

EDUCATION BRIEFS

The Talbot County, Maryland School Board has voted down school officials' plans to distribute condoms to high school students without parental consent. If the plan had been approved, Talbot County would have become the first school system in the United States to give out contraceptives without parental consent. Although officials had originally said the proposed measure was necessary to prevent AIDS and pregnancy, many parents disagree with the concept and approve the school board's decision. Parent Pam Ross commented that giving out condoms is "like putting a piece of pie in front of you and telling you not to eat it."

A new federal law requires colleges to disclose crime statistics to students, employees and applicants. Colleges must publish the number of murders, rapes, robberies, aggravated assaults, auto thefts, alcohol and drug abuse violations, and weapons possessions occurring during the previous three years on campus property. Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), a sponsor of the bill, says the law is designed to help prospective students and parents "make an informed decision" about college by letting them know how safe each college is.

According to a poll commissioned by Phi Delta Kappa, support for school choice among minorities has reached an all-time high of 72 percent, outnumbering even white support for school choice. The poll also showed that, while 90% of the public wants students to be taught about the dangers of drug use, only 28% approve of "peace education" courses which teach about the dangers of nuclear war.

Parents and religious and community organizations are making their opposition known to the controversial new "NC-17" rating, designed to replace "X" as the Motion Picture Association's symbol for films prohibited to minors. The National Council of Churches and the Catholic Conference accused the MPAA of "caving in to the commercial interests of those who are attempting to get sexually exploitative material into general theatrical release," and the *Birmingham News* announced that it would neither advertise nor review any movies with an NC-17 rating. Parents fear that the new system will make it easier for children to see harmful material without parental consent.

Early childhood education is primarily a female occupation and has not been affected by the national trend of moving men and women into so-called "non-traditional" careers. According to the last Census figures available, men occupied only 4% of the early-childhood-education teaching jobs. News reports indicate that the increasing number of men going into daycare has been stopped by several well-publicized cases of child abuse by men.

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Restored One-Room Schoolhouse Attracts Visitors

One of the popular tourist attractions in southern Illinois is a restored one-room schoolhouse. The Giger School in Highland, about 30 miles east of St. Louis, was used as a school from 1880 to 1954. It was restored by Louise and Erwin Weder in 1957 and has been exhibited ever since to show tourists, schoolchildren, and history buffs what the fabled one-room schoolhouse really looked like. Over a thousand visitors came to see the Giger School in 1989.

When giving tours of the schoolhouse, Mrs. Weder leads visitors on a stroll back in time. She explains that teachers today who complain about bad working conditions do not realize how lucky they are as compared with their counterparts from the turn of the century.

Back then, a teacher's monthly salary was only \$35 a month, and by 1950 it was \$120 a month. In addition to instructing a class, teachers were required to fill lamps, clean chimneys, build fires, and keep the classroom clean. They did not have their own homes but instead boarded with a family in the district. Teachers were not allowed to be married and were expected to devote all their waking hours to the school. Despite all these restrictions, some instructors stayed for as long as seven years.

Schoolchildren's days were much more exacting 100 years ago than they are now. At the Giger School, the day opened with a pledge to the flag, a prayer, and roll call. In order to be marked as present on the roll call, pupils were required to recite a "memory gem," which was a short verse such as "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."

Since students of varying age groups were taught in the same room, the older pupils helped the younger ones with their schoolwork. Because of this, it was not unusual for a child to skip a grade.

Pupils at the Giger School, like many other children at the time, were rewarded for edu-



ational achievements. Children who read six books on their own were rewarded with a Reading Circle certificate; those who went on to finish 18 books would receive a Reading Circle diploma. They were also encouraged by awards for spelling and attendance.

Children had three recess periods a day at 10:30, noon, and 2:30. Lunch was brought from home in a pail or lunch box. There was no water fountain in the school; each student had his own folding drinking cup and drank well water kept in a bucket at the front of the classroom. There were no indoor restrooms at the school; students used outhouses in the backyard. The children helped keep the school in order by carrying in coal, cleaning the blackboards, and dusting erasers.

