

**ONE MAN'S OPINION: A COLLECTION OF
OP-EDS AND GUEST COMMENTARIES ON
EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND OTHER PUBLIC
POLICY MATTERS**

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DEDICATION

For my Wife, Marcia, who understands that, "I have something to say," means she will have to share the computer with me whether she likes it or not. Greater love hath no woman

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INTRODUCTION

I retired from active university teaching in the summer of 1997, having completed nearly forty years of academic work. I thought I had said all that I had to say about education and, indeed, about almost everything else. However, that proved not quite true. In the last two years, I have found that I had a few more things to say about educational finance and governance, about politics and about several other things. These two dozen-plus short essays came about largely because editor Bill Wills at the *Pantagraph*, the major paper in McLean County, IL, paid me the compliment of publishing some of these items. Therefore, I learned to write to his specifications; hence these items are all either approximately 350 words long or 800 words long, these being the length of documents that he would accept. That was a hard task. A Distinguished Professor is accustomed to a somewhat longer length of rope by which to hang himself. Recently, the *Normalite* has also kindly published some of these items. Also, the Stevenson Society has placed a few on the Internet. The items were written between November of 2000 and November of 2002. They are as they were written; no attempt has been made to update the content.

The first items constitute a residual of my thinking in the area of educational finance and governance. There is not much new here since I can no longer claim to be on the cutting edge of the discipline to which I once gave a lot of my life. However, these old chestnuts may still be worth raking from the fire. The next items are in the broader area of politics and public policy. They include the solicited guest commentary, "On a Definition of a Liberal," for which I have received a number of requests. The next items constitute different interests and different phases of my life. The remaining items deal with a subject close to my heart and stomach--food and wine. The subjects are diverse enough that there should be something here for just about everybody.

The urge to write dies hard; so be sparing in your praise of this little effort least ye be put upon by the likes of me again.

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FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATION

Education as a Civil Right (The *Pantagraph* statement)

In the April 9th edition of this paper, Marsha Mercer comments on the Bush Administration's statements about education as a "new civil right." As she correctly notes, this position must come as a shock to his strict constructionist friends in the judicial branch. In the first place, education is nowhere mentioned in the federal constitution. The only way to assure that education will be considered to be a fundamental constitutional right would be to amend the constitution and place an educational clause or article into that document. That could be done, but it does not seem likely that President Bush would lead that cause through the Congress and through ratification in the necessary states.

Second, while an education article does appear in every state constitution including Illinois, in only about half of the states has education been held by the state courts to be a constitutional right. Illinois is emphatically NOT one of those states. The Supreme Court of Illinois, in *The Committee v. Edgar*, made it crystal clear that education is not a fundamental constitutional right in this state. Further, the citizens of this state turned back an attempt to amend the state constitution so that education would be a fundamental constitutional right. To be sure, that amendment came very close to passing, receiving a simple majority of votes cast, but not the sixty percent required to amend. It is possible--indeed quite likely—that, at some point in the future, those desirous of making an adequate education a constitutional right will try again.

When that day does come it will take a coalition of Democrats and Republicans to get the job done. In the last struggle, Senator John Maitland nobly and without regard to personal political consequences, led a section of his party in supporting the constitutional amendment while Senator Art Berman led the Democrats. Those most honorable gentlemen can probably no longer lead such a charge, but others will rise to pick up the flag. On some brighter morning, an adequate education will be a fundamental constitutional right of every child born in this state.

Is Bush For Real on Education? (Expanded from a *Pantagraph* Article)

In the April 9th edition of this paper, Marsha Mercer poses the question, “Is reading a civil right for every American?” She then explains that President Bush has been answering that question in the affirmative for the last couple of years. We have a very long history with that question in Illinois. We do frame it differently, asking rather, “Is education a fundamental constitutional right?” But, before I recite some of that state history, it may be useful to view this question at the federal level.

The word “education” appears nowhere in the federal constitution. It is true that there are a few lawyers and scholars who believe that it might be possible to extrapolate a fundamental right to education from the First Amendment or perhaps the Fifth Amendment. However, that group is very small and includes almost none of the advisors of George W. Bush, who tend to be, as Mercer points out, strict constructionists. Most lawyers and scholars believe that for education to become a fundamental constitutional right, it would be necessary to amend the federal constitution. That is not unthinkable, but it requires an organization or organizations ready to carry the process through the Congress and then through the requisite number of states. Individuals in some of the national educational organizations have said they are willing to do that, but is George W. Bush now prepared to lead that national effort?

If he does, he will join that small group of Republicans who believe in the concept of “education as a unique public function.” That was an idea put forward many decades ago by Professor Judd of the University of Chicago. The idea was that education was not like other governmental services. The return to the public from an investment in education was believed to be much larger than the return from investing in other public services. This idea foreshadowed the “human capital” school of thought in Economics. The principle advocate of this position on the national scene was “Mr. Republican,” the late Senator Robert Taft of Ohio. In Illinois, our own state senator, John Maitland, often expressed the same notion. Skeptics, however, are not going to place much credence in President Bush’s position. After all, they will say, he only averaged 77% on the history courses he took at Yale; therefore, he may not fully understand all of the constitutional law implications. On the other hand, Senator Ted Kennedy is supporting some of Bush’s ideas and even his critics acknowledge him to be the most efficient man in the United States Senate. Let us turn to the relevant record in Illinois.

In the early 1990s, a group of professors at Illinois State University met; reviewed the constitutional challenges to school finance systems that had then been going forward in other states for twenty years and decided that Illinois should launch a constitutional challenge to our system of funding the K-12 schools. They invited to Normal every district superintendent they thought would support that legal challenge. On the eve of the meeting, there was a blizzard that knocked out all the lights on the campus except the power in University High School. I walked over to U High expecting absolutely no one to be there. When I opened the door, I found that the auditorium was packed. I remember turning to my old colleague, Ben Hubbard, and saying, “If they come through a blizzard for this, then the die is cast.” He nodded and said, “Yes, now we must go forward with it.” So, the case was launched with the help of an awfully lot of good men and women. With the considerable help of a local attorney, Robert J. Lenz, an organization was put together to fight the cause. Funds to support the litigation were

obtained from the Joyce Foundation and from many school districts. The state moved to dismiss; won at the district level; was sustained at the appeals level; and won decisively, five to one with one judge abstaining, at the Supreme Court level. The decision in the *Committee v. Edgar* states very, very clearly that in Illinois education is NOT a constitutional right. To be sure, it is a fundamental constitutional right in almost half of the other states, including President Bush's Texas, but NOT in Illinois. That is the law in Illinois to this day.

Before the decision was announced, a different group of professors at Illinois State University met with legislators, including Senator John Maitland and Senator Art Berman. This group decided to carry an amendment to the Illinois Constitution that would change the wording of Article Ten (the education article) so that the state's constitution would then clearly proclaim that education was a fundamental right. The amendment was based largely on the work of Professor David Franklin, then a member of the Illinois State University faculty, who had studied education articles in all fifty states. During the campaign to pass the amendment, Senator John Maitland made over 50 speeches advocating passage. I made over 30. I recall one meeting in the offices of the *Pantagraph* where an irate Senator Maitland shouted at the then publisher, because this paper refused to support the amendment. We needed a super majority; we failed by only a few percentage points, surpassing the Presidential candidate and the candidate for the United States Senate at that election. The failure of passage may be laid at the feet of several business groups that strongly opposed the measure and directly at the feet of Governor Jim Edgar, who belatedly came out against the amendment. The failure of the court case and the failure of the amendment ended several academic careers, including mine. Looking back on those events though, I think I can agree with General Longstreet. Longstreet said, after the battle of Gettysburg, "To lose a battle that important, a lot of men had to make a lot of mistakes and I made my share."

So George W., if you want to come out here in the prairies and lead another charge up that hill, you will have infantry to do just that. Unfortunately, John Maitland can no longer give another fifty speeches, nor can I stand on my feet for thirty, but we will be there, watching. Who knows, John, maybe--just maybe--this time we will get the *Pantagraph's* endorsement?

School Vouchers: Solution or Another Problem?

In 1777, a young Governor of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson, pushed through the House of Burgesses one of the first public school statutes in the United States. Unfortunately, the legislature did not follow Jefferson's recommendations for funding this new governmental service. Jefferson proposed to fund this new public service by a statewide tax. The legislature decided otherwise and had local governments fund the new government service. Jefferson said of this action: "This will not work. The wealthy towns will have good education and the poor towns will have little or no education." Despite the efforts of a lot of well meaning men and women, not much has changed since Jefferson's time. It is against this background of gross inequalities between the rich and the poor in education that voucher proposals must be judged.

Vouchers are not a new idea. Milton Friedman, a noted economist, advocated them in the late 1940's. Under the Friedman proposal, the state would provide a certificate worth a certain amount of money. The parents could then add to this amount from their own pockets and take the certificate to any school, private or public, and cash it in. Schemes like Friedman's general voucher have been proposed in many states, usually by referendum. They have succeeded in none. Why? Because they would clearly make the ancient equity problem described above, much worse. The wealthy parent could come out of pocket with much more than could the poor parent, and the differential between the rich and the poor schools would then continue to grow.

Sometime in the 1950's, a counter proposal arose. Rather than a general voucher, as Friedman advocated, why not have a voucher inverse to wealth? Eventually, this became a notion of restricting the voucher to only poor parents. In that form, it has seen its way into law at least in Wisconsin and Ohio. It is the Ohio form of that legislation that is now before the United States Supreme Court. Pro-voucher people believe this highly restricted voucher proposal may pass the scrutiny of the "establishment clause" in the first amendment. We will not know until this summer, if that will be the case.

About thirty years ago, in the last days of Richard Ogilvie's administration, an Illinois school finance task force did recommend a "voucher to the poor" system. It was not accepted for the following reasons. First, as George Will, himself a voucher advocate, candidly admitted in his February 18th column in this paper, "Suburban public schools refuse to receive poor inner city scholarship students." It was believed they would continue to do so under a voucher system. Since that time, the British have adopted a system of scholarships to their elite private schools that required those schools to reserve a percentage of their seats for these poor scholars. Thirty years ago, few were prepared to require both public and private schools in Illinois to reserve a quota of seats for the poor. Are they now?

Much discussion ensued at that time over the alleged, "creaming off effect." School officials thought that the better students would take advantage of the vouchers and thus leave behind the poorer students in the inner city schools. The disappearance of good role models in the student population would have a negative effect on those who were left behind. It has been well established that the single most powerful variable in predicting test scores in a given school is the percentage of children from low-income families in that school. Since a voucher system would likely remove students from middle income parents, the percentage of students

from low income parents would increase and the average test scores of the “left behinds” would, according, decline drastically.

Another matter of concern was the schooling of disabled children. These students are costly to educate; therefore, it was felt that many schools would not voluntarily take students with physical or mental handicaps. There was also the matter of transportation. Since the children of the poor generally lack transportation, the state would have to shoulder extra costs in getting the “vouchered children” to their new schools. There was also the matter of social exclusion in the receiving school brought on by differences in clothing and in speech habits of the poor. Perhaps, if all students wore uniforms, as they do in many British schools, it might work, but American schools have largely opposed school uniforms. Finally, the voucher proposals would take the future leaders of minorities from their natural base and inculcate them in the values of the white middle class. Well-educated minority leaders already have major problems in communicating with their less well-educated rank and file population and the “voucher to the poor” would likely make that gap worse.

