

Retiring from the active ministry

Rev. H. James Shillabeer, pastor of Trucksville United Methodist Church, was honored on his retirement from the active ministry after more than 30 years' service. Guests included, first row from left: Mrs. Phyllis Shillabeer, Rev. Shillabeer, Anne Vernon; standing: Margaret Johnson; district superintendent Dr. William Lawrence; Rev. Howard Hockenbury, pastor of Athens United Methodist Church and Rev. Thomas Morris, pastor of Lehman United Methodist Church.



POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

J.W.J.

Is O.B.E. a cure-all or merely a "quick fix?"

By J.W. JOHNSON

Outcome Based Education. If you haven't heard of it yet, you will.

It's the latest notion in the tampering with public education...and from this chair, its watermark principle is that we must do everything but call a spade a spade...because in Outcome Based Education, (OBE) students no longer can fail; they simply receive an "L". And that stands for learning...and isn't the world a peachy, keen place in which to grow up.

The only problem with this is that not all students, indeed, not all people are created equal; indeed, there is no perfection. To ignore this by not recognizing it quantitatively through grade standards of passing or failing is to put the best face on the effort, but to deny the students the real life benefit of sharpening him or herself against the wind of failure.

But our little Johnny or Suzy is perfect, parents who want this OBE system seem to be saying.

"Demanded in others by the ungrateful, promoted in others by the ineffectual, and cherished in others by the nearly competent, perfection is, indeed, an illusion." I just quoted myself, but that's a permitted privilege when you've been writing for 25 years.

And perhaps the most sought after perfection is the continued perpetuation of the illusion that quality (as opposed to quantity) can be achieved through public education.

All humans are born with different strengths and weaknesses. That's empirically self-evident. But in pursuit of the notion that public education is among the principal sources of strength in a republican democracy, we nevertheless perpetuate the illusion of perfection; indeed, with OBE we are now trying to institutionalize the idea of perfection by a calculated ignoring of reality...some kids are just plain not too bright.

A fraud being committed upon the intelligence of the entire nation as we mouth rhetoric about

quests for perfection/excellence, and turn a blind eye and deaf ear to the mediocrity our educational system is actually producing.

This happens because parents don't want to be told their children are not doing well; parents want to hear exactly the opposite, because parents have bought into this cockeyed notion of perfection. As such, parents are now buying into the idea of OBE.

The fraud is most apparent to those who must try and teach beginning college students: students who are woefully unprepared to do college level work because those students were cushioned from reality in primary education by something called "grade inflation", a reducing of standards to the point where a former D is now a B...and now by the addition of the letter L in OBE.

Somebody is lying to somebody here. And it's clearly the nation's educators and parents in a mutual self congratulation society, while the rest of the world not only is maintaining higher primary education standards, but also doesn't don the robes of an ill conceived idea of perfection in developing and maintaining those standards.

This morass of mediocrity was bound to happen. Public education, by definition, and in order to, in fact, be public, must tailor its product to the least common denominator.

Spending more money on public education won't increase its quality. All it will do is (witness what's happening in the Wayne Highlands School District) is provide smaller classes, better facilities, and more materials. It does nothing to increase the quality of teachers...teachers of quality are, in fact, generally already in private schools, or have left the profession entirely. Trying to teach the least common denominator logically will see the least common denominator doing the teaching.

There have been attempts to deal with this phenomena i.e., private education and, most recently, "magnet schools" within

the public education system.

Sometimes called "public prep schools", magnet schools have sprung up throughout the country in major cities. Administered by the school districts in which they are located, such schools are funded by the same tax dollars which fund the general schools in that area. Magnet schools actively recruit the best and the brightest, while offering rigid academic standards and emphasis on math, science and/or artistic disciplines.

Critics say this relegates a majority of students to the mediocrity of ordinary schools...which begs the question of our stated quest for excellence. Those who see this nation descending into the mediocrity of nations applaud the magnet school effort.