When the Giger School finally closed its doors in 1954 to make way for a new, modern school, an era came to a close. Although both students and teachers have a much easier time

now in school than they did back then, it is arguable that an 8th-grade student back then was better educated than a high school graduate today.

The Giger School is open to visitors from April to October by appointment. It contains memorabilia and artifacts from the school's history. For information on scheduling a guided tour of the schoolhouse, call Louise Weder at 618-654-6051 or 618-654-2161. ■

ABC-TV's 20/20 Airs Show on Death Education

ABC-TV's news show 20/20 aired a report on death education on Friday, September 21. Narrated by Tom Jarriel and produced by Lisa Shreve, "Death in the Classroom" showed a typical death education class. Students visited a morgue where they were encouraged to touch "still warm human remains" in a cremation room and feel a corpse. They visited a cemetery and were encouraged to design their own tombstones and write their obituaries.

The report noted that students in the class "relive intensely emotional experiences." One student was shown sobbing after reliving the death of her father a year ago. Another student interviewed after the death education class said, "Now I'm not scared to die."

Tom Jarriel called the "therapeutic techniques" used in death education "potentially dangerous," since the teacher is not a psychologist and only receives a one-day workshop training in teaching death education.

Dr. William Coulson, California psychologist and longtime critic of "therapy education," said that death education is "not powerful enough to help troubled kids, but powerful enough to hurt untroubled kids."

Tara Becker Merrill, a Colorado woman who several years ago attempted suicide after a high school class about death, said that she was taught that "death is exciting, appealing, something to look forward to." She said that her teacher, who believed in reincarnation, discussed death as if it were an answer to adolescent problems. Mrs. Merrill mentioned that she was so caught up in these induced illusions about death that she even fantasized over what she would look like in her casket.

The ABC reporters appeared shocked at their own report and urged parents nationwide to go and ask the schools about any death education that may be in their children's course schedule. ■

Educators Emphasizing New Help for Black Students

In an effort to fight the many problems facing the black community, some educators are using innovative but controversial ideas to foster interest in education among African-American students.

Schools in Milwaukee, Chicago, and Baltimore are establishing separate classes in some schools for young black male students. The classes stress an Afrocentric curriculum and use male school teachers as role models for the boys. However, separating school facilities by race and gender is illegal, and schools which have done this are facing numerous court challenges.

The state of Illinois recently passed a bill mandating the study of black history in public elementary and secondary schools. The law goes into effect January 1 and requires that all schools study both "the contributions made by individual African-Americans" to the "economic, cultural and political development of the United States and Africa" and the "socio-economic struggle" which blacks have faced "in striving to achieve fair and equal treatment." The study of women's history is also required by the same law.

New York State is about to undergo similar changes in the way it teaches history. Education officials are now secretly working to revise the state's curriculum to come in line with the controversial "A Curriculum of Inclusion" report (see February, 1990 *Education Reporter*).

Education Commissioner Thomas Sobol claims that meeting behind closed doors is necessary "to create an atmosphere where participants can express their views freely." Critics charge that the secret meetings are being used to implement controversial and historically distorted changes in the state's schools without public knowledge.

Black history is also being taught in Indianapolis, Washington, Atlanta, Detroit, and Portland. Many of the classes have been criticized for distorting historical facts and amounting to what American Federation of Teachers president Albert Shanker has called "ethnic cheerleading."

In Brooklyn, New York's Boys and Girls High School principal Frank Mickens has instituted a dress code requiring all males to wear ties. Mr. Mickens, who is black, says that the aims of the dress code are to give the mostly black students a sense of pride and to impart a businesslike atmosphere to the school. He has also banned gold jewelry, expensive coats, and Walkmen from the school.

In Humboldt Visual and Performing Arts School in St. Louis, students sing two songs at the beginning of the school day — the Star-Spangled Banner and "Lift Every Voice and Sing," the so-called "black national anthem." The school has been under fire for allowing this because many feel it causes racial tension between black and white students. ■

FOCUS: What's Wrong With Drug Ed?

