

# MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE®

ISSUE No. 29

OCTOBER 2010  
MAILED IN SEPTEMBER

## RENEWAL 2 - EDUCATION

### INTRODUCTION

WE ARE NOW CAUGHT UP IN A GOVERNMENTAL MISADVENTURE OF OUR OWN MAKING SO PERVASIVE THAT IT CHALLENGES CREDIBILITY. ITS KEY OPERATING PARTS ARE:

1). POLITICAL CONFRONTATION SCALED TO THE LEVEL OF ANNIHILATION AND FUELED BY EMOTION AND FINANCES FROM THE FAR REACHES OF OUR POLITICAL SPECTRUM. THESE ELEMENTS HAVE COMBINED TO OBLITERATE TRADITIONAL CENTRIST POLITICS, WITH THEIR POWER TO ACCOMMODATE, OVER THE PAST HALF-CENTURY.

2. DENIAL OF OUR BASIC FREEDOMS DIRECTLY THROUGH THE ABUSE OF OUR ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND INDIRECTLY THROUGH THE EXTENSIVE INFLUENCE ON ALL PARTS OF GOVERNMENT BY THE FUNDING/LOBBYING ACTIVITIES OF SPECIAL INTERESTS.

3) THESE DEGRADE, CONSUME AND WASTE OUR NATURAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES, AND GREATLY LESSEN OUR ABILITY TO PRODUCE EFFECTIVE LEGISLATION IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST.

THIS PATTERN OF FAILURE WILL NOT BE REPAIRED EASILY, AS THE SUPPORT POINTS OF AUTHORITY AND ENFORCEMENT HAVE ALREADY BEEN COMPROMISED. FAIRNESS HAS ALWAYS HELD A PLACE AT THE CENTER OF OUR DEMOCRATIC THOUGHT, BUT IT HAS BEEN PUSHED ASIDE AND IS NO LONGER AVAILABLE FROM GOVERNMENT. BUT, FORTUNATELY, IT IS STILL REGARDED AS ESSENTIAL TO OUR POLITICAL EXPERIENCE BY MOST AMERICANS, AND WILL OFFER A RALLYING POINT AROUND WHICH A WIDE VARIETY OF CONSTITUENCIES COULD ASSEMBLE AND JOIN FORCES.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF THE POLITICS OF DECEPTION AND MANIPULATION. THEY WANT IMPROVEMENT! THEY WANT THEIR GOVERNMENT BACK!

BUT THEY ARE FACED WITH AN ACCUMULATION OF DEMOCRACY'S BROKEN PROMISES DELIVERED BY AN ELECTORAL SYSTEM DOMINATED BY THE MEDIA/MONEY COMBINE AND A HIGHLY SECRETIVE POLITICAL CLASS. THE LATTER LACKS ANY INTEREST IN OR COMMITMENT TO THE TYPE OF OBJECTIVE THOUGHT REQUIRED TO DEFINE, REDEFINE AND PURSUE A NATIONAL INTEREST.

FOR THE PAST HALF CENTURY OUR GOVERNMENT HAS INCREASINGLY ADOPTED AN "US" (POLITICIANS) VERSUS "THEM" (THE PUBLIC) ATTITUDE WITH MORE POWER IN WASHINGTON AND LESS ACCESS TO IT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.

THIS TREND CAN BE CORRECTED, BUT FIRST IT MUST BE RECOGNIZED BY AMERICA'S CITIZENS. THEY MUST BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS OF SEPARATION FROM THEIR GOVERNMENT THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE AND MUST BECOME FAMILIAR WITH AREAS FOR AGREEMENT AND REPAIR THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO THEM. IT WILL BE THE TASK OF AMERICAN RENEWAL TO INITIATE THE OUTREACH AND INFORMATION THAT WILL BE NECESSARY TO FORGE A COMMON IDENTITY AND PURPOSE AS WE HAVE DONE IN THE PAST WHEN CONFRONTED BY THREATS TO OUR DEMOCRACY.

THE PROCESS WE FORESEE WILL BE SIMPLE, BUT BY NO MEANS EASY. IT WILL CONSIST OF STARTING WITH SOME GENERAL PROPOSITIONS CAPABLE OF GENERATING WIDE

**IN THIS ISSUE** WE DEAL PRIMARILY WITH OUR NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL CRISIS WHICH IS ONE OF SEVERAL NOW APPROACHING TIPPING POINTS. THESE INDIVIDUAL CRISES WILL BE THE LEAD TOPICS FOR THE REMAINING ISSUES IN THIS SERIES WHICH IS PRESENTLY SCHEDULED TO RUN THROUGH OUR JULY, 2012 ISSUE.

**OUR NEXT ISSUE** WILL EXAMINE OUR NATIONAL CULTURE IN LIGHT OF BOTH THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PRESSURES PLACED UPON IT BY OUR FAILED FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICIES.

# CENTER FOR PUBLIC CONSCIENCE

P.O. Box 220722  
WEST PALM BEACH,  
FL 33422-0722

www.  
centerforpublic  
conscience.org

Email:  
moconscience@aol.com

## Bromwell Ault

Editor/Founder  
Phone (561) 697-2233  
Fax (561) 242-9264

## Sandra Beck

Publisher  
Phone (561) 784-9444  
Fax (561) 784-9052

The Center for Public Conscience has no affiliation with or loyalty to any particular political party or movement and none of its principals has ever held an elective or appointive political office; nor will they in the future. It receives no revenue from advertising or any source other than subscription income and voluntary contributions which are tax deductible under section 501(c)3 of the IRS tax code.

The contents of this report are protected by U.S. copyright law. However, reproduction for non-commercial purposes is permitted if full and prompt attribution of the source is included.

AGREEMENT AND THEN EXPANDING THEIR REACH AND SPECIFICITY. WITH GROWTH, THE TASK BECOMES MORE COMPLEX, BUT ITS LARGER SIZE GIVES IT ADDED STRENGTH WITH WHICH TO CONTINUE THE PROCESS.

AMERICAN RENEWAL WILL TAKE TIME AND EFFORT, BUT WE SHOULD RECALL THAT WE HAVE A TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS WITH THE PROBLEM, FOR THE PROCESS NOW REQUIRED IS IDENTICAL TO THAT OUR FOUNDERS FACED IN THE GENERATION THAT FOLLOWED OUR DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE IN 1776.

IN THAT TIME, ACTUALLY, THE TASK WAS MORE DIFFICULT, AS THEY HAD TO UNIFY THIRTEEN INDEPENDENT COLONIES WITH ONLY PRIMITIVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THEM. BUT IT WORKED! AND IT DID SO BECAUSE ALL INVOLVED WERE GUIDED BY A DESIRE FOR FAIRNESS, A NEW FORM OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND A SHARED SENSE OF NATIONAL INTEREST.

FOR TODAY'S AMERICANS WE WILL IDENTIFY AREAS OF PROBABLE JOINT INTEREST AND COOPERATION AND HOW THEY CAN BE USED TO REGAIN RESPONSIVE DEMOCRACY. IN DOING SO WE WILL EMPHASIZE GENERALLY RECOGNIZED COMMON GROUND THAT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO ATTRACT BROAD POPULAR SUPPORT.

\* \* \*

## EDUCATION

ONE OF OUR NATION'S MAJOR ISSUES THAT HAS PROVED RESISTANT TO BENEFICIAL CHANGE IS OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM. AS THE "RICHEST" NATION IN THE WORLD, IF WE HAVE THE REQUISITE INTEREST, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO ASSEMBLE ITS VARIOUS INDIVIDUAL PARTS INTO AN EFFECTIVE, FUNCTIONAL ENTITY. QUITE TO THE CONTRARY, THE USA HAS REGULARLY SCORED BELOW OTHER SMALLER AND LESS WEALTHY NATIONS IN VARIOUS RECENT EDUCATIONAL RANKINGS.

LET'S START WITH A SIMPLE STATISTIC QUOTED BY NY TIMES OP-ED COLUMNIST DAVID BROOKS:<sup>1</sup>

"THE RESULTS OF A RECENT POLL SHOW THAT AMONG THE 18 TO 29 YEAR OLD AGE GROUP ONLY 40% OF THOSE QUESTIONED COULD IDENTIFY ENGLAND AS THE COUNTRY FROM WHICH WE GAINED OUR INDEPENDENCE."

THIS IS NOT ONLY SIMPLE. IT IS SHOCKING. THE RESPONDENTS WERE NOT KIDS IN SCHOOL WHO MIGHT HAVE A HISTORY TEST NEXT WEEK FOR WHICH THEY HAD NOT PREPARED.

THESE ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL AND ARE EITHER PURSUING FURTHER EDUCATION OR ARE IN THE WORK FORCE.

AS THE QUESTION INQUIRES INTO OUR HISTORICAL/POLITICAL ORIGINS, IT COULD NOT BE MORE BASIC. AND YET, 60% OF THOSE QUESTIONED WERE UNABLE TO ANSWER CORRECTLY. THE FAILURE OF KNOWLEDGE IS SHOCKING ENOUGH IN ITSELF, BUT EDUCATION INVOLVES MORE THAN LEARNING. IT IS ALSO A POWERFUL CULTURAL COMPONENT IN OUR SOCIETY, AND THIS STATISTIC IS ACCOMPANIED BY A VARIETY OF CULTURAL AFTERSHOCKS.

IT MAY BE THAT OUR SYSTEM'S CURRICULUM HAS CHANGED AND ITS TEACHERS NO LONGER REFER TO OUR NATIONAL ORIGIN, BUT THIS SEEMS UNLIKELY. MORE TO THE POINT IS THAT OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IS WILLING TO ACCEPT THE LACK OF EFFORT AND LEARNING EVIDENCED BY THE POLL RESULTS.

ALL STUDENTS K THRU 12 HAVE APPROXIMATELY THE SAME AMOUNT OF TIME AVAILABLE TO THEM FOR LEARNING. WHAT CAN EXPLAIN WHY 60% OF THOSE ASKED COULD NOT PROVIDE THE CORRECT ANSWER TO SUCH A BASIC QUESTION?

IN OUR CULTURE THE TWO MOST READY ANSWERS ARE INSUFFICIENT PARENTAL SUPERVISION AND EXCESSIVE ENTERTAINMENT (TV, SPORTS, ETC.). THEY ARE "READY" BECAUSE WE HAVE MET THEM BEFORE, BUT, AS TRUE AND AS WIDESPREAD AS THEY MAY BE, THEY ARE NOT A COMPLETE ANSWER.

FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF OUR CULTURE, HOW CAN WE EITHER ACCEPT OR EXCUSE THE FACT THAT 60% OF THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES IN THIS AGE GROUP DIDN'T EVEN HAVE THE CURIOSITY TO INFORM THEMSELVES OF OUR MOST BASIC HISTORICAL FACT? IN OUR COUNTRY, WITH SO MUCH OF ITS LANGUAGE, LAW, POLITICS, RELIGION, ETC. STILL BEARING THE IMPRINT OF OUR ORIGIN, HOW CAN ANYONE UNAWARE OF THAT ORIGIN EXPECT TO UNDERSTAND OUR PRESENT IDENTITY OR PRIOR DEVELOPMENT?

WE HAVE WRITTEN BEFORE ABOUT THE DUMBING DOWN OF AMERICAN EDUCATION. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT IS REGULARLY ARGUED AND BOUNCED BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN TEACHERS, PARENTS, SCHOOL BOARDS, UNIONS AND STATE/FEDERAL OVERSIGHT BUREAUCRACIES ALL OF WHOM HAVE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES BUT ARE COMMONLY ENGAGED IN PROTECTING THEIR OWN TURF.

"IT IS PROOF OF DUMBING DOWN,  
WRIT LARGE IN BRIGHT, FLASHING LIGHTS."

IN DOING SO THEY ENGAGE IN OBFUSCATION, DENIAL, DEFLECTION AND OTHER EVASIONS. BUT THE STATISTIC WE HAVE QUOTED IS NOT AVOIDABLE. IT IS PROOF OF DUMBING DOWN, WRIT LARGE IN BRIGHT, FLASHING LIGHTS.

“EDUCATION WORKS BETTER WHEN IT REVEALS TRUTH, NOT REPLACES IT.”

\* \* \*

EDUCATION IN AMERICA POSES OTHER QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS. TEACHERS COMPRISE THE LARGEST SINGLE UNIONIZED GROUP IN OUR LABOR FORCE, AND APPLY GREAT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL POWER IN OUR ELECTORAL PROCESS IN THE FORMULATION OF POLICY AND ITS ENABLING LEGISLATION. THIS WEIGHT HAS BEEN ABLE TO RESIST CAMPAIGN RHETORIC AND ROLL OVER MOST REFORM EFFORTS BECAUSE OF THE TWO UNIONS’ ECONOMIC/POLITICAL MUSCLE. FOR ANY PRESIDENT, REGARDLESS OF PARTY, OPPOSITION TO THE EDUCATIONAL LOBBY’S INTERESTS USUALLY MOVES TO THE BACK ROWS AND TENDS TO BE KEPT THERE BY THE CYCLE OF MORE IMMEDIATE CRISES THAT MUST BE FACED.

IT WOULD BE WRONG TO THINK THAT THE EDUCATIONAL BUREAUCRACY’S INFLUENCE IS EXPRESSED ONLY ECONOMICALLY OR POLITICALLY. THE MANY THOUSANDS OF TEACHERS THAT BELONG TO THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOC. (NEA) AND THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT) HAVE A STRONG VOICE IN DETERMINING HOW COURSES ARE TAUGHT. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE OF HOW SUBJECT MATTER IS SELECTED FOR AND PRESENTED IN TEXTBOOKS.

