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## Illiteracy: Shameful Epidemic Plagues North Carolina

*Half of state's residents  
lack 6th-grade literacy;  
81% in some counties*

By **KATHLEEN KEENER**  
Contributing Editor

**W**hen Butch Jones signed up to be a tutor, he knew that adult literacy was a problem in Beaufort County, but Jones was not prepared for how bad the situation really was. Literacy Volunteers of Beaufort County, a nonprofit organization, assigned Jones to a 26-year-old mother of two who was eager to improve her math and reading skills. With an 11th-grade education from the local public schools, she was reading on only a seventh- to ninth-grade level, and her math skills were on a third- to fourth-grade level, Jones says. She had gone through 12 years of school and did not know how to multiply and divide.

"I was stunned," Jones said. "I was astonished. I can't imagine how this happened. I don't know if she slipped through the cracks or if she was socially promoted."

### *Schools fail students, some quit*

Jan Israel, executive director of Literacy Volunteers, said this is all too common. There are students who are promoted through school and don't learn the material, and there are students who drop out to go to work.

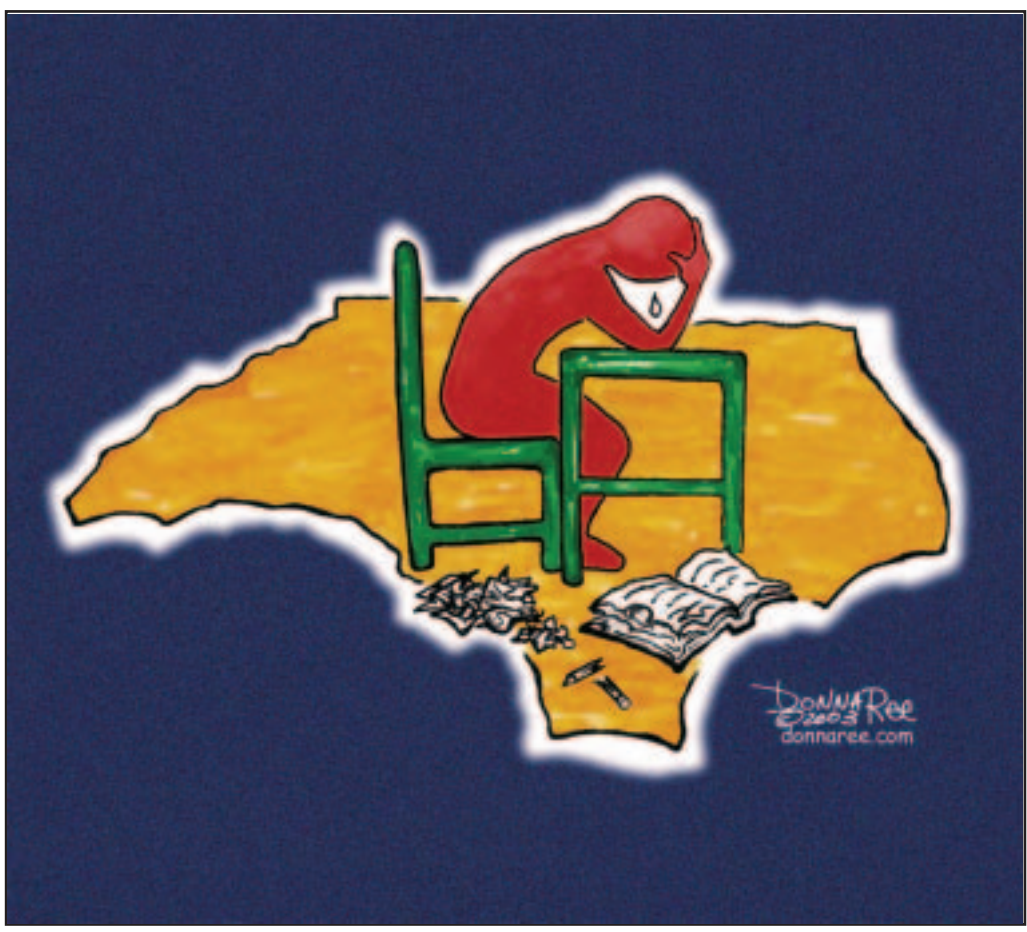
That was Lula O'Neal's situation. She dropped out of the local all-black school after the seventh grade. That was the end of her formal education. Last year at age 70, O'Neal signed up for tutoring with Literacy Volunteers. After a year-and-a-half, she said, she has mastered math skills up to basic algebra and has improved her reading comprehension and vocabulary.

"I can do more now than I ever could. I know more now than I ever did before," she said. "I can go to the bank now, and I can withdraw money. I can take care of my own business with no problem."

O'Neal said she knows many older women who have functioned their entire lives with only an elementary-school education.

"Older women like me act like they are

RALEIGH



*It is estimated that about half of North Carolina's residents can't read above a fifth-grade level.*

ashamed because they can't read," she said. "We go to church, and they can't read the Bible."

These women are not alone.

According to the North Carolina Literacy Resource Center, a division of the North Carolina Community College System, in Beaufort County, 61 percent of people over the age of 18 can't read above a fifth-grade level.

Beaufort's literacy problem, though, is not the worst in the state. In Bertie, Northampton, and Warren counties, the resource center reports that an estimated 81 percent of adults cannot read above a fifth-grade level.

These counties are more the norm than Orange and Wake counties, which have highly literate populations. In 82 of North Carolina's 100 counties, the resource center estimates that at least half of the population can't read and do math above a fifth-grade level. The estimate is based on census data about poverty and education levels.

"The literacy stats in North Carolina are appalling," said Chancy Kapp of the North Carolina Community College System. "Most people have no idea."

But North Carolina's literacy statistics are no more appalling than national statistics. According to the resource center, 46 percent to 51 percent of the American population is operating with only a fifth-grader's ability to read and do math.

### *Five levels of literacy*

The National Institute for Literacy explains the five-level measurement of literacy:

"Almost all adults in Level 1 can read a little but not well enough to fill out an application, read a food label, or read a simple story to a child. Adults in Level 2 usually can perform more complex tasks such as comparing, contrasting, or integrating pieces of information, but usually not higher-level reading and problem-solving skills. Adults in levels 3 through 5 usually can perform the same types of more complex tasks on increasingly lengthy and dense texts and documents."

"Very few adults in the United States

*Continued as "Literacy Lays," Page 3*

*Nonprofit organizations  
help clients overcome  
the stigma of ignorance*

By **PAUL CHESSER**  
Associate Editor

**C**ommunity colleges and local school districts address illiteracy to varying degrees in North Carolina, but nonprofit literacy organizations are the consistent warriors against the problem.

Their success, as with most charities, depends upon the amount and the quality of their ammunition, which is usually insufficient given the stigma of illiteracy and community ignorance of the problem.

Finding enough volunteers is always difficult, but even greater is persuading people who are illiterate to seek help. They are often overwhelmed by shame and by the prospect of learning basic reading skills as an adult.

"Going through grade-level school-work as an adult is not the same as going through grade-level work as a child," said Monica Angelucci, executive director of the Literacy Council of Wake County.

### *Encouragement to get help*

Sometimes a push from outside is required to motivate uneducated people to overcome their embarrassment.

That is what happened with Constance (name has been changed to protect privacy), who has been tutored by a volunteer from the Literacy Council for about 10 years.

Constance graduated from a Raleigh high school in 1968, despite her lack of skills. Shortly afterward she became employed by a large corporation, working in its cafeteria. She later moved into the company's manufacturing operations.

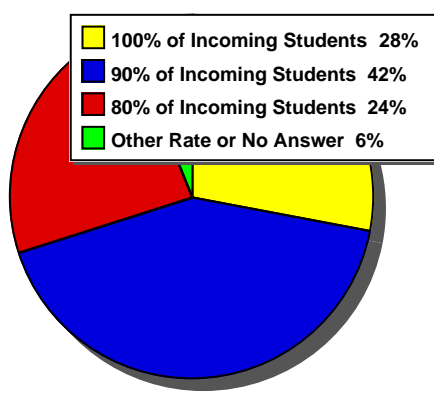
In 1993 her supervisors realized she needed help.

"We were on computers and we had to look up things," Constance said. "That was hard."

As is often true in illiteracy cases, it took someone who cared about Constance to nudge her to overcome her fears.

*Continued as "Literacy Council's," Page 3*

### "Success" in H-S Graduation



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### ON THE COVER

• Illiteracy is still a pervasive problem in North Carolina, and new federal standards are adding pressure to improve student performance. Public schools, community colleges, and nonprofit organizations want to reduce the number of uneducated adults and to prevent the statistics from growing in the future. *Page 1*

### NORTH CAROLINA

• A "structural pest control training facility" for North Carolina State University was included in this year's state budget, even though university officials say the project wasn't a priority. *Page 4*

• An agency whose budget was slashed in midyear 2002, and was recommended for elimination by the governor this year, was rescued by the General Assembly in the new budget. *Page 4*

• Author Karl Zinsmeister, on his way to visit the Fayetteville home of new friends he made as an embedded reporter in Iraq, spoke at a John Locke Foundation luncheon in Raleigh. *Page 5*

• U.S. Rep. Mike McIntyre, D-7th District, joined 32 Republican congressmen Oct. 22 to denounce reporting by "CBS Evening News" that connected homeschooling to child abuse. *Page 5*

### EDUCATION

• A new look at what drives the success of Asian-American students offers some perspective on why they outperform other ethnicities. *Page 6*

• North Carolina's history and geography curriculum have been revamped, but one group says schools aren't doing enough to fill the huge gap in young Americans' knowledge about Asia. *Page 7*

• Americans would rather reform their own public school than abandon it for alternatives such as transfers or private schools, according to the 2003 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll of American attitudes toward public schools. *Page 8*

### HIGHER EDUCATION

• On Nov. 1 more than 100 academics and scholars gathered in Raleigh to discuss "What Has Become of Standards in Higher Education?" for the annual Pope Center conference. *Page 10*

• Boston University professor of anthropology and higher education commentator Peter Wood delivered the keynote address at the Pope Center conference. *Page 11*

• George Leef says raising the cap on the number of out-of-state students who may attend UNC schools isn't such a great idea. *Page 11*

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

• The John Locke Foundation will conduct *Innovate 2004: Preserving the American Dream in North Carolina*, a conference Jan. 10 that will discuss the consequences of the "smart-growth" movement. *Page 14*

• Canton is awaiting a ruling from the state Property Tax Commission on the valuation of the town's largest industry, which will determine whether the town has to raise its

property taxes or reduce the services it provides to residents. *Page 16*

• An interview with Dr. Walter Williams, professor of economics at George Mason University. *Page 17*

### THE LEARNING CURVE

• Reviews of the books *Nothing is Sacred* by Robert J. Barro and *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game* by Michael Lewis. *Page 18*

• Reviews of the books *The Real Environmental Crisis: Why Poverty, Not Affluence, Is the Environment's Number One Enemy* by Jack M. Hollander, and *Can Gun Control Work?* by James B. Jacobs. *Page 19*

### OPINION

• Associate Editor Paul Chesser examines what John Edwards actually said about the Howard Dean/Confederate Flag flap, and wonders why the senator and presidential candidate got so much play but made so little sense. *Page 20*

• Editorials on strategies for state budget solutions and on "smart growth" theology. *Page 21*

• Michael Walden explains the "government spending puzzle," and says it can be solved. *Page 23*

### PARTING SHOT

• **CJ parody:** A study done at the Very Best University in the United States (UNC-Chapel Hill) shows that tall people earn more than short people. *Page 24*

### Innovate 2004 to Focus on 'Smart Growth' Policies

On Jan. 10 the Center for Local Innovation will conduct *Innovate 2004: Preserving the American Dream in North Carolina*, a conference that will feature several nationally known experts on growth and transportation, including Wendell Cox, Ted Balaker, Randal O'Toole, John Charles, and David Hartgen. The event will be held at the Radisson Governor's Inn in the Research Triangle Park.

Cox is principal of Wendell Cox Consultancy, an international public policy firm that specializes in urban policy, transport, and demographics. He has provided consulting assistance to the U.S. Department of Transportation. He was certified by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration as an "expert" for the duration of its Public-Private Transportation Network program (1986-1993). He has consulted for public authorities in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand and for public policy organizations and lectured widely. He serves as visiting professor of transport and demographics at the Conservatoire National des Arts et Metiers (a national university) in Paris.

Cox served three years as the director of public policy for the American Legislative Exchange Council, where he oversaw the development of state model legislation and policy reports. He drafted the 1988 Colorado legislation that required 20 percent of the Denver transit system to be competitively tendered, the only mandatory competitive tendering law in the United States.

Balaker is a research fellow for the Reason Public Policy Institute, a Los Angeles-based think tank that promotes individual liberty, government accountability, and market reform. He edits *Privatization Watch*,



Transportation analyst Wendell Cox

Reason's monthly publication that chronicles and comments on the latest developments in privatization.

Before joining Reason in 2003, Balaker spent five years with the John Stossel Unit at ABC News, where he reported on a wide array of issues, including privatization, monopolies, government waste, regulation, corporate scandals, economic development, free speech, grade inflation, self-esteem, environmental policy, drug policy, and addiction.

O'Toole has spent more than 25 years working on a variety of environmental and natural resource issues for the Thoreau Institute, a nonprofit organization whose goal is to find ways to protect the environment without big government. O'Toole divides

his time between urban issues and public-lands problems.

In 1996 O'Toole reviewed growth-management plans for Portland, Ore., and published his conclusions in *The Vanishing Automobile and Other Urban Myths*.

Charles is senior policy analyst and environmental policy director for the Cascade Policy Institute in Portland.

Before joining the institute, Charles was executive director of the Oregon Environmental Council for 17 years.

He was an active participant in Oregon legislative proceedings, and authored numerous environmental statutes in the areas of forest management, toxic substances, air pollution, watershed restoration, and transportation.

Hartgen is professor and coordinator of transportation studies at UNC-Charlotte, where he holds joint appointments in geography, civil engineering, and the Urban Institute.

He is author of more than 250 publications in transportation planning and policy, and is the U.S. editor of the international journal *Transportation*.

His recent studies include comparative studies of highway and transit systems, impacts of electric and natural-gas vehicles, economic impacts of transit and road proposals, economic impacts of airports, the motor sports industry, Charlotte traffic and transit service, site development, and commercial development at rural interstate exits.

The conference will begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m. A continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. The cost of the event is \$10 per person. For more information or to preregister, contact Summer Hood at (919) 828-3876 or events@johnlocke.org/cj



# Literacy Lays the Foundation for Employment, Quality of Life

Continued From Page 1

are truly illiterate. Rather, there are many adults with low literacy skills who lack the foundation they need to find and keep decent jobs, support their children's education, and participate actively in civic life," the institute says.

## A difficult road to recovery

In North Carolina there are few options for undereducated adults who want to go back to school. The North Carolina Community College System offers high-school graduate equivalency programs for dropouts, but adults who do not have reading and math skills cannot do the work.

O'Neal wanted to earn a high-school equivalency diploma, but she and her tutor, Terrie Pike, decided it would be too difficult.

"With her not having any science, very little history, no English literature, I finally said to her that it would be extremely stressful for her to try to attain her GED (General Education Development)," Pike said.