Two Experts Speak Out



By Dr. William Coulson

Recently we met with law enforcement professionals in the Pacific Northwest. The subject was the failure of the dominant forms of drug education. None is more dominant than *Quest*. Is *DARE* better? Yes and no. First a little background.

Almost all of today's drug education has been influenced by "values clarification" and by the values originally "clarified" for themselves by college students under the values clarification regimen. Beginning in 1978 with Howard Kirschenbaum's *Skills for Living* curriculum, *Quest* brought values clarification into American classrooms and, however inadvertently, brought with it some of those same values "clarified" by the college students. It brought in these values under the authority of the school's official curriculum, and this gave them undue influence.

In the years since 1978, *Quest* has been working its way down through the grades. High school and middle school students proved insufficiently malleable; for along with the idea of being nice to one another — no one denies that *Quest* wants kids to be nice and is capable of getting at least a simulacrum of niceness out of them — they also accepted the idea that they might use drugs, accepted it under the influence of users among the class.

Quest wanted kids to "buy" abstinence from drugs, but to "buy" it without *Quest* selling it. They wanted students to learn virtue, as it were, through indirection and discussion. Indirection and discussion proved not to be enough.

Now we have *Skills for Growing*, an elementary school program. Will well-reared children be influenced only by the niceness in *Skills for Growing* or also by the bad part? By the bad part we mean what *Quest* calls "in-depth sharing": the idea that well-reared kids and at-risk kids should become closer friends than otherwise would be likely. Traditionalist mothers and fathers have always told their children something like "Be careful of whom you pick for friends." *Quest* makes it impossible for them any longer to be careful.

So, no one knows the outcome of *Skills for Growing*. In its typical, enthusiastic way, *Quest* calls the program "highly successful and promising" in the program design booklet of 1989. But a program not yet tested — and at the time of the program design book not even completely written — can hardly be called "highly successful." In truth, *Skills for Growing*

is an experiment; on *Quest's* record to date, the prospects of success for the experiment aren't good. This problem isn't just *Quest's*, of course. It belongs to the whole range of affective programs.

Like *Quest*, *DARE* is an affective program, with an "a." As we gathered in a recent conversation with a *DARE* training official on the West Coast, the program is too new to have the kind of behavioral data recounted in its newsletter. In one sense, the prospects are better for *DARE* than for *Quest*. *DARE* lessons are delivered by uniformed law enforcement officers. They represent civic authority to the children and thus may turn out to produce a better long-run effect than those who merely represent the practices of the amateur non-directive group therapist, which is how the role of the *Quest*-style classroom facilitator was originally cast by our colleague Carl Rogers.

But *DARE*, too, is more psychological than necessary, in our opinion. It has role-playing, for instance, and self-esteem exercises. It also has decision-making, which is entirely out of place when the issue is drugs. There is nothing for children to decide about drugs. Mother Nature has already settled the issue. Drugs are never a choice. It only confuses things to teach decision making in connection with drug education.

We don't want to be too hard on *DARE*. One difference that favors the *DARE* style of decision making over the method in *Skills for Adolescence*, in our view, is that *DARE* tacks on an additional step to the multi-step decision-making regimen. This extra, formal step in *DARE* invites children to check out their decision with the responsible adults in their lives.

It's a big improvement. Still it must be said that a problem remains. *DARE's* consultative step is at the end of the decision-making regimen. If it were at the beginning rather than the end, children would be spared ever having to believe they should become decision makers about drugs. Upon consulting the responsible adults in their lives, surely they would hear that there is no decision to make, none whatsoever; surely they would become persuaded that the essential task is to recognize that they must never take drugs and then to be faithful to this realization.

Our point is that for children to hear the truth about drugs is to risk making them think their rights have been violated by this adult. ("I've already decided what to do. Now Dad tells me no decision is appropriate.") It's far better never to lead them into believing in decision making in the first place.