THE TEXTBOOK MARKET IS BITTERLY COMPETITIVE AND, IN ORDER FOR PUBLISHERS TO KEEP COSTS DOWN, THEY ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH AS MUCH CONFORMITY AS POSSIBLE IN THEIR TEXTS. THIS CAN TAKE THE FORM OF PERSUADING SMALLER STATES TO ACCEPT THE TEXTS OF LARGER ONES SUCH AS CA, TX, NY, ETC. THEIR LEVERAGE IS THAT A UNIFORM TEXT WILL PERMIT LARGER PRESS RUNS AND LOWER PRICES WHICH WILL BE READILY APPROVED BY STATE OR LOCAL FUNDING GROUPS.

THE END PRODUCT TODAY IS SO BLAND, GENERALIZED AND UNDEMANDING OF THE STUDENT THAT IT PLAYS A VERY SIGNIFICANT PART IN OUR DUMBING DOWN PROCESS. SHOULD WE THINK THAT TEXT BOOK PUBLICATION IS ONLY AN ECONOMIC EXERCISE, WE WOULD BE BADLY MISTAKEN. IT IS ALSO A MATTER OF POLITICAL INTEREST AND PERSUASION.

TODAY’S MULTICULTURALISM CALLS FOR ALL EFFORTS TO BE DICED AND SLICED TO ACCOMMODATE EVERY MINORITY GROUP REGARDLESS OF ITS SIZE. IN TEXTBOOKS THIS MEANS THE PRESENTATION OF HISTORY, LITERATURE OR OTHER SUBJECTS IN WAYS THAT ESTABLISH EQUALITY, THAT ELIMINATE DIFFERENCES. AS MUCH OF THE CHALLENGE AND PROGRESS OF HISTORY (AND LITERATURE) HAS DERIVED FROM DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PEOPLE, SYSTEMS AND NATIONS, WE ARE WITNESSING ANOTHER KIND OF DUMBING DOWN THAT REWRITES WHAT WE HAVE KNOWN ABOUT THE PAST TO CREATE A NEW TEXT THAT WILL PLEASE THE POLITICAL PRESENT (I.E., MULTICULTURALISM) AND PROVIDE HOPE FOR ITS FUTURE.

THIS IS A FORM OF MANIPULATION OF THE TRUTH WITH THE POWER TO DO AWAY WITH SCHOLARSHIP STANDARDS THAT HAVE EVOLVED AND ESTABLISHED CONSENSUS IN MOST PARTS OF OUR EDUCATED WORLD. IT IS A BAD BARGAIN WITH THE HIGH PROBABILITY OF NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES. EDUCATION WORKS BETTER WHEN IT REVEALS TRUTH, NOT REPLACES IT.

\* \* \*

EDUCATION REFLECTS, AS WELL AS INFORMS, OUR SOCIETY. MONEY, RACE AND POLITICS FIND THEIR WAY INTO THE EDUCATIONAL ARGUMENT AS THEY DO IN OTHERS. FOR INSTANCE, THE EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE IS SHARPLY DIVIDED OVER THE PRACTICE OF PROVIDING DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNING TO STUDENTS UNABLE TO SPEAK ENGLISH, AS HAS BEEN MOST NOTABLY PRACTICED IN AREAS OF HIGH HISPANIC CONCENTRATION.

THE ARGUMENTS INCLUDE FINANCIAL, ACADEMIC, FAIRNESS, SOCIAL, PARENTAL PARTICIPATION AND CLAIMED CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES. THIS DEBATE IS CIRCULAR BY NATURE AND WILL, UNLESS SOME MAGICAL BREAKTHROUGH OCCURS, CONTINUE TO GO AROUND AND AROUND. IT BUMPS UP AGAINST MANY DIFFERENT GROUPS, EMOTIONS, BELIEFS, PEOPLE AND WAYS IN WHICH OUR SOCIETY EXPRESSES ITSELF.

AND IT ALSO REVEALS THE COMPLEXITY OF OUR EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE AND WHY AGREEMENT IS SO DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE. THE GREAT BULK OF OUR EDUCATION TAKES PLACE IN GRADES K-12 AND IS ADMINISTERED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL BY APPOINTED OR ELECTED BOARDS. THERE IS ANOTHER GRADE OF INVOLVEMENT AT BOTH THE STATE AND FEDERAL LEVELS FROM WHICH POLICY AND FUNDING FLOW IN LARGE, BUT NOT OVERLY GENEROUS, AMOUNTS.

THERE IS A SHAMEFUL DISCONNECT HERE WHEN THE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS COMMITTED AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL SEEM TO EVAPORATE AND TEACHERS ARE FORCED TO BUY CLASSROOM SUPPLIES FOR THEIR STUDENTS WITH THEIR OWN FUNDS. THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR SUCH A FAILURE. ITS CAUSE LIES SOMEWHERE ON THE TWISTED TRAIL OF MONEY BETWEEN THE CLASSROOM AND THE CONGRESS. BUT A FAILURE IT IS, AS IS OUR SYSTEM’S NATIONAL RANKING COMPARED TO THOSE OF OTHER COUNTRIES.

OUR VAST EDUCATIONAL BUREAUCRACY IS DIVIDED BETWEEN OUR GOVERNMENT AND OUR LABOR UNIONS WHO EMPLOY MILLIONS OF PEOPLE. THEIR PAYROLLS ARE ENORMOUS, AS ARE THE BENEFITS, ESPECIALLY PENSIONS, THAT DERIVE FROM THEM. SOME COMMUNITIES OFFER “STEP” SALARY INCREASES FOR UP TO TEN EARLY YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT. THESE ARE AUTOMATIC PERCENTAGE INCREASES DESIGNED TO TIE THE TEACHER TO THE SYSTEM AND TO MAKE UP FOR WHAT ARE ADMITTEDLY LOW STARTING SALARIES.

EDUCATION, AS A STATE/LOCAL BUDGET ITEM, IS A BIT OF A BOUNCING BALL. LEGISLATURES AND COMMISSIONS/BOARDS GENERALLY FIND WAYS TO REDUCE ITS FUNDING WHEN OTHER ISSUES WITH MORE IMMEDIATE GLAMOUR, NEED OR PRESSURE COME TO THE FRONT. THE REAL PROBLEM IS THAT, WHILE THE PUBLIC CAN VOTE EDUCATIONAL FUNDING, BOND ISSUES, ETC. INTO EXISTENCE, IT IS THE POLITICAL MACHINERY THAT DISTRIBUTES THE MONEY. AGAIN, THE ANSWER CAN BE FOUND SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE CLASSROOM AND THE CONGRESS.

\* \* \*

WERE WE TO PHRASE AMERICA'S EDUCATIONAL GOAL IN ITS BROADEST TERMS WE MIGHT SAY THAT WE WANT A SYSTEM THAT IS ACADEMICALLY FUNCTIONAL AND ECONOMICALLY EFFICIENT. AS MOST AMERICANS WOULD ACCEPT THIS GOAL, IT CAN SERVE AS A STARTING POINT OF AGREEMENT.

AS SOON AS WE START TO FURTHER DEFINE THIS STARTING POINT, TO MAKE IT MORE SPECIFIC, THOSE SPECIFICS ENGENDER OPPOSITION. THEY CREATE SPACE FOR TRADE-OFFS AND THE NEED FOR ACCOMMODATION WHICH ARE NOT HARMFUL IN THEORY, BUT WHICH, IN PRACTICE, CAN COMPROMISE THE SYSTEM'S FUNCTIONALISM AND ITS ORIGINAL GOAL.

BUT EVEN BEFORE WE ADD ANY SPECIFICS THERE EXISTS A MAJOR PROBLEM IN OUR CONCEPTION AND PRACTICE OF EDUCATION IN AMERICA. EARLY IN OUR HISTORY IT WAS ESTABLISHED AS A MATTER OF POLICY THAT PUBLIC EDUCATION WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO ALL WITHOUT CHARGE. THIS IS NOT ENUMERATED IN THE CONSTITUTION OR THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, BUT HAS BEEN HONORED OVER TIME WITH ALMOST THE SAME SPIRIT AND STRENGTH AS THAT OF ESTABLISHED LAW.

IT IS LIKELY THAT THE FRAMERS OF OUR CONSTITUTION CONSIDERED EDUCATION A MATTER FOR THE STATES TO ADDRESS AND LEFT ITS REGULATION UP TO THEM. AND YET WE NOW HAVE A HYBRID STRUCTURE WITH A WEB OF FUNDING AND POLICY DIRECTIONS CONTROLLED BY A FEDERAL PRESENCE.

IT IS TO BE FREE AND EXCELLENT — AND, AS A RESULT, IT IS TO BE EXPENSIVE!

REGARDLESS OF ITS CONSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND, THERE IS ANOTHER CONTRADICTION IN WHAT WE HAVE CALLED FOR IN OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND WHAT WE THINK IT CAN PRODUCE. WE WANT IT TO BE BOTH FREE IN COST AND SUPERIOR IN QUALITY. IN SOME THINGS SUPERIORITY IS TIED TO, AND EVEN DEMANDS, SMALLER NUMBERS. OUR SYSTEM HAS RULED THAT OUT. IT IS TO BE FREE AND EXCELLENT — AND, AS A RESULT, IT IS TO BE EXPENSIVE!

THERE ARE MANY SERVICES PROVIDED BY GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THOSE OF PUBLIC PROTECTION AND SAFETY, FOR WHICH THEIR AVAILABILITY AND FUNCTION OVERRIDE THEIR COST CONSIDERATIONS. EDUCATION IS ONE OF THESE, AND IT

IS PROBABLY THE MOST DIFFICULT ONE TO ENGAGE.

THE MODEL CONCEIVED AND CONDUCTED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IS FUNDED BY A BEWILDERING, AND OFTEN CONFLICTING, COMBINATION OF SOURCES. ADDITIONALLY, NEITHER THE FUNDING SOURCES NOR THE LOCAL MANAGERS OR PLANNERS CAN CONTROL THE SIZE OR SHAPE OF THEIR RAW MATERIAL — I.E. THE STUDENT BODY. THIS IS BASICALLY AN UNWORKABLE MODEL BY MOST MANAGERIAL STANDARDS, BUT WE HAVE OPTED FOR IT AND DECLARED IT WILL WORK. AND SO IT MUST.

FACED WITH POPULATION GROWTH, SCHOOLS ARE FORCED TO CONSTANTLY ADJUST THEMSELVES TO NEW NUMBERS WHICH ARE OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY RACIAL AND ETHNIC FRICTION THAT FURTHER CONFUSES THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION. OFTEN SCHOOL MANAGERS AND FACULTY ARE CAUGHT BETWEEN SIDES WITH NO EFFECTIVE REMEDY AVAILABLE.

LARGER POPULATION AND STUDENT BODIES REQUIRE LARGER CLASSES, MORE CLASSROOMS, NEW OR ENLARGED BUILDINGS AND PARKING AREAS AND MORE PERSONNEL — TEACHERS, MAINTENANCE, COACHES, COUNSELORS, SECURITY, ETC. AND YET, THE PRODUCT IS ONE OF WHICH 60% DO NOT KNOW THAT ENGLAND WAS MOTHER COUNTRY TO OUR COLONIES.

\* \* \*

THE QUESTION REMAINS — “HOW DO WE FIND A WAY TO REPAIR OUR SYSTEM? TO BRING ABOUT A MORE ORDERLY AND FUNCTIONAL, LESS POLITICAL STRUCTURE CAPABLE OF PRODUCING A BETTER PRODUCT?”

WE MUST START AT THE CENTER, AT OUR POINT OF AGREEMENT — ACADEMICALLY FUNCTIONAL AND ECONOMICALLY EFFICIENT. FROM THIS CENTER WE WILL HAVE TO EXPAND OUTWARD EVER SO GRADUALLY AS INCREMENTS OF AGREEMENT BECOME POSSIBLE. THIS WILL NOT BE EASY. EACH EFFORT TO ENLARGE OUR AREA OF AGREEMENT WILL MEET RESISTANCE IN THE FORM OF INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP PREFERENCES, CONVICTIONS, BACKGROUNDS, PREJUDICES, HABITS, ETC. WHICH WILL NOT BE SURRENDERED EASILY

THE ONLY WAY TO FORGE NEW AGREEMENT CAPABLE OF OVERCOMING OR AVOIDING THESE MULTIPLE FORMS OF RESISTANCE IS TO FRAME THE NEW AGREEMENT IN ONE WAY ONLY — IS WHAT WE CONTEMPLATE IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST? THE WE/THEY, REPUBLICAN/DEMOCRAT, CONSERVATIVE/LIBERAL, UNION/NON-UNION AGENDAS MUST BE DROPPED. PEOPLE WILL, OF COURSE, SEE THE NATIONAL INTEREST DIFFERENTLY, BUT IT IS THE ONLY WAY BY WHICH WE WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE PROGRESS IN IMPROVING OUR INSTITUTIONS.

THE SIMPLE ACT OF INQUIRING WHETHER SOMETHING IS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST IMMEDIATELY ELIMINATES MUCH OF THE PETTY AND PARTISAN DRIVEL THAT WE HAVE ALLOWED TO CREEP INTO OUR NATIONAL CONVERSATION. BASED LARGELY ON THE SEPARATIST THINKING OF MULTICULTURALISM, THIS POLITICAL STATIC HAS BECOME AN IMPEDIMENT IN IDENTIFYING AND ACHIEVING NATIONAL GOALS. BUT WHETHER MULTICULTURAL OR TRADITIONAL IN OUR WAY OF THINKING, WE

MUST REFRAME OUR CONCEPT OF “THE NATIONAL INTEREST” AS A WHOLE, RATHER THAN AN ACCUMULATION OF PARTS.