Wake County School Board member Bill Fletcher suggests offering adult literacy classes in public schools. Recruiting students for the classes will be difficult because most people are ashamed to admit they cannot read, he said.

"Ultimately we as a state have to do something to encourage people to improve themselves," Fletcher said.

## Public schools' responsibility

State government and the community college system offer no solution to the state's adult illiteracy problem, and the best hope for producing literate adults for the future is in the K-12 grades. The N.C. Department of Public Instruction began reforms in the 1990s to increase school accountability, provide a better system to measure student achievement, and to end social promotion. It's too early to say if the reforms are just politics, or if they are helping to produce a more literate population.

In 1995, North Carolina made the ABCs standardized testing program the law. Teacher bonuses are tied to test scores, and teams of educators from the state are sent in to work with schools that have low scores. The testing program has been criticized by



Photo courtesy of Wake County Literacy Council

Alina Cochran, a tutor with the Wake County Literacy Council, helps Moyao Olofermes.

teachers and parents for forcing educators to teach to a test and for putting too much pressure on young students. Fletcher questions the value of the tests to track individual student's progress.

"The most it does is give you a snapshot on one day of what that student can do," Fletcher said.

A new federal education law, No Child Left Behind, is raising the stakes of North Carolina's testing program. Until now, the ABCs program has measured growth and achievement on a whole-school basis. No Child Left Behind requires schools to track the progress of groups of students. It's not enough for the majority of the students to score well on tests. All demographic groups (i.e., minorities, low-income students, foreign-born students) must be meeting national standards for a school to earn high marks from the state and federal government.

Tied to the ABCs is North Carolina's effort to end, or at least curb, social promotion. Social promotion is the practice of moving students to the next grade even when they have not mastered the work at that grade level. Until recently, children who fell behind in North Carolina public schools were often promoted because edu-

cators believed that retaining students hurt their self-esteem. In theory, North Carolina now requires students to make "on-grade-level" scores on their state exams before being promoted. In practice, it's a different story.

Students who don't make a passing score the first time have several opportunities to take the test again, and they can go to summer school for special instruction. In the end, the student's principal decides whether the student is promoted, and parents have the option of appealing the decision. The safeguards result in few students being retained. In 2000-01, fewer than 2,000 of the state's nearly 100,000 fifth-graders were held back because of their test scores.

As well as creating an accountability system for what schools are teaching and what students are learning, state lawmakers have discussed raising the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18. About one-third of students who enter the state's public high schools fail to graduate four years later. North Carolina's problems with illiteracy are connected to the dropout rate, but State Board of Education Chairman Howard Lee said he questions whether raising the compulsory attendance age is the right way to go.

"You can lead a horse to water, but you can't force a horse to drink," he said. "I think we need to go deeper than raising the compulsory attendance age. We need to really excite kids about learning and school."

Forcing students to stay in school when they don't want to be there may do more damage than good. Lee said that schools need to do a better job making education relevant to students.

## The necessity of education

"We do know that kids have trouble seeing the relationship between education and jobs," he said.

With the loss of manufacturing, textile and tobacco-related jobs in North Carolina, the opportunities for low-skilled workers are shrinking. For the state's economy, it's imperative that schools — public, private, and charter — provide today's students with a better education than many of their parents and grandparents received.

"One of our (North Carolina's) most important assets is our intellectual capital," said Michelle Howard-Vitale, a professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and state school board member. "We need an intelligent workforce that's willing to work and able to work."

In Beaufort County, the literacy tutors see people every day who have been laid off from low-skilled jobs, and do not have the training and education to find a new career. It's seeing progress in students such as O'Neal that gives the tutors faith that the program can make a difference.

"I have learned from her that nothing is impossible for a willing heart," Pike said. "And if she can do it at her age, anybody can do it."

Israel, the volunteer center's director, said the program's goal is to improve the lives of individual Beaufort County residents. They don't have the resources to significantly affect the county's literacy rate.

"I realize that it's one adult at a time," she said. "And that we are not going to change the statistics overnight."

But at the very least, it's a start. *CT*

Kathleen Keener is a writer living in Raleigh. She is the former education reporter for WBTV News 3 in Charlotte.

# Literacy Council's Tutors Making a Difference in People's Lives

Continued From Page 1

"They knew I had a problem and got me in touch with the Literacy Council," she said.

Constance was scared at first.

"They made you come in and do tests," she said.

But once the council assessed Constance's abilities and found her a tutor, her fears gradually disappeared. She learned that the perception of Literacy Council workers wasn't what she thought it was.

"People didn't really care, (why she couldn't read)" she said. "They just wanted to help."

## A good relationship

Lynn Troy became a widow in 1988, and one asset her husband left behind was 200,000 frequent flyer miles. Alone, she told herself that she would "not turn down any chances of a lifetime." She has traveled to many parts of the world since.

A self-employed property manager and seller, Lynn decided to volunteer in the

community in some way. She completed the council's 12-hour workshop for its basic literacy tutors, but decided it was too much of a commitment because she was traveling a lot at the time.

But about a month later the Literacy Council called and asked her to come in and read the profile of a new student. She saw that the student, Constance, lived nearby, and had the same birth date as she did. Lynn took it as a sign.

They have met, usually at Lynn's house in the late afternoon, for about 10 years.

## 'Feeling their way'

Finding the right curriculum for the student is usually trial and error. Lynn and Constance thought the first material they used was "kind of babyish" because it used sentences and stories that didn't apply to adults.

"It's never an exact science," said Chris Endicott, program director of Adult Basic Education for the Literacy Council.

He said that even though students are tested before they begin, the council allows

them to "feel their way" to material they feel comfortable with. Their only boundaries were to stay at the level where they tested.

"We feel like we have a good series of books," Endicott said.

## Signs of progress

Because of Constance's apprehension, she felt the tutoring sessions were a little awkward at the beginning. But she quickly became comfortable with Lynn.

As time elapsed and the number of times they met increased, Constance's skills inevitably developed. She dropped an occasional surprise on her tutor.

"One day she came in and said she was writing her own checks now," Lynn said.

Constance reached other milestones as well: Getting a library card and checking out books; reading on the Internet; and using the phone book and the dictionary. She became fond of Nancy Drew and other mystery books.

About three years ago Constance began writing on a higher level, employing

the rules of spelling and suffix use, using proper sentence construction, etc.

"That was a big challenge," Lynn said, "but she's self-motivated." She said Constance has become much more adept at finding answers to problems and questions on her own.

"I think her level of confidence has gone up a lot," Lynn said.

She said she plans to meet with Constance as long as the client wants to.

"It takes a long time to learn to read," Lynn said. "It's a pleasant experience for both of us."

## Literacy Council's growth

The Literacy Council was started in the late 1960s by several women from the area who began tutoring in their churches. It gained nonprofit status in 1970 and remained "a very grassroots" organization until the 1990s. It receives some federal funding, but no state or local money.

Today the council has a staff of four and almost 300 volunteers, but it always has more students than it is able to tutor. *CT*



## Around the State

• North Carolina politicians, with an eye on next year's elections, emphasized what N.C. Free Executive Director John Davis said will be the three major campaign issues: "Jobs, jobs, and jobs." Republican gubernatorial candidate Bill Cobey, in a letter to Gov. Mike Easley, said he sees "no significant action on your part" to stem job losses in the state. In response, Easley adviser Dan Gerlach attributed the losses "to our national trade policy." On Oct. 14 U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Dole, speaking in Winston-Salem, offered some support for Easley's position, blaming China's trade practices for job cuts. And on several occasions in the last few months Easley has proposed lowering the state's corporate income tax in order to boost growth.

• The U.S. Department of Commerce announced that during the third quarter the nation's economy grew at the fastest rate — 7.2 percent — since 1984. President Bush said "we're on the right track" and attributed the growth at least partially to tax cuts he has advocated, but Democrats wouldn't credit the president's policies. Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina said in *The Washington Times*, "The Bush administration has dug a hole so deep and so wide that it's going to take a lot more than one quarter to get back on solid ground." Democrats said that despite signs of recovery, job creation still lags, although the Labor Department announced that unemployment claims fell again — a continuing trend. In North Carolina, Easley had two major job announcements. After its merger with Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp., R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Holdings Inc. said it will bring 800 to 1,000 jobs to the state. General Electric plans to relocate the headquarters of its nuclear energy division to the Wilmington area.

• After Howard Dean proclaimed last month that he wanted to be the candidate for "guys with Confederate flags in their pickup trucks," presidential candidate John Edwards and other Democratic opponents rebuked him. "Some of the greatest civil rights leaders, white and black, have come from the South," Edwards said. "To assume that Southerners who drive trucks would embrace this symbol is offensive." Edwards also conspired, unsuccessfully, with fellow candidates John Kerry and Richard Gephardt in an effort to block an endorsement of Dean by the Service Employees International Union. The Associated Press reported that Edwards had spent about \$1.5 million in Iowa and New Hampshire to promote his candidacy, but his standing in polls in those states remains in single digits. Edwards has had a better showing, though, in another early primary state: South Carolina. However, a conservative group ran an ad there critical of Edwards, because of his opposition to President Bush's nomination of Justice Janice Rogers Brown to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. That didn't prevent Edwards from voting against Brown, who is black, by proxy in a Senate Judiciary Committee meeting. *CJ*

*University officials won't take the credit***Who Wants a Pest Control Facility at N.C. State?**

By PAUL CHESSER

Associate Editor

RALEIGH

A "structural pest control training facility" for North Carolina State University was included in this year's state budget, even though university officials say the project wasn't a priority.

Lawmakers allocated \$310,000, to be paid for with borrowed money, for the project. The facility consists of a modest classroom building and a concrete foundation upon which the Department of Entomology will simulate various styles of construction found in the state. Instructors will use the slab and faux structure to demonstrate proper treatments for subterranean termite prevention and extermination.

Four university representatives interviewed by *Carolina Journal* said the facility has been on the drawing board for a few years, but none asked for it in another year of state budget difficulties.

"It wasn't anything we did or the faculty did," said Andy Willis, assistant to the chancellor for external affairs at NCSU. "It was not part of our priorities and we did not seek it."

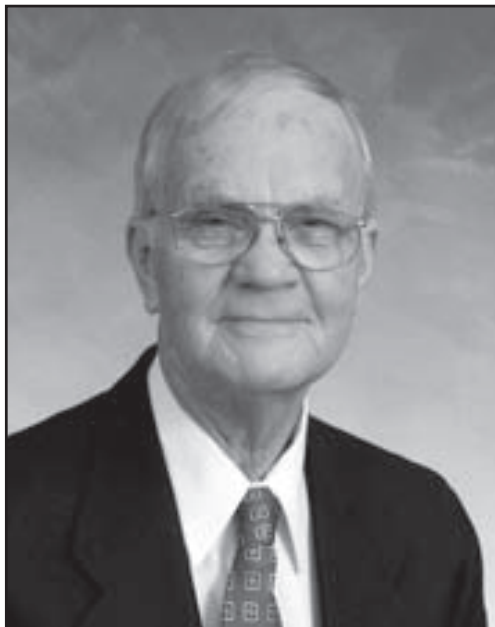
Willis said that about one month before the state budget was finalized, the General Assembly fiscal research staff requested that he work up a cost estimate for the termite facility. He said several other universities in the Southeast have similar projects, which he used as resources for his calculations.

Leaders in the NCSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences verified Willis's claim that the university didn't lobby for the project. Dr. James Harper, head of the Department of Entomology, acknowledged that his faculty has wanted the structure for a number of years, but he said he didn't know of anyone who lobbied for it.

Asked whether he expected to get the project, Harper said, "Given the situation this year, no." He said because of the state's recent budget difficulties, "everything's been going (financially) backward for us for years now."

Winston Hagler of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences also pleaded ignorance to the identity of the project's advocate. "As to why [the pest control center] appeared," he said, "I don't know."

Mark Fleming, associate vice president for state governmental affairs for the UNC system, was also in the dark, although he knew that it "was an item that came up in



He wanted it: Rep. Dewey Hill

the last minutes of the legislature."

Carl Falco, director of the structural pest control division in the state Department of Agriculture, said he was aware of the project because he received a late request for cost information from House Speaker Jim Black's office. Black's son owns a pest control company. Chad Lowery in Black's office did not return calls inquiring about the project.

Falco said that he didn't expect anything to come of Black's inquiry but that the state needed the facility to improve training of pest control specialists. "The better the training is," he said, "the better the service to consumers. (Termite) pretreatments have been a problem area, and we have tried to address it every way we can."

Falco also expressed surprise that it was in the budget, and said, "We did not try to pursue this."

Nor did the obvious lobbying suspect in the state: The North Carolina Pest Control Association. Told that no one claimed responsibility for the project, NCPA President Walt Cooper said, "You'll have to put me in that category also."

Likewise, the organization's executive director, Mike Borden, said, "I don't know the source of it. None of us in our wildest dreams thought that if we approached [the idea], that it would come about."

Finally, a legislative staffer pegged Rep. Dewey Hill, a Whiteville Democrat, as the advocate of the termite facility. Reached by telephone, Hill confirmed that he pushed

for the project, and that the university didn't seek it. "They were not exactly in favor of it," Hill said. "It sure was not high on their priority list."

"Local people in Bladen County and Columbus County (Hill's territory) worked with me on it," Hill said. He said pest-control businessmen in his area were "getting crucified" by Agriculture Department officials because "they tried to do something they thought was right, and it wasn't."

Falco said he didn't know of any specific problems with termite control service in Bladen or Columbus counties, but he didn't deny that it was possible.

Hill couldn't explain why borrowed money was pledged for the facility.

Lawmakers dramatically increased the number of capital projects funded by borrowed money in the new budget finalized in June. Pleased with the way three new prisons were financed for \$224 million in 2001, the Assembly broadened the scope of borrowing in the 2003 budget.

Legislators typically use the financing method because the capital projects run into millions of dollars in costs — a profile that didn't fit the termite facility. In June legislators authorized variations of lease-purchase agreements that may borrow as much as \$800 million for: five more prisons; preliminary work on three juvenile delinquency facilities; a new state psychiatric hospital; and funding for renovation and repairs to state property.

A university system official suggested that funding the \$310,000 for the termite facility was awkward for a comparatively small amount of money — making it much more difficult to manage than if the Assembly simply appropriated the money.

While Hill succeeded at getting the facility, the people who budgeted the project under borrowed funds are still anonymous. "What usually happens is someone wants it and they can't get it through ordinary means," said state Sen. Richard Stevens, R-Wake.

Sen. Fred Smith, a Clayton Republican, said he couldn't offer an opinion on the necessity of the termite facility, but he did condemn the process.

"It's another example where we sat there the whole session saying 'we didn't have enough money,' then these things appear in the cover of darkness," he said. "It's not a good way to manage the people's business." *CJ*

**Agency for Public Telecommunications Survives Cuts**

By PAUL CHESSER

Associate Editor

RALEIGH

An agency whose budget was slashed in midyear 2002, and was recommended for elimination by the governor this year, was rescued by the General Assembly in the new budget.

Gov. Mike Easley called for 2,600 state government jobs to be cut in July 2002, about half of which were unfilled positions, because of the state's budget gap. The Agency for Public Telecommunications staff of 13 was whittled to 10 part-time employees. Executive Director Leila Tvedt lost her job, and the agency's future was in doubt.