The whole idea of decision making, in fact, is a shuck. We've asked hundreds of adults around the country, "Name the course you took in order to learn how to make decisions." They can't do it. There was no such "how to decide" courses when they were growing up. Instead they were told *what* to decide. That is, as it turns out, today's adults, no less than their parents and grandparents, learned a substantive morality, not a "process morality." Again, they learned *what* to do, not how to *decide* what to do. There is no such thing as a valid process-oriented substitute for traditional right and wrong.

Let's talk about values and tradition. In *Cigarette Smoking Among Teen-Agers and Young Women*, a study conducted for the American Cancer Society by the firm of Yankelovich, Skelly and White and published



By Dr. Melvin Anshell

The major cause of today's epidemic of student drug users is school drug teachers. Some teachers lead children and young people to use drugs by actual example. Others encourage drug use by openly or tacitly condoning it. The most influential teachers causing students to use drugs — and paradoxically, perhaps, the most innocent — are those convinced that knowledge-based school education programs will correct the problem.

The latter instructors conduct drug classes in which detailed information about drugs is given: the street and scientific names of drugs, their colors, feel, chemical makeup, physical and psychological effects, how to use drugs — everything one could possibly want to know about drugs is taught to students in school drug classes.

Because of ignorance, strong mental resistance or for other reasons, the knowledge-based drug teachers fail to consider the well established clinical and statistical data that clearly show "the more students are taught about drugs in school classes, the more students become involved in drug use."

Psychoanalytic clinical observations reveal that, when normal young people are instructed about a societal taboo by adult authorities, many a youths will be drawn to that activity. About 60% of youths have this constitutional compulsion; the remainder have the character to resist that which is prohibited and accept the advice given. Perhaps, by doing just the opposite of what adult authorities teach, many young people believe they are proving their independence and acting grown up.

Larry's mother, an intelligent, elegantly attractive woman, sat in my office with tears running down her cheeks. Larry, she said, had been using marijuana for several months and was now smoking it in his room at home. When she rapped on his door and begged him to stop smoking, he flung the door open, cursed her violently and threw her down the staircase. I was amazed. Larry had been my patient for several years; I knew he loved his mother

by the National Cancer Institute in 1977, Daniel Yankelovich and his colleagues found that of the teenage girls in a national representative sample who did not smoke, 52 percent were properly to be categorized as invulnerable to the offer of cigarettes or other drugs.

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dearly.

A schedule of one hour weekly consultations for three months was arranged. Larry kept the appointments gleefully. For three months he joyfully told me about the benefits of marijuana and adjured me to use it myself. There seemed to be no light at the end of Larry's marijuana tunnel.

Suddenly, one day, Larry said, "Doc, you're right. I see clearly what you've been saying." Having not said anything for three months, I wondered what he meant. "Yeah, Doc, you're right. If everybody — my mom, dad, brother, you, President Reagan — if everybody smoked marijuana, we'd all become like prehistoric cavemen." He continued, "I have an essay to write for English class tomorrow. I'm going to write about how if everybody smoked marijuana we'd all become cavemen, and get my marijuana-smoking classmates to stop."

A week later Larry returned for his hourly appointment. He stared at me with intense antipathy and spoke with disgust.

"It's your fault. You made me write it. My essay was the only one the teacher read out loud and he made me stand before the front of the class while he read it. When he finished, he said (apparently sardonically according to the inflection in Larry's voice), 'So tell me Larry, so what's wrong with the laughter?' The whole class — my friends — laughed at me." Larry's face turned crimson as he recalled his embarrassment.

Several years later, Larry returned to my office for treatment of a genital infection. Having not seen him for such a long time, I looked at him for several moments with wonderment. Standing over six feet tall, he was an intelligent, handsome, 22-year-old man. After graduating high school, he elected to work for a local manufacturing firm and was now one of its junior executives.

