

J.W.J.



John W. Johnson

Polarization goes hand in hand with illiteracy

mind of time to expand, even to contemplate the effort.

Television watching is more complex than its electronic insides. Its complexity raises larger issues than the medium's questionable use as a substitute parent.

There is no question of the development of future leaders. There are now more than 170 million television sets in use. Leaders are going to be more difficult to find in a populace increasingly more accustomed to being led than to leading.

As well, participatory government, essential to the maintenance of freedoms, has a good chance of succumbing to benign neglect, crushed under the cushions of all those watchers.

To suggest that the nation stop watching television would be just as mindless as some of that medium's programming. The alternative is for adults to find the on/off switch and assert the right to be guardian of the child's developing mind and master of their own.

As we wrestle with how television affects education, the clear message that public education is in trouble, can clearly be seen by the increased numbers of enrollments in both private and parochial schools.

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Why...? Since education is the yardstick by which we are measured and then permitted access to the arena of chasing success, one would think that we would give our children the best possible tools. With public education, what we, in fact, are doing is lying to them and ourselves, reduced to mass producing the average, rather than challenging the best.

Put another way, a self-deceiving fraud is 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 public educational system is actually producing...and has very little choice but to produce.

This happens, in part, because parents don't want to be told their children are not doing well. 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.

Looking at the numbers makes this clear; high school students nationally score a B average, and yet only 5 percent of high school students can do college level math, and only 40 percent have college level verbal and cognitive skills.

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 maintains higher primary education standards.

The balance of the blame here is in the notion of public education itself. This morass of mediocrity was inevitable. Public education, by definition and in order to in fact be public, must tailor its product to the average student. That means the bottom half pulls the top half toward the middle. As it was put by novelist and philosopher Ayn Rand: "If you would destroy greatness, do not attack it; merely elevate mediocrity."

Private education is the alternative to this morass of perpetuating mediocrity. There, for example, the random violence and lack of discipline found in public schools simply find no easy home. At a private school, the student who is a discipline problem is expelled or simply not admitted. The appeal of a private school is that anti-social elements are kept out and education is paramount.

Does this mean that by allowing private schools to operate, we are turning our public schools into pits of despair where armed patrols in the hallways will become the rule?

That's the wrong question. Private schools did not create the discipline and mediocrity problem; private schools are one alternative presented should be viewed seriously by those in public school as a model. And that model would be that private schools offer identifiable goals, a common purpose, and sense of direction for faculty and students.

With clearly defined parameters of objective and rules of discipline, potential problems at a private school find it difficult to have sustenance.

Public education was formerly a system whereby one was educated. Education now seems to be secondary to insuring that everyone attends, and that everyone receives an 'equal' education...whatever that is.

Without clearly defined objectives, objectives which go beyond experimenting with the equality theory inherent in public education, public education is rapidly disintegrating into a mentality geared more toward keeping the assembly line moving, rather than feeding the mind.

As I was saying



Jack Hilsher

...The Dirt on Kirk Sorry, but I must burst the bubble of Captain Kirk worshippers out there, Kirk being from the starship ENTERPRISE and a.k.a. William Shatner.

My tool is a direct quote from George Takei's autobio "To the Stars." George you'll recall was Mr. Sulu, helmsman of the ENTERPRISE. He wrote, "With the colossal spectacle of 100 extras in alien dress standing around, the production was brought to an expensive and stubborn halt. Bill would not play a scene the way it was directed. It would be shot his way or not at all."

"We stood around and waited as the weary extras hunkered down trying not to soil their exotic outfits, technicians rolled their eyes. Shatner remained totally oblivious. I felt sadness for him. He had changed over the years. He seemed ignorant of the pain he inflicted, had denigrated his colleagues and giggled about it. He had diminished himself."

Beam yourself up, Captain Kirk, you jackass.

...Books 'R' Us from the American Library Association: "50% of a child's intellectual development occurs between birth and age four. Children who are read to in the home, and who use a library, do better in school."

MORAL: Take a grandchild to the library this week. And next.

...Gem from Sam - Samuel Johnson that is, who once counseled a young writer asking for advice, "Your manuscript, sir, is both good and original. But the part that is good is not original, and the part that is original is not good."

...Two similars - one is A.J. Leibling's: "Freedom of the press belongs to those who own one." and from Anon: "The Golden Rule means, he who has the gold makes the rules."

James Kirk was no nice guy

...How did you do? A six-month study of classic literature circulation in libraries nationwide, using 58 titles, resulted in these top 10 winners: 1) The Scarlet Letter, 2) Wuthering Heights, 3) Pride and Prejudice, 4) Tess of the D'Urbervilles, 5) Sister Carrie, 6) Sons and Lovers, 7) Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, 8) Vanity Fair, 9) Silas Marner, and 10) Mansfield Park.