In the meantime, we continue to struggle with a public education system ever more strapped for cash because it depends on the property tax and state and federal dollars to survive, all of which are in ever more smaller supply, i.e., the Pennsylvania portion of local education support has now declined to about 38 percent of the total monies spent.

It's little Johnny or Suzy, the innocent ones looking to us for guidance who are suffering here. While we delude ourselves about our own perfectibility and that of our children, we receive the acquiescence of educators, who must keep the assembly line of our declared equality/perfectibility moving.

Despite the laudable effort of magnet schools, the rhetoric for perfection continues while the reality of mediocrity grows.

There is, indeed, something to be said for public education being a strength in our republican democracy. It must also be said that, without high standards expected by parents and executed by educators, there is no choice but to see the educational emperor for what he is.

Naked. Naked, while the minds of our children are freezing to death in the intellectual hand-me-downs of institutionalized mediocrity.

Library news

BMT Library plans 47th annual auction

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The May meeting of the Back Mountain Memorial Library Book Club was held on Monday, May 17 at the library. The secretary's report was read and approved, given by Mary Lou Swingle; Treasurer balance \$1,274.72 with 211 members joined for 1993 to date. The listing of the books purchased for Book Club for April was passed around to members. A motion was passed to purchase a book from the Contingency Fund for the library book club shelf. Book Club Selection chairman, Mary Panaway, discussed method for selecting new books and asked for recommendations from members.

The program was presented by club members: Orceil Davis, Gene Wert, Inga Goldsmith, Frances Linskill, and Grace Martin; Frances told about a tear bottle; which was supposedly used for tears with this story, "God cries when you are bad as a child; and when the bottle is full, you die". The real story was that when you

cry, you collect the tears, which are eventually used for medicine. Frances Linskill and Grace Martin served the refreshments at the tea table. Next meeting is June 21, the third Monday in June. This will be the last meeting of the Book Club until September. Guests are welcome to attend.

The 47th annual library auction is scheduled for July 8 through July 11 with Bill Jones chairman and Joseph Kluger as co-chair. An opening event for the annual auction is the 5th annual Horse Show to be held Saturday, May 29 at the Luzerne County Fair Grounds. The all-English event for adults and children will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Entry fees are \$8 and \$10 with judging by Wissie Brede of Allentown. Refreshments will be provided by the Dallas Rotary Club. Call Kathy Shaskas for information, 675-0313.

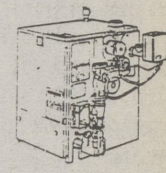
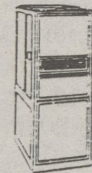
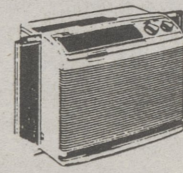
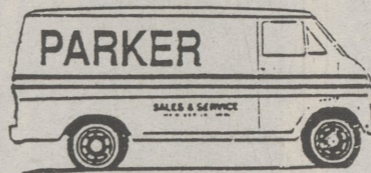
Maryann Daily will be manning the Nearly Old Booth at the auction once again and she will accept any items for that booth. They may be brought to the li-

brary. Also, Benny Matchett, chair of the Book Booth, is looking for books for that booth with emphasis on cookbooks and children's books. Sybil Pelton, Mary George and Jean Grimes, chairpeople of the Odds and Ends with the Women of Kiwanis, are looking for good saleable merchandise for their booth. All donations will be accepted at the library when the library is open for business.

New books at the library: "L A Times" by Stuart Woods is a mesmerizing thriller about Hollywood and the mob. A stunning story of greed, triumph and deception.

"The Scorpio Illusion" by Robert Ludlum is a multi-leveled, deftly plotted story of a brilliant and seductive woman who lives single-mindedly for revenge, and she is deadly.

"Perfect" by Judith McNaught is the story of Julie Mathison, a spirited beauty who passionately lived her ideals, proud of the respected role she had made for herself.



