

Facing the Walkman Syndrome

By Laura Karinch

This summer, I had the unique experience of "retreating" to a ski lodge in the Poconos for a weekend with 20 teenagers from my church. The majority of these kids are from upper-middle-class families. They wear stylish clothes, get excellent grades in school, and take part in extracurricular activities. Most of the kids would be considered the *creme de la creme* of a typical group of high school students.

Each teenager brought along the typical necessities for a long weekend retreat -- sleeping bag, pillow, toothbrush and Walkman. Walkman? Yes, that small, innocent-looking radio/cassette player with ear plugs that has grown attached to practically every teenager's head in the last couple of years.

Plugged into the stimulating world of popular and various other types of rock music, these kids listened to the thing while they read, climbed mountain trails, slept, and even held conversations. And these are relatively intelligent teenagers from educated homes.

One very wholesome young girl sat in a recliner after our long drive to the retreat site clutching her teddy bear, plugged into her "tunes," and fell asleep while I, 15 feet away, could hear every word of Prince's 1999 blaring from her earphones.

I wish I had one dollar for every time I began a conversation that weekend by saying, "Can you hear me?" I'm sure I could buy an entire outfit at Saks Fifth Avenue with the money.

Don't misunderstand me. I enjoy listening to popular music too, but I do not consider it part of my daily attire and/or sustenance. How do traditional forms of work or relaxation compete with this fascinating and stimulating world of music to which teenagers have become addicted? This is just one of the problems our society faces.

I am certainly no expert on the teenage population of our country, but its perception of the world seems unrealistic in my view. Upon leading discussion groups of four or five kids on various topics that weekend, I learned that most had one common, major goal: to be rich.

In addition, the things in life they value the most are materialistic items with little sentimental value in the traditional sense. This I discovered with the discussion, "What 10 Things Would You Take From Your Home If It Were Burning?" I hope someone soon invents a stereo system that can be thrown out of a window easily, because this was number one on their lists of items with which they could not part.

Upon picking up a copy of Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*, the first chapters I looked at were "Books" and "Music." Bloom writes that "[Students] have not learned how to read, nor do they have the expectation of delight or improvement from reading."

Bloom later writes: "Though students do not have books, they most emphatically do have music. . . . It is their passion; nothing else excites them as it does; they cannot take seriously anything alien to music. . . . At best that ordinary life is neutral."

Since this problem seems to be staying a while, teachers in our educational system will have to face the fact that this is what they're up against with today's kids. Our school system needs teachers willing to make the classroom, from elementary school through high school, a dynamic and exciting place for children to learn. The days of strictly structured, militantly administered learning must come to an end or the students will not be reached.

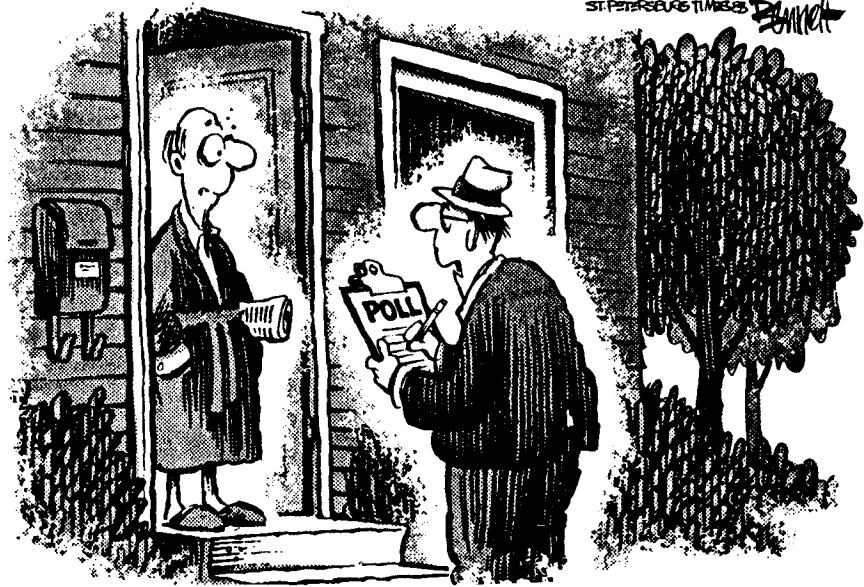
What teenager will pay the slightest attention to a crabby English teacher diagramming sentences on the blackboard when he has "You gotta fight (bom bom) for your right (bom bom) to paaaaarty" ingrained in his mind?

Children need reading material early on that will make them curious, so they will learn that reading can be enjoyable. An effective approach to reading must be discovered by every teacher in all subjects, not just reading, and by teachers of every grade. Too many children slip through the cracks early in their education and never catch up with reading skills throughout their entire educational career.

