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The

Education

Revolution

The Magazine of Alternative Education

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FEEDBACK FROM # 34

From Italy: "I have just received the last issue of your magazine. Once again, congratulations for your exceptional innovative work."

From MA: "Wow, guys, what a tour de force!"

From Russia: "I am very grateful for the issue of your magazine with nicely arranged texts... Please, thank Albert Lamb for the delicate and clever work he has done..."

From CA: "I am so glad you did the piece on charter schools - and with Joe Nathan."

"While I enjoy some articles in the Education Revolution -- and this last one had some fine ones -- I was saddened by the article "One Girl's Fight for Free Speech."....Personally, her actions did not strike me as at all

mature, starting with what she put on a T-Shirt -- the tone of which was sarcastic and antagonistic...."

" I think the new version is a big step up. The cover is eye-catching and amusing. The content much meatier. I hope you'll continue the section on public alternatives. I've loaned my copy to a colleague in education. I think you will appeal to a wider audience."

"We love the whole issue...Goddard College Library."

From South Africa: "I read it cover to cover. A great issue, keep it up. I like the cover. I can't say which article I enjoyed most as they were all good."

From OR: "I think the font and the graphics are excellent. I loved the cover, but the new font made it look great."

"Spent a couple of interesting hours with the Magazine tonight. Lot's of food for thought and so much going on around the world. There are good people everywhere and several of the items touched me. I will pass it on to friends who are actively involved with school age children.

MAIL AND COMMUNICATIONS

John Taylor Gatto is posting a free online version of his book **The Underground History of American Education**". He's doing it one chapter per month; so far the prologue and chapters 1-5 are available online. You can read them at: www.johntaylorgatto.com/chapters/index.htm.

The Attic is a multiage learning community in Washington State, currently with 25 students ages 5-12, that meets three days a week. We follow a developmental learning philosophy; i.e., "There are predictable sequences of growth and change that occur in children, but each child develops at his or her own rate. The curriculum of The Attic, as well as the adult interactions with the children, is responsive to individual differences. A child's curriculum experiences will match his or her developing abilities, while also challenging the child's interest and understanding." Parents have a high degree of involvement. Attic children study reading, writing, math, science,

and art in a workshop format. The students have a lot of say in decisions that are made about the school, and our daily routine includes a class meeting at which problems are aired and solutions discussed. Web: <http://the-attic.org/index.htm>.

From **Armed Student Planned to Die** by Ralph Montañó, Bee Staff Writer, 3/21/2002: A 13-year-old boy went to John Barrett Middle School in Carmichael on Wednesday morning planning to kill and expecting to die. The eighth-grader, who officers said expressed frustration with authority, went to school with a backpack containing his father's .22-caliber pistol, 50 extra bullets and a final will in which he left his guitar to his mother. Investigators later found a hit list of intended victims, but a massacre was narrowly avoided, officials said, when his first target, a teacher, eluded him a second before he intended pulled the trigger. He was confronted by Sacramento County Sheriff's Deputy Earl Helfrich and surrendered after a brief but tense standoff. Helfrich said that when he arrived at the classroom, the suspect had already released many students and others were milling around and standing in the doorway. Investigators are still looking into what motivated his actions, said sheriff's spokesman James Lewis. He has no history of behavior problems, criminal history or problems at his school, Lewis said. "He has said he is 'tired of authority' and tired of being told what to do," Lewis said. The boy complained specifically about science class, saying information on things like DNA was "useless" and he didn't see a reason to have to study it. "I've never heard anything like it from someone so young," Lewis said.

From H-E UK, A list of info forwarded from Tim Fields regarding **School Bullying**:

ABC program on bullying:

http://abcnews.go.com/onair/2020/stossel_020215_popularity.html.

A comprehensive article in the New York Times examines girl bullies:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/24/magazine/24GIRLS.html?pagewanted=1>.

More on girl bullies in the International Herald and Tribune: <http://www.iht.com/articles/49575.html>.

A complementary article on schoolgirl bullying:

<http://www.observer.co.uk/focus/story/0,6903,660933,00.html>.

Based on real events, *Bully* is a movie about a community in shock after a group of teenagers decides to kill a bully who has been plaguing them. Details at <http://www.bullythemovie.com/>.

The inquest has taken place on 13-year-old Morgan Musson from Nottingham, England, who took her life after being tormented for seven months. More at: www.successunlimited.co.uk/bullicide/chldnews.htm#Musson2.

An inquest on 15-year-old Hannah Taylerson from Bristol, England, has returned a verdict of "self-harm". Hannah hanged herself with her school tie after having problems at school which included peers talking about her behind her back. More at: www.successunlimited.co.uk/bullicide/chldnews.htm#Hannah.

A swipe card pilot scheme at St Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic High School in Edinburgh, Scotland, will enable pupils to pay bus fares, visit sports centers and buy their lunch without the need for cash. The aim is to stop children being bullied for their dinner money. There's more on specious excuses at: www.successunlimited.co.uk/bullicide/child.htm#Reasons.

The Power of Partnership is a groundbreaking, practical, new book by Riane Eisler that addresses and links all the major issues facing us today. From terrorism, political and economic corruption, human rights violations, and global warfare to the day-to-day problems in our workplaces, communities, and relations between men and women, parents and children, this book provides personal, social, and political solutions. It is a new genre of self-help book that tackles what 9-11 so tragically showed: that the self cannot be helped in isolation from the larger web of relations around us. Eisler is internationally recognized for her study of the "Domination" and "Partnership" ways of life over the whole span of human history. She is a co-founder of the General Evolution Research Group and President of the Center for Partnership Studies (www.partnershipway.org). For further information, contact 831-626-1004 or (415) 884-2100. Email: loye@partnershipway.org or Marjorie@nwlib.com.