OUR COUNTRY IS IN DESPERATE NEED OF RENEWAL. THIS CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED BY OUR OLD WAYS OF THINKING AND ACTING. ACTUALLY, MAKING PEOPLE VIEW ISSUES IN TERMS OF A NATIONAL INTEREST CAN CHANGE THE WAY GOVERNMENT OPERATES AND RESPONDS TO ITS CITIZENS, AND VICE-VERSA. SUCH AN EFFORT IS BY ITS NATURE EDUCATIONAL, AS IS AMERICAN RENEWAL. THIS WILL BE A NEW CONVERSATION AMONG OURSELVES WHICH WE SHOULD HAVE AND WHICH MAY WELL PROVIDE US WITH BETTER INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNAL WAYS TO PURSUE LEARNING.

THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE THE WILL OR THE STRENGTH TO ASSURE SUCCESS, BUT THEY’VE BEEN A GOOD BET IN THE PAST, AND THE STATUS QUO OFFERS NO HOPE. WE HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE DUMBING DOWN OF OUR SCHOOLS UNTIL THEY NOW FALL FAR SHORT OF OUR STATED GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS. THE ULTIMATE DUMBING DOWN WOULD BE THAT OF OUR WHOLE COUNTRY. WE ARE PROBABLY MUCH CLOSER TO THIS THAN WE THINK. CONSENSUS ON THIS SHOULD BE PART OF OUR STARTING POINT, BUT WE ARE NOT READY FOR THAT YET.

\* \* \*

ONE OF THE REASONS WHY EDUCATIONAL POLICY HAS PROVED SO DIFFICULT TO CHANGE IS THAT THE EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE WHICH HAS TO BE MODIFIED EXTENDS FAR BEYOND THE PRIMARY FUNCTION OF TEACHING. BY “STRUCTURE” WE REFER TO THE POLICY AND MANAGERIAL BEHAVIOR NECESSARY TO PRODUCE RESULTS THAT WILL MEET OUR GOALS.

EDUCATION IS A MULTI-TASK PRESENCE THAT REACHES INTO ALMOST EVERY IMPORTANT AREA OF OUR LIVES — FINANCIAL, POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL — WHICH MAY BE FAR REMOVED FROM THE CLASSROOM, BUT MAY WEIGH HEAVILY ON THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS.

LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS ARE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE OVERSIGHT FOR SCHOOL MANAGERS AND FACULTY, BUT ARE OFTEN CALLED UPON TO MEDIATE OR SETTLE DISPUTES BETWEEN PARENTS AND SCHOOL STAFF. THE DISTRICTS REPRESENTED BY SCHOOL BOARDS CAN VARY IN PHYSICAL SIZE, BUT SHARE THE PRACTICE OF BOTH RECEIVING AND DISTRIBUTING LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY.

THEIR BUDGETS INVARIABLY REVEAL THAT (AGAIN, AS POPULATION EXPANDS) THEY SPEND EVER LARGER AMOUNTS ON CONSTRUCTION, LAND ACQUISITION, MAINTENANCE, SECURITY, TRANSPORTATION, ETC. OFTEN UNSURE OF THEIR OWN EXPERTISE IN THESE AND OTHER AREAS, THEY INCREASINGLY TURN TO CONSULTANTS TO PROVIDE SUPPORT AND POLITICAL COVER FOR THEIR DECISIONS.

THE WIDE VARIETY OF ISSUES THAT EMANATE FROM LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS’ FUNCTIONS REQUIRES CONSTANT CONTACT WITH LOCAL LEGISLATIVE AND LICENSING BODIES. THESE OFTEN HAVE THEIR OWN ARCAINE PROCESSES THAT REQUIRE THE RIGHT CONTACT AT THE RIGHT TIME TO MOVE

THE NECESSARY CONSTRUCTION PERMITS AND POLITICAL APPROVALS.

“THEY BUY IT AND THEY SELL IT.  
THEY MAKE THE MARKET IN IT.  
AND THE PRICE IS RIGHT — FOR THEM.”

TO DO THIS, SCHOOL BOARDS, LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, TURN TO THE SERVICES OF A GROUP OF WELL-CONNECTED LAWYERS, ACCOUNTANTS, APPRAISERS, ENGINEERS AND CONSULTANTS WHOSE CAREERS ARE BASED ON ACCESS. THEY BUY IT AND THEY SELL IT. THEY MAKE THE MARKET IN IT. AND THE PRICE IS RIGHT — FOR THEM.

FREQUENTLY SCHOOL BOARDS HAVE TO ENGAGE IN PUBLIC FINANCING WHEREBY THEIR FUNDS DERIVE FROM TAX REVENUES OR BOND ISSUES BOTH OF WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE CURRENT FUNDING WHICH CAN BE REPAID WITH INTEREST LATER.

AND AGAIN TO EMPHASIZE THE REACH AND INTERCONNECTION OF OUR EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE, BECAUSE MANY TYPES OF LOCAL DEBT INSTRUMENTS ENJOY TAX FREE IRS TREATMENT OF THEIR INTEREST PAYMENTS, THEY SERVE AS IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN THE FINANCIAL MIX OF WALL STREET AND IN PRIVATE ASSET MANAGEMENT.

IN SHORT, SCHOOL BOARDS THAT OFTEN DEAL IN BUDGETS OF MILLIONS, OR HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS, OF DOLLARS FIND NO SHORTAGE OF USUALLY KNOWLEDGEABLE SERVICE PROVIDERS IN THE PRIVATE OR THE PUBLIC SECTOR WHO ARE WELL DISPOSED TO ASSIST IN THE EXPENDITURE PROCESS, AND TO RECEIVE FEES THEREFROM.

\* \* \*

WITHIN OUR EDUCATIONAL CULTURE, AS WE HAVE DUMBED DOWN, SOME OTHER THINGS HAVE BEEN GOING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION — UP. ONE OF THESE IS TUITION WHICH FOR PRIVATE SCHOOLS HAS GREATLY SURPASSED THE NATIONAL RATE OF INFLATION IN RECENT YEARS.

IN STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TUITION IS LARGELY SUBSIDIZED BY THE STATES AND, CONSEQUENTLY, IS NOT A SIGNIFICANT MARKER. BUT, GOING BEYOND TUITION, ESPECIALLY IN THE AREA OF ATHLETIC EXPENDITURES, WE CAN FIND SOME QUITE SURPRISING NUMBERS:

FOR INSTANCE, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SPENDS MORE ANNUALLY ON FOOTBALL (\$73 MILLION) AND ALL ATHLETICS (\$120 MILLION) THAN ANY OTHER SCHOOL. RANKED JUST BELOW IT ARE GEORGIA AND FLORIDA<sup>2</sup>.

TEXAS’ FOOTBALL TEAM ALSO EARNS THE MOST PROFIT AT \$46.2 MILLION FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY NOTRE DAME AND GEORGIA<sup>3</sup>. MICHIGAN, PENN STATE AND OHIO STATE SCORED HIGHEST IN AVERAGE ATTENDANCE PER GAME, ALL IN EXCESS OF 100,000<sup>4</sup>.

NOTHING ABOVE, HOWEVER, CAN SO CLEARLY SUGGEST THE RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS GROWN UP BETWEEN MONEY,

SPORTS AND EDUCATION AS THE AMOUNT OF FUNDS RAISED FROM ALUMNI AND OTHER SOURCES FOR ATHLETICS. FOR 2007, NORTH CAROLINA HEADS THIS LIST AT \$51 MILLION WITH TWENTY FULL-TIME ATHLETIC SOLICITORS FOLLOWED BY VIRGINIA WITH \$45 MILLION AND 19 FUND RAISERS<sup>5</sup>.

FOOTBALL, OF COURSE, HAS BECOME A WAY OF LIFE FOR AMERICANS AND THEIR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. EVEN BEFORE COLLEGE, AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL, ON FRIDAY NIGHTS WHOLE TOWNS IN OUR WESTERN AND MIDWESTERN STATES EMPTY THEMSELVES AND REAPPEAR AT THE HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUMS. THESE ARE NOT AS LARGE AS THEIR COLLEGE COUNTERPARTS, BUT THEY ARE HOME TO THE SAME LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT. THEY ARE MOSTLY WELL BUILT, LIT AND MAINTAINED.

THIS EMOTIONAL COMPONENT COMES IN ALL SHAPES, SIZES AND DEGREES AND ASSUMES ITS MOST EXTREME FORM IN THE ALUMNI BOOSTER WHO ALLOWS HIS LIFE TO BE DOMINATED BY HIS SCHOOL'S FOOTBALL ACTIVITIES WHETHER OR NOT HE ACTUALLY PLAYED.

SOME TIME AGO, WE CAME ACROSS AN ACCOUNT OF WHAT MUST BE THE ZENITH OF SUCH BOOSTERISM. A MIDWESTERN COUPLE LIVED IN A LAND CRUISER VEHICLE FOR THE WHOLE FOOTBALL SEASON, FOLLOWING THEIR SCHOOL'S TEAM FROM GAME TO GAME. EVERY FLAT SURFACE IN THEIR CRUISER WAS DEVOTED TO TEAM MEMORABILIA. ALL FABRICS FOR DRAPES, SHEETS, TOWELS, UPHOLSTERY, ETC. WERE EITHER IN THE SCHOOL'S COLORS OR BORE ITS INSIGNIA, OR BOTH. DITTO FOR CARPETS, CHINA, GLASSWARE, KNIVES, FORKS, SPOONS, ETC. THE ARTICLE CONCLUDED ITS REPORT ON THIS COUPLE'S LIFESTYLE BY STATING THAT AT THE END OF THE FOOTBALL SEASON THEY RETURNED TO THEIR HOME ON CAMPUS WHERE THEIR SOCIAL LIFE ENTAILED MIXING WITH OTHER BOOSTERS.

MALE ATHLETES, EITHER REAL OR WISFUL, OFTEN ENGAGE IN RELIVING THEIR YOUTHFUL YEARS, AND ARE ENCOURAGED TO DO SO BY COLLEGE ATHLETIC FUND RAISING TECHNIQUES AND PROGRAMS. STILL, MOST WILL NOT APPROACH THE ASSUMED IDENTITY OF THE BOOSTER DESCRIBED ABOVE.

THE DISTURBING QUESTION THAT SUCH EXTREME BOOSTERISM ASKS IS "HOW DOES IT RELATE TO EDUCATION?" THE HOURS, DOLLARS AND EFFORTS THAT ARE SPENT ON ATHLETICS WITH THE INTENT TO SHOW SUPREMACY OR ACHIEVE COMPETITIVE VICTORY ARE THE TAIL THAT HAS COME TO WAG THE DOG.

IT WOULD BE REACHING TOO FAR TO THINK THAT THE GENEROUS FOOTBALL REVENUES REPORTED ABOVE ARE SPENT ON EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES. THEY USUALLY STAY WELL WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT AND ARE USED TO FUND OTHER SPORTS PROGRAMS AND/OR ATHLETIC PURPOSES. OF COURSE, IF A MAJOR EXPENDITURE IS REQUIRED FOR A NEW STADIUM OR PRACTICE FACILITY, SUCH AN EFFORT IS EXPANDED TO INCLUDE GENERAL UNIVERSITY AND ALUMNI FUNDING SOURCES.

WE ARE NOT ALONE IN OUR ATHLETIC EMPHASIS. OTHER SCHOOLS IN OTHER COUNTRIES ENGAGE IN ATHLETIC PROGRAMS THAT SCHEDULE MATCHES BETWEEN HISTORICAL OR REGIONAL RIVALS WHERE MONEY, MEDIA COVERAGE AND EMOTION RUN HIGH.

ONE OF THE REASONS FOR OUR INTENSE COMPETITION

IS THAT OUR SCHOOL ATHLETIC PROGRAMS SERVE TO PREPARE STUDENT ATHLETES FOR PROFESSIONAL SPORTS AND OFFER THEM A WAY TO BE RECOGNIZED, TRACKED AND GRADED AS THEIR SKILLS DEVELOP.

THE NORMAL PROGRESSION IS FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE TO THE PROFESSIONAL LEAGUES, BUT OCCASIONALLY THERE ARE THOSE, USUALLY POSSESSED OF MORE ATHLETICISM THAN MATURITY, WHO GO DIRECTLY FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO THE PROS. WHATEVER THEIR ROUTE, THERE ARE ALWAYS SCOUTS ON HAND TO OBSERVE AND EVALUATE THEM.

AMERICA HAS DIRECTED, AND CONTINUES TO DIRECT, INCREASINGLY LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY TO ITS PROFESSIONAL SPORTS WHICH HAVE BECOME A MARKETING MIRACLE OF OUR TIME. THEY CREATE EMPLOYMENT, REVENUE, DREAMS OF GLORY AND A MEANS OF EXIT FROM THE DRUG USE AND POVERTY OF OUR INNER CITIES. SPORTS AT AND AFTER COLLEGE HAVE BECOME BIG BUSINESS. THEY APPEAL TO AND MOTIVATE A HIGHLY VOCAL SEGMENT OF OUR SOCIETY. THEY HAVE A BASE AND THEY ARE, IN TURN, A BASE FOR A VARIETY OF INTERESTS.

BUT THEIR EXCEPTIONAL COMMERCIAL SUCCESS HAS STRETCHED THEIR CONNECTION TO EDUCATION. SPORTS WAGERS, TRAVEL, PROMOTION, MANAGEMENT AND CONTESTS COST US MANY BILLIONS OF DOLLARS EACH YEAR. WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY FROM THE WRESTLING MATCH OR DISCUS TOSS OF THE ANCIENT GREEK ACADEMY.