APT, which produced public-affairs programming that airs on cable systems, was budgeted \$1.57 million by the state in fiscal 2002. For 2003, \$1.14 million was earmarked for the agency before the ax fell.

According to Kathy Crooke, chief fiscal officer for the Department of Administration, Easley recommended the APT be elimi-

nated. She said the legislature restored its funding for the next two years.

The new budget allocates about \$1.13 million for the agency each in fiscal 2004 and 2005.

State Sen. Virginia Foxx, a Banner Elk Republican who is a vice chairman on the Appropriations Committee for General Government, said the agency's fate was not decided in her meetings. "Somebody at a higher pay grade than me made that decision," she said.

Rep. Leo Daughtry, R-Johnston, who serves on the House's version of the same committee, said APT wasn't considered in the House committee. "It was not done in the presence of the committee," he said.

"There was a period of time when we didn't know whether we were going to have an appropriation..." said APT board Chairman Randy Fraser. "Fortunately, we were able to work through that and there was an appropriation for the agency..."

At the same meeting the board dis-

cussed the search for a new executive director. Easley appointed his former press secretary, Fred Hartman, to the position, and he began working June 16. Hartman had been somewhat in limbo after returning from paternity leave in January.

However, according to the APT board meeting minutes, Fraser upheld another candidate, Jay Holloway of UNC-TV, as "clearly the most qualified and competent person of that group of candidates." Fraser cited Holloway's extensive background in television production.

Hartman was considered the second-most qualified candidate. Both Holloway's and Hartman's names were sent to Easley as recommended appointments, with each of their qualifications and the requirements for the position.

Foxx believes the state could do without the APT.

"There's no reason for it to be a separate entity, in my opinion, from UNC-TV," she said. *CJ*



Zinsmeister tells story at foundation luncheon**Boots on the Ground: A Month With the 82nd Airborne in Iraq**

By PAUL CHESSER  
Associate Editor

RALEIGH  
Author Karl Zinsmeister, on his way to visit the Fayetteville home of new friends he made as an embedded reporter in Iraq, spoke at a John Locke Foundation luncheon Oct. 17 in Raleigh.

Zinsmeister, editor-in-chief of *The American Enterprise* magazine, traveled most of March and April this year with troops of the 82nd Airborne Division, away from his family in upstate New York. He emerged from his trip with an appreciation for the sacrifices made by U.S. troops, which he documented in his new book, *Boots on the Ground: A Month with the 82nd Airborne in the Battle for Iraq*.

"I spent this spring on vacation in the Middle East," Zinsmeister told the audience in Raleigh before heading to Fort Bragg for an event there. "It was one of the most tremendous and inspirational things I've done in my life, and that's because of these guys."

"These guys" were the hundreds of soldiers Zinsmeister traveled with in Kuwait and Iraq. Unlike many embedded reporters who stayed with their assigned troops during major combat operations, Zinsmeister moved around.

Assigned to a helicopter battalion, Zinsmeister quickly realized that if he were to experience combat, he would need to stick with ground troops. He used military convoys that delivered food and supplies



Carolina Journal photo by Richard Wagner  
Karl Zinsmeister describes his experience as a wartime correspondent at the Raleigh luncheon.

as a "taxi service," which afforded him freedom of movement.

"I saw whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted," he said, adding that the reporters who complained about limited mobility had only themselves to blame. Zinsmeister said that embedded media were "not led by their nose" by the military.

Zinsmeister's freedom enabled him to witness a broad sampling of Army operations, including the planning of raids, house-

to-house searches, urban assault, the enemy's unethical fighting tactics, and medical operations on injured soldiers.

"The thing I learned about combat," Zinsmeister said, "is that it is tremendously improvisational."

And unpredictable. He was even privy to internal disagreements, such as one in which a chaplain and a chief medical officer argued over the recovery of bodies. Zinsmeister said that while the troops ex-

hibited strict discipline, such disputes were allowed to unfold until the best argument won. The strife exemplified the difficulty of making life-or-death decisions on the battlefield, he said.

"There is no easy answer," Zinsmeister said. "You just wrestle."

The war often tested soldiers' ability to make clear moral choices, such as when enemy soldiers often hid behind women and children or barricaded themselves in hospitals and schools.

"The price of a mistake here is serious," Zinsmeister said. "It was very difficult work to sift and sort."

He came away impressed by the Army's ability, by necessity, to improvise combat operations while minimizing collateral casualties.

Most soldiers maintained an idealistic view and reminded themselves often of the reason they were in Iraq, he said. "I Love NY" and "NYPD" emblems were frequently visible on vehicles and apparel.

"They do think in bigger, grander terms," Zinsmeister said, adding that while soldiers fight for their buddies in their foxhole, they recognize the larger cause.

Disappointed with much of the current American reporting on operations in Iraq, Zinsmeister praised the military for tremendous progress in a short period of time.

"It's only been about six months," he said. "They didn't think six months after combat that it would be soccer games with the Fedayeen." CJ

Congressmen denounce biased reporting**Rep. McIntyre Joins Protest vs. CBS**

By PAUL CHESSER  
Associate Editor

RALEIGH  
U.S. Rep. Mike McIntyre, D-7th District, joined 32 Republican congressmen Oct. 22 to denounce reporting by "CBS Evening News" that connected homeschooling to child abuse.

The House members signed a letter to CBS News President Andrew Heyward stating they "were deeply offended by the recent 'Eye on America' dealing with homeschooling."

McIntyre was the sole Democrat, and also the only representative from North Carolina, to sign the letter.

"That was not an issue for me," McIntyre said, adding that he was pleased to be contacted by his colleagues. "From a personal perspective, I thought it was a very biased report."

"CBS Evening News" reported Oct. 13-14 that there is a "dark side of homeschooling," in which parents exploit allegedly lax homeschooling laws to hide the abuse, and even murder, of their children. The first night's segment focused on the case of Nissa and Kent Warren in Johnston County, whose 14-year-old son Brandon committed suicide after he shot to death his half-sister and brother in 2001.

In their letter to Heyward the congressmen wrote that the report "implied a tragic murder-suicide in rural North Carolina was somehow evident of a 'dark side' of homeschooling, which justified further government regulation of home education." They called the "tenuous connection" between the Warren case and the millions of families who homeschool "absurd."

"What your correspondent, Vince Gonzales, failed to mention in his segment was the numerous child protection laws

already that could have been used to safeguard the children in question," the letter said. "North Carolina Social Services had repeated contact with the family and had even removed the children from the home for a time.

"Yet, Mr. Gonzales' solution is to shackle homeschool parents across the country with further laws and regulations that would not have prevented the tragedy in question."

Reps. Virgil Goode and Frank Wolf of Virginia, Rep. Zach Wamp of Tennessee, and Rep. Joe Wilson of South Carolina were among the Republicans who signed the letter.

Rep. Todd Akin of Missouri, who homeschools his six children, spearheaded the signature-collecting effort. McIntyre, who said he and his wife home-educated their two sons for a few of their elementary school years, previously worked with Akin on legislation that would prevent the removal of "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance.

"He thought I might have an interest in [the letter to CBS]," McIntyre said.

The letter emphasized the growth and academic successes of the homeschooling movement, and took CBS to task for focusing on rare cases of abuse instead of reporting the widespread positives.

"You chose to take a handful of tragic incidents and, from them, cast aspersions on the entire homeschool movement," the congressmen wrote. "Your report was unfair and indicative of both bias and ignorance."

"We sincerely hope reporting of this kind is the exception and not the rule at CBS."

A copy of the letter is on the Internet at [www.hslda.org/docs/news/hslda/200310/200310270.asp](http://www.hslda.org/docs/news/hslda/200310/200310270.asp). CJ



For more than 12 years, *Carolina Journal* has provided its thousands of readers each month with in-depth reporting, informed analysis, and incisive commentary about the most pressing state and local issues in North Carolina. With a particular emphasis on state government, politics, the General Assembly, education, and local government, *Carolina Journal* has offered unique insights and ideas to the policy debate.

Now *Carolina Journal* is taking its trademark blend of news, analysis, and commentary to the airwaves with a new program — **Carolina Journal Radio**.

A weekly, one-hour newsmagazine, **Carolina Journal Radio** is hosted by John Hood, publisher of *Carolina Journal*, and features a diverse mix of guests and topics. Education reform, tax policy, the state legislature, affirmative action, air pollution, freedom of the press and the courts — these are just a few of the subjects that **Carolina Journal Radio** has tackled since the program began production in May.

Currently broadcast each weekend on 16 commercial radio stations — from the mountains to the coast — **Carolina Journal Radio** is a one-of-a-kind program that seeks to inform and elevate the discussion of North Carolina most critical issues, and to do so in a fair, entertaining, and thought-provoking way.

For more information or to find an affiliate of *Carolina Journal Radio* in your community, visit [www.CarolinaJournal.com](http://www.CarolinaJournal.com).



## NC News in Brief

• School board changes in Charlotte-Mecklenburg may mean new policies for the district's schools, according to *The Charlotte Observer*. One of the most volatile issues that the board faces are questions of whether and how to readjust the Mecklenburg County school assignment/choice plan.

At present, there is a "home school guarantee" in place for the district's public schools. That means that families have the option to select schools close to their homes, and that a percentage of seats in those schools will remain available to those in the "home" area.

Mecklenburg allows parents to try to enroll their children in public schools of their choice. Children are not assigned to schools unless there are no seats available in any of the schools on the family's preferred list.

The "home school guarantee" prevents children from being crowded out of schools near their homes because of the choice program.

With three new at-large members on the CMS board, new alignments between the board and the community are likely to occur, the report states. The result for board decisions? "I'm optimistic that perhaps we'll see more flexibility on the board," re-elected board member Lee Kindberg said.

• School bonds were overwhelmingly approved in recent elections. For Durham, this means \$124 million that will go to renovations and additions to schools, land acquisition, and equipment.

In a statement to *The News & Observer* of Raleigh, Michael Page, new chairman of the Durham County school board, said, "It's a landslide. This is a real statement from the community—a real show of support."

After the bond vote Page said he believes voters' willingness to support the bonds, even at the cost of higher taxes, will be seen "as a real watershed."

• Durham has also been the focus of attention because of gang activity, both inside and outside its schools. According to Page, gang activity is the No. 1 problem facing the schools and young people in the city. In an interview with *CJ*, Page noted that five years ago the main problem with children was drugs. "Now," he said, "it's gangs. They are very seductive to a lot of kids." "Kids get in, and then they realize they can't get out."

Page has initiated a series of meetings with parents and community members. He hopes to enlist their help in dealing with the problem.

• Wake County has adopted a new five-year plan, aimed at getting 95 percent of students in grades three through 12 at grade level by 2008, the *News & Observer* reports.

The previous five-year plan improved achievement, but missed reaching that goal in 2002. *CJ*

## Asian Students Aim High And Succeed

Students select professions and studies that offer greatest potential for returns

By KAREN PALASEK  
Assistant Editor

RALEIGH

Why are Asian-American students motivated to achieve? They have been portrayed as overachievers, especially in fields like math and science. In 2002, Asian students as a subgroup in North Carolina scored below their 2001 SAT level, moving down from 1031 to 1025. This score is still well above the state average for the year of 998, and five points above the national average. White students and Asian students in the state are the only groups that typically top the national average on the SAT.

Popular mythology holds that family and cultural values drive Asian/Pacific American students to succeed. Based on the belief that Asian children are taught to have greater respect for education and teachers, observers have tried to explain the upward mobility of Asians in the United States in terms of values and work ethic.

A new look at what drives the success of these students offers some perspective on the relative success of Asian-American students in the United States.

In "Social Mobility and the Educational Choices of Asian Americans," Yu Xie at the University of Michigan, and Kimberly Goyette at Temple University examined occupational choices, expected college participation and choice of major, occupational goals, and college enrollment and graduation.

Their findings indicate that the barriers to success are lowest, and the rewards to academic achievement highest, in academic disciplines and professions grounded in math and science. As relatively unconnected newcomers, these are the paths that offer the most potential for social and financial advancement.

### Something so right

Asian students represented only 2 percent of the state's public school population in 2002, but made up almost 5 percent of the students taking Advanced Placement exams, a total of 1,147 students. Colleges consider advanced placement for students scoring a three or higher on their AP's. Among Asian students, 57 percent achieved a three or better in North Carolina. Nationally, 64 percent of Asian students reached that mark. By comparison, white students attempting the AP scored threes 60.5 percent of the time in North Carolina. For blacks the figure was 26.8 percent, and for American Indians 45.1 percent.

Although Asian students represent a numerical minority of students in the state, they are not usually included in the North Carolina calculation of the white-minority achievement gap. The reason seems to be that performance on end-of-grade and standardized tests for Asians is not typical of other numerical minorities. When North Carolina measured the white-minority achievement gap on its end-of-grade tests without Asian student scores, the gap was 26.8 points. Including them decreased the gap to 25.2 points.

Slightly less upbeat statistics emerged from the third- to eighth-grade North Carolina reading tests. Fewer Asian students

moved out of the lowest reading proficiency level, Level I, in 2002. But a greater number advanced from levels II and III, the Department of Public Instruction reports.

In mathematics, more than 91 percent of Asian students placed in the highest level, Level IV. Mathematics achievement levels are almost identical for Asian-American male students and female students.

Many studies exist to document the fact that Asian-American students excel on math tests, often scoring higher than their white counterparts. They are as likely or more likely than whites to advance to college and to graduate.

Until recently, these tendencies were explained by common anecdotes that revolved around family values and the Asian work ethic.

### Paradox and strategic adaptation

According to Xie and Goyette, the Asian-American population in the United States is likely to continue to increase rapidly in coming years. Very little real research has been done to measure how this diverse group is doing in American life.

What baffles many researchers is what seems like the paradox of Asian-American success. According to the authors, "Asian American seem to have suffered disadvantages as a minority but fare well by standard measures of socioeconomic success."

Asian-Americans have been barred from joining unions, owning land, testifying in court, professional licensure, and even marriage, the authors report. Most of these abuses were ongoing in the United States during the first half of the 20th century.

According to "Social Mobility and Educational Choices..." education has played a key role in the success of Asian-Americans. Their explanation combines the influence of Asian values, job expectations, and the difficulty Asians experience when trying to live simultaneously in two different 'worlds.'

As newcomers, Asians have often been marginal members of society. "Facing the possibility of discrimination and lacking necessary political resources and social capital, Asian Americans who strive to

achieve high status look for paths that present few barriers. In the market economy... upward mobility through channels of higher education, independent business, and science and engineering is preferred to that... where subjective criteria predominate."

### Expecting success

Xie and Goyette reject the "model minority" label that is sometimes associated with Asian immigrants and their descendants. They warn that the tag is "simplistic" and "obscures the complex nature of the social mobility processes experienced by Asian Americans."

The likelihood of financial reward and success, as seen by Asian-American youth "planning for their future" is far higher in nuclear physics or engineering, say Goyette and Xie, than in pursuing careers in law or politics that require social and political connections.

The authors conclude that Asian-American students make their educational plans based upon their career expectations. They also found that Asian-American students are more likely than white students to enroll in college beyond what is needed to just meet those goals.

