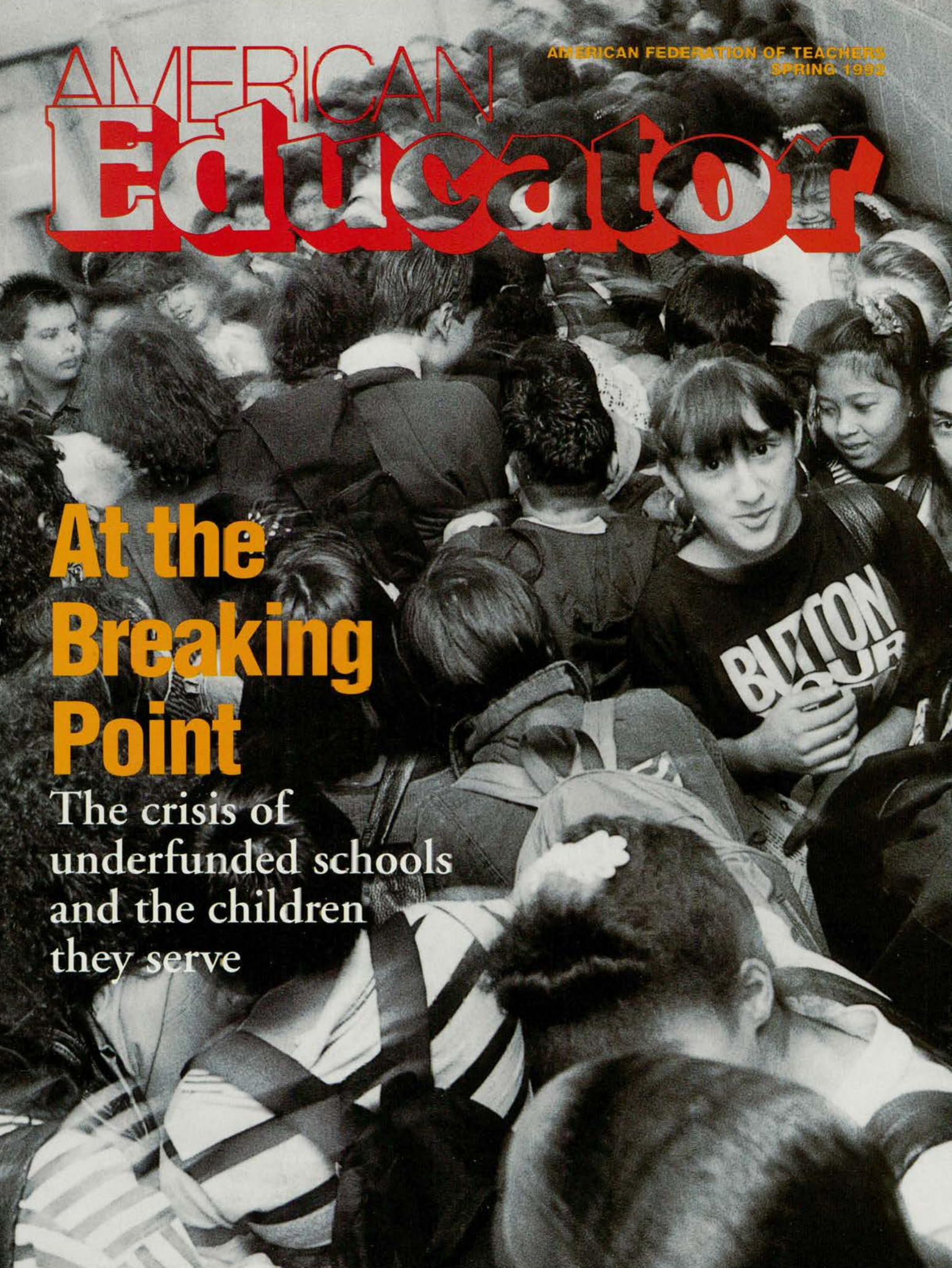


AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
SPRING 1992

AMERICAN **Educator**

At the Breaking Point

The crisis of
underfunded schools
and the children
they serve



Teaching a child to Teaching a whole class



Dragon Tales, created by Jostens Learning Corporation, is an incredibly exciting, literature-based program that was developed specifically for use on Macintosh. It is an integrated learning system that includes everything from comprehensive software to activity sheets to classroom big books to parent-involvement newsletters. It helps teachers provide a rich environment for children to actively explore and experiment with the functional and literal uses of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Not only do all children learn differently, some children learn in different languages. Which is why you'll also find some innovative stand-alone programs like Living Books, by Bruderbund, some of which are available in Spanish and Japanese. Each of these storybooks features unique animation, sound effects, narration and lively music. Combined with the special capabilities of Macintosh, they're a wonderful way to bring life to reading. And reading to life.



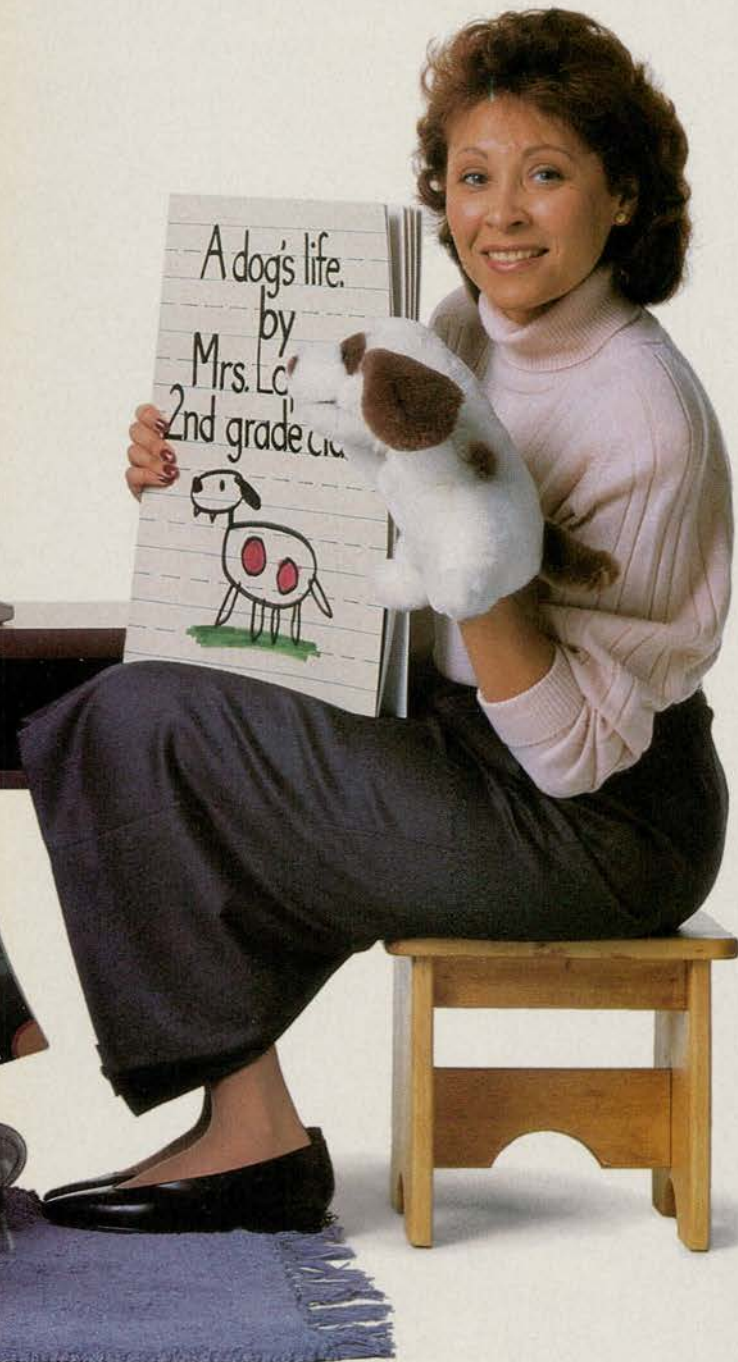
New language arts software is constantly being created to take advantage of the magic of Macintosh. So whether you're looking for a totally new program for reading and writing or an enhancement of one of the classics, you can be sure it just won't be the same on any other computer.

Every Macintosh has sophisticated sound capabilities that let you record sounds, as well as play them. Which means in programs like Kid Pix by Bruderbund, students and teachers can create their own stories. Songs. Even personalized instructions. So students use more than their voices, they use their imaginations. (Some Macintosh computers even come with their own microphone, like the one pictured here.)



You can get more information on all the software featured in this ad by calling the company directly. For Kid Pix, featured in the classroom above, call 800-521-6263; The Bank Street Writer, call 800-541-5513; CCC, call 800-227-8324; Dragon Tales, call 800-521-8538; and "The power to be your best" are registered trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc. Dragon Tales is a trademark of Jostens Learning Corporation. The Golden Book Encyclopedia is a registered trademark of Western Publishing Company. Kid Pix and Living Books are registered trademarks of Scholastic, Inc. Story Tailor is a trademark of Humanities Software. Mention of third-party products is for informational purposes only. All product specifications and descriptions were

read is hard enough. ss to read takes magic.



The journey from letters to words to a story with a happy ending is different for every child. And every teacher. And every school.

Which is why we've designed a computer that offers as many ways of teaching as there are ways of learning. A computer that's meant to enhance teachers, not inhibit them. A computer so easy to use that teachers can spend their time teaching the joys of reading instead of the mechanics of computing.

Reading and writing and Macintosh.

The Apple® Macintosh® computer does all of this. And on top of that, it brings something else into your classroom no ordinary computer can.

It brings a little bit of magic along with it.

The kind of magic that lets kids learn at their own pace, so they can enjoy the journey as much as the destination. And the kind of magic that has inspired a new generation of reading and writing software. Programs that take advantage of the unique features only available on Macintosh.

At one end of the spectrum, there are large-scale comprehensive courses. At the other end, there are hundreds of individual programs, tools and stand-alone products you can tailor to fit your needs.

For more information, call your Apple Education Sales Consultant. And see how easy it is to discover the power of Macintosh. The power that's every bit as important for kids to discover as reading. The power to be your best.®





For a retirement plan that's safe and sound, talk with the leader.

One on one.

It's comforting to know that your retirement savings are safe and sound.

And that comfort level is increased when you consider the strength and stability of the fixed accounts offered by VALIC, one of the nation's leading providers of 403(b) Tax-Deferred Annuities to educators.

Strength through growth.

In just the last five years, the number of employer groups managed by VALIC has more than tripled, from 4,400 to over 14,000. At the same time, the number of participant accounts more than *quadrupled*. Strong testimony, indeed, to the level of confidence educators place in VALIC.

Strength in numbers.

The numbers and rankings speak for themselves: VALIC has over \$12 billion in assets, ranking in the top 2% of all U.S. life insurance companies. Our rating from A.M. Best Company, an independent rating service for the insurance industry, is A+ (Superior), its highest. Standard & Poor's, a leading independent credit rating company, assigned VALIC an AA+ (Excellent) rating for our ability to pay customer claims.

The strongest numbers of all — one-on-one.

There's a VALIC representative ready to meet with you, one-on-one, to develop your plan for retirement. Let us show you the advantages of pre-tax contributions and tax-deferred earnings.

We'll analyze your retirement income needs and tailor a plan to meet your goals. We'll help you select an investment mix that meets your financial objectives and show you how to choose annuity options when you retire. With VALIC as a partner, you'll see how strength and stability can translate to a future you can look to — with confidence.

Now that you've seen the numbers, call this one: 1-800-22-VALIC. We'll send you a retirement plan fact kit or schedule an appointment for you to meet one-on-one with a VALIC representative.

America's Retirement
Plan Specialists

VALIC®

★ An American General Company

©1991 The Variable Annuity Life Insurance Company, Houston, Texas. VALIC is a registered service mark of The Variable Annuity Life Insurance Company.

ALBERT SHANKER
President
American Federation of Teachers

Elizabeth McPike
editor

Mary Power Boyd
associate editor

Wanda Bailey (on leave)
editorial assistant

Shirley Baldwin
editorial assistant

Andrew Bornstein
design consultant

Cover photo by Jonathan Smith

The *American Educator* (USPS 130-610) is published quarterly by the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2079. Telephone: 202-879-4420.

American Educator is mailed to all AFT teacher, higher education and other school-related professional members. Annual subscription price: \$1.75 (included in membership dues) and available only as a part of membership. Subscription for others: \$8.

Signed articles and advertisements do not necessarily represent the viewpoints or policies of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.

American Educator cannot assume responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts.

Application to mail at second-class postage rates pending at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to *American Educator*, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2079.

General advertising office
555 New Jersey Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
Telephone: 202-879-4420

Advertising Sales Representative
Peter Li, Inc.
2451 E. River Rd.
Dayton, OH 45439
513-294-5785
Fax = 513-294-7840

William M. Doran
Peter Li, Inc.
1220 Broadway
New York, NY 10001
212-947-2300
Fax = 212-947-2609

West
Jo-Ann McDevitt
Peter Li, Inc.
2169 Francisco Blvd., East, Suite A4
San Rafael, CA 94901
415-457-4333
Fax = 415-457-4379

Southwest and Midwest
Thomas H. Bachman
Peter Li, Inc.
1000 N. Lake Shore Drive, Suite 1802
Chicago, IL 60611
312-337-7490
Fax = 312-337-7685

American Educator is produced with the assistance of members of Local 2, Office and Professional Employees International Union, AFL-CIO, and members of AFT Staff Union. Composition and printing are done in 100 percent union shops.

© American Federation of Teachers, 1992.



PAGE 18



PAGE 24



PAGE 34

AMERICAN Educator

CHILDREN IN CRISIS: THE TRAGEDY OF UNDERFUNDED SCHOOLS AND THE STUDENTS THEY SERVE

8

By Sandra Feldman

"No gym, no music, no nurse, no guidance counselor, no trips, no art supplies. What's left?" is the way one New York teacher summed up the devastating impact of funding cuts that are affecting many school districts around the country. At a time when many young people are bringing more problems with them to school each day, schools are being denied the most fundamental resources.

IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO

18

By Patrick Welsh

Remember the old saying, "No pain, no gain"? Why do so many students seem to feel so little compulsion to work hard, and what can we do about it?

THE COLUMBUS CONTROVERSY

24

By Stephan Thernstrom

The 500th anniversary of the landing of Columbus has become the occasion for fierce debate and political wrangling. The author presents a brief review of what historians currently think about some of the issues in contention.

QUESTIONS OF CONQUEST:

25

WHAT COLUMBUS WROUGHT AND WHAT HE DID NOT

By Mario Vargas Llosa

How could a few hundred Spanish adventurers conquer an empire of 20 million people? To try to unravel this and other mysteries, the distinguished Peruvian novelist takes us back to early Inca culture.

FIRST ENCOUNTERS

34

By Michele Landsberg

The first books a child reads are among the most important. Surveying a wide selection, this expert on children's literature suggests some of the best for the beginning reader.

A BOOKSTORE IN THE BUILDING

41

By Robin Cohen

Why were so many children "losing" the books their teacher had loaned them to take home? Here's a mystery story with a very happy ending.

The
Harold W.
McGrav, Jr.
Prize in
Education

Three who make a difference: Announcing the 1991 winners of the McGraw Prize in Education.



The Harold W. McGraw, Jr. prize was established in 1988, in celebration of McGraw-Hill's 100th anniversary and in honor of our chairman emeritus.

Each year, up to three \$25,000 prizes are awarded to people who have made a difference in education.

For 1991, the Board of Judges selected these three individuals for distinguished contributions to the advancement of education.

Dr. Judith Lanier



Improved teacher education is integral to education reform. And Michigan State University's School of Education has become a world center for research on teaching and teacher education under the leadership of its dean, Judith Taack Lanier.

Dr. Lanier is the president and driving force behind the Holmes Group, a consortium representing 100 of the nation's top research universities dedicated to improving learning in schools through research and development and high quality teacher preparation.

Her work on the national level is paralleled by her efforts to raise standards for teacher education and teaching in Michigan through the Michigan Partnership for New Education, a collaboration between education, government and business that focuses on increased levels of learning for all students.

Dr. Robert H. McCabe



Robert H. McCabe has shaped Miami-Dade Community College into an institution that fulfills the role of the American community college: giving every individual—the underprepared as well as those with superior skills—the opportunity for quality higher education.

Under Dr. McCabe's leadership, Miami-Dade has reformed its total educational program, raised student expectations and achievement, and developed comprehensive processes to improve the entire teaching/learning environment.

Dr. McCabe is an innovator who has helped chart

the course for the American community college movement. His contributions have placed Miami-Dade in the ranks of the nation's best institutions of higher education.

Dr. Theodore R. Sizer



No two good schools are ever alike. Yet successful schools share powerful guiding ideas that underpin their programs with students.

These ideas have been distilled into a set of common principles by Theodore R. Sizer of Brown University, founder of the Coalition of Essential Schools. The fundamental purpose of schooling is intellectual, according to Dr. Sizer; all students must learn to use their minds well. School programs must establish the essential skills students should master to graduate. Education must be personalized to engage students so they are not mere recipients of instructional services.

Since 1984, the Coalition has been building a network of schools which subscribe to these principles, increasing attendance and the number of students continuing their education while lowering dropout rates.

For more information, write to The Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education, McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.



Funny. When this time comes around, the kids want to stay around.

"With Teaching and Learning with Computers, the end of the day, I think, is the biggest mark of success for the program. The bell will ring, and I'll have to announce to 27 children that school is over for the day. And they all moan and groan.

"You know, if they had their way, we'd all be eating dinner here."

—Suzanne Sturrock, 1st Grade Teacher
A.D. Henderson School,
Boca Raton, Florida

In other classrooms with Teaching and Learning with Computers, children have asked to take their computers home for summer vacation. They talk about school being fun. And teachers talk about feeling like heros.

Developed in partnership with hundreds of educators across the country, Teaching and Learning with Computers is an approach that helps teachers integrate computers into their own classrooms. Small groups of students move among several stations in the room, creating a truly cooperative learning environment. This could involve an activity station, a research or library station, an idea development station, and a computer station consisting of several IBM PS/2[®]s. A guide with lesson suggestions helps you tailor the activities at each station to work with whatever subject you're teaching.

Because students work together in small groups, at their own pace, completing specific tasks themselves,

Teaching and Learning with Computers fosters both participation and independent learning. Kids are active, more involved, so they like learning more. And teachers have more freedom to get closer to their students, and give special attention to



those who need it.

Most important, though, Teaching and Learning with Computers enhances everything that is right about the classroom to begin with.

It works with a school's curriculum and complements a teacher's individual style. So kids are more successful learning what they should, and teachers are more successful teaching.
As
Sherri

Shade, a second grade teacher at Graham Elementary School in Shelby, North Carolina said, "The philosophy of Teaching and Learning with Computers works because it's child-centered. It puts the needs and the nature of the children first." Mary Thomas, a third grade teacher at the John S. Newberry Elementary School in Detroit adds, "If you could just see the kids, their faces, when they see some of their products, 'Hey, I wrote this! These are my words, my thoughts.' That's just amazing."

Teaching and Learning with Computers includes schoolwide networks with both teacher and student IBM PS/2s, proven instructional software, teacher's guides with lesson suggestions, and teacher training and support.

Of course, all this is just a glimpse of what can happen with Teaching and Learning with Computers in a classroom. For more information, call or send the coupon below.

The only thing it can't help with is dinner.

IBM and PS/2 are registered trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation.
© 1991 IBM Corporation

Please send me more details about IBM's

Teaching and Learning with Computers

Clip and mail to:
IBM Corporation, Dept. 832
P. O. Box 3974, Peoria, IL 61614

Or call:
1 800 IBM-6676, ext. 832

Name _____

Title _____

School _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Phone _____



CHILDREN IN CRISIS

The Tragedy of Underfunded Schools and the Students They Serve

BY SANDRA FELDMAN

NOT TOO long ago, one of our high schools in Brooklyn, N.Y., made national headlines when two students were shot dead in a hallway. Just three months earlier at that same high school, another student had been killed and a teacher shot. Fifty students from that school have died on the streets of Brooklyn during the past five years. The school has "grieving rooms," where students can go to express and share their grief, along with teachers, aides, administrators, and counselors. That's how much violence, tragedy, and death there is in these young people's lives.

I spent a good deal of time at that school, which is located in the midst of a poverty-stricken neighborhood, filled with vast, dreary public housing projects, boarded-up buildings, and empty lots. Yet, I can assure you, amidst so much desolation, the school is an oasis of hope. The faculty is outstanding and the principal is dedicated and caring. The great majority of the students are hungry for an education and dream the typical dreams of young people who want to better their lives. Although many of them don't make it to graduation, of those who do, about 80 percent apply to college.

In the past two years of budget cuts, the school lost approximately 10 percent of its staff. There is no doubt that with more resources—from teachers to textbooks to laboratory equipment—that high school could succeed. Yet right now it is struggling just to maintain a safe and secure environment.

Jefferson High School's tragic story is representative of both the promise and the problems of education in much of America today, from impoverished inner cities to factory towns hard hit by the recession to rural communities facing a less-publicized but equally painful poverty. All across America, young people are bringing more problems with them to school each day. Yet, at a time when the schools need to do more than ever before to help our young people survive and succeed, they're being denied the resources they need because of recession-hit tax revenues and shortsighted budget



Sandra Feldman is president of the United Federation of Teachers in New York City and a vice president of the American Federation of Teachers.