Frankly, I didn't do too well. ...Check on checkups...Like everything else these days, medical opinion has changed regarding your annual checkup. Experts now recommend something completely different:

For ages 50 to 59 two examinations about five years apart. This means you should have a complete physical each time, including the usual tests for hearing and/or vision defects, diabetes, heart disease... the whole schmeer.

For 60 to 74, exams every two years will suffice, and from 75 and up, go back to the annual checkup. And don't forget your dentist - get a cleaning and examination yearly so you can keep

what you have in your jaws. But if you have a medical problem needing more frequent attention, for heaven's sake Get It!

...Letter to ye ed - from a recent NY Times letter column, "Sitting at the counter of a sandwich shop in Miami Beach in the 50s, I noticed Walter Winchell sitting right next to me. I had a letter addressed to my mother and I asked him to autograph it, saying my mother would love to have it. At first he declined, but then he asked for the envelope and signed his name.

"He proceeded to talk endlessly all through lunch. Among other things, he told me the difficulties of being a celebrity. Everywhere he went, people expected him to pick up the check. He was going broke by doing this. I sat, entranced, listened as he spoke for more than 30 minutes and hardly uttered a word.

When the waitress tried to hand me my check, he grabbed it and said it was a pleasure for him to pay for my lunch, as I was the most interesting person he has met in a long time."—Helen Rosenberg, NY

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Library news

Library names auction committee chairmen

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library is pleased to announce the chairman of the 1995 library auction will be Peggy Harvey. Peggy has been connected to the library and the auction ever since she was a mere child. Her parents, Dr. Lester Jordan and Ann were involved with the library for many years. Dr. Jordan was a member of the library board of directors for a number of years and general chairman of the 1961 library auction. Doc and Ann were also involved with the Dallas Rotary Club. Doc served as the student exchange chairman for years with Rotary. Ann is still involved with Rotary Women. Doc Jordan was also an auction auctioneer through the years.

To quote Peggy, "I love the auction". She has worked with new goods and other committees. Her husband, Glenn, will serve as her right hand, and Kiley, 16 and Erica, 12 will be helping hands. Cochairmen of the 49th annual

auction will be Connie Scott and Ernie Ashbridge. Committee chairmen to date: New Goods: Lois Townsend and Joe Dwinchick; Vendors, Peggy Dwinchick and Chances, Jennie Valick. The auction dates are July 6, 7, 8 and 9; Thursday through Sunday.

The seventh annual "Luncheon With A Special Author/Artist" will be held on Thursday, April 27 at Appletree Terrace, Newberry Estate. Hospitality at 11:30; Lunch at 12; and 1:15 the program featuring the artistry of Sue Hand of Dallas.

Donation for the luncheon is \$16.50 payable to the library, paid in advance. Your check is your reservation. Seating preference will be honored for group attendance. Tables of eight will be available. Forms for reservation are available at the library.

New books at the library: "The Cunning Man" by Robertson Davies is the story of Dr. Jonathan Hullah, a former police surgeon. As he watches Father

Hobbes die in front of the High Altar at Toronto's St. Aidan's on the morning of Good Friday, he wonders how he died. We learn the answer on the last page of this 'case book' of a man's rich, observant life.

"The Disciples of Market Leaders" by Michael Treacy and Fred Wiersema explains how to choose your customers, narrow your focus, and dominate your market. Why is it that Casio can sell a calculator more cheaply than Kellogg's can sell a box of corn flakes? Why can FedEx 'absolutely, positively' deliver your package overnight? Case studies included.

"The Neon Smile" by Dick Lochte is the story of Terry Manion, New Orleans private investigator who agrees to work for Pierre Reynaldo, the king of exploitation TV. He doesn't have a clue about what he's getting into. He wants to reopen a case the police slammed shut 30 years ago—the racially motivated murder of Tyrono Pano, a black militant leader

Kingston Twp. posts yard sale sign rules

The Kingston Township Zoning Officer reminds residents that it is illegal to attach garage/yard sales signs to telephone poles or trees. Signs should be attached to individual stakes and removed no later than two days after the sale.

Violators may be fined up to \$300. Additional information may be obtained from the zoning officer at 696-3809.

Publishes poem

Dallas resident Marlen Lukacinsky recently published original poetry Edge of Twilight, a treasury of today's poetry compiled by The National Library of Poetry.

The poem is entitled Moon Beam and its main subject is love. Marlene has been writing for 20 years. Her favorite subjects and ideas are life, nature and love.

Water company changes name

General Waterworks of Pennsylvania, a United Water Resources company, has announced that it has changed its name to United Water Pennsylvania, Dallas operation. The name change includes a new corporate logo to be phased in during 1995.

United Water Resources is the second largest investor-owned water services company in the country.

The Dallas operation provides water service to 2,900 people in the Back Mountain and has nine employees.

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