IT HAS BEEN ARGUED THAT COLLEGE SPORTS PROGRAMS, IN ADDITION TO THEIR PHYSICAL AND HEALTH BENEFITS, DEVELOP VALUES FROM FAIR PLAY AND TEAM PARTICIPATION THAT FORM THE STUDENT AND SERVE THE COMMUNITY. IT'S A REASONABLE ARGUMENT, HOWEVER, THAT THESE RELATIVELY SILENT VALUES ARE DROWNED OUT BY THE DIN OF CELEBRITY, MEDIA EXPOSURE AND THE EXTENSION OF ATHLETIC SCHEDULES TO INCLUDE POST SEASON CONTESTS IN PURSUIT OF THE #1 TITLE OR STATUS.

THIS MESSAGE OF "MORE", WHICH HAS COME TO DOMINATE THE MARKET PLACE, NOW INFECTS THE ACADEMY AND AGAIN POSES THE QUESTION OF WHAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATHLETICS AND EDUCATION IS, AND SHOULD BE, IN OUR PRESENT AND OUR FUTURE.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? BECAUSE IT PLAYS A LARGE ROLE IN FORGING OUR NATIONAL IDENTITY. IF WE ARE WHAT WE EAT, AS MANY SCIENTIFIC THEORIES NOW PROCLAIM, CAN WE NOT JUST AS EASILY BE WHAT WE TEACH?

AMERICA'S IDENTITY HAS CHANGED DRAMATICALLY IN THE LAST CENTURY. NATIONAL IDENTITIES CAN EVOLVE GRADUALLY FROM CIRCUMSTANCES WE CANNOT PRACTICALLY CONTROL, OR THEY MAY BE FORMED FROM CONSCIOUS EFFORTS. MUCH OF OUR RECENT TECHNOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE HAS BEEN SO RAPID THAT IT HAS CREATED CONFUSION AND DIVISION WITHIN OUR INSTITUTIONS AND OUR CITIZENRY WHICH PLAYS OUT IN THE BITTER IDEOLOGICAL BATTLES (THE IDEOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE) THAT PASS FOR GOVERNMENT.

". . . IT IS ONLY ONE SLIP AWAY  
FROM DISASTER."

LIKE A HIGH WIRE CIRCUS ACT, WE WATCH THE

IDEOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE WITH RAPT ATTENTION, AND EVEN FASCINATION, MINDLESS OF ITS DANGER AND THAT IT IS ONLY ONE SLIP AWAY FROM DISASTER.

WE ARE AT THE POINT NOW WHERE OUR RENEWAL WILL REQUIRE US TO COME TO A MORE SHARED SENSE OF OUR IDENTITY — NATIONAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL. AND THE ONLY WAY TO ACHIEVE THIS IS TO EXAMINE THE CHOICES AVAILABLE TO US IN TERMS OF THE NATIONAL INTEREST. EDUCATION, IN ALL ITS MANY ASPECTS, HAS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THAT INTEREST AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE.

\* \* \*

EDUCATION REACHES OUT GEOGRAPHICALLY AND BY AGE GROUP TO MOST OF OUR POPULATION, WITH THE POWER TO BOTH TEACH AND TRANSFORM. WE HAVE NOTED ABOVE ITS INVOLVEMENT WITH OUR NATIONAL PSYCHE AND OUR PRIVATE COMMERCIAL SECTOR THROUGH ATHLETICS. THERE ARE OTHERS.

WE STATED EARLIER THAT THE SERIOUS ISSUES AMERICA FACES DO NOT EXIST IN ISOLATION, BUT ARE OFTEN JOINED IN COMPLEX WEBS. BECAUSE OF EDUCATION'S REACH AND ITS PUBLIC STATUS AND FUNCTION, IT HAS BECOME A PRIME TARGET FOR MULTICULTURALISTS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO INFLUENCE CURRICULA, CHANGE SCHOOL SOCIAL PATTERNS AND TO INCUBATE THEIR AGENDA AMONG OUR YOUNGEST STUDENTS.

SCHOOLS ARE BASICALLY DESIGNED IN A TRIANGULAR SHAPE AROUND THREE ELEMENTS — THE STUDENT BODY, THE CURRICULUM AND THE FACULTY. IN PAST YEARS WE HAVE OBSERVED THE GROWTH OF ONE PROCESS THAT HAS HAD A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON ALL THREE, AND YET CONTINUES TO SPREAD. IT IS CALLED GRADE INFLATION AND TAKES THE FORM OF INCREASING NUMBERS OF STUDENTS BEING AWARDED HIGH GRADES. UCLA, FOR INSTANCE, REPORTED THAT FORTY-FIVE PERCENT OF ITS 2006 FRESHMAN CLASS WERE RATED "A" STUDENTS WITH GRADE POINT AVERAGES (GPA) OF 4.0 OR HIGHER.<sup>6</sup>

THE MOTIVATING KEY TO UNDERSTANDING GRADE INFLATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES IS THAT IT IS DESIGNED TO REMOVE, OR LESSEN, DISTINCTIONS, AS IS MOST OF THE MULTICULTURAL AGENDA. BUT GRADE INFLATION POSES SOME VERY REAL PROBLEMS FOR ACADEMIA, AND COLLEGE ADMISSIONS IS ONE OF THEM.

AN "A" GRADE USED TO BE RESERVED FOR ONLY A VERY FEW STUDENTS AND SERVED AS A BADGE OF DISTINCTION. AS SUCH, IT WAS A MARKER OF GENERALLY ACCEPTED VALUE AMONG ADMISSIONS OFFICES AT ALL LEVELS OF APPLICATION. GRADE INFLATION HAS CHANGED THIS SO THAT MANY MORE STUDENTS RECEIVE HIGH GRADES AND THESE "A" STUDENTS, RATHER THAN REPRESENTING DISTINCTION, FORM A LARGE GROUP AT MID-LEVEL OF THEIR CLASS WHERE THEY SIGNAL AVERAGE RATHER THAN EXCELLENT COMPARATIVE SKILLS.

IN A GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 500, THE UCLA PERCENTAGE WOULD TRANSLATE INTO A TWO HUNDRED STUDENT MIDSECTION OF "A" STUDENTS. IN THE BRIEF TIME

OF THE RECENT 1990-2000 DECADE, HIGH SCHOOL GPAS INCREASED FROM 2.68 TO 2.94, OR 9.7%.<sup>7</sup> EVEN MORE REVEALING, PERHAPS, IN 2005 23% OF COLLEGE FRESHMEN CLAIMED AN AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL GRADE OF A OR BETTER, ABOUT TWICE AS MANY AS IN 1975.<sup>8</sup>

THIS TENDENCY TO PROGRESSIVELY INFLATE GRADES, THEREBY LESSENING THEIR VALUE, HAS CAUSED DIFFICULTIES AT ADMISSIONS OFFICES WHICH HAD EMPLOYED GRADE LEVELS AS THEIR PRIMARY DETERMINANT OF ACCEPTANCE. FACED WITH A FLOOD OF "A" STUDENT APPLICATIONS, ADMISSIONS OFFICES HAVE SOUGHT TO CREATE NEW CRITERIA THAT EXAMINE MORE PERSONAL AND LESS SCHOLASTIC ASPECTS OF APPLICANTS' LIVES. WHETHER THIS SHIFT HAS AIDED IN FURTHERING THE INTENSE PERSONAL EMPHASIS OF THE "ME" GENERATION, OR WHETHER IT IS A RESULT OF IT, IS A GOOD QUESTION.

ADMISSIONS OFFICES ARE AFFECTED IN ANOTHER WAY IN THAT NARROWING THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL ACADEMIC RECORDS IS PUSHING ADMISSIONS PERSONNEL TO ASSIGN MORE IMPORTANCE TO STANDARDIZED TESTS AT A TIME WHEN GROWING NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WITHIN THE EDUCATIONAL FIELD HAVE FOUND CAUSE TO OBJECT TO THEM FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER.

THEN, THERE IS THAT PART OF THE ARGUMENT THAT CARRIES TOO FAR AND PROVIDES A NOTE OF HUMOR. IN THEIR HEADLONG PURSUIT OF "ONE SIZE FITS ALL" NON-DISTINCTION SOME HIGH SCHOOLS HAVE APPOINTED MULTIPLE VALEDICTORIANS AND OTHER CLASS HONORS. IT'S THE OLD END OF SUMMER CAMP AWARDS CEREMONY WHEN EVERY CAMPER RECEIVES A PRIZE — CUP, RIBBON, BANNER, SCROLL, ETC. THE IDEA OF THIRTY OR MORE VALEDICTORIANS GIVING SPEECHES, EVEN BRIEF ONES, CAN ONLY MAKE THE GRADUATION CEREMONY MORE UNWIELDY THAN IT ALREADY IS.

THERE IS ANOTHER ASPECT OF OUR DUMBING DOWN PROCESS THAT IS CLOSELY RELATED TO GRADE INFLATION. IT IS THE PRACTICE OF PROMOTING STUDENTS TO THE NEXT GRADE LEVEL WITHOUT THEIR HAVING PASSED EXAMINATIONS OR OTHERWISE MASTERED THEIR CURRENT COURSE REQUIREMENTS. THESE "SOCIAL PROMOTIONS" ARE DESIGNED TO AVOID THE STIGMA OF FAILURE AND TO REWARD EVERYONE EQUALLY. UNFORTUNATELY THEIR REAL FAILURE, TO UNDERSTAND AND USE COURSE MATERIAL, FOLLOWS THESE STUDENTS THROUGH THEIR SCHOOL YEARS AND CREATES AN EVER WIDENING GAP BETWEEN WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM AND WHAT THEY CAN PROVIDE IN RESPONSE.

AND, FINALLY, ONE MORE TRAGIC FORM OF DUMBING DOWN. WHILE IT IS INTENDED TO HELP AND EXCUSE THOSE OF LESSER CAPABILITIES, BY SHRINKING THE ACHIEVEMENT HORIZON FOR THE WHOLE GROUP IT PENALIZES ALL. THIS IS A FORM OF MINORITY PREFERENCE/ELEVATION EXPRESSED NOT IN GOVERNMENT, BUT IN THE CLASSROOM. A BETTER CHOICE THAN THE LOWERING OF THE GROUP'S STANDARDS WOULD BE TO OFFER WAYS THAT WOULD BEST SERVE THOSE WITH LIMITED ABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS.

“. . . AN UNNECESSARY AMERICAN TRAGEDY.”

MASS SOCIAL PROMOTIONS ARE A RECENT PHENOMENON IN OUR EDUCATION HISTORY. THEY CREATE OBVIOUS PROBLEMS FOR SCHOOL FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATORS THAT WERE UNKNOWN PRIOR TO A HALF CENTURY AGO, AND TRACE THEIR ORIGINS TO OUR FIRST EXPOSURE TO MULTICULTURALISM AND POLITICAL CORRECTNESS. LIKE THEM, THEY SEEK TO ELIMINATE DISTINCTIONS OF ANY KIND AND, IN THE CASE OF EDUCATION, ARE WILLING TO SACRIFICE STUDENT LEARNING IN FAVOR OF THEIR SOCIOPOLITICAL IDEOLOGY. THE END RESULT OF A KNOW-NOTHING EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE ILL-EQUIPPED TO OBTAIN ANYTHING OTHER THAN THE LOWEST FORM OF EMPLOYMENT IS AN UNNECESSARY AMERICAN TRAGEDY. AND YET WE HAVE PERMITTED AND ENCOURAGED IT FOR ALMOST TWO GENERATIONS. THERE CAN BE NO SATISFYING ANSWER TO OUR EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS UNTIL WE ASK "WHY?"

AUTHOR/TEACHER FROSTY WOOLDRIDGE RELAYS FROM BRIAN WILLIAMS/NBC NIGHTLY NEWS THESE SOBERING STATISTICS. DETROIT SUFFERS FROM A DROP OR FLUNK OUT RATE OF 76%. OTHER MAJOR CITIES (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, LA, SF, MIAMI & CHICAGO) EXPERIENCE A 50% TO 60% RATE.

FORTY-TWO MILLION AMERICANS (14%) CANNOT READ OR WRITE, AND ANOTHER FIFTY MILLION (17%) READ ONLY AT FOURTH GRADE LEVEL OR BELOW. THE COMBINED TOTAL OF THESE TWO GROUPS AMOUNTS TO NINETY-TWO MILLION, OR 31% OF OUR POPULATION<sup>9</sup>.

THERE ARE MANY RITES OF PASSAGE IN OUR SOCIETY. ONE IS A RITE OF SPRING WHEN HIGH SCHOOLS EMPTY OUT AND SENIORS GO ON TO THE NEXT LEVEL OF LIFE — COLLEGE OR WORK. WILLIAMS REPORTS THAT 1.2 MILLION OF THESE APPROACH THEIR FUTURE UNABLE TO READ OR WRITE!

\* \* \*

NOT SURPRISINGLY, OUR NATIONAL EDUCATION ISSUE BONDS AT MANY POINTS WITH OUR IMMIGRATION ISSUES, THE MOST FIERCELY CONTESTED OF WHICH IS ARGUABLY BILINGUAL EDUCATION. THIS PROCESS INVOLVES PROVIDING PARALLEL LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT PROFICIENT IN ENGLISH IN BOTH THE STUDENT'S NATIVE LANGUAGE AND IN ENGLISH.