PHOTO: JONATHAN SMITH

Changing classes in an overcrowded high school, Queens, New York.

cuts at all levels. For ten years, the federal government has slashed programs and services for poor children while also cutting aid to states and localities. Left in the wake is a generation mired in poverty: one in five children nationwide, double that in my own city. That's 24 million nationally.

Ironically, while our schools, our students, and our society's future are being shortchanged, the Bush administration and the nation's governors have committed themselves to six "national education goals" for the year 2000, including the following.

- *Readiness for School:* By the year 2000, all children will start school ready to learn.
- *High School Completion:* By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
- *First in the World:* By the year 2000, U.S. students will be the first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.
- *Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools:* By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

These goals seem like a mockery to many American teachers striving to do the best they can for their students in schools that are overcrowded, under-equipped, and, all too frequently, unsafe as well. Often the school is the only stable institution in many students' lives, and teachers feel that the burden of society's unsolved problems has been placed on their shoulders. The stresses and strains of trying to cope with the nation's most severe problems, without the tools they need to do their jobs, explain why a health newsletter recently ranked "inner-city teacher" as America's most stressful job. And of all the tensions in the teacher's life, the worst may be the terrible sense that we're watching helplessly while beautiful kids are being shortchanged and enormous potential lost.

TWO YEARS ago, the AFT created a Task Force on Children in Crisis to study and suggest solutions for the problems of young people who need so much more from our schools at the very time our schools are being forced

to make do with less. To begin to cope with these problems, the AFT has called upon President Bush to declare a state of emergency for children in crisis and has urged Congress to take immediate legislative action. Specifically, we're proposing that \$10.5 billion of what this nation used to spend on defense be spent on ten basic education, health care, and school facility repair programs. Most of this money would be used to expand existing, proven, successful—but never fully funded—programs, such as Chapter 1 and Head Start (see sidebar, page 16).

As chairperson of that AFT task force, I've spoken with teachers all across the country and heard first-hand accounts of how America is abandoning many of its children and neglecting most of them, at an untold cost to its future.

Those anecdotes have been given broad national validity by the steady drumbeat of recent reports documenting the deteriorating condition of America's children. One of the most comprehensive and perceptive of these is a book by Sylvia Ann Hewlett entitled *When the Bough Breaks: The Cost of Neglecting Our Children* (Basic Books, June 1991).

Hewlett's book looks at children's entire lives, not just their education, and concludes that our government has just about given up on the younger generation, period. Citing everything from inadequate prenatal care to cutbacks in child health programs and early education to a crying lack of decent, affordable housing for families, Hewlett shows how our children are at much greater risk than children elsewhere in the industrial world. Although the U.S. ranks number two in per-capita income, we don't even make it into the top ten on any significant indicator of child welfare.

"Each day in the United States, sixty-seven newborn babies die," writes Hewlett. "Had they been born in Japan, only thirty-seven would have died. Over the course of a single year, approximately 40,000 American babies die before their first birthday. The U.S. international ranking in infant mortality worsened from sixth in the mid-1950s to twentieth in 1987. Japan, on the other hand, went from seventeenth to first place over the same span of time. . . . A black baby born in the shadow of the White House is now more likely to die in the first year of life than a baby born in Jamaica or Trinidad."

For many of those children who do make it beyond their first year, the author paints a picture of life that is a continuous battle to survive. "The problems of our youth range from elemental issues of health and safety to more complicated issues of motivation and performance. . . . Nationwide, the incidence of child abuse has quadrupled since 1975. . . . A child is safer in Northern Ireland than in America. . . . Millions of American children are failing to receive immunizations against polio, measles, and mumps." And on and on go the grim statistics.

Other reports—notably those prepared by the Children's Defense Fund and by KIDS COUNT, a project of the Center for the Study of Social Policy—echo Hewlett's findings: During the decade of the eighties, the percentage of children living below the government's poverty line increased, from 16 percent to 19.5 percent; the rate of violent deaths among teenagers increased by 12 percent from 1984 through 1988 alone; births to unmarried teenagers climbed from 7.5 percent to 8.6 percent of all



births; the juvenile incarceration rate jumped by 41 percent from 1979 through 1987; and the percentage of children living in families with only one parent went from 21 percent to about 24 percent of all children.

Hewlett shows how these problems have all been exacerbated by the squeeze on public funds for programs that affect children: "Federal expenditure on all child-oriented programs—AFDC, Head Start, food stamps, child nutrition, child health, and federal aid to education"—fell from \$51 billion in 1978 to \$48.3 billion in 1987. When it comes to education spending, she writes, "the United States ties for twelfth place among sixteen industrialized nations. To bring our primary and secondary schools up to the average level found in the other fifteen countries, we would need to increase spending by over \$20 billion annually."

Hewlett isn't blind to the fact that the breakdown in family and social structure over the years has also contributed to the problems. She notes, for example, that about 50 percent of today's teenagers are products of divorced families and that 42 percent of all divorced fathers fail to see their children after the divorce. But her key point is that at this time of social breakdown, we live in a country that hasn't developed a policy to protect its children.

If no action is taken, the future looms worse. By the year 2000, the very year President Bush predicts we'll reach educational nirvana, more than 23 percent of America's children will likely live in poverty. That means nearly one in every four children will be living in families earning less than \$10,857 a year for a family of three.

WHILE POOR children are suffering the most, all of our young people—the children of middle America and upper America, as well as the children of the poor—are having a harder time growing up healthy in mind, body, and spirit. With fathers and mothers working longer hours just to hold onto their piece of the Amer-



PHOTO: JONATHAN SMITH

Above and below: In many school districts across the country, closets, cloakrooms, halls, bathrooms, and lunchrooms have been pressed into service as classrooms. "There's no air in the closet and the children get listless," reports the New York teacher pictured above.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF CHICAGO TEACHERS UNION

ican dream, the time that families spend together is becoming shorter and more stressful.

Thus, Sylvia Hewlett cites the findings of University of Maryland sociologist Joan Robinson, who reports that "total contact time"—the time parents spend with children doing things other than the most basic activities like feeding and dressing them—has dropped 40 percent during the past quarter-century. Children who spend so much less time with their parents suffer an incalculable cost in emotional security and self-esteem. Part of that price may be reflected in the increase over the past thirty years in obesity, behavioral disorders, and even suicide among American children, as reported in a recent edition of *Science* magazine. Even among the children of the wealthy, whose parents often lavish them with everything but time and attention, there is an increase in feelings of aimlessness and alienation that Children's Defense Fund President Marian Wright Edelman calls "affluenza"—a condition portrayed on Fox television's popular show "Beverly Hills 90210."

Given the tremendous strains on American families, and in the virtual absence of any other institutions to shelter and nurture and guide young people, the public schools find themselves with an awesome responsibility for the next generation of Americans. Public education is the universal service. If family problems are not being addressed in health clinics or by caseworkers, they are finding their way to school. Yet far from receiving the resources they need, our schools—and especially those in the neediest urban and rural communities—are forced to make do with less.

During a national economic recession that is now well into its second year, schools have suffered from often severe reductions in state aid and shortfalls in local property taxes. State and local governments are in no condition to make up for what the federal government is no longer sending. According to the National Governors' Assn., thirty-seven states are in dire fiscal condition.

To make things worse—much worse—this financial strain comes on top of the fundamental inequity in how we pay for our children's education: With substantial, and, in some states, most funding coming from local property taxes, wealthy communities can afford to pay much more than poor communities where the needs are greatest. Rather than correcting for this inequity, some state aid formulas actually add to it. In New York City, for example, each child receives \$350 less aid than students elsewhere in the state, despite their greater needs. These problems are presented in vivid—and appalling—detail in a book that paints a devastating picture of the education offered to poor children in this country: *Savage Inequalities* by Jonathan Kozol (Crown Publishers).

Studying school systems throughout the country, Kozol finds that students from poor communities have to put up with the worst, while young people from communities with greater wealth (and more political clout) get better schools. From personal experience, I know that Kozol is right on target in his observations about conditions in New York City and its suburbs. For instance, in a visit to a school district in the Bronx that spans the gamut of middle class to poor schools, Kozol observed one elementary school serving a low-income population—a school housed in a former skating rink.

It's a school I know well from several visits.

Here is some of what he saw: Classes "as large as 37"; "Textbooks are scarce, and children have to share their social studies books"; "A ratio of 930 children to one counselor"; "To make up for the building's lack of windows and the crowded feeling that results, the staff puts plants and fish tanks in the corridors."

Kozol writes: "The library is a tiny, windowless and

claustrophobic room. Seeing no reference books, I ask a teacher if encyclopedias and other reference books are kept in classrooms. 'We don't have encyclopedias in classrooms,' she replies. 'That is for the suburbs.'"

I am constantly reminded of our system's "savage inequalities" by the schools I visit during my work week. And recently a revealing incident occurred during a family outing. As it so happens, my niece goes to the same

RURAL AREAS HARDPRESSED, TOO

Lack of equipment makes mockery of Science 2000 goal

By DAVID KUSNET

A TROUBLED youngster doesn't get the counseling she needs. A science lesson is taught with a lecture, instead of laboratory work. And almost one out of five students drop out before finishing high school.

These are some of the human costs of the lack of funds for the public schools in Logan County, as business, jobs, and people continue to flee the coal country of southern West Virginia.

Over the past ten years, Logan County's population has declined by more than six thousand, and school enrollment has dropped by more than three thousand during the past five years alone. The unemployment rate is close to 10 percent, among the worst in the state and the nation.

With state aid linked to declining student enrollment figures and an additional 1 percent cut imposed on education funding throughout West Virginia, Logan County schools have lost at least \$250,000 this year. On top of that, local property tax revenues have also declined during the recession, particularly after the bankruptcy of Columbia Gas, the biggest natural gas distributor in the state. And these cuts in school funding hit especially hard at a school system that has always been hardpressed for resources, with aging buildings and outmoded equipment.

Meanwhile, students are coming to class with more problems and some aren't showing up at all. The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-cost school lunch has climbed to forty-five.

Attendance officer Charles Gore often gets a first-hand look at the problems. "There's a cycle of pover-



PHOTO: JACKIE MCNEELY

ty in these hills," Gore says, referring specifically to the more poverty-stricken rural areas, particularly those in the "hollows" between the mountains. "The environment is not conducive to learning, not conducive to getting up in the morning and going to school.

"Sometimes, when I visit a home where a child isn't going to school, I walk into the house and almost fall through the floor," Gore recalls. "The porches are falling off the house. The steps are falling down. And, sometimes, the adult at home is just sprawled out on the couch, watching TV, like he or she has given up."

With many of the more ambitious young people leaving the state to look for jobs, often leaving their children behind, an increasing number of school-aged youngsters are growing up in single-parent homes or with their grandparents, who often are retired or disabled miners. Except for working or retired miners or government workers, many families lack health insurance—a problem that's poignantly brought to the attention of their teachers.

"We have a new policy on absenteeism—students who miss five

consecutive days of school need a doctor's excuse," explains Moss Burgess, a science teacher at Logan High School and president of the Logan County Federation of Teachers. "We get notes back from their parents saying they can't get a doctor's note because their family doesn't have medical coverage." Sometimes, students are legally adopted by their grandparents in order that they can be covered under their health insurance.

Students' needs and schools' resources seem to be moving in opposite directions. In a community where regular medical checkups are luxuries many families can't afford, the entire Logan County school system has only two nurses serving more than nine thousand students in thirty-one schools. Nurses try to visit each school for a half-hour to an hour each week—nowhere near enough time to examine students who often bring health problems that hinder their learning to school. "We should have one nurse per thousand kids—seven more nurses," says Jack Garrett, assistant superintendent of schools.

Nurses aren't the only personnel in short supply; so are counselors.

public school I attended in Brooklyn. There are thirty-seven kids in her class. I overheard my niece swapping stories with a young friend, the same age, who lives and goes to school in Scarsdale, a wealthy suburb of New York. There are eighteen children in her class. The contrast was a grim reminder that school spending per student is about \$2,500 higher in the suburbs around New York City.

Logan Grade School, with 365 students, tries to make do by having a teacher squeeze in an hour or so of counseling between her other duties each day. Principal Norma McCloud says that often she has to do counseling herself—a fact that was verified during a recent visit to her office, where one child had just left and a line of others were waiting to meet with her.

"You see a need, and you do it for kids," McCloud said. "I see a kid in crisis every day. We can't alleviate the home problems, but we can make the children more comfortable with themselves and get them in the frame of mind to go back into the classroom." She recently spent a half-day counseling a troubled girl. "What do you do? You can't walk away from that kind of alienation."

FOR ALL THE dedication of the staff, sometimes the schools don't have the resources to bring out the best in the students. The lack is particularly painful in science classes, which usually don't have laboratory equipment in the junior highs and which frequently have antiquated equipment at best in the high schools.

Logan High School science teacher Moss Burgess says that, in his chemistry class, "The faucets finally just rotted away—they were replaced eventually—but the gas line wasn't replaced for most of the bunsen burners." Now, Burgess explains, "Kids have to double up, and we have a hard time doing experiments."

Tickling off an inventory of antiquated equipment, Burgess mentions "a barometer made in Germany before World War II" and "a distiller bought twenty years ago—it's a matter of time before it goes, and then it'll cost \$1,500 to replace. I don't know where the money will come from. It's kind of hard, with these conditions, to read in the papers that President Bush has

announced that the U.S. is going to be first in science by the year 2000."

At Logan Junior High School, science teacher Anthony Grando's class also suffers from a lack of basic equipment. A few years ago, when the pipes froze, they were never replaced. And the classroom doesn't have an exhaust fan, so, when something is burned, the smoke stays in the room, even if the windows are open, discomforting everyone and causing special problems for students with asthma. The lack of equipment makes it difficult for a teacher to do demonstrations, much less for students to conduct experiments of their own.

Inevitably, the result is a style of teaching where "you tell but don't show—and that's book science," warns Burgess. "Real science is learning for yourself. The tragedy is that the kids' Nintendo games at home are more modern than most of the lab equipment they use at school."

Science isn't the only subject that suffers from the lack of equipment. At Ralph R. Willis County Vocational School, the newest car they have to work on is eight or nine years old, says Cosma Crites, county superintendent of schools. "Many engine components are now computer controlled," she explains. "But our auto mechanics students don't have the computer equipment to learn on. You can't fix things with just a screwdriver and a wrench anymore."

Problems with physical facilities also put a crimp on the schools. Crites says that many buildings have leaky roofs. "The roofs leak so badly, it gets into the asbestos, then the ceiling tiles begin to fall. We have to shut the place down while the asbestos is removed, which is more money we don't have."

Logan Junior High School presents a different problem. It is built into a hillside, where most houses have no septic tanks. Raw sewage runs downhill in a creek alongside

IN COMMUNITIES across the country, cuts in school funding are having devastating effects. In my own city of New York, we have suffered budget cuts reaching a mind-numbing three-quarters of a billion dollars in the last two years. The situation is dire. When I asked members of New York City's United Federation of Teachers to send in reports about the impact of budget cuts at their schools, more than 8,000 responded with stories of

the school, and, as principal Robert Adkins explains, "At noon, when the kids hit the bathrooms, you can smell the sewage." Because of a lack of usable classrooms, a special education class meets in the service room of the library where materials such as encyclopedias are stored.

Meanwhile, Logan Grade School doesn't even have a library. "I just finished ordering a set of encyclopedias and dictionaries, but where am I going to put them?" asks principal Norma McCloud.

Dealing with these difficulties, teachers often dip into their own pockets to provide resources for their students, from chemistry samples for experiments to books and videotapes. Science teacher Moss Burgess, for instance, spent his own money to buy paint, nails, and other materials to repaint and repair the cabinets in his chemistry room. "I don't know of any teachers who don't spend their own money to make things a little better," says superintendent of schools Cosma Crites.

Many Logan County teachers were born and raised here, went away to college to receive their teaching degree, and then returned to teach new generations. "This is our home," said one teacher. "If we don't give up, maybe these children won't either."

But, despite their best efforts, teachers and administrators are haunted by the living evidence that the schools aren't doing everything possible for young people discouraged from achieving their full potential.

"When students drop out, they hang around for a while and get jobs at Wendy's and McDonald's when they can," Burgess explains. "Sometimes they end up on welfare."

"So many kids get out of high school and I see them two or three years later, just hanging out trying to find a job," Crites concludes. □

human tragedy.

Class sizes are increasing to as many as forty students because we have 2,500 fewer teaching positions at the same time that school enrollments have increased by 20,000 over last year. The school population is rapidly approaching its peak of 1971, yet we have 3,500 fewer classrooms and 100 fewer schools than we had then. Curricula have been cut back, from advanced-placement classes to electives and foreign languages, music, and art. Counselors, psychologists, and social workers have seen their caseloads skyrocket because of reductions in staff and growing numbers of students with severe problems. Because schools lack the funds to buy new textbooks and workbooks, many students are "doubling up" on them. While laboratory work has been curtailed, students are

spending more time warehoused in "study halls." Meanwhile, bathrooms, halls, closets, and lunchrooms all have been pressed into service as classrooms.

Reading many of the teachers' responses was truly heartbreaking:

• A junior high school teacher wrote: "My blackboard broke last year. There's no money to replace it, so I have a gaping four-foot space in front of my room. I have to write around it."

• A special education science teacher from Brooklyn described the shortage of books and supplies: "Our school doesn't have enough textbooks for students to take home. I can't even give them handouts because we're out of paper for the copy machine. The science department can't afford any science supplies. Our cur-

LOS ANGELES: THE NEW 'ELLIS ISLAND'

LOS ANGELES has been called "America's new Ellis Island." Like New York City at the turn of the twentieth century, Los Angeles, at the turn of the twenty-first century, has become the home for immigrants from every continent on earth, seeking freedom and opportunity in the United States.

The children of many of these immigrants—and the children of many older residents as well—bring to Los Angeles' public schools not only the rich diversity of their cultures but the many problems of poverty.

Eighty-four different languages are spoken in Los Angeles' schools. And in 413 of these schools, at least half the students are not fluent in English.

Fully 50 percent of the children in Los Angeles schools were born into poverty. One of every four babies in the city is born to a young and unwed mother. And over 20 percent of the city's adult population is illiterate.

While the needs of the city's children have been growing, the resources of its schools have been dwindling. The average kindergarten class size is now thirty-five, while high school academic classes have forty or more students.

A recent story in the *Los Angeles Times Magazine* described what has been happening:

"Squeezed between rising costs and shrinking state funding, the Los Angeles Unified School District has had to cut its spending by 15 per-

cent, or more than \$630 million, in the last three years. During that time, enrollment has mushroomed by more than forty-five thousand new students. More than 75 percent of the \$3.9 billion the district spends annually comes from the state, but last year the state had to grapple with its own \$14.9 billion deficit, so education spending was pared down and across-the-board cost-of-living increases virtually eliminated.

"The school board had already reduced administrative spending, borrowed from its construction accounts, cut custodial services and dipped into its insurance reserves to narrow the budget gap, before it voted last summer on more cuts. . . . Ultimately, almost 2,000 teachers were laid off, hundreds of courses were eliminated and the remaining classes were crammed with additional students, and spending on such basic supplies as textbooks, pencils and paper was curtailed."

As Helen Bernstein, president of the United Teachers of Los Angeles, explains: "The image of Los Angeles is one of opulence, Hollywood, and world-class wealth. Teachers see the other—the real—L.A. We work and promote learning under the most adverse conditions. 'Our' Los Angeles is one of sweatshops, factories and hotels, where the parents of many of our students spend their workdays."

America's greatness has always been its ability to bring such young people into the mainstream of our society. In the passage that follows, a junior high school teacher from Los Angeles discusses how one of the largest and fastest-growing school systems in urban America is

meeting that test, particularly in the aftermath of state and local budget cuts. Bruce Williams has taught social studies for nine years at John Muir Junior High School and is a site representative for the United Teachers of Los Angeles.

"My experience confirms the fact that teaching is a job that breaks your heart every day. Most of my colleagues love teaching, but we have trouble liking our jobs. You try to start each day with optimism, but within the hour, you're confronted with so many things that make teaching difficult.

"First, let me tell you about our school. Its demographics are roughly 58 percent Latino and 42 percent African-American. It's right in the heart of South Central Los Angeles. It's on territory that's disputed between the gangs.

"Out of 1,604 students, we have about three hundred who speak little, if any, English. They are identified as Limited English Proficiency (LEP). We have another five hundred who are less than fluent in English. They are identified as English as a Second Language (ESL).

"About two-thirds of our students come from families that are on Aid to Families with Dependent Children. And, another grim fact, approximately 75 percent of our children score below the twenty-fifth percentile on standardized tests.

"We are exactly the kind of school where resources, money, staff, small

rent situation is beyond hopeless."

- A third-grade teacher in upper Manhattan talked about the crowding: "The classroom is so small (12 feet by 18 feet), no additional desks will fit. Children have to crawl under desks to get in and out of the room."

- A teacher from Queens described the effect on special ed students: "The classes are so large, we cannot mainstream the special ed students when they are ready. This has set special education back five years!"

- "How can I teach pipe welding without any pipes?" asked a Manhattan vocational high school teacher.

- And an elementary school teacher from the Bronx summed it all up: "No gym, no music, no nurse, no guidance counselor, no trips, no art supplies. What's left?"

