

John W. Johnson

OBE – a mindless morass of educational mediocrity

tant, how they will do in life. Put another way, the SAT score is a very rough yardstick to measure a person's position in the order of things when entering college. And a college degree is a very rough yardstick for prospective employers to judge the suitability of new employees. Neither high SAT scores nor a degree are a substitute for native ability, coupled with persistence, discipline and hard work.

Meanwhile, back in the land of acronyms, we have yet another to mouth; OBE. 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 poor student a poor student, because in OBE (Outcome Based Education), students no longer can fail; they simply receive an "L." And that stands for "Learning."

As we persist in the institutionalized mythology telling us that perfection is attainable, the reality is that all students, indeed, all people, aren't created equal, much less have the ability to achieve perfection. To ignore this by not recognizing it quantitatively through grade standards of passing or failure is to put the best face on the effort, but to deny the student the real life benefit of sharpening him or herself against the whetstone of failure.

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 further institutionalize the idea of perfection by a calculated ignorance of a reality...some kids are just plain not too bright.

At the same time, we are turning 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, and in particular, parents whose children are mediocre stu-

dents are now buying into the idea of OBE because OBE doesn't permit the brightest to shine, rather it lowers the top and elevates the bottom toward some theoretically emotionally-preserving middle.

This morass of mediocrity was bound to happen. Public education, by definition and in order to 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 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.

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 smaller supply. And with the graying of America, there will be more discontent from those who have no children in school, continuing to foot the education bill.

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 perfectability and that of our children, we receive the acquiescence of educators, who must keep the assembly line of our declared equality/perfectability moving. That effort has now regurgitated OBE.

There is 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, now further mired in the muck of Outcome Based Education,

As I was saying



Jack Hilsher

A financial guy I knew laughed himself giddy over this loose variation on the Golden Rule: "He who has the gold makes the rules." Mildly amusing I guess, but much more interesting are these Golden Rule interpretations according to various religions and deep thinkers:

...From Christianity, Matthew, 7:12 - "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law of the prophets."

...From Judaism, Talmud, Shabbat, 31a - "What is hateful to you, do not to your fellowman. That is the entire Law, all the rest is commentary."

...From Brahmanism, Mahabharata, 5, 1517 - "This is the sum of duty; do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you."

...From Buddhism, Udaava-Varga, 5, 18 - "Hurt not others in

The Golden Rule, in theme and variations

ways that you yourself would find hurtful."

...From Confucianism, Analects, 15, 23 - "Surely it is the maxim of loving-kindness. Do not unto others that you would not have them do unto you."

...From Taoism, Tai Shang Kan Ying P'ien - "Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain and your neighbor's loss as your own loss."

...From Zorostranism, Dadistan-i-dinik, 94, 5 - "That nature alone is good which refrains from doing unto another whatsoever is not good for itself."

...From Islam, Sunnah - "No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself."

...From George Bernard Shaw, A Dissenter's View, 1903 - "Do not do unto others as you would that they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same."

A new U.S. 32¢ stamp features a likeness of Ex-President Richard M. Nixon. "Likeness" is certainly the operative word here, but although there is some resemblance, this version is nothing at all resembling the real thing. The shifty eyes? Gone. That

crafty (I know more than you know) look? Gone. The man pictured on this stamp has been sanitized. He would inspire confidence, trust and lasting devotion. To sum it all up, you would indeed buy a used vehicle from this man. But not from the real thing. Take a good look at it.

It is a good thing I had stopped collecting the flood of U.S. stamps before I saw this one. If I hadn't, this Tricky Dick stamp would have done the trick for sure.

Three quickies for seniors: #1 - Keep your eggs in the fridge in their carton, on the middle shelf, which is cooler than the egg rack. (Courtesy of UC at Berkeley. Oh them Californians!)

#2 - Cut your vitamin pill in half and take twice a day. Since the body eliminates C in 12 hours, this keeps blood levels high throughout the day. (Beloit College, Wisconsin.)

#3 - Drink juices like orange, grapefruit and tomato juice, all rich in Vitamin C, so you can increase the iron your body absorbs.

Of course a little fermented juice of the vine goes down well too!

Cross-stitch

(continued from page 1)

busy farm which was visited by a traveling bookmobile. "But I've always loved the people at the library, especially here at this library," she said. "We are committed to community service in the Back Mountain area."

She and Dan also volunteer to sort books during the annual library auction and are involved in community service programs at Frances Slocum Park.

As much as they enjoy their service, they remain unselfconscious about their contributions. "I enjoyed it, and it turned out nice," Jane said of the cross-stitch. The piece will remain on permanent display at the library.



POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Jane Swire, left, displays the cross-stitch piece she and her husband, Dan, created for the Back Mountain Memorial Library. Martha Wheeler, library director, is in the center, and Beth Rosenthal, who is chairing the committee making plans to celebrate the library's 50th anniversary, is at right.

George Gwilliam in running for Harveys Lake council seat

George R. Gwilliam has announced he is a Republican candidate for Harveys Lake borough council.

He won a spot on the ticket by a write-in nomination in the May Primary.

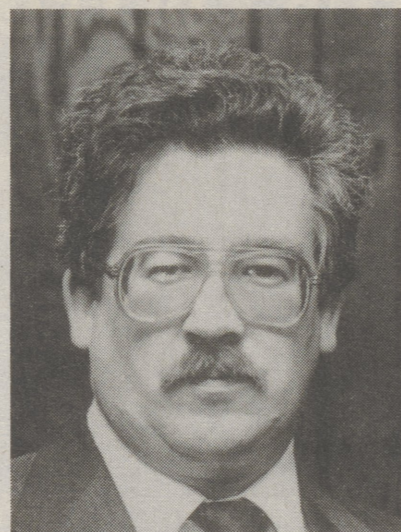
He has been a full-time resident of the lake for 23 years and is employed as a sales manager for Simpson Motors.

He is married to the former Therese Becker and has two children, Cori and Tara.

He was a councilman for six years and served on the Zoning and Planning Commission for three years and four years respectively.

"I feel that being a life-time resident, summer and full time, I understand many of the concerns the people have at the lake," he said.

He is running on the Republican ticket with Ruth Eaton, Tom Callahan and Christopher Hinton.



GEORGE R. GWILLIAM



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The afternoon events will include a fun fashion show, presenting the latest styles and upcoming trends for women and children, and an array of delicious desserts.

Admission is free, however, we invite you to help support the efforts of the Domestic Violence Service Center by bringing a donation of a new personal care item or a household product to the program. (Please inquire when registering.)

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