

Channel One Loses Round In Classroom Marketing

TRENTON, NJ — An administrative law judge in New Jersey has recommended that Whittle Communications, Inc.'s Channel One news program for classrooms be withdrawn from schools. The judge found that the time devoted to commercials in the 12-minute news show violates the state's constitutional guarantee of a "thorough and efficient" education.

Channel One is a daily 12-minute news program, including two minutes of commercial advertising, produced by Whittle Communications of Knoxville, TN. Whittle asserts that it is now in 11,800 schools nationwide, reaching 7.1 million schoolchildren daily. In exchange for the school guaranteeing to require students to view the program, Whittle supplies one television set for every 23 students, two VCRs for recording the newscasts, puts a satellite dish on

One, charged that "Whittle is making huge profits on the backs of our students." Trenton school officials, who defended their decision to contract with Whittle for the showing of its newscast, argued that the commercials are negligible when compared to the amount of technological equipment that was provided to the high school for free by Whittle Communications.

Whittle won a similar court battle last year when the North Carolina Supreme Court ruled against the state's Board of Education. The California Department of Education has filed a suit to ban Channel One at a San Jose high school, arguing it represents a sale of instructional time for noneducational activity. Channel One was also banned recently by the Fort Worth, TX, school board.

School Returns TV Equipment

Centaurus High School in Boulder Valley, Colorado became the first school in America to give back its \$50,000 worth of televisions and satellite dishes in order to regain the 12 minutes a day its students have spent watching Channel One since 1990. After a year of losing an hour a week to classroom television news, the Centaurus High School faculty decided the equipment wasn't worth it. The teachers said the technology wasn't really free because the school had to give up an hour of instruction every week, squeezing out different classes throughout the year.

The Centaurus students agreed with the decision to abandon Channel One. June graduate Marci Meier said that the efforts to gear a program toward teenagers by making it fast-paced and "cool" didn't work. "It's almost an insult to us," she said. "We know when we are a target audience and that's what it felt like."

NEA Opposes Channel One

At the 1992 convention of the National Education Association, the 8,500 delegates approved by a large vote a proposal authorizing its president, Keith Geiger, to write letters informing "media businesses and advertisers who seek to commercialize the classroom that exploiting students who are a captive audience is unacceptable and repugnant to our organization." The union resolution does not mention Whittle by name, but NEA officials acknowledged that it refers to Whittle Communications of Knoxville, TN.

NEA spokesman Bill Martin said that about 20 corporations will receive "strongly worded" letters this summer from NEA protesting their commercial spots on Channel One. The companies include Pepsi-Cola Co., M&M Mars, Frito-Lay Inc., Nike Inc., Burger King Corp., Nintendo, Kellogg, Warner Lambert Co., Colgate Palmolive Co., Quaker Oats Co., Gillette Co., Columbia Pictures, Warner Bros. Inc., Paramount Pictures, Twentieth Century Fox, Procter & Gamble, and Taco Bell. ■



the roof, and wires the entire school.

Judge Bruce R. Campbell stated in his opinion that the commercial content of Channel One "is inappropriate fare in homeroom or any other school day period." He found the school's contract with Whittle to be in violation of the state's compulsory attendance law for students aged 6 to 16.

"Children are paying for the equipment and programs just as surely as if they were asked for money," he said. Noting that the Trenton School Board itself admitted that Channel One has "no particular value to its educational and instructional programs," Campbell went on to say that "compelling pupils to watch it is all the more a gratuitous act."

Judge Bruce Campbell's recommendation now goes to New Jersey Education Commissioner John Ellis, who has 45 days to adopt, modify, or reject it, or allow it to take effect.

Whittle Vice Chair Laura Eshbaugh called the ruling "legally unsupportable." Betty Kraemer of the New Jersey Education Association, which challenged Channel

Michigan Governor Vetoes Michigan Model Funding



Senator Douglas Carl

LANSING, MI — Michigan Governor John Engler on July 16 vetoed funding for \$2 million training program that planned to be used to train teachers to teach the controversial comprehensive health curriculum called the "Michigan Model."

State Senator Douglas Carl of Lansing has been the leading opponent of continued funding for this curriculum, which has aroused much opposition from parents all over the state. The Michigan Governor enjoys the power of the Line-Item Veto, and the Michigan Model was one of a number of spending items totalling \$3.9 million that Governor Engler eliminated from the FY 1993 budget.