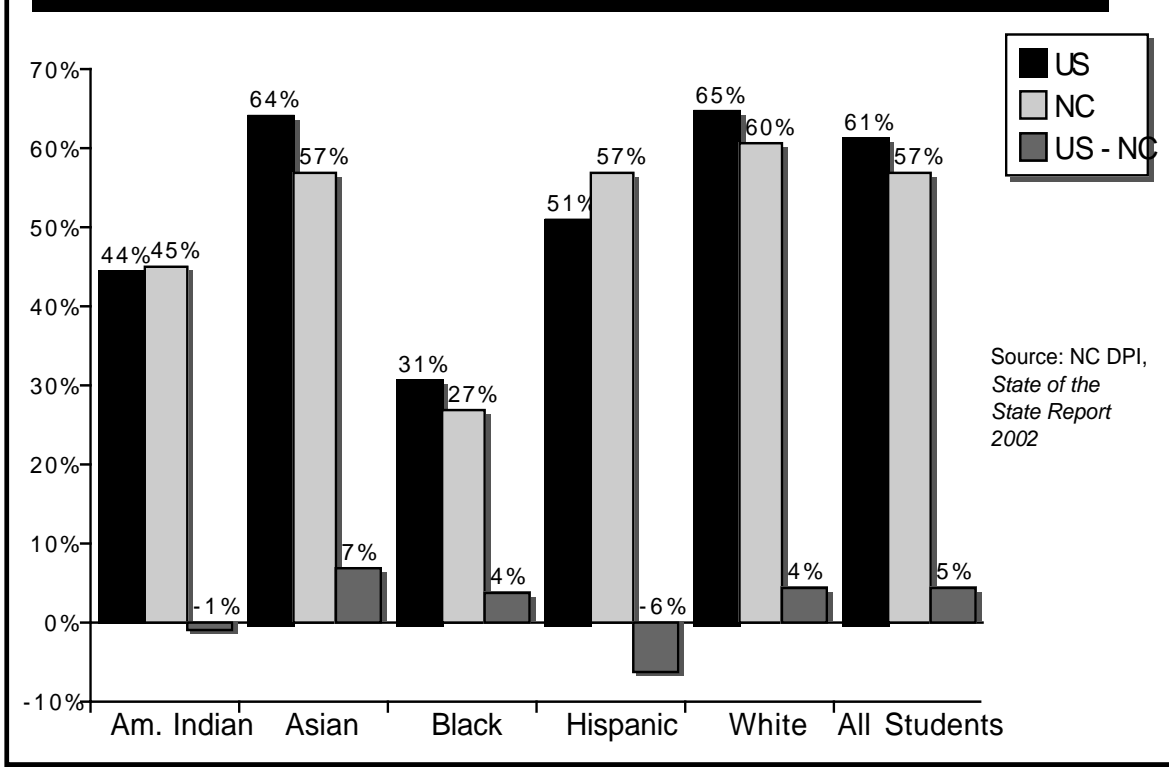
Asian-Americans in college "in mathematical science and social science... are under-represented in expected education but overrepresented in actual enrollment."

This study reports that most of the differences that are observed between white students and Asian students in their choice of college and occupational goals can be explained by seeing formal education as a means to upward social

mobility. "Our thesis is that, being marginal racially, culturally, and politically, Asian Americans favor formal education, particularly formal education in fields of high demand in the economy, as their preferred channel of mobility."

The "Social Mobility..." study sheds new light on Asian-American success, replacing the cultural explanation with one that makes sense in terms of the goals, incentives, and choices facing newcomers. *CJ*

## Percent of AP Scores Equal to 3 or Higher In NC and



**Asian-Americans appear to have suffered disadvantages as a minority but fare well by... measures of socioeconomic status.**



*Most young Americans can't find Israel, Iran, or Iraq on map*

## U.S. Schools Should Do More to Educate Students About Asia, National Group Says

By KAREN PALASEK

Assistant Editor

RALEIGH  
North Carolina's history and geography curriculum have been revamped, but one group is saying that American schools aren't doing enough to fill the huge gap in young Americans' knowledge about Asia.

That's not only ignorant, it's dangerous, according to the Asia Society in its *Asia in the Schools* report "Preparing Young Americans For Today's Interconnected World." U.S. military involvement in Iraq, and international focus on the Middle East, make understanding present-day Asia essential, they say. Instead, American social studies classes often present Asia as more of an ancient curiosity, purely in terms of remote civilizations or world exploration.

They have a point. According to the "National Geographic-Roper 2002 Global Geographic Literacy Survey," for young Americans between 18 and 24, "only one in seven can find Iraq (13 percent) or Iran (13 percent) on a map of Middle East/Asia." The state of Israel is mentioned daily in most major U.S. news markets, but only 14 percent of those surveyed could find Israel on a map.

The problem is, it would be hard to fit another special focus into North Carolina's social studies lineup. The curriculum contains separate sections for African-American, Latino-American, and American Indian issues. "Every group wants a special focus," said Penny Maguire, social studies curriculum consultant for the middle-school grades. Middle school, specifically seventh grade, is where the substantive instruction about Asia, Africa, and Australia is placed in the standard course of study.

Schools "can't be comprehensive," Maguire said. But increasing American knowledge and understanding of an area that contains 30 percent of the world's land mass, and at least 60 percent of its people, is no small task. There is simply too much material, Maguire said, to study every country or region across all three continents in a single year. So schools pick and choose. As a result, only a few countries get detailed attention.

The North Carolina standard course of study includes what educators call "strands," or connections to international topics, in grades as early as elementary school. But the *Asia* report stresses the need for a more comprehensive approach, woven throughout the curriculum, and strongly urges Asian language study beginning in the earliest school years.

North Carolina has a stake in this knowledge game. Exports to Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and China via North Carolina already total in the tens of billions of dollars annually, according to the N.C. Department of Commerce.

The Roper/*National Geographic* survey revealed that knowledge of geography facts about Asia and the Middle East were weakest among American, Mexican, and Canadian subjects. Nine countries in all — the United States, Mexico, Canada, Sweden, Germany, Italy, France, Japan and Great Britain — participated in the survey.

### Asia studies in North Carolina schools

The "strands" approach to social studies topics is widely used across the United States. It is part of what Frazee and Ayers refer to in the Fordham Foundation's *Where Did Social Studies Go Wrong?* text as the "expanding environments" approach. In a gradually widening circle, students are exposed to concepts that flow from the home outward.

The problem with this approach, Frazee and Ayers say, is that it lacks meaningful content. Students are not prepared to deal with substantive subject matter, so they are asked to see "connections," beginning as early as kindergarten. These "strands" are supposed to stay with them and become a unified and sophisticated whole by the time they finish high school. Frazee and Ayers argue that these "baby steps" are also "deeply boring." That's another reason that students discard them along the way, they say.

The North Carolina social studies curriculum exhibits all of the hallmarks of the "expanding environments" approach. It is non-chronological, tends to be repetitious, and



focus topics tend to be narrow and arbitrary.

The Roper/*National Geographic* survey documents the result of years of this approach. Young Americans don't know how the United States compares to other countries. On one question, for example, Americans estimated that the U.S. population is about 33 percent of global population. They didn't know enough facts to form an accurate perspective.

The *Asia in the Schools* report recommends an integrated approach to history and geography, just as Fordham does. Fordham would use the United States to anchor modern events, presented in chronological order. *Asia in the Schools* suggests adding Asian language, geography, and history to the current plan. Early access to language instruction is a central theme of the *Asia* report. From K-12, all students should be able to study at least one Asian language.

### Neglecting urgent concerns?

The *Asia* report, along with the results of the National Geographic survey, make a good case that young Americans are severely lacking in knowledge of facts related to international geography, history, or culture and politics. But North Carolina revisits content in the standard course of study once every five years. The 2003-04 school year begins a five-year cycle for the social studies curriculum approved in March 2003.

Some argue that students need to improve their understanding of Asian cultures, geography, and political issues now. "The nation urgently needs to improve the way students are prepared for the world awaiting them. Enhancing teaching about Asia is central to this task," "Preparing Young Americans" argues.

Asia is home to some of the fastest-growing economies in the world. According to the report, Korea, Singapore, and Japan have a nearly 100 percent literacy rate. Vietnam has a 97 percent literacy rate, and "a rich base of natural resources."

With huge potential markets poised to grow, Asia represents a substantial opportunity for American business, as well as a gigantic potential competitor. "However, the vast majority of Americans know very little about Asia, let alone the individual nations and cultures that make up this region.

"With ignorance comes weakness," the *Asia* report says. "American ignorance is our critical vulnerability, one which may lead to bad public policy or business decisions that can harm us as a nation, as citizens, and as workers." Investing in capital and assessing risk in Asian countries will become critical skills, the authors note.

The emphasis in North Carolina on reading and math, because of No Child Left Behind, is squeezing social studies content, Maguire said. Social studies doesn't get tested until high school, so it's hard to make it a priority. "One of the biggest problems in K-8 is getting social studies taught on a par with other subjects," Maguire said. CJ

## Calif. Ignites a Fire In Homeschooling

Cultural change is like watching children grow. My children grew daily, but virtually unnoticed until they visited grandma out of state. She kept a pencil-mark measurement every time they visited. As the years passed, the marks progressed up the woodwork. Public opinion is often difficult to measure. However, every now and then, a benchmark identifies the next shift. Then comes the realization of the child's growth or how far cultural thought moved. When the culture reaches a "tipping point," the change begins to spread, like the recent wildfires we witnessed in California.

The largesse of the education establishment prohibits little more than a snail's pace of change from the issues surrounding teacher education programs and licensing, to curriculum, standards, textbooks, testing, expectations, accountability, funding, merit pay, privatization, choice, etc.

Two situations recently caused me to pause. I slowed down to realize that choice, a free-market-based educational perspective, is taking root. Our country is not at a "tipping point," but the idea of options is gaining ground. While they continue to spend millions of dollars lobbying citizens with fear tactics against choice, those in the establishment know they must be open to alternatives. The growing number of families choosing options other than the traditional public school model provides incentives for the system to change. It is the old "if you can't beat them, join them" mentality.

Several years ago, California's education establishment reluctantly accepted homeschooling as a valid education method.

Did you know families in California can enroll in a public "homeschool?" Yes! Public education includes homeschooling. I had the opportunity to visit Orange County's Community Home Education Program ([www.ocde.k12.ca.us/chep/index.htm](http://www.ocde.k12.ca.us/chep/index.htm)). More than 1,300 students are enrolled with several sites conveniently located in office parks. A teacher meets with parents/guardians in her office as a consultant. The system freely provides teacher manuals, textbooks, workshops, and other services.

In the late 1990s, after the program showed success, the state superintendent sent a letter to all homeschool families stating they must enroll in a government program. Needless to say, public outcry was strong and loud. The fury was hotter and faster than the fires recently witnessed. The state superintendent was removed from office, and the mandate never saw the light of day. Currently, families choose to independently homeschool or enroll in the government homeschool program.

While some see this as a "government" encroachment, I see it as a change of thought. The local systems recognized the market for this approach, and they could either offer this option or continue to lose families.

Recently in Mecklenburg County the "First Annual School Fair" was held at the Charlotte Merchandise Mart — the first time in history all types of education providers were under one roof for "customers" to review. Private schools, religious schools, boarding schools, military schools, homeschooling associations, tutoring services, charter schools, and traditional school systems were represented.

School choice at its best? A huge step is missing, but a step the public is beginning to understand. Publicly funded scholarships programs and tax credits are necessary for lower-income families to fully participate. With more options, it is only a matter of time before a "tipping point" occurs. The "fires" of opportunity for all students are only beginning! CJ



Lindalyn  
Kakadelis

Kakadelis is director of the NC Education Alliance.

## School News: Nation

• The *New York Times* reports that the increased federal emphasis on accountability under the No Child Left Behind act and other Bush administration initiatives means that children enrolled in Head Start will take mandatory standardized tests. Children as young as 4 will be tested with the same instrument across the country.

The test, which takes about 15 minutes to complete, asks for "simple vocabulary, letter recognition, and math," according to the *Times*.

Head Start has been criticized for failing to raise the literacy readiness of preschool children. The tests will be used, according to the report, not "to judge individual children but to evaluate the thousands of Head Start programs across the country."

Testing children as young as 4, when children's development is "in enormous flux," has critics voicing opposition to the plan. But Craig Ramsey, a psychologist at Georgetown University and adviser on the project, sees it merely as a "quality assurance" measure for Head Start centers.

Samuel J. Meisels, president of the Erikson Institute for child development in Chicago, criticizes the test questions as being outside the children's experience and context.

While many critics of the test agree that Head Start has problems that should be addressed, some fear that the testing process itself will have negative consequences for preschool children.

• Despite some of the toughest regulations in the nation, more New York families are joining the ranks of home schoolers, the *New York Times* reports.

One family cited bullying in a "highly regarded" school, plus the inability to pay private-school tuition for their high-school-age twins, as reasons that sent them looking outside the mainstream.

According to New York City statistics, 1,800 students are being schooled at home this year.

Mitchell Stevens, an education psychologist at New York University and author of "Kingdom of Children: Culture and Controversy in the Homeschool Movement," said that the standards movement has ironically given more parents an incentive to remove their children from schools.

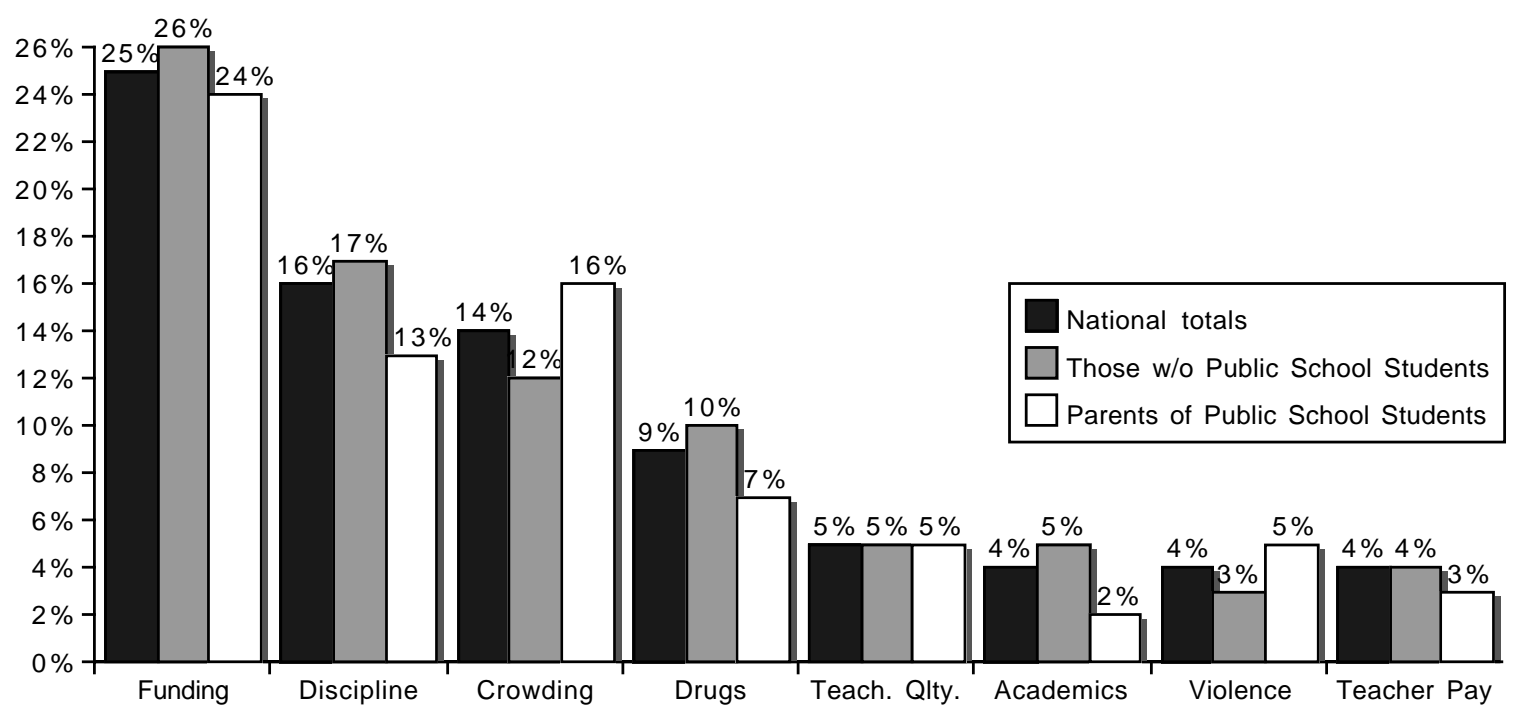
According to the report, the majority of home-schooled children nationwide come from white, two-parent families with at least three children.

