of Oz*, and "Representations of Family and Kinship in the 18th Century Novel," where students study "incest as a narrative trope." "It all sounded very interesting," he writes, "the only thing missing was the books."

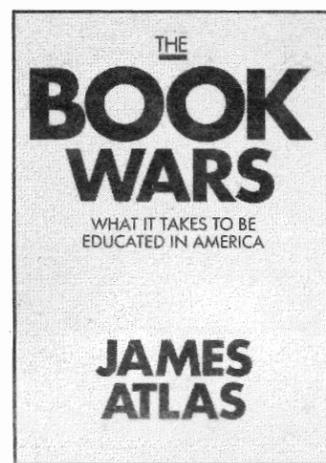
Affirmative action has made its way into the university curriculum. Works by black female authors such as Alice Walker and Toni Morrison are exalted not because of any literary value but because they are written by black women, while "dead white European male" authors are to be avoided. America's entire past is viewed as an era of unmitigated oppression and misery. Without any historical evidence, the Iroquois Indians are cited as one of the two major influences on the writing of the U.S. Constitution.

Universities today are more concerned with politics than literature because today's professors were the anti-war radicals of the 1960s who stayed in college to avoid the draft. Because of that, "the questioning of authority that's such a pervasive theme in criticism today is a theoretical version of battles that were fought on campuses 20 years ago."

Atlas writes that "politics — the advocacy of a specific ideological cause — is, and always has been, the enemy of art." He senses the same situation today, where "a cadre of professors" has "appropriated the humanities for its own ideological purposes." Atlas believes it's likely

that our nation's cultural illiteracy will continue because of radical professors' hatred for the "Great Books." It's no wonder that students haven't mastered "a core of classics," Atlas notes. "Their professors haven't mastered it. Their professors don't even believe it. Why should they?"

Another effect of this radicalism is that the politicization of the humanities is moving down to elementary and secondary school levels. New York's Board of Regents recently approved the recommendations of "A Curriculum of Inclusion," an anti-white-male polemic against American society, and will soon institute its hatred for America into the state's history textbooks. Even the Advanced Placement History examination has moved onto the "cutting edge" of politicized history.



Atlas is cynical about any improvement in academia: "the cultural revolution is entrenched." He laments the passing of the use of the Great Books, since they reflected "the negotiation between personal freedom and collective self-interest that is the essence of our American democracy. If it goes, a tradition that we cherished will go with it."

The Book Wars can be ordered for \$11.95 by calling 1-800-284-1956 or writing to The Larger Agenda Series, Whittle Direct Books, 505 Market St., Knoxville, Tennessee 37902. If you're opposed to advertising in a book, be forewarned: the book contains 18 pages of advertising from Federal Express (which has contracted with the publishers to pay the costs of shipping the book). ■

Profs Fight English Course

Continued from page 1

postponing the new curriculum for one year "to address concerns and misunderstandings about the course."

After the syllabus and proposed packet of readings became available, the debate that ensued quickly reached statewide proportions and even drew the attention of national commentators George F. Will and William Murchison. "Writing About Difference" would now consist of readings primarily about forms of oppression and discrimination in the United States, sometimes discussed in "peer"-group format. Required readings would include a chapter from Martha Minow's *Making All the Difference: Inclusion, Exclusion, and American Law*, Peggy McIntosh's "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming To See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies," as well as summaries of various court cases involving "discrimination."

Dr. Alan Gribben, English professor at the University of Texas, noted the "imbalance" of the proposed readings because there is "not a single success story about minorities or women" among them. He said that the reading materials contained a "guilt-inducing intention" which was inappropriate for an English composition class. Professor Gribben called for the adoption of "exemplary prose models" instead of "selectively chosen political messages".

Despite vocal opposition throughout the state, the Department of English convened on September 14 and voted 46-11 to endorse the new course concept and its controversial readings.

However, the implementation of the new course has been postponed for at least a year, which means that 3,000 freshmen this year have been spared the new version of E306, which Professor Gribben calls "obligatory indoctrination regarding America's alleged failings." ■