IN THOSE STATES THAT HAVE BEEN MOST IMPACTED BY OUR HIGH HISPANIC IMMIGRATION NUMBERS OVER THE PAST HALF CENTURY THIS PRACTICE COMES CLOSE TO NECESSITATING TWO SYSTEMS — ONE IN ENGLISH, AND ONE IN SPANISH.

SUCH DIVISION AND DUPLICATION IS COSTLY AND INEFFICIENT FOR FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATIVE PLANNING, BUT IT HAS BEEN TENACIOUSLY PUSHED BY IMMIGRANT ADVOCACY GROUPS AS A WAY OF MAINTAINING CULTURAL IDENTITY. IT'S MAIN FAILURE, HOWEVER, IS ACADEMIC, AS IN MANY STATES NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING STUDENTS SHOWED VERY SLOW LEARNING PROGRESS UNDER THE BILINGUAL FORMAT. THIS MATTER IS FURTHER COMPLICATED BY THE FACT THAT SOME SCHOOL DISTRICTS RECEIVE EXTRA FUNDS FOR CHILDREN DESIGNATED AS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL).

EDUCATORS WHO OPPOSE THE BILINGUAL PROGRAM FAVOR

ENGLISH IMMERSION CLASSES AND, WHERE THEY HAVE OBTAINED DISTRICT PERMISSION TO IMPLEMENT THEM, GENERALLY REPORT SUCCESSFUL RESULTS. IN ILLINOIS' DIAMOND LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT 76 IMMERSION CLASSROOMS WERE INITIATED IN 2004 AND BY 2007 IT REPORTED ELL SCORES HAD IMPROVED 100% IN READING AND 60% IN MATH.<sup>10</sup> OTHER STATES THAT HAVE HAD SIMILARLY SUCCESSFUL RESULTS AND HAVE ADAPTED IMMERSION TECHNIQUES INCLUDE CA, AZ AND MA.

CA IS A SPECIAL CASE IN SEVERAL WAYS. IT SUFFERS FROM EXPLOSIVE INCREASES IN POPULATION, IMMIGRATION, TAXES, BUDGET DEFICITS AND DEBT. BECAUSE OF ITS NUMBERS AND THEIR TRENDS IT COULD WELL QUALIFY AS THE POSTER STATE FOR EDUCATION/IMMIGRATION ISSUES.

THE CENTER FOR IMMIGRATION STUDIES HAS REPORTED THAT IN 1970 IMMIGRANTS REPRESENTED 9% OF CA'S POPULATION WHICH BY 2008 HAD GROWN TO 27%. IN THE SAME PERIOD CA'S LABOR FORCE RANKING DROPPED FROM SEVENTH MOST EDUCATED TO FIFTIETH — I.E. LAST. CIS GOES ON TO STATE:

"PRODUCTIVITY, STANDARD OF LIVING, WELFARE USE, HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE AND THE TAX BASE ARE HEAVILY IMPACTED BY EDUCATION LEVELS. THE LOW LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN THE STATE IS LIKELY TO CREATE SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES FOR CA IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE."<sup>11</sup>

IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO STATE MORE CLEARLY THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND IMMIGRATION.

\* \* \*

THE ROLE OF LABOR UNIONS IN OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM HAS GROWN TREMENDOUSLY IN THE PAST HALF CENTURY, AND TODAY OUR SYSTEM IS A HIGHLY UNIONIZED FORCE. THE NEA, THE LARGEST TEACHERS UNION, ENTERTAINED AND ACCOMMODATED 9,000 MEMBERS AT ITS 2008 ANNUAL CONVENTION WHO FOR THE MOST PART ARE HIGHLY VOCAL AND ARTICULATE SPONSORS OF NEA POLICIES AND PROGRAMS.

IN THE EDUCATIONAL FIELD WE FACE AN UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCE IN THAT UNION POLICIES AND SUPPORT ARE BROADLY DIRECTED AT MANY MORE ISSUES THAN THOSE CONCERNED WITH THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS. THESE TAKE THE FORM OF STAND-ALONE POLITICAL ISSUES SUCH AS STATEHOOD FOR DC AND GUN CONTROL. THEY INCLUDE OPPOSING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ENGLISH AS OUR OFFICIAL LANGUAGE AND PROPOSE STRONG CULTURAL POSITIONS INVOLVING SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER RIGHTS AND IDENTIFICATIONS, DIVERSITY, ETC.

TEACHERS HAVE ACCESS TO YOUNG STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM ON A DAILY BASIS AND CAN DETERMINE, OR AT LEAST INFLUENCE, MUCH OF WHAT IS TAUGHT THERE AND HOW OUR POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT ARE PERCEIVED BY OUR YOUNGEST CITIZENS. WE RUN A GREAT RISK IF WE ENGAGE IN POLITICAL OR CULTURAL INDOCTRINATION WITHOUT IDENTIFYING IT AS PERSONAL OPINION AND OPEN TO CHOICE.

“IT IS THE IDEA OF DEBATE AT THE CENTER OF THE ACADEMY THAT HAS DRAWN THEIR MOST PERSISTENT FIRE.”

OUR WESTERN EDUCATIONAL VALUES HAVE HAD MANY BATTLES WITH THE VARIOUS FORMS OF THOUGHT POLICE THEY HAVE ENCOUNTERED ALONG THEIR WAY. WHILE THESE ENFORCERS’ UNIFORMS AND TARGETS HAVE VARIED, IT IS THE IDEA OF DEBATE AT THE CENTER OF THE ACADEMY THAT HAS DRAWN THEIR MOST PERSISTENT FIRE.

RENEWING AMERICA WILL REQUIRE US TO VISUALIZE AND DECLARE THE FUTURE FORM AND DIRECTION OF AMERICAN EDUCATION AND, IN DOING SO, WE MUST ASSURE THAT CLAIMS FROM ALL POINTS ON OUR POLITICAL SPECTRUM ARE PRESENTED OPENLY, HONESTLY AND IN WAYS THAT RECOGNIZE OUR HISTORY AND TRADITIONS.

\* \* \*

LANGUAGE IS A CULTURAL COMPONENT. IT IS ALSO A COMMODITY EMPLOYED BY MAN AND BEAST TO REACH BEYOND INSTINCT AND TO EXPAND THEIR ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND THEIR WORLD AND EACH OTHER. LIKE THE MARKETPLACE, LANGUAGE IS HIGHLY FLUID AND CHANGES ITS FORM OR DIRECTION AS THE RESULT OF MULTIPLE INDEPENDENT DECISIONS.

IN CULTURAL MATTERS BETWEEN OPEN SOCIETIES THERE IS USUALLY A FREE AND SPONTANEOUS EXCHANGE. IRON CLAD CULTURAL CONTROL, WHERE IT SUCCEEDS, USUALLY TAKES PLACE AS THE RESULT OF REVOLUTION OR WAR FOLLOWED BY MILITARY OCCUPATION OF THE DEFEATED COUNTRY. BUT EVEN THEN, WITH BRUTAL CONTROLS AND REPRESSION IMPOSED, CULTURAL REMNANTS CAN SURVIVE IN SECRET FOR SEVERAL GENERATIONS.

“ . . . WE SEEM TO TREAT OUR LANGUAGE AS SOMETHING THAT WILL TAKE CARE OF ITSELF.”

FRANCE IS EUROPE’S LEADING DEFENDER OF ITS LANGUAGE AND EXERTS A CONSCIOUS AND CONTINUING EFFORT TO PROTECT IT FROM SLOPPY USAGE, HYBRID FORMS AND OUTRIGHT INVASIONS BY FOREIGN PHRASEOLOGY. THESE EFFORTS ARE PROBABLY MORE NOBLE THAN PRACTICAL, BUT EFFORTS THEY ARE. FRANCE GRADES HIGH FOR WHAT IT ATTEMPTS. IN OUR COUNTRY WE SEEM TO TREAT OUR LANGUAGE AS SOMETHING THAT WILL TAKE CARE OF ITSELF.

THE REASON FOR THIS IS EVIDENT. WE ARE STILL YOUNG BY HISTORICAL/CULTURAL STANDARDS AND, OVER THE COURSE OF OUR TWO HUNDRED PLUS YEARS OF NATIONHOOD, HAVE IDENTIFIED OURSELVES AND INSTITUTIONS MORE BY OUR POLITICAL/ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS THAN OUR CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS. THIS IS NOT MEANT TO TRASH AMERICAN CULTURE WHICH HAS PRODUCED SOME UNIQUE AND EXTRAORDINARY ACCOMPLISHMENTS, BUT THE MOTIVATIONAL FORCES THAT HAVE PROPELLED OUR COUNTRY’S UNUSUAL GROWTH HAVE BEEN THE DUAL DEVELOPMENT OF

OUR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC AND THE GREAT WEALTH OF OUR LANDMASS.

LANGUAGE CAN BE IMPRECISE AND CONTRADICTIONARY EVEN IN AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE WE WOULD EXPECT NEITHER, SUCH AS EDUCATION. FOR EXAMPLE, A STUDENT LOOKING THROUGH A CURRICULUM DIRECTORY AND COMING ACROSS A COURSE IDENTIFIED AS MULTICULTURAL STUDIES MIGHT LOGICALLY ANTICIPATE THAT IT WOULD OFFER A SELECTED VARIETY OF CULTURES AND PROVIDE KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR ORIGINS, VALUES AND DISTINCTIVE QUALITIES.

IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AMERICA THE PHRASE MULTICULTURAL STUDIES HAS A TOTALLY OPPOSITE MEANING IN THAT IT CONVEYS A POLITICAL MESSAGE THAT MAKES A QUALITATIVE JUDGMENT AS TO THE VALUE OF DIFFERENT SUB-CULTURES WITHIN OUR DOMINANT NATIONAL CULTURE. INVARIABLY, THIS MESSAGE CASTIGATES OUR HOME CULTURE FOR A WIDE RANGE OF POLITICAL OFFENSES THAT FAIL TO RECOGNIZE OR CELEBRATE THE SUB-CULTURE AS BEING EQUAL, OR PREFERABLE, TO OUR NATIONAL CHARACTER.

THE RESPONSE BY OUR INSTITUTIONS THAT MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO RESIST SUCH EDUCATIONAL ENCROACHMENT HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY EVASIVE OR INADEQUATE. OUR COURTS, CONGRESS, UNIONS, MEDIA AND EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITIES HAVE ALL GIVEN THEIR ASSENT TO THIS TYPE OF POLITICAL INTRUSION EITHER BY THEIR SILENCE OR APPROVAL.

THIS MIX OF POLITICS AND EDUCATION IS A DANGEROUS ONE WHICH WE HAVE TRIED TO AVOID IN OUR PURSUIT OF DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE, AND WE HAVE TAKEN PRIDE IN THE VALUES OF OUR EUROPEAN WESTERN CIVILIZATION AND A “LIBERAL ARTS” EDUCATION DERIVED FROM THEM.

“THEY PROPOSE TO DO AWAY WITH THE SYSTEM THAT HAS GIVEN THEM THEIR VOICE AND PERMITTED THEM TO BE HEARD.”

WESTERN CIVILIZATION CONTAINS A WIDE RANGE OF PHILOSOPHICAL, RELIGIOUS AND SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT, AND THE REGARD IN WHICH WE HOLD AND TEACH IT IS ANATHEMA TO THE MULTICULTURALISTS’ DEMANDS FOR SPECIAL TREATMENT. THEY TRASH IT AND OUR POLITICAL/EDUCATIONAL BELIEFS AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY, BUT THE GREATEST AND MOST OBVIOUS FAILURE OF THEIR POSITION IS THAT, IN CALLING FOR THE ABANDONMENT OF THE WESTERN CIVILIZATION EDUCATION MODEL, THEY PROPOSE TO DO AWAY WITH THE SYSTEM THAT HAS GIVEN THEM THEIR VOICE AND PERMITTED THEM TO BE HEARD.

WE SHOULD NOT LIMIT THEIR VOICE AS LONG AS IT STAYS SHORT OF TREASON OR SEDITION, BUT SOMEWHERE AMONG OUR INSTITUTIONS WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIND AND RAISE OUR OWN.

\* \* \*

OUR COMPLEX LOCAL/STATE/NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM FINDS ITSELF AT THE MIDDLE OF MANY OF OUR MOST DIVISIVE ISSUES. THIS IS CERTAINLY TRUE OF IMMIGRATION, AS ALL IMMIGRANTS, LEGAL OR ILLEGAL, WANT THEIR OFFSPRING TO

ENTER OUR SCHOOLS AND RECEIVE THEIR TAXPAYER PROVIDED BENEFITS.

\* \* \*

IMMEDIATELY, CONFLICT ARISES AND, ALTHOUGH WE MIGHT LIKE TO FEEL THAT THE ISSUE CAN BE RESOLVED FAIRLY, EACH PARTICIPATING INTEREST HAS A DIFFERENT CONCEPT OF WHAT IS FAIR.

A LOCAL STATE COLLEGE HAS AN IN-STATE TUITION RATE OF \$89.10 PER CREDIT HOUR COMPARED TO AN OUT-OF-STATE RATE OF \$323. THIS RESULTS IN A BACHELOR'S DEGREE REQUIRING 120 HOURS HAVING A TUITION COST OF \$10,692 FOR IN-STATE STUDENTS AND \$38,760 FOR OUT-OF-STATE.<sup>12</sup> THIS DIFFERENCE IS OF SUCH A SIZE THAT IT CAN TRANSLATE INTO COLLEGE OR NO COLLEGE, AND IT OFFERS SEVERAL OPPOSING VIEWS OF FAIRNESS.

