

A Contagious Concept

In theory, certainly, and in practice, hopefully, the Lincoln County School of Technology is North Carolina's vocational-education future in action today. Jackie Cloutman's report in a recent Tribune says this new facility combines private and public funding to combine training for high school juniors and seniors with advanced post-high school instruction in specialized fields.

The school is a state pilot project tailored for Lincoln because this neighboring county does not have a community college or technical institute, and because the county's three senior high schools cannot provide the breadth and depth of vocational training modern industry requires. The campus brings to Lincoln what it has been missing, and it does it with a bonus: the financial support, leadership and encouragement of Lincoln businesses and industries, notably Timken Bearing.

Everybody wins. The high school students are exposed to a level of instruction and a quality of equipment not feasible through the school system alone. The industries are helping themselves by helping create a pool of skilled labor. And an area rich in vocational skills is an invitation to industries looking for plant sites.

This fall, nearly 450 Lincoln County high school students are enrolled in the School of Technology, combining valuable vocational experience with academics. This year's General Assembly demonstrated its belief in the concept by appropriating \$442,000 to the facility.

The Timken Foundation put \$1.3 million into the school, and its Lincoln plant contributed land and building. Gaston Community College and the Lincoln school system pumped in another \$500,000, and 10 county businesses and industries provided \$15,000 each.

Dr. Tom Fulcher is dean of instruction for Mitchell Community College. He sees this concept as "making the best possible use of taxpayers' educational investment." He wants MCC to move more strongly into this area in cooperation with Iredell's high schools.

"Labs and shops are woefully expensive," he points out, "and duplication is unnecessary expense. We need a blend of offerings for our high school students, and we can accomplish this best through cooperative programs."

The Lincoln School of Technology concept is, indeed, contagious, and that bodes well for vocational education.

Help Us Keep The Image Sharp

Just about everything has a day, week, month or some unit of time to call its own. Oct. 4-10 is, among others, ours, National Newspaper Week.

Give us a minute. Remind yourself that your newspaper is like your mail, your electricity, your telephone: it's there. The tendency to take it for granted is strong—as long as it informs you and does not involve you involuntarily.

When your newspaper does involve you—as it does so many of you routinely—it becomes a very present cause of whatever reaction it inspires. Appreciation, perhaps, if picture and words of your daughter's wedding are everything you expected. Satisfaction, maybe, if news of your club's service project is accurate and full. Aggravation, certainly, if your newspaper reports something incorrectly or reports correctly

The Value Of 'Business' Language

From The Christian Science Monitor
Americans have long assumed that a knowledge of English is enough to resolve any problem of real importance in the world. Periodic prods from foreign travel to the stepped-up foreign language requirements in academia in the '60s, have done little to shake that confidence.

But a new mix of job-related pressures on students to develop a more informed international outlook and sharpen their language skills could make a significant difference.

American businesses, concerned about the nation's trade deficit and growing overseas competition, are solidly behind the new push. Many firms that used to hire overseas nationals to bridge language gaps now see strong advantages in having US employees aboard who understand both the language and the culture.

State governments have also taken the lead in restoring to college and public school systems many of the foreign language requirements dropped in the '70s. A number of sobering national reports, underscoring US deficiencies in international studies, also have played a role.

Results of the new push are widespread. At Tufts University, international relations is currently the most popular undergraduate major. Students at the University of Northern Kentucky, in part because of a new Japanese auto plant coming into the state, may take courses in Japanese. Michigan State University, in a move related to its roots as a land grant college and work with developing countries, offers students a choice among 23 African languages. At Boston University students may take such core curriculum courses as political science and philosophy in foreign languages.

One of the most interesting offshoots is a program offering courses in business skills, area studies, and foreign languages. The Wharton School's Joseph Lauder Institute, combining masters degrees in business management and area studies, is considered a national model. Also, several colleges offer special courses in "business" French, German, or Spanish.