Student Rights, By Maureen Magee, Union-Tribune, 04/30/2002: The principal at Scripps Ranch High School has issued a written apology to senior Christopher Hu a year after campus administrators threatened to discipline the student for distributing pamphlets advising classmates of their right to opt out of state testing. The apology is part of a settlement agreement negotiated by the ACLU on Hu's behalf. In the agreement, principal David Le May acknowledges that Hu was legally exercising his rights under the First Amendment and the state Education Code. Fed up with

the battery of testing students are put through, Hu began investigating student rights last year. The articulate straight-A student summed up his findings in a concise pamphlet, "A Student's Guide to SAT 9 Testing," and passed them out at school. The literature details reasons for not taking the test and describes the process for opting out of the exam. Campus administrators confiscated undistributed pamphlets, and Hu sent off a complaint to the ACLU. State law governing the free speech rights of public school students permits students to distribute written materials as long as they are not "obscene, libelous or slanderous;" do not incite other students to break school regulations or the law; and do not disrupt the orderly operation of the school. Principals are prohibited from censoring or prohibiting the distribution of materials which meet these requirements. Scripps Ranch High officials told the ACLU they objected to the pamphlet because they feared it might persuade students to shun the exam. School administrators said they were concerned that if enough students opted out of the test, the school might not qualify for incentive-based funding. But the pamphlet recall got more attention than the leaflets, and 118 students ended up opting out of the test; that's about 8 percent of the school's testing population.

The National Consortium on Alternatives for Youth at Risk (NCAYAR) has announced that it is transferring its extensive database on alternatives for youth at risk to the **National Center for Juvenile Justice**. After the transfer is complete, NCAYAR will close. All who seek juvenile justice information will be able to consult the online Lingle Directory of Alternatives for Youth at Risk through the center's website: <http://www.ncjj.org>.

Is the Internet doing more harm than good in our school? A new book, **Bringing the Internet to School** by Janet W. Schofield and Ann L. Davidson, probes how school life changes for better or worse with the introduction of the Internet. As the authors show, there are excellent arguments representing both the pros and cons as to how useful the Internet really is in schools. Also included are useful tips for how schools can get the most out of the Internet. It is available now in bookstores or from Jossey-Bass Publishers. Tel: (800) 956-7739. Web: www.josseybass.com.

Schooling for Humanity: When Big Brother Isn't Watching by David O. Solmitz documents the author's thirty-year struggle as a controversial, anti-establishment teacher in a small, rural, central Maine high school. Using journal entries, accompanied by administrative reprimands, intertwined with historical documentation of the intensifying conflict between democratic pedagogy and capitalist domination in our public schools, the author gives a narrative account of his efforts to create a democratic classroom in a traditional secondary school setting. By incorporating theories of progressive educators into his practice, Solmitz demonstrates the possibility of achieving the ideals of democratic schooling in spite of an increasingly

bureaucratic, rigid, and authoritarian system. The book is available from Peter Lang Publishing, New York, NY. Web: www.peterlang.com.

HOME EDUCATION NEWS

From **Brave New Schools** by Diana Lynne, WorldNetDaily, 4/10/2002: San Juan Unified School District officials show no sign of yielding in their truancy case against a home-schooling family and, to the contrary, are taking steps to crack down on all homeschooling. Joseph Tucker, the district coordinator of the Student Attendance Review Board plans to address the issue with state education officials next month, seeking to reform and clarify California compulsory education laws, according to the Sacramento Bee. Tucker referred the case of Sandra and David Sorensen to the Sacramento County district attorney's office for prosecution. The Sorensens face up to one year in jail if found guilty of "contributing to the delinquency of a minor." To Tucker, who enforces state compulsory attendance laws, the Sorensen's 10-year-old son has been truant since January when the couple decided to home-school. California education code does not address homeschooling and is considered by the state to be "unauthorized." Private schools are neither regulated nor monitored by the state, and are not required to comply with public school district standards. And because the education code doesn't specifically define what a private school is, many families have elected to set up private schools within their homes, which the Sorensens have done. Carol Guardia, a former child welfare and attendance coordinator for Sacramento County insists district officials are merely looking out for the educational welfare of the students. "For every competent homeschooler out there, there are 300 who are not, using it for an excuse to keep their kids home," Guardia told WorldNetDaily. "There are hundreds of thousands that are 'home-schooling.' What would be involved in pulling these kids in? It would be a police state." A "police state" is precisely what homeschool advocates fear, and what the Sorensens feel they're getting a taste of. www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=27165

From **Lawmaker to Kill Controversial Homeschooling Bill**, Newsday, AP, 03/15/2002: Hartford, CT -- A state lawmaker has agreed to kill a controversial homeschooling bill that was opposed by nearly 1,000 people who flooded the Capitol for a hearing on the proposal last week. State Rep. Cameron Staples, D-New Haven, co-chairman of the legislature's Education Committee, promised Thursday to recommend that the committee drop the plan, which would have imposed several requirements on homeschoolers. Lawmakers said they have been inundated with telephone calls and e-mails from people opposed to the legislation. The law would have required homeschoolers to file notice of their plans for home instruction, including

subjects, materials and a schedule of at least 900 hours of instruction per year. It also would have required parents to schedule an independent assessment of their child's performance. Advocates for homeschoolers met with Staples for about two hours Thursday and were pleased with the outcome of the discussion. "We did not want a home schooling law," said John Kinsky of Granby, an official of The Education Association of Christian Home Schoolers. "We still are of the opinion this is an issue of parental authority," said Deborah G. Stevenson, a lawyer representing the group Citizens to Uphold the Right to Educate.

Results of a Phi Delta Kappa Int'l poll: In 1985 respondents were asked whether home schooling was a good or a bad thing for the nation. Only 16% said it was a good thing. That percentage has increased each subsequent time the question has been asked, rising to 28% in 1988, 36% in 1997, and 41% this year. This is another area that divides the political parties, with 47% of Republicans but only 34% of Democrats viewing home schooling as a good thing. Two new questions were included in this year's poll, the first exploring home schooling's impact on the nation's academic standards and the second, its impact on good citizenship. The results show a divided public, with 50% believing home schooling does not contribute to raising academic standards and 43% believing it does. Meanwhile, 49% of respondents believe home schooling does not promote good citizenship, and 46% believe that it does. Forty-eight percent of Republicans believe home schooling contributes to raising academic standards, and 53% believe it promotes good citizenship. On the other hand, just 36% of Democrats believe home schooling helps raise academic standards, and 39% believe it fosters good citizenship. A regional difference also surfaces, with 53% of those in the West believing home schooling promotes good citizenship as compared to 37% of those in the East. Rich and Pam Stauter.