FOR THE IN-STATE STUDENT, WHOSE FAMILY PAYS TAXES THAT SUPPORT THE STATE'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND WHO MAY CONTINUE AFTER COLLEGE TO LIVE AND WORK IN THE HOME STATE, THE DIFFERENCE APPEARS AS A JUSTIFIABLE DISCOUNT OR BENEFIT. FOR THE OUT-OF-STATE LEARNER THE HIGHER PRICE REPRESENTS A PREFERENCE FOR EDUCATION BEYOND HIS/HER HOME STATE.

UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS ARE MOSTLY CHARGED OUT-OF-STATE FEES, ALTHOUGH IN SOME STATES EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO GRANT THEM THE LOWER IN-STATE RATE. THIS HAS ENGENDERED A VERY EMOTIONAL ARGUMENT AT ALL LEVELS OF OUR EDUCATIONAL/POLITICAL STRUCTURE.

WHAT FORM DOES FAIRNESS TAKE IN THIS MATTER? THE IN-STATE STUDENT CONSIDERS THE LOWER RATE TO BE APPROPRIATELY OFFERED BY THE STATE AND FAIRLY RECEIVED BY ITS RESIDENTS. ON THE STATE'S SIDE, IT HAS THE RIGHT TO SET PRICES AND DETERMINE ADMISSIONS FOR ITS SCHOOLS.

WITH THE UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANT ANOTHER VIEW EMERGES. HE/SHE MAY HAVE ATTENDED LOCAL ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY GRADES AND BEEN A RESIDENT, ALTHOUGH ILLEGAL, IN THE U.S. SINCE EARLY YOUTH. TO THIS STUDENT THE COST DIFFERENCE MAY PRECLUDE ANY FURTHER EDUCATION AND DO AWAY WITH BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO HIS FRIENDS, CLASSMATES, NEIGHBORS, ETC. THIS LINE OF THOUGHT LEADS TO THE ARGUMENT THAT THE STUDENT IS BEING UNJUSTLY PUNISHED FOR THE ACTIONS OF HIS/HER PARENTS.

AFTER THE STATE'S AND THE TWO INDIVIDUALS' VIEWS THERE IS ONE MORE PARTY INVOLVED, ONE MORE VOICE TO BE HEARD. THIS IS THE BODY OF TAXPAYERS WHOSE FUNDS ENABLE THE STATE'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. THEY ARE NOT GENERALLY KNOWN FOR THEIR UNANIMITY ON TAX/BUDGET POLICY, BUT FOR THE MOST PART SEEM TO FAVOR THE DUAL RATE SYSTEM AND OBJECT TO EXTENDING THE HOME STATE BENEFIT TO THOSE LACKING CITIZENSHIP BY BIRTH OR NATIONALIZATION.

EDUCATIONAL POLITICS IS SOMEWHAT OF A BUNGEE CORD WITH HIGH EMOTIONS AT EACH END. IT CAN BE STRETCHED WAY PAST ITS ORIGINAL SHAPE, BUT THEN SNAPS BACK. FAIRNESS IS ONE OF OUR POLITICAL EMOTIONS THAT WE LIKE TO THINK OF AS A KEY ELEMENT IN OUR DECISION MAKING, BUT IN REALITY IT HAS BEEN OVERTAKEN IN THIS CAPACITY IN THE LAST HALF-CENTURY BY THE VAST AMOUNTS OF MONEY INJECTED INTO OUR POLITICS WITH WHICH IT MUST COMPETE. THIS CONTEST HAS NOT BEEN AN EVEN ONE AND WE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT A PENDULUM OR BUNGEE EFFECT WILL TAKE PLACE.

THE HUMAN FAILURES WITH WHICH WE INVEST OUR CULTURE WORK THEIR WAY THROUGH OUR INSTITUTIONS AND TAKE ROOT IN THEM. NOWHERE IS THIS MORE APPARENT THAN THE USE OF DRUGS BY STUDENTS AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION BY YOUTH GANGS. ONCE ISOLATED LOCAL GROUPS, THESE GANGS ARE NOW NATIONAL IN SCALE AND ACT ON BEHALF OF FOREIGN DRUG PRODUCERS IN MOVING THEIR DRUGS IN THE U.S. MARKET WHERE DEMAND AND PROFIT ARE CONSISTENTLY HIGH.

WE HAVE THEORETICALLY BEEN ENGAGED IN "THE WAR ON DRUGS" FOR ABOUT FIFTY YEARS. WE SAY "THEORETICALLY" BECAUSE WE HAVE COMMITTED MANY BILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO COMBAT THE RISING TIDE OF DRUG AVAILABILITY AND USE, BUT THE UGLY TRUTH OF OUR SOCIETY IS THAT DEMAND CONTINUES TO INCREASE.

JUST AS OUR SCHOOLS ACT AS TRAINING CENTERS FOR PROFESSIONAL SPORTS, SO DO THEY ALSO SERVE AS MARKETING OUTLETS FOR CRIMINAL DRUG DISTRIBUTORS.

“. . . THERE HAS BEEN NO STATISTICAL DECREASE IN THE LAST DECADE . . .”

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY HAS RECENTLY REPORTED THAT MORE THAN 25% OF MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ACKNOWLEDGE THE PRESENCE OF GANGS AND DRUGS IN THEIR SCHOOLS.<sup>13</sup> JUST UNDER 50% OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE SURVEY, ADMITTED THAT GANGS OR DRUGS WERE PRESENT IN THEIR SCHOOLS.<sup>14</sup> AND FOR A TELLING NOTE REGARDING "THE WAR ON DRUGS", CONSIDER THAT IN 2001 31% OF MIDDLE SCHOOLERS SAID DRUGS WERE PRESENT COMPARED TO 32% THIS YEAR.<sup>15</sup> THE FACT THAT IN ALMOST A THIRD OF THESE SCHOOLS DRUGS WERE SOLD, STORED OR USED AND THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO STATISTICAL DECREASE IN THE LAST DECADE SUGGESTS THAT OUR PRESENT TACTICS WILL NOT PRODUCE A VICTORY IN SPITE OF THE DOLLARS, HOURS, EFFORTS AND LIVES WE EXPEND.

\* \* \*

OUR WESTERN EDUCATION IS ROOTED IN THE ACADEMY OF THE ANCIENT GREEKS. THERE, MENTAL AND PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE WERE JOINED AND STROVE FOR A KIND OF PURITY THAT NO LONGER EXISTS TODAY. EVEN THE MASS ROBOT GYMNASTICS IN NORTH KOREA AND OTHER TOTALITARIAN NATIONS ARE DESIGNED TO SERVE THE STATE, NOT THE INDIVIDUAL.

WE HAVE NOTED HOW SOME OF OUR CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES SUCH AS SOCIAL PROMOTIONS AND GRADE INFLATION PRETEND TO BENEFIT THE STUDENT, BUT ACTUALLY DO JUST THE OPPOSITE. MUCH OF OUR SCHOLASTIC COMPETITION HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED TO ATHLETIC FIELDS WHERE DIFFERENT SKILLS ARE NEEDED AND WHERE THE PRIZES CAN BE RICH.

THERE IS ANOTHER ASPECT OF OUR PRESENT SYSTEM THAT INTERFERES WITH THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS, AND IT

IS THAT SCHOOLS HAVE BECOME PROVIDERS OF FAR MORE THAN EDUCATION. THEY OFFER SERVICES SUCH AS SECURITY, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND GENDER PREFERENCE COUNSELING, GRIEF RESPONSE, DOMESTIC RELATIONS CONFERENCES, CAREER CHOICE DISCUSSIONS, SEXUAL EDUCATION, APTITUDE TESTING AND OTHERS.

THIS EXTENSION OF SCHOOLS' RESPONSIBILITIES ARE DUE PRIMARILY TO THREE CAUSES. THE FIRST IS THE GROWING NUMBER OF STUDENTS THAT RESULTS FROM OUR RAPIDLY INCREASING POPULATION. THE SECOND STEMS FROM SCHOOL BOARDS AND ADMINISTRATORS WANTING TO HAVE A "COVER" OPINION UPON WHICH THEY CAN BASE THEIR DECISIONS IN THE EVENT OF LITIGATION OR POLITICAL CRITICISM.

AND THE THIRD IS A FUNCTION OF PARENTING IN OUR FINANCIALLY PRESSURED SOCIETY. WITH TWO WORKING PARENTS IN A HOME, MANY ASPECTS OF FAMILY LIFE AS WE KNEW IT FIFTY YEARS AGO HAVE BEEN FARMED OUT — TO THE TV SCREEN, TO PRIVATE OR COMMERCIAL SERVICES AND TO SCHOOLS. IT IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR PARENTS, ESPECIALLY IN LOW INCOME URBAN CENTERS TO EXPECT SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE A FULL, HOT MEAL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY AND SNACKS AT OTHER TIMES; TO OFFER SEXUAL EDUCATION; TO INSTILL GOOD BEHAVIOR STANDARDS AND TO INVOKE DISCIPLINE — BUT NOT TOO MUCH — WHEN THEY ARE NOT MET; TO PROVIDE SECURITY AGAINST ALMOST ANY KIND OF MISHAP; AND TO KEEP PARENTS INFORMED THROUGH PERSONAL CONTACT AND PUBLIC MEETINGS.

THE LATTER ARE OFTEN CHARGED WITH A "WE VERSUS THEM" CURRENT WHICH CAN BECOME UNPRODUCTIVELY HOSTILE AND LEAD WHOEVER HAS THE MICROPHONE TO ADOPT A PERRY MASON OR PATRICK HENRY PERSONA.

NOT ALL IS LOST, HOWEVER. THERE ARE SOME ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENTS. TWO YEARS AGO WASHINGTON, DC INSTALLED MICHELLE RHEE AS THE NEW HEAD OF ITS SCHOOL SYSTEM. WITH THE BACKING OF THE MAYOR SHE HAS FACED DOWN THE UNIONS ON MANY ISSUES, INCLUDING A NEW CONTRACT. THOSE TEACHERS "WHO WERE THERE BECAUSE THEY WERE THERE" WERE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRODUCE BETTER RESULTS. THOSE WHO DID STAYED; THOSE WHO DIDN'T WENT ELSEWHERE.

MS. RHEE COULD NOT HAVE SUCCEEDED TO THE DEGREE SHE DID WITHOUT THE UNWAVERING SUPPORT OF MAYOR FENTY. HER PROGRAM IS NOT YET COMPLETED, BUT SHE HAS CONFRONTED THE POLITICS OF RACE AND THE ECONOMIC GRIP OF THE UNIONS IN WAYS THAT PREDICT SUCCESS.

ANOTHER FAVORABLE TREND HAS BEEN THE GROWTH OF CHARTER SCHOOLS IN WHICH TOP TEACHERS, LONGER HOURS AND MORE DEMANDING CURRICULA FORM THE BASIS FOR GREATLY IMPROVED RESULTS AND A STEP UP TO THE NEXT LEVEL OF LIFE FOR THOSE WHO CAN QUALIFY AND STAY ENGAGED.

JOEL KLEIN, THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS IN NYC, HAS EMBARKED ON A MAKEOVER PROCESS SIMILAR TO THAT IN WASHINGTON, AS HAS NEW ORLEANS IN THE WAKE OF HURRICANE KATRINA. THEY ALSO HAVE SHOWN VERY PROMISING RESULTS.

BUT WASHINGTON, NEW ORLEANS AND NYC ARE ONLY

THREE AREAS. THERE ARE OTHERS, SMALL AND LARGE, WHO ARE CONTEMPLATING OR JUST COMMENCING THE KIND OF INVESTMENT IN STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND PLANT THAT WILL BE REQUIRED. RESULTS WILL NOT ALWAYS BE EVEN AND, UNFORTUNATELY, REGARDLESS OF THE ACTIONS TAKEN AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL, A SIGNIFICANT SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT WILL REQUIRE EXTENSIVE FUNDING AND CHANGES ON THE PART OF UNIONS AND POLITICIANS IN HOW OUR SYSTEM IS MANAGED.

OUR EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM IS NOT ONE OF POLITICAL ISOLATION. AS WE HAVE STATED BEFORE, ALL OF OUR MAJOR "TIPPING POINT" CRISES ARE INTERRELATED AND THE EDUCATIONAL/POLITICAL LINKAGE IS CLEAR. TO DATE, THE ACADEMIC CONSEQUENCES OF OUR FAILED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM ARE MOST EVIDENT, BUT ITS POLITICAL RESULTS ARE NOT FAR BEHIND AS WE TURN OUT LARGE NUMBER OF ILLITERATE AND UNEDUCATED "GRADUATES" EACH YEAR. AND AS THIS PERCENTAGE OF OUR POPULATION GROWS, THE TASKS OF AN INFORMED ELECTORATE TO PROVIDE, OVERSEE AND ADMINISTER GOOD GOVERNMENT FOR OUR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC WILL BECOME MORE DIFFICULT AND THEN IMPOSSIBLE.

AS WITH HEALTH CARE AND DEFENSE SPENDING, WE SPEND MANY PRE-TIPPING POINT YEARS TURNING OUT ORDINARY PRODUCTS AT EXTRAORDINARY COSTS BECAUSE OUR VALUE SYSTEM RELATES TO POLITICS RATHER THAN PRICE OR EFFICIENCY. THE MEANS ARE AVAILABLE WITHIN OUR SOCIETY TO MAKE REAL AND MUCH NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS IN OUR HEALTH CARE, EDUCATIONAL, MILITARY PROCUREMENT AND TAX POLICIES, BUT NOT IF WE CONTINUE TO ALLOW POLITICAL INTERESTS TO COME AHEAD OF OUR NATIONAL INTEREST AND TO CONTROL THE PROCESS.