Similar tragedies are unfolding across the country. AFT

leaders described the situations in their cities at a news conference held in Washington this past winter. The cross-section of cities represented made it clear that poverty does not discriminate; it destroys urban and rural children, white, African-American, Latino, and Asian children alike.

- In Los Angeles, where half the students come from poor families and many have limited proficiency in English, the average kindergarten class size is thirty-five, while high school academic classes have forty or more students. Meanwhile, enrollment in the Los Angeles Unified School District is expected to grow by 15,000 to 20,000 every year for the next twenty years. Helen Bernstein, president of the United Teachers of Los Angeles, explained: "The linguistic, psychological, and economic

classes, individual attention are urgently needed. Unfortunately, we're not receiving them.

"For example, as a result of some of the budget cuts, my department, the Social Studies Department, has decreased from ten teachers to eight, and class sizes have increased. In the five seventh-grade classes that I teach, my smallest class has twenty-nine students and my largest has thirty-three. So the amount of time that I can spend with any individual student is minimal, if it exists at all.

"Our maintenance staff was down to the bones to begin with, but, in January, we lost three more positions. Now, they're so hard-pressed, they can barely do more than empty the trashcans every night. My classroom hasn't been swept in two weeks. That used to be something you could count on. And with one hundred fifty kids coming in and out of this room each day, you can envision how much it is needed. I'm not blaming the staff; there's just fewer of them, and they can only do so much. Every morning, the students in my homeroom class help me out, and we straighten up the room and pick up the floor. Half my Venetian blinds are broken—and have been for two years—and the wall clock doesn't work. Supplies for the school's bathrooms are not regular, and we have water fountains that are broken and windows that are boarded up.

"We used to have a school nurse each day, but now we have one only three or four days a week. We used to have two music teachers; now

we have one. We used to have two art teachers; now we have one. In the elementary schools in L.A., by the way, art and music positions have been totally eliminated.

"Another example of the impact of the cuts is that the Board of Education has frozen our instructional materials account, and it's only a matter of time before we run out of paper for duplicating teaching materials. To make matters worse, not every student has a textbook. I have a class set, so everyone has a book during class, but not everyone has one to take home at night. That means I can't use textbook-based homework assignments, so I often need to reproduce material to give to the children for homework. And that means paper, which, as I said, is in short supply.

"Looking at the needs of the students who aren't fluent in English or for whom English is a second language, we do have a shortage of bilingual teachers. In my school right now, out of a total of sixty-three classroom teachers, we have only seven fully credentialed bilingual teachers, that is, teachers fluent in both English and Spanish. That's a money problem, too, because we need to pay a differential to attract teachers with the bilingual language skills we need. What's even worse is that class-size limits are the same in the LEP and English as a Second Language classes as in other academic classes although, when we're teaching students who are not proficient in English, the class size needs to be smaller.

"Meanwhile, in the midst of all

the problems we face, a lot of our time is taken up with bureaucratic paperwork, when really every minute is needed for teaching students or preparing for classes. For example, the governor of our state has proposed that we take and report formal attendance four times a day instead of just the first period of the day. The reason is that state aid is based in part on average daily attendance, and the state saves money if attendance declines during the school day. Think about that for a minute—we would be taking time that could be used for teaching and spending it instead to compile statistics that could be used to further cut our resources.

"What pains me most is the students I'm afraid we're losing, and, worse yet, the students I'm afraid we've lost.

"I think about a seventh grader who lives in a group foster home. Every day, he comes to school with myriad problems, most of them relating to self-esteem. Unfortunately, he's in my largest class—with thirty-two other students—and it's difficult for me to give him the individual attention he needs. When I try to work with him, I envision a circle—a wall circled around him—and everywhere I turn, I just keep seeing barriers. He responds to personal attention, but, unfortunately, we don't have the time and the staff it takes to give him the attention he really needs.

"The tragedy is: we could do more for him. And for so many others who never had a fair chance." □

CHILDREN IN CRISIS: AFT PROPOSALS

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Parts of this program are moving in different bills in the Congress. However, success of the overall package still rests with having someone friendly in the White House. AFT members who agree that this program is a very high priority item should write to their members of the House and Senate urging them to take action on behalf of schools and children in crisis.

Program	Proposed Increases	Purpose
Chapter 1 (compensatory funding)	\$1 billion (current authorization \$6.1 billion)	To serve an additional 1 million educationally disadvantaged students, with 50 percent going toward concentration grants and the other 50 percent used for regular distribution.
Chapter 1 (other funding)	\$1 billion (current authorization \$1.98 billion)	This money should be earmarked for full-day early childhood education for four- and five-year-olds.
Education for All Handicapped Children Act	\$800 million	Funding is used to improve the education of children with physical and/or mental disabilities.
Medicaid	Entitlement	To provide elementary school counselors and clinicians in the schools to help children facing temporary health and emotional problems and to prevent inappropriate placement of children into special education programs.
Head Start	\$1.75 billion (current authorization \$2.2 billion)	Head Start is an example of how early childhood education can put a student on the right path to quality education. The \$1.75 billion should be used to increase enrollment by at least 50 percent and to expand the number of children who are eligible.
Health clinics at or near schools	\$2.5 billion	Inadequate health care and poor educational performance are closely related. These funds would help provide primary and preventative care for 15 million children.
Five-year public works program to rebuild schools	\$500 million*	This program would solve the infrastructure problems of our schools and help bring the country out of the recession by putting people to work. It should be funded at \$500 million for the first year and increased to a total of between \$8 billion and \$10 billion over five years.
Other special-needs programs	\$100 million (current funding for similar programs: \$250 million)	These funds should be targeted to programs like the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and Emergency Immigration Education, including bilingual education and English as a Second Language.
Child care, prenatal care, and preventive health care	\$2.5 billion	These funds should be used to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ expand child care and development block grants ■ fund community health centers ■ expand maternal and child health services grants ■ increase funding for nutrition for women, infants and children ■ assist public and community health clinics to administer child immunization vaccines
Expand programs targeted to math and science	\$100 million (current authorization \$240 million)	To provide additional training for elementary and secondary school math and science teachers through programs like the Dwight D. Eisenhower Math and Science Education Act.

*first-year costs



PHOTO: MILLER PHOTOGRAPHY

Above: It's hard to move, let alone teach or learn, in this class of forty-four in New York City.

Below: Coats in the classroom aren't the exception, they're the rule for these Chicago students, who wage a seasonal battle against cold indoor temperatures.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF CHICAGO TEACHERS UNION

needs of these children are at once more critical and more daunting than any one of us has ever known."

- In Peoria, Illinois, the shutdown of the city's largest employer, Caterpillar, as well as the closing of the Pabst brewery and the Hiram Walker distillery, mean that 47.9 percent of the students are now classified as low-income families. As Judy Fuson, president of the Peoria Federation of Teachers, observed, "The recession, rising poverty, lack of health insurance, and single-parent homes are not just big-city problems."

- Baltimore Teachers Union co-president Lorretta Johnson reported that teachers and paraprofessionals in the city's schools are stretched to the limit. "We consider ourselves lucky at the elementary school level if we have specialists for art, music, and physical education," she said. "And although problems of weapons, violence, and gangs have migrated down to the elementary level, we consider it a luxury to have a school nurse, guidance counselor, or security officer in a Baltimore elementary school."

- Responding to a survey by the United Teachers of New Orleans, where many of the schools were built at the turn of the century, 19 percent of teachers said the roofs of their schools leaked, and a significant number reported sewers backing up into the school building. Twenty-nine percent of the student sinks were reported to be not working, and 33 percent of all water fountains were broken. As union president Nat LaCour observed, "If a hurricane swept across the Gulf and devastated New Orleans, we would qualify for federal disaster relief. I don't think we should wait for a strong wind; let's declare a state of emergency for the children of New Orleans and other American children today."

Despite the disgraceful conditions exemplified in these accounts from around the country, many, many schools that serve poor children are performing heroically. Last year, in my own city of New York, with 65 percent of our children living at or below the poverty line, our high school students won about \$110 million worth of college scholarships. And in this year's prestigious Westinghouse Science Talent Search, seventy-nine

(Continued on page 46)

IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO

BY PATRICK WELSH

“AMERICAN KIDS want their teachers to do everything for them. They’re spoiled. In other countries, teachers just lecture and leave and you have to get it,” says Amir Batouli, who attended schools in Tehran and Vienna before coming to T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia, where I have been teaching English for the last twenty years. “Most teachers here are better than the ones I had in Iran and Austria. They try all kinds of different methods to make it interesting. It’s the American students, not the teachers, who are the problem,” says Batouli.

“I hear kids saying, ‘All my teachers suck—that’s why I’m not getting A’s.’ They’re just making excuses for not working. It’s our culture—the American way—not to push yourself if it is not going to have some immediate reward,” says Sarah Drucker, who was in my class two years ago.

I thought of these comments by my former students when I saw a chart the other day that comes out of the work of Harold Stevenson and his multinational team at the University of Michigan. For more than ten years, Stevenson and his colleagues have been studying and comparing the attitudes, educational achievement, teaching methods, and school arrangements of the U.S., Japan, Taiwan, and China. The chart showed the responses of American, Japanese, and Taiwanese students when asked to identify the most important factor in their performance in math.

The contrast in their answers is stunning. Seventy percent of the Japanese students and 60 percent of the Taiwanese students placed the burden squarely on their own shoulders: They named “studying hard” as the determining factor in how well they did. Only a quarter of the American students agreed that hard work on their part was the key. Some named native intelligence, some said the home environment. But a clear majority of U.S. students—55 percent—put the responsibility on their teachers. A “good teacher,” they said, was the most important factor in determining how well they did in math.

As my colleague Ed Cannon puts it: “Today the teacher is supposed to be responsible for motivating the kid. If they don’t learn, it is supposed to be our problem, not

theirs.” And of course, today’s busy parents, who are guilt ridden over the little time they spend with their kids, are big subscribers to this theory. Cannon and I chuckled as he told me of an affluent mother who recently was waiting outside his classroom door before he arrived at 7:00 A.M. She had come to complain about the B+ Cannon gave her son. “English is his forté; you are destroying his self-esteem,” she whined.

Recently a parent whose child had done next to nothing in my senior English class came to a conference to tell me that his son did well when inspired by his teachers. The implication was obvious: It was my fault that his son was getting a D.

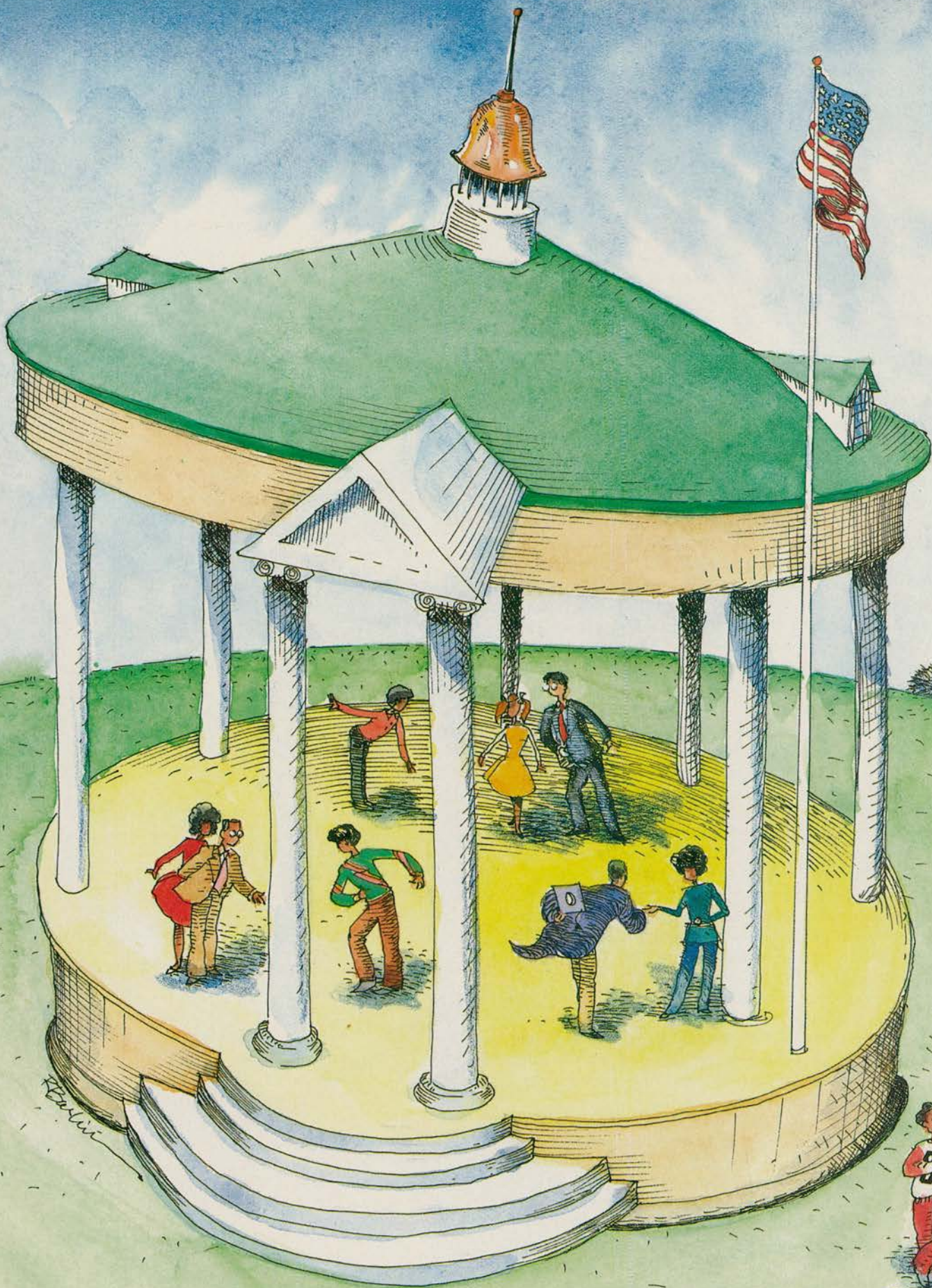
“Kids have convinced parents that it is the teacher or the system that is against them. In my day, parents didn’t listen when kids complained about teachers,” says T. C. Williams chemistry teacher Dave Roscher. “We are supposed to miraculously make kids learn even though they are not working. That’s impossible with chemistry. They have no idea of what hard work is.”

THIS HALF of the learning equation—the student half—has been conspicuous for its absence from school reform efforts of the last few years. Don’t get me wrong, I’m an enthusiastic supporter of most aspects of the reform movement. Schools, especially high schools, need a major overhaul. There’s too much teacher lecturing; there’s an overreliance on textbooks—a mind-numbing approach to subject matter; the days are divided lock-step into fifty-minute, unconnected periods; and the schools themselves are often large, anonymous enterprises instead of communities of learning for teachers and students alike.

“Education has been turned into a little formula—the teachers spit out the information; you write it down then spit it back on a test. You can’t ask any real questions or go into any depth or do any real thinking because the teacher has to ‘cover the material.’ You sit in these boring classes for hours, doing tons of busy work. I can just about get through the day,” says National Merit finalist Megan Reilly.

Even the best teaching and highest student motivation are at the mercy of the ever-present fifty-minute Carnegie unit in which we teachers live our lives. The best student artists say that art cannot be done in fifty-minute chunks. Just about the time the creative juices get flowing, the

Patrick Welsh teaches English at T. C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia.



Karl

teacher tells them it is time to clean up, the bell rings, and they have to rush to the next class. Science teachers say they are not given the time they need to set up the kinds of labs that would turn students on to their subjects. In my English classes, the emotional impact of exciting film productions of plays like *Death of a Salesman* and *Henry V* is dissipated when they have to be shown over a three-day period. It is as if regimentation and order, not excitement and passion for learning, are the bottom line in today's schools.

But even if all the reforms were magically enacted tomorrow, they would mean little if students didn't hold up their end of the bargain. Of course good teaching can inspire student effort. But—although I'm not advocating this arrangement—learning *can* take place in the absence of good teaching. It *cannot* take place in the absence of student effort.

I often tend to romanticize the nuns and priests I had as my teachers in the Catholic high school I attended in western New York during the late fifties. But in reality some of those teachers were pretty bad. I had a horrible teacher for Latin III. But I learned more Latin that year than ever, because in that school culture it was very clear that learning was up to the student. I would never have thought of going to the counselor to get out of the course or of having my parents take me out. The whole class knew that at the end of the year we had to take the New York State Regents in Latin and that blaming the results on the teacher wouldn't cut it. I got one of my highest Regents marks in Latin III, and I felt great about it because I learned the subject pretty much on my own.

MAYBE EVERY generation of students has wanted to take it easy. But until the last few decades, they weren't allowed to get away with it. "Nowadays, it's the kids who have the power. When they don't do the work and get lower grades, they scream and yell. Parents side with the kids who pressure teachers to lower standards," says chemistry teacher Joel Kaplan. "I'm constantly hearing, 'But I can't be a doctor if I get a B.' The kids are caught in a conflict. The parents have them obsessed with grades, but they don't want to do the work involved."

But it's not only parents who are siding with students in their attempts to get out of hard work. "Schools play into it," says psychiatrist Lawrence Brain, who deals daily with affluent teenagers throughout the Washington metropolitan area. "I've been amazed to see how easy it is for kids in public schools to manipulate guidance counselors to get them out of classes they don't like. They've been sent the message that they don't have to struggle to achieve if things are not perfect. They jawbone their teachers into capitulation—nag and nag until they get what they want," says Brain.

Whether those nuns or priests I had in high school were good or bad teachers, they got enormous respect from parents, as did most teachers in the fifties. For today's parents, it is open season on teachers. At the beginning of this school year, I asked an Alexandria mother how her thirteen-year old liked the junior high school she just began attending. Without a moment's hesitation, the mother launched into a diatribe on two teachers that her daughter "didn't like." I wanted to tell the woman that maybe she should be more concerned if her daughter *did* like those teachers at the beginning of the year;

Even if all the reforms were magically enacted tomorrow, they would mean little if students didn't hold up their end of the bargain.



that maybe those teachers were pushing her daughter to do her very best work—a push that most thirteen-year-olds naturally resent and take as a personal attack.

Respect for teachers has eroded in private as well as in public schools. A teacher at St. Alban's in Washington, D. C., one of the most prestigious private schools in the country, told me that a major concern of faculty there is the attitude of parents. "Many parents seem to equate intellect with money. The implication is that if you could be doing something else you wouldn't be teaching," she said. A teacher in a private school in Philadelphia told me his colleagues are often blamed for the problems of affluent students whose parents refuse to recognize their offspring's limitations. "These parents have had their kids at boarding schools for years and then send them off to summer camp. If you give their kids a C, it has to be your fault because their child has to be Yale or Stanford material. It's the first time they haven't been able to get their kids something with a checkbook. So they take their frustration out on the teacher." Obviously when parents blame teachers for kids' grades, the message is that it's the effort of the teachers, not that of the kids, that is the key ingredient to learning.

"Thirty years ago the school was always supported over the individual. But today the sense of individual entitlement is so great and the school community is splintered. There is more chaos and infighting. School systems are very responsive to parents' complaints. The kids apply pressure to parents, who then complain to principals who won't back teachers," says Fairfax family therapist Joseph Jurkowski.

There is ample evidence that across the country kids and parents are having their way when it comes to beating teachers down for grades. As reported recently by Carol Innerst in the *Washington Times*, 23.5 percent of freshmen entering college last fall reported having an A average in high school—almost double the percentage with A averages in 1969. Innerst reports that Eric Dey, associate professor of the freshman survey project at the University of California at Los Angeles, thinks that high school teachers are having to deal with "massive levels of underpreparation. So that if a student gives half an effort and doesn't cause any problems, that's where we are getting grade inflation." High school teachers who hold to high standards would agree. "If they come to class and don't give you any trouble, hand in a little homework, they think they deserve a C even if they fail every test. In junior high school, they must have been rewarded for not harassing teachers," says my colleague Dave Roscher.

But teachers are also responsible for the fact that kids are doing less work. Like parents, we have caved into kids. Paul Levitt, professor of English at the University of Colorado, tells the story of a colleague who complained at the end of a term that "students can't write worth a damn." Levitt later found out that his colleague gave the kids he was complaining about a combined GPA of 3.1 on a four-point scale. "Such grades would suggest that either his students can, in fact, write—and can write damn well—or that my colleague regards a 3.1 average as inadequate, in which case he has lent himself to the growing band of high school teachers and university professors who feel that any grade less than a B is failing. All across the country there are instructors . . . who contend

that a paper is 'abysmal,' then give it a B on the theory that 'that's punishment enough.' We have entirely too many students walking around packing a three-point-plus grade average [GPA] even though they can neither think logically nor write gracefully," says Levitt.

ONE OF THE reasons that many students don't work hard is that schools have told them in subtle and not-so-subtle ways that their ability, as measured by the standardized tests of school "experts," is much more important than time and effort put in on study. Take the labeling of some kids as "gifted and talented"—usually in the third grade but in some cases as early as kindergarten. What school officials seem incapable of understanding is that when they label one group of kids "gifted and talented," they are automatically labeling all the others "ungifted and untalented"—and those kids know it. As *Washington Post* columnist Allan Barth once wrote: "There is hardly any kid who isn't bright enough to understand that he isn't considered very bright."