Finally, for those of us who still believe that every student in this state has a fundamental right to an adequate education, this is merely another “save a few by sacrificing the many” proposal. Nuts!!

A Case for an Elected Superintendent of Education and an Elected School Board

Seldom, a year passes in the Illinois General Assembly without a bill to disestablish the current state school board and replace it with an alternative method of governing education. Many of these proposals would create a State Superintendent, appointed by the Governor, who would be treated the same as any other cabinet officers. A few have suggested going back to an elected State Superintendent, with or without a school board. Many of these proposals have merit, but most lack any underlying theory or basic assumption which gives guidance to the arrangements proposed. Let us construct such a theory based proposal.

First, we need to select a theory. Let us say we go back to the early part of the last century when a group of men at the University of Chicago were outlining what became known as the “Doctrine of Unique Function.” That notion held that expenditure for education was not like expenditures for any other public function. It was observed by these men and women that expenditures for education were not entirely for consumption, but that they could be viewed as investments in the infrastructure of society. At the end of that century, this observation led to a notion of “human capital” and investment in “human capital.” Such a theory holds that expenditures for education constitute a “prior claim” on governmental budgets, especially the state’s governmental budgets; therefore, decisions about the level and methods of that spending, should be made before the rest of the public budget is determined. It should be noted that this is not a theory held only by Democrats. No less than the late Robert Taft, “Mr. Republican,” held a similar view. In various states, it has also given rise to legislation which requires the state to spend no less than a predetermined percent of the state’s budget for education. It also gives rise to sentiments expressed on both sides of the aisle that

“education shall be cut last.” One could, however, build an institutional structure that was directly based upon this doctrine.

For example, suppose we move education out of regular politics by having the State Superintendent and the School Board elected on a non-partisan ballot. A panel of experts, drawn from the educational community, could willow the applicants for the Superintendent down to three names, which could be placed on a ballot without party affiliation. The election could be held in off-years when we are not electing a Governor. Many legislators have observed that educational politics is really regional politics, so why not establish a board of education with regional representation? Perhaps we could elect 15 representatives from six regions of the state with each region having no more than three nor less than one representative based on population. The same panel of experts could get the applications for regional representatives and could also actively nominate some individuals if applicants were slow in coming. It is true that the Doctrine of Unique Function is really a public finance doctrine, but unless this underpinning of non-partisanship is provided, it is difficult to see how it would work in the real world.

With the aforesaid nonpartisan governmental structure in place, the State Superintendent could be charged with preparing an annual budget showing not only where the dollars would be spent, but also where and how these dollars would be raised. This would certainly be a marked difference from current practice. At present, the Superintendent is not responsible for outlining how the funds are to be raised although he or she must realistically assess what taxation is possible. If the Doctrine of Unique Function is correct, then such a budget should also NOT be presented to the Governor’s Bureau of the Budget. It should pass directly to the General Assembly for its action. Since it is a “Prior Claim,” the General Assembly must act on the education budget before it acts on the remainder of the state budget. Such a procedure would “earmark” funds for education in the revenue structure. “Earmarking” taxes has been repeatedly resisted by the state legislature. However, it is interesting that every time this question arises on a public opinion poll, the public says it wants to know exactly where the funds are coming for education, including which tax sources. It is likely that the budget for higher education and for the community colleges should be worked out separately, but then presented to the General Assembly as one complete budget for education at the same time.

We have a very bad habit in education of not putting our money where our mouth is. We say education has a priority, but we provide no real institutional structure to accomplish that priority. The present painful cuts in educational spending only serve to highlight this gross lack of intestinal fortitude. Stop complaining. Do something about it.

Outline of Prospective Legislation for an Annual Equity Report

For almost a quarter of a century the Center for the Study of School Finance at ISU documented the progress of the State of Illinois toward or away from equality of educational opportunity. In the early days, the Center's reports went to the School Problems Commission and later directly to the Governor and the General Assembly. Due to retirements and budget problems, this function has been dropped in recent years. Some of us feel that it is just too important a task to abandon. Accordingly, I have drafted this proposed legislation, which would require the State of Illinois and State Board of Education to take over this function. Although the number of legislators with an interest in *equity* may not be as great as in the past, hopefully, enough remain to see this into law.

Inasmuch as it is a goal of the General Assembly of Illinois to achieve equality of educational opportunity, the Superintendent of Education is directed to transmit to the General Assembly and the Governor an Annual Equity Report, which shall contain, but not be limited to, the following information.

1. The variance among the school districts with regard to:

(a) operating expenditures per pupil; (b) property valuation per pupil; (c) educational tax rate; (d) general state aid per pupil; (e) categorical state aid per pupil; (f) median family income; and (g) test results on all academic achievement tests required by the state. Standard statistical descriptive measures shall be used, including the standard deviation and the coefficient of variation. When a sufficient number of annual measurements have been taken, a time series of these measurements shall be established so that the General Assembly shall know whether the state has been moving in the direction of *equality of educational opportunity* or away from *equality of educational opportunity*. These measurements shall be supplemented by cartographic analysis so that regional inequalities may be studied.

2. The Annual Equity Report shall also state the association of these variables:

(a) property valuation per pupil and expenditure per pupil; (b) median family income and expenditure per pupil; (c) median family income and test score; (d) property valuation per pupil and general state aid per pupil; and (e) median family income and categorical state aid. Standard statistical descriptive measures shall be used, including the product moment correlation coefficient and the standardized regression coefficient. When a sufficient number of annual measurements has been established, a time series shall be established so that the General Assembly shall know whether educational provision and outcomes are becoming a greater *function of local wealth* or whether they are becoming less of a *function of local wealth*.

3. The Annual Equity Report shall also state what actions have been taken by the State Superintendent and the State Board to reduce the variance in educational expenditures and educational outcomes between school districts and what actions have been taken to reduce the relationship of local wealth to educational expenditures and outcomes. The Report shall also state the cost and effectiveness of these actions.

4 .The Annual Equity Report may be prepared in house or the Report may be contracted out to acknowledged experts in school finance, or both, provided that the external contract does not exceed \$40,000 in any given fiscal year. The budget of the State Superintendent shall reflect this as a separate item.

5. The Report shall be printed and published by the State Board of Education and shall be distributed to all members of the General Assembly and the Executive Office of the Governor. An executive summary shall be made available to the media.

Education Panel Is Correct

The interim report recently issued by the Education Funding Advisory Board is correct. The burden of supporting the public schools should be shifted from the property tax to the state income tax. This recommendation is just as sound now as when Illinois State University Professors Hubbard and Hickrod made it three decades ago. During that last three decades, many states did make this shift; however, Illinois ran counter to the national trend. In fact, during part of this period, the tax burden moved from the state and to the local government. Why? We submit that the reason for this is that the income-wealthy suburbs have a vested interest in keeping things exactly the way that they are now. Should the legislature shift the burden to the state, it is the poorer schools that will be advantaged by this shift and not the wealthier schools. The legislative representatives from the wealthy suburbs are well aware that their high-income constituents will pay more should the burden be shifted to the income tax and away from the property tax. Let it be quickly said, however, that fair minded and courageous individual citizens in those suburbs do support this shift, because they know it is better for the state as a whole. They rise above parochial interests to do the right thing.

The panel would do well to listen to some of its more skilled political members such as former Representative Art Berman. He argues for a more gradual shift costing less money. The panel may not have drawn the right conclusions from the failed attempt to make this very same shift by Dawn Clarke Netsch, in 1994. When one tries to accomplish the twin goals of making this tax shift and providing new funds for the schools, things become complicated. Also, they become quite pricey. A better strategy might be to accomplish the goal of property tax relief in one legislative session and then provide additional funds for the schools in another legislative session. Remember, a tax shift is not tax relief. There is no free lunch.

Unit Five School Board Shows Guts

Membership on a School Board is one of the many thankless, difficult jobs that must be done to make a democracy work. When it is done well, it surely should be noted. McLean County Unit District Five's attempt to balance the percentage of children from low socio-economic families among its various school jurisdictions is based on solid sociological and educational research. Tons of studies show that the single most important predictor of low test scores is the percentage of children from low-income families in the jurisdiction. The greater the percentage of lower-income students in a jurisdiction, the lower the test scores. Therefore, it is solid public policy to make this percentage as even as possible between jurisdictions. Unfortunately, there are limits on how much can be done here since the largest differences are usually between elementary jurisdictions, so proximity is a major consideration with younger children. Ultimately, the critics of the balancing policy are also right about one thing. It is segregation by social class that is the prime cause of this problem. The rich live together; the poor live together; and they both put as much geographic space between one another as they possibly can. Study of this problem goes back over 75 years in sociology, usually under the title of "urban ecology."

The Unit Five School Board is following the utilitarian premise of "the greatest good for the greatest number." Unfortunately, when the greatest good for most children is NOT the same as the greatest good for your child, there is a real emotional twist. The middle class school board member voting for a policy that will not particularly help middle class children has a stronger sense of citizenship than most of us possess. There is one saving grace. That same body of research shows that the percentage needs to be greater than 50% to have a strong negative influence on test scores. Most jurisdictions in Unit 5 have not yet reached that point. If the Board does not buckle under pressure, and holds to its course, it will deserve a "profiles in courage" award.

GENERAL GOVERNANCE AND POLITICS

On a Definition of a Liberal

(Published as “What is a Liberal?” – *Pantagraph*, June 3, 2001)

In our “soundbites” mentality we routinely slam around labels like, “right wing” and “left wing” and even “liberal” and “conservative” without realizing that those labels carry very few common understandings. Hence, they do not facilitate rational political discussion. It has not always been so. The late Barry Goldwater wrote, *Conscience of a Conservative*, and millions read the book; by no means were all of them conservative. Similarly, the late Hubert Humphery wrote essays in *The American Scholar*, defining what he through Liberalism meant in the 20th Century; thousands read them; not all of them were liberals. Since no one else seems to be stepping up to the plate to do similar service for the readers of the *Pantagraph*, perhaps it falls on the shoulders of a retired Illinois State University professor to take a swing at it. At least, I will attempt it here for the Liberal side and leave it to a more qualified individual to do it for the Conservative side.

There must be a score of points on which one could hang a definition of Liberal as we enter the 21st Century. Only twelve of these public policy positions will be discussed. Some of these policy positions have a range of opinion attached to them. I will try to indicate that variation.

1. The social security system passed by a liberal president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, is a bed rock issue for most Liberals. Most Liberals today would support expansion of that program and would be suspicious of attempts to privatize this program since the privatization of the program would not likely benefit Americans of modest circumstances.
2. The Medicare program passed by another liberal president, Lynden Baines Johnson, is a second bed rock issue for Liberals. Most Liberals would support expansion of that program to include prescription drug benefits. There is a range of opinion here extending from simple expansion of Medicare through a complete revamping of the way we finance health care in the United States.
3. Protection of the environment is a strong issue with Liberals and has also been an issue with presidents like Theodore Roosevelt, who would have been more comfortable with the label “progressive.” This issue extends into finding substitutions for fossil fuels and into wider issues such as global warming and global over-population.
4. Some modest redistribution of income is on the agenda of Liberals, although it may be nothing more than a defense of the progressive income tax and a similar defense of the estate or inheritance tax. There is an important assumption here that should be made explicit. Many Liberals believe that if the private enterprise system is allowed to run unchecked and unregulated, it will result in a very unequal distribution of wealth. While some variation in wealth is surely justified, given the differences in talent and application among individuals, Liberals often believe that huge inequalities in wealth are

not healthful to a representative form of government. In fact, they hold, with Aristotle, that democracies cannot survive great inequalities in wealth. In the *Third Book of the Politics*, Aristotle states that only a large middle class can contribute to the stability of a Republic. Most Liberals accept that as gospel.