• The *Christian Science Monitor* has weighed in on recent discussions about history and social studies.

Many students don't know basic history facts, and don't study them in social studies, which stresses concepts over facts.

As early as 1998, the National Assessment of Educational Progress Civics exam showed that 75 percent of students scored at "basic" or "below basic" levels in civic knowledge. *CJ*

## PDK/Gallup Poll 2003: Most Significant Issues Facing Pub



## Controversial survey focuses on No Child Left Behind

## Poll Finds Support of Public Schools Over Options, Concern About Fairness of Testing Evaluations

By KAREN PALASEK  
Assistant Editor

RALEIGH  
Americans like their public schools. In fact, they would rather reform public school than abandon them for alternatives such as transfers or private schools, according to the 2003 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll of American attitudes toward public schools.

Even when schools are identified as failing or "needing improvement" under the federal No Child Left Behind law, parents express a strong desire to obtain extra services, such as tutoring, at their child's school instead of elsewhere. If their child became eligible for a transfer, only about half of the parents say they have enough information to choose a nonfailing school.

Vouchers cleared the Constitutional barrier in 2002, but the PDK/Gallup polling appeared to find the public less enthusiastic about them this year than last. In 2002, public backing for vouchers reached 48 percent in the Gallup poll. This year, that figure was just 38 percent, much closer to the 34 percent approval rate in 2001.

Voucher advocates have long criticized the Gallup polling on vouchers for using flawed language to generate a politically predetermined result. Phi Delta Kappa's "use of biased and misleading questions results in the conclusion that Americans do not embrace providing choices to families whose children are trapped in failing schools," the Washington-based Center for Education Reform stated. "PDK is a society that in its modern history has become vehement in its defense of traditional public education, regardless of its record."

The poll of 1,011 adults focused on several issues that will be in the forefront as schools deal with the requirements of No Child Left Behind. At least 75 percent, however, say they know little or nothing about No Child Left Behind. Most, about 60 percent, favor decision-making at the local vs. state or federal level.

## Testing is an issue

Those who answered questions on the PDK/Gallup poll expressed concern about the role of test results under No Child Left

Behind. It didn't seem to matter whether parents had children in the public schools, 66 percent indicated it was not fair to label a school "needs improvement" as the result of a single test.

The needs-improvement label will attach to North Carolina schools that miss "adequate yearly progress" goals for two years. Even though states establish their own AYP benchmarks, they can be hard to meet. Every subgroup in the school must succeed, or the entire school falls short. In 2002-03, 53 percent of N.C. schools missed AYP for at least one target or subgroup.

That result has the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, as well as teachers, bristling at the federal law. According to DPI, 284 schools, or 13.1 percent, missed their AYP by just one target. Across the state, 68 percent of North Carolina's schools met 90 to 100 percent of targets.

The number of targets for each school varies with the number of student subgroups they serve. Two schools in the state had a single subgroup, 579 had 17 target groups, and one school had 35 targets to shoot for. A school must have at least 40 students in a given category before it becomes a target under AYP, but many students fall into multiple categories. Every category must reach the AYP benchmark, or the school fails for that year.

## Students and 'teaching to the test'

Poll participants didn't approve of evaluating students based on math and English tests alone. Regardless of whether they had children in public schools, 71 to 77 percent thought the subjects tested were too narrow. At least 80 percent agreed that the English and math tests create a de-emphasis on other subjects in the curriculum.

As for teaching to the tests, respondents said that teachers have a strong incentive to gear instructional time toward anticipated test items. A total of 66 percent agreed that teachers will face these incentives, and nearly 60 percent think teaching to the tests "is a bad thing."

Only one question in the poll asked parents explicitly about standards for special-education students. Under current practices, many special-education students

take regular end-of-grade tests as well as National Assessment of Educational Progress exams. They may be given special accommodations, but the results are compiled along with results of other students. At least 66 percent of respondents said "no" to the item that asked whether the same standards should apply to special ed as to regular students.

## Improving schools and teachers

Some of the more interesting results of the survey appear in attitudes toward funding, and parents' ideas about what it will take to improve American schools.

When parents were asked to rank the most significant problems facing schools in 2003, funding placed first. At least one-fourth ranked funding above discipline, the next most urgent issue they identified. Most survey participants thought teacher salaries were too low, and at least 64 percent believed that schools in need of improvement should increase teacher salaries as way to attract high-quality teachers.

Respondents said that when it comes to the racial achievement gap, the most important factors are a combination of parent involvement, home life, student interest, and community involvement. Ninety-four to 97 percent said these were "very" or "somewhat" important in closing the gap.

Teacher quality was included among the significant problems facing schools, but respondents didn't get a chance to rank it against family and community factors that could eliminate learning gaps. More than half of respondents said that the gap can be erased without more spending. While parents say systems need to pay a premium to bring good teachers to low-performing schools, they also indicate a belief that schools and spending are not the root cause of gaps in academic achievement.

Responses were about evenly split over voucher use. Half think they will make a positive difference in achievement, vs. no difference. Full-tuition vouchers would send as many families to public as to private religious schools of choice, and some to nonreligious schools. Half-tuition vouchers favor a choice of public school enrollment, according to the survey. *CJ*



*Students discuss performance, expectations, and opportunities*

## Foreign Students Compete For Education In Their Home Countries

By KAREN PALASEK  
Assistant Editor

RALEIGH  
Carolina Journal recently asked three young adults to discuss their pre-university education experiences, and to talk about preparatory education in their home countries of India, Kenya, and China. The information that they shared reveals that these countries, with relatively few education resources, produce high quality graduates through a process of intense competition for seats in public schools.

All of the students interviewed chose to pursue part of their university or graduate education outside their own country, and all answered the same set of questions for these interviews.

Questions covered the number of years of pre-university schooling, access to schooling, ability "tracking," academic standards, percent of students who attain high levels of education, nonuniversity options, employment prospects, and what the typical educational level is across their countries. They were also invited to comment on their educational experiences, or on what they have observed abroad.

### India

Sabyasachi Mukherjee is a graduate of Jadavpur University in Kolkata, India, and a product of Indian pre-university education. He visited the United States as a John Locke Foundation intern in 2003.

There are two broad categories of schools in India, Mukherjee said — government-owned public schools and individually owned private schools. Private schools are further divided into general schools and convent schools.

India has 25 states and seven territories. Some schools follow the syllabus set by their state, while others are affiliated with and follow a syllabus determined by the Central Board. Since 1986, there has been significant effort in India to establish a national framework for curriculum, and to set broad guidelines across all states, according to the Indian National Council of Research and Training.



Sabyasachi Mukherjee

Formal education begins at 3 to 5 years old. There are 15 years of schooling below the university level. Ten grades of primary-middle education are followed by two years of secondary education, after which university begins. At the secondary level, Mukherjee said, students have to specialize in one of three broad "streams:" science, commerce, or arts.

All students take a 10th-year public exam. The purpose of this is to "decide in which field to specialize during the next two years," and at the university level.

"The competition at this examination level is cutthroat," he said. "There are hundreds of thousands of students who sit for this exam, and seats for a stream of someone's choice in a prestigious school [is] like gold dust."

Mukherjee reports that he was among the top 5 percent of these students, and because of that was able to get a seat for two years in a very good school.

Another public examination at the end of the 10th year forms the basis for admission to a university. A prospective economics major, such as Mukherjee, would need a score in the 90th percentile to gain a seat in Jadavpur University. "Given the fact [that] the number of candidates sitting for the plus-two level exam touches millions, getting a seat in college is like winning a lottery," he said.

Economic factors play a large role in pre-university education. Parents who can afford it send their children to the better, private schools, "with state schools left for not-so-fortunate people," he said.

Location and sex also make a difference. In cities, most parents allow their boys to complete the 10 level, while girls may be expected to marry or discontinue their education earlier.

Poorer families now encourage their children to get more education. Primary education is compulsory, but in practice family and social pressure and the desire for income determine how long students stay in school. A child's educational status will reflect on family status.

Mukherjee represents only about one-half of 1 percent of the Indian population

and bread got too expensive. his age. Mukherjee said U.S. students "are simply spoiled for choices." Mukherjee is currently pursuing graduate work in Manchester, England.

### Kenya

June Arunga, a native Kenyan, is a graduate of the University of Nairobi. She was director of youth programs at the Inter-Region Economic Network in Nairobi. She was contacted by *CJ* while she was working on a documentary for the BBC in London.

School in Kenya begins at age 3 to 7, and is free at the primary level. Even so, some families cannot afford the clothing and food needed to send their children, so they don't attend. Pre-university education spans 16 years, from kindergarten through secondary school.

According to Arunga, grades determine whether a child can remain in school in Kenya, or must exit and try to work. The Kenyan public education system doesn't have the resources to send every child to secondary school, Arunga said, and spaces in public universities are even harder to come by.

Kenyan students encounter the first cutoff after eight years of primary school. A national exam determines which students get limited spaces in secondary school. After four years of secondary school, students take a second national exam. This determines who will be allowed a university seat.

"Grades are very important," Arunga said, "because availability and allocation of the limited spaces...for the career you would like to study, is all subject to merit." Private education is very expensive, she said, and "only the very rich have the luxury to study whatever they want, even if they did not excel." June's family is middle class, but she describes having to give up eating breakfast when milk, butter,

and bread got too expensive.

"The bottom line is the economic question," Arunga said. If you can pay and your family can survive without your income, you go to school, "if not, then you don't."

Professional employment is hard to find in Kenya, even with a master's degree.

Leaving the country is a "coveted option" for those who can afford to relocate and extend their job horizons. Her work with students in the U.S. led her to say that "home schooled students were the brightest and most interested" students that she encountered.

### China

"Children are the future of China," said Han Guang, who studied at Xi'an Uni-

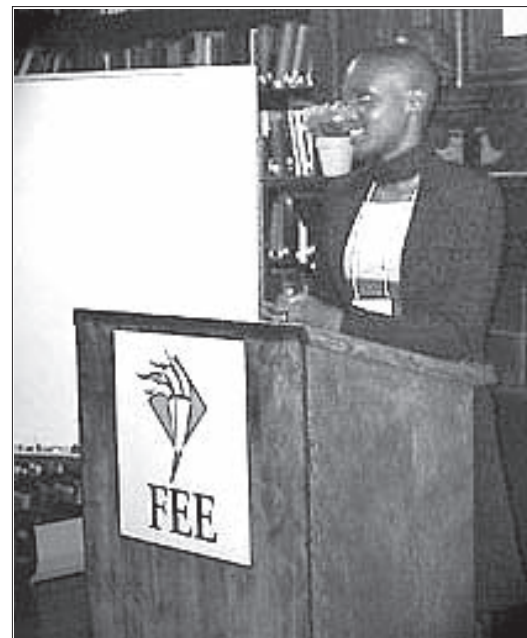
versity. Guang now takes post-graduate work at the University of Manchester in England.

No matter how poor, all children in China must attend school. To assure this, the first nine years of education are compulsory in China. All aspects of Chinese education are mandated by the Chinese Ministry of Education, Guang said.

Critical points in the Chinese student's education come at the entrance to high school, Guang said. "The enrollment exam to high school is crucial for us because if you can enter a high quality school, you will attain the key to the door of university." There are 12 years of pre-university education in China. Pressure to achieve comes both from parents and school teachers.

Guang describes the Chinese preparatory system as rigid, which stifles creativity and innovation. Still, most students try to continue their education after high school.

Admission to universities is very competitive, and granted on the basis of academic, physical, and moral qualifications. Guang is among the 20 percent who go on to postgraduate study, but one of only about 5 percent who can study abroad. *CJ*



June Arunga

John  
LOCKE  
FOUNDATION

### Your Home on the Web for North Carolina Public Policy

The John Locke Foundation's brand new, completely redesigned home page is your best source of research, analysis, and information on the critical public policy issues facing North Carolina state and local governments.

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See what one Raleigh paper called "Matt Drudge with Class"



## Course of the Month

## You hate to see this course here

This month's selection is offered for spring 2004 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It is a "service learning course" offered through the "APPLES" program (the acronym stands for Assisting People in Planning Learning Experiences in Service). What that means, according to the web site ([www.unc.edu/apples/courses](http://www.unc.edu/apples/courses)), is that it "incorporate[s] a service-learning component into [its] curriculum. Instead of just talking about theories in the classroom, as an APPLES student you will have the opportunity to put your ideas and knowledge to work in the community."

Just in case you wonder: "Why? Not only will the service-learning component enhance your class experience, it will also translate to valuable work experience, a heightened awareness of your community, and a chance to explore possible careers."

Imagine, if you will, the career you can explore through this class:

**COMM 129: FOUNDATIONS OF HATE**  
Students will learn about the nature of hate in American life, with an explicit focus on how hate is used to accomplish social and political goals. The course will also focus on how students may fight hate in their own communities and UNC students will partner with a community organization to develop and conduct workshops devoted to helping people in the community to address hate speech and hate crime.

Now, don't think that UNC-CH is preparing future Thought Police. For two reasons: First, if they are, it would obviously be dangerous for you to think it. Second, it may be the case that this class *isn't* inventing "hate" as a motive behind individuals' actions in society and politics.

Yes, CM will readily grant that often what's regarded as "hate speech" and "hate crime" is defined by leftist politics. Legally, crime is crime, which is to say, illegal — and speech is free. Add that modifier "hate," and then you have an inferred motive for the crime — which the groundbreaking 20th century social thinker Eric Blair appropriately labeled *crimethink* — and you also have "hate speech," which a "living Constitution" cannot protect, and besides, hate speech is tantamount to hate crime and should be treated as such. Right?