T. C. Williams graduate Karen Carrington has bitter memories of the days in fourth grade when her "gifted" peers would be pulled out of class. "They got to do the interesting things that would stimulate any kid to learn. They had the plays, the fun projects; they cooked Chinese food. The rest of us would sit in the classroom and do fifty of the same problems over and over again. That would make anyone feel inferior. But when you're black and look around the room and see that almost all the 'gifted' kids who are pulled out are white, it makes you feel even worse," says Carrington, who overcame those feelings to become a top student, accepted at Columbia and Northwestern.

A white guidance counselor in a Fairfax high school said that her son's friends would ask him why he wasn't in the gifted program when he got such good grades. "I explained to him a hundred different ways that it didn't make any difference. But in his mind it still came out that he wasn't as good as his friends who were in the program. That message comes from the system; it is so visible a message when kids are separated," says this woman who does not want to be identified.

"When I first came to America, I was astounded to hear all these parents telling me how 'gifted' their children were. People in other countries just don't do that," says Anthea Maton, a British physics teacher with the National Science Teachers Association.

In their just-released book *The Learning Gap: Why Our Schools Are Failing and What We Can Learn from Japanese and Chinese Education* (Summit Books), Harold Stevenson and James Stigler argue from extensive research that while the Chinese and Japanese see hard work as the key to accomplishment, Americans—educators, parents, and students—emphasize innate ability over effort. As Stevenson and Stigler put it:

"An overemphasis on innate abilities has insidious implications for children's development and education. Children who believe that their high ability is sufficient to insure success find little reason to work hard. Alternatively, children who perceive themselves as having low ability and doubt that they can master their lessons through continued effort also have little reason to work hard. Many American students apparently hold the latter belief. In contrast, Asian students, confident that the time they invest will lead to mastery of the academic curriculum, work long hours at their

studies. Chinese and Japanese societies allow no excuses for lack of progress in school. Regardless of one's current level of performance, opportunities for advancement are always believed to be available through more effort. High scores on a test are interpreted as a sign of diligence. Low scores are not regarded as a sign of stupidity, but simply as an indication that the student has not yet learned what will ultimately be possible through persistence and hard work."

I didn't have to read the research of Stevenson and Stigler to know the truth of what they are saying. Every year, many of the National Merit Scholars—those with the highest scores on standardized tests—in my senior advanced-placement classes put down classmates who outperform them on the work for the course. One of these "scholars" who got a D on a test said of a girl who got an A: "So what? She's not a good student." The fact is the girl is a terrific student and has gotten A's on everything all year. The implication of what this guy was saying was obvious: "My score on standardized tests—my 'ability'—is much more important than the results she achieved through hard work."

This kind of arrogance is typical of kids who "test" better than peers. As Jim Dawes, a former student of mine now at Oxford, put it: "Many kids who have been in the gifted and talented and honors programs have bloated egos because fawning teachers and parents have always told them how great they were. By the time they get to high school they think they know more than their parents and teachers." But behind the arrogance is an unwillingness to work. When I gave several of the National Merit types the first B's they ever got in English, they were outraged. One young man who tried to argue me down finally admitted that he just didn't want to work as hard on his papers as some of "those nerdy girls" who got A's.

Stevenson and Stigler discuss another effect of putting the focus on ability rather than effort: "An emphasis on innate ability makes Americans preoccupied with categorizing children as a basis for deciding who can benefit from particular kinds of education. Expectations for 'low ability' children are reduced, and they finish their education with inadequate skills and insufficient knowledge for finding jobs and adapting successfully to contemporary society."

The emphasis on innate ability over hard work takes its toll especially in math, say Stevenson and Stigler, who point out that "American children view learning mathematics as a process of rapid insight rather than a lengthy struggle. According to one researcher in mathematics education, American children appear to believe that if a mathematics problem is solvable, it can be solved in fewer than ten minutes. The unfortunate result is that American students are likely to give up before they reach genuine understanding."

Even the presumably most dedicated students look for fast, painless results. Hollis Williams, who taught physics at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, in Annandale, Virginia, the school with the highest number of National Merit Scholars in the country, says, "You have to put in the time in science. Kids want the answers quickly—as if a science problem were a sitcom or MTV. A group of my students was working on a problem for forty-five minutes and had gotten several insights. But they thought it was a waste of time because they hadn't gotten the answer yet."

WHAT ABOUT kids whose families are in the tight grip of all the problems poverty brings: Should we expect less from them? It is a difficult line for teachers to walk. On the one hand, we scrupulously guard against lowering our expectations, of being part of a self-fulfilling prophecy. On the other hand, we want to acknowledge the painfully difficult circumstances of these children and the impact those circumstances have on learning.

Last year, for example, in one of my "low-track" classes, kids filtered in from all over the country. A fifteen-year-old, who became one of my favorites, traveled alone by train from Chicago with her infant baby to live with a relative. When I recently checked on her whereabouts, no one knew if she is still in the area going to school. And it's not just low-income kids who have chaotic family lives, though it is disproportionately so. Other students in my class were being tossed between divorced parents living hundreds of miles apart or bounced around the Beltway to aunts and grandmothers in Prince George's and Fairfax counties.

The answer to how much we should expect from kids who carry problems like these on their shoulders is, of course, that we should expect a lot, but we need to give them extra help and to show them that there is a future that can be theirs. I've seen first-hand that kids most schools give up on can be reached—not just disciplined but turned on to learning.

My own school has created an experimental class that is proving that many "at-risk" kids really want to—and can—learn. The course is taught by Candis Ramelli and Chris Gutierrez, two dynamic English teachers with extensive experience in adjusting teaching to the various learning styles of students.

Most of the youngsters enrolled in the course are minority students, and nearly all those enrolled scored below the 35th percentile in reading. But these students tell me they have never worked harder, learned more, or enjoyed class as much. "It's such a relief to come to this class," says Alpheila Kerns. "Mrs. Gutierrez and Mrs. Ramelli make us do more work, but they show us how to understand it. The other teachers are just putting the grades in the book. In ninth grade, I was in a low-phase class. I felt so stupid I didn't even try. Now I'm doing SAT prep, I'm reading Greek plays, I'm thinking college, I don't feel I'm low anymore."

The success of this class is a sterling example of both halves of the learning equation coming together: good teaching *and* rigorous work standards.

Adults are sometimes surprised to hear kids say they welcome discipline and challenge. But not 1st Sgt. La Grant Smith, one of the two instructors of the Junior ROTC at my school. The program started with sixty-two students in September. Since then, kids have been coming out of the woodwork to join. "We now have 140 kids in the program. We had to add an afterschool class to accommodate them all," says Smith.

When Smith ran an ROTC program in the District of Columbia Street Academy, administrators were afraid to discipline the harder cases for fear they would drop out. "Just the opposite happened," says Smith. "When we made them stay after school for breaking rules, they gladly accepted."

"In regular school, when you cause trouble you get

High school in this country is a fault-free environment where, if you choose, you may completely mess up and still go on to further education.



pulled aside by an administrator and maybe get sent to detention after school. It's no big deal," says junior Wesley Johnson. "If you cause trouble in ROTC, it's serious business. You get called up in front of all the cadets. It's humiliating. Then they take your rank away—something you have worked months for—and give it to someone else right in front of you. You think twice before you risk that happening."

WE SHOULD listen carefully to that high school junior. He is taking us back to something basic to human nature, something that may lie at the heart of the student effort problem. It is the simple notion of consequences, the idea that much of human behavior is directed by the consequences—good or bad—that result from that behavior.

Poor grades have traditionally been the strongest in-school consequence of poor academic performance. I've already described the near-meltdown that has occurred in that arena. But there's another, even bigger, piece of the motivation puzzle: It's the lack of external consequences. Reformers who do not see the importance of making a clear connection between student effort and achievement and serious, real-life consequences may be doomed before the starting bell even rings.

When high school kids look at the world beyond the school walls, what do they see? Those who have gotten the idea that they can go on to further education see colleges accepting almost anyone who is medically alive and has parents who are willing to write a check. When students of mine seem to be having nervous breakdowns over SATs and college acceptances, I often try to settle them down by reminding them of the fact that they constitute the lowest number of seventeen- to eighteen-year-olds of any generation in the country since 1940. All but a few colleges, I tell them, are desperate to keep up enrollments and will most likely accept them and their parents' money with open palms. If the worst happens and they don't get in anywhere, they can go to a junior college for a year or two and then transfer. What I can't bring myself to tell them is the bottom line: That high school in this country is a fault-free environment where, if you choose, you may completely mess up and still go on to further education.

"Adolescents are like adults," writes Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers. "They do as much as they have to in order to get what they want. The young people who want to go to elite schools must meet high standards, and they work hard. But the rest of high school students know they can get into some college no matter how poorly they do."

Even the students who worry about doing well on SAT tests have little motivation to study hard in school. As Shanker points out, the big difference between our college entrance exams and those of other countries is that ours "pride themselves on being divorced from the curriculum." By testing "aptitude" rather than achievement, Shanker explains, our tests "do not call on students to demonstrate what they have learned in school. . . . Other nations' exams turn this around; they are based on the curriculum the students have studied, and they try to find out how much students have learned and how well they can use it. . . . There's no chance of getting by with a com-

(Continued on page 46)

THE COLUMBUS CONTROVERSY

*A historian walks through
the battlefield of ideas*

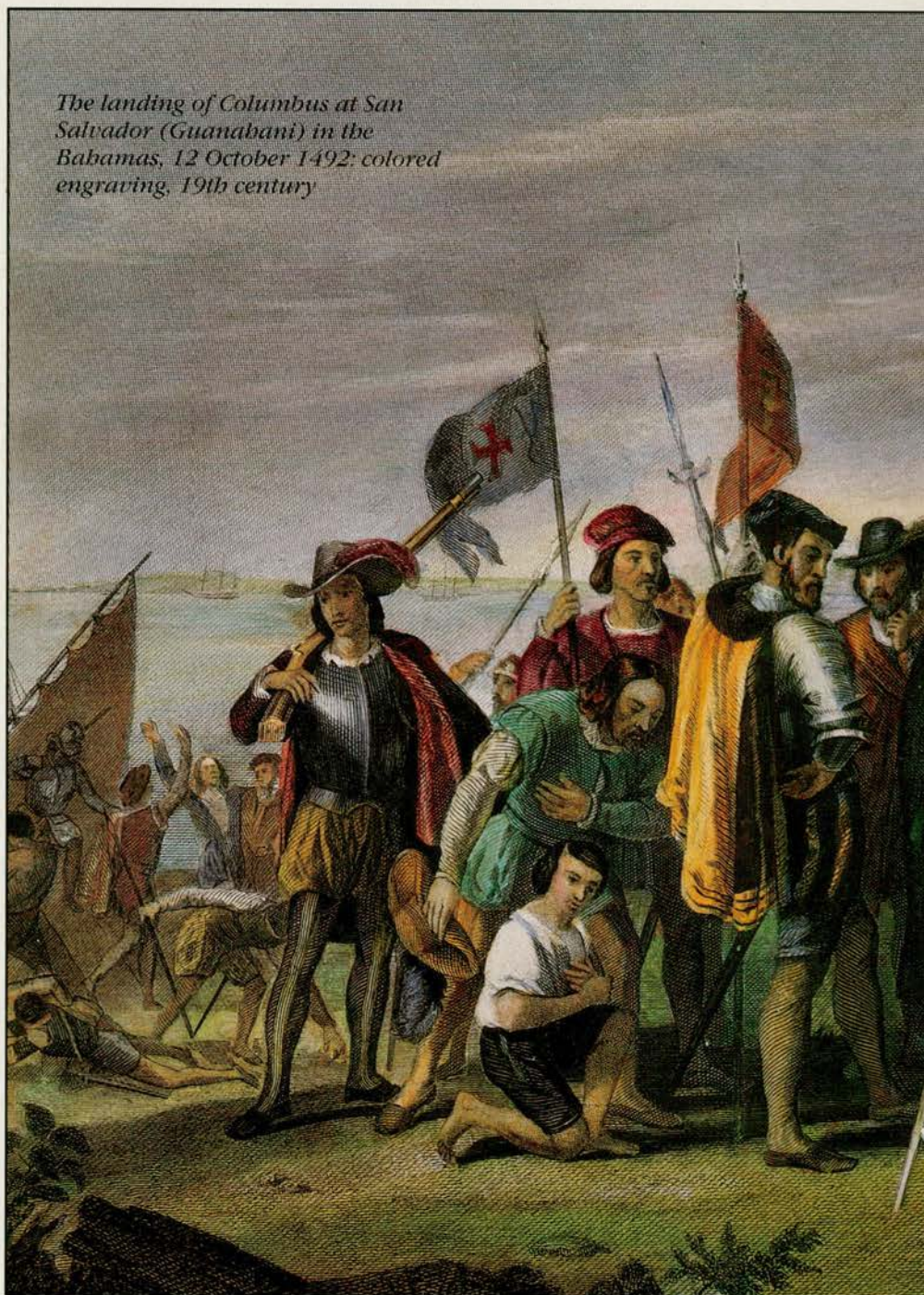
BY STEPHAN THERNSTROM

THE 500th anniversary of the first voyage of Christopher Columbus is about to touch shore. A century ago, the United States celebrated the exploits of Columbus proudly: Some 24 million people—which amounted to about 40 percent of the U.S. population at the time—attended a great international exposition in Chicago marking the event. There, at a meeting of the American Historical Association, the young historian Frederick Jackson Turner delivered his famous paper on “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” sounding an appropriate theme for the commemoration of the explorer who opened up the most significant frontier in world history: the entire Western Hemisphere.

The approach of this year’s 500th anniversary of 1492, by contrast, has touched off enormous controversy and endless political wrangling. The National Council of Churches has announced that 1992 should not be a time for celebration at all but rather for “repentance” for a great historical crime. Columbus, in the council’s view, was a monster akin to Hitler, having been responsible for an “invasion and colonization with legalized occupation, genocide, economic exploitation, and a deep level of institutional racism and moral decadence.” The history of America since

(Continued on page 28)

Stephan Thernstrom is Winthrop Professor of History at Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. An earlier version of this essay appeared in the October 1991 issue of The American School Board Journal.



The landing of Columbus at San Salvador (Guanabani) in the Bahamas, 12 October 1492; colored engraving, 19th century

QUESTIONS OF CONQUEST

*What Columbus wrought,
and what he did not*

BY MARIO VARGAS LLOSA

IN MADRID not long ago, a shadowy group calling itself the Association of Indian Cultures held a press conference to announce that its members (it was not clear who these men and women might be) were preparing to undertake, in Spain and also throughout Latin America, a number of acts of "sabotage." It is, of course, a sad fact of life that in a number of Latin American countries—in Spain as well—the planting of bombs and the destruction of property continue to be perceived by some as a means of achieving justice, or self-determination, or, as in my country, Peru, the realization of a revolutionary utopia. But the Association of Indian Cultures did not seem interested in seizing the future. Their battle was with the past.

What are to be sabotaged by this group are the numerous quinquennial ceremonies and festivities scheduled for 1992 to commemorate the epochal voyage nearly five hundred years ago of Columbus's three small caravels. The Association of Indian Cultures believes that the momentous events of 1492 should in no way be celebrated; and although I have yet to hear of other persons willing to make the point through subversion, I

Mario Vargas Llosa, the distinguished Peruvian novelist, has been nominated several times for the Nobel Prize. His latest novel is In Praise of the Stepmother (Farrar, Straus and Giroux). This essay is an abridged version of one that appeared in the December 1990 issue of Harper's Magazine. Copyright © 1990 by Harper's Magazine. All rights reserved. Reprinted from the December issue by special permission.



ALL SELECTIONS FROM THE GRANAGER COLLECTION

do know that the group will not lack for sympathizers.

The question most crucial to these individuals is the oldest one: Was the discovery and conquest of America by Europeans the greatest feat of the Christian West or one of history's monumental crimes? It is a question they ask rhetorically and perhaps will answer with violence. This is not to say that to discuss what could have happened as opposed to what did happen is a useless undertaking: Historians and thinkers have pondered the question since the seventeenth century, producing wonderful books and speculations. But to me the debate serves no practical purpose, and I intend to stay out of it. What would America be like in the 1990s if the dominant cultures were those of the Aztecs and Incas? The only answer, ultimately, is that there is no way to know.

I have two other questions, both having to do with the conquest, and I happen to think that an honest and thoughtful discussion of them is as timely and urgent as any others one could pose just now about Latin America. First: How was it possible that cultures as powerful and sophisticated as those of the ancient Mexicans and Peruvians—huge imperial cultures, as opposed to the scattered tribes of North America—so easily crumbled when encountered by infinitesimally small bands of Spanish adventurers? This question is itself centuries old, but not academic. In its answer may lie the basis for an understanding of the world the conquest engendered, a chronically “underdeveloped” world that has, for the most part, remained incapable of realizing its goals and visions.

The second question is this: Why have the postcolonial republics of the Americas—republics that might have been expected to have deeper and broader notions of liberty, equality, and fraternity—failed so miserably to improve the lives of their Indian citizens? Even as I write, not only the Amazonian rain forests but the small tribes who have managed for so long to survive there are being barbarously exterminated in the name of progress.

THE CONQUEST of the Tawantinsuyu—the name given to the Inca Empire in its totality—by a handful of Spaniards is a fact of history that even now, after having digested and ruminated over all the explanations, we find hard to unravel. The first wave of conquistadores, Francisco Pizarro and his companions, was fewer than 200, not counting the black slaves and the collaborating Indians. When the reinforcements started to arrive, this first wave had already dealt a mortal blow and taken over an empire that had ruled over at least twenty million people. This was not a primitive society made up of barbaric tribes, like the ones the Spaniards had found in the Caribbean or in Darién, but a civilization that had reached a high level of social, military, agricultural, and handicraft development that in many ways Spain itself had not reached.

The most remarkable aspects of this civilization, however, were not the paths that crossed the four *suyus*, or regions, of the vast territory, the temples and fortresses, the irrigation systems, or the complex administrative organization, but something about which all the testimonies of the chronicles agree. This civilization managed to eradicate hunger in that immense region. It was able to distribute all that was produced in such a way that all its subjects had enough to eat. Only a very small number



of empires throughout the whole world have succeeded in achieving this feat. Are the conquistadores' firearms, horses, and armor enough to explain the immediate collapse of this Inca civilization at the first clash with the Spaniards? It is true the gunpowder, the bullets, and the charging of beasts that were unknown to them paralyzed the Indians with a religious terror and provoked in them the feeling that they were fighting not against men but against gods who were invulnerable to the arrows and slings with which they fought. Even so, the numerical difference was such that the Quechua ocean would have had simply to shake in order to drown the invader.

What prevented this from happening? What is the profound explanation for that defeat from which the Inca population never recovered? The answer may perhaps lie hidden in the moving account that appears in the chronicles of what happened in the Cajamarca Square the day Pizarro captured the last ruler of the empire, Inca Atahualpa. We must, above all, read the accounts of those who were there, those who lived through the event or had direct testimony of it.

At the precise moment the Inca emperor is captured, before the battle begins, his armies give up the fight as if manacled by a magic force. The slaughter is indescribable, but only from one of the two sides. The Spaniards discharged their arquebuses, thrust their pikes and swords, and charged their horses against a bewildered mass, which, having witnessed the capture of their god and master, seemed unable to defend itself or even to run away. In the space of a few minutes, the army, which defeated Prince Huáscar, the emperor's half-brother, in a battle for rule, and which dominated all the northern provinces of the empire, disintegrated like ice in warm water.

THE VERTICAL and totalitarian structure of the Tawantinsuyu was without doubt more harmful to



Aztec Indians, with smallpox contracted from the Spaniards, ministered to by a medicine man: illustration from Father Bernardino de Sahagun's 16th century treatise, General History of the Things of New Spain.

its survival than all the conquistadores' firearms and iron weapons. As soon as the Inca, that figure who was the vortex toward which all the wills converged searching for inspiration and vitality, the axis around which the entire society was organized and upon which depended the life and death of every person, from the richest to the poorest, was captured, no one knew how to act. And so they did the only thing they could do with heroism, we must admit, but without breaking the 1,001 taboos and precepts that regulated their existence. They let themselves get killed. And that was the fate of dozens and perhaps hundreds of Indians stultified by the confusion and the loss of leadership they suffered when the Inca emperor, the life force of their universe, was captured right before their eyes. Those Indians who let themselves be knifed or blown up into pieces that somber afternoon in Cajamarca Square lacked the ability to make their own decisions either with the sanction of authority or indeed against it and were incapable of taking individual initiative, of acting with a certain degree of independence according to the changing circumstances.

Those 180 Spaniards who had placed the Indians in ambush and were now slaughtering them did possess this ability. It was this difference, more than the numerical one or the weapons, that created an immense inequality between those civilizations. The individual had no importance and virtually no existence in that pyramidal and theocratic society whose achievements had always been collective and anonymous—carrying the gigantic stones of the Machu Picchu citadel or of the Ollantay fortress up the steepest of peaks, directing water to all the slopes of the cordillera hills by building terraces that even today enable irrigation to take place in the most desolate places, and making paths to unite regions separated by infernal geographies.