Make no mistake. Americans have barely begun to make the effort most of their European and Asian counterparts have routinely

From Where I Sit

By Johnny Morrow

Given time and a specific frame of mind, I can offend anyone. This isn't so much a boast as it is a statement of fact. And the objective is best accomplished not with malice, but with the stark reality of humor. You have to hit some people over the head with the truth before they will sit up and take notice. Throw in a little stereotyping, and some good-natured joking and a smidgen of disrespect, and voila. Besides, what are we if we cannot laugh at ourselves? Are we so perfect that we can deal with our prejudices? If so, why do we have them? Ask yourself these three questions at the end of this space, and let's see where you and I stand then.

Pope John Paul II made a big splash with his recent visit to the United States. I know next to nothing about Catholicism, other than the fact that he is head honcho over the church. It might sound irrelevant, but the pope is only a mortal man. Oh, he's a sharp dresser and a charismatic gentleman. And he must be plenty smart, what with the ability to speak 11 languages. He no doubt came to us with good intentions, an emissary of peace. But he is still flesh and blood. Yet, the faithful flocked just to get a look at him. Jesus Christ Himself could not have received much more fanfare had the Second Coming taken place. Were the people worshipping the man, his image or an ideal?

I was mildly amused — and somewhat disappointed — when President Reagan greeted Pope John Paul II to our country. After all, it was a media event, and our president is never one to pass up the spotlight. Still, he should have let George do it. I was also a bit insulted when the pope didn't kiss the ground on his arrival. Isn't this customary? Then, the two men took center stage. There they were, Pope John Paul II and President Reagan, in all their radiance. Where could you find a better representation of God and Satan in one place? The president was the opening act. The pope brought the house down. Afterward, each was whisked away in separate limousines.

That parting act was as close as the two got to separation of church and state, as mandated in our Constitution. I will admit that John Paul did a lot for capitalism. Entrepreneurs turned out those novelties as popcorn, the pope scope, a pope video cassette, pope balloons, pope greeting cards, a pope mask and pope T-shirts. Lots of them. My favorite featured the likeness of the pope and Spuds MacKenzie, with the inscription "The Original Vatican Animal." One enterprising fellow in Carmel, Calif. came out with a T-shirt that surely made the little town's mayor happy. It read "Thou Hast Made My Day."

Thousands of people jammed a sweltering South Carolina football stadium for hours to catch a glimpse of the Holy Father and hear him speak. Ambulances carried away many victims of heat exhaustion. The pope stopped in Hollywood to advise actors and filmmakers to clean up their act. And, yes, he did pay a visit to Carmel. I've got a mental picture of the pope mobile doubled-parked, with the pope sneaking out, only to run into Mayor Clint Eastwood. Clint squints and snarls, "Go ahead, pontiff, make my day." The pope gets back in and burns rubber. He has already been wounded by one crazy man, so you can bet your Sunday suit that he doesn't want to cross Dirty Harry.

As stated earlier, I don't know much about the Catholic Church. I don't know why one of the higher-ups walks in front of a procession swinging a smudge pot, or why the pope wears a beanie at some gatherings and a mitre at others. I suppose the big hat would be best for taking up the collection. I believe the pope is too stern, idealistic and self-righteous. I also believe there is a weak link in the chain of command from God to man when one mortal is allowed to confess his sins to another mortal, spout a few Hail Marys, and receive absolution. All of us think the particular religion we practice is the right one, the one that will get us to Heaven.

When it comes to religion, flesh-and-blood human beings and worldwide recognition, Elvis Presley could give the pope a run for his money. The Elvis fan is a true fanatic, and he worships his hero. He saves his hard-earned money all year just to make the pilgrimage to Graceland. He tours the King's castle and pays homage at the King's grave. He wears a pompadour, mutton-chop sideburns, an open shirt, gold chains, rings and metal-framed glasses. He is in his mid-50s, has a pot gut and black dyed hair. His wife looks like Priscilla — well, the way Priscilla looked in 1967. In his Walter Mitty world, he is Elvis for a few stolen moments. He is fatuous and has delusions of grandeur. But, oh, is he loyal.

You get the feeling that such fans have led very sheltered lives. Many of them have homes that are virtual shrines, filled to the attic with Elvis memorabilia. They flock to Memphis souvenir shops for the latest lamp, ceramic statue and poster. In my opinion, the greatest tribute they could pay the King of Rock 'n' Roll — and he was that — would be to let him rest in peace. I genuinely like Elvis, the man and his music, especially his gospel recordings. Fame and fortune never brought him happiness. He has sold more than a billion records, and is more popular a decade after his death than at any time during his illustrious life. But Elvis is a legend, and legends never really die. They only become greater.