5. Liberals often believe that a more modest defense budget is required than those who are on the other side of the aisle believe. However, the range of opinion here is not as great as one might expect. Surely, there are Liberals who are pacifists. However, until and unless Christianity succeeds with its message of peace on earth, we will need an adequate defense force. Most Liberals see that in terms of a smaller, highly mobile force rather than in terms of a larger "star wars defense." It is not inconsistent, for example, to argue for a four division Marine Corps and still maintain a liberal position. Smaller, elite, rapid deployment units seem to fit our world of "pocket wars," bombings, terrorism and assassinations.
6. Consistent with point four, Liberals also see the need for rigorous enforcement of anti-trust legislation in order to maintain fair competition in the economy. Similarly, they are apt to stress enforcement of regulations in finance and banking intended to protect the small investor in the economy and to lessen "inside trading." Selected tax breaks for small businesses are consistent with a liberal position, but across the board tax relief for the wealthy is not.
7. Liberals are strong supporters of public education. They accept the Jeffersonian position that the Republic cannot survive without a well-educated electorate. They are suspicious of proposals to privatize the system through voucher proposals and even alternative school proposals, although here the range is quite large. Some Liberals do see a role for "charter schools," if they will help the situation of the urban poor and not be restricted simply to the wealthier suburbs. Consistent with their strong support of equal educational opportunity they are offended by great differences in expenditure per pupil between school districts. They generally support more state aid to school districts and would prefer to depend less upon property taxes to support public education. In higher education, Liberals usually take a low tuition or no tuition stance at least for undergraduate education. The success of the Scottish Liberal Democrats in removing entirely tuition at the undergraduate level stands in stark contrast to the increasing tuition levels in U.S. colleges and universities.
8. Liberals support the separation of Church and State. They view with some fear what they believe to be a lack of religious toleration among some fundamentalists, both Christian and Moslem. In particular, the attempt of some of these religious groups to impose their will upon the public schools is a cause of some concern. There may be more agnostics, Unitarians, and Reformed Jews in the liberal pews than on the other side of the aisle, but Liberals are also found in ethical organizations like the Masonic Lodge, largely because that organization has historically stood for religious liberty.
9. Gun control advocates are more strongly represented among the liberal group than elsewhere in the society. The range here though is quite wide. Some Liberals merely work for the registration of all handguns. Others would urge us to follow the lead of

Great Britain and outlaw the handguns completely. The controversy here extends into just what the Second Amendment really means.

10. At certain points, the civil Libertarian and the liberal positions overlap, but, at other points, they differ. Certainly, the strong enforcement of the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment has been a hallmark of the liberal position since the days in which FDR put the minorities into coalition for the Democratic Party. Constitutional rights for women, for gays, for racial minorities, for seniors, all receive more support from Liberals than they do from those on the other side of the aisle. Liberals are also apt to make more of First Amendment Rights as well as the Fourteenth Amendment. It hurts a liberal veteran just as much as some other kind of veteran to see an American flag burned, but the Liberal may tolerate it as the extreme expression of freedom of speech. Similarly, Liberals are more fearful of book censorship than are other groups and they tend to lend more support to the constitutional rights of students, teachers, and professors.
11. On the abortion issue, Liberals tend to come down on the side of “choice” rather than “life.” This is consistent with point ten in that it is one more illustration of their concern for women’s rights. It is also consistent with their concern for over-population.
12. The final point is the liberal position on campaign finance. Liberals support restrictions on campaign funding, though bothered by the constitutionality of such proposals. History has a very stern warning here. Two centuries before Christ, the great Roman Senate had degenerated into a place where seats could be bought and the struggle between the rich and the poor literally tore that institution apart. Caesar brought his legions to support the rich; and the Republic was history. When public office can be purchased, it is all over for representative democracy.

Some concluding observations are now needed. Do you have to hold all these positions to be a “Liberal”? Not unless you are an “illiberal” Liberal and there are certainly such. Can a Republican as well as a Democrat be a Liberal? Assuredly they can be and have been. A large section of the eastern wing of the Republican Party probably qualifies as such. The label was actually used by a Republican Governor of New York and Vice-President of the United States, the late Nelson Rockefeller. Admittedly, he was not well received by members of his own party here in the Midwest. It may be necessary to support more than one of these positions otherwise one could become a “single issue advocate” which does describe many in political life these days.

Above all we need tolerance now, as never before, for the other person’s position. Remember that Humphrey and Goldwater held each other in high respect, even though they could not agree on the time for lunch, once they had stepped on the floor of the U.S. Senate. Remember also that when Strom Thurmond was asked who he thought was the most competent U.S. Senator, he replied without blinking an eye, “Teddy Kennedy.” Remember, finally, that Republics do not have long lives. Three or four centuries are about par for the course, and only the Athenian, Roman, English and American can qualify there. With a little more respect, tolerance and civility, we may set an historical record.

Proportional Representation Plus

In a recent Viewpoint debate, Gerald Bradley has it right. We did throw out the baby with the bath when we reduced the size of the House and dropped proportional representation. However, we do not need to go back to the old system to correct the flaws of the present electoral method. The Scots show us the way. In their new Parliament, the Scots combine single district with proportional representation, thus getting the benefits of both electoral systems. It is similar to combining an analog system with a digital system.

One way it could work in Illinois would be to elect the current 118 representatives just as they are now, and then add on 61 more representatives elected by proportional representation. Yes, that would put us back at the levels of representation we were at before we went to single district alone and would increase the public payroll. But it should also end "safe districts" in which no minority party has a chance and in which the only real choice the voter has is in the primary ballot. We would need to create twenty large regional districts over the top of the 118 single unit districts. In these 20 regional districts we could elect three representatives each on the basis of proportion of the vote received by each political party adding one for a tiebreaker.

In many places, that would work out with Republicans entitled to two representatives and Democrats to the one remaining representative, or vice-versa. In the second stage, the political parties would nominate the actual individuals, and the voter would vote only for a party. The individuals to be elected would be published in order of priority--called "party lists" in Scotland. Rarely, would you need to go beyond the first or second individual ranked on a party's list.

All of this sounds much more complicated than it actually is. The system works to the advantage of the minority party, which in modern Scotland happens to be the Conservative Party. No finder's fee required. But I wooda refuse a wee dram if yo're a mind.

British Politics: Another View

In the June 11th issue of the *Pantagraph*, noted columnist, George Will, offers his interpretation of the recent British election and his prognostications for the British election of 2006. But he sees the facts through conservative glasses. Since the Conservatives have been soundly trounced in two successive elections, he sees a revival of the Conservative and Unionist Parties in 2006. He may be right, because British politics, like American politics, shows the same pendulum-like swings that occur through time between the Liberal and Conservative poles on the political spectrum. However, another interpretation is possible. The political party gaining the most seats in the most recent British election was the Liberal Democrats, whose gain of six seats puts them at 50 in the House of Commons. This is not many, to be sure, but a look at what is happening in Scotland may suggest a very important role for them in 2006.

In Scotland, Labor governs, but only because of a coalition government which includes the Liberal Democrats. Without them, Labor would not have enough votes to form a government in Scotland. The Liberal Democrats in Scotland have cashed in big on their deal with Labor. Two important social programs--the removal of tuition in higher education and the program for the care of the elderly--have been passed and paid for by increased taxation. Those programs and others and the increase in taxes necessary to pay for them were the price exacted by the Liberal Democrats for participation in the Lab-Lib coalition.

Could this same scenario develop in the Westminster Parliament by 2006? Yes, it could. The last poll conducted by the *London Times* showed only 30% of the electorate supporting the Conservative Party. Admittedly, this is more than the meager 16% who support that same party in Scotland. The Conservative showing in this last election was so bad that both Hague, the U.K. Conservative leader, and Robertson, the Scot Conservative leader, had to resign. Charles Kennedy, the new Liberal Democrat leader, launched a powerful campaign with a plan for revising and expanding a number of social programs, including the National Health Service. Kennedy is a Scot and frequently uses the success of the Liberal Democrats north of the border as an example of what can be done in England. One of his slogans is, "We are the party of opposition now and we will be the party of governance in another ten years."

Mr. Will overlooks the important fact that European politics is often a matter of multi-party coalitions. You cannot make the same two party assumptions in Europe that you do in the United States. A Lab-Lib coalition governs Scotland now and a Lab-Lib coalition could govern England in 2006 or 2011. All right, that's looking at the same subject through liberal glasses rather than through conservative glasses. Now, you look at it through your own glasses.

Tail Wags Dog?

Commentaries by George Will and Earl Reitan might be thought to exhaust the news of the latest British election. Not quite. We did not hear from the Scots. Scotland is not England. The Scots do not talk like the English; they do not eat like the English; they do not teach their children like the English; they do not worship their God like the English; and they have not done so for centuries. Recently, they also do not govern themselves like the English and they sure as the devil do not vote like the English. In this last election, the Labor Party gathered 43.9% of the Scottish vote; the Scottish National Party ran second with 20.1 %; the Liberal Democrats ran in the money with 16.4% of the vote; and the electorate relegated the party of history, the Conservative and Unionist Party, to fourth position.

Political power, however, is not just a matter of counting votes. Since Labor did not win in Scotland the crushing victory it did in England, Labor could not form a government in the Scottish Parliament. They would not deal with the Conservatives and the SNP would not deal with them. Enter the Liberal Democrats. They would form a government with Labor, but Labor would have to pay a price. That price was support for the LD bill to remove all tuition in all higher education and to back their programs for the elderly. Deal done. Both pieces of legislation passed. The point of all this?

If Labor ever loses its crushing majority in Westminster, do you really think they would hesitate to cut the same deal in England with the Liberal chiefs that they have in Scotland? Not likely. Then the Scottish tail would wag the English dog as it so often has before in history.

Required National Service Bill Deserve Support

David Broder's column of February 6th is on target. A required National Service Bill could now receive bi-partisan support. Long on the agenda of the Democratic side of aisle, it has recently picked up strength on the Republican side as well, notably from Senator McCain and the President. Unlike the old Universal Military Training bills, these new bills open the possibility of satisfying the two or three year requirement by other than military service, including the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, and the President's new USA Freedom Corps. Presumably, all would be means of satisfying the requirement and neatly sidestep the conscientious objector problem. We might also solve some national security problems by including the Border Patrol and the Coast Guard. It also could be a solution to youth unemployment especially in urban and rural areas. If educational credits were attached to this kind of service, we also provide a way, similar to the GI Bill, of providing college and graduate school support to young men and women. It might even be extended to "faith based" organizations although here we run the risk of constitutional problems. Service in organizations like the Red Cross might pass the constitutional test.