From **A Home-Schooling Parent Sues for Access to School Activities**, AP, 01/19/2002: Harrisburg, PA: Nestor Hrycenko would love to play for his high school soccer team, but there is one problem: he lacks a high school. Nestor, 16, is one of seven siblings taught at home, and his father has filed suit, demanding that his son be allowed to play on the team. He is also urging state legislators to act on the issue. A bill introduced in the Legislature last month would require the state's public schools to let those schooled at home join sports teams and other clubs. Fourteen states already have such laws, according to the Home School Legal Defense Association in Purcellville, VA. About 6 percent of the nation's 850,000 home-schooled children participate in extracurricular activities, according to a study released in August by the Education Department. Some public schools welcome children who are being taught at home, but others, like Allen High School in Allentown, where Nestor wants to play, prohibit children from participating in sports and other activities if they do not attend class.

The **Bucks County Educational Resource Center** is located in the Lower Bucks County PA area. The center's 7 spacious rooms are currently open to members each Wednesday and Thursday. We operate September through May. Members pay just \$10 per month for the entire family. We are a diverse and inclusive secular group. Our goal is to meet the needs of local homeschooling families. We can offer support, socialization, academic classes, and enrichment activities. There is no compulsory attendance at the center. So far, we have had what we feel is phenomenal success--the children are constantly busy doing something of their choice, whether it is a scheduled class or a spontaneous activity. We currently have over 70 children attending the BCERC, so there are plenty of opportunities for socializing and working together. E-mail Trisha at: Totsntikes@aol.com. Web: <http://hometown.aol.com/totsntikes/myhomepage/index.html>.

Kingdom of Children: Culture and Controversy in the Homeschooling Movement, by Mitchell L. Stevens, shows that, for the most part, homeschooled students are completely normal people, not social recluses, who come to their commitment to teach their children at home for a variety of reasons. Most homeschooled children are engaged in all sorts of activities with other children outside their homes. In many cases homeschooling families cooperate with each other to provide instruction in foreign languages and science, and some public school systems now allow children to participate in such subjects, or in extracurricular activities, while otherwise learning outside of school. Despite the adamant opposition of the public education establishment, homeschooling appears to be providing children with an effective education, and most selective colleges have no hesitation about admitting them. What seemed, only twenty years ago, to be a radical alternative to traditional schools has become an accepted part of the ever-widening panoply of educational choices. From review by Charles Glenn, teacher of education policy and history at Boston University. Web: <http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft0202/reviews/glenn.html>. Book published by Princeton University Press.

PUBLIC ALTERNATIVES

Experimental Phoenix School Reducing Dropout Rate: Bostrom Alternative Center may offer clues to how school districts nationwide can deal with the longstanding dropout challenge. An upbeat learning outpost in an otherwise dreary neighborhood of warehouses and auto shops near downtown Phoenix, Bostrom serves about 300 students who volunteer for the program. Bostrom is a showcase for the Phoenix Union School District's extensive student-retention efforts. Through tireless outreach and mentoring programs, the 23,000-student district has trimmed its dropout rates from 18 percent down to 8.6 percent in six years - an

impressive achievement in a state that currently ranks last in the nation for dropout prevention. Key steps include aggressively targeting potential dropouts with everything from anger management and drug counseling to in-home tutoring. The district also uses mentors to shepherd students all the way to graduation. A different environment is the goal for all students. Small class sizes and a nurturing atmosphere are tools to pull kids up from a background of failure. By Tim Vanderpool, School Helps Dropouts Get Back on Track, The Christian Science Monitor, 12/27/2001. Web: [ww.csmonitor.com](http://www.csmonitor.com).

From 'Cyber Schools' Draw Flak Over Funding and Methods, By Robert Tomsho, The Wall Street Journal, 04/05/2002: Philadelphia –Cheltenham Township School District has joined dozens of other Pennsylvania districts in a multi-venue legal challenge to Einstein Cyber School's existence. "We think too much money is going out of the district for what they are delivering," says Cheltenham Superintendent Charles Stefanski. Cyber schools have become the latest battleground in the growing national fight over school choice. Many states have long had laws that allow students to attend schools outside their immediate neighborhood, with increased public funds flowing to the most popular institutions. Now, online schools, freed of any geographic boundaries at all, have entered the competition for students and the tax dollars that follow them. About 50 have taken root, with students and teachers communicating via telephone, chat rooms and e-mail. Many are recruiting primary and secondary students across broad regions, even though some states and accreditation agencies are still figuring out how to evaluate them. Most are publicly funded and sponsored but linked to for-profit entities backed by such entrepreneurs as the former junk-bond king Michael Milken, or ex-secretary of education William Bennett. Supporters say cyber schools offer broader opportunities for high achievers in search of more-challenging courses, and for the 850,000 U.S. children who are home-schooled. Backers also maintain that such schools provide a dynamic, self-paced alternative for students who don't thrive in a traditional environment. "For the families that this is right for, it is incredibly right for," says Ron Packard, chief executive of K12 Inc., the cyber-school concern based in McLean, Va., that was co-founded by Mr. Bennett with financial backing from Mr. Milken. School districts fear additional competition for public funds, and teachers' unions worry about lost jobs. Even some educators who are excited about the possibilities of online education say there is little research about its effectiveness at the elementary and secondary-school levels. Meanwhile, some of the districts that have filed lawsuits against Einstein are making new online plans of their own. The Altoona Area School District, for one, plans to open a cyber school next September.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

From **When Failure Means Success**, Chicago Tribune Editorial, 4/01/2002: A charter school failed in Chicago last week. But its ordered closure by the Chicago Public Schools board only demonstrates how well the charter model works. Nuestra America Charter School, which opened in 1997 on the West Side, was an undeniably failing school. Its students were reading far below national norms. Achievement test scores had been on a nosedive, as had attendance. Staff turnover resembled rush hour at Union Station, and school finances sank into chronic straits. So on Wednesday, Chicago Public Schools administrators ordered it closed by June.