Advocates of the Michigan Model courted the Michigan Governor by getting the House of Representatives to add funds to the education budget for "professional development." However, local districts would certainly not be compelled to spend the money for the Michigan Model (as they would have been without the Engler veto) and can instead spend the funds for training in academic subjects such as math.

Since 1985, the Michigan Model has been the target of sustained criticism by parents who testified at 12 hearings conducted by a Senate select committee across the state. Parents complained that the curriculum is essentially psychological rather than academic, and that it manifests all the defects of the affective/non-directive education in such wide use in the public schools today.

Parents object to the Michigan Model specifically because it changes children's values by teaching them "problem solving" without an ethical or legal basis, it teaches the "responsible" use of sex and illegal substances, it reflects an anti-family bias, it invades family privacy, and it uses techniques that could produce altered states of consciousness. Parents scored a victory last fall when the State Department of Education deleted a deep-breathing technique from the Michigan Model. (See *Educational Reporter*, Nov. 1991 and Mar. 1992.)

Teachers and students had no foreknowledge of the content of the survey, says Stewart. "People appeared in classroom with a stack of surveys and basically usurped the individual teacher's role for an hour."

Stewart notes that the undated letter SMMUSD sent to parents the week prior to the distribution of the first questionnaire consisted of "mimeographed sheets that advised of a 'scientific survey' and included a cutout at the bottom for those parents who refused." Not only was the burden placed on parents to take action if they did not want their children to participate, says Stewart, but the list of parents who refused permission apparently "was not cross-referenced when the survey was given."

See *Rand Corp.*, page 2

Why is the Rand Corp. Studying Sex?

SANTA MONICA, CA — In June, the RAND Corporation cancelled a teen sex survey that was to be administered that month to 2,700 students at Santa Monica High School (Samohi). The survey was the second of a series begun in April to assess the effects of a new condom distribution program for grades 9-12 that was approved by the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) in March.

RAND officials have announced plans to revise parental notification procedures before conducting a follow-up survey next spring. RAND is a private research institution based in Santa Monica which holds \$80 million in U.S. Government military and civilian contracts in 1991.

Parents, teachers, and students had protested the content of the first survey and the way it was conducted. The Western Center for Law and Religious Freedom threatened a lawsuit, claiming that the survey violated the state education code that requires written permission for surveys on morality and sexual practices. The group argues that the survey results should be permanently sealed. "There is no question that the survey was illegal," Center President David Llewellyn told *The Outlook*, a Santa Monica newspaper.

Samohi teacher Ken Kearsley believes that the prospect of a lawsuit is what prompted postponement of the survey. Kearsley is one of several teachers who objected to the administration of the survey. "We see it as a religious freedom issue," he told *The Outlook*. "If a kid is dragooned into taking a survey parents don't support, we think that's wrong."

According to John H. Stewart Jr., the father of two Samohi students, the survey included such questions as "How many times did you have anal sex last month?"

EDUCATION BRIEFS

Contrary to the fears of many educators and parents, a recent University of Florida study finds that home-schooled children do not lag in social skills when compared with children who attend conventional schools. The study suggests that children taught at home behave better because they tend to imitate their parents. Larry Shyers, a psychotherapist involved in the study stated that, "The results seem to show that a child's social development depends more on adult contact and less on contact with other children than previously thought." The study also showed that homeschooled children consistently had fewer behavioral problems.

Bush's recently announced "GI Bill for Children" is a plan that will allow the use of government funds for attendance at public, private or parochial schools of parents' choice. The \$500 million proposal would allow states, cities, and school districts to compete for the funds, and they could apply for grants "to run their own school-choice programs under their own rules." Low- and middle-income families could receive up to \$1,000 to send children to schools of their choice. Though some are sharply attacking Bush's proposal, others see this as further proof that the educational choice movement is making great strides.

U.S. students do very little reading in or out of school, according to a recent report by the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). Based on a 1990 survey of 25,000 students, NAEP found that nearly 1/3 of 8th and 12th graders said they do not have homework assigned or do not do it. In response to this problem, Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander suggested that parents read to their children every night, get them library cards, and limit television viewing.