Granted, it would require organizations like the old draft boards to administer fairly the new legislation, but these might be partially staffed on a volunteer basis and thus reduce administrative overhead. If something like this comes out of the terrorist problem, we will have found a silver lining in an otherwise very ugly cloud.

Tallest Tree in the Forest

If your ear was pointed toward Chicago, last week, you doubtlessly heard the lightning strike the tallest tree in the forest. When a stroke caught up with Senator John Maitland, it felled one of the last remaining strong supporters of public education in this state. While we do not know the extent of the stroke's damage, it cannot be good for education. John Maitland belonged, indeed led, that rare group of Republicans who put funding for education in a special category, outside other public spending.

There is literature on the subject. It is referred to as the "doctrine of unique function" and holds that spending on education is not like other public spending in that it is more investment than it is consumption. The late Senator from Ohio, Robert Taft, led this group nationally at one time. With the death of Charles Claybough and the retirement of Gene Hoffman, its numbers have declined in the Illinois General Assembly. The retirement of Maitland's counterpart on the Democratic side, Senator Arthur Berman, does not help matters, either. The number of "unique function" men has thinned in the halls of academe as well. We just cannot afford to find former Marine John Maitland on the casualty list.

A Different Kind of Dear John Letter

Mr. Penn, the Democratic chairperson, and Mr. Wilson, the self-appointed spokesperson for the Republican Right, have sent their Dear John letters to Senator Maitland. We are sending here a different kind of letter to the ailing Senator. John, by your exemplary service you have earned the right to at least a full year's recovery from your stroke, perhaps more. You have fought many a battle for just causes. Fight this one now for all the men and women who have struggled, or who are struggling, to come back from serious medical problems. You now represent a special constituency, the recovering, who are found on both sides of the political aisle. Does Mr. Parrott, the Republican chairman, really believe it will be easy to find another man or woman who has so well represented both moderate Republicans and moderate Democrats? Does he really want to set off a war between the right and the middle within his own party? We think not to both questions.

Random Thoughts on Galbraith and Schlesinger

It is scary that Galbraith is 92 or 93 years old and Schlesinger is 82 or 83 years old. I cannot conceive of what the Liberal movement in America would be without both of these men. One an economist, more correctly a political economist, and the other an historian, they were definitely not “ivory tower” professors. Both served in the Roosevelt administration and in the Kennedy administration and consulted with even Republican administrations. They gave real meaning to that old saw, “How do you get in Government?” “You go to Harvard and turn left.” History may record that Galbraith had the greater impact on American society because it fell to John Kenneth Galbraith to interpret to the American public the theory of another John, John Maynard Keynes. As they reach the end of their lives, surely all Liberals hope they receive the credit that is obviously due to them.

Both prolific writers, they must have turned out 35 or 40 books between them. Which of these had the greatest impact on the American public? For Galbraith I would argue that *The Affluent Society* and the *Culture of Contentment* are works of lasting importance in political economy. On the other hand, some smaller works like *The Scotch* and *Between Friends*, fill in the cracks to make Galbraith the most humane being that he was. Galbraith has had, and will continue to have, his detractors. In the early days, a group on the Board of Overseers, the body that functions as a Board of Trustees for Harvard, tried to block the granting of tenure to Professor Galbraith on the grounds that he was too politically active. The President of Harvard threatened to resign and the veto collapsed. Galbraith got himself elected President of the American Economic Association despite the fact that he took a dim view of turning all of economics into a branch of mathematics. For Ken, the world could not be reduced to a set of regression equations.

For Schlesinger one certainly has to start with the *Age of Jackson*. Not only was this a Pulitzer Prize winner, but also it brought back into American history an interpretation based on class struggle, but one that was not Marxist. Schlesinger has been, and remains, the standard bearer of the NCL (non-communist left). Also widely read, more so than most history books, was *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*. Schlesinger never neglected his historical duties as well. He reprised and extended his father’s major theory on political swings in history in *The Cycles of American History*. More recently, he has started his autobiography, *A Life in the Twentieth Century*. It is devoutly to be prayed that he be given the strength to finish it.

About the best way to honor these men is to see that their books continue to be read and discussed. Therefore, I propose that the Stevenson Society establish a Galbraith/Schlesinger reading group. Marcia and I will be glad to host such a group if we can get it up and running. There is no reason to limit our readings to Galbraith and Schlesinger in *The New Liberal Canon*, but that would be a darn good place to start.

Meritocracy, Yes; Aristocracy, No

The recent awarding of a Knighthood of the British Empire to Alan Greenspan is certainly appropriate and constitutes the best use of the Queen's honors list. The British have been careful about this. Much improvement has taken place from the time in which a Knighthood could be purchased by a large enough contribution to the Conservative and Unionist Party in England. We Americans lack the equivalent for honoring our meritorious people; we are much the poorer for it. Sadly, we seem intent on rewarding the accumulation of wealth, rather than the accumulation of merit. Thomas Jefferson must be rolling in his grave.

Jefferson and like-minded Founding Fathers were fearful of the establishment of a landed aristocracy in this country. For that reason, they made it unlawful for the practices of primogeniture and entailment to exist in the United States. That is, land cannot be passed only to the oldest male heir, nor can the heirs be prevented from selling the land. The creation of Trusts has gotten around some of these restrictions, but not completely. Most countries also prevent land from being passed from one generation to another without paying a price for that privilege. We had such a tax until the Reagan and Bush administrations launched successive campaigns to repeal that law. At present, up to a million dollars in wealth, in land or anything else, can be passed to your children without federal tax, and the whole tax will be eventually eliminated in the United States. Very few countries in the world are this generous to their wealthy citizens.

The rationale behind the elimination of the inheritance tax in this country was that a father and mother had some sort of "right"--not a "privilege"--to pass on their money to their children, if that was their wish. Within limits, that does seem reasonable. But is it reasonable to be able to pass on millions of dollars--which the father and mother themselves probably did not earn--to their children--who certainly did not merit by any action of their own--these large rewards? We think not. When you couple this action with the lowering of the income tax, especially in the upper brackets, and with the lowering of the capital gains tax, you have set the stage for the creation of an aristocracy in this nation. Admittedly, this new aristocracy is not based on land alone, but on all forms of wealth. Of course, if the stock market continues its slide, we will not have to worry about any adverse effects of lowering the capital gains tax since there will be bloody few capital gains for anybody.

It must also be admitted that aristocracies are not all bad. A good case can be made that without aristocracies there would be much less fine arts in this world. Historically, aristocracies have been good patrons of the arts and have supported scholars and universities as well. Regrettably, as Aristotle pointed out over two millennia ago, "government by the best" tends over time to degenerate into "government by the powerful." Therefore, we have to be constantly on guard against the rise of an Oligarchy in the United States. We have not been doing a very good job of this recently.

Jefferson was so fearful of the inheritance of both wealth and honors that he opposed the establishment of the Order of Cincinnati. That Order, which still exists today by the way, was intended for men and women who could trace their ancestry to an officer in the Revolutionary Army. Jefferson did believe strongly in the establishment of a Meritocracy. He

made that absolutely clear in his letters to John Adams. He also made it clear that he regarded the establishment of the University of Virginia as an equal achievement to the writing of the Declaration of Independence. We forget, at our considerable peril, what the Sage of Monticello taught us.

FROM LIFE

Good Wars/Bad Wars

Boots on the floor and body bags at the door. For the extreme patriot there is no bad war and for the pacifist there is no good war. The rest of us have to sort it all out.

Karl Von Clausewitz helps. This nineteenth century writer believed that war was simply national self-interest, an extension of normal foreign policy. A less sympathetic interpretation might say war is greed. We have a lot of candidates for that category. Into it put all wars necessary to build the British, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese colonial empires. On our part we can add the War of 1812, where we blatantly tried to steal Canada; the Mexican War; and the Spanish-American War. A hard-eyed view of the Gulf War might also allocate that to the bad category since oil played so much of a role in the conflict.

Opposed to these are the good wars. It is easy to see where they differ from the first category. Greed plays a minor role here. These wars are fought for non-material goals. Central to their content and causality are matters of liberty, freedom, democracy, human rights and the like. The major revolutionary wars of the world: the English Civil War of the 17th Century, our own Revolutionary War, the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution belong clearly to this category. The American Civil War, both World Wars and the Korean War can also be found herein. Material gain was present in these wars, but it was not the major motivation.

Comes now "Been Looney" and his ilk. For this man, who thinks he is Saladin the Magnificent, it is the 13th Century and he wishes to plunge us into another good war between the entire Moslem world and the rest of us. Religious nuts are bad for your health. There should be a Surgeon General's warning. He is right, however, about one thing. This is a good war. In Winston Churchill's famous words, "These men would bring another Dark Age to civilization." No, Sir. Not now. Not ever.

In God We Trust?

We appear to be having trouble with our old motto: "In God we trust." Would it help any to think in terms of "In the works of God we trust"? Surely we can agree on some good works. For me, the hand of God was present in the Constitutional Convention when the founders tried hard for "a more perfect union." It was present also in the Bill of Rights. Unfortunately, what we could not get done with pen in 18th Century, we had to finish with bayonet in the Civil War. It was present in the struggles of the Abolitionists and in the life of Lincoln. I find it in the speeches and life of Martin Luther King, Jr. I can see it in the words of Franklin Roosevelt, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." I can even see it in the lives of Lyndon Johnson and Jack Kennedy, imperfect men beyond a doubt, but men dedicated to making life better for the average person.

If you do not like looking for the hand of God in mere men, then try looking at events, particularly in WWII. There was no good reason for the United States achieving the atom bomb before Nazi Germany. The German scientists were ahead in that race before the irrational actions of a mad man, Adolph Hitler, put them behind. Logically, the Brits should not have been able to get off that beach at Dunkirk. Do you want to ascribe it to chance alone that our dive-bombers happen to get through at Midway, when our torpedo planes were wiped out completely? How about Pearl Harbor? Was it just chance that every aircraft carrier we had was not in port when the Japanese struck?

Perhaps the Zoroastrians had it right, long before the Jews and the Christians. There is a force for good in this world. They called it Ahura Mazda, the God of Light, and it made itself known through the presence of the Sun. Somehow, someplace we stuck a sign up in the window that says, "Only the Judo-Christian God need apply." We are beyond that.

War is Hell, But Madness May Be Useful

(As it appeared in the July 27, 2001, issue of the *Pantagraph*, Bloomington, Illinois)

General Sherman's famous phrase "War is Hell" may only tell a part of the story.

Just prior to the Texan War for Independence, an ancestor of mine, later to be Colonel Henry Karnes, was acting as a scout and was captured by Commanche Indians. The Scottish Karnes family tends to have reddish-brown hair, "ruagh" in the Gaelic. The Indians had never seen red hair. After taking Henry to the closest stream and unsuccessfully attempting to wash off what they thought must be a dye, they stood back perplexed. Henry "keened" (as the lowland Scots say) that the Indians might think him mad. So he began to "speak in tongues." It worked. Many tribes believe the mentally ill are "touched by the hand of the Great Spirit"; therefore, they are also protected by the Great Spirit. To harm them is to risk danger to oneself. So, they let him go--"Scot free" as it were.