Plus, who loves hate? Hate's defenders are few and hard to find, and besides, who's looking? And whereas opinions based upon reason and philosophy must be treated with respect, hatred is irrational and must be shunned. That's why it's such a handy political ploy to denounce someone's views with which one disagrees as "hate." It might take some sleights of rhetoric to name the group being targeted by such inferred hate, but those who are crafty enough to play the hate card are usually adept at naming what's supposedly being hated. Thus, opponents of "affirmative-action" racial discrimination by government really only hate minorities, people who support the right of Christian organizations to set their own policies according to their beliefs really only hate gays, people who applaud the passage of the ban on late-term abortions of babies that could otherwise survive really just hate women, etc. The possibilities are limited only by the imaginations of the debate-haters. CJ

# Conference Explores Tainted Teaching In History, Math, Science and English

By JON SANDERS  
Assistant Editor

RALEIGH  
On Saturday, Nov. 1, more than 100 academics and scholars gathered in Raleigh to discuss "What Has Become of Standards in Higher Education?"

The conference was the annual higher education conference conducted by the Pope Center for Higher Education Policy. It took place at the Jane S. McKimmon Center of North Carolina State University. Three of its sessions discussed how teaching three disciplines within colleges and universities had changed.

## Teaching history, math and science

The first session, "What Has Happened to the Teaching of History?," featured Thomas Reeves, emeritus professor of history of the University of Wisconsin at Parkside, and UNC-Chapel Hill history professor Roger Lotchin.

Reeves told how history today is "seen almost exclusively through the lenses of race, color, and sex." The study and teaching of history now is based upon "emphasizing grievance and pity," Reeves said, and dissent from this approach provokes suppression. "I've seen it; I've felt it," he said.

Reeves also blamed open admissions and the "anti-intellectual smog that hovers over all American university campuses" for rendering serious education impossible.

To remedy these problems, Reeves suggested restricting college attendance to those who can handle the work of a real college education and in fact desire it, bringing back the requirements for a broad education on campus (only two percent of colleges require students to take any history), ending the blacklisting of conservative professors and the punishing of conservative students, rewarding demanding professors, and investing money and time in discussing the intrinsic value of education.

Lotchin opened his remarks by describing great feats of social interaction and innovation that occurred on the U.S. homefront during World War II. He cited many instances of how the nation worked together despite regional differences, ethnicity, disability, educational differences, and many other social differences.

But historians don't discuss the miracles of production nor the emergence of a more comprehensive American nationality that came about during the war, Lotchin said. Instead, "homefront history is becoming increasingly about minorities." The present body of historical literature about the homefront is inadequate, Lotchin said, except for African-Americans, gender issues, and the Japanese internment.

The second session, "What Has Happened to the Teaching of Mathematics and Science?," featured John Wegner, editor of *Science Insights*, and John Hubisz, visiting physics professor at N.C. State and former president of the American Association of Physics Teachers.

Hubisz told how logic, once a staple of education, has disappeared from curricula. The 1960s gave birth to "informal geometry — an oxymoron if ever there were one,"

Hubisz said, but up until the 1950s, students took a battery of mathematics, progressing from geometry, analytical geometry, philosophy of mathematics, and so forth. Students took "college" mathematics to prepare them for college, but now, Hubisz said, such courses earn them college credit.

Hubisz asked the audience if they remembered the old expectation that every student should spend three hours outside of class for every hour in class. "Students here argue that such an expectation is ridiculous," Hubisz said. They have jobs and other interests besides studying, and this attitude "strongly affects what goes on in universities." As a consequence, concerning the teaching of physics, at most American colleges more than 50 percent of physics graduates are foreign students.

Hubisz said that physicists recognized this problem years ago, but they made the mistake of allowing teachers education to prepare teachers to teach physics. Now physics associations work to improve physics teaching in K-12 and conduct research on physics education.

Our students aren't dumb, Hubisz said, but "higher education has too much become lower education."

Wenger discussed how political radicals are attacking the idea of science, using the example of "difference feminists" attacking a "masculine bias" in science. Wegner said they approach "the discovery of truth as a gendered affair."

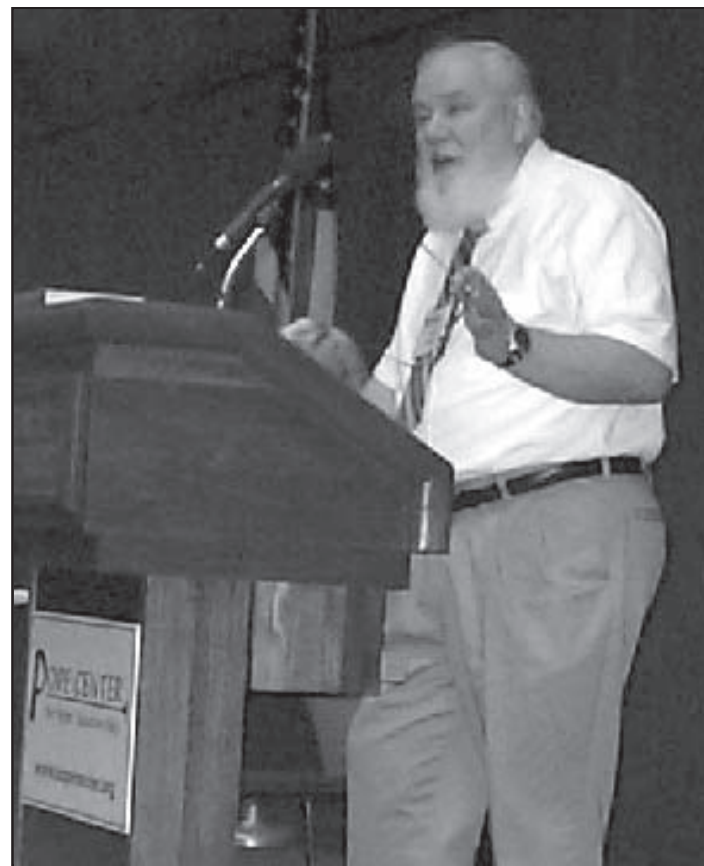
Their arguments, however, are self-defeating, Wenger said, and some are risible. For example, Wenger quoted feminists' argument against the teaching of egg fertilization. They criticize what they see as the egg being portrayed as "passive" and the sperm "active," on the basis that students might extrapolate from it that "women should be silent."

Wenger said feminists fail to show why good science done by women owed not to their own abilities as scientists but to their gender or "female perspective".

## Teaching English

The third session, "What Has Happened to the Teaching of English?," featured Paul Cantor, professor of English at the University of Virginia, and Thomas Bertonneau, visiting professor of English at the State University of New York at Oswego.

Cantor cited two major shifts in pedagogy that were most pronounced in English departments, where they are the least checked, than in other disciplines. In the sciences, after all, there are still necessarily "right answers." One of those shifts in the attack on lecturing as a mode of teaching, Cantor said. Cantor noted that many English professors pride themselves on the fact



NCSU Prof. John Hubisz tells how teaching math has changed.



UNC-Ch Prof. Roger Lotchin.

that they no longer lecture, but instead "facilitate discussions" in the classroom. This approach allows teachers "to walk in class unprepared," Cantor said.

Another pedagogical shift is the reliance on the group project. Cantor said he can see an educational function to the activity, but that it is employed extensively and as "a kind of socialism of education." Group-project advocates dislike individualism and don't like competition among students, Cantor said. Ironically, he said, students often complain that professors don't lecture enough and that "they didn't come to college to hear other confused 18-year-olds discuss the material."

These changes are very much ideologically based, Cantor said, and in tune with the new thinking on the curriculum — decentering. No longer is it the subject matter that's decentered, but even the teaching itself. He cited one example of a "facilitator" not correcting a student's idea that John Milton wrote in the 19th century, so during the 40-minute class period the teacher as facilitator allowed *Paradise Lost* to seem a literary reaction to the French Revolution.

Bertonneau gave a presentation steeped in classical allusions to argue the link between Eros and Education — that youthful attraction can lead to higher learning. But this requires educators to have the wisdom to perceive students' awakening Eros and harness the accompanying energies towards instruction.

Bertonneau decried the absences students face in their instruction, given this link between Eros and Education. Instead of refocusing their fledgling passions to aesthetic loveliness and thus inculcating a passion for higher ideals, educators today give them "sex education" that is explicit, sexual harassment training, and also lectures teaching that poems, movies, and the other arts serve as social code for expressing racism, sexism, and the like. Rather than learning a vocabulary of the soul, they are given a perniciously secular education from kindergarten through college, obsessed with a "cult of ugliness."

"The education price in the humanities" of this lack, Bertonneau said, "is a crisis of the soul, of a debilitating and moribund Eros." Bertonneau said education reformers must "learn how to put the loins and the brains back together." CJ



The public 'wants lower standards in higher education'

## 2003 Caldwell Award Winner Peter Wood Describes Academe's 'Flowering Imbecility'

By JON SANDERS  
Assistant Editor

RALEIGH

**B**oston University associate professor of anthropology and higher education commentator Peter Wood delivered the keynote address at the Pope Center for Higher Education Reform's 2003 conference, "What Has Become of Standards in Higher Education?"

Wood is author of *Diversity: Invention of a Concept*, published in 2003 by Encounter Books. He is a frequent writer on American culture and issues in higher education whose columns can be seen at *National Review Online*.

Wood's address before the Pope Center conference was entitled "Loosestrife: The Flowering of Imbecility in American Education." Wood opened his talk with a discussion of loosestrife, a summer weed with purplish flowers that can be seen around wetlands and waterways. As Wood explained, the weed has a pleasing appearance. Nevertheless, it is a weed, but more than that, it is not one that is native to North America. Regardless of its pleasing appearance, purple loosestrife is an invader that is choking waterways and crowding out native species. It is a threat.

From there Wood began to cite the facts of the decline of higher education and, worse, the public's acceptance of lower standards for higher education. He said that we have witnessed a transformation of higher education into a system that prolongs adolescence into "children's" third decade. Nevertheless, the public has been content to watch this transformation take place, because they have allowed themselves to find it pleasing. "Economically speaking, Americans want low academic standards," Wood said. "It's what we purchase."

According to Wood, "the public has by and large acquiesced in their responsibility" to higher education. Universities have become accustomed to putting identity groups, identity politics, diversity, and the like in front of academic standards. The public has been complicit in allowing universities to partially displace academic standards with racial and ethnic quotas.

Higher education officials, meanwhile, find they can market these low standards better than they ever could market high standards, Wood said. But even when they are questioned about the degradation of their standards, academics "found ways to justify them as high." So universities began employing phrases such as "celebrate diversity," "empower learning," etc.

### Preferring to be 'suckers'

Besides, people do not want to believe that the standards are lower, because they prefer to believe they can handle academic work. Thus those who are affected by the lower academic standards, Wood said, rather than find outrage in them, find comfort.

"The educationist comforts us with the idea that we belong in the company of genius," Wood said. "Educational loosestrife comforts us with its educational sweetness."

Wood noted that even before John Dewey, P. T. Barnum discerned that the way to get people to pay money for really dumb spectacles was to dress them up as education. Barnum excelled by selling purposeful exaggerations



Boston University's Peter Wood (right), author of *Diversity: The Invention of a Concept*, accepts the 2003 Caldwell award from Pope Center Director George C. Leef.

and trickery, Wood said. He showed that "quite often we know we're being suckered, and we buy that ticket anyway."

Wood compared the public's allowing themselves to be suckered by Barnum to their allowing the Progressives to take control of public education. Wood said Progressivist education had three themes. These were attacks on the three components of traditional learning: attacks on memory, attacks on authority, and attacks on hierarchy.

The decline of memory has brought about educational standards stripped of their most substantial content. Its effects are everywhere, even at the checkout desk, where the clerk is unable to make change without the register telling him the total.

The educational authorities of today are now supposedly the students, who are placed in charge of "finding things out for oneself." Meanwhile, "educationists teach students to sneer at the greatest authorities of their times as if they were only puppets of their times or purveyors of prejudice," Wood said. "They teach students instead to trust in their own ignorance."

Wood discussed other barriers to higher education, including the percentage of high school graduates who attend college and also the recent changes made to the SAT. The main reason we have problems in higher education, Wood said, is because "we don't think good teaching and rigorous curricula are important."

Nevertheless, he concluded on a hopeful note. "Citizens are changing," he noted. The young are rejecting the low standards and are even learning to memorize such things as poems, Wood said. They are even discovering the value of educational authority, he said.

At the conclusion of his talk, Pope Center director George C. Leef presented Wood with the Caldwell Award, named after two pioneers in higher education in North Carolina, David Caldwell and Dr. Joseph Caldwell. Previous recipients of the annual award were Alan Charles Kors, Abigail Thernstrom, and the late Peter Aranson. cj



Purple loosestrife.

## Has UNC Too Many North Carolinians?

**S**chools of the University of North Carolina system have a limit on the percentage of out-of-state students they can accept. The General Assembly has it set at 18 percent for each UNC campus. There is a move afoot to raise the limit to 22 or perhaps 25 percent. Should we?

UNC Chancellor James Moeser said the cap imposes "a barrier to our enrolling more academically outstanding students."

That's correct. At Chapel Hill last year, more than 1,000 out-of-state students with high SAT scores (over 1,400) were turned away because the school couldn't admit any more non-North Carolinians. The North Carolinians who were admitted instead had lower scores than that.

Why is that a problem?

UNC leadership says that if Chapel Hill could admit more of those academically gifted out-of-staters, it would "help stem the brain drain leading many of North Carolina's best and brightest to attend out-of-state colleges."

Brain drain? Are we to seriously believe that the welfare of the state is harmed when top students head off to college in other states? It's hard to see how. Employers in North Carolina can and do hire top talent in the national labor market. Where someone went to college means almost nothing in this day of mobility. Even if UNC gets its way, the state won't be any better off, because those out-of-state students will also go wherever the best jobs are.

The solution to the brain-drain problem is a better economic climate, something that the education establishment can't produce for us.

UNC also argues it will give UNC "more diversity." Moeser said many of North Carolina's best students choose "out-of-state colleges that enroll more geographically diverse student bodies." True, the great national universities have "more geographically diverse student bodies," but that has nothing to do with the reason why students go there. "Diversity" has become an all-purpose justification for just about everything universities want to do these days. It's usually a very weak justification — in this case, preposterous.

Moeser said raising the cap will give UNC a "more intellectually stimulating environment." Well, having a few hundred SAT 1,400-plus non-North Carolinians replace an equal number of SAT 1,200 in-staters might make a tiny bit of difference on campus, but remember, the students are the ones receiving the education. The intellectual environment is overwhelmingly determined by the professors, not the students.

The above arguments seem so weak that you suspect that they're cover for something else. I believe they are: prestige and money.

For the last several years, Chapel Hill has narrowly missed making the Top 25 in the annual "Best Colleges" issue of *U.S. News & World Report*, which ranks colleges by inputs, including student selectivity, rather than educational quality. Quality is impossible to quantify. The UNC brass would love to crow over making the Top 25, but UNC prestige is of no more benefit to the state than are basketball championships.

Concerning money, the out-of-state students would pay substantially more in tuition, giving the UNC system several million dollars more to spend. Compared to the entire system budget, though, it's a fairly small amount. And just because the university has more to spend doesn't mean that the typical North Carolinian will be better off. His taxes won't go down.

The drawback to the plan is obvious — some North Carolina families whose children would have been able to attend Chapel Hill or one of the other campuses that is at the cap, will have to go elsewhere — perhaps UNCC or East Carolina. In turn, some students who would have gotten in at those schools may have to go elsewhere. More out-of-state students means disappointment for some North Carolinians, whose taxes support the system.