The lack of literacy among American workers "is a primary drawback to U.S. industrial competitiveness," writes the *Wall Street Journal*. The 30 million Americans reported to be functionally illiterate by the Work in America Institute is a problem especially for auto makers because of the growing complexity and competitiveness of the auto business. Today it is necessary for assembly-line workers to not only have the physical stamina to assemble products, but also to possess the mental agility to inspect products for quality and to make repairs. Ford Motor Co., Chrysler Corp., and GM have all established literacy or basic education programs for their workers because, as Jerome Rosow, president of Work in America, says, "If companies want to be competitive, they have to educate their workers. Otherwise, they're carrying dead weight."

Education Reporter (ISSN 0887-0608) is published monthly by Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund with editorial offices at Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002, (618)462-5415. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the persons quoted and should not be attributed to Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund. Annual subscription \$25. Back issues available at \$2. Second Class postage paid at Alton, Illinois.

What Activities Are Behind 'Government Relations' in the NEA?

The National Education Association reported at its 1992 annual Convention that it spent \$8,534,943 in its 1991 fiscal year on a category called "Government Relations." The following is the NEA's own description of what "Government Relations" means:

"Government Relations programs are designed to achieve Strategic Objectives One, Four, and Eight by coordinating NEA activity with governmental agencies, state and intergovernmental organizations to establish partnerships with policy-makers, opinion leaders, and affiliates; strengthening coalition efforts to advance NEA goals for education reform; and providing technical assistance, training and information to state affiliates. Lobby Members of Congress and congressional staff and committees to advocate for the legislative program on behalf of NEA objectives and build support among other groups: monitoring activities of the administration and federal agencies, and support Congressional Contact Teams, members selected by state affiliates to lobby Members of Congress, to coordinate grassroots support and involvement in the NEA legislative program. Administration of NEA-PAC, NEA's political action arm; development and implementation of training programs for members and staff on all phases of campaigning and electoral politics; get-out-the-vote campaigns for state and federal candidates; assistance to affiliates on state ballot issues; monitoring long-range activities such as reapportionment and redistricting; and coordination of member participation in national party activities such as the Democratic and Republican party conventions. Field staff support to deliver programs and services to state and local affiliates to establish a favorable legislative environment." ■

Disturbing Assignment Raises Its Head Years Later



Norma Jean Evans

PRICE, UT — Roseanne Wilkins was astonished to discover that her younger sister was given the same disturbing population control assignment in school on May 11 that she herself had been given by her science teacher 11 years before.

The 16-year-old sister, Norma Jean Evans, brought Mrs. Wilkins a copy of the handout and explained that she and other students in the class felt uncomfortable about filling it out. Mrs. Wilkins was amazed when she realized it was exactly the same handout she had been given in her science class in 1981 when she was a sophomore in high school — even the punctuation was the same. Mrs. Wilkins says the assignment "had always bothered her."

The handout instructed the students to assume they were members of a Congressional committee appointed to draft a bill on population control. They were to choose from a selection of solutions and rank them in order of "most acceptable" to "least acceptable."

The proposed solutions were completely outrageous and antagonistic to traditional values and morality. They included suggestions such as requiring mothers or fathers to be sterilized after the birth of a second child, and tax law changes to provide bonuses according to the number of children a person *doesn't* have. Other solutions were to treat water supplies with birth control chemicals, and require all states to have laws permitting abortion.

Mrs. Wilkins is deeply concerned about the state of education today. "We are teaching our children a group mentality, and I highly resent being one of those children who had to undergo the conformation process," she says. "I assume that all the students taking this class in the years between my sister and me had the same assignment."

"Needless to say," she adds, "I didn't conform, but the process was an ugly one." ■

Population Control Quiz

Assume you are members of a Congressional Committee appointed to draft a bill on population control. The following solutions have been formulated, and the Committee must decide which to use in preparing the bill. You are to identify the proposal *most acceptable* to you and number it #1. Then identify the *least acceptable* proposal, number it #8. Rank the other proposals numerically between numbers 1 and 8. You must rank order each choice.