The second anecdote comes from World War II. This is the story of the mad piper of "D-Day." A Brigade commanded by Lord Lovat was in the attack wave at Omaha Beach and carried its usual section of pipers. Losses of pipers in World War I had been so high that, in World War II, Command discouraged using pipers in their traditional role, at the head of the advancing troops. But, Lovat thought otherwise. He ordered his piper (who is still living in Scotland today) to sound the pipes. This he did, but to Lovat's amazement and admiration, he simply stood up in the midst of a hail of bullets and started marching back and forth in front of the lines. Oddly enough, he was not even shot at. When a captured German sniper was questioned after the landing, he was asked why he did not shoot such an obvious target. He replied, "The German Army does not shoot women, children, old men or priests. And we certainly do not shoot lunatics, either."

Leave it to the canny Scots to figure out that if war is going to be hell. Then, me lad, it's better off that you are to be the looniest coot in the bin.

When Scot Fought Scot: The American Revolution

Americans of Scottish descent generally understand that in the American Revolutionary War the Highland Scots remained loyal to the British Crown, while the "Scotch-Irish" flocked to the standards of George Washington and the Rebels. The battle of Moore's Creek was virtually an all Scottish affair with the Scotch-Irish gaining a resounding victory over the Highland loyalists. However, many Americans of Scottish ancestry have often wondered why this was the case. After all, Culloden took place only 31 years before Lexington/Concord. Among Highland families the butchery of Lord Cumberland still must have been a vivid memory.

Comes now Michel Newton with his careful study: *We're Indians for Sure Enough: The Legacy of the Scottish Highlanders in the United States*, (Saorsa Media, 2001), which is a sequel to his *A Handbook of the Scottish Gaelic World*, (Four Courts Press, 2000). Professor Newton, who holds a PhD in Celtic Studies from the University of Edinburgh, has a masterful command of the Scot Gaelic which enables him to inspect important manuscripts not available to those who do not have the Gaelic.

With this advantage, it is clear to see that the Highland Scots and the Scotch-Irish were of entirely different cultures and backgrounds. The Scotch-Irish had been driven out of Ulster in the very early part of the 18th century and they hated the Hanoverian Crown for that reason. A Hessian officer commenting on this state of affairs said, "Count not this an American Revolution. Count this rather a Scotch-Irish Revolution." Inspection of the Pennsylvania Line in Washington's Army reveals at least half of the names are Scotch-Irish in derivation. Clearly, the Scotch-Irish of the Pennsylvania hill country thought that simply another George had come to persecute them, as other Georges had persecuted their grandfathers.

The view from the Highland side was quite different. After Culloden, the British Crown had raised numerous regiments in the Highlands with promises of land in America for those that would serve there. This was a familiar way of life for the Highlander whose ancestors had always "gone to be a soldier." To hold land in turn for military service, (e.g., "sword land") was a way of life for them. But as Newton makes clear, it was more than simply the promise of land that held them loyal to the Crown. The Highlanders despised Lowlanders, their language and their way of life. The difference between the Galltachd and the Gaidhealtachd was enormous. Differences in speech, in dress, in religion, in diet and in politics were conspicuous. This difference is not present in the modern world. Only through a careful study of the Scot Gaelic can the differences in that older world be revealed.

Still, in the Carolinas of the late 18th Century there were divided loyalties within a single family. Newton recounts the differences between General MacDonald and his son. The General stayed loyal, but his son went with the Patriots. One must not overdo the divisions of the past. The kilts, the highland games, the haggis and all the rest are national customs and costumes of ALL of Scotland. When Newton attacks the Scottish "kitsch" of tartans, bagpipes and the like, he does not appear to fully understand this. To be sure, one could wish that more "want-to-be" Scots would learn the Scot Gaelic, Some are doing exactly that. However, capturing a pure cultural breeze from the Highlands may be beyond the capacity of many an honest Scot ethnic. Scotland needs all of its sons, Lowland and Highland alike.

The Corps: A Critical Assessment

Guest Commentary

The Marines have landed, this time in Afghanistan, and the situation is well in hand. Or is it? Winston Churchill once called the Soviet Union, “a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, surrounded by an enigma.” He could have been speaking of the United States’ Marine Corps. That glamorous answer of the United States to the French Foreign Legion has been around since just before the Revolutionary War. We believe the record will show it is an organization capable of both great heroism, great stupidity and often the two combined.

For example, in World War II, the Battle of Tarawa should never have happened. One of the best Marine generals ever to serve, “Howling Mad” Smith, said of Tarawa, “Somebody should have been court-martialed for this.” The Marines if not the Navy, knew those coral reefs were too high for the Higgins boats. Australian intelligence had told them that, but they went in anyway, because Washington had to have a victory at that point in WWII and put intensive pressure on Admiral Halsey to get one. One Marine a minute died at Tarawa. One of the few Japanese survivors said, “We knew we were defeated because the U.S. Marines just kept on coming, no matter how many we killed, they just kept on coming.”

Korea was no better. A monumental mistake put untrained reservists at the Chosen Reservoir to struggle with experienced Chinese troops. Men with no more than two summers of reserve training and only four weeks of combat training were sent with inadequate summer clothing to fight in 40 degree below zero weather. You’re damn right: someone should have been court-martialed for that. On the other hand, the retreat to Hangnam was the most heroic military effort staged since Napoleon retreated from Moscow. Thank heavens the Chinese had no field artillery at their disposal and no air capability. If they had, an entire Marine Division would have been lost. That has never happened since the organization of the Corps. The Fourth Marine Regiment, the China Marines, burned their colors rather than surrender them to the Japanese in WWII; but no Marine Divisional color has ever been struck anyplace to anyone.

The situation did not improve in Viet Nam. It is very interesting to note that the Corps generally gets into trouble when it has to expand rapidly to meet some crisis. This probably points to a never corrected weakness in its reserve policy. Most people do not realize that more Marines were used in Viet Nam than in World War II. That seems impossible, since six full divisions were activated for WWII. But Viet Nam dragged on much longer than WWII, hence the need for more men. To be blunt about this; the mob that turned up in Marine Corps Recruit Depots in the 1960’s drove many a drill instructor to reconsider his choice of vocation. Many recruits had drug and serious delinquency problems before they ever reached the Corps. Again, as in Korea, there was not enough time to deal with those problems and they were much worse in Viet Nam. Ultimately, of course, the Corps can be no stronger than the society from which it is recruited. American society had very serious problems in the sixties.

When the flag went up on Mt. Surabachi, the Secretary of the Navy said the presence of that flag means a Marine Corps for another 200 years. Be thankful the man was right. In these days of small guerilla actions and terrorist activities, the Corps is admirably designed to meet the challenge. Small, fast, rapidly mobilized, able to fight from sea-lift or sky-lift, capable of

independent action without supply for months, it's the best larger elite military force we have going. When organized at its proper size, which is three full divisions and one division in reserve, it is larger than the Paratroopers, Rangers, Special Forces or Navy Seals, all of which are outstanding military units; however, none is designed to do the same thing the Marines do. Unfortunately, the Marines never do anything in understated manner. They don't dress that way. They don't act that way. When they foul up, you can depend upon it, they will foul up in a magnificent manner.

When you see that both grand and gaudy uniform coming down the street, know that it does not house a God, Goddess, or demigod. On occasion, it can house a hero or heroine. Mostly likely though, it is just the outer covering for men and women who make mistakes, correct those mistakes and then carry on. That is really why they are called, "a few good men."

This Time No Tricks

This last Memorial Day left me with mixed emotions. I wanted very much to honor the men and women who saved Western Civilization in World War II and who are now leaving us in alarming numbers. The fact that their belated memorial in Washington D.C. has had to file for bankruptcy is a national shame. But I am also troubled by the many wars we have fought that could have been avoided.

Lets start with the war of 1812. The illegal search of ships on the high seas was the alleged cause of the war, but our attempt to steal what is now Canada was the real motive. We lost every major battle in that war, except the last one. The Black Watch stole the silver out of the White House; later, they gave it back. The war was so unpopular that the entire New England section of the country threatened to secede. Look at the Mexican War. An obscure Whig politician from Illinois named Abraham Lincoln stood on the floor of the House of Representatives and denounced that war. He said we tricked the Mexican government into hostilities. We did. "Remember the Maine." For what? We do not know to this day if it was a mine that sunk the old battle ship or obsolete boilers.

"Ancient history," you say? Well, the Bay of Ton Kin is not ancient history. Congress gave the President the power to make that first step in an unsurpassed tragedy that cost this country over 37,000 in dead and missing, because one of our destroyers was allegedly attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats. A Naval board investigated the matter some time after the attack. A Naval aviator said this; "I was on patrol that night and had the best seat in the house. There were no enemy ships in the area. We were just firing into the darkness."

Korea is the right model. Wait for the call to come from the UN and then take action. If that call does not come, wait for overt aggression, as was true in the Gulf War, and then take action. Yes, it is absolutely true that we cannot appease dictators now, any more than we could in 1939. But let the threat be clearly proven. No more tricks.

What do the Masons Stand For?

The Order of Freemasons claims origin from the building of King Solomon's Temple, but written records of the Lodge exist only from the 17th Century in England and Scotland. It is clear that the Lodge developed and expanded in the same 17th Century ferment that activated the Puritans to leave England and come to the United States seeking religious liberty. In both the American Revolution and the French Revolution, Masons were active in the struggle to establish religious freedom and liberty. Evidence suggests that the plan for the Boston Tea Party may have been hatched in a tavern where the Masonic Lodge usually met. As is well known, General Washington was a Mason. Lodges were definitely held in the Continental Army. French Masons took a leading role in the French Revolution. During the post revolutionary period, French Masons were active in revolutionary movements of the 1820's and 1840's. In more modern times, the wearing of the familiar triangular device with a letter G in the middle of it would buy the wearer a quick trip to one of Hitler's concentration camps. The same was true in Franco's Spain and Mussolini's Italy. To avoid this, during WWII, a small rosette was worn in the lapel in place of the more familiar Masonic emblem. The need for secret recognition signs and signals rose partially from these more violent periods of Masonic history. Masons are seldom secretive about what they teach, but there have been periods in which they had to be secretive about who they were.

Students of the history of the order will point out that Masons also supported the King. Indeed, many of the "chivalric" degrees may derive from Jacobite connections. When the Bonnie Dundee fell at the battle of Kilcrankee, he allegedly had on his body the cross of a Knight Templar. Likewise, there were Lodges in the British Army in the Revolutionary War. The case is good that the Prince Hall Masons may have sprung from that source. It is also true that British Masons broke from their brothers in France over the Lodge's participation in the French Revolution and again in the upheavals of the 19th century in France. Yes, collaborators with Fascists did include some Masons. We think, however, that the weight of the historical evidence does indicate much more support among Masons for freedom of religion and for the basic liberties that underlie religious choice than for establishment of a state religion and for the persecution of heretics.

If the case for support of religious freedom is controverted, the case for religious toleration is straightforward. Religious tolerance is built directly into the ritual. The Entered Apprentice is told immediately that he can take his vows on any religious text of his choice as long as his religion acknowledges the existence of a single supreme being; that is, as long as it is Deistic. For Christians, that would be the Bible; for Moslems, it would be the Koran; for Jews, it would be the Torah. Thus, from the very initial instance of his Masonic activities, the individual is confronted with religious choice. He is not commanded to take a single road or ascribe to a single doctrine. This lesson is taught again in the Knight of St. Andrew degree of the Scottish Rite.