One could go on forever listing problems and solutions in educating children in our modern society. But the problem of not enough books and too much music are two very important and closely related issues. And we, as future parents, must become involved in our children's education. Too many expectations are placed on our public school system, adding to the problems they already face.

At home, as well as in school, children must learn early to like reading or their education will always suffer. And secondary teachers must accept that they are dealing with a "fly-chill (cool), rockin' bunch of teenagers" who might miss out on most of the education that is being offered to them if some special effort is not taken to reach them.

No matter how easy it is for parents and teachers to give up on our school children and let them do their own thing, the future of our world and theirs is in those finger-snapping hands.



"IF THE 1988 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS WERE HELD TODAY, WHO WOULD YOU BE THINKING ABOUT VOTING FOR IN 1992?"

Amazing But True: Parallels Between Kennedy and Dukakis!

By C.W. Heiser

Is history repeating itself?

Evidence has come to light revealing astonishing parallels between Presidential Candidate Michael Dukakis and John F. Kennedy. After painstaking research, this reporter was stunned to learn that not only is Dukakis a Democrat, as was Kennedy, but both the Greek go-getter and the Mick Maven grew up and began their political careers in Massachusetts! And, astounding as it may seem, like Kennedy, Dukakis has chosen as his running mate, a senator from Texas with extensive legislative experience!

When Kennedy campaigned for the presidency in 1960, the Republicans had controlled the administration for eight years, and the lame duck was Dwight Eisenhower--an elderly, popular president. *Amazingly*, as Dukakis campaigns for the presidency in 1988, the Republicans have controlled the administration for eight years, and the lame duck is Ronald Reagan--an elderly, popular president!

In a close race, Kennedy's opponent was Richard Nixon, a sitting vice president nobody really trusted. And, in what will probably prove to be a close race, Dukakis is running against George Bush, a sitting vice president nobody really trusts! But the parallels don't end here.

The family names Kennedy and Dukakis each contain seven letters, with a repeated consonant, and their informal names, Jack and Mike, both have four letters, one of which is a K!

The names Johnson and Bentsen each contain seven letters also.

Kennedy was elected in 1960. Dukakis is running in 1988. $1988 - 1960 = 28$. Looking at 88, it's the same as two 8s! $8 - 2 = 6$ (60)! $8 + 8 + 6 = 22$. John F. Kennedy was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963! $1963 + 22 = 1985$, which is when Dukakis probably decided to make his run for the presidency!

After Kennedy was assassinated, his wife, Jacqueline, married Aristotle Onassis, a Greek. . . . This is Kitty Dukakis' second marriage--Dukakis is Greek!

Other startling similarities:

Kennedy: Older brother killed when plane was shot down.

Dukakis: Older brother killed while riding on a Schwinn.

Kennedy: Served in World War II as commander of sea-going vessel

Dukakis: Served in Korea as company clerk!

Kennedy: Never admitted to an affair with Marilyn Monroe.

Dukakis: Ditto!

And, although it has not been fully confirmed, according to reliable sources, neither John F. Kennedy nor Michael Dukakis ever fought Sonny Liston!

UP's Undergraduate Student Government Reacts To Tuition Hike

by Ann Vonada-Vazquez

The University's closed budgetary process which resulted in the tuition increase was recently addressed by the students of Penn State. In University Park's July 14 *Daily Collegian*, undergraduate student government leaders detailed specific items they want released regarding the University's budget.

USG President Seth Williams and Vice President Amy Manderino have pursued an open budget since their election in March, stating that University accountability is the key to ending high

tuition increases.

A report by USG Executive Assistant Travis Parchman and Town Senator Kendall Houk outlined several departmental and administrative budget areas they request be opened to the public. These areas include, but are not limited to:

-- A breakdown of faculty and administrative salaries by race and gender.

-- Salaries by department, i.e., total money allocated for departments, not specific professors' income.

-- Funding for recruitment of underrepresented persons.

-- Physical Plant spending.

-- Various enumerated budget items for the Nittany Lion Inn, the Penn State Bookstore, and the University Creamery.

-- Intercollegiate athletics allocations.

Reasons presented for opening the University Budget include:

-- State legislators would be more receptive to funding requests if they had a better explanation of how the money is spent.

-- Better monitoring of the priority placed on recruitment and retention of black students.

-- Possible subsidy by undergraduates of graduate education. Usually graduate tuition is much higher, but at Penn State the figures are relatively close, indicating that undergraduate tuition may be used to compensate for the difference.

The USG feels a closed budget equals a tuition increase, and this year's 21st consecutive increase to University students seems to justify their feelings.