- | Rank | Proposals |
|-------|---|
| _____ | Compulsory family regulation by requiring mothers to be sterilized after the birth of a second child. |
| _____ | Compulsory family regulation by requiring all fathers to be sterilized after the birth of the second child. |
| _____ | Establish a Federal Population Commission with a budget for propaganda. It would support reproductive responsibility, and emphasize the connection between rising population and a lower quality of life. |
| _____ | Tax law changes to discourage reproduction. These would eliminate tax deductions for children and provide a graduated deduction system with bonuses according to the number of children you don't have. In effect this would pay a bounty to the childless. |
| _____ | Make instructions in birth control methods mandatory in all schools and require all states to have laws permitting abortion. |
| _____ | Increase the scope and effectiveness of family-planning services and research. |
| _____ | Mass regulation of population growth by treating water supplies with birth control chemicals. An antidote would be available upon request to the government for those wishing to reproduce. |
| _____ | Have a voluntary program of no children or stop after one child. These would be voluntary and based on personal integrity. |

Rand Corporation *Continued from page 1*

Responding to telephone inquiries from Stewart, RAND behavioral scientist David Kanouse noted that the private, nonprofit research institution is reviewing its notification procedures "to see how they might be improved so that every parent is aware of the survey, and of the choices they and their high school son or daughter have regarding their participation." According to Kanouse, parents may examine copies of the survey kept on file in the principal's office and in the district superintendent's office, but may not have copies of their own. "Because this is an ongoing survey," he explained, "we have decided not to provide individual copies to people who request them before the evaluation is completed."

According to a fact sheet Stewart received from RAND, the surveys — funded by the UCLA/RAND Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program — are intended to evaluate the SMMUSD condom distribution program and "provide the

school district with facts and measurements upon which it can base decisions about the desirability of continuing the program and whether revisions to the program should be considered." Most of the survey questions "were adapted from materials prepared by the Centers for Disease Control, the World Health Organization, and the University of California."

Two phenomena purportedly being measured include "changes in the type of sexual activity, improvement (if any) in the level of knowledge about the consequences of sexual activity with and without contraception, frequency of students' use of condoms, and whether students who have never had sex delay sexual initiation, or, as some fear, may begin having sex earlier because of the availability of condoms." Research results will be published "in medical, public health, education, and related professional journals," the fact sheet notes. Those results, it stresses, "will only be reported as

grouped data and it will be impossible to identify individual respondents."

Stewart is skeptical of claims that students' anonymity will be respected. He notes that students taking the survey were asked to provide the first letters of their first and last names and the first letter of the month they were born in, ostensibly to facilitate tracking of their responses on future surveys. "Anyone with the desire to collate this data can do so," Stewart observed in an April 28 letter to Board of Education President Connie Jenkins.

Stewart also questions the scientific nature of the survey. "Most of the multiple-answer questions appear to be nothing more than a Gallup Poll of what kids think other kids are doing," he wrote in the letter. "This is not a scientific survey but an opinion poll." Stewart insisted that the notice mailed to parents should "not presume the parent's obligation to reply or the child automatically gets the survey." Jenkins has not responded to Stewart's letter. ■

FOCUS: Helping Youth Say "Yes" to Tobacco

By Joseph R. DiFranza, MD, and Tim McAfee, MD, MPH
Fitchburg, Massachusetts, and Seattle, Washington

"Tobacco: Helping Youth Say No" is a superbly executed glossy booklet, in color, with heartwarming pictures of teenagers and parents interacting.¹ Governors, school boards, and community groups are being solicited to support the use of this program in homes and schools. Advertisements are planned for newspapers, billboards, and television. "Tobacco: Helping Youth Say No" is produced by the Tobacco Institute (the tobacco industry's public relations and lobbying organization headquartered in Washington, DC) because they "don't want kids to smoke."² After nearly two decades of research, however, there are considerable data about what are and what are not effective smoking prevention strategies.³ We believe that the tobacco industry has used these data to create a program that will turn teachers and parents into unwitting accomplices in addicting another generation of children to nicotine.