"I don't smoke marijuana anymore, but I do use coke. I'm not hooked though," he hastened to assure me. "I only use it about three times a week after work."

My gaze fell upon his eyes. I saw before me a person for whom life was meaningless. Notwithstanding his success at work, good looks, a bevy of girls and heir to wealthy, extraordinary parents, Larry found no joy in living. Former U. S. Attorney General Kennedy's son, who killed himself with drugs, came to my mind.

If only Larry's high school teacher had encouraged Larry to stop using marijuana instead of making him appear foolish, Larry's future would be brighter.

Perhaps, my mental restraints against hating human beings are too highly developed; but there should be another galaxy to which Larry's school teacher and other marijuana-using drug teachers like him could be sent.

The only solution for controlling today's drug problems is for society once again to reestablish its social conscience abhorring the use and selling of drugs. Along with a re-established social conscience, strong, severe laws against drugs must be initiated and enforced.

Spending more taxpayers' money for school drug education programs is throwing good money after bad. Students will be more likely to try drugs. The school drug programs will simply make them better informed drug users. ■

Melvin Anshell, a practicing psychiatrist in Mission Viejo, California, is the author of five books and many articles on human sexuality. His M.D. and B.S. degrees are from the University of Maryland.

School Uses Horoscope to Teach Self-Esteem

Parents in Haymarket, Virginia objected to their children being given an astrology article in a decision-making class. "Choosing Your Horoscope" was handed out to 3rd graders in Gainesville Elementary School by school counselor Linda Falden as a way to increase children's self-esteem.

The handout described horoscopes as "a description of one's personality and/or a forecast of one's future" and said that horoscopes are "published daily in some newspapers and are read by many people." The article did not mention that astrology has been shown to have no scientific basis in fact.

After parental complaints, the school agreed that "Choosing Your Horoscope" was inappropriate classroom material and stopped the use of the handout. Since that time, Mrs. Falden, the school counselor in question, has left the school.

The following is excerpted directly from the handout given to the children.

Choose Your Horoscope



A horoscope is a description of one's personality and/or a forecast of one's future based on the relative positions of the planets and constellations, or signs of the zodiac, at a specific time. Horoscopes are published daily in some newspapers and are read by many people. First, read the sample horoscopes. Then, choose the one that fits you best. Write the title for the horoscope you chose.

If none of the horoscopes suits you, write your own horoscope. In doing so, you may

wish to combine parts from the horoscopes on the following pages or from other horoscopes you have read.

Finally, compare your horoscope with those chosen and written by other members of your class. Which horoscope was most popular? Which horoscope was least popular? Why?

Horoscopes



Aries (The Ram) The Intellect — Your intellect enables you to grasp things easily. You also have a strong will and choose your own friends, a few close ones rather than many.



Taurus (The Bull) The Traveler — You enjoy change, traveling, meeting different people, and adventure. You do not like to be alone, but neither do you favor strong ties.



Gemini (The Twins) The Humanitarian — A great love and concern for all mankind singles you out as an outstanding person. You would like to see a better world with less poverty, disease, and suffering. You are concerned about the environment and pollution.



Cancer (The Crab) The Sport — You are an active, energetic, highly competitive person. Sports, games, and contests are of special interest to you. You pay close attention to the workings of your body and use exercise and nutrition to maintain good health.



Leo (The Lion) The Business Person — Businesses, corporations, and finances bring out the best in you. You are efficient and prompt; and you like for everything to be clean, neat, orderly, and modern. Your friends might classify you as a workaholic.



Virgo (The Virgin) The Nature Lover — You love the outdoors and nature. Peace and quiet dominate your life. You value the time you spend in quiet meditation. You are not motivated by money or by material possessions.



Libra (The Balance) The Legal Mind — There is no stopping you when you are pursuing what you believe is right. Justice, government, and politics consume your energies.



Scorpio (The Scorpion) The Creative Person — You like to make things with your hands. You are creative and original in your work, hobbies, and the atmosphere in which you live.