A state religion that took away the individual's free will and crowned the authority's decision with the aura

of a divine mandate turned the Tawantinsuyu into a beehive—laborious, efficient, stoic. But its immense power was, in fact, very fragile. It rested completely on the sovereign god's shoulders, the man whom the Indian had to serve and to whom he owed a total and selfless obedience. It was religion rather than force that preserved the people's metaphysical docility toward the Inca. It was an essentially political religion, which on the one hand turned the Indians into diligent servants and on the other was capable of receiving into its bosom as minor gods all the deities of the peoples that had been conquered, whose idols were moved to Cuzco and enthroned by the Inca himself. The Inca religion was less cruel than the Aztec one, for it performed human sacrifices with a certain degree of moderation, if this can be said, making use only of the necessary cruelty to ensure hypnosis and fear of the subjects toward the divine power incarnated in the temporary power of the Inca.

We cannot call into question the organizing genius of the Inca. The speed with which the empire, in the short period of a century, grew from its nucleus in Cuzco high in the Andes to become a civilization that embraced three quarters of South America is incredible. And this was the result not only of the Quechua's military efficiency but also of the Inca's ability to persuade the neighboring peoples and cultures to join the Tawantinsuyu. Once these other peoples and cultures became part of the empire, the bureaucratic mechanism was immediately set in motion, enrolling the new servants in that system that dissolves individual life into a series of tasks and gregarious duties carefully programmed and supervised by the gigantic network of administrators whom the Inca sent to the farthest borders. Either to prevent or to extinguish rebelliousness, there was a system called *mitimaes*, by which villages and people were removed en masse to far-away places where, feeling misplaced and lost, these exiles naturally assumed an attitude of passivity and absolute respect, which of course represented the Inca system's ideal citizen.

Such a civilization was capable of fighting against the natural elements and defeating them. It was capable of consuming rationally what it produced, heaping together reserves for future times of poverty or disaster. And it was also able to evolve slowly and with care in the field of knowledge, inventing only that which could support it and deterring all that which in some way or another could undermine its foundation—as, for example, writing or any other form of expression likely to develop individual pride or a rebellious imagination.

It was not capable, however, of facing the unexpected, that absolute novelty presented by the balance of armored men on horseback who assaulted the Incas with weapons transgressing all the war-and-peace patterns known to them. When, after the initial confusion, attempts to resist started breaking out here and there, it was too late. The complicated machinery regulating the empire had entered a process of decomposition. Leaderless with the murder of Inca Huayana Capac's two sons, Huáscar and Atahualpa, the Inca system seems to fall into a monumental state of confusion and cosmic deviation, similar to the chaos that, according to the Cuzcan sages, the Amautas, had prevailed in the world before the

(Continued on page 47)

THE COLUMBUS CONTROVERSY

(Continued from page 24)

1492, the council declares flatly, is simply "criminal." Inspired by such beliefs, some groups are planning to blockade harbors when replicas of Columbus's three ships are due to arrive and have promised to "sabotage" the celebration.

But the other side stirs passionate feelings as well. How many Americans will join the National Council of Churches in wringing their hands at the alleged crimes of their remote ancestors? How many Americans agree that American history has been something like a prolonged Holocaust? Does America endorse a critique that implies that 99 percent of the American people should give the land back to the 1 percent who descend from its initial inhabitants and hasten back to the parts of Europe, Africa, or Asia from which their forebears came long ago? Are these the lessons we want taught in America's schools?

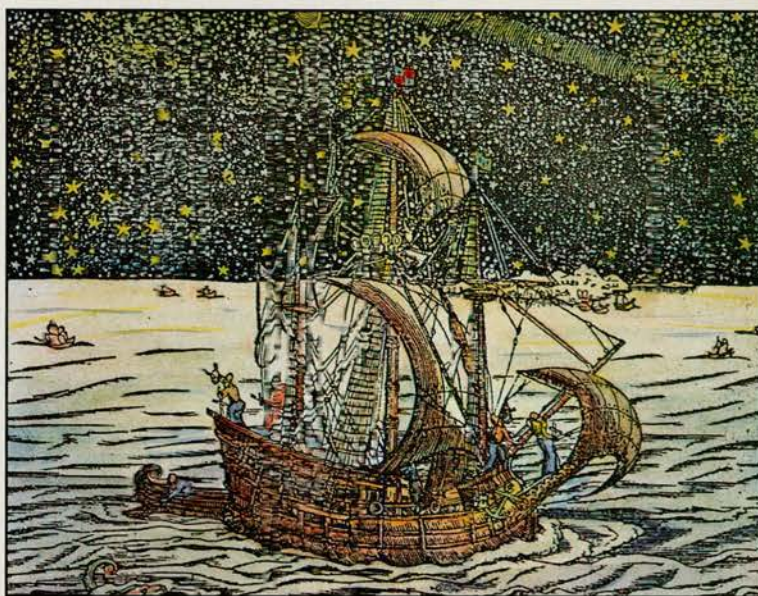
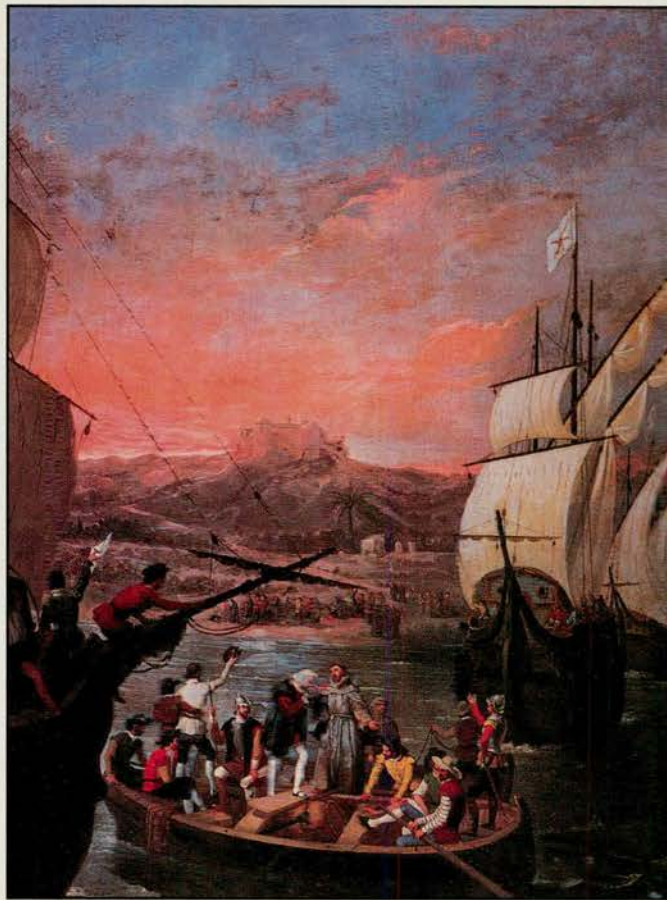
It seems highly unlikely the several million Americans of Italian descent will be convinced by the current fashionable claim that their greatest national hero was actually a monster. Moreover, Columbus sailed in the service of Spain, and the immediate result of his voyage was to establish a vast Spanish and Roman Catholic empire in the Western Hemisphere a century before the first British colonies were formed. How many of the approximately 20 million Hispanics in the U.S. are happy to see Spain presented as the perpetrator of a monstrous historical crime? How many of the more than 60 million American Catholics will buy the argument that the Spanish introduction of Roman Catholicism into the Western Hemisphere was an unmitigated disaster?

Public school educators from the district boardroom to the classroom are going to have to steer their way through this multicultural mine field. A brief review of what historians currently think about some of the issues in contention might be helpful.

A bittersweet record

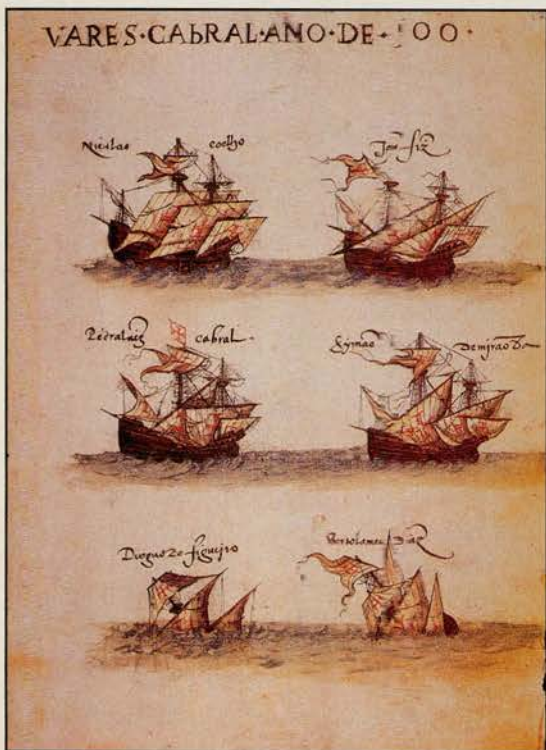
The story of the European discovery, invasion, and conquest of the Western Hemisphere—a process that began with Columbus in 1492—certainly is not all sweetness and light. It is hard to think of a major historical development that is. Edward Gibbon, the great historian of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, might have been too cynical when he said history is largely the record of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind. But crimes and follies are in the history of every people, including those who did not leave behind written records allowing historians to demonstrate their sins in detail. The Columbus story, like every other momentous historical event, calls not for easy moralizing and finger pointing but for an appreciation of a complex clash of cultures that was crucial to the emergence of the modern world we inhabit.

A substantial amount of new scholarship about the transplantation of European civilization in the Western Hemisphere has accumulated since the textbooks used in many of today's classrooms were written. Since few teachers have the time to read deeply into the matter, you should be warned that some recent popular books that purport to summarize the current state of knowledge are propaganda, not history.



Above: Sailors navigating by the stars at night: woodcut, 1575. At right: Six of the thirteen Portuguese ships in Pedro Alvares Cabral's expedition to India in 1500, which resulted in the discoveries of Brazil and Madagascar: manuscript page from a mid-16th century Portuguese record book

At left: *The departure of Christopher Columbus from Pálos, Spain, on 3 August 1492; the monastery of La Rábida is visible in the background; oil on canvas by Cabral Bejano. Below: World map of Juan Vespucci, 1526*



A prime example is Kirkpatrick Sale's *The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy*, which tells the tale with about as much balance and judiciousness as we might expect in a history of the U.S. written in the Soviet Union in the darkest days of Stalin's rule, with the saintly Indians of the New World playing the role of the saintly, long-suffering proletariat of Communist myth-makers, and Columbus, Cortés, and other conquistadores as the avaricious capitalist oppressors spoiling what Sale seems to think was literally paradise before the Europeans took over. His book has the same kinship with real history as the movie *Dances with Wolves* does: very distant indeed.

Although the subject is too vast to cover in an essay, some elements of a more balanced, less tendentious perspective on the problem might emerge from brief consideration of six questions:

1. Who was first?

The question of whether explorers from other continents reached the shores of the New World before Columbus is a hardy perennial, with new candidates still being discovered or invented. A far-from-exhaustive list of the supposed discoverers would include the Phoenicians in 600 B.C., the Jews of Palestine before the birth of Christ, the Romans in A.D. 64, Hwei-shin of China in 499, St. Brendan of Ireland in the sixth century, the Vikings in the 11th century, a Welsh prince in 1170, the Zeno brothers of Venice in 1400, and a Polish sailor named Jan of Kolno in 1476. To this day, Portuguese schoolchildren are taught that Portuguese sailors beat Columbus to the prize by at least a decade. Some current advocates of "Afrocentric" history insist that black Africans were first at this, as well as at practically everything else, having crossed the ocean blue to America in 1500 B.C.

Most of these claims are fanciful, resting upon the merest scrap of evidence that a vessel had returned from a long voyage with tales of sighting land far away to the west, or upon the apparent similarity between clay pots or other artifacts found in the Western Hemisphere and some other part of the world. The "evidence" for the existence of flying saucers today is far stronger than that provided by the proponents of such theories. On the other hand, there is little doubt that the Norse, who had colonies in Greenland, reached Newfoundland, Labrador, and Baffin Island and established settlements in the 11th century. British fishermen were taking catches off the coast of Newfoundland in the 1480s, and it is highly plausible that the adventurous Portuguese seafarers touched land in the Western Hemisphere before Columbus.

Although claims that "so-and-so got there first" arouse public interest, they are of little concern to the historian. Even if it could be proven beyond reasonable doubt that Africans, or Phoenicians, or Jews crossed the Atlantic long before the birth of Christ, the historian will ask the bottom-line question: What *difference* did it make? The voyage of Columbus did make a difference, a profound difference. Unlike the journeys of his predecessors, real and imagined, his voyage set in motion a process of enormous historical change, both in the world he

came from and in the world he came to.

2. Discovery or invasion?

The old idea that Columbus “discovered” a “New World” has been challenged sharply in recent years. Roald Amundsen may truly be said to have discovered the South Pole in 1911. He and the other Norwegians in his party were quite simply the first human beings ever to set foot there. The New World that Columbus found, however, obviously was not new to the many millions of people who already lived there—the people whom Columbus, out of the delusion that he had landed on the fringe of Asia, termed “Indians.” Columbus did not really discover a new world but instead forged a new connection between two worlds that were already old. What seemed a discovery from the European vantage point was, in Indian eyes, the beginnings of an invasion.

Drawing the distinction between invasion and discovery is a semantic issue, but not “merely” a semantic one. Columbus, the conquistadores who followed in his footsteps to build a great Spanish empire in the Western Hemisphere, and the English, French, and other Europeans who later carved out territory there for settlements obviously were aware that America was already peopled. They spoke in terms of discovery because they were confident they represented a “higher” Christian civilization than that of the native heathen peoples. They viewed the natives as lost souls to be won for Christ; conveniently, these potential converts also could provide needed labor. Students need to understand why Europeans were able to see their overseas ventures in those terms, though there should be no denying that the newcomers were indeed invaders who conquered and ruled over the weaker peoples who stood in their way.

But to admit that Columbus was the initiator of a process of massive invasion and conquest should not lead us to throw up our hands in horror along with the National Council of Churches. The moral outrage many Americans felt over Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait shouldn’t be generalized into a blanket condemnation of all forcible changes of regime throughout history. Invasions and conquests, like revolutions and civil wars, are violent upheavals that bring about a change of government. Historians do not find it fruitful to spend their time deploring the immorality of the Norman Conquest of Britain in 1066, the expansion of the Islamic empire, or the French Revolution.

Painful though it might be to accept, much of history is the story of what the strong have done to the weak—and of shifts in the bases of power that undermine the position of the once-strong and lead to their decline and fall. It would be nice if that were not so, but it has been so thus far in human history.

Contrary to romantics like Sale, who contrast the warlike Europeans of 1492 with the supposedly pacific natives, the history of the societies of the Western Hemisphere before Columbus fits this mold, too. Conquest and domination were not corruptions that Europeans introduced into a New World Eden. The great empires of the Aztecs in Mexico, the Incas in Peru, and those of the Mayas much earlier were not formed by a process of peaceful persuasion but by superior force. And their rule



was as cruel and exploitative as anything Europeans were guilty of in the New World; in some ways more cruel. As the great Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa has said, the Incas built a “pyramidal and theocratic society” of “totalitarian structure” in which “the individual had no importance and virtually no existence.” Inca society, he remarks, was a gigantic “bee-hive.” Much the same could be said of the Aztecs.

It is startling and extremely revealing that Sale, in his more than four hundred pages on Columbus and the Columbian legacy, offers not a word on the Incas or Aztecs, who do not square at all with his fetching image of “noble savages.” That is like publishing a portrait of contemporary America focused on life in Montana and Arkansas alone. Even the Taino Indians Columbus first encountered in the Caribbean islands, whom Sale portrayed as the sweetest and gentlest of people, were actually invaders from the mainland who had overcome and shoved aside an earlier Indian group who had settled there first, the Guanahacabibes. Sale says discreetly that the Tainos “displaced” the Guanahacabibes, without indicating how what he antiseptically calls displacement differs from the invasion and conquest that supposedly only vile Europeans engaged in. To see the clash between the Indians and the invading Europeans in stark good and evil terms—the peaceful innocents versus the murderous and avaricious Spaniards—is intolerably simple-minded.



Bartolomé de Las Casas protesting the execution of an Indian chieftain of Cuba: colored engraving from a 16th century edition of Las Casas' Brief Relation

3. How many natives were there?

Scholarship by demographic historians has made plain that the New World was much more densely populated than had previously been thought. Some investigators now put the total population of the Western Hemisphere in 1492 as high as 100 million, a third larger than the population of Europe at the time. Their methods of estimation rest upon a good many assumptions that are open to question, and the whole problem is the subject of continuing controversy. But even the most conservative figures that are taken seriously by participants in the current debate are much higher than had been thought plausible a generation ago.

These new population estimates reveal that the coming of the Europeans brought about one of the greatest demographic disasters in world history, at least comparable to and very probably much worse than the Black Death that cut through the population of Europe like a giant scythe in the latter half of the 14th century. Within a century of the conquest, the population of the New World had dropped by at least one-third and possibly by as much as 90 percent, depending on which estimates of preconquest population you accept.

The explanation is not that the Spanish were mass murderers like the Nazis. Many Indians died in battle, of course, and many from being mercilessly overworked by the invaders. But the vast majority died because they lacked inherited biological immunities to the diseases that Europeans brought with them. Not only smallpox

and typhoid fever but mumps, measles, and whooping cough—diseases that are mild childhood afflictions to people long accustomed to them—raged through the Indian villages with deadly consequences for decades. It is absurd to charge the Spaniards with “genocide” for the carnage wrought by the invisible microbes they unknowingly brought with them. They can hardly be blamed for not knowing what medical science would discover about disease centuries later. But the European invasion did accidentally bring about a public health calamity that had an immensely demoralizing impact on the native people.

The parts of North America that eventually became the United States were also apparently more heavily populated than had previously been thought, though far less so than the Aztec and Inca empires. The same process of depopulation took place there for the same reasons: raging epidemics striking a “virgin population” that had never been exposed to them before. The great difference between the Spanish and British experience with native peoples is that the much larger and more sedentary populations the Spanish encountered were large enough, even after the die-off from the epidemics, to provide a usable labor force. The number of surviving North American Indians, by contrast, was too small to satisfy the demand for labor, and the Europeans found it necessary to import a labor force made up of immigrants who could pay their way to America, indentured servants whose passage was paid by their employers, and African slaves.

4. How did so few conquer so many?

The higher population estimates make even more puzzling what always was something of a mystery: How could a handful of Spaniards conquer and rule societies whose populations numbered in the millions? Hernando Cortés had only four hundred warriors when he defeated Montezuma and took over the Aztec empire, which embraced as many as 25 million people—much more than the population of Spain at the time. Even more amazingly, Francisco Pizarro led a party of but 180 Spaniards to victory over an Inca empire that extended over three-quarters of South America and included some 20 million people.

To be sure, the Spaniards had an edge in military technology—muskets, armor, and horses. But muskets were single-shot weapons that took time to reload, not machine guns. They were not sufficiently better than bows and arrows and spears to cancel the overwhelming native advantage in manpower.

Two key factors tipped the balance in favor of the invaders. The first was the demoralizing effect of the rapid spread of European disease, all the more unsettling to the natives because the invaders obviously were not similarly afflicted. Second, the huge populations of the native empires included many alienated, conquered peoples who viewed the newcomers not as threatening oppressors but as liberators who would free them from the chains of Aztec or Inca rule. Thus several thousand Indians joined Cortés and his conquistadores in their assault upon Montezuma's forces defending Mexico City, and Pizarro had similar native help. That the Spaniards were liberators was an unfortunate illusion, of course. But it is important to understand that political domina-

tion and repression were not European imports: they had grown up on native soil long before the European presence.

5. Is Columbus to be blamed for slavery?

One of the long-term effects of the European penetration of the New World was the capture of millions of black Africans, who were enslaved and shipped across the Atlantic to work the plantations that produced tobacco, cotton, sugar, coffee, and other products for European markets. That can justly be called a great historical crime.

The blame for slavery, however, rests not with Columbus, Spain, or even Europe alone. Slavery existed in most of the world in ancient and medieval times. It was common in Africa long before the first European voyages of exploration reached the African coast. Not only slavery but a long-distance slave trade were indigenous to Africa. Arab traders were marching captive blacks north across the Sahara for sale in the Islamic world as early as the eighth century.

Indeed, the opening of the Western Hemisphere to European settlement and the development of an international market for the products of New World agriculture greatly increased the demand for slave labor and set in motion an international trade that shipped some 12 million Africans west across the Atlantic before the trade was abolished in the 19th century. But we should note that the slave traders shipped *eastward* even larger numbers of Africans—14 million—chiefly to Muslim countries. In addition, the abolition of the slave trade and then of the institution of slavery itself was the work of the Christian West, which used its superior power to force abolition in the Islamic world. Slavery was not a Western invention; the idea that slavery was immoral and must be abolished *was* a Western invention.

Furthermore, the trade in slaves depended upon the cooperation of African chieftains, who sent parties of warriors into the interior to capture fellow Africans and sold them to Europeans in the port cities, an important point that regrettably is neglected in popular works like Alex Haley's *Roots*. If we attempt to apportion historical blame for a viciously repressive and dehumanizing labor system, we may point to many guilty parties besides Columbus.

6. Was Columbus guilty of ecocide?

The newest addition to the indictment against Columbus is that he committed "ecocide." The native peoples of the Western Hemisphere, some current environmentalists claim, revered nature and lived in harmony with it. The European invaders instead raped and pillaged the land with reckless abandon.