Smoking Prevention Programs

Over the past two decades, two different theoretical approaches to adolescent smoking prevention have developed: the "social influences" approach and the "affective" approach. Social influences programs are based on the theory that factors external to the individual, such as the marketing efforts of the tobacco industry, are important causes of adolescent tobacco use.⁴ The affective approach contends that internal factors such as low self-esteem, faulty decision making, and difficulty coping with stress are of primary importance in the onset of tobacco use.⁵

The social influences approach has been tested extensively, and the weight of the evidence indicates that this approach can be quite effective in preventing the onset of tobacco use.⁶

On the other hand, several evaluations of the affective approach to substance abuse prevention have found that not only have these programs been ineffective in preventing substance abuse, they have frequently resulted in increased use of tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana among students exposed to the programs when compared with control groups.^{4,5} Unfortunately, by the time health researchers realized that affective programs may actually increase substance abuse, these programs were in wide-spread use in schools throughout the United States.

The Tobacco Institute has also invested in its own affective "smoking prevention" programs. These efforts increased dramatically when it was revealed that cigarette advertisements effectively promote smoking to children.^{6,7} "Tobacco: Helping Youth Say No" is just the latest in a series of affective programs distributed by the Tobacco Institute since 1984. Unlike the affective smoking prevention programs tested by well-intentioned prevention researchers, the Tobacco Institute's program is clearly designed to encourage tobacco use.

Feelings vs Facts

"Tobacco: Helping Youth Say No" in its earliest form was entitled "Helping Youth Decide."⁸ Like other affective programs, it emphasized helping youth get in touch with their feelings and values: "this approach is designed to help youth explore and develop their own values and morals, to be honest with themselves about how they really feel."⁹ Once they are in touch with themselves, they can decide whether tobacco use is right for

them. According to "Helping Youth Decide," "Young people need opportunities to examine the personal consequences of choices, to choose and to accept the responsibility for the choices they make."⁸

Dr. Jerrold Greenberg, an early proponent of this approach, has written that "health educators must not be concerned with the particular behavior of their clients, but rather with the process used by their clients to arrive at that behavior. For example, if a client (student in a school, adult in a nursing home program, etc.) chooses to smoke cigarettes but has made that decision freely, the health educator has been successful. . . ." To the advocates of affective programs, one decision about smoking is as good as another.

The emphasis that affective health education programs place on inner process issues rather than on factual material can be dangerous. "Teaching styles which rely only on 'process' modes, i.e., without a factual focus, bear the risk not only of destabilizing use and not restraining spread, but also of facilitating that spread."¹⁰

Responsible Decision Making

The success the affective programs have shown in increasing tobacco use may be due to their lack of factual content in conjunction with their emphasis on decision making. The tobacco industry repeats the word "decision" like a mantra. One of the goals of "Helping Youth Decide" is to help "our young teenagers learn to make more of their own decisions."⁸ "Adults who suggest and help, rather than direct and decide, are more likely to instill the confidence adolescents need to make more and more independent decisions."⁸ Children who might never have considered tobacco use to be an option are taught that they must make a decision about using tobacco. Not surprisingly, some decide to try it.

The very premise that smoking is something youths should be deciding about must be condemned. Each day, approximately 3000 American adolescents become regular smokers.¹⁰ Of these, about 30 will eventually die in traffic accidents, 20 will be murdered, and nearly 750 will be killed by tobacco.¹¹ Who would tell a child that he must "decide" whether or not to run in front of a car or pack a gun to school? We certainly should not be telling children they must decide about smoking.

Children see that with important matters they are told what they must do. We do not ask children to decide about attending school or receiving childhood immunizations. When tobacco use is presented as something children can and should decide about, it suggests that it is not important to adults what decision they actually make.

Forbidden Fruit

"Project 16" was a tobacco industry research project that interviewed children to "learn everything there was to learn about how smoking begins."¹² Project 16 identified "the forbidden fruit" appeal as an important factor in adolescent experimentation with smoking. Presenting smoking as a forbidden fruit appears to be the Tobacco Institute's primary goal in "Tobacco: Helping Youth Say No": "The decision to smoke, like many other personal lifestyle choices, should only be made by adults."⁸ "Children cannot and should not do many of the things adults choose to do."⁸ What could make smoking more appealing to a teenager than to portray it as a rite of passage into adulthood?