In short, raising the cap isn't such a great idea. cj



George C. Leef



## Bats in the Belltower

## Modest Proposals at N.C. State to Put Diversity in Every Classroom

North Carolina State University has a new diversity czar. Apparently, "diversity czar" is the term *de rigueur*, as it was used without irony by *The News & Observer* in its Oct. 14 article on N.C. State's Jose Picart.

"We say academics is our core mission," said Czar Jose I. "So we must put diversity into academics."

Furthermore, according to the *N&O*, the new czar "said professors should integrate diversity into the classroom of every discipline, no matter how technical." One may wonder how. Picart anticipated that. "For example, he said, a humanities student could be required to attend a lecture or dinner and then write an essay about it. An engineering professor could require students to go into the community to conduct group projects, then grade them on their interactions with residents."

Some professors may have already reworked their course descriptions, regardless of how technical their discipline, to meet the new czar's decree. The following list came to *CAROLINA JOURNAL* anonymously, and *CJ* cannot vouch for its accuracy. Readers will note that they are modest proposals. That having been said, here is the list of those course descriptions, with the additions highlighted in italics:

### CHEMISTRY 416. ANALYTICAL CHEMISTRY LABORATORY

Experiments in spectroscopy, electrochemistry, chromatography and electronics; computer applications to experimental design and data smoothing. *Dinner with a NAMBLA representative.*

### BOTANY 421. PLANT PHYSIOLOGY

Physiology of higher plants with emphasis on biochemical, cell biological and molecular aspects of how plants function. Unique aspects of regulation of plant metabolism including photosynthesis, respiration, nitrogen fixation, cell wall biosynthesis, growth and stress responses will be emphasized. The course is intended for students interested in postgraduate studies in plant biology. *Group project: "No justice, no peace" demonstration. Suggested sites: Wal-Mart stores, Starbucks stores, other successful equal-opportunity employers. If in doubt, just go to GOP headquarters.*

### FOREIGN LANGUAGE-RUSSIAN 201. INTERMEDIATE RUSSIAN I

Basic Russian language skills continued. More emphasis given to writing and essential conversational practice. Intermediate level readings in Russian literature and culture. Class and laboratory practice; written assignments. *Take-home assignment: spend a night in a closet; compare and contrast experience with that of LGBTQ students in the closet imposed by our culture.*

### NUCLEAR ENGINEERING 400. NUCLEAR REACTOR ENERGY CONVERSION

Introduction to the concepts and principles of heat generation and removal in reactor systems. Power cycles, reactor heat sources, analytic and numerical solutions to conduction problems in reactor components and fuel elements, heat transfer in reactor fuel bundles and heat exchangers. Problem

sets emphasize design principles. Heat transfer lab included. *Group project bake sale. Cookies, brownies, fudge, pie. Different prices for men and women reflect gender income disparity.*

### MECHANICAL & AEROSPACE ENGINEERING 541. ADVANCED MACHINE DESIGN I

Advanced treatment of stress analysis and mechanics of materials devoted to analytical methods of predicting the life of mechanical components. Development of governing differential equations of elasticity. Analyses of beams, stress concentrations, pressurized pipes, rotating disks and contact stresses. Usage of energy approach to elasticity problems also as well as a brief introduction to plastic failure criteria. *Essay topic: "Reparations for slavery by 2005 — no more dreams deferred."*

### ANIMAL SCIENCE 303. PRINCIPLES OF EQUINE EVALUATION

Conformation and function, performance, and soundness of the horse. Breed standards, rules, and regulations for evaluation, selection, and performance. Field trips. *Abortion endorsement and flavored condom distribution at Planned Parenthood.*

### PHYSICS 401. QUANTUM PHYSICS I

An introduction to the basic principles of quantum physics with an emphasis on selected applications to atoms, molecules, solids, nuclei and elementary particles. *Assignment: "Queer Eye for the Quantum Physics Guy." Have LGBTQ student "rainbow up" your wardrobe.*

### STATISTICS 430. INTRODUCTION TO REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Regression analysis as a flexible statistical problem solving methodology. Matrix review; variable selection; prediction; multicollinearity; model diagnostics; dummy variables; logistic and nonlinear regression. Emphasizes use of computer. *Lunch, lecture with Latina Lesbians.*

### AFRICANA STUDIES 240. AFRICAN CIVILIZATION

An interdisciplinary study of centers of African civilization from antiquity to the 1960s. Such centers include ancient Egypt, Nubia, Axum, Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Kilwa, Malinda, Sofola, Zinzibar and Monomotapa. *Attendance of the annual "Heritage Pride" concert given by Kids of the Confederacy's "Stars & Bars Forever" glee club.*

### WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES 492. THEORETICAL ISSUES IN WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES

Examination of feminist theory. Study of formative texts in modern feminism, drawn from various disciplines within the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. In-depth exploration of feminist perspectives on issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, work and mothering, among others. Analysis of local and global cultural practices using feminist theoretical frameworks. *Requirement to attend a dinner with a man. Involves all cooking and cleaning.*

CJ

## Oops! Congressional 'Mistake' Prompts NIH Research Review

By JON SANDERS  
Assistant Editor

RALEIGH

A mistake by a congressional staff member ignited a review of research projects approved by the National Institutes of Health. But despite what U.S. Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., called "scientific McCarthyism," it turned out Congress had *not* declared war on the NIH approval process.

During an Oct. 2 oversight hearing, several U.S. representatives questioned the health value to the nation of several studies approved by the NIH. Some time after that hearing, someone from Congress sent the agency a list of hundreds of questionable projects.

The exact source was initially unknown, and the agency assumed it was being asked to justify those projects to Congress. So it began to undertake a review of those studies.

A few days after the list was sent, the sender was revealed as a mere staff member for the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, whose subcommittee on oversight and investigations has been reviewing the NIH grant-approval process.

The list had not been prepared by the committee, but by an organization called the Traditional Values Coalition, which claims to represent 43,000 churches across the nation.

Committee spokesman Ken Johnson

### A few of the questioned NIH projects

- \$147,000 to study the "genital arousal of lesbian, bisexual, [and] heterosexual women as they view pornography"
  - \$182,375 to research "jealousy among homosexuals"
  - \$317,739 to conduct research among "sex workers in Moscow"
  - \$700,618 to compare sexual behaviors of Mexican immigrants in the Southeast U.S. with sex behaviors in their home communities and analyze "migration-related determinants of sexual behaviors"
- Source: <http://traditionalvalues.org>

told the *Baltimore Sun* that the staff member had sent the list by mistake and had "exercised poor judgment."

"You've got nameless, faceless bureaucrats funding bizarre stuff, inappropriate stuff," said Andrea Lafferty, executive director of the TVC, in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* online's daily news of Oct. 31. "There needs to be accountability at the NIH."

"We are not targeting these grants," Johnson said, adding it was "much ado about nothing."

John T. Burkow, NIH spokesman, told the *Chronicle* that the agency would give Congress a general, not detailed, explanation of the research projects on the TVC list "very soon." CJ

## CAROLINA JOURNAL Publisher John Hood Garner's Praise for His Most Recent Book:

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Look for *Investor Politics* in bookstores or at [www.TempletonPress.org](http://www.TempletonPress.org).



Academic freedom is for students, too

## Intellectual Intolerance on Campus Faces a Diverse Group of Foes

By JON SANDERS  
Assistant Editor

RALEIGH  
In October, U.S. Rep. Walter Jones, a Republican representing the Third District in eastern North Carolina, and U.S. Rep. Jack Kingston, R-Ga., announced a bill known as the "Academic Bill of Rights." The measure would, Jones told the *Herald-Sun* of Durham on Oct. 26, protect the "intellectual independence of professors, researchers, and students."

"There is no place for partisan politics in higher education, especially when it influences the mindset of students," Jones told the newspaper. "Students go to college to learn and make independent, educated decisions."

Meanwhile, in the other chamber, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions conducted hearings over the lack of intellectual diversity tolerated by American universities.

At the same time, the *New York Times* of Oct. 27 carried an article by David Brooks discussing the "true anguish" that afflicts the conservative faculty "dissenters" on campus: "when a bright conservative student comes to them and says he or she is thinking about pursuing an academic career in the humanities or social sciences." The anguish is from knowing the "hostile and discriminating territory" and "intense discrimination" the student will face in that pursuit.

That same day, UNC-Wilmington conservative professor, Mike S. Adams, wrote in his TownHall.com column about "a new tactic being employed at many public universities," which "involves the use of the student group recognition process to force students to adopt beliefs alien to their conscience in order to promote 'tolerance' and 'inclusion.'" Adams cited efforts last semester by UNC-Chapel Hill to derecognize Christian groups on campus because they required their leadership to have a "belief in God," which UNC-CH found "exclusionary" and "intolerant."

Public outcry beat back that foray, but now, Adams said, "the UNCW Office of Student Organizations informed the College Republicans that they would be

derecognized if they did not incorporate the university's nondiscrimination clause into their constitution," practically meaning that "the College Republicans will now have to admit Democrats" or lose its official recognition.

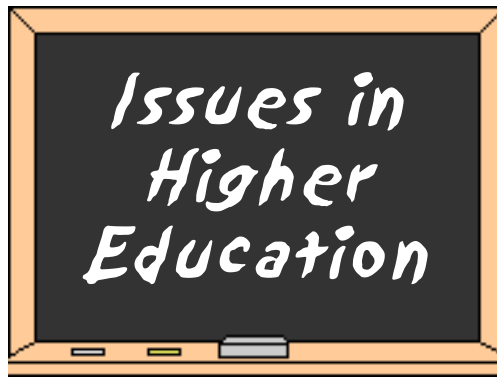
The timing of these actions was coincidence. But that was a coincidence made possible by the magnitude of the problem of intolerance for conservative ideas on campus, and the growing convictions among people who hold campuses near and dear that campus administrations are either oblivious to or complicit in the problem, and that others must be found to do something about it.

### Who should get involved

But who? As a panelist told the Senate committee, the problem *wasn't* to be solved by legislation. Anne D. Neal, president of the American Councils of Trustees and Alumni, a group that was smeared as neo-McCarthyist for citing its sources in its "Defending Civilization" report on academic anti-Americanism, said the solution rested with trustees and alumni.

Trustees and alumni certainly hold large sway. A similar idea was expressed by Adams in his column, entitled "Putting in your zero cents worth," aimed at donors to universities (many of who are alumni). Adams' column was written to second a Walter E. Williams column of Sept. 3 ("America's academic tyrants"), which encouraged donors to "Close your pocket-book" to universities that, in Adams' words, "claim to promote tolerance while in reality doing just the opposite."

But Williams and Adams have something else in common other than the idea of withholding donations as a way to encourage universities to break with the Diversity-Über-Alles lockstep. They're both university professors (Williams teaches economics at George Mason University). And



clearly the faculty need to get involved, although with them the unique problem that Brooks wrote about in the *Times* in operative: "faculties skew overwhelmingly to the left," meaning most won't notice the problem while the

rest, in the advice of a liberal professor to a bright, aspiring conservative academic, have "got to be really quiet."

Outside groups, such as ACTA, the Foundation of Individual Rights in Education (whose Greg Lukianoff spoke before the Senate committee also), the Center for the Study of Popular Culture (which is a proponent of the "Academic Bill of Rights"), and a host of other nonprofit organizations, are also important to collect and publicize examples of the problem. Likewise needed are media that are willing to report those problems, and not only mainstream media like the *Times*, but also reputable sites such as TownHall.com.

Let's add students and parents to that list as well. They are in a sense on the front lines of this assault, and they are beginning to fight back. For example, a new group named Students for Academic Freedom is running ads in campus newspapers nationwide under the heading, "Is Your Profes-

sor Using the Classroom as a Platform for Political Agendas? This Is a Violation of Your Academic Rights." The ad quotes from the American Association of University Professors' 1940 defense of academic freedom in which professors are enjoined to "be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject" and concludes with, "If your professor is abusing his or her teaching privilege or is confused about the professional obligations of an educator please contact us."

A resource for parents and students is the web site entitled NoIndoctrination.org, which "is an organization of parents who are disturbed that sociopolitical agendas have been allowed to permeate college courses and orientation programs," in the words of president and founder Luann Wright.

Wright explains that the site came about because some (not most) professors would "use their courses as stages for social or political propaganda... with impunity," which violates students' academic rights. Another reason for the site — important to note in this context — is because "conventional means [of] communicating with administrators, regents, trustees, alumni, and legislators" brought no end to the problem of "[i]deological fiefdoms."

All of these groups are doing what they can to bring cleansing light to the murky, reflexively socialist halls of academe. More light is needed. cj

## We Want Less!

Concerned About Issues Such As Taxes, Regulations, Property Rights & Patient Choice in Health Care?

Thousands of your fellow North Carolinians are, too — that's why they have joined **North Carolina Citizens for a Sound Economy** to fight for less government, lower taxes, and more freedom. They are making their voices heard.



North Carolina CSE members protest state tax increases at an August rally in Raleigh.

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— U.S. Rep. Richard Burr of Winston-Salem
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— Sen. John McCain

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## Town and Country

## Durham, hotel owners clash

Durham and the owners of the Heart of Durham hotel property may be headed to court after the property owners rejected the city's last offer of \$1.5 million for the 3.25-acre property, according to the *Durham Herald-Sun*.

The city plans to condemn the property so it can be used for a new train and bus station that also would serve as a stop on the planned regional rail network. The city expects the condemnation to draw a lawsuit from the property's owners, the Charles Russell Wellons Foundation, and a judge would determine the final price for the property.

The latest failed negotiations hinged on who would be responsible for demolishing the decrepit building, which would involve a costly asbestos cleanup. The \$1.5 million offer was contingent on the owners presenting the city with a clean lot.

"If they take the property... the city deposits their estimate of just compensation — which is the fair market value of the property, with all the good bad and ugly — with the court," said George Autry, a lawyer hired by the foundation. "A clean site, 3.25 acres in the middle of downtown Durham, is worth a whole lot more than \$1.5 million. We have not had it appraised yet."

The hotel, built in 1968 and originally known as the Downtowner Motor Inn, is surrounded by a fence and is falling apart.

## County may privatize EMS

Fire chiefs in Cumberland County will not run the county's Emergency Medical System, *The Fayetteville Observer* reports.

Freddy Johnson, president of the county fire chiefs association, said the management model selected by Cape Fear Valley Health System administrators calls for the ambulance provider to pay \$1 million to \$2 million to the health system each year. "That makes it impossible for the fire chiefs to participate," Johnson said. The county's emergency medical services are provided by the health system.

Richard Parks, the health system's president, said in late March that he was considering a plan to turn the ambulance system over to a private company to save money. Parks said that the health system loses \$4.2 million on ambulance services each year, and that a private company could manage the ambulances more efficiently.

## Council members settle tie

Chuck Houska has volunteered to serve a two-year term on the Clemmons Village Council, settling the tie with incumbent Mark Smith, the *Winston-Salem Journal* reports. The tie caused confusion about their terms.

Council members serve four-year terms. The lowest vote getter in the council race serves for two years.

Houska and Smith received 164 votes each in the Nov. 4 election. Election officials examined the results on Nov. 7, and both candidates remained tied. "There was one provisional ballot counted, which still resulted in a tie as each candidate received one additional vote," said Kathie Cooper, director of the Forsyth County Board of Elections. *CJ*

## Innovate 2004: Preserving American Dream

Conference to feature national experts on 'smart growth', its relevance to N.C.