Most cities take a fuzzier approach toward the decision to close charters that don't work. They are astonished when Chicago's charter schools czar, Greg Richmond, tells them the decision is based quite simply on how well the school serves kids. Elsewhere, special committees spend weeks evaluating the troubled schools and agonizing over what to do. In Chicago, it's simple. You don't perform, you don't survive. No lawsuits, no protracted haggling with unions, no delays, no compromise. That is how it should work.

Like neighborhood schools, Illinois charters are accountable to their local school districts. They're more immediately accountable, though, to parents' feet. If mom and dad don't like the education their child is getting, they walk. But a careful analysis of actual feet shows just the opposite: Many more families are trying to walk in than out. Enrollment in the city's 15 charter schools is 7,540; another 4,255 youngsters are on waiting lists, trying to get in.

A study just released by the Chicago Public Schools helps explain why. All but two of Chicago's charter schools are outperforming their neighborhood public schools on nearly every one of 70 different measures--from reading and math scores to attendance to dropout rates. The most glaring exception was Nuestra America.

Illinois hopped on the charter school train a few years late when, in 1996, it allowed 45 to be established. The purpose was to offer an alternative to public schools, and also to shake up local districts by providing competition and perhaps a few innovative new ideas. Charters are moving beyond experiments. That the weak among them get closed down, the way poorly run businesses go bankrupt, only proves the charter system works. Now it's time for neighborhood schools to explore why 12 of Chicago's 14 charters are outperforming them.

Nearly 13,000 Kids on Charter School Waiting Lists, by Ed Hayward, Boston Herald, 04/03/2002: Interest in the state's seven-year-old experiment

with charter schools shows no sign of waning with a staggering 12,959 students placed on waiting lists for the schools next year, according to a new report. In September, state officials project 17,071 students will attend 49 charter schools - a jump of 1,985 students, or 13 percent. The nearly 13,000-student waiting list is an increase of 1,800, or 16.1 percent, the Department of Education analysis found. Charter schools are privately run, but funded with public money. Charters receive the average per pupil expenditure from a student's hometown school district. There are 42 independently run Commonwealth Charter Schools and seven Horace Mann Charter Schools, which are run in partnership with public school districts. State capacity allows for 72 Commonwealth and 48 Horace Mann charters in all. While the academic performance of the charters has slowly improved, the schools have pointed to test results that show them outperforming the schools in their sending districts. A number of charter schools have waiting lists that now top 1,000 students. Boston's Neighborhood House Charter School's list is at 1,298; Boston's Renaissance Charter School's list is at 1,627; Sabis Foxboro Regional Charter School's list is at 1,499; and Sabis International Charter School in Springfield is a whopping 2,096.

From: The 2001 EIA Public Education Quotes of the Year
"The most popular form of choice is a choice system called the suburbs." -- Dr. Joe Nathan of the Center for School Change, speaking at the National School Public Relations Association conference in Minneapolis on July 11.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS AND COMMUNICATIONS

CANADA

From **Children Schooled at Home Have Better Social Skills Challenges Orthodoxy**, by Julie Smyth, National Post, Canada, 10/15/2001: Children who are educated at home have better social skills and achieve higher grades on standardized tests than students in private or public schools, according to a new report. Contrary to the popular belief that children educated at home are disadvantaged because of a lack of peers, the study by the Fraser Institute shows they are happier, better adjusted and more sociable than those at institutional schools. The average child educated at home participates in a range of activities with other children outside the family and 98% are involved in two or more extracurricular activities such as field trips and music lessons per week, the report says. Home-schooled children also regularly outperform other students on standardized tests. Children taught at home in Canada score, on average, at the 80th percentile in reading, at the 76th percentile in languages and at the 79th percentile in mathematics, the

report shows. Private and public students perform, on average, in the 50th percentile on mandatory tests in the same subjects. Home-schooled children are still a tiny minority in Canada, although an increasing number of parents are opting for this style of education. The most recent figures show the number has risen to 80,000 children. Home schooling is legal throughout Canada, but most provinces require parents comply with provincial education legislation, which means they must provide satisfactory instruction. Alberta is the only province that funds home-based education.

CZECHOSLAVAKIA

Home education in the Czech Republic is only temporarily legal—pursuant to a governmental order that expires after a five-year experiment—and strictly limited to the first five years of elementary schooling, approximately ages 6-10. (This is the third year of the experiment.) Existing education law simply describes obligatory school attendance as the norm, with no mention of home education. Under the five-year law, every home schooling family must enroll in one of three government-recognized schools, which minimally "supervise" the home education program. The schools issue a certificate of permission twice a year and the children have to be tested. No federal agencies are involved in the process. The Ministry of Education issued a new bill recently that continues to limit home schooling to the first five years and adds a new set of restrictions. The parents would have to first communicate with the local education agency that supervises area schools and this agency will decide if there are serious enough reasons for the child to be home schooled. In the interview with agency officials, parents would have to specify their reasons for choosing home education and other private information regarding facilities, income, etc. The Parliament has been flooded with email from homeschoolers and others from around the world protesting the measure. Michal Semin, President, National Czech Home School Association. Email: semin@gts.cz

ECUADOR

In the valley of Vilcabamba, there is a new type of education for children. Here, we embrace new forms of relations in all aspects of our daily life. We develop many activities with a similar outlook: morning exercises, eating, organic agriculture, architecture, regenerations, group interaction, meetings, lectures, etc. Our first big step was creating a school for children ages 3 to 12. The name of the school is **The School of Refreshment**. The work of our school is to simultaneously discover and construct reality, which we refresh by constantly displacing ourselves from our system of reference. For those who are interested in our project and would like to visit or stay and participate, we have many rooms available. In addition, for those who are interested in a longer involvement, we have 50 hectares, where you could choose to construct. For more information contact Fasila Carter or Pedro Padilla, email: option3@netexplora.com. Web: www2.netexplora.com/option3. Hacienda Altamira, Lista de Correos, Vilcabamba, Loja, Ecuador.