Unlike genuine prevention programs, "Tobacco: Helping Youth Say No" never states that there are any detrimental health effects related to smoking. Instead they imply that this matter is controversial: "Young people are aware of the claims that [smoking presents] risks to one's health [emphasis added]."¹³

This statement also implies that there is no need for parents to discuss health concerns since "young people are aware." This is simply not true. About one third of high school seniors still do not believe there is great risk in smoking one or more packs of cigarettes per day.¹³

Since the Tobacco Institute maintains that tobacco is harmless, the only reason they give for why children should not smoke is that they are not mature enough. Indeed, their statement that "children shouldn't smoke" implies that smoking is fine for adults. This is certainly not the message that health educators teach.

An Adult Choice

"Tobacco: Helping Youth Say No" advises parents to tell their children that "some adults may choose to smoke." It portrays smoking as an "adult decision" when, for most smokers, it was a childhood (as well as childish) decision. The majority of adult smokers became addicted to tobacco as children and would not smoke now if it were simply a matter of making a "decision."

The tobacco industry does not acknowledge that nicotine is addictive. In their version of reality, all adults smoke out of choice. This is what they are teaching children. Smoking is just another "adult custom."⁸ The clear message we, as parents and health educators, should be giving children is that using tobacco is never a wise choice, no matter how old you are.

Although the Tobacco Institute frequently cites parental example as a strong factor influencing children to smoke, "Tobacco: Helping Youth Say No" never advises parents to quit smoking in order to be good role models. Indeed, an RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company publication advises parents: "If you smoke because you enjoy smoking — as most smokers do — say so. Your child can usually tell if you are not

being truthful, and there is no reason to be ashamed of giving an honest answer to an honest question."¹⁴

Commitment Not to Smoke

Rather than portray smoking as something that children can decide about, the social influence programs ask children to make a public commitment to never use tobacco. In "Tobacco: Helping Youth Say No" children are not asked to commit to not using tobacco. Even Samuel D. Chilcote, Jr., president of the Tobacco Institute, asserts the purpose of these programs is not to prevent tobacco use but simply to delay it until children reach their 18th birthday: "If this booklet helps youngsters defer important decisions until they are adults, then it will achieve its purpose."¹⁵

Given that programs with an emphasis on decision making stimulate tobacco use among children, given that tobacco use is portrayed as a forbidden fruit and badge of maturity, and given that the addictive and lethal properties of tobacco are not honestly presented, we conclude that the Tobacco Institute's "Tobacco: Helping Youth Say No" program will increase the likelihood of tobacco use among children who are exposed to it.

Acknowledgment: Dr. William Coulson of the Research Council on Ethnopsychology provided background materials for this paper.

References:

1. Tobacco: Helping Youth Say No. Washington, DC: Tobacco Institute, 1987.
 2. RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company. Advertisement in Boston Globe, February 7, 1992.
 3. Flay BR. Social psychological approaches to smoking prevention: review and recommendations. *Adv Health Promotion* 1987; 2:121-80.
 4. Hansen WB, Johnson CA, Flay BR, et al. Affective and social influences approaches to the prevention of multiple substance abuse among seventh grade students: results from Project SMART. *Prev Med* 1988; 17:135-54.
 5. Blum RH, Garfield EF, Johnstone JL, Magistad JG. Drug education: results and recommendations. *J Drug Issues* 1978; 8:379-426.
 6. DiFranza JR, Richards JW, Paulman P, et al. RJR Nabisco's cartoon camel promotes Camel cigarettes to children. *JAMA* 1991; 266:3149-53.
 7. Fischer PM, Schwartz MP, Richards JW, Goldstein AO, Rojas TH. Brand logo recognition by children aged 3 to 6 years. *Mickey Mouse and Old Joe the Camel*. *JAMA* 1991; 266:3145-8.
 8. Helping youth decide. Washington, DC: The Tobacco Institute 1984.
 9. Greenberg J. Health education as freeing. *Health Education* 1978; 20-1.
 10. Pierce JP, Fiore MC, Novotny PE, Hatzidreou EJ, Davis RM. Trends in cigarette smoking in the United States: projections to the year 2000. *JAMA* 1989; 261:61-5.
 11. Glynn TJ. School programs to prevent smoking: the NCI guide to strategies that succeed. Bethesda, Md: National Institutes of Health, Jan 1990. NIH publication no. 90-500.
 12. Project 16. Kwechansky Marketing Research Inc. October 18, 1977, Montreal, Quebec.
 13. Johnstone LD, O'Malley PM, Bachman JG. Drug use among American high school seniors, college students and young adults, 1975-1990. Rockville, Md: US Department of Health and Human Services, 1991. DHHS publication no. (ADM) 91-1813, p 134.
 14. How to talk to your kids about not smoking even if you do. Right decisions/right now. RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company, 1991.
 15. Tobacco Institute. Requests for "Helping Youth Decide" pour in from all over country. *Tobacco Observer*, December 1984; 9(6):1,7.
- This article is reprinted with permission of Appleton & Lange, Inc. from The Journal of Family Practice, Vol.34, No.6, 1992, pp. 694-696, © 1992.*