IN ALL THESE MATTERS TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE. THAT'S WHAT TIPPING POINTS ARE ABOUT. IF OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM CONTINUES TO TURN OUT INCREASING NUMBERS OF FUNCTIONAL OR ACTUAL ILLITERATES AND AS THEIR PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION INCREASES, THE PUBLIC ELECTORATE WILL BECOME LESS ABLE TO RECOGNIZE AND CALL FOR WHAT CHANGES ARE NEEDED. AT THAT TIME REMEDIES WILL NO LONGER BE AVAILABLE. SOMETIME BETWEEN NOW AND THEN, WITHOUT FANFARE AND WITHOUT EVEN REALIZING IT, WE WILL REACH AND PASS A TIPPING POINT.

AND TECHNOLOGY IS EVER PRESENT. IT GIVES AND IT TAKES, AND THERE IS NO CLEARER EVIDENCE OF ITS DUAL ROLE THAN IN EDUCATION. CALCULATIONS AND COMMUNICATION ARE INSTANTANEOUS AND THE INTERNET IS A SOURCE OF SEEMINGLY UNLIMITED INFORMATION.

THE DARK SIDE IS THAT THE INTERNET PROVIDES ACCESS TO A WORLD OFTEN WITHOUT RULES OR BOUNDARIES FOR WHICH LESS THAN MATURE IDENTITIES ARE NOT PREPARED. THIS PRIVATE CYBER WORLD OFFERS REFUGE BEYOND THE REACH AND RECALL OF PARENTS, AND ALREADY HAS CREATED ACADEMIC, SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS THE FULL EXTENT OF WHICH WE CANNOT NOW DETERMINE. WE ARE ON THE CUSP OF THIS WORLD, ITS FIRST MASS GENERATION. IT CAN BE MANY THINGS, INCLUDING ADDICTIVE AND WITHDRAWING, OF WHICH WE MUST BE AWARE.

## ELECTION YEAR 2010

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN! IT'S THE TIME OF OUR MID-TERM CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS IN WHICH ALL SEATS IN THE HOUSE AND ONE THIRD OF THOSE IN THE SENATE WILL BE CONTESTED.

AND ON THE DAY AFTER ELECTION DAY, NOVEMBER 3, THE CAMPAIGN PROCESS FOR THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WILL QUIETLY AND SLOWLY COMMENCE. ALL ITS PRESS RELEASES, PHOTO OPS, DEBATES, SPEECHES, PARADES, RALLIES, HAND SHAKES, INTERVIEWS, PROMISES, AND PRESS CONFERENCES LIE AHEAD. THEY ARE TOO MUCH TO CONTEMPLATE SO SOON AFTER 2008. WE WILL CONCENTRATE ON NOVEMBER 2 AND THE MID-TERMS.

THESE RACES INDIVIDUALLY AND IN COMBINATION COULD CONSTITUTE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT IN OUR HISTORY AND OUT OF PROPORTION TO MOST MID-TERM ATTEMPTS TO CONFIRM OR CHALLENGE THE INCUMBENT PARTY'S STATUS AND ITS CONTROL OF THE NATION'S POLITICAL AGENDA.

THERE ARE MAJOR IDEOLOGICAL DIRECTIONS AT STAKE; THERE ARE SOME VERY RARE OPPORTUNITIES TO BE SEIZED; AND BOTH PARTIES FACE THE POSSIBILITY OF ALMOST CERTAIN DEFEAT IF THEY MISINTERPRET THEIR OWN OR THE PEOPLE'S COMING POLITICAL ROLES.

IDENTIFICATION WILL BE KEY IN MANY OF THIS YEAR'S CONTESTS — HOW CANDIDATES AND THEIR PARTIES IDENTIFY THEIR PROGRAMS, THEIR ALLEGIANCES AND THEIR PRIORITIES TO THE VOTERS; AND HOW THEY CAN IDENTIFY THEIR CREDIBILITY IN LIGHT OF THE MANY FAILED COMMITMENTS OF THE OBAMA AND BUSH ADMINISTRATIONS.

IN LOOKING AHEAD TO NOVEMBER 2, THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT IS THE PUBLIC'S MOOD OF DISAPPOINTMENT WITH BOTH PARTIES OVER WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE — FOR LEGISLATIVE INADEQUACY, INEQUITABLE RESULTS AND UNETHICAL CONDUCT. THESE FAULTS COVER A WIDE RANGE OF VOTER CONTACT, AND ARE AT THE HEART OF THE PUBLIC'S ANGER TOWARDS ITS GOVERNMENT AND THE POLITICAL CLASS WHICH SERVES AS ITS FACE.

THE DEMOCRATS HAVE HANDED THE REPUBLICANS A MAJOR GIFT OF SEVERAL IMPORTANT ISSUES ON WHICH THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION IS VULNERABLE. THESE ARE THE RECESSION'S FAILURE TO CREATE JOBS IN SPITE OF MASSIVE STIMULUS SPENDING; THE GREATLY INCREASED NATIONAL DEBT AND THE STRUCTURAL THREAT IT POSES; ACTUAL AND PROJECTED ANNUAL DEFICITS OF OVER ONE TRILLION DOLLARS; THE WIDESPREAD OIL POLLUTION IN THE GULF COAST AND THE WAY IT WAS HANDLED; THE LACK OF ENFORCEMENT OF OUR IMMIGRATION LAWS AND THE FEDERAL/STATES CONFRONTATION AND LITIGATION THAT WILL RESULT FROM ATTORNEY GENERAL HOLDER'S FILING SUIT AGAINST THE STATE OF AZ TO NULLIFY ITS STATE LAW 1070; THE ETHICAL CHARGES BROUGHT BY THE HOUSE ETHICS COMMITTEE AGAINST REPS. CHARLES RANGEL AND MAXINE WATERS; AND, PERHAPS THE MOST BITTERLY FELT, THE INEPT TAXPAYER BAILOUT OF THE NATION'S BANKING SYSTEM WHICH FURTHER ENRICHED THE LEAD PLAYERS ON WALL STREET.

THERE ARE EVEN CARRY-OVER ISSUES FROM BUSH

DAYS THAT OBAMA HAS INHERITED AND NOW "OWNS". THESE ARE THE TWO WARS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN NOW BEING DIRECTED BY HIS APPOINTEES; AND THE MESS, AS YET NOT FULLY PUBLICIZED, CONCERNING THE OPERATIONS OF FREDDY MAC AND FANNIE MAE WITH THE INTRICATE INVOLVEMENT IN THESE TWO FAILED ENTITIES OF KEY DEMOCRAT FINANCIAL LEADERS, SEN. CHRISTOPHER DODD (CT) AND REP. BARNEY FRANK (MA).

OUR UNSOUGHT ADVICE TO REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES ACROSS THE COUNTRY IS TO STICK TO THIS VERY AMPLE MENU. ITS ITEMS ARE FRESH, NATIONAL AND URGENT — ALL DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN. THE GOP MESSAGES FROM THE PAST REGARDING LOWER TAXES, SMALLER GOVERNMENT, GUN CONTROL AND ABORTION SHOULD BE GIVEN A REST. THEY CAN ALWAYS BE RECLAIMED, BUT FOR NOW THE PARTY NEEDS A DIFFERENT IMAGE AND HAS VERY FORTUNATELY BEEN GIVEN THE TOOLS TO BRING IT ABOUT.

WHAT'S BEING OFFERED IS THE POSSIBILITY FOR A BASIC AND EFFECTIVE CHANGE IN CAMPAIGN STRATEGY. YOU CAN PICK YOUR OWN TOPICS AND BASE YOUR CAMPAIGN ON CURRENT, LIVE ISSUES, NOT THE STALE IDEOLOGY THAT HAS CAPTURED BOTH PARTIES AND BROUGHT OUR POLITICS TO THEIR PRESENT LOW STATE. SPECIAL INTERESTS AND IDEOLOGIES WILL RESIST. THEY WILL NOT SEE THE OPPORTUNITY, BUT WILL PROBABLY BE ABLE TO ADJUST TO ANY NEW REALITY.

THERE IS ANOTHER VITAL FACTOR AT WORK FOR REPUBLICANS. OBAMA WAS ELECTED BY THE SUPPORT OF LARGE NUMBERS OF INDEPENDENT VOTERS MANY OF WHOM, BASED ON HIS CAMPAIGN PROMISES, EXPECTED A MORE CENTRIST PATH FOR HIS ADMINISTRATION. BUT CENTRISM WAS NOT TO BE PART OF THE OBAMA AGENDA. IT WAS DROPPED ALONG WITH A LOT OF OTHER CAMPAIGN PROMISES AS THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY TOOK A HARD LEFT TURN.

THIS HAS ANGERED AND DETACHED FROM THE DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT STRUCTURE A LARGE NUMBER OF INDEPENDENTS WHO HAD EXPECTED SOMETHING DIFFERENT FROM OBAMA. ALTHOUGH THEY MAY NOT TURN OUT IN THE SAME NUMBERS AS THEY DID FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, THEY ARE DEEPLY OFFENDED BY WHAT THEY REGARD AS OBAMA'S MISUSE OF BOTH THEIR VOTE AND THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE.

THE REPUBLICANS HAVE A CHANCE TO PUT A NEW FACE ON THEIR PARTY BECAUSE THERE SEEMS TO BE NO END TO THE DEMOCRATS' ABILITY TO CONFUSE THEIR OWN CHANCES, AS HAS BEEN EVIDENCED BY THE MULTIPLE DEMOCRATIC RETIREMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS OF THE PAST YEAR.

WE THINK THEY WILL LOSE CONTROL OF THE HOUSE AND PERHAPS AS MANY AS TEN SEATS IN THE SENATE. WERE THIS TO OCCUR, THE VOTING BALANCE IN THE SENATE WOULD BE REDUCED FROM 60/40 TO AROUND 50/50. SUCH REALIGNMENT COULD WELL IMPROVE THE SENATE'S DELIBERATIVE PROCESS AND THE LEGISLATION IT PRODUCES.

IT MAY BE TOO MUCH TO EXPECT THE GOP TO MAKE EVEN A SMALL MOVE AWAY FROM ITS PAST ROOTS. AFTER ALL, IT IS CALLED THE GRAND OLD PARTY. THERE IS SOME ELECTORAL RISK, BUT IT SEEMS MINIMAL WHEN WEIGHED AGAINST THE ADVANTAGE OF RUNNING AGAINST AN ARRAY OF INDEFENSIBLE RESULTS AND BEING SUPPORTED BY BROAD VOTER ANGER.

DEMOCRATS FACE A MUCH MORE DIFFICULT SITUATION, AS THEY ARE LOCKED INTO FIXED POSITIONS AT MANY LEVELS. THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN ASSEMBLING A GROUP OF QUITE DIFFERENT BLOCS BENEATH ITS BANNER. KEY AMONG THESE ARE LABOR UNIONS, IMMIGRANTS, LOW INCOME WORKERS, LIBERAL ELITES, ACADEMICS, MACHINE POLITICIANS FROM PRECINCT TO CONGRESSIONAL LEVELS AND OTHERS. THERE ARE MANY VOICES SPEAKING AT ONCE AND OFTEN IN DIFFERENT POLITICAL TONGUES. THE RESULT IS A BODY LACKING FORM, BUT MORE THAN MAKING UP FOR IT BY ITS STRENGTH IN NUMBERS AND THE APPEAL OF ITS INCLUSIVE PHILOSOPHY. THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IS POLITICAL CIRCUS — MANY ACTS UNDER ONE TENT — AND BRINGS TO MIND WILL ROGERS’ ACUTE RESPONSE, WHEN ASKED WHETHER HE WAS A MEMBER OF ANY ORGANIZED POLITICAL PARTY. “NO”, HE ANSWERED, “I’M A DEMOCRAT”.

BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES THERE IS ONE DISTINCTION THAT SEEMS TO FAVOR DEMOCRATS. IN SPITE OF THE DIFFERENT VOTING ELEMENTS WHICH IT ATTRACTS, THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAS MAINTAINED A UNIFORM ATTITUDE TOWARDS MOST DOMESTIC ISSUES THAT IS BASED ON INCREASED GOVERNMENT SPENDING. AS A SOLUTION TO SPECIFIC PROBLEMS THIS METHOD HAS NOT ALWAYS SUCCEEDED, BUT IT HAS PROVIDED THE PARTY WITH A CONSISTENT PHILOSOPHY AND OVER TIME HAS WORKED ITS WAY INTO OUR GOVERNMENT IN SUCH WAYS THAT IT HAS GAINED SOME DEGREE OF GENERAL ACCEPTANCE EVEN IN HARD ECONOMIC TIMES.

REPUBLICANS ARE NOT IN THE SAME POSITION. THEIR ECONOMIC BELIEFS THAT FAVOR PRIVATE OVER GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR MANY ACTIVITIES HAVE TO BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO GENERAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IF THEY DETERIORATE. BUT BUDGET TRIMMING AND THRIFT CONCERNS RUN COUNTER TO OUR INFLATIONARY MIND-SET. THEY TEND TO HAVE SHORT LIVES AND TO BE ABANDONED WHEN CONDITIONS IMPROVE, OR WHEN NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPENDING APPEAR AND CAN BE OFFERED AS DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESS OR EVEN NEW SOLUTIONS TO OLD PROBLEMS.