Now, it must be admitted that most of the "appendent degrees" in Masonry are designed with the Christian in mind. The upper degrees of both the Scottish and York Rites might be uncomfortable for the non-Christian. The Knight Templar degree would seem to require not only a Christian belief, but also a Trinitarian Christian belief. The Royal Order of Scotland also states that none but Christians need apply. Still, even in these appended degrees,

non-Christian beliefs are treated with the utmost respect and courtesy. Even in the Knight Templar degree, the emphasis is not upon the Crusades themselves, but upon the peaceful conclusion of the Crusades, and the lesson is one of tolerance toward the Islamic World. The tradition of Jihad, holy war, so important to the fundamentalist wing of the Islamic world, has no place in modern Masonic thought. It is interesting in this connection that when the Knights Templar were excommunicated by the Pope, one of the central charges was that the Templars engaged in too friendly a relationship with their Moslem counterparts, to the point of practicing heretical rituals and holding heretical beliefs. The point is that, after centuries of warfare with Islam, the Templar Knights themselves had moved on to a belief in religious toleration. Unfortunately, some of their Moslem adversaries never made that leap forward, and they still have not today.

Religious fundamentalists of today, whether of the Christian or the Islamic variety, have great trouble with the principle of religious toleration. Bin Ladin and his terrorists would simply bomb us out of existence. The Christian fundamentalists are not nearly so bloodthirsty. They would rely on tearing down the barrier between the church and state so carefully created by Thomas Jefferson and his colleagues, many of whom were Masons. They would then proceed to construct a state religion along the lines of their own beliefs and the rest of us would have to conform or face penalties. In short, the fundamentalists would roll us right back to the 17th and 18th centuries when the Lodge was struggling to establish religious freedom and religious toleration. I, for one, do not want to go back down that path to another Dark Age. The modern Masonic Lodge may stand for many things, but in my humble opinion, they stand tallest and proudest when they stand for religious freedom and religious toleration. The problem is that not enough people know this.

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Wabash on My Little Mind

Fifty years is a very long time but here goes. The year is 1948. A group of very scared freshmen is huddled in a study group in Kane House. They are certain they will flunk Dean Byron Trippet's Western Civilization course. Trippet had a reputation of being a tough grader. It is a group of six or eight, but memory allows me to recall only Andy Andrews, Don Cole, Gene Reeves, Bill Reinke and myself. For some unknown reason, I got the task of coordinating this group. I must have done a halfway decent job, because we all passed the course. Thanks, Gents, because right then and there, I got the crazy idea that I might someday make a reasonably good college professor; and I did. I don't think my freshman roommate, the late Whitey Telligman, was in that study group. Perhaps he was not in Trippet's course at the time. Whitey was a strong silent type; so, later, I was not surprised to find that he had joined the Marine Corps. I can't square my memory of him with his also being a banker, which he later became, in California.

Professors do have an influence on all of us. For me they were: Byron Trippet, Jack Charles, and Bob Harvey. Trippet was important to me several times. First, in my sophomore year, my grades began to slip because my old friend Thomas Jefferson Lee and I started making a few too many trips to Danville for various and sundry pleasures that I do not care to detail in a public document. The Dean called me in and I got the standard Gentleman's Code lecture but with a twist. Byron Trippet came from Princeton, Indiana, and he knew my family in Fort Branch, Indiana. The towns are only a few miles apart. Our little chat must have been effective because I did a little better the second semester. I think I knew he was fully capable of calling my Dad, for a little man-to-man discussion about his son's wayward activities. The "Gentleman's Code" did allow for family influence.

Bob Harvey, on the other hand, simply scared the living hell out of me. I had been a pretty big frog in a very little pond in Fort Branch High School--valedictorian, president of the senior class and all the rest. The first two papers I got back from Bob Harvey were straight out "F." Me, the valedictorian, given an "F." I kept those papers in my drawer all the years that I was at Wabash. The night they inducted me into Phi Beta Kappa, I took them out, looked up and said, "Thank you, Bob, with all my heart."

John Fredrick Charles, Lafayette Professor of Greek and Latin, was the third professor with a profound influence on me. Coming from a little rural town in Indiana, he was the first, living, breathing, real scholar I had ever seen. He once said, "I suppose you might say that I am kept alive by books." I know now that's a variation on one of Jefferson's similar statements, but I sure as hell did not know that then. Often, in my own retirement, I have thought of another one of his observations about his retirement; i.e., "There are many things I should do, but nothing that I must do." He taught me ancient history, medieval history, Latin and French. But most importantly, he taught me that the son of an automobile dealer and grandson of a farmer could be a scholar, too. Many years later, when I walked across that stage at Harvard with a doctorate in my hand, you better believe I thought of "the owl of Athens". I think I was the only member of our class at his funeral.

In the fall of 1950, T.J. Lee was standing on the porch of the house in which we lived holding a large letter. His face was about as sad as I ever recall its being. It was an order from the Commandant, United States Marine Corp, to Private G. Alan Hickrod to report for active duty. T.J. had lost his leg at the Battle of the Bulge. He knew war. I took the letter and went over out of respect to Dean Trippet, thinking we would spend only a few minutes on formalities. He asked his secretary to hold his appointments. For an hour or so we walked around the yard talking. Most of it was about his service in the second world war, but he made me solemnly promise that if I survived, I would come back to Wabash and finish what I had started. I promised him that and I did it. There is a brick over there in the walk that says simply, "To the memory of Byron Trippet." You need not ask who put it there.

In my senior year, we talked a third time. I was a pretty serious student by then; except for an occasional lapse in the Beta Theta Pi house, where a former Sergeant in the Marine Corps seemed always a welcome guest though he was never a member. I hit the books rather hard. Dean Trippet wanted me to apply to Harvard but I didn't think I had it in me to do that. Finally, he convinced me to apply to a Master of Arts in Teaching program in their Graduate School of Education with the argument that I could always find my way into

secondary education, if some college or university doors did not open up. I had the good sense to listen to him. Charlie Finch, another Wabash man, and I went off to Cambridge, Massachusetts, together--but that's another story. In the thirty-one years that I was a university professor I taught over two thousand students, both undergraduate and graduate. I directed over one hundred doctoral dissertations. To the very best of my ability, I passed on everything that Wabash gave me to those students; yes, the Gentleman's Code and all.

It's a long, long way from the lonely sound of a coal mine whistle in southern Indiana to the cheerful sound of the chapel bells in the Harvard Yard. Thank you, gentlemen, for that trip. I owe you all more than I can ever repay.

MAN DOES NOT LIVE BY THOUGHT ALONE

In Praise of the BLT

My father said that honest men and women would differ when it came to religion and politics. Of course he was right, but then he never tried to get consensus on how to build a bacon and lettuce and tomato sandwich. You would think it would be easy. After all, the main ingredients are spelled out in the name of the thing. Think again. First, there is the question of which bread on which to build this classic. Is it toasted or is it not toasted? Is it white, wheat, rye, sourdough, or something as fancy as a croissant? White would probably be more true to its humble origin in the Midwest, but I hold for the sourdough.

On bacon there is a real Donnybrook. A standard serving of bacon may be three slices, but the late Suzy King, who with her son, Rob Buford, ran one of the last “blue plate diners” here in Bloomington, held that a rasher was five slices and always made her BLTs that way. Count me with Suzy King. It is five slices; but five slices of what? Not five slices of the thin, tasteless, cardboard that passes for bacon in most grocery stores. Five slices of thick West Virginia bacon, thank you, with considerable fat which you will fry out anyway. .

Lettuce can produce a struggle as well. Historically, I will admit that it was probably iceberg. Suzy used lots of that--too much I think. Here you could get some folks holding forth for the joys of Romaine, or Endive, or for some mixed greens. Finally, we find a constant in this changing world. BLTs are always made with mayonnaise, but Miracle Whip eaters can be expected to put up a serious struggle. Those who call, “hold the mayo,” must be stricken from the books and driven from the ranks as heretics.

BLTs are also always made with tomatoes but the tomato should be vine ripened, of local derivation if possible. Vine ripening is the *sine quo non*. There is nothing worse than a yellowish hot house raised tomato, which has no taste to it at all. You are instructed to give no parley here, nor offer quarter, nor take prisoners. On the other hand, don't overdo the tomatoes. Too many tomatoes and your BLT will become a soggy substitute for breaded tomatoes. A little seasoned salt should round out the operation nicely.

I have no quarrel with French or German food. As Nero Wolfe might say, “I use a lot of it.” If left up to me, the City of Bloomington should start work right now on a monument to the new French restaurant in town, La Petit Bistro. Mark you, in the culinary world, the little BLT is a Baron, a Chief of the Name and Family, no less, taking precedence with Count and with an Earl, if not with a Marquis or a Duke. Look sharply therefore, and see to it that you pay it a proper respect.

Gourmets Drummed Out of Corps

On some quiet late fall day, before it gets too cold, you may well hear the sound of muffled drums and muted bugles. It will be the Corps de Gourmet ignominiously drumming out the cowards in this area who have failed to support chef-owned restaurants of good quality. The record is very clear. Failure to support the late Phil Hagman will lead the list. Phil was not only a chef-owner of great quality, but also, he struggled against a terminal illness. Despite the pain of that illness, Phil carried on each day with a warmth and smile that few of us can muster on our best days. Next would be Richard Kurz and his long campaign. Richard may have been more controversial than Phil, but he had a copious knowledge of food and was a master at the catered buffet. Sometimes supported and sometimes not he ended up in Peoria. Then came Bernie Hoffman, arguably the best-trained chef in several years. After a sojourn in Peoria, he ended up a professor at a community college in Texas. The lone survivor of this group is the team of folks who run Lancaster's. Like the "Bloody Bastards of Bastogne," they just refuse to give up. Maybe a reprieve from penalty can be found for their patrons. Older chef-owned eateries have done little better. Ozark House and CJ's stand firm in the line, but a community institution, the Grand Hotel, went down like Napoleon's Old Guard at Waterloo.

Come now the two Erics: Eric Eitner and Eric Cresson. With more guts than sense, they open the only French Restaurant that Bloomington-Normal has ever had. Everyone who has tried Le Petit Bistro knows it has, flat out, the best cuisine in Bloomington-Normal in thirty years. Chef Cresson may speak no English, but he speaks volumes in terms of high quality classic French cuisine. Their fate will be very, very carefully watched.

Where, oh where, are those valiant supporters of small business enterprises? In Bloomington- Normal they do not appear to put their money where their mouths ought to be.

Restaurant Ratings Unfair

All right, I must admit that business is much more about efficiency than about fairness. Fair practice is still a concept taught in our business schools. Restaurant ratings, however, can be grossly unfair. The problem stems from the "one size fits all" philosophy. From the famous Michelin star system down through the Mobil star system to the AAA diamond system; the assumption is that there is only one league or classification operating in the field. We even do it locally in the *Pantagraph's* ratings. Yes, I have, myself, been guilty of doing it for the Local Guide section of AOL. Such a system makes it almost impossible for small, owner operated, small capitalization restaurants to compete successfully with large, well-established, high capitalization restaurants. The small restaurant with its low volume is often priced out of the market. Nor can the small restaurant compete successfully for skilled cooks and waiters. Most open their doors, hoping to find that unique niche in the market, but most never find it. Often, the problem is lack of capital. The mom and pop operation cannot stay the field long enough to capture a repeating clientele.