Writing Assignment Brings Shocking Results

SAN JOSE, CA — What is on the minds of children today? The answer is violence and immorality, according to the results of a recent Alum Rock Union Elementary School District writing assignment.

"The task of reading these writing samples has been for us teachers a shocking and mortifying experience," says Judith Liegmann, 5th grade teacher at Cureton Elementary School.



Cureton Elementary School children with teacher Ms. Liegmann. Teachers were astonished that such obviously happy and normal students could write such violent stories.

The assignment was in response to the official district-wide CAP Writing Domain prompt for grades 3, 4 and 5. The students were given the following background or "prompt" and were told to write an ending to the story that included creating "a conflict or a problem" and how it was resolved:

"You went to school on a misty, foggy, Monday morning. When you arrived there was a strange vehicle out in the field. You went out to it and heard voices coming from inside the vehicle. One of them sounded like your teacher's voice."

The stories that resulted from this prompt were filled with a disturbing amount of violence and even savagery — most of which involved the teacher as the central character. After reviewing stories from three different 5th grade classes and two different 4th grade classes at Horace Cureton Elementary, Ms. Liegmann noted that, "the teachers and the administrator are repeatedly either the perpetrators or the victims of the vilest kind of violence, vice, duplicity and immorality."

"She had a machine gun in her back seat. When class started, she stared at me like she was going to kill me," is one example of what one child wrote in his story. Another child wrote that his teacher and her brother were "looking for the principal to assassinate," and yet another wrote, "Our teacher was right behind us because she wanted to scare us a lot. She turned into an ugly witch with a big nose. . . We started to run because she was going to eat us up."

Other stories involved a teacher kidnapping a student and putting him in the trunk of her car, a teacher making plans to blow up the school, and a teacher working with aliens to capture the kids. In one story the teacher was a victim of an angry student who stuck duck-tape to her mouth and pointed a gun at her head because she had flunked him.

Also surprising was the immoral content and inappropriateness of the stories. One student wrote that she saw her teacher in the car kissing a man and heard her say, "Give it to [me] baby" and "tomorrow let's go to my place, honey." Another student wrote, "I heard a lady's voice and a man's voice. And one sounded like my teacher's and my dad . . . and I said, 'What are you

doing with my father and why is my dad's car here?'"

Many blame the results of this writing assignment on the enormous amount of sex and violence children are exposed to daily on TV, in music, and at the movies. What many adults may consider shocking is often considered commonplace by today's youngsters.

The teachers at Cureton Elementary School, however, also blame the prompt itself for the outrageous results of the writing assignment. Ms. Liegmann stated in a letter to the school district that the story prompt "placed the individual classroom teacher as the central character in a mysterious, potentially violent and compromising situation; in so doing, it literally incited the children to activate the evil side of their imaginations." She claims that the humiliating abuse which the teachers had to endure could easily have been prevented if those in the district had "shown more sensitivity to the fact that this kind of material could not have evoked any other kind of reaction!"

"It is common knowledge," Ms. Liegmann continued, "that the children of this generation have been exposed to massive amounts of violence and immorality through the media, and, for that reason, their minds are veritable 'Pandora's Boxes,' which, when opened, will naturally spew out the evil which has been stored in them."

In her letter to the district, Ms. Liegmann requested an apology to the teachers from those who were responsible for the formulation and approval of the writing prompt. Judith Knutson, Administrator of the Department of Research and Development for the district, responded with a letter defending the prompt, saying that it had been developed by Mentors. She stated that, "Because there was no intention of brutality, repression, or tyranny, no apology is forthcoming."