GREECE

British Centres, Klevakid is a research center and a school of foreign languages. The school was partly inspired by A.S.Neil's ideas and Summerhill. We treat students as equals and they have a say in the running of the school. We have campaigned for years against the mindlessness of tests and examinations and have suffered greatly as a result. The students are by and large very happy here. Many parents are suspicious of that. The local witch doctors, to borrow the analogy, have put the frighteners on many parents in the area saying that we are evil, dangerous and mad. I could go on and on about the school but that should be enough to give you an idea. Andrew. Email: guardian_angel108@yahoo.com.

INDIA

How do we teach value in a society, where corruption is universal, both in spiritual and material spheres of social life? The only answer to this crisis is to revamp the education system in a holistic way. We have compartmentalized education and divested it of its cultural values. The result is that we have no education system, only an examination system. Value-based education is more relevant than it ever was, with liberalizations; privatization and globalization – LPG – taking place rapidly. If we have to join it meaningfully and still hold our own, then as a first step we have to re-orient the entire spectrum of education in a holistic way. Otherwise it remains nothing but a permanent passport to competitive examinations and employment only. The 93rd amendment to Indian Constitution, which promises universal elemental education in India is a right and bold step. The foremost factor contributed to the poor quality of life in India, is the degrading value system in school education. Another major crisis is the growing parental pressure. Parents must realize that their ward's emotional well-being is more vital than academic excellence. They have to train their wards to face even failures too in their examinations and in life. We have to re-orient our entire education network towards the concept of learning schools. Learning schools refer to the emergence of educational dynamics of a nation. It exposes the vibrancy and rationality of a society. They are the forces of social transformation and further development towards prosperity and boom. The learning school can direct towards our shared vision of India 2020, if we want to give our children a true account of India.

ISRAEL

Editor's Note: We got this report late. We have the video at the AERO office if people are interested. It is very powerful. We all do miss Hussein Issa, more perhaps than we realized we would.

A memorial ceremony to commemorate two years since the passing away of Hussein Ibrahim Issa, a Palestinian refugee and teacher of peace was held on

March 5. 16 years ago, Issa established the Hope Flower School in the poor village of El-Hader, near Bethlehem, with the avowed purpose of educating his pupils in the spirit of peace, tolerance and democracy. The school is still maintained by his widow Hind and his daughter Rada in the same spirit, despite the enormous difficulties of the present situation. The children from El-Hader and their parents could not attend - on the phone they told that even to approach an Israeli military roadblock nowadays involves great life danger. Nevertheless, they were there in spirit, and heard, together with their one-time close mates, of how the project continues - this time, with the Third Graders from neighboring Arab village of Abu Ghosh. The Hebrew speakers sang in both languages the song they learned during their year together: "Come, come O, dove, and bring us peace!" For further information - including details of the film made about Issa, Eyal and their pupils - please contact: Eyal Bloch at eyb@internet-zahav.net and Amos Mokadi at mokadi@internet-zahav.net. For Flowers of Hope School contact: amalzh@hally.net.

SCOTLAND

Home educators tend to choose HE because they do not want to have their children disempowered by an authoritarian school system, where children are expected to defer to adults simple because they are children. The 2001 Euridem Report into pupil democracy in Europe described the UK school system as lagging far behind the rest of Europe in terms of children's rights. The authors of the report describe the UK as being 'almost unique' because, unlike most European countries, children have no say in the content of their curriculum at school, there are no grievance procedures, no pupil unions, no place for a child's complaints against a teacher to be taken seriously. A fundamental human right must be to have control over what goes into one's own mind; insisting that someone 'learns' something and punishing them if they have no interest in it is an outrageous idea. Rather than trying to force us to put our children into an inherently abusive school system, or making us bully our children into studying things in which they have no interest, the education system should look at us and ask how it is we manage to educate our children so successfully whilst preserving their dignity and autonomy. Moreover, unlike the school system, we fully meet the Education Act criteria in that we educate according to ability and aptitude, not just age. We allow our children room to develop their talents.

JAPAN-ENGLAND

John Potter's correspondence to and from the British Government concerning Summerhill School and the Inspectors has been compiled into an article printed by the Kogakken University Journal of Social Welfare. It begins in 1999 when the report of the eight school inspectors appeared in the press, and ends with the court case which Summerhill won. It's available as

an offprint from John Potter, 7-136 Yurigaoka-Higashi, Nabari-shi, Nie-kea, 518-0477, Japan.

STORK SCHOOL TRIP TO KLUCH IN MOSCOW

A group of students and teachers from the Stork Family School in Vinnitsa, Ukraine came by train to visit us at the Kluch School in Moscow. They immediately began to organize a play they had prepared, complete with decorations they had brought! The play was great! Our students were wide-eyed with amazement. This was very important for our older students to see—they often refuse to take part in plays.

We then all had a meal together and a meeting at the same time in which we worked out plans to spend our summer holidays together in our camp program. One of the most interesting plans is to do archeological and historic digging at a place on the Black sea, either the Ukrainian or Russian part.

The Stork School then went to Tubelsky's School of Self-Determination to do the play. They were late because one of their students got lost during the day, Stasic (sometimes called Harry Potter because he looks like him). But they had all agreed that if anyone got lost they should stay in one place until they were found. He stayed in the same place for three hours and was found!

Eugenia Tarasova, the mother of Kostya (Kluch student), was their constant guide all their constant guide through the time they were here. She used her creative imagination to find places the school could afford to go to. They went to the Gogol museum, where the scientist-guide looked exactly like Gogol! They visited many places around Moscow, much of it by foot. There was only one problem: where to eat? MacDonalds helped. "All we need is a Big Mac, water and a toilet," as Eugenia said).

On the last day Stork went to book stores, mostly to buy books about Harry Potter (we have 4 of them at the school) and many others! Sasha (you remember him from Tokyo) completed the most difficult order: he found "Amaricord" for his parents.

Then we had a meeting at Mary's home (she was in Tokyo too) with Oxana, one of the leaders of Stork we love indeed.

Such visits are very important for deep "self-determination" (as Tubelsky calls it). We will never forget the great support of IDEC and Jerry Mintz which has made this friendship possible. It was great support in the most difficult period for our school! Thank you for this visit too!