There is no easy solution, but it would help if classes or types similar to those used in athletics were employed. Secondary schools in most states compete only within size groupings; e.g., Class I, Class II, Class III, etc., not between them. You loose something by

this. No longer is it possible to see David take Goliath, as was the case in the movie, “Hoosiers” based on the true, and almost Homeric, triumph of little Milan, Indiana, over giant Muncie. Also, it is not so easy to set up these classifications. We might try something like this: I, Fine dining/chef owned; II, upscale franchise; III, family and café, IV, ethnic; V, regular franchise; VI, breakfast and lunch only. Ratings are then used only within categories, never between categories. If that is too complicated, then go back to strictly size. Anything would be an improvement over the travesty of justice we have now.

Wine Myths (Part I)

Of all the snobs we have to put up with in American society, wine snobs are probably the hardest to take. We have noticed that wine snobs survive by rules that they consider to be written in stone. This is utter nonsense. Therefore, we intend, in this two-part commentary, to destroy some of those myths.

I once attended a dinner at which a young lady dumped sugar into her red table wine. This, for most wine snobs, is a definite no-no. They seem to forget that wine is basically sour grapes. Of course, the sourness is carefully controlled by agents that stop the fermentation process before it goes too far. The modern drinking of dry--that is, a non-sweet wine--is of recent origin. Thomas Jefferson would have probably done exactly what this young lady did, because, in his day, sweet wine was far preferred over dry wine. Jefferson's favorite wine was Madeira. Today, that wine is mainly used as a dessert wine or for cooking. If you prefer sweet wines over dry, don't be ashamed of your preference. Most of us, however, would not eat a candy bar while consuming a steak. We would use a sweet wine with dessert. Here, the American gets lucky. Sweet wines are greatly undervalued in this country; consequently, very good sweet wines can be had at bargain prices.

The wine snob would also have fits over drinking red wine with fish and white wine with meat. It could not matter less. The Cajuns always drink red wine with seafood. Of course, most whites would simply not hold up to hot Cajun cooking anyway. I must admit a personal bias against rose' wines that seem to me to be neither fish nor fowl, but I have no rational basis for that discrimination. Some white wines can attain a high degree of dryness. The white wines of the Loire Valley in France are noted for their crisp, dry quality. They seem to go especially well with shellfish. The wines of Bordeaux, which the English persist in calling "claret," can also be quite dry and go well with fowl. Burgundy is heavier and seems to hold up better with red meat. But these are largely personal preferences. The wine snob who insists that he or she knows exactly "what goes with what" is probably pulling your leg.

The wine snob will make a great fuss over the types or variety of wine grapes, the "varietals" as they are known in the U.S. trade. Admittedly, these are quite important. The taste of the wine is largely governed by what variety grapes have been used in the process of venting the final product. The American public has been brainwashed into thinking that mixtures of these varietals are somehow inferior to the original varietals. Nothing could be further from the truth. Wine makers in France will occasionally use a single varietal in making their products, with their eye on the American market, but blends are more common. Historically, it was probably vintners in southern France who first started using different types of wine blended together. They may well have done this to make the product more acceptable to conquering Roman legions. This "mixology" then quickly spread up the Rhone valley and over into Bordeaux. One of the most common mixtures is that of the cabernet sauvignon with merlot, sometimes with a third type of grape. That is the classical formula for the "claret" so highly prized in England and Scotland. This "softening" varietal in Rhone wines is the syrah grape. The same grape in Australia is called the shiraz grape. In Italy, it is the sangiovese, often with three or four other grape varieties, producing the excellent wines of Tuscany. California also uses mixtures in their rather expensive "Meritage" wines. This, remember, is

not Scotch, where a single malt might be preferred over a blend or mixture, although the superiority of single malts is greatly exaggerated.

Wine snobs also insist on aging. Here, they are again, on solid grounds. Wine, unlike whiskey, does continue to age in the bottle after it has been taken from the aging casks. By the way, these casks do impart flavors to the wine. Most Americans drink wine that is far too young. Red wine needs about seven years bottle age and white wine could use at least three years bottle age. Because the cost of warehousing is so high in the United States, the additional years will cost one dearly. About the only solution is to create a wine cellar for yourself and “lay down” the bottles for three or four years. This is not as difficult as it sounds. An old closet should work rather well. Just don’t put the wine where it will freeze or boil. If you can arrange it, a temperature between 40 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit would be ideal. It is useful to keep a running inventory of what you have on hand. If it gets to be a large collection there are special computer programs to handle the situation.

Wine Myths II

In our last segment, we argued that wine snobbery came often in the form of wine myths. We discussed some myths about sweet versus dry wines, red versus white wines, and the aging of wines. We will conclude by looking at myths concerning the country of origin of wines and, perhaps the most important of these myths, the cost of wine. We will also mention further sources for information on wines.

The wine snob will insist that French wines are far superior to any other wines on earth. That is, again, a half-truth. There is no doubt that the long history of viticulture in France has produced outstanding results. Some years ago, I observed that in Scotland the quality of claret there was far superior to the quality of claret obtained in the United States. The reason turned out to be quite simple. Negotiants in Scotland have been importing Bordeaux wines for centuries. Often the same chateaus have been connected with the same importers for generations. Trade relations that old are made of strong stuff. The result is that many of the best wines go to England and Scotland directly from France. You can get in on this by buying your wines through Scotland, but the cost of shipping will kill you.

Other countries in the world now produce fine wines as well. Southern and Southwestern Australia are producing some outstanding products. Italy also is shipping great wines, often blends of many grapes. Spain is also blending fine wines as is Austria, Switzerland, Chile, Argentina and yes, Bulgaria. California has finally discovered the importance of wine blending and is now producing wines with all kinds of blends. Often these appear as “estate” wines, some with well-known names such as Director Francis Ford Copula and the actor and singer the late Frank Sinatra. There is also a whole category of California wines called, “meritage” that are blends usually of merlot and cabernet. These are pricey, however.

Price is a major problem. The wine snob will insist that the higher the price the better the wine. Again, a half-truth. Supply and demand does, indeed, determine the price of wine as

it does everything else. However, wine speculation, plus current fads, add greatly to the price. There is also the matter of conspicuous consumption. To be seen uncorking a first growth claret still is important to many people. The result is that the price of first class French wine is now atrocious. However, wines from the lesser known regions of France, particularly in the south and southwest of the country, are now available and are taking up the gap left by pricing most ordinary people out of the classic French wines. The most serious problem is with the price of wines in restaurants. When the restaurateur has to pay sky-high prices on the wholesale market and then add his own margin, the price will tear a hole in the ceiling. The price of good California wines has also been driven into the stratosphere. Most restaurateurs will allow you to bring your own wine, especially if you are a “regular.” There is normally a “corking fee” of seven to ten dollars for this service. The old trick of shopping for wine in liquor stores that normally do not sell much wine works less well than it did in the past. I can remember picking up several fine wines on the cheap in stores where wine did not move well, but those days are largely gone. Still, a little drive to a small town liquor store may be well worth your time.

There are now lots of places to receive advice on wine consumption. Just type “wine” on your browser and watch the citations roll off the Internet. Serious wine consumers should invest in a small handbook called Professional Wine Reference. It is inexpensive and packed with information. Get the latest edition. The serious consumer may also wish to join the American Wine Society. This is an interesting old organization of both consumers and producers of wine. They can be reached at www.americanwinesociety.com. The most independent critic in the field is undoubtedly Robert Parker who is also available on the web. Once, a French producer who had been given a bad review by Parker actually set his dogs on Parker. Badmouthing wines in France is not a really great idea.

If you don't want to go to all this trouble, go to a sommelier you trust. For me that would be Eric Eitner at Le Petite Bistro in Bloomington. Unfortunately, he now spends much of his time in Gary, Indiana. It is a French restaurant so he will lead you toward French wines; but he is knowledgeable about many other wines as well. A final caution, alcohol is a drug; it can be addictive. It is also counter-indicated in cases of diabetes and other diseases. However, there are a number of Cardiologists, including some in Bloomington-Normal, who might actually suggest a couple of glasses a day due to its vascular dilation action. You might ask your Minister, Priest, or Rabbi for his comment on the biblical injunction, “Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake.” But do not ever let the snobs and their myths drive you away. As Emerson said, “A petty consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.”

[Illinois State University Distinguished Professor Emeritus G. Alan Hickrod, a frequent contributor to the *Pantagraph*, has collected wines for several decades, is a member AWS, and owns an extensive wine cellar.]

The Fading American Dream as published in the
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Several recent books (K. Phillips, Wealth and Democracy; W.G. Gates, Sr, Wealth and Our Commonwealth; E.D. Wolff; Top Heavy; G. Hodgson, More Equal Than Others) have documented the fact that in the last three decades of the 20th century both wealth and income have become much more concentrated in this country. There are fewer households in the middle range, more in the poorer range, and a lot more in the higher income range. We know that this has happened at least twice before in this country: once in the 1890 period (the Gilded Age) and once in the 1920's (the Roaring Twenties). Ominously, both times, an increase in the concentration of wealth and income was then followed by a severe depression.

So what? Is this not the price one must pay for having a private enterprise system? Some win, but some must lose. Perhaps, especially since developing countries like India and China, now starting to experiment with the free market system, do also show this tendency toward wealth concentration. But if so, then we must be aware of the very high price we are paying. The rich have good schools, the poor

have lousy schools. The income inequality also warps the market into an hour glass. Luxury goods and services are for the upper part of the hour class, and K-Mart for the lower part. Falling demand in the middle class slides the economy into recession or depression. Even the military is affected. An officer class may remain, but the quality level of the non-coms and the common soldier declines.

Some believe that as long as there is strong upward mobility between income levels, then this is not a serious problem. However, a study conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and published by "Business Week" shows that upward mobility was much greater in the 1970's than in the 1980's in this country. Further, another study by the Century Foundation shows that upward mobility is now greater in Finland, Sweden, Canada, and Germany than it is in the USA. Regrettably, the American Dream of rags to riches may be fading. It is becoming riches to riches and rags to rags

So what can we do? Well, what we should certainly NOT do is to follow the policy recommendations of the Bush administration. Tax cuts for the rich can only make the disparity in income and wealth worse than it now is. Also, the repeal of the federal inheritance (estate) tax will

simply make it easier for the wealthy to pass their large incomes earned in the last three decades into the 21st century. Admittedly, there does need to be a high exemption on this tax, so that the inheritance of family farms and small businesses is not jeopardized. Much inherited wealth, of course, totally escapes any tax through the use of family trusts. Ultimately, if these trends continue, we may have to consider the taxation of wealth, in addition to the taxation of income, such as is done in Switzerland, Denmark, Netherlands and ten other European nations.

