

*Solving the Problems of ...***EDUCATION: Part I—What to teach and how to teach it**

Orangevale, California-May 26, 2008: I read an interesting article this morning in the Sacramento Bee—yes, I do read the Bee because they do a pretty fair job reporting regional, national, and international news. As far as local news ("local" meaning Orangevale and immediately-adjacent communities) ... well, that's the entire purpose of our existence. One thing I usually try to find time to read is Dan Walters' commentary, which is what I am addressing in this editorial.

The headline, in the left-hand column of page A3, reads, "Vocational education war erupts." Being a teacher with both designated subject vocational and single subject secondary credentials, the title caught my immediate attention. The broad theme is, "... the erosion of job-oriented high school teaching, what used to be called "vocational education" but more recently has been updated to "career technical education" or CTE.

At this point, I would suggest that those of you have an interest in education, and wonder why career-oriented education has all but disappeared from our public school systems, invest the time to read Walters' article in its entirety. He provides an interesting perspective on how three different point-of-view advocacy groups are trying to pass their agendas through the governmental morass which (in my opinion) will simply result in spending millions of

badly-needed education dollars on trying to identify comprehensive solutions. In the meantime another generation of students continue to struggle through a system divided between vocational and college prep curriculum. He (Walters) quotes State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell regarding one of these, "Multiple Pathways," as saying "The two are not mutually exclusive." Unfortunately, O'Connell's statement does not reflect the current thinking in the Halls of Academia or in the Legislatures here in Sacramento.

Before any real progress can be made in solving the problem, there are some very serious problems that need to be solved. We need to eliminate the current landscape of "standardized testing" until we are teaching a standardized curricula to standardized students. (Oops, when was the last time you met a "standardized" student?)

Then, while we are leveling the playing field, we need to develop performance-based high school exit exams (which I also disagree with, because their entire purpose is to evaluate the individual's potential to move into a college-format education system). Performance-based testing, on the other hand, evaluate the students' abilities to apply the materials into real-world where there are few multiple-choice answers. Does the solution function or doesn't it? If the student can apply the knowledge, then the system works.

We also need to eliminate an entire laundry list of laws that dictate what will be taught, and we need to open the classrooms to teachers whose "education" includes years of experience in the field instead of between 125 and 200 "units" of college seat time. By the way, the current system only allows individuals to teach vocational classes in narrowly-defined vocational areas while academically-credentialed teachers are allowed to teach in numerous areas included under their discipline. English majors are allowed to teach any subject within the spectrum of "Language Arts" (Writing in any and all genre is my personal pet peeve—too many English majors have little or no non-academic English exposure.) American public education is in trouble; not because its practitioners are incapable of doing their jobs but because they often are not allowed to do their jobs properly.

And, finally, there is a way to merge Academic and Vocational education into curricula that reaches the same students in the classrooms at the same time. Its proponents refer to it as Hands-on Education ... it's too bad the major opponents run throughout almost the entire Higher Education Academic community.

If you would like to learn more about this, go to <http://www.iveleague.org>. The IVE League welcomes people with open minds who want to get involved. If you would like to discuss it in constructive, open-forum setting, write to editor@orangevalejournal.com. ☺

One Of "10,000 Points Of Light "

Despite what one might think about the Bush presidencies, there are some things that have come from the father-and-son administrations that make sense. One of these was the first Bush's allusion to 1,000 Points of Light in his 1998 acceptance speech at the Republican Convention

"... [we are] a nation of community; of thousands and tens of thousands of ethnic, religious, social, business, labor union, neighborhood, regional and other organizations, all of them varied, voluntary and unique.

"This is America: the Knights of Columbus, the Grange, Hadassah, the Disabled

American Veterans, the Order of Ahepa, the Business and Professional Women of America, the union hall, the Bible study group, LULAC, "Holy Name" -- a brilliant diversity spread like stars, like a thousand points of light in a broad and peaceful sky.

"Does government have a place? Yes. Government is part of the nation of communities -- not the whole, just a part."

There are many people who have seen this call to action as an infringement of government into religious action. But when you read the text of the last sentence, "Does government have a place? Yes. Government is part of the

nation of communities -- not the whole, just a part," you cannot help but see his meaning that government is but one of a thousand replies to individuals in need. He does not see Washington as a single point of contact for individuals in need but rather as a coordinator of 1,000, "... and even 10,000 ..." private agencies and organizations. He does not see government agencies,

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Letters to the Editor

I was recently browsing through some of our local periodicals and noticed something that I truly appreciate about OUR Orangevale's Country Journal. Each and every issue gives us news about our community in a positive and educational manner. It is refreshing to read articles that bring a smile to your face or cause a "call to action" response. The information presented from local business people encourage the reader to think and educate themselves about what matters in our lives. For example the MicroEconomics, Investment information and Insurance talk are all essential in everyday life but are rarely discussed and not investigated enough in my humble opinion. My other tidbit of praise my not apply to anyone but myself. I get weary of reading and hearing about all the sensationalistic and gruesome stories of violence. I commend you for keeping to a positive and community based publication.

Vickie, your Orangevale neighbor

I need your assistance if possible. I am in the planning phases of our annual Graffiti Night event in August. It is possible that along with Candy Clark and Bo Hopkins from the movie American Graffiti we might have Richard Dreyfuss accompany them.

What, you ask, do I need? I have been told that there is someone on Oak avenue in Orangevale that owns a Citroën 2cv. This is the type of car that was in the movie. I need to find that person, see what kind of shape it is in and would they be willing to have it highlighted at our event. I figured the newspaper is the best way to find them. If located it would be the first time they were presented together at an event.

Ray Marchese 804-4697



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