We can look forward to even more Elvis impersonators. They are not only cashing in on his stardom, they are making a laughingstock of him. And Elvis can't do anything about it. There will be more charges from burned out groupies that he fathered their children. There will be more books written about him, some by his former associates, most by complete strangers. Elvis Presley died alone, overweight, suffering from addiction to prescription medications. He was a prisoner of his celebrity status. If only one of his so-called closet friends had taken him aside and said, "Look, you need professional help..." Who knows, maybe he would still be here making beautiful music.

The last person I'll address today is the redneck, viewed by many as a subculture. But I saw him in the South Carolina football stadium patiently awaiting the pope. And I saw him shed a tear at Graceland. I will admit that he is more at home when attending a professional wrestling match or a combination tractor pull-Monster Truck show. He knows more about Hulk Hogan than he does about John Paul II. He knows more about Big Foot than he does about Elvis' mama's pink Cadillac. The upply among us call him crude. So what if he looks like he stepped right out of the movie "Deliverance"? This doesn't mean that he isn't good people.

Maybe you view him as a tobacco-chewing, beer-swilling old. He is often seen in public without a shirt, his weekend sunburn displayed prominently on his protruding belly. He wears a CAT hat. Gotta have a CAT hat. He drives a pickup truck, preferably a four-wheel-drive, with fire about waist-high. He may need a stepladder to get into it. There will be a gun rack across the back, with an NRA sticker and a Confederate flag on the back window. He wears boots to shoes, leather to nylon, denim to polyester. His lady friend wears loose tank tops and tight jeans. He likes Willie Nelson and CB radios. He believes a seven-course meal consists of a six-pack of Bud and a Twinkie.

Now, what does all this tell us? The pope is human, just like you and me. Personally, I wanted to see him pull off a miracle. I don't know whether to genuflect or laugh. Elvis is a hoax, a fantasy, the biggest publicity stunt in music history. Col. Tom Parker has snookered three generations. I don't know whether to laugh or puke. The redneck is sort of a human sloth, but he's happy. He doesn't expect much out of life because he doesn't put much into it. I don't know whether to puke or tuck tail and run. The sum total of these three groups combined makes up at least a fraction of each and every one of us. But who among us are thin-skinned? How many have I offended?

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OUR COMMUNITY

IN OTHER YEARS
1931
56 YEARS AGO

Mrs. Flora Olivia Moore, wife of Samuel F. Moore, of Mazeppa, died at her home at an early hour last Friday morning following an illness of ten days with pneumonia. Mrs. Moore was aged 50 years, 2 months and 15 days. Funeral services were held Saturday morning at 11 o'clock at Centenary Methodist Church, conducted by the pastor, Rev. D.R. Proffitt. The interment was made in the cemetery nearby.

Word came to Mr. and Mrs. G.O. Cornelius Tuesday morning that a grandson had been born to them at Florence, S.C., and that Mr. and Mrs. W. Harry Cornelius were the proud parents of an 8 1/2 pound boy.

The unloading of a big road shovel at this place Monday attracted considerable attention. It was a machine belonging to the road equipment of Mr. Ellison Grange who will have charge of the construction of the old Lincoln road from the Iredell county line to Salisbury.

W. Lee Gamble, well-known farmer and merchant of Mecklenburg county, died last Thursday night in a Statesville hospital, where he had been under treatment. Mr. Gamble had been in bad health for sometime and his passing was not unexpected by those who knew him and his endeavored condition.

Samuel L. Pharr, an attaché of the Mooresville Creamery and secretary of the local Associated Charities, who has been laid up for the past five weeks or longer with an attack of pleurisy, is somewhat better, but not yet permitted by the attending physician to be out.

Eggs are said to be cheaper at this time than at any period in the past twenty years. Merchants are paying only 15 to 20 cents per dozen for them. The egg producing hens have been unusually busy, and at the same time the demand has been slackened considerably of recent months.