The district office considered the situation at Cureton Elementary School to be "unfortunate but isolated." However, an informal survey done by Ms. Liegmann proved that the violent results were district wide. At Dorsa Elementary School one child wrote about his teacher being brutally raped in the car, and there were other reports of shocking stories from Linda Vista Elementary School, too. ■

Animal Rights Activists Prowl the Schools

The National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (NAHEE) recently developed an "Adopt-a-Teacher" program through which corporations can "adopt" local teachers, who are then provided with free copies of *KIND News* for distribution to their students. This is one of various attempts by environmentalists and "animal rights" activists to promote their ideology in the public school classroom.

KIND stands for Kids in Nature's Defense. Among the corporations that adopted this plan was Ace Hardware. NAHEE is actually the youth arm of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), a group that lobbies for the hard-line position that "there is no moral distinction between the treatment of humans and other animals." HSUS calls bacon and eggs "the breakfast of cruelty" and, of course, is opposed to hunting, trapping, and fishing. Ace is a major dealer of hunting and fishing supplies.

A new organization called "Putting People First," which opposes the goals and tactics of the "animal rights" and environmental extremists, along with the Wildlife Legislative Fund of America (WLFA) and others, undertook to stop NAHEE's attempt to propagandize schoolchildren. PPF and WLFA warned Ace that legitimizing HSUS in the eyes of impressionable children would not only strengthen the attempt to ban hunting and fishing, but would cause Ace to lose goodwill among responsible animal users.

Ace responded by promising to monitor the content of *KIND News*, saying it was satisfied with NAHEE's pledge to "not run articles on animal rights [or] set children



blindly against hunting."

Then, Putting People First, WLFA, and other sportsmen groups activated their membership to protest to local Ace dealers, threatening a boycott. Ace suddenly reversed itself by announcing that the company "would no longer offer . . . *KIND News* to its dealers." Ace spokesman John Cameron said, "We are in the business of hardware . . . not the business of confrontation. Our corporation will no longer offer *KIND News* and the 'Adopt-A-Teacher' program to Ace retailers."

Boycott has heretofore been a favorite tactic of the "animal rights" and environmentalist groups. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is now engaged in battling more than 100 companies involved in animal use, including L'Oreal cosmetics, General Motors, and American Express (because it advertises fur in its catalogues). Earth First has called for boycotts of American Express, Princess Cruises, Blockbuster video stores, and the entire state of Montana.

Putting People First says that the threatened boycott taught Ace the lesson that "it's not right to snuggle up with the enemy and leave your friends out in the cold." ■

Two Typical Stories by Pupils

Story by 5th grade boy:

"I heard steps coming at me. I started to run the fastest that I could and got to school. The fog started to clear up.

I was my teacher's car. The next day I went to school I look in her car and she had a machine gun in her back seat. When class started she started to stare at me like she was going to kill me.

After school I ran home did my homework. I turned on the TV.

I put it on channel two and America's most wanted was on. And I saw my teacher in there and I calleded.

I told them where she was and what she was. and the next day I went to school. and she look out the window and she saw the Police.

and look out the door's and windows in the room.

She took the gun out and she had us hostages. and some body try to run out and she killed him. and she wanted car and money.

To escape they broke her a car and they put a bomb under the car and when she turned it on it blew up and everybody was happy

Story by 4th grade girl:

One day I went to school on a misty, foggy, Monday morning. I saw a strange vehicle out in the field I heard my teacher's voice saying, "give it to [me] baby,". "Oh no", I said my teacher, It's not what you think Debbie it's not what you think. But it can't be she wouldn't do that it's horrible. I ran to the vehicle and she said, "tomorrow let's go to my place honey". I smacked my forehead and said, "oh brother,".

The bell rang, I peeked in the window I saw a man in my teacher's car my teacher kissed the guy, I started throwing up on the field my teacher gave the man a french kiss I threw up again. I ran to the principal's office told him everything I heard and saw Mr. [Principal] went to the vehicle and said "Miss [Teacher] tell me everything" Miss [Teacher] said, "Ugh . . . hi Mr. [Principal] in a crying voice "What are you doing here "A child in your class told me everything. I said "teachers ugh,". He took my teacher to his office. AND THATS THE END!