Can education be a help? Yes, both common sense and detailed economic studies (Arrow, Meritocracy) prove that education is a strong factor in upward mobility. Apparently President Summers at Harvard believes this. Beginning this fall, if you can get admitted to Harvard, and if you come from a family with less than \$43,000 income per year, you can receive a free ride to Harvard College. No tuition, no fees, zip. Other high profile universities may follow this example. But this will not help the many who are educated in state colleges and universities, such as ISU. There, the lack of state money will not allow such largesse. Can the government do something? Yes, Senator Kerry has a plan to give two years of college free to those who would give two years of service to the government; a

sort of mini GI Bill. The Senator has also pledged to increase the Pell Grants, which go to low income students trying to attend colleges and universities.

Some will say this is merely playing the “class warfare card” in American politics. Much to the contrary, this is an attempt to save the middle class from extinction, and thus avoid class warfare. Aristotle told us over two millennia ago that the middle class was essential to the continued existence of any body politic.

History also tells us that the over concentration of wealth was a prime factor in the fall of many previous republics: Rome, Renaissance Italy, the Dutch republic, and that this same over concentration corrupted many British attempts at representative governance. Among American Presidents who have warned us of the danger of over concentration of wealth and income to this Republic we find: Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon. If these be the soldiers of class warfare, then show me the enlistment papers.

School Funding for Democrats and Progressive Republicans

This paper will outline four long-term goals for the Democratic Party and for Progressive Republicans in Illinois. In thirty-five years of working with state legislators in many states I am very aware of just how difficult it is to achieve the goals that are herein advocated. Many compromises, and a lot of legislative tactics, will be required to meet these goals. It is necessary, however, to have a general road map, for this is an area in which it is easy to lose one's way.

The third President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, is usually credited with founding the Democratic Party. It seems appropriate therefore to start with him. Mr. Jefferson was a man of prodigious intellect. His knowledge ran from philosophy and history through architecture and agriculture. He was also knowledgeable of school funding. When he was Governor of Virginia he recommended an entire educational system to the Virginia legislature. Shortly before he died in the early 1820's he reviewed what the Virginia legislature had done. He noted that, contrary to his recommendation that the state pick up the entire costs of K-12 education, they had left this tax burden to the individual school districts. He said, "This system will not work. The wealthy districts will have good schools and the poor schools will have bad schools." Nothing has changed since Mr. Jefferson's evaluation. The system still does not work.

Inequalities between school district are dependent on a number of factors. If a state is large in geography, if it has many school districts, if it has a history of large economic differences within the state, and if it also has a history of low state support and high local support, there will be large inequalities in educational services between school districts. Unfortunately Illinois is just such a state. The result has been that disparities between school districts within Illinois are some of the largest in the Union, at least where the so-called, "dual districts" are concerned. Unit districts do not show quite this large disparity.

Since the Democratic Party of Illinois is committed to equal educational opportunity, a long-term goal of the Party should be to reduce these inequalities between school districts. This situation is often referred to in school finance jargon as the "equity" problem. The solution to the equity

problem is to move from largely local support to largely state support of education. This means higher state taxes and lower local property taxes. A part of this can come in the form of property tax relief provided the state government makes up dollar for dollar what is proposed as property tax relief. It is also possible to reduce this disparity with property tax caps on local school districts provided state funds are allowed to increase at the same time. A reduction in disparities can also be obtained by reducing the number of districts in the state, especially by merging dual districts into unit districts.

A second goal of the Democratic Party is to secure “adequate” funding as well as “equitable” funding. In some states this is made easier by a state constitution that mandates that all citizens of the state receive an “adequate” or “basic” education. Regrettably, Illinois is not one of those states. In 1994, in *The Committee v. Edgar*, the Supreme Court of Illinois declared that the present article #10 of the Illinois Constitution does not provide the citizens of this state with a fundamental right to education. Education was declared to be a major state interest, but not a fundamental constitutional right. Two years previously, in 1992, educational groups, with the considerable assistance of the Democratic Party and Progressive Republicans had tried to amend article #10 so that it would provide citizens with a fundamental right to an adequate education. Amendments to the constitution require sixty percent of those voting to pass and the amendment failed by only three percentage points. The amendment failed largely because of business group opposition to the increase in state taxes that would be necessary in order to attain an “adequate” level of funding for education. In 2004 it would seem appropriate for the Democratic Party and for Progressive Republicans to again attempt a constitutional referendum that would guarantee all of the citizens of Illinois a fundamental right to an adequate education.

A third long term goal of the Democratic Party and of Progressive Republicans is to attain economic efficiency in the public schools of Illinois. This can be done in a number of ways. First, it has been apparent for some time that there are too many school districts in this state. Consolidation and reorganization would produce economies of scale that could be passed on to taxpayers. This is, however, not a popular thing to do. Consolidations can often lose state legislators more votes than they can possibly attain. Small towns fight viciously and effectively to keep their public schools even though they know those schools are economically inefficient. Second, and related to size, no public school ought to operate without a full time business

manager. If it proves impossible to merge districts then a full time business manager should be shared between schools. Third, both the business and educational practices of districts that operate with higher than expected test scores, at lower than expected costs, should be rigorously inspected to see how they arrive at that favorable product / cost ratio.

The conservative side of the aisle says little about the “equity” or “adequacy” problems. They have much, however, to say about the “efficiency” goal. They advocate Voucher systems, Charter Schools, and other privatization systems for what is now public education. Most of these proposals would, unfortunately, make the “equity” problem worse, because almost all of these systems would increase educational disparities between school districts. Both Voucher systems and Charter Schools are means of skimming off the better students while leaving behind the poorer students. Proponents of these systems rarely address the question of what happens to those left behind in the “public schools”. Nor do these systems address very well the question of who is to educate the handicapped children in the society. Since it gives priority to equalizing educational opportunity the Democratic Party and Progressive Republicans should oppose most of these privatization schemes. Proposals, however, to increase competition within the public sector should be supported.

A fourth long term goal of the Democratic Party is to secure adequate funds for children at risk. Spending the same amount of money on each child does not attain the first goal, “equity”. Children with physical and mental handicaps require more funds than do normal children. Also children raised in poverty environments require more funds than do normal children. It must be honestly said that it is questionable whether educational spending in the central cities and sparsely populated rural areas of Illinois can ever be “economically efficient” in the usually accepted sense of that word. In many central city environments and also in some rural environments the proper analogy is an “intensive care” ward. In “ICU” you are engaged in saving lives, not in delivering health care in the most economically efficient manner. Exactly the same situation holds in many of the worst educational environments in Illinois. You are engaged in saving kids lives and futures and not in doing that in the most economical way possible. It is very hard to find that “bottom line” in special education and compensatory education.

These four goals constitute a long-term strategy for the Democratic Party but it is a rock bottom fact that they cannot be attained in Illinois without Republican help. Fortunately there have always been enough Republicans who agreed with these goals and have been willing to support them, even though legislation of this kind did not always help the constituencies that these Republicans represented. In the 70's and 80's a group of Republican state senators who called themselves "the crazy eight" made possible a lot of sound educational reform in Illinois by linking their votes to the Democratic votes. Educators in Illinois may well owe more to these few, but important, and courageous Republicans, than they do to Democrats. At the national level men like Robert Taft and Wendell Wilkie never considered educational spending in the same light as other public expenditure. They rather considered it an investment in the nation. Republicans as well as Democrats do respond to the principle of the greatest good for the greatest number.

Men like Jefferson, Franklin, Madison, Lincoln, Wilson, T.Roosevelt, F.D. Roosevelt, and John Kennedy all knew what public education means to this democracy. In any age or time, under any set of circumstances, it is the responsibility of Democrats and Progressive Republicans to rally to the support of the public schools. Be advised that in Illinois we have done, and we intend to do, just that.

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Normal, Illinois

A Mistake Corrected

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About two decades ago I headed a research team that reported to the then existing Illinois School Problems Commission. We were investigating the causes of low test scores in the public schools. We found that the leading cause of poor test scores was the percentage of students from families below the poverty line in a given school. We also found that a “tipping point” existed, so that when there were more than a majority of poverty impacted pupils the test scores in the school fell like a rock. Since then this finding has been replicated many places in the United States, and in Great Britain, and in Japan.

The policy recommendation that my colleague Ben Hubbard and I made to the General Assembly at that time was that the weighting in the grant-in-aid formula for poverty students should be increased for districts with high concentrations of these kinds of pupils. The recommendation was accepted, the law was accordingly changed, and more state money flowed to poverty impacted schools. I received an award from the Urban League for my role in that endeavor. Our diagnosis was correct. However, with the passage of time, I have come to believe that the therapy we suggested was not nearly aggressive enough. What I should have recommended was that NO public school be allowed to operate with more than a majority of students from poverty families. This would require of course help from the state in terms of drawing new attendance lines and in the bussing of students to attain these goals.

Bussing of students is assuredly not popular, even to obey the edicts of the court, as in Brown vs. the Board. In the fifty years

since Brown we have learned that not only is racial segregation bad for the schools, socio-economic segregation is even worse. To insist rigorously therefore on “neighborhood schools” is often to condemn some students to a bad education, and to give other students a good education. Granted, this situation is not as bad in places like Bloomington/Normal as it is in the larger metropolitan areas where we have both schools and school districts with no poverty students, and then other schools and districts in which every single student comes from a poverty home.

Why admit the mistake now? Because socio-economic segregation in American schools is growing decade by decade. A large number of economic studies indicate that both wealth and income are now more concentrated than they have been since 1890 and 1920. These inequalities in wealth and income then become translated into very unequal residential housing choices. People use their wealth to choose homes that will also provide good schools for their children. Very understandable. But the poor are unable to do that. In a private enterprise system the people surely have every right to choose automobiles, clothing, and yes, housing on the basis of their individual purchasing power in the market. But at least in my opinion, they do not, have a right to exert this differential purchasing power with regard to public schools. The public schools, unlike some private schools, are not a commodity to be purchased on the free market. The “Common Schools” are exactly that. They exist for the greatest good for the greatest number.

All this has been known for a very long time. And it is very disturbing to people to be forced to look at this problem, so why not just sweep it all under a rug. Because the stakes are now much higher than they were a quarter of a century ago. Most economists, liberal or conservative, agree that our economy can not survive in this competitive world without greatly increasing the effectiveness

of the public schools. We did not really become alarmed about this until middle class jobs started to disappear to South America, the Far East, and to Europe. We must do something, and do it fast. Without effective schools our mighty armed forces will not work, our highly technical economy will not work, our medical services will not work, and it is for darned certain our democracy will not work. Certain kinds of charter schools, and even a very carefully controlled voucher system might help, but they would just be band aids on a major infection. And an uncontrolled voucher system could very well make the disease worse.

This is not a pipe dream of a superannuated professor from ISU. A remarkably good book published recently from the Brookings Institution lays out much of the research on this issue. It also provides examples of school districts that have faced the problem squarely, and then done something about it. Ever the teacher, I suggest you add Richard D. Kahlenberg's, All Together Now, 2001, to your reading list.

NOTE ON COST EFFECTIVENESS

While further research would be needed to prove this point, it is not unlikely that the practice of balancing the socio-economic composition of students in schools could turn out to be a cost effective way to raise test scores in the public schools. The standard approach to raising test scores in children from poor homes is to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio in those classes, or to add teacher aides to those classes. This has been shown to be effective in raising test scores, but the cost is of course high. Even if it is necessary to add costs from bussing students those costs would likely not be as high as adding teaching personnel. If the scores rise just as much by reducing the percentage of children at risk in the school below fifty percent, then this is also the least costly way to raise scores.