Since environmentalists have been a healthy voice in contemporary public policy debates, it is regrettable to find some of them taking such a simplistic position on complex historical problems. It is generally true that the native peoples who lived at the most primitive technological level did less to alter the physical environment, for better or worse, than those who developed a more complex economy. But even small, semi-nomadic tribes practiced slash-and-burn agriculture, felling trees by stripping their bark along the base, letting them die and

fall, and then setting them on fire. They violated the precept "Save the trees" and created some ugly scenes on the landscape, including forest fires burning out of control.

The much more highly developed civilizations of the Mayas, Incas, and Aztecs built huge cities and a vast network of roads and canals, leaving marks on the landscape still visible many centuries later. To be sure, they had no steam engines, automobiles, or electrical power plants to pollute the atmosphere. Indeed, they had no inanimate sources of power at all, nor did they have any domestic animals larger than the dog, or even wheeled carts to carry heavy objects more efficiently. Thus, they depended on backbreaking human labor to perform all necessary tasks. One wonders if those who argue that Aztec civilization was ecologically preferable to high-tech modern American civilization would really be willing to live in the former rather than the latter if given the choice.

THE EUROPEAN invasion five centuries ago exposed a large portion of the globe to the influence of a questing and dynamic civilization that did much to make the modern world what it is. Since Columbus, America in general and the United States in particular have been a giant safety valve for the rest of the world, a place where people living in cramped and constricted circumstances can make a new start and search for economic opportunity and political and religious freedom. And a place in which traditional parochial conceptions of identity based upon blood ties have been replaced by the broader identity of belonging to an inclusive melting pot society of global dimensions.

That the indigenous people of the Western Hemisphere suffered greatly from the opening of this safety valve cannot be forgotten. It was indeed a tragedy in many ways. Even for many of these "victims," though, there were also enormous long-term benefits. As Vargas Llosa has pointed out, in his discussion of the Indian cultures of Latin America, the European invasion broke open "antlike" or "beehive" societies in which "the individual could not morally question the social organism of which he was a part." It forcibly incorporated native peoples into "the first culture to interrogate and question itself, the first to break up the masses into individual beings who with time gradually gained the right to think and act for themselves." The process of moral questioning of European conduct toward the natives did not begin with the hysterical utterances of the National Council of Churches in our time. As early as 1550 Bartolomé de las Casas published his excoriating *Brief History of the Destruction of the Indies*, initiating a critical tradition that eventually brought about major improvements in the lot of indigenous peoples.

The arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Western Hemisphere was a pivotal event in the making of the modern world. It did not usher in utopia, but neither did it destroy a paradise. The process it set in motion, for all of its ambiguities, was a step forward for mankind. □

The reception of Christopher Columbus by Ferdinand and Isabella at Barcelona in April 1493: oil on canvas by Eugène-François-Marie-Joseph Devéria



FIRST ENCOUNTERS

Books to encourage the beginning reader

BY MICHELE LANDSBERG

I know nothing of myself till I was five or six. I do not know how I learnt to read. I only remember my first books and their effects upon me; it is from my earliest reading that I date the unbroken consciousness of my own existence.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Confessions, 1781

AT THE beginning of the summer holidays when our city street drowsed under its overhanging maple trees, I would sit on the tiny concrete porch of the duplex where we lived with a sense of luxurious pleasure that would not have been out of place in a Venetian palazzo. In summer, we were allowed to take six books at once, not the usual three, from the local children's library. And so, beside me on the porch, was a treasure heap that was sure not to run out too soon. I would open the first page of the first book, smooth down the page (those tough green library bindings always made the covers want to snap shut), and, with a keen sense of anticipatory magic, dive down beneath the summer surface of my world into somewhere else.

Look at a child reading: sprawled immobile, all that restless energy dissipated somehow or gone up into the mind where it is unseen, holding a collection of paper, glue, and print in front of her eyes. She is there but not there; she inhabits another world that has mysteriously been created by the words on the page and now lives inside her head, and she is moving invisibly through palaces or shanties that are more real to her at this moment than the living room rug where she is lying or the dinner waiting to be served. Call to her, and you can watch her self come back slowly, from far away, into her eyes.

Children's reading should mesmerize, transport; reading ought to be a free-flowing stream of pleasure and con-

This article is adapted from Reading for the Love of It, a critical guide to children's literature, by Michele Landsberg (Prentice Hall Press: New York). Copyright © 1986, 1987 by Psammead Associates Ltd.



ILLUSTRATED BY BOBBI TULL

solution that runs beneath their daily lives like an underground spring. But how to begin? How can we ensure that the mechanical process of reading becomes such second nature to our children that it turns transparent like a window? We should consult our own experiences for a start. Try to remember how and why you learned to read; ask friends who are ardent readers; ask, especially, the ones who never pick up a book.

The experience of my daughter Jenny—her surprising choice of *The Castle of Yew* for her very first book—ought to stand as an epigraph for this chapter. For one thing, any category called “beginners’ books” can be taken only as a very arbitrary selection. There really is no predicting what will be the right first book for any given child. He may, in the course of a single day, listen enraptured while *The Hobbit* is read aloud, dip into a classroom encyclopedia, browse through a Superman comic behind the couch, and be ready for a favorite fairy tale at bedtime.

How, then, can you choose the beginner books that will most stimulate the child to want to read for herself? Look for themes that spring from the common emotional experiences of the beginning reader’s age group, roughly four through eight years old. The child is growing more independent. She separates from mother to go to school and enjoys the experience (after the first dreadful pangs of cutting loose) and yet she greets with a rush of relief that moment of reunion at the end of the day. At school, the child meets for the first time an impartial and sometimes incomprehensible authority from above. Questions of justice and fairness, therefore, loom large. Friendship, and how to achieve it, is an anxious priority. And since many children will not find a best friend in the first year or two of school, loneliness is an important theme, too. Helplessness (think of those schoolyard bullies) and its delicious opposite, competence, are crucial matters for the beginning reader.

The passionate dependencies of the preschool years are over, but think how close a first-grade child is to losing control over newly conquered functions: crying, for-



getting how to tie shoe laces, or wetting one's pants are major humiliations. Humor, therefore (from the raucous guffaw to pointed wordplay), is a welcome tool to keep the emotional temperature down and enable a child to feel in control. Getting a joke is a splendid way to assert one's knowingness, one's worthiness to belong to the group.

Luckily, this age group is blessed with an abundance of picture books of such splendor of color and design that the only difficulty is to choose wisely. Illustrations provide both a stimulus and a prop for a reader still struggling to decode printed words. In many less obvious ways, as I hope to show in more detailed descriptions of some particularly apt choices, good picture books encourage reading skills and reinforce rewards that may turn a beginning reader into an eager one.

The spate of I-Can-Read books published in the last decade has greatly enriched the available selection, but you would still have to search hard for better beginner books than the now-classic *Little Bear* series by Else Holmelund Minarik, with illustrations by Maurice Sendak. They are just the right grown-up book shape and size, with chapters, yet enlivened and made more accessible by pictures on every page. Sendak's early style of rounded, expressive crosshatching achieves the perfect balance: surely, no ursine family ever had more bearlike claws or convincingly long snouts. But how human are their tender looks of amused affection, glances that weave the strands of the story from page to page, and knit the family members together in a web of tolerant attachment.

The subject matter is really the way in which Mother Bear tacitly supports the pretend play of Little Bear and his friends. In *Birthday Soup*, the story with the strongest element of suspense, Little Bear fears that his mother has forgotten his birthday. Resourcefully, and not forgetting the duties of hospitality, he makes a vegetable soup to serve to his friends who arrive to help him celebrate. When mother gets home just at the crucial moment, bringing a beautiful cake, Little Bear is no less grateful for the surprise, even though he has coped remarkably well on his own as host and chef. And the story ends with a sentence of resonating maternal reassurance ("I never did forget your birthday and I never will") that is matched in picture books only by the emotional roundedness of Maurice Sendak's last line in the famous *Where the Wild Things Are*: Max journeys back from the land of wild things, after all his adventures, to find that "supper was still hot."

NOT ALL beginner books are aesthetic masterpieces. When my husband brought home to our three preschoolers a book called *Are You My Mother?* by P.D. Eastman, I dismissed it. It looked cartoonish, starring a gawky bird and a gaggle of bulldozers and steamshovels. The story, I thought, seemed trite. How wrong I was!

Torn between terror at the little bird's separation from his mother and superior laughter at his awkward mistakes in interpreting the world, the children sat riveted. They loved the building tension of the search, the repeated question ("Are you my mother?") and the overwhelming relief of the mother-and-child reunion at the end.

Are You My Mother? is a perfect example of a book

that may lack aesthetic appeal to the educated adult eye, and yet has an emotional validity that is immediately irresistible to the child. H.A. Rey's *Curious George* books, the often repetitious adventures of a too-lively monkey, seem to get the same double response: ho-hum from adults, spontaneous loyalty from children.

A child of prereading age will usually sit still for almost any story that an adult will take time to read aloud; the closeness of sitting on a lap will make up for almost any lack of depth or interest in the book. But an adult who is sensitive to a child's responses will quickly learn to tell when the child has been well and truly engaged by a story and when he is simply listening politely. The story that grips is almost certainly one that will tempt the listener to try to read for himself.

The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek by Jenny Wagner, with its golden-hazed, mysterious drawings of dark night, snares the interest at first with its gentle spookiness, its innocent version of the horror movie's opening gambit: "Late one night, for no particular reason, something stirred in the black mud at the bottom of Berkeley's Creek." But with the Bunyip's very first waking words—"What am I?"—the reader is seized by the intrinsic interest of the Bunyip's identity crisis. One great emotional task of the school-age child is to determine "what am I . . . aside from my parents' child?" No wonder that the Bunyip's plight (unhandsome, unrecognized, unloved) arouses such a sympathetic rush of fellow feeling. With its flat-footed posture and short arms, the Bunyip has the endearingly defenseless look of a kindergarten child on the first day of school. In the face of an unkind world, he maintains a lugubrious optimism. (If only for its correct use of the adverb *hopefully*, this book justifies its purchase price.) The message is one of acceptance, of self-realization through love—a measure of the large themes that can be tackled unpretentiously and well in a picture book of artistic strength.

Robust, extroverted humor is beloved of preschoolers, and one of the best early readers in the *Cat in the Hat* series from Random House is another P.D. Eastman book, *Go, Dog, Go*. Though there's no plot, only a succession of ridiculous episodes (a greeting on a mountaintop, dogs driving cars, a dog party in a tree), the terse captions and energetic pictures sweep you along. It's impossible not to laugh out loud, in fact, at these wiry red and yellow dogs with their expressions of crazed eagerness and wild joy—you can practically hear their yelps of enthusiasm.

At the purely mechanical level of reading, the book is a valuable tool. What nonreading child could fail to recognize the word *go* and *dog* after just one or two read-alouds of this madcap endeavor, with its rhythmic repetitions and racy pictures? Like all good illustrations, whether they are as painterly as the *Little Bear* pictures or as Disneyesque as the ones in *Are You My Mother?* these show more than the words alone indicate. One double-spread picture in *Go, Dog, Go* brings the break-neck action to a sudden halt. All the dogs are asleep in one huge bed, companionably snuggled together. Children love this enormous bed and never fail to notice that one dog is lying stark awake, eyes wide open in the dark. Why? No reason given. The unexplained detail gives the young reader something to ponder, to talk about, in the minds of pell-mell activity.

THE CHILD beginning to read is just about to embark on the long voyage to self-reliance. It's not surprising that some of the most loved and enduring books for this age group deal with the struggle between autonomy and the rules of group life. As always, and just as we expect in adult literature, the themes are not baldly stated. You can, of course, if you wish to encourage your child in crude and shallow thinking, buy mass-produced kitsch like the Mr. Man series, sold nearly everywhere, with its simple-minded prescriptions for "proper" behavior. These books are worse than useless since they teach the child a sort of insincere lip service to convention without respect for the child's inner drive toward growth and mastery over impulse.

To illustrate the difference between the commercial moralistic books and one that looks at a central dilemma of child life through the child's eyes, consider *The Story about Ping*, by Marjorie Flack, which has been in print continuously for more than fifty years. It was, as I've said, the first book I ever read for myself. When I picked it up again, exactly forty years later, I recognized every line in every picture so well that I could actually spot some sloppy changes and color distortions in a recent Puffin edition (avoid that one and buy the accurate hardback or the earlier Viking paperback, if you can find it).

Ping is a handsome young duck who lives, along with a flock of aunts and cousins, in a "wise-eyed" boat on the Yangtze River. Every night, as the ducks walk back up the gangplank after a day of diving and feeding on the water, their keeper lightly slaps the hindmost duck with a long switch. It's an offhand, almost benign ritual, but one so resented by Ping that he runs away. Instead of returning to the boat one evening, he hides on an island of reeds. Few readers will ever forget the wistful back view of Ping as he watches the wise-eyed boat sail into the distance. The duck is so small and stretches so yearningly for one

last look against that serenely wide river vista. Kurt Wiese's softly grayed blues and yellows, and the sinuous black outline with which he highlights his simple shapes, breathe emotional life into the scene.

Ping does survive alone on the river, but not without hunger and difficulty. One of the most memorable pictures in the book is of Ping's startled encounter with a flock of cormorants: We see him back-paddle furiously in astonishment at the sight of these frightening, hook-beaked birds, with iron rings around their necks to prevent them from eating their catch. I recall my own uneasy mix of fear and compassion when I first saw those menacing, enslaved cormorants diving for their master.

Maybe I loved *The Story about Ping* because it matched my own growing complexity of perception. Family life, I was just beginning to realize, was warm, secure, the only imaginable way to exist in the threatening wide river of life. But along with the safety, one had to endure its small stings and balks. Because the child reader's sense of injustice has been deeply acknowledged through artistic representation, the moment of reconciliation, the acceptance of order at the book's finale, rings true.

The attractiveness of order is part of the appeal of the classic favorite, *Madeline*, and the subsequent Madeline books by Ludwig Bemelmans. Those twelve little girls live in two such straight lines in the cloistered security of Miss Clavel's school in Paris. On their walks around familiar Paris landmarks, we see them "smile at the good and frown at the bad." Perhaps it is this grave decorum that enables them to take part in the life of such an adult city, sparkling with the sophisticated gaiety of Bemelman's drawings.

Of course, infant insurgency is given its due: Madeline is not only the smallest and bravest of the girls, she is also the cheekiest. In *Madeline and the Bad Hat*, Miss Clavel is taken in by the company manners of the naughty boy next door—Pepito, the son of the Spanish ambassador. Maybe there's just a hint of social snobbery, too, in Miss Clavel's doting admiration of the elegant boy. But Madeline isn't fooled for a minute. She is severe. She knows what Pepito is doing with that tool kit Miss Clavel gave him: He's building a guillotine for chickens.

Several levels of awareness are working here. The reader knows that Pepito's badness is as skin deep as his company manners for adults. We know it by the cherubic grin under his preposterously villainous black hat, and we know it by the sheer comic gusto of the verse: He ate those chickens "... roasted, grilled, and frito, / O what a horror was Pepito!" Not to overburden a delicately witty vehicle with too heavy a freight of meaning, part of this story's charm is the ingenious vigor with which the children are working out their own moral order, right under the noses of the adults.

WHOSE MOUSE Are You? by Robert Kraus, with pictures by Jose Aruego, is one of my favorite books about sibling rage, precisely because it takes a sidelong approach to its subject without in the least pulling its punches. A vividly colored, sparsely drawn book, with cartoonlike figures filling up red and orange pages, it leaps straight into the action with the question "Whose mouse are you?" asked by an unidentified voice-of-authority. "Nobody's mouse," answers the sulky little



hero. "Where is your mother?" "Inside the cat." And so goes the catechism, with each answer disposing of one more family member. The father is caught in a trap, the sister is far away on a mountain. The brother? "I have none."

This is the first clue that the story is about the mouse's rebellious tantrum over an imminent new baby in the family. Then comes the question: "What will you do?" For the answer, there's a completely blank page, a pause while both the mouse and the reader may consider what alternatives there are to getting along with a new sibling, particularly if you decide symbolically to annihilate the whole family and are left alone in the world. Then, with gathering momentum, the little mouse reverses the action. He shakes the mother out of the cat, rescues all his family, wishes for a baby brother, and when at last he is asked again "Now whose mouse are you?" he is ready, and happy, to acknowledge his whole family. Restitution has been made.

Whose Mouse Are You? shows the beauty of metaphor, humor, and understatement in dealing with direct emotional conflict. With the rage comfortably projected onto the mouse (and eventually diffused, without a new baby ever being mentioned directly), the reader can put his own feelings into perspective. That, indeed, is one of the functions of art. A mass-market book, on the other hand, with its trite, treacherous clichés about proper attitudes to new babies in the family, denies the child's true feelings and cannot possibly provide the consolation achieved here.

Books with strong emotional impact are sometimes all the better for being read aloud by a parent. Though *Whose Mouse Are You?* is ideal, at the mechanical level, for private reading by a beginner, it is emotionally perfect for a shared snuggle and read-aloud when the participation of the parent is a tacit reassurance that the child's anger about a new sibling is recognized and accepted.

Other picture books are challenging enough for an accomplished reader to tackle alone, and yet are deeply satisfying to a reader at the age of six or seven if mediated by an adult. I'm thinking of the extraordinary series of Homeric hymns, translated from the Greek poetry of the seventh century B.C. by Penelope Proddow, and illustrated by the gifted American artist Barbara Cooney, who went to Greece to soak up the light and colors that radiate through these retellings of the ancient hymns sung by wandering bards. I can't imagine a more electrifying introduction to the Greek myths than these six books, all of which, unforgivably, have been allowed to lapse out of print. They are timeless classics and ought to be hunted down in libraries if they cannot be found in the bookstore.

The language of the books is strong, rhythmic, incantatory, and filled with Homer's imagery—a revelation for a child who may be more accustomed to the mumbled monosyllables and thin quackings of the television voice. "Now I will sing of golden-haired Demeter," begins the poet, in *Demeter and Persephone*. You can practically see him strumming the first chords on his lyre in some long-vanished banquet hall: "Demeter the awe-inspiring goddess, and her trim-ankled daughter, Persephone, who was frolicking on a grassy meadow."

Calm and wise, with the strong profile of the classical



period, Demeter in her deep blue shawl gazes into the heart of a poppy. Behind her, fresh and innocent in diaphanous robes, Persephone plays with a butterfly. On the next page we see Persephone with the blue Aegean. These opening pictures strike the reader with a thrill of freshness: not just the sun-washed clarity of the pure, lyrical colors, not just the lovely girls in gossamer with their arms full of flowers, not just the delicacy of the irises and violets wound around their tendrils of curls, but the whole vision of spring, and the startling depiction of female beauty without the customary sickly overlay of self-conscious sexiness.

Suddenly Persephone is abducted by a darkly handsome king of the underworld. While in Hades, she eats some of the crimson seeds of the pomegranate he strews around her. Demeter, meanwhile, ravages the earth in her grief-stricken loss. This, of course, is a myth of imperishable power. And this version of the story has great resonance because it includes so much: the many ambiguous names for the mysteriously attractive Hades, for example; provocative details like those ruby-red pomegranate seeds, and the futility of Demeter's attempt to fill up her loss by raising another woman's baby as an immortal.

Demeter and Persephone is almost irreplaceable in any collection for another reason, too: It is one of the very rare depictions in children's literature of strong love between mother and grown daughter. Our popular culture abounds in Edith Bunkers and Playmates and other shaming travesties of womanhood. But womanly dignity like Demeter's is so rare as to be almost shocking in its novelty. Juvenile literature is loud with the exploits of male heroes, and today there is a conscious effort to give equal roles to brave or athletic girls, but you would have to go far to find such a gripping portrait of female power and love as this one. It is an interpretation that is equally important for boys as girls, and is all the more potent for being so visually beautiful and unmarred by propa-

gandist motive. The same series of books offers a parallel affirmation of a boy: *Hermes, Lord of the Robbers* is enchanting in the delicate wit and beauty of its illustrations and in its story of a boy leaping into manhood in a single day.

Before you read any of this series aloud, read it yourself to note some of the subtleties of the pictures. (See, for instance, how Hermes in his leafy wood sandals is making the cows walk backward to deceive pursuers.) A book so far off the beaten track needs adult guidance. Your enthusiasm, your willingness to read with greater clarity and cadence than is usually called for, your pointing out details in the story, will make these superb examples of pictorial and verbal art even more memorable. They are worth the effort.

NATURALLY, MOST books for this age group won't have the scope of lyricism of Homeric hymns. But even at the most mundane level, picture books can illumine the themes of everyday life. Anyone who has ever watched the excitement of a six-year-old entrusted with an important grown-up task (helping to wash the car or fold laundry) will know how much satisfaction the child gains from making a real contribution to the family. In typical middle-class life, there are few real tasks left for a small child to perform. He may have no role to play other than that of a junior consumer of toys and cereals. With our labor-saving devices and smaller families than in earlier years, we seem to require less and less from our children. Yet nothing is more undermining of self-worth than to feel useless and unneeded.

An early reading book that warmly conveys a sense of children's participation (realistically enough, the characters first complain about working when they'd rather go swimming) is *Six Darn Cows* by Margaret Laurence. The format, with its pastoral watercolors by Ann Blades and short but adult-style real chapter with titles, is well calculated for the beginning reader, to whom such ego-bolstering details are important.