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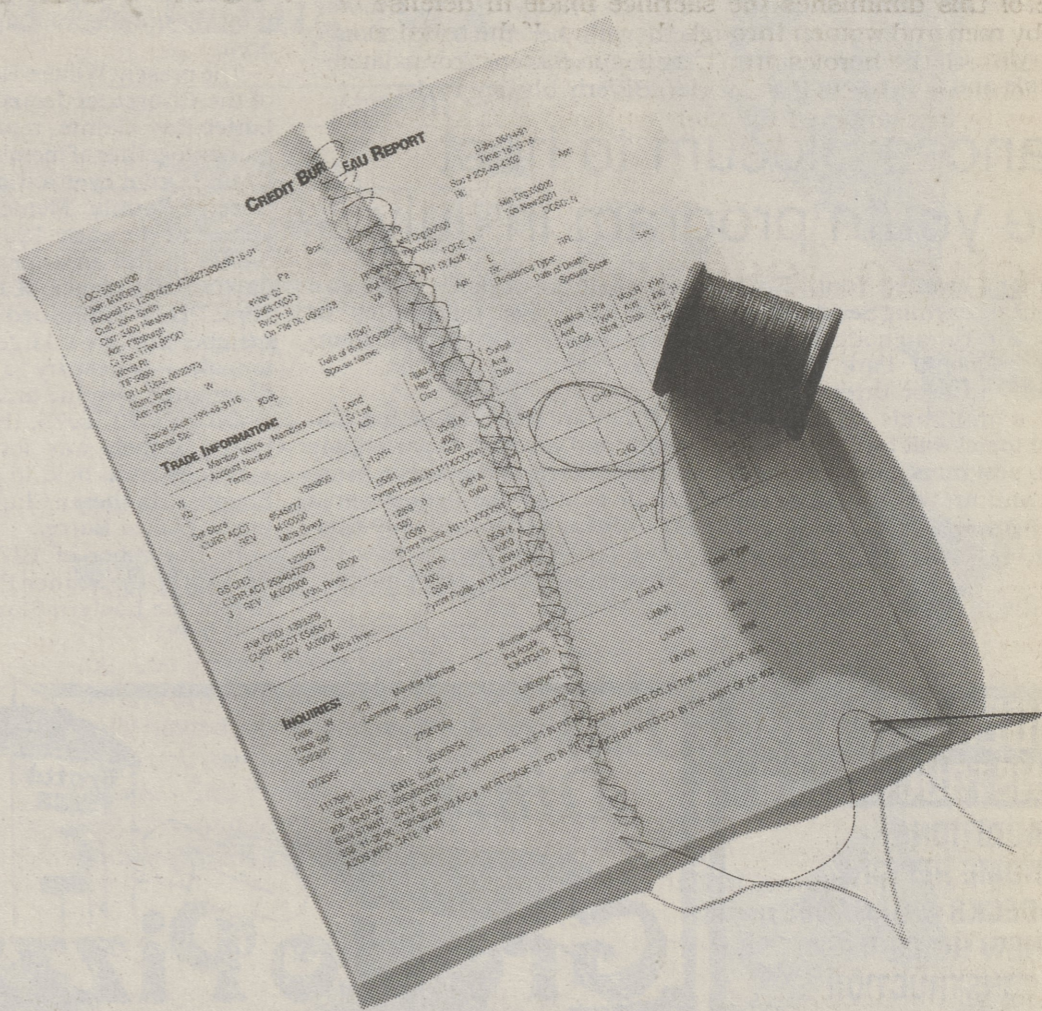
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CONSUMER CREDIT WORKSHOPS

Stroudsburg
St. Luke's Roman Catholic Church,
Lower Level,
818 Main St.,
May 26, 7-9 p.m. 424-7173

Milford
Delaware Valley School,
Lecture Hall No.1,
Rte. 209N,
June 2, 7-9 p.m. 296-8576

Tunkhannock
Tunkhannock Area
High School Library,
120 West Tioga St.,
June 8, 7-9 p.m. 836-2135