Saturday's Statesville Daily, in a pretty and impressive ceremony, solemnized at high noon, at Broad Street Methodist Church, Miss Julia Rebecca Meacham became the bride of Mr. Claude White Kipka.

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Summer Provides Critique Reading Time For The Nation's Educators

This material was written by Dr. Larry McGee, vice president for development and professor of religion at Wake Forest College. It was provided free to newspapers by the Spartanburg, S.C. School.

Educators are somewhat at a loss to explain why two critiques of education have been on most top-ten best-seller lists. The two are Allan Bloom's "The Closing of the American Mind" (Simon and Schuster, 1987) and E.D. Hirsch Jr.'s "Cultural Literacy" (Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

In the days of summer tent revivals—and even afterward, when protracted meetings moved indoors—there was a fellow back home who guaranteed that no visiting evangelist would leave town empty-handed. (In that era, an "empty-handed" evangelist was one who could not count any saved souls at meeting's end, not one, as recently defined, who counts dollars instead of souls.)

My personal suspicion is that the summer popularity of the Bloom and Hirsch critiques of education is due to a lack of education in the schools. To teach summer school and therefore having time to indulge in enjoying Old Bill's twin feelings of guilt and forgiveness. I just haven't run into many non-educators who claim to have read or even to have bought the books, and so I assume educators are the primary buyers and readers.

Hirsch's thesis is that a "culture" is a "nation," and that the American culture is in disarray because it lacks a national language and a set of commonly held (a "commonwealth") symbols and information. He found that students perform better in writing and reading when they are a little bit familiar with the topic. Students who have heard of Pearl Harbor write better than those who never heard of World War II, for example.

In an earlier day, students across the nation were learning "how to move anywhere with a minimum of diagram sentences or identity parts of speech at about the same age, just as they were sharing, though separated into thousands of schools, Julius Caesar, Silas Marner, the legends of Washington and Lincoln, and memorization of key places and dates in history.

With that curriculum, learning method, and elementary information shared across the nation, both teachers and students could move anywhere with a minimum of adjustments trauma, and the adults could communicate from the same principles and allusions. The pluralism of school systems and the proliferation of avenues to learning have changed all this, and expanding education has ironically moved up narrowing it.

Bloom shares with Hirsch and indictment of universities as a contributing cause of educational decline. Both indict academic departments within the colleges for growing into self-contained fiefdoms and increasingly divorcing themselves from one another and from the search for unity of knowledge and for motivations for students. Bloom is particularly hard on colleges for their lack of "ethos," a nurturing climate in which values and creativity are applauded. By contrast, he says, today's students come to college and leave it convinced that "everything is relative" and "anything that works," especially in career success, "is okay."

In both instances, educators receive hard licks for impersonal and professionalization. Neither critic seems to realize how much more likely, in a society of power and of mass education, educators and their institutions are to be creations and reflections of their society than transformers. Like Old Bill's revivals, these two jeremiads are long on guilt and short on redemption.

Children usually groan when told to stand up straight. While good posture can be learned, parents should be aware of a condition that can result in an irregularity in a child's posture, if it's not caught in time.

Idiopathic (meaning the cause is unknown) scoliosis is the most common form of scoliosis in children. In scoliosis, the spine veers sideways toward either shoulder blade. The vertebrae may twist, and the ribs push outward.

Left untreated, scoliosis can become severe, leading to lung disease and affecting the heart's function.

While occurrence of idiopathic scoliosis cannot be predicted, it is thought to be a hereditary predisposition. A mild form affects five percent of children in the fifth through eighth grades, boys and girls equally. Girls are five to 10 times more likely to develop progressive scoliosis and require treatment, said Dr. Robert D. Fitch, assistant professor of orthopedics at Duke University Medical Center.

"School screening programs for detection of scoliosis have become widespread in the United States," he said. "The goal of screening is to provide early diagnosis. Scoliosis is treatable if detected early."

The forward flexion test, in which the child bends forward from the waist, is the most common test used in screenings.

The test shows the rib deformity, which may be the first sign of scoliosis," Fitch said. "When a child who has scoliosis bends over, the examiner can see that the ribs are higher on one side of the back. X-ray examination may be needed to document accurately the deformity."

A device that Fitch hopes will become more widely used in following surgery — as much as 1.2 inches," he said.

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