When Jen and Todd Bean discover that they have inadvertently left the pasture gate open and let the cows wander away, they decide to tackle the problem on their own. Mother rescues them with a flashlight just when things are getting spooky in the darkening woods; I like the ironic tone when the children confide to their mother, "We thought you'd be mad" and she replies, "You have a point." But she goes on to say, "I'm proud of you. You did what you thought was best." Like so many peak moments of satisfaction in children's literature, the final scene takes place around the family dinner table, where both parents help give shape and meaning to the children's experience by joking and even singing about the day's small adventure.

Herman the Helper by Robert Kraus, illustrated by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey with huge, almost fluorescently bright pictures, is a lighthearted testament to a child's need to be resourceful and self-reliant: Herman, a sprightly little octopus, dashes through the bright blue water, all eight tiny legs streaming neatly behind him as he rushes to the aid of friends and relatives.

Much of the humor lies in Herman's unflinching and kindly ingenuity, always shown in the pictures rather than mentioned in the text: He ties balloons to tired old turtles, for example, to help them win, and darts into a

glass bottle to help his uncle build a miniature ship. Not only does the child "read" the pictures for much of the action but he's lured into reading the good-humored snippets of dialogue that are hand lettered right on the picture, like the speech bubbles in comic strips.

That, of course, is one of the beauties of books that are most suited for beginning readers: They initiate the child into the art, not merely the mechanics, of reading. The jaunty bits of dialogue from the fishy characters in *Herman the Helper* ("Thanks, Herm!" they exclaim breezily) are written in a distinctly more speechlike tone of voice than the text of the story itself. It is a first experience in catching the feel of naturally written dialogue, and in hearing the shift in the author's tone. The gentle wordplay serves the same purpose: When the baby seahorses spin around on Herman's carousel and their exclamations ("Whee!") come out upside down, the child is being invited to play with the possibilities and tricks of language. Herman has the very last joke in the book. At dinnertime, Herman's dad offers to help him to some mashed potatoes. "No thanks," grins Herman. "I'll help myself."

Rosie's Walk by Pat Hutchins is famous for this same quality of a joke shared by author and reader. An adult teacher is constantly engaged in the play of the author's mind and several levels of awareness are always at work: what the author knows, what the characters know, and what the reader perceives of both. A child who doesn't learn to read at these different levels simultaneously will miss most of the pleasures and rewards of literacy in adult life. And the process of understanding may begin early and naturally when a five-year-old child can see a whole plot being enacted in the pictures that is not even mentioned in the text. This is what happens in the story of Rosie, the hen. What the words tell us is that Rosie is going for a walk across the yard, around the pond, past the haystack, and home in time for dinner. What we see in the pictures is a sly fox chasing Rosie across each double page, and coming to woeful, predictable grief every time he makes an ill-timed pounce. The deadpan slapstick of the action and the stylized bright red and yellow illustrations perfectly enhance the child's growing delight in being an insider, in getting the joke shared with the author.

EVEN A wordless book can help the child in the first lessons of reading closely, noticing details, linking them together in sequence and holding them all together in the mind for lightning cross references as the story progresses. *Moonlight* by Jan Ormerod is justly recognized for the charm of its realistic and touching watercolors depicting an evening in the life of a young, modern, middle-class family. The book begins with a family dinner scene that we "read" horizontally from left to right: the mother looking informal and capable with her short-cropped hair and casually crossed legs beneath the table; the four- or five-year-old daughter, relaxed and loved, glancing perkily at her mother (and she really is a preschooler, as the litter of crumbs and dropped cutlery beneath her chair tells us); then the father, his curly beard and youthful face letting us know that he is gentle and playful.

The great skill of the narrative in *Moonlight* lies in the way the child reader must make the connections, though

all the clues to the story are provided in correct sequence. On pages where four or five separate panels tell the story, they lead from left to right with continuing action, and sometimes the little girl even walks from one frame to another, leading the reader's eye visually and the mind temporally. When the child makes two little boats from a melon rind and a triangle of orange peel, we are reminded that the food scraps and other makings (toothpicks, a fallen leaf, red paper napkins) have been in the pictures from the beginning. That's an example of the forward and backward cross referencing I mentioned earlier. Incidentally, the fate of the little boats provides another strand in the continuing story. We see them being sailed in the bath, gradually coming apart, and then being abandoned as the action goes on.

Just as in older fiction, we must read motivation and character from the sequence of events. The father washes the dishes; where is mother? The question is left hanging, like a small subplot in a novel, until it becomes clear, a few pictures later, that she was in the bathroom running the bedtime bath for the little girl. The shower cap and the neatly hung roll of toilet paper become the tags that carry us to the next picture, where the once-tidy bathroom is strewn with the child's clothes. The toilet paper roll is on the floor (a clue to the unstated intervening action which the reader must infer) and the shower cap, just visible above the rim of the tub, tells us where the little girl is.

Action leads to consequence: Not only is the child's bathtub play deliciously drawn but the reader can anticipate what might come next when the shower cap drifts away, and the girl's hair gets more wet and bedraggled by the minute. When the mother comes back, her hands-on-hip stance clearly spells out her exasperation; the last frame of the bath sequence shows mother (whose face wears a "Well, it's your own fault" expression) combing out the wet tangles, while the child squawks in protest.

The bedtime scene—its rituals, its tenderness, its fears—is just as sensitively narrated. In every frame, the reader is called upon to remember previous details, make connections, deduce causes and consequences, and identify emotionally with the characters. Humor, surprise, comfort, and family love are all there. All count on the reader's active imaginative involvement to make the story live. Without words, the drama of nuance and character are fully present: the father's amused affection, for example, and the mother's more down-to-earth personality, in which the child greatly resembles her. The beauty of *Moonlight* (and its companion volume, *Sunlight*) is that all this is drawn from the reader without any strain. The reader's work is unconscious, just as it is in an engrossing but complex adult work of fiction.

THIS IS the priceless lesson of beginner books: how to read with an awakened imagination. The ABCs of reading, the mechanical mastery, are mere eye exercises compared to this. As long ago as 1880, Randolph Caldecott, the great English illustrator, showed the way. His *Hey Diddle Diddle*, now reprinted in a Godine paperback for less than one dollar, is just an old familiar nursery rhyme, but the way Caldecott spun out its meaning is like a blueprint for the reader's inner eye. Nearly every phrase in the rhyme has its own full-page illustration, and these pictures show how the reader's imagi-

nation must work to bring the written text into abundant life. The phrase "Hey diddle diddle," for example, introduces us to a children's party, with a cat as music master leading a dance. "The cat" shows us a proud papa cat, stuffed into his best jacket before the admiring eyes of his demure wife and kittens. This scene, we realize, takes place just before the first party scene, and shows us the cat getting ready to perform. "And the fiddle" is also a prior action; we see the fiddle left on a table by a milquetoast music teacher; then we see the cat, having "liberated" the instrument, fiddling maniacally on a garden wall while animals cavort, the cow nearly transported by the gaiety of the music. When the cow "leaps over the moon," she is really kicking over the milk bucket, and her flying heels frame the new moon low on the horizon.

Best of all is the conception of the dish who elopes with the spoon. The demonic cat is fiddling so madly that ordinary objects are besides themselves; the vinegar cruet has sprouted breeches-clad legs, and even the plates on the shelf kick their heels while a dish steals away with a simpering spoon. Even when the rhyme finishes, Caldecott's wit does not: An end page shows the dish lying shattered on the ground while the other plates weep, and the errant spoon is marched off between a grimly upright fork and a stern knife.

The adult who reads aloud can help the child to notice these humorous details by taking time to speculate aloud about them. Otherwise, much of the complexity will simply be overlooked, especially by the modern child accustomed to the crude shapes and one-dimensional meanings of Disney books and Saturday cartoons.

I've tried to show, in some detail, how to "read" the pictures because this is one of the primary goals in sharing a picture book with a child: to encourage the youngster to form detailed and coherent pictures in his own mind rather than letting the words slip across the surface of his consciousness. Reading on his own, an older child will often be content to "skip" descriptions and gulp down the plot, but if this habit of active imagining has been instilled early on, he may well go back over the book and gain twice as much from it at a more leisurely pace.

In selecting only a few picture books that have particular reading value for the beginner, I'm doing a conscious injustice to the whole field of picture book art, which could well command an entire volume of its own. Today, there is such a profuse flowering of this form of children's literature that more and more adults have realized what a sophisticated resource it can be for the older reader as well. Thousands of picture books have subtle and complex stories, with content geared to a higher level of maturity. Elaine Moss, a British writer who has worked to encourage reading among inner-city children, once described how she put challenging picture books on a top shelf in a library to signal the older children that the books were meant for them, not for the floor-level preschoolers.

Picture books are a garden of delight for all age groups. Wisely chosen, they can make an enormous difference in preparing the child to become the best kind of reader, the one who creates whole worlds of images in the mind, who is the author's active collaborator, questioner, and fellow explorer. □

A BOOKSTORE IN THE BUILDING



Lines form early for the 8:00 A.M. opening of the bookstore

BY ROBIN COHEN

“WHY CAN’T you send the reading book home?”
“How can I help my child read at home when you don’t use a reading book anymore?”

These are the questions the parents of our students asked when our school changed from a basal approach to reading to a literature-based, whole language approach. The parents had been used to helping their children read at home from a basal reader, but now the children had no basals to bring home. We knew that many parents were anxious and uninformed about our new language approach and uncertain about what specific books they should use at home. In response to these concerns, the school sent home tips on reading to children and lists of recommended books, and we asked parents to read from any books they had at home or to borrow books from the library. As teachers, we realized that reading quality literature to children at home is vital to strengthening their reading ability and enhancing enjoyment.

To further address this reading-at-home problem, I decided to implement a lending library in my first-grade classroom, hoping the children would encourage their parents to read to them from the available classroom lit-

Robin Cohen is a Chapter 1 reading teacher at P.S. 121, District 11, Bronx, New York.

erature. In front of my room, I set up two large buckets of books. One contained books I thought the children could read to themselves; the other contained books that someone at home could read to them. The children could borrow these books freely during the year. Each book had a card pocket in the back and, after signing the card, the child placed it in a box located near the buckets.

The children were free to choose books during any free time period during the day. They were also responsible for placing their card back in the book when they returned it to the bucket. I didn’t place a time limit on returning books because many children enjoy repeated readings of a story, and I wanted them to establish favorites.

I felt this system would satisfy the needs of both the children and the parents who did not have literature to read to their children at home.

I decided to monitor the system once a month to see if any books were being checked out for an unusual length of time or if any were being lost. In order to promote responsibility and proper care of the books, I sent home a notice advising parents that if a book were lost or damaged, a fine of two dollars would be imposed. The majority of the books were paperback, so replacement costs would be low.

I began to notice that many children reported their

books lost and paid the two-dollar fine. I was upset because I thought the children were not taking care of the books, but I decided to continue the system, emphasizing again the need to take care of class property. I then noticed several of the missing books in the children's desks and book bags. I asked them to return the books to the buckets, and I would refund their money, but they refused. The children claimed that the books now belonged to them, since they had paid for them.

I then realized they were buying their favorite books from me. Their parents felt that two dollars was a modest price to pay for a book their child enjoyed, and one that they didn't know where to purchase outside of school.

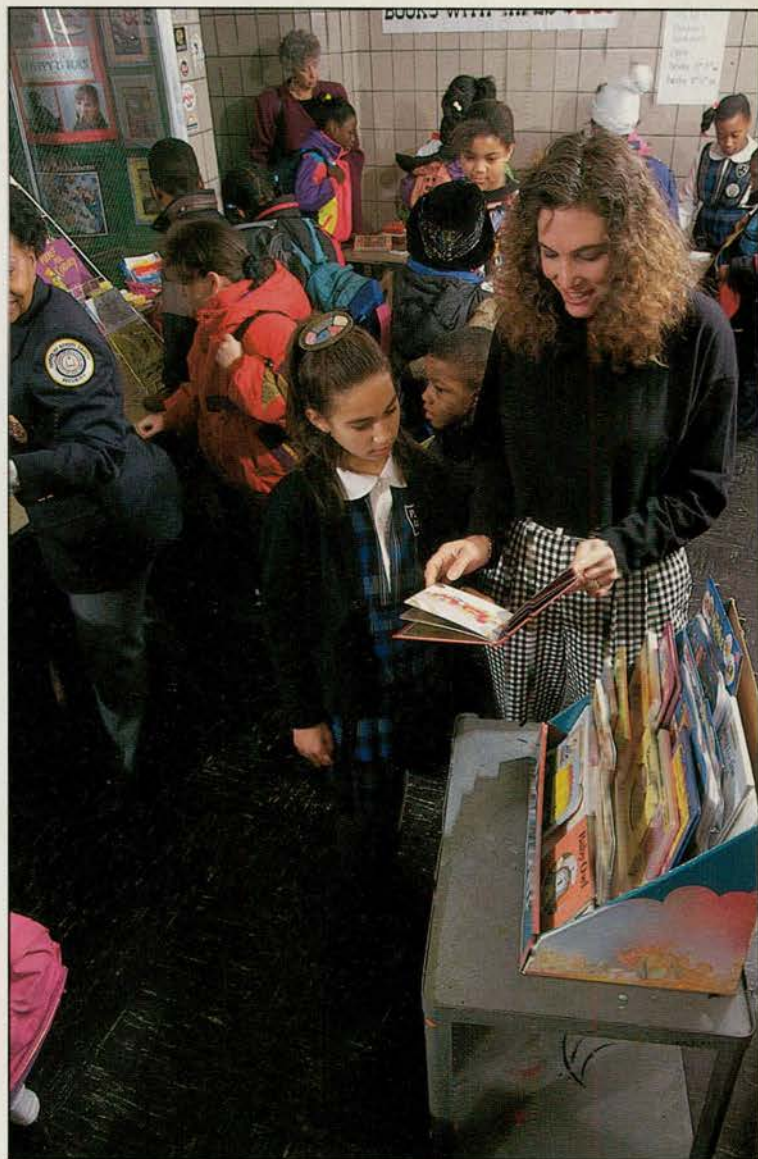
This experience led me to realize that we needed a source for quality children's literature at modest prices to increase the prospect of parents and children reading together at home. It was not lack of interest or understanding that was holding the process back, but rather the lack of materials and a place to purchase them.

In our neighborhood—which is a working-class area of quite modest incomes—and I suspect in many others, there is no store that sells good children's books at affordable prices. There are no bookstores, and certainly no children's bookstores. That leaves neighborhood supermarkets, drug stores, and discount stores, but their stock is typically limited to comic books, Little Golden books, a few Disney titles, the Berenstain Bears, and books that are tied in to the latest video release—a far cry from the wonderful world of good children's literature that we would like our students to enter. Public libraries, due to budget limitations, have limited hours of operation and restricted selections. Also, many of our children are left with caretakers or in afterschool programs, neither of which provide time to go to the library. Thus, I needed a way to provide quality reading material in order to push the reading process forward.

AT FIRST, I tried to encourage the children to order books from the various book clubs that offer quality literature at reasonable prices. The response was not encouraging. The process from the time the money was collected until the books arrived took approximately one month—way too long. By then, the children were losing interest. Also, they enjoyed examining and choosing as they did in my classroom. This hands-on aspect is missing from the book clubs.

These experiences led me to one of those once-you-think-of-it-you-wonder-why-you-didn't-think-of-it-before ideas: Why not open a bookstore right here in our school building? I brought the idea to Meryl Natelli, my principal. I knew she would be extremely supportive because of her strong belief in literature-based reading in the classroom and because of her support of all past programs that promoted reading. She suggested a grant be written to obtain the initial expenses, but she committed to funding the idea if the grant did not materialize.

I then conferred with Veray Darby, one of the other reading teachers in our school. She was extremely enthusiastic and she helped me prepare a grant for consideration by the New York City Teacher's Consortium, which eventually funded our program. Our start-up costs were actually quite modest. All that is needed is two or three book racks or a cart, approximately \$40 per rack and



Above: Teacher and bookstore founder Robin Cohen helps a student make a selection. Below right: Part of the appeal of the bookstore is the opportunity to browse through its many excellent offerings. Above right: "Just like the real world," say student workers, who have to fill out an employment application and be interviewed.

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

Name Michael Savaris P.S. 121 Book Store Class 4-316

Job applying for Advertising Executives

To a few sentences write why you think you are qualified for this job.

I feel that I am qualified for this job because I am able to meet deadlines and I work extremely well with others. I do not like to rush people in to buying a book that is not what I want.

To a few sentences please write why you would like this job.

I would like this job because I think it is very interesting. When people like me help others we all have a warm feeling deep down in us. A feeling so strong that you want to grow a really good tree.

Teacher recommendation: _____

Parent's Signature Michael Savaris

Please print or type all information. Return by May 13 to Mrs. Cohen, Room 208
Mrs. Darby, Room 118A

\$100 per cart; plastic baskets at \$1 per basket; a book stamp—\$10; and approximately \$500 worth of books.

The major problems we faced once money was forthcoming was finding a suitable location in the building, locating sources for purchasing books at reasonable cost, hiring student employees, and establishing store hours.

We printed an advertisement at school asking for student cashiers, stock clerks, critics, advertising executives, reporters, and security guards. We decided to draw upon the fourth-grade classes for our workers, and distributed the advertisement during April because we wanted to train the children to begin work in September.

Each student who responded had to fill out an application and be interviewed; "just like the real world," they noted. After we had our "employees," we held several meetings with the various groups and on-the-job training sessions with the entire group to familiarize them with the operation.

We then had to obtain books. We charge \$1.50 for all books in our store, which we determined was a reasonable price for the students in our working-class neighborhood. Therefore, our stock had to cost less than that. We ordered a large quantity from the Scholastic Clearance Catalog and from other book clubs, using the bonus points they offer to reduce the cost per book. We also went to the Scholastic warehouse sale in Connecticut, which was held in June, to obtain additional stock. I recommend these sources for purchasing books, because the cost is extremely reasonable. [See sidebar on p. 44 for additional sources.]

These sources, plus others, allowed us to offer a wide range of reading material, such as Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*; Tomie De Paola's *Strega Nona*, *Amelia Bedelia*, by Peggy Parish, *Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder, and numerous other quality selections: a stark contrast to the limited choices in neighborhood stores.

We solicited parent volunteers to inventory our stock. They placed an index card with the title of each book in the book itself. When a book is sold, the card is removed and the book is stamped "P.S. 121 Children's Book Store." The removed card allows us to know how many and which books are sold; it also gives us a way to double-check the total monies taken in at the end of each session. The stamp allows our student security guards to check the book and verify that books taken out of the store have been paid for.

We set up our store in an alcove by the back entrance of the school. We chose this location because both children and parents can enter and exit the store without having access to the rest of the building. We use a book rack, three tables, and a rolling cart, all of which are locked in a nearby office when the store is closed. We also use several plastic baskets, which we fill with books and lock in a metal cabinet that stands in the alcove.

We are open Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 8:00 to 8:25 A.M. The student stock clerks, Mrs. Darby, and myself report at 7:45 A.M., and we roll out the cart and set up the book rack and baskets in fewer than ten minutes. At 8:25, we pack up and close the store in fewer than ten minutes.

Nine or ten children report to each half-hour session. Three are cashiers, three are security guards, and three or four are stock clerks who also help children choose



SOURCES FOR INEXPENSIVE BOOKS

COMPILED BY KARIN CHENOWETH

BOOK CLUBS

Book clubs are set up to provide inexpensive editions of books or access to books in paperback that are not available elsewhere. Most of the clubs offer a combination of quality, award-winning books, and trendy offerings, such as Ninja Turtle stickers and videos. Prices generally range from \$1 to \$4. The clubs also offer teachers bonus points and special offers for books and tapes that can be used in the classroom.

For more information, call:

- Scholastic (1-800-325-6149)
- Troll (1-800-541-1097)
- Trumpet (1-800-826-0110)
- Carnival (1-800-654-3037)

BOOK STORES

Your nearest children's book store may be willing to offer in-school services. Eager to expand their markets, enterprising owners might be interested in serving near-by schools and offering discounts.

For information about children's book stores, teachers can call the Association of Booksellers for Children at 1-800-631-7800. Teachers can also become associate members of the ABC for \$30 a year and receive information about ordering and book selection.

WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTORS

There are hundreds of reputable wholesalers around the country. An excellent resource for teachers is the Educational Paperback Association, a group of wholesale distributors specializing in paperback books for teachers and schools. Discounts vary from company to company but generally range from 30 to 40 percent off retail.

Many of its members have catalogs that not only list books but also group them in sets. One catalog, from The Book Source in St. Louis, for example, has a set of thirty-three Newbery Medal winners aimed at fourth through seventh graders, including such books as

Charlotte's Web and *Caddie Woodlawn*, for \$90.30 plus shipping.

To locate the nearest wholesale distributor, call the Educational Paperback Association at 1-800-525-4862. Although wholesalers ship anywhere in the country, you can save on shipping costs if you use the distributor nearest you. Some even permit teachers to browse through their warehouses and choose the exact books they want.

Paperback association members tend to be somewhat smaller than the big, national wholesalers, who are less geared to schools and small operations and who may have ordering restrictions, e.g., they may require that all orders be placed through the school library or that you obtain a retail or resale certificate. However, they sometimes offer greater discounts than the small wholesalers. Below are numbers for three of the largest wholesalers:

■ Baker & Taylor, which carries 1.7 million titles from 14,000 publishers. Call 1-800-235-4490.