Andrew Pantuev, Eugenia Tarasova, Kluch School, Moscow

TEACHERS JOBS AND INTERNSHIPS

The Albany Free School has a teaching opening beginning in September 2002. The pay is low but the work is challenging and rewarding. Preference will be given to female applicants because the staff is getting too male-heavy. For more information about the school go to www.albanyfreeschool.com. To apply, contact Chris at chris@albanyfreeschool.com, or phone 518.434.3072.

The **Albany Free School** had just received word that the funding for its residential internship program has been renewed for next year. The first year was wonderfully successful, and we are now seeking interns for next year. Interns will teach full-time in the school with the ongoing support and guidance of a mentor, who is a member of the paid staff. Interns will not be locked into any specific role, but will be free to work with kids of various ages and to inspire students in the intern's areas of particular passion. Interns will also participate in a weekly seminar where they can share insights and ideas, as well as discuss books they are reading together. For more information or to apply, contact Chris Mercogliano at albanyfreeschool@yahoo.com or at (518) 434-3072.

Pacifica Community Charter School is a start-up K-8 Charter School seeking credentialed teachers to work in an alternative, humanistic, parent-participation elementary school on the west side of Los Angeles. We are creating an environment where children are trusted, families are respected, the uniqueness of each child is supported, family and community participation is encouraged and compassionate communication, and peaceful conflict resolution is practiced. Please send resume or contact us with questions at (310) 845-9405 or e-mail recruitment@pacificaschool.org.

Colorado High School of Greeley Colorado has an opening for administrator/principal for the upcoming year. CHS is an alternative charter

school of 125 dedicated students. The position is half-time but there is a half-time teaching position to match. Salary and benefits are comparable. Please contact Dr Ralph Tarnasky, Colorado Board of Governors, 4913 2nd Street, Greeley CO. Email: dheiman@colohigh.org.

The Community School in Camden, Maine has a position open for an intern for the spring/summer and the fall of 2002. Interns get free room and board in 20 return for working and teaching at the School. The Community School works with non-traditional learners who have left conventional school, and are looking to complete high school. Residential terms are five and a half months long; and each intern joins us for one term. Email emanuel@cschool.acadia.net for more info. Web: www.thecommunityschool.org.

The National Coalition of Education Activists is a network of parents, teachers and other school staff, community activists, teacher educators, and others working for equitable and excellent schools. They are currently seeking to fill the following positions: Executive director, District Community Voices Organized & Informed for Change in Education, Washington, DC. Details: dcvoice@dcvoice.org, www.dcvoice.org, (202) 986-8535. Publications Specialist, Director, Development Associate, and Community Organizer, NECA/Teaching for Change, Washington, D.C. Details: www.teachingforchange.org. Managing editor, Rethinking Schools, Milwaukee, WI. Details: (414) 964-9646, rethink@execpc.com, www.rethinkingschools.org. Organizers, Community Collaborative to Improve District 9 Schools, S. Bronx, NY. Details: Eric Zachary, (212) 998-5813, NYU Inst. for Education and Social Policy, 726 Broadway, 5th Floor, NYC 10003. Program associate, ERASE, Applied Research Center, Oakland, CA. Details: www.arc.org, 510-653-3415, tjohnson@arc.org. Asst. or Assoc. Prof., College of Public & Community Service, Univ. of Mass., Boston. Details: UMass/Boston, Human Resources Search #720, 100 Morrissey Blvd., Boston, MA 02125. Dir. of Applicant Operations, New Teacher Project, District of Columbia Public Schools. Details: dsigler@tnp.org.

Sunday Tony Obilegbo from Lagos Nigeria IS 22 years old, has studied in three different schools, and wants to further his education in the United States. He is a science student and wants to study Computer Science and Engineering at an alternative university. He is a member of an Action Group in Nigeria. He needs help with finances, residence, and /or sponsorship. Contact him at: tonytech@37.com.

Another member of the Nigerian Action Group also wants to further his education in the US. He is planning on leaving Nigeria but needs financial

support and sponsorship. **Bakare Yusuf Abiodun** can be reached at abeytin64@yahoo.com.hk.

The Blue Rock School is an independent child-centered school and is looking for a classroom teacher for fall 2002. The school's approach is hands-on and multi-disciplinary. An interest in collaboration, communication, and self-development is required. For more information, contact the school at 110 Demarest Mill Road, West Nyack, NY 10994. Tel: (845) 627-0234. Fax: (845) 627-0208.

High-Stakes Testing for Dentists?? What Dentists and Teachers Have in Common

by **John S. Taylor**

Last spring at the Project-Based Learning Conference: Kids Who Know and Do, keynote speaker Linda Darling-Hammond retold the following story by John S. Taylor, Superintendent of Schools in the Lancaster County School District in South Carolina. In a room full of 5,000 educators, you could have heard a pin drop. Of course, during the witty dialogue and the ironic parts, outbursts of laughter filled the room. But as soon as Darling-Hammond began speaking again, the audience fell silent.

My dentist is great! He sends me reminders so I don't forget checkups. He uses the latest techniques based on research. He never hurts me, and I've got all my teeth, so when I ran into him the other day, I was eager to see if he'd heard about the new state program. I knew he'd think it was great. "Did you hear about the new state program to measure the effectiveness of dentists with their young patients?" I said. "No," he said. He didn't seem too thrilled. "How will they do that?" "It's quite simple," I said. "They will just count the number of cavities each patient has at age 10, 14, and 18 and average that to determine a dentist's rating. Dentists will be rated as Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, and Unsatisfactory. That way parents will know which are the best dentists. It will also encourage the less effective dentists to get better," I said. "Poor dentists who don't improve could lose their licenses to practice in South Carolina." "That's terrible" he said.

"What? That's not a good attitude," I said. "Don't you think we should try to improve children's dental health in this state?"

"Sure I do," he said, "but that's not a fair way to determine who is practicing good dentistry."

"Why not?" I said. "It makes perfect sense to me."

"Well, it's so obvious," he said. "Don't you see that dentists don't all work with the same clientele; so much depends on things we can't control?"