Sagittarius (The Archer) The Philanthropist — You truly love the fine arts. If you become wealthy, you will be a patron of art, music, sculpture, or theater. Fine food and travel also beckon to you.



Capricorn (The Goat) The Socialite — People are drawn to you and confide in you. You are outgoing and enjoy social gatherings of all kinds and the company of many friends.



Aquarius (The Water Bearer) The Scientist — Medicine, teaching, and research are your interests. You have few friends, but they are very good ones. Most people and things do not impress you.



Pisces (The Fishes) The Artist — Beauty, color, art, flowers, and antiques are some of your favorite things. You are old-fashioned and sentimental, a person with inner fires and desires.

Book of the Month



The New Freedom: Individualism and Collectivism in the Social Lives of Americans, by William Donohue. Transaction Publishing, 1990, \$22.95.

William Donohue, who wrote perhaps the definitive history of the American Civil Liberties Union, has taken on the "rights without responsibilities" crowd in his new book, *The New Freedom*. The book's thesis is that the social upheavals of the past 30 years have caused a "preoccupation with individual liberty, to the neglect of other competing values," and "has left a trail of social discord that will be difficult to redress."

Instead of the more liberal social mores of today making society more harmonious, it has done just the opposite. Any idea of looking out for the common good of society has been eschewed in favor of an individual "rights mania" at all costs. Donohue comments, "By throwing off tradition, custom, and social convention as the yoke of repression, man is essentially going to war against himself. It is a war he cannot hope to win."

This pursuit of unfettered individual liberty

has led to overwhelming social problems such as homelessness, child abuse, drug addiction, AIDS, and the skyrocketing divorce rate. Yet our society, while placing individual rights on an exalted pedestal, refuses at the same time to make people take individual responsibility for their actions. It's easier to blame our social ills on Reagan or rich people or the latest liberal boogeyman.

Something is deeply wrong with a country in which burning the flag is protected speech but burning tobacco in a cigarette can lead to a hefty fine, in which the government, not promiscuous homosexuals and drug addicts, is blamed for spreading the AIDS epidemic, in which 2 Live Crew's raunchy, misogynistic lyrics are called artistic and their detractors called censors, and in which abortion is simply a matter of personal choice but wearing a seat belt is required by law.

Donohue states that it's no surprise how morally corrupt our society has become. "A promiscuous society allows for diverse demonstrations of promiscuity," he writes. "It is not surprising that those who place so little value on the responsibilities of the individual should themselves fail to accept responsibility for the consequences of their ideas."

How can we change our society for the better? Donohue suggests four ways: "stronger families, more morally responsible schools, a renewed respect for the public role of religion, and a criminal justice system that makes accountability a priority once again."

Donohue calls for an end to our society's moral neutrality on social issues by "redrawing the parameters of acceptable behavior in a manner that accommodates a reasonably broad area of individual expression." Although he acknowledges that many feel "the only alternative to the new freedom is moral despotism," Donohue writes that there is a middle ground between these two extremes, and that "it is in this gray area that ordered liberty has been and can be found."



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They called this large group the "traditionalists." Of these youngsters they wrote: "It is easy to understand why the 'traditionalists' do not smoke. They are strongly religious, respectful of authority, and not accepting the new values. They also shy away from their peers who smoke, drink or use marijuana."

Enumerating the new values, the authors said: "In general, the teen-age girls have been more influenced by the new youth values than the boys. These 'New Values,' originally generated by college youth in the sixties, are characterized by the rejection of authority, emphasis on the emotional rather than the rational, freer sexual morality, a strong accent on self and self-fulfillment, the acceptance of illegal drugs and a more informal life style."

Our claim is that affective education puts well-reared kids at risk for making it impossible for them any longer to "shy away from their peers who smoke, drink or use marijuana." The direction of influence in classroom groupwork has long been known to be from users to abstainers rather than the reverse. There has to be a better way of conducting drug education than to put good kids at risk with a form of classroom groupwork that, at best, is questionable even for at-risk kids.

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