■ Brodart Co. with about 150,000 titles and 10,000 publishers. Call 1-800-233-8467.

■ Ingram, with 90,000 titles from more than 2,000 publishers. Call 1-800-937-8000.

One pitfall of dealing with wholesale distributors is that many practice "substitution." Instead of sending twenty-five copies of *Charlotte's Web* as requested, they may send fifteen copies of *Charlotte's Web* and ten copies of *Stuart Little*, if that is what they have in stock. Wholesalers differ, so inquire as to their substitution policy.

PUBLISHERS

Where wholesale distributors are known for filling orders very quickly, publishers tend to be slower. However, if teachers wish to order direct from publishers, some of the major ones with their toll-free numbers are listed below. To get a discount greater than the

usual 20 or 25 percent offered to schools, teachers must have a retail or resale certificate.

■ Scholastic 1-800-325-6149.

Scholastic is the publisher most geared to selling in schools. From January to June, it has a clearance catalog with thousands of titles, and its prices are hard to beat. Many books that are grouped in sets average less than \$1 each.

■ Simon & Schuster 1-800-223-2336.

■ MacMillan Children's Book Group, including Alladin Books, Atheneum Books, Margaret K. McElderry Books, Charles Scribner's Sons Books, Bradbury Press, Four Winds Press, and Collier Books. Call 1-800-257-5755. For additional information, teachers can also call the Education Marketing Manager, Dorothy Milhoffer at 212-702-3771.

■ Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1-800-543-1918.

■ HarperCollins, which includes Harper Trophy, Harper Paperbacks, Harper Perennial, HarperCollins Children's Books. 1-800-242-7737.

■ Houghton Mifflin Co. 1-212-420-5889 for a catalog, 1-800-225-3362 to order books.

■ Little, Brown and Co. 1-800-343-9204.

■ Random House, Inc. 1-800-726-0600 for a catalog or information, 1-800-733-3000 to place an order.

■ Bantam Doubleday Dell 1-800-223-6834.

FLEA MARKETS

And, of course, don't forget to haunt yard sales, flea markets, and local discount stores. Not only may you turn up a treasure trove of good books, you might just enjoy browsing.

NOTE: Check with your city/state revenue departments for any requirements regarding the reporting and paying of sales tax. Many PTAs regularly resell items, and your PTA treasurer may have the appropriate forms if required.



Children get a chance to share their favorites.

the books they want. When the store is open, the cashiers work behind a table adjacent to the display tables. They were trained to use a calculator and to make change. Each one has a separate job; one takes out the inventory card, one stamps the book, and the last cashier takes the money. They rotate jobs at each session.

The security guards stand at the entrance and the exit of the bookstore. They direct traffic into and out of the store and check to see that each book is stamped before it leaves the store.

Other staff members were also given specific jobs. The advertising executives make posters and banners to advertise the store. They also make fliers that are distributed in the neighborhood. The critics select books on various levels and write a short critique on each book. These will appear in a literary review we plan to publish

and distribute. The reporters take pictures and interview children and teachers about the store. In the future, they will distribute a questionnaire to help us with ordering stock.

The children who work during store hours select the shifts they can work and sign in when they report. The reporters, advertising executives, and critics were given packets of job-related supplies, i.e., markers, paper, pencils, crayons, and they work during lunch hour or at home.

The parents association made I.D. buttons for our staff members, which allow the children early access into the building.

Finally, we pay our young staff with certificates they redeem for free books. Each staff member receives two certificates per month if they have reported to work on their self-selected days and been on time.

THE SUCCESS of our store has been overwhelming. We have thirty to fifty customers a day, and we average about fifty to seventy dollars per session.

The greater rewards, however, are that parents, children, teachers in our school, and teachers from nearby schools have become steady customers. Parents have been sending in lists requesting certain titles, and the president of the Parents Association has also purchased gift certificates to raffle off at their general meeting as a way to encourage parents to attend P.T.A. meetings. Children chase after us in the hall asking for certain titles and begging us to expand our store hours. In fact, during the Christmas season, we had to open the store every day because both parents and children came in with gift lists to fill (some purchased between ten to twenty books).

We are constantly learning how to fill the needs of our children while we expand their world with literature. In response to imitating the real world, we had to establish two common purchasing practices: We now have lay-away and charge account procedures in the store. Although we thought the \$1.50 price per book was modest, some of our customers found it difficult to pay all at once, so they either put a book on hold, which we place in a lay-away box for them with a reserve ticket on it until they bring in the money, or they take the book after making a small payment and charge the balance. They then pay us off a small amount at a time.

The implications for whole-language learning, life experience learning, and promoting reading extended far beyond what we originally intended or imagined. Many more of our children are reading for enjoyment because, based on our sales, we know they have more books in their possession. Our upper-grade children are writing book reviews and newspaper articles. We are teaching math skills, employment responsibilities, cooperation, art layout, design skills, photography, and much more.

I've learned that parents relied on the basal reader to help their children at home because it was sent home and made readily available to them. Most parents will read quality literature to their children and help them at home if we make it available to them. A bookstore such as the one we've established in P.S. 121 in the Bronx will not only boost reading-at-home programs but will also help our children realize that reading books—and browsing at bookstores—is one of the nicest ways to spend one's time. □

CHILDREN IN CRISIS

(Continued from page 17)

of the three hundred nationwide semi-finalists came from New York City public high schools.

Throughout this nation, hundreds of thousands of children are saved from falling off the edge of the world by their connection to school, the one stable institution in their lives. The teachers and other school personnel working with them do it on sheer grit and dedication and with very little support. They do it under extremely difficult circumstances and with great generosity of spirit. They will not give up on these children.

Yes, we are losing too many of our students. But we're saving enough of them to know that, if only we could make an adequate investment in programs that work, it would be possible to save almost all of our young people.

Money *does* make a difference. For instance, in New York City, state and local education funding increased throughout the late 80s, and per-pupil expenditure grew by more than \$1,500 in the last half of the decade. The money was targeted to a few well-defined objectives, and it worked. Attendance is at its highest level in twenty-four years, and the dropout rate has been edging steadily downward. A special math initiative raised math scores five percentage points, the largest one-year gain in twenty years. And perhaps most gratifying, reading achievement for those with the least skills soared ten percentage points.

But it took money. Now there's no money. Because the federal well has dried up, we at the local level cannot make the president's America 2000 program work. No one can ask teachers to shoulder the burden of improving education alone in underfunded schools serving children whose basic needs haven't been met. If the president is willing to put resources and political will behind the national goals, teachers will take responsibility and be held accountable for improved education. But we must have the tools, conditions, and resources to do our job. We must be allowed to focus on what we do best: teach. And we must be assured of a real partnership with school management and with the government.

When I think of what our schools could do, I think about a night high school in our city, where a regular high school program is restructured into a 5:30 P.M. to 11:00 P.M., plus Sunday, week, so that students—many of whom might otherwise be homeless—can work during the day to pay their rent.

At their graduation last June, the valedictorian, a lovely young woman who had won a scholarship—on academic merit—to a prestigious private university, spoke eloquently of her own struggle out of a life on the streets and in shelters. She talked about a support network that included a social worker in the shelter and a counselor in the school system who brought her to this special high school. At one point, she broke down in tears. Her classmates—all of whom have heartbreaking stories—rose instantaneously and gave her a prolonged standing ovation.

Thinking about her story, I am reminded of all the other stories we could tell. And even more, of all the new stories we could help create—if only we had the resources we need to do the job. □

IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO

(Continued from page 23)

bination of vague general knowledge and inspired guesswork."

In the last ten years, I have been amazed to see the kinds of kids colleges are accepting. Affluent white kids who have been kicked out of several private schools before landing in my class, who barely had a C average, and who have been addicted to alcohol and other drugs have been getting into what I once thought were respectable schools. Minority kids who are barely literate have been waltzing into higher education. Even many of the brightest kids who get into the super-selective schools are doing as little as possible as they build the resumes that the Ivies and other competitive schools are looking for. And the point is, the kids know it. They see their do-nothing older buddies getting in, and they realize they don't have to work.

Columnist Robert Samuelson put the problem in perspective in a *Washington Post* essay last year: "College leaders see themselves as the victims of poor high schools. This rationalization is at least half backward. Lax high school and college academic standards feed on each other. In our society, the badge of successfully completing high school is not just the degree but the ability to go to college—and almost anyone can go to college."

Samuelson suggests taking some of the fault-free quality out of education. He suggests that states could "shut down 10 percent to 20 percent of their colleges and universities, so schools wouldn't have to continually scrounge for students. States could also sharply raise their tuition and couple the increases with big boosts in scholarships. But to keep scholarships, students would have to maintain a C average."

Likewise, Shanker favors paying the full costs for students who meet rigorous standards but could not otherwise afford college. And, he adds, "it's not a now-or-never proposition. America has always been the land of second and third chances. There should be multiple opportunities to meet the standards and lots of help to do so. But no one should be admitted to college without being able to do college-level work."

Samuelson is right on the mark when he says that establishing *real* college admission standards "would instantly improve high schools." Students do respond to challenge when they see it is in their best interests to do so. But instead of offering challenges and clearly defined goals that kids can work toward, we let them slide by for fear that not all of them will choose to—or be able to—attain those goals. As Samuelson puts it, "We prefer to maintain poor schools—high schools and colleges—that everyone can attend rather than have good schools that might benefit most students. We prefer to complain about 'underinvestment' in education rather than face the harder question of why our massive investment in education produces such poor results. . . . No matter how worthy, reforms can't succeed unless students work harder."

Samuelson and Shanker are right. Several decades ago, if a child didn't learn, we blamed the child. That was wrong. Now if the child doesn't learn, we blame the adults or the system. That, too, is wrong. It's time we insisted on both halves of the learning equation. □

QUESTIONS OF CONQUEST

(Continued from page 27)

Tawantinsuyu was founded by the mythical Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo.

While on the one hand caravans of Indians loaded with gold and silver continued to offer treasures to the conquistadores to pay for the Inca's rescue, on the other hand a group of Quechua generals, attempting to organize a resistance, fired at the wrong target, for they were venting their fury on the Indian cultures that had begun to collaborate with the Spaniards because of all their grudges against their ancient masters. At any rate, Spain had already won the game. Rebellious outbreaks were always localized and counterchecked by the servile obedience that great sectors of the Inca system transferred automatically from the Incas to the new masters.

Those who destroyed the Inca Empire and created that country called Peru, a country that four and a half centuries later has not yet managed to heal the bleeding wounds of its birth, were men whom we can hardly admire. They were, it is true, uncommonly courageous, but, contrary to what the edifying stories teach us, most of them lacked any idealism or higher purpose. They possessed only greed, hunger, and in the best of cases a certain vocation for adventure. The cruelty in which the Spaniards took pride, and the chronicles depict to the point of making us shiver, was inscribed in the ferocious customs of the times and was without doubt equivalent to that of the people they subdued and almost extinguished. Three centuries later, the Inca population had been reduced from twenty million to only six.

BUT THESE semiliterate, implacable, and greedy swordsmen, who even before having completely conquered the Inca Empire were already savagely fighting among themselves or fighting the pacifiers sent against them by the faraway monarch to whom they had given a continent, represented a culture in which, we will never know whether for the benefit or the disgrace of mankind, something new and exotic had germinated in the history of man. In this culture, although injustice and abuse often favored by religion had proliferated, by the alliance of multiple factors—among them chance—a social space of human activities had evolved that was neither legislated nor controlled by those in power. This evolution would produce the most extraordinary economic, scientific, and technical development human civilization has ever known since the times of the cavemen with their clubs. Moreover, this new society would give way to the creation of the individual as the sovereign source of values by which society would be judged.

Those who, rightly, are shocked by the abuses and crimes of the conquest must bear in mind that the first men to condemn them and ask that they be brought to an end were men, like Father Bartolomé de Las Casas, who came to America with the conquistadores and abandoned the ranks in order to collaborate with the vanquished, whose suffering they divulged with an indignation and virulence that still move us today.

Father Las Casas was the most active, although not the only one, of those nonconformists who rebelled against the abuses inflicted upon the Indians. They fought against their fellow men and against the policies of their own country in the name of a moral principle that to

them was higher than any principle of nation or state. This self-determination could not have been possible among the Incas or any of the other pre-Hispanic cultures. In these cultures, as in the other great civilizations of history foreign to the West, the individual could not morally question the social organism of which he was a part, because he existed only as an integral atom of that organism and because for him the dictates of the state could not be separated from morality. The first culture to interrogate and question itself, the first to break up the masses into individual beings who with time gradually gained the right to think and act for themselves, was to become, thanks to that unknown exercise, freedom, the most powerful civilization in our world.

It seems to me useless to ask oneself whether it was good that it happened in this manner or whether it would have been better for humanity if the individual had never been born and the tradition of the antlike societies had continued forever. The pages of the chronicles of the conquest and discovery depict that crucial, bloody moment, full of phantasmagoria, when—disguised as a handful of invading treasure hunters, killing and destroying—the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Spanish language, Greece, Rome, the Renaissance, the notion of individual sovereignty, and the chance of living in freedom reached the shores of the Empire of the Sun. So it was that we as Peruvians were born. And, of course, the Bolivians, Chileans, Ecuadoreans, Colombians, and others.

ALMOST FIVE centuries later, this notion of individual sovereignty is still an unfinished business. At least one basic problem is the same. Two cultures, one Western and modern, the other aboriginal and archaic, hardly coexist, separated from each other because of the exploitation and discrimination that the former exercises over the latter. Our country, our countries, are in a deep sense more a fiction than a reality. In the eighteenth century, in France, the name of Peru rang with a golden echo. And an expression was then born: *Ce n'est pas le Pérou*, which is used when something is not as rich and extraordinary as its legendary name suggests. Well, *Le Pérou n'est pas le Pérou*. It never was, at least for the majority of its inhabitants, that fabulous country of legends and fictions but rather an artificial gathering of men from different languages, customs, and traditions whose only common denominator was having been condemned by history to live together without knowing or loving one another.

Immense opportunities brought by the civilization that discovered and conquered America have been beneficial only to a minority, sometimes a very small one; whereas the great majority managed to have only the negative share of the conquest—that is, contributing in their serfdom and sacrifice, in their misery and neglect, to the prosperity and refinement of the westernized elites. One of our worst defects, our best fictions, is to believe that our miseries have been imposed on us from abroad, that others, for example, the conquistadores, have always been responsible for our problems. There are countries in Latin America—Mexico is the best example—in which the Spaniards are even now severely indicted for what they did to the Indians. Did they really do it? We did it; we are the conquistadores.

They were our parents and grandparents who came to

LEARN MUSIC ON YOUR COMPUTER

Now you can learn music, understand music theory, and learn to play an instrument.

Developed by music teachers and psychologists, for both children and adults.

It's like 20 lessons from a professional.

Uses Practice or Test Modes.
Amazing Graphics and Sound.

Requires: IBM PC or compatible; 5.25" or 3.5" floppy disk drive; Min. 256K; CGA/EGA/VGA/MCGA; MS DOS 3.0+

CLIP AND SEND

CHECK THE PROGRAM(S) OF YOUR CHOICE

- 1. Music for beginners
- 2. Guitar for beginners
- 3. Recorder for beginners
- 4. Piano for beginners
- 5. Harmonica for beginners
- 6. Accordion for beginners
- 7. Ear Training

\$16.95 plus \$3.00 s/h OR any three for \$44.85 plus \$3.00 s/h OR \$100.00 for all seven. Add \$1.00 per disk for 3.5"

SEND CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO:
DJS WORLD ENTERPRISES, DEPT AE
P.O. Box 524 Depew, N.Y. 14043

Name _____

Address _____

City/St/Zip _____

(ALLOW 4 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY)

Reward Your Students Achievements.

2 1/4" Solid
Diecast Medal

FREE
NECK
RIBBON!

99¢

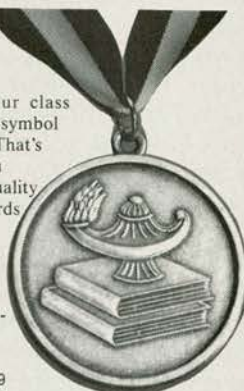
1000 & up

Everyone in your class deserves a fitting symbol of achievement. That's why we at Crown have made top quality Educational awards more affordable than ever.

All backed by
our 100% Money-
Back Guarantee!

10-99 \$1.79
100-499 . . . \$1.49
500-999 . . . \$1.39
1,000 & up . . .99

Also available
in Olympic Torch



To order, or for free color catalog of trophies, plaques & medals, call:

1-800-227-1557 In NY: 1-914-963-0005
CROWN TROPHY

One Odell Plaza, Dept. AE2L,
Yonkers, New York 10701

CROWN TROPHY
The Symbol of Success

our shores and gave us the names we have and the language we speak. They also gave us the habit of passing to the devil the responsibility for any evil we do. Instead of making amends for what they did, by improving and correcting our relations with our indigenous compatriots, mixing with them and amalgamating ourselves to form a new culture that would have been a kind of synthesis of the best of both, we, the westernized Latin Americans, have persevered in the worst habits of our forebears, behaving toward the Indians during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as the Spaniards behaved toward the Aztecs and the Incas, and sometimes even worse. We must remember that in countries like Chile and Argentina, it was during the republic (in the nineteenth century), not during the colony, that the native cultures were systematically exterminated. In the Amazon jungle and in the mountains of Guatemala, the exterminating continues.

Only in countries where the native population was small or nonexistent, or where the aboriginals were practically liquidated, can we talk of integrated societies. In the others, discreet, sometimes unconscious, but very effective apartheid prevails. Important as integration is, the obstacle to achieving it lies in the huge economic gap between the two communities. Indian peasants live in such a primitive way that communication is practically impossible. It is only when they move to the cities that they have the opportunity to mingle with the other Peru. The price they must pay for integration is high—renunciation of their culture, their language, their beliefs, their traditions and customs, and the adoption of the culture of their ancient masters. After one generation they become mestizos. They are no longer Indians.

Perhaps there is no realistic way to integrate our societies other than by asking the Indians to pay that price. Perhaps the ideal—that is, the preservation of the primitive cultures of America—is a utopia incompatible with this other and more urgent goal—the establishment of societies in which social and economic inequalities among citizens be reduced to human, reasonable limits and where everybody can enjoy at least a decent and free life. In any case, we have been unable to reach

any of those ideals and are still, as when we had just entered Western history, trying to find out what we are and what our future will be.

If forced to choose between the preservation of Indian cultures and their complete assimilation, with great sadness I would choose modernization of the Indian population, because there are priorities; and the first priority is, of course, to fight hunger and misery. My novel *The Storyteller* is about a very small tribe in the Amazon called the Machiguengas. Their culture is alive in spite of the fact that it has been repressed and persecuted since Inca times. It should be respected. The Machiguengas are still resisting change, but their world is now so fragile that they cannot resist much longer. They have been reduced to practically nothing. It is tragic to destroy what is still living, still a driving cultural possibility, even if it is archaic; but I am afraid we shall have to make a choice. For I know of no case in which it has been possible to have both things at the same time, except in those countries in which two different cultures have evolved more or less simultaneously. But where there is such an economic and social gap, modernization is possible only with the sacrifice of the Indian cultures.

IN THE LITERATURE that gives testimony to the discovery and the conquest, we also learn about the roots of our problems and the challenges that are still there unanswered. And in these half-literary, half-historical pages we also perceive—formless, mysterious, fascinating—the promise of something new and formidable, something that if it ever turned into reality would enrich the world and improve civilization. Of this promise we have only had until now sporadic manifestations—in our literature and in our art, for example. But it is not only in our fiction that we must strive to achieve. We must not stop until our promise passes from our dreams and words into our daily lives and becomes objective reality. We must not permit our countries to disappear without writing in real life the definite masterwork we have been preparing ourselves to accomplish since the three caravels stumbled onto our coast. □



Lend Hungarian Teachers a Hand

Although the Communist regime in Hungary has collapsed, the teachers in that country now face a critical moment in their fight for democracy.

The fledgling Democratic Union of Teachers (PDSZ) in Hungary is preparing for what will be the equivalent of a national representational election scheduled for the early fall. The stakes are high. If successful, the PDSZ, formed in 1988 by a handful of activists who pressed for a free union despite risks to their jobs and even their lives, will help modernize the whole union movement in Hungary.

The PDSZ will be running against the old Communist teachers organization for proportional representation rights for 200,000 teachers and school support staff in more than 12,000 work sites across Hungary. Victory for the PDSZ also will be pivotal for the democratic union movement throughout Eastern Europe as those nations move toward free-market economies.

But the teachers and school staff of Hungary desperately need help from their AFT colleagues. That's why the AFT executive council has voted to authorize this fund appeal. The PDSZ needs funds to run the election, primarily for release time for people to help in the campaign. Also needed are funds for meetings and forums, telephones and lines, FAX machines, computers and printers, photocopiers, publications and pamphlets, polling, postage and radio commercials.

Just as we came to the aid of the Polish Solidarity movement 10 years ago—a movement that sparked events that ended 40 years of dictatorship throughout Eastern Europe—we know that AFT members will come through in this time of need.

Here is my contribution to the teacher unionists of Hungary.
(Make checks payable to the AFT Hungary Fund.)

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

AFT Local _____

Clip and send to the AFT Hungary Fund, AFT International Affairs Dept., 555 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20001. *One hundred percent of all monies collected will go directly to the election campaign.*

PHOTO: BLACK STAR