"For example," he said, "I work in a rural area with a high percentage of patients from deprived homes, while some of my colleagues work in upper-middle-class neighborhoods. Many of the parents I work with don't bring their children to see me until there is some kind of problem and I don't get to do much preventative work."

"Also," he said, "many of the parents I serve let their kids eat way too much candy from a young age, unlike more educated parents who understand the relationship between sugar and decay."

"To top it all off," he added, "so many of my clients have well water which is untreated and has no fluoride in it. Do you have any idea how much difference early use of fluoride can make?"

"It sounds like you're making excuses," I said. I couldn't believe my dentist would be so defensive. He does a great job."

"I am not!" he said. "My best patients are as good as anyone's, my work is as good as anyone's, but my average cavity count is going to be higher than a lot of other dentists because I chose to work where I am needed most."

"Don't get touchy," I said.

"Touchy?" he said. His face had turned red, and from the way he was clenching and unclenching his jaws, I was afraid he was going to damage his teeth. "Try furious. In a system like this, I will end up being rated average, below average or worse."

"My more educated patients who see these ratings may believe this so-called rating actually is a measure of my ability and proficiency as a dentist. They may leave me, and I'll be left with only the neediest patients. And my cavity average score will get even worse."

"On top of that, how will I attract good dental hygienists and other excellent dentists to my practice if it is labeled below average?"

"I think you're overreacting," I said. "'Complaining, excuse making, and stonewalling won't improve dental health.' I am quoting that from a leading member of the DOC," I noted.

"What's the DOC?" he said.

"It's the Dental Oversight Committee," I said, "a group made up of mostly lay persons to make sure dentistry in this state gets improved."

"Spare me," he said. "I can't believe this. Reasonable people won't buy it," he said hopefully.

The program sounded reasonable to me, so I asked, "How else would you measure good dentistry?"

"Come watch me work," he said. "Observe my processes."

"That's too complicated and time-consuming," I said. "Cavities are the bottom line, and you can't argue with the bottom line. It's an absolute measure."

"That's what I'm afraid my patients and prospective patients will think. This can't be happening," he said despairingly.

"Now, now," I said, "don't despair. The state will help you some."

"How?" he said.

"If you're rated poorly, they'll send a dentist who is rated excellent to help straighten you out," I said brightly.

"You mean," he said, "they will send a dentist with a wealthy clientele to show me how to work on severe juvenile dental problems with which I have probably had much more experience? Big help."

"There you go again," I said. "You aren't acting professionally at all."

"You don't get it," he said. "Doing this would be like grading schools and teachers on an average score on a test of children's progress without regard to influences outside the school, the home, the community served, and stuff like that. Why would they do something so unfair to dentists? No one would ever think of doing that to schools."

I just shook my head sadly, but he had brightened. "I'm going to write my representatives and senator," he said. "I'll use the school analogy, surely they'll see my point." He walked off with that look of hope mixed with fear and suppressed anger that I see in the mirror so often lately.

John Taylor is Superintendent of Schools for the Lancaster County School District in South Carolina. He is a graduate of Davidson College with MEd and EdS degrees from University of South Carolina. He has served as a teacher or administrator in several of South Carolina's most economically challenged school districts, including Allendale, Clarendon, Colleton, and Dillon. He has also worked in Richland 2 and Rock Hill and served as an Education Consultant at the Department of Education.

CONFERENCES

2002 NCACS Annual National Conference Keynote Speaker will be Don Trent Jacobs, Ph.D., Ed.D., former Dean of Education of Oglala Lakota

College and now Associate Professor in Instructional Leadership at Northern

Arizona University's Center for Excellence in Education. Don's keynote title is "A Matter of Significance" and will address why and how a new approach to teaching and learning is necessary for our future survival. The Conference will begin on Wednesday, May 8 with Registration at Birch Hall

from 1-5 p.m. Terri Wheeler, NCACS Vice-Chair, Conference Committee. To learn more about Don and his work, visit his website at www.teachingvirtues.net.

Spirituality in Education Conference IV. June 20 – 23, Rocky Mountain Shambhala Center, Red Feather Lakes, CO. Discovering Magic and Meaning in the Classroom. For more information, call 1-800-603-3177 or email extend@naropa.edu. Web: www.naropa.edu/spirited.

The International Association for Learning Alternatives (IALA) Conference. June 28 - 30, Duluth, MN. The conference theme is: Powerful Options for Learners. The keynote speakers are Howard Fuller & Susan Ohanian. Contact David Bly, Northfield ALC, 1651 Jefferson Pkwy, Northfield, MN 55057. Tel: (507) 664-3750. Fax: (507) 664-3751. Email: david.bly@nfld.k12.mn.us.

Lisa Ratahi is now the contact person for the **2002 IDEC Conference** to be held in New Zealand. Dates have been confirmed and accommodation has been booked from Thursday August 15 to Friday August 23. There will be some academic speakers supporting democratic education and representatives of each attending school will be expected to come prepared to describe and talk about how their respective schools function. One of the aims of such discussion is to illustrate for the wider education community that, and how, these ideas, methods, and ways of functioning work. Contact Tamariki School, PO Box 19506, Christchurch, New Zealand. Tel: 64 3 384 9014. Email: tamariki2002@hotmail.com.

From: The 2001 EIA Public Education Quotes of the Year
"The most popular form of choice is a choice system called the suburbs." -- Dr. Joe Nathan of the Center for School Change, speaking at the National School Public Relations Association conference in Minneapolis on July 11.