IN THE LONG TERM BOTH PARTIES SEEM TO HAVE SHORT MEMORIES. THE LURE OF DEFENSE SPENDING FOR REPUBLICANS AND OF SOCIAL PROJECTS FOR DEMOCRATS IS EQUALLY STRONG, EVEN WHEN TESTED BY THE DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PAST TWO YEARS. OUR GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE HAS BEEN INFECTED BY POLITICS TO THE POINT THAT IT CAN NO LONGER HEED THE PUBLIC’S WILL, AND THE ONLY ANSWER IS TO REFORM THE CITIZEN/GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIP.

“FOR DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES THEIR RISK IS THE STATUS QUO, AND THEY MUST TAKE IT.”

LIKE REPUBLICANS, DEMOCRATS COULD WELL USE A BIT OF A MAKEOVER IN 2010, BUT THEIR SITUATION IS COMPLICATED BY THE RECORD OF OBAMA’S FIRST TWO YEARS WHICH THEY CANNOT AVOID AND MUST APPEAR TO SUPPORT. THEIR IMAGE IS MIRED IN THIS RECORD AND WITHOUT RUNNING ROOM THEY BECOME TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY. FOR DEMOCRATIC

CANDIDATES THEIR RISK IS THE STATUS QUO, AND THEY MUST TAKE IT.

THE REAL RISK FOR THE COUNTRY IS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT REGARDLESS OF WHICH PARTY WINS. IT IS THE PROBABILITY THAT WHOEVER GAINS CONTROL OF CONGRESS WILL RETURN TO PAST WAYS OF ERROR BY BLAMING THOSE WHO WENT BEFORE WHILE BUILDING A NEW SYSTEM OF FAILED PERSONAL, POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATIONS.

THE IDEOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE IS AT HAND TO PUMP UP POLITICAL EMOTIONS AND TO DIVERT THE PUBLIC’S ATTENTION FROM THE TRUE EXTENT OF OUR GOVERNMENT’S DYSFUNCTION. AS WITH THE STAGE MAGICIAN, IF WE KEEP WATCHING THE RED HANDKERCHIEF TRICK, WE WON’T SEE THE BUNNY BEING PUT IN THE HAT.

GOVERNMENT, WHICH USED TO BE OPEN TO COMMENT AND QUESTIONS NOW OPERATES IN A CLOSED CYCLE OF SPECIAL INTERESTS, MEDIA PUBLICITY, EXCESSIVE COMPENSATION, CORRUPTION, LACK OF TRANSPARENCY AND BLAMING THE OTHER PARTY. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF OUR MODERN MEDIA CAPABILITY ALL OF THESE ELEMENTS HAVE PLAYED THEIR ROLES IN THE FAILURE OF OTHER GREAT POWERS.

WE HAVE REPEATEDLY POINTED OUT THE INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN SOME OF OUR NATION’S MOST DIFFICULT AND DEMANDING ISSUES. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR COMMERCIAL MASS MEDIA AND OUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IS AN EXAMPLE OF THIS POWERFUL SYMBIOSIS.

TAKE YOUR MEMORY BACK TO OUR WORLD OF POLITICS IN THE 40S AND 30S BEFORE TV. DO YOU RECALL ANYTHING OTHER THAN AN OCCASIONAL NEWSPAPER PHOTO OF YOUR REPRESENTATIVE, AND THEN ONLY FOR A TRULY IMPORTANT OCCASION? CAN YOU RECALL HEARING YOUR REPRESENTATIVE ON THE RADIO? THE ANSWERS ARE BOTH, GENERALLY, “NO” BECAUSE THE MEDIA, AND THE NEWS ITSELF, WERE VALUED DIFFERENTLY, AND SO WAS PUBLICITY.

TODAY, MOST NEWS PROGRAMS CARRY VIDEOS OF SENATORS AND/OR REPRESENTATIVES DOING NOTHING MORE THAN POSING FOR PUBLICITY FOOTAGE. AND EVEN LEGISLATION OF DECIDEDLY LESSER IMPORTANCE EARNS A SIGNING CEREMONY WITH THE PRESIDENT SURROUNDED BY A DOZEN OR SO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WHO HAVE TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED TO SHOW THEIR IMPORTANCE.

THE PROCESS OF NEVER ENDING PERSONAL PUBLICITY FOR POLITICIANS IS BANAL. IT’S BASED ON PRETENSE AND PRIVATE BENEFIT. AND YET IT’S AN ESSENTIAL PART OF ONE OF THE MOST MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS OF OUR CULTURE. THE BROADCAST MEDIA NEED TO FILL 24 HOURS OF PROGRAM TIME EVERY DAY. THEY NEED CONTENT. POLITICIANS NEED EXPOSURE TO ATTRACT VOTES. IN THEIR WAY OF THINKING THEY WOULD LIKE TO BE ON CAMERA 24/7. AND THE POLITICIANS, THEIR PARTIES OR THEIR BACKERS SPEND HUGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY AT ELECTION TIMES.

THAT’S THE UNHOLY ALLIANCE OF MONEY, MEDIA AND ELECTIONS THAT DOMINATES OUR SYSTEM. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO BREAK THIS LOCK? UNFORTUNATELY, PROBABLY NOTHING, AS LEGISLATION WOULD BE NEEDED TO INITIATE ANY CHANGE. WERE THAT TO BECOME POSSIBLE, THE FIRST STEP MIGHT BE

TO LIMIT ALL CAMPAIGNING AND CONVENTIONS TO A MUCH SHORTER PERIOD — PERHAPS TWO TO FOUR MONTHS PRIOR TO ELECTIONS. ENGLAND USES TWO MONTHS AND, THEREFORE, ENGAGES IN FEWER DEBATES, SPEECHES, ETC. BUT THOSE THAT TAKE PLACE DO BETTER IN BOTH THE CONTENT AND THE DELIVERY OF THE KEY PARTIES' MESSAGES. AN ADDED BENEFIT OF SUCH A REDUCTION IS THAT WE WOULD CUT OUR DEMAGOGIC EXPOSURE TO MORE BEARABLE LEVELS.

AFTER NOV. 3 NEW MEMBERS WILL APPEAR IN CONGRESS AND OLD ONES WILL LEAVE. ITS FORM AND FACE WILL CHANGE QUICKLY, BUT WITHOUT A NEW REALIZATION OF WHAT IS NEEDED THERE WILL BE NO GAIN.

HISTORY IS A GREAT TEACHER IF WE ALLOW IT TO BE. IT REVEALS MOTIVATIONS AND INSTRUCTS US IN THE METHODS OF CIVILIZATIONS' RISE AND FALL — IN WAR AND PEACE, FOR MONARCHS AND MASSES. IT IS WHAT IT IS. AND YET, IN RECENT YEARS WE HAVE PUSHED OURSELVES TO THE DECEPTION OF REWRITING IT IN TERMS OF OUR CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT. HISTORY'S BODY, ITS TRUTH, IS ALWAYS SUBJECT TO REVISION BY KNOWLEDGE, AND BY KNOWLEDGE ONLY. IN OUR TIME WE HAVE CONFUSED PREFERENCE WITH KNOWLEDGE IN OUR ATTEMPTS TO UNDERSTAND HISTORY. THIS HAS BEEN TRIED BEFORE, AND FAILED. IT WILL FAIL AGAIN.

EDUCATION IS HISTORY'S ENDURING INHERITANCE. THE BATTLES, WEAPONS, WARS, GOVERNMENTS, HEROES AND VILLAINS FADE INTO THE PAST, WHILE ITS INTELLECTUAL MOMENTUM SUSTAINS US. ALTHOUGH MAN, NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY NOW ALL HAVE THE ABILITY TO SLOW OR HALT THIS MOMENTUM, WE MUST TRUST IN OUR INHERITANCE.

ECD 9/9/10

## END NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> PBS; THE NEWS HOUR; 7/2/10, BROOKS AND SHIELDS COMMENTARY
- <sup>2</sup> U.S. DEPT. OF EDUCATION FOR 6/30/08 SCHOOL YEAR VIA PALM BEACH POST, 1/8/09
- <sup>3</sup> FORBES MAGAZINE, 2007 VIA PALM BEACH POST 1/8/09
- <sup>4</sup> NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETICS ASSOC., VIA PALM BEACH POST 1/8/09
- <sup>5</sup> CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION 2007 SURVEY VIA PALM BEACH POST 1/8/09
- <sup>6</sup> ASSOCIATED PRESS VIA PALM BEACH POST. 2/19/06
- <sup>7</sup> IBID
- <sup>8</sup> IBID
- <sup>9</sup> NATIONAL RIGHT TO READ FOUNDATION
- <sup>10</sup> THE PROENGLISH ADVOCATE, 4/09
- <sup>11</sup> A STATE TRANSFORMED: IMMIGRATION AND THE NEW CALIFORNIA BY STEVEN CAMAROTA AND KAREN JENSENIUS; CENTER FOR IMMIGRATION STUDIES, WASHINGTON DC VIA MIDDLE AMERICAN NEWS, 7/10
- <sup>12</sup> PALM BEACH POST, 8/8/10 DREAM CHASERS . . . BY JOHN LANTIGUA
- <sup>13</sup> NATIONAL CENTER ON ADDICTION AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY VIA LOS ANGELES TIMES, 8/19/10
- <sup>14</sup> IBID
- <sup>15</sup> IBID

## PERSONAL NOTE

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN JOURNALISTS SHOULD PROPERLY STEP OUT FROM BEHIND THE EDITORIAL CURTAIN. THIS IS SUCH A MOMENT.

THE AMERICAN RENEWAL EFFORT WHICH I HAVE WRITTEN ABOUT HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN THE SUPPORT OF THE SMALL GROUP OF FOUNDATIONS THAT WERE CITED AS A CRITICAL STARTING POINT IN ISSUE 28.

AMERICAN RENEWAL IS CONCEIVED AS A SELF-SUPPORTING PROJECT CAPABLE OF GENERATING AND ATTRACTING PUBLIC INTEREST BUT WHICH WILL REQUIRE PRIVATE (I.E., FOUNDATION) FUNDING FOR ITS ORGANIZATIONAL AND LAUNCH STAGES. OUR COUNTRY CAN BE TURNED AROUND AND IT CAN BE SAVED FROM ITSELF — BUT NOT BY THE SAME WAYS THAT PUT US WHERE WE ARE.

TOWARD THIS END, I WOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL FOR REFERRALS TO FOUNDATIONS THAT MIGHT BE WILLING TO EXPLORE IN DETAIL THE CONCEPT AND POTENTIAL FOR SUCCESS OF AMERICAN RENEWAL.

REFERRALS ARE ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL, AS THEY OFFER A WAY TO BY-PASS THE ALMOST CERTAIN-TO-FAIL “COLD CALLING” STAGE. FOR INSTANCE, I HAVE BEEN TRYING UNSUCCESSFULLY SINCE FEBRUARY BY MAIL AND PHONE TO REACH THE PRINCIPAL BENEFACTOR OF ONE LARGE FOUNDATION WHOSE PUBLIC COMMENTS SUGGEST A POSSIBLE INTEREST IN AMERICAN RENEWALS'S GOALS.

I WILL CONTINUE, BUT A REFERRAL WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL IN MOVING THE PROCESS TO THE POINT OF PERSONAL CONTACT. FROM THAT POINT ON, I WILL UNDERTAKE THE REST—INITIAL EXPLORATION, SUBSEQUENT PRESENTATION, PLANNING OUTLINE, FOLLOW-UP AND ALL NECESSARY CONSULTATION AS TO THE DIRECTION, FUNDING TIMING AND GOALS THAT WILL BE REQUIRED PRIOR TO THE PROJECT'S INITIATION.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE NOW IS TO IDENTIFY THE HANDFUL OF FOUNDATIONS WILLING TO JOIN IN THIS EFFORT. SHOULD YOU WISH TO DISCUSS THIS FURTHER, PLEASE CALL ME AT 561-697-2233.

## YEAR END DONATIONS

AS THE TIME APPROACHES WHEN MANY PEOPLE COMPLETE THEIR CHARITABLE GIVING, WE WOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL TO BE INCLUDED. AND FOR THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY DONE SO, AGAIN OUR CONTINUING GRATITUDE.

## EDITOR'S BIO

MR. AULT IS RETIRED FROM BUSINESS, A GRADUATE OF YALE UNIVERSITY, AND THE AUTHOR OF A RETAIL FOOD STUDY (LA ROCHE & Co. NYC, NY 1957) WHICH DESCRIBED THE EMERGENCE AND GROWING DOMINANCE OF THE SUPERMARKET IN AMERICAN FOOD RETAILING

# CENTER FOR PUBLIC CONSCIENCE

Bromwell Ault, Founder / Editor  
Phone (561) 697-2233  
Fax (561) 242-9264

P.O. Box 220722  
West Palm Beach, FL 33422-0722  
E mail: moconscience@aol.com  
www.centerforpublicconscience.org

Sandra Beck, Publisher  
Phone (561) 784-9444  
Fax (561) 784-9052

## SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Check Here

Amount Enclosed

- ( ) Please enter my subscription to Matters of Conscience for one year at the rate of \$75 \$75.00

Back Issues: All prior issues except the most recent are available on our website. We also have a limited supply of all issues in print form, and can provide copies upon request.

- ( ) I would like to support the work of the Center for Public Conscience and have included a tax deductible contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please print:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send copies of Matters of Conscience to the following

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- ( ) The above copies are to be sent as a gift from me and I am including payment for them at the rate of \$75 per subscription \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: Center for Public Conscience  
Contributions in excess of the \$75.00 subscription fee are deemed tax deductible  
charitable donations under Section 501(c) (3) of the IRS code.

FOLD AND TEAR ALONG PERFORATION

BROMWELL AULT  
CENTER FOR PUBLIC CONSCIENCE  
P.O. BOX 220722  
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33422-0722

FIRST CLASS MAIL