By DONNA MARTINEZ

Associate Editor

RALEIGH

Over the past two decades, the term "smart growth" has become part of the national lexicon. Used frequently by policymakers and activists, the term describes a planning vision for transportation and development that purports to preserve the American dream of home ownership, mobility, and freedom. Proponents contend the result will be an ideal lifestyle that uses resources in the best interest of cities, towns, and their residents. But the ramifications of what is in reality a stifling and coercive approach to public policy are starkly different from the utopian-sounding rhetoric.

On Jan. 10, the John Locke Foundation will host *Innovate 2004: Preserving the American Dream in North Carolina*, a discussion of the consequences of the smart-growth movement, a look at the experiences of other states, and thoughts on what's in store for North Carolina if smart-growth policies continue to be implemented. Transportation and growth experts from around the nation and across North Carolina will share perspective on the movement's threat to liberty and freedom as demonstrated by transit and land-use regulations that promote dense urban development and restrict rural development.

## Rubin, Balaker: other rail projects

To kick off the conference, rail transit experts Thomas Rubin and Ted Balaker will team up for "What Will Rail Transit Do for North Carolina?" To set the framework, Rubin, a certified public accountant and independent consultant who was controller-treasurer of the Southern California Rapid Transit District during the construction of the Los Angeles Red Line subway, will review results of rail projects already operating. In the process, he will offer evidence of rail's exorbitant cost, ineffectiveness at reducing road congestion, and inefficient use of transportation dollars.

Balaker, Jacobs fellow in transportation policy for the Reason Public Policy Institute in Los Angeles, will bring the discussion home to North Carolina as he weighs in on the feasibility and cost of rail in North Carolina, including proposals for Charlotte and the Triangle. His presentation will include preliminary results of a North Carolina rail study he and others are conducting for the John Locke Foundation. The study will be released in early 2004.

"Light-rail projects tend to focus on one small area of a city and they generally don't do much to improve overall mobility," Balaker said. "It will be interesting to see if the North Carolina projects focus on improving overall mobility and especially improving the mobility of the working poor, who often have no alternative to public transit."

## Cox: make room for cars

If rail isn't the answer, then what are the components of sound transportation policy for North Carolina's growing cities? Urban policy and transportation specialist Wendell Cox will offer his expertise and analysis for "How Does North Carolina Best Meet Its Urban Transportation Needs?" According to Cox, a principal of the international public policy firm Wendell Cox Consultancy, those who try to make policy with an eye toward limiting the use of cars are heading down the wrong road.

"The regional planning organizations



Preserving the American Dream  
in North Carolina

<p><b>Saturday, January 10, 2004, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Radisson Governor's Inn, RTP</b></p> <p><b>Register at <a href="http://www.johnlocke.org/events">www.johnlocke.org/ events</a> or call 1-866-JLF INFO (1-866-553-4636). \$10 fee includes lunch.</b></p> <p><b>Schedule: 8:30 a.m....What Will Rail Transit Do for N.C.?</b></p>	<p><b>10:30 a.m. ..How Does North Carolina Best Meet its Urban Transportation Needs?</b></p> <p><b>Noon.....What Will Smart Growth Do for North Caro- lina Land Uses?</b></p> <p><b>2:00 p.m.....What Should North Carolina Do to Protect Land Values and Lifestyles?</b></p>
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in all North Carolina urban areas project that virtually all new urban travel demand will be for automobiles," Cox said. "There is good reason for this. The modern urban area, whether it be in the United States or Europe, is automobile-oriented. Transit can serve only the large downtowns, and there are none in North Carolina. The critical challenge is to keep the traffic and the economy moving," he said.

## Hartgen and O'Toole

Joining Cox will be UNC-Charlotte Professor of Transportation Studies David Hartgen, author of the Locke Foundation's recent policy report "Highways and Sprawl in North Carolina." Hartgen's study of North Carolina road construction projects during the 1990s disproved the common smart-growth argument that roads create sprawl. In fact, Hartgen's research proved the opposite is true: roads follow growth.

While the John Locke Foundation is analyzing transportation policy in North Carolina, the American Dream Coalition studies policy decisions around the nation and analyzes their impact. Randal O'Toole, the group's director, will join *Innovate 2004* to provide perspective for "What Will Smart Growth Do for North Carolina Land Uses?" A specialist in environmental and natural resources at the Thoreau Institute, O'Toole will offer a look at the movement's oppressive restrictions on property owners and businesses.

Negative consequences of smart-growth land policies include increased costs for homebuyers and consumers, and limited economic freedom for owners. In fact, according to the Heritage Foundation's 2002 Index of Economic Freedom, nations that protect economic freedom and property rights have per-capita incomes at least six times greater than nations that don't.

O'Toole believes smart growth is an elitist movement that favors those who can afford high housing prices and who prefer to ride transit, even though the vast majority of Americans find auto driving to be convenient and prefer to live in single-family homes with yards.

"Efforts to promote smart-growth planning in North Carolina will have the same effects as they have had in Oregon, California, Colorado, and elsewhere: unaffordable housing, declining rates of home owner-

ship, increased traffic congestion, and higher taxes to pay for subsidies to little-used rail transit and less desirable high-density housing," O'Toole said.

## Sanford and McClanahan

Marlene Sanford of the Triad Real Estate and Building Industry Coalition will add a North Carolina perspective. Sanders' work gives her detailed knowledge about the oppressive effects of land-use and transportation policies, particularly on home buyers.

According to the American Dream Coalition, a significant majority of Americans say their ideal home is a single-family house with a yard. Despite that clear desire, smart-growth advocates endorse growth boundaries and construction regulations that can push young home buyers out of the market. The result is that housing in less-regulated areas such as Las Vegas and Phoenix is more affordable than housing in smart-growth-friendly markets such as San Jose, Portland, and others.

Kay McClanahan, founder of South Carolina Property Rights Watch, will join O'Toole and Sanders. Her fight against smart-growth regulations, and other landowners in Richland County, S.C., will put a human face on the movement's effects.

## Charles and Sinclair

While the implications of smart-growth policies are stark and clear, there are ways to fend off the encroachment on personal choice and property rights. In the conference's final session, "What Should North Carolina Do to Protect Land Values and Lifestyles?," John Charles and Chris Sinclair will outline strategies to defeat the challenge with empirical evidence and factual arguments.

Charles, senior policy analyst and environmental policy director with the Cascade Policy Institute in Portland, has conducted detailed research into Portland's transit-oriented policies and other smart-growth plans. Sinclair, president of the Triangle Community Coalition, will discuss how his organization advocates policies that protect the rights and interests of property owners while promoting balance among economic growth, development, the environment, and community needs. *CJ*





Heavy equipment at work at a landfill in Indiana.

## Localities become sellers of trash and landfill services

# Garbage Becomes an Industry

By MICHAEL LOWREY  
Associate Editor

Waste disposal is increasingly becoming a business, with garbage as a commodity. Often communities can dispose of their garbage at the lowest cost by shipping it long distances to large, regional waste disposal sites. To get better deals, producers of garbage are even banding together, to offer landfills a long-term predictable stream of waste. Recent developments in Wake and Surry counties highlight this trend.

### Size matters

Cities and counties around the country are importing and exporting trash. In 2000, 49 states exported municipal solid waste and 45 states imported it. Between 1990 and 2000, interstate shipments of waste increased by 30 percent. After adjusting for inflation, disposal costs actual fell over the 10-year period.

A major reason for all this movement of solid waste is economics: There are economies of scale in operating a landfill. A larger facility can, for example, spread its permitting costs over many more users and use its equipment more efficiently.

A 1997 Environmental Protection Agency study highlights the advantages of size. The costs of operating a 100-ton-per-day landfill were three times higher on a per-ton basis than that of operating a 1,000-ton-per-day landfill. A 1,500-ton-per-day landfill was even more efficient, with costs on a per-ton basis one-fourth of that of the 100-ton-per-day landfill.

For scale, Cary, with a population of just over 100,000, generates about 27,000 tons of garbage a year.

It is difficult, however, for individual localities to generate enough trash to justify building and operating a large-scale, economically efficient landfill. Coming up with the needed capital can also be difficult.

These limits have helped spur the move toward large regional landfills operated by private firms. Today the private sector employs about 75 percent of the people in the solid-waste industry.

### Wake County acts

Garbage disposal remains very much a local responsibility. In Wake County, the county itself is responsible only for the waste generated in unincorporated areas. The county's 12 municipalities are responsible for the waste generated within their own borders.

"On our own, we really don't pick up

much garbage," Wake County Manager David Cooke said to *The News & Observer* of Raleigh.

"It makes it harder for us to bargain a new contract. If we have Raleigh's garbage and Cary's garbage and all the other towns, that's a lot of garbage. We can take that into the marketplace and get lower prices."

Much of the residential waste generated throughout the county currently goes to the North Wake landfill. That facility should be full in 2007, forcing users to find an alternative waste disposal site. Two approaches are being considered as a replacement for North Wake: opening a new landfill or shipping waste out of the county.

To address the issue most efficiently, Wake County and its municipalities are exploring combining their garbage contracts into one. By doing so and entering into a long-term agreement, the governments hope to reduce costs enough so that they won't have to open the new landfill. On an even larger level, Triangle J Council of Governments has started examining the feasibility of a regional garbage compact that might reach all the way from the Triangle area into Virginia.

### Surry County says no

One place Wake County's garbage most certainly will not be going to is Surry County. The Surry County Commission decided Oct. 2 to turn down a proposal to lease out its landfill to a private company. The company would have turned the site into a regional facility that disposed of waste from up to 200 miles away.

Under the proposal by Waste Industries, the company would have operated the fill for 30 years under an exclusive franchise agreement. Separate operating agreements would be renewable every 10 years. Waste Industries would also manage garbage collection and recycling within Surry County.

To reduce traffic through Elkin to the landfill, the company was looking at the possibility of constructing a special exit off Interstate 74 leading straight to the dump.

Waste Industries already operates a regional landfill in Sampson County. Among those speaking in support of the proposal was Sampson County Commissioner Kermit Williamson, who stated local residences in his county were pleased with the company.

While Surry County turned down Waste Industries' proposal, the strong incentives offered by the company demonstrate the financial resources of the industry. In time, it and other landfill operators will find the sites they need. *CJ*

## Local Innovation Bulletin Board

# Cable Costs Climb

Competition leads to lower cable rates and improved quality, concludes a new General Accounting Office report.

More than 70 million U.S. households receive television service from a cable television operator. In recent years, rates for cable service have increased at a faster pace than the general rate of inflation. From 1997 to 2002, the cost of basic cable service was up 40 percent — from an average of \$26.06 in 1997 to \$36.47 in 2002 — while the Consumer Price Index was up only 12 percent.

The GAO found competition from a wire-based company is limited to very few markets, but where available, cable rates are substantially lower — by an average of 15 percent — than in noncompetitive markets.

Direct broadcast satellite service is available nationwide. The two main providers are the DISH Network (EchoStar) and DIRECTV. In markets where both companies provide local broadcast stations, the GAO found that cable operators improve the quality of their service. Typically this involves providing about 5 percent more channels than in markets where DBS services do not yet carry local broadcast stations.

The effect that DBS competition has on pricing, however, is minimal. A 10 percent increase in market share by DBS providers was associated with only a 15 percent per month reduction in cable rates.

Both DIRECTV and the DISH Network carry local broadcast stations in the Charlotte, Raleigh-Durham, and Greensboro markets.

A variety of factors contribute to increasing cable rates. During the past three years, the cost of programming has increased considerably (at least 34 percent). Additionally, cable operators have invested large sums in upgraded infrastructures, which generally permit additional channels, digital service, and broadband Internet access.

Although some members of Congress have called for cable rate re-regulation, the GAO warns that regulations could raise rates for some consumers, while lowering them for others.

The report is "Issues Related to Competition and Subscriber Rates in the Cable Television Industry," GAO-04-08, Octo-

ber 2003. It can be found at [www.gao.gov/new.items/d048.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d048.pdf).

### Sewer improvements costly

Sewage treatment systems in 770 American cities are outdated. Many were built more than a century ago and need costly upgrades to meet federal clean-water standards.

But the federal money available for such updates is a fraction of what it was a generation ago.

The problem is that these cities' systems blend sewage from homes and businesses with runoff from streets, roofs, and parking lots when it rains. For generations, these cities dumped untreated waste into rivers and streams whenever heavy rainfall overwhelmed the systems' ability to carry the load to treatment plants.

Cities that built separate systems for sewage and storm water in the first place also must meet the standards of the Clean Water Act and its subsequent amendments. But the rules hit particularly hard at cities and suburbs that have combined systems.

Those communities are left with two options:

- They could build separate systems for sewage and storm runoff, which would mean huge disruptions and costs.
- Or they could build massive underground tanks to hold the combined flows during storms; after the storm, the wastewater could be pumped to treatment plants and released into rivers.

Most cities have picked the second option.

The federal government once paid 75 percent to 95 percent of the cost of such projects, industry experts say. That share has dropped to about 5 percent. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the cost of clean-water improvements from 2000 to 2019 will be \$388 billion more than federal money currently planned.

There is little movement in Congress to finance major clean-water initiatives at a time when the federal budget deficit is at record levels. More than likely, the costs will be shifted directly to residents through higher sewage bills.

Reported in *USA Today*. *CJ*

## Wanted: A Local Government Guru

The John Locke Foundation is accepting applications for a new full-time position at the **Center for Local Innovation**, a special project devoted to issues facing North Carolina counties and municipalities. Job responsibilities would include policy research, writing, analyzing local government budgets, and consulting with local officials about issues such as taxes, regulations, growth controls, transportation, and privatization.

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## Transit Lobby Misuses Urban Mobility Report

Publication by the Texas Transportation Institute of its 2003 urban mobility report recently has led the transit lobby to make false claims about the role transit can play in relieving urban congestion.

The American Public Transportation Association claims the report says that "more public transportation is needed to relieve traffic congestion" (<http://tinyurl.com/p9hl>). In fact, the report says no such thing.

TTI, which is part of Texas A&M's engineering program, has published its annual urban mobility report for more than a decade, and the latest report tracks highways and driving in each of 75 urban areas from 1982 through 2001. (See <http://mobility.tamu.edu/ums/> to download the full report.)

This year, TTI added a new feature: an evaluation of how bad congestion would be if public transit were somehow eliminated. The institute also made the unrealistic assumption that, without transit, everyone who now rides transit would start driving everywhere where they now go by transit. Since a large share of transit users in most cities are people who can't drive, this is absurd.

Based on this assumption, TTI calculated that transit greatly reduces urban congestion. Even this is unlikely in most urban areas. When the main Los Angeles transit agency went on strike for a month in 2000, no one could discern any increase in congestion. Except in a handful of major urban areas (mainly New York, Boston, Washington, Chicago, San Francisco, and Philadelphia), transit carries too few people to make any difference to congestion outside of downtown areas. This makes transit really just a subsidy to downtown densities.

Even if TTI's calculations are correct, the report says absolutely nothing about whether further investments in transit will reduce congestion. This is especially striking, because the report DOES calculate that further investments in other programs can reduce congestion:

- Freeway ramp metering currently saves motorists 73 million hours a year, and adding it to congested freeways that do not now have it could increase the savings by nearly 200 million more hours;

- Traffic signal coordination, which TTI calls "one of the most cost-