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NEW! *A Free Range Childhood: Self-regulation at Summerhill School*

By Matthew Appleton

An updated, insightful account of everyday life at Summerhill. This is the first major book to appear on the school since A.S. Neill's 1960 bestseller inspired an international movement for alternative education. Through graceful and reflective writing, Appleton expands on Neill's stirring call for educational freedom, and explains how the world's most famous alternative school continues to demonstrate that children thrive in an atmosphere of freedom, trust and self-government. \$19.95

The Underground History of American Education:

***A Schoolteacher's Intimate Investigation into the Problem of Modern Schooling* (412 pages)**

By John Taylor Gatto

Gatto's thesis is that the American public school system is efficiently doing what it was intended to do: Creating a docile, trained, consumer-oriented population which will not question the control of the country by big business interests. He backs this up by quoting the founders of this system, who actually articulated these goals, and in the process, knocks down icon after icon. You had better read this book. You may argue with it, not agree with some of it. But you should certainly be aware of what John has unearthed. AERO was able to get some of the first printed, pre-publication additions. **\$30, and if you order soon, we will send it with no additional cost for postage.**

Creating Learning Communities

From A Coalition for Self Learning

"Collaborative homeschooling could replace schools," says a new publication. In 1980 there were about 20,000 homeschoolers. In 1990 there were over 200,000 homeschoolers. By 2000 there were nearly 2,000,000 homeschoolers. At this rate there will be 20,000,000 homeschoolers in 2010, and 200,000,000 in 2020. Impossible! But it shows that schools may be replaced as more students learn out of school than in school. As homeschooling has grown homeschoolers have started forming "homeschool support groups." In the past several years, there has been a proliferation of cooperative community life long learning centers, learning co-ops, and other forms of collaborative non-school learning organizations forming. This phenomenon is explored in this new book. **\$19.95, and if you order soon, we will send it with no additional cost for postage.**

***THE ALMANAC OF EDUCATION CHOICES**, Editor in Chief Jerry Mintz, Associate Editors Raymond Solomon, and Sidney Solomon, with over 6,000 entries by state in zip-code order, and a dozen informative essays about how to start a new alternative, how to start homeschooling, use of computers by alternatives, etc. Includes the Montessori, Waldorf, Quaker, charter, public choice, and at-risk schools. Canada, add \$5. Out of US, add \$10-\$15 for air mail postage. **Special for paid subscribers, only \$10 plus \$3 postage**

***SUMMERHILL SCHOOL, A New View of Childhood**, A.S. Neill, Edited by Albert Lamb. This is a new editing of Neill's writings, an update of the original book, *Summerhill*. **\$15 including postage**

Contact AERO for sets of labels from the Handbook/Almanac database. Entire list is \$60 per thousand names. Subsets can be custom-created..

GREEN REVOLUTION, the newsletter of the School of Living. *Education Revolution readers can become members of the School of Living and get a subscription to the *Green Revolution* for half price. The SOL is a 60-year-old organization that pioneered the environmental protection movement, consumer protection, and is involved with land trust and communities movements, and is the sponsor of AERO. **\$10 (half price)**

***Campus-Free College Degrees, Thorson's Guide to Accredited College Degrees through Distance Learning**, by Marcie Kisner Thorson. Correspondence study, experiential learning, independent study, group study, seminars: organized by subject area, type state. **\$24.95**

***New! What are Schools For, by Ron Miller \$20**

***New! The Homeschool Book of Answers, Linda Dobson, \$24.95**

***Making It Up as We Go Along, Chris Mercogliano's book about the history of Albany's Free School. \$15 plus \$3 postage.**

AUDIOCASSETTES:

AERO has an expanded list of over 100 tapes from our show, The Education Revolution on the TalkAmerica Network and Cable Radio Network. Tapes may be purchased for \$10, including postage. Contact AERO for a list of programs, featuring interviews with people such as Mary Leue, Joe Nathan, John Gatto, David Colfax, Andy Smallman, Pat Montgomery, Chris Mercogliano, Bob Barr, Arnie Langberg, Zoe Readhead, and many others

VIDEOS

***DEMOCRATIC MEETINGS.** A two-hour tape of demonstrations of various democratic meetings, including one at Summerhill, a meeting of Russian students at the New Schools Festival in the Crimea (translated into English), a demonstration meeting with Long Island homeschoolers, age four to 13, a meeting setting up a democratic system for an "at-risk" public high school alternative, and a democratic meeting at a public "choice" high school. **\$25**

***HOMESCHOOL RESOURCE CENTERS.** A video of three homeschool resource center featuring the Snakefoot Education Center, at Common Ground Community, Puget Sound Community School and Clearwater School, both in Seattle. Snakefoot is a group of families that created a center in which 15 homeschooled children met three times a week. They also hired resource people. He video also includes an Interview with Any Smallman, Founder of PSCS, and a vidio of radio interviews with Clearwater. **\$25**

***SUMMERHILL VIDEO.** Two videos in one: the 1990 International Alternative School Conference at Summerhill, with interviews of Summerhill students and alumni as well as vivid footage of the Summerhill end-of-term celebration. Also, Summerhill's 70th anniversary celebration in August, 1991, featuring more alumni interviews, and a Summerhill democratic meeting. **We also have a 1995 tape of Sands School and Summerhill. \$25 each**

***Nellie Dick and the Modern School Movement.** A fascinating two-hour interview with a 96-year-old pioneer in the alternative education movement. Born in the Ukraine of Jewish, anarchist parents in 1893, she started anarchist schools in England back in 1908, went to the US in 1917 to teach at the Modern School (based on the work of Francisco Ferrer) in New Jersey, and taught at and ran Modern Schools until 1958. Her son Jim, who was a student at the Modern Schools and is now a 70-year-old pediatrician, is also interviewed. There are also excerpts from the Modern School reunion in 1989 which featured the Spanish Modern Schools. **\$25**

***Transcript of Nellie Dick and the Modern School! \$5**

CONTACT AERO FOR FOUR OTHER MODERN SCHOOL VIDEOS

***CODE CRASH--For quickly learning the Morse Code.** Hundreds sold! This is a tape in which two 12-year-old homeschoolers learn the Morse code in less than 20 minutes each by our unique copyrighted association method. People interested in getting their amateur radio license will be amazed. It works. We guarantee it. You'll learn it. Show to a whole class. Recently glowingly reviewed in *Growing Without Schooling*; "We were all amazed and impressed with ourselves that we suddenly knew the whole Morse code in an hour." **\$20**

PHONE CONSULTATIONS:

Want to start a new alternative school or homeschool resource center? Looking for an educational alternative for your children? Looking for a job in alternative education? Set up a private phone consultation with Jerry Mintz. He knows what's going on today in the whole field of educational alternatives and can help you with in-depth answers to your questions. Call 800 769-4171 for an appointment. Only \$65. In-person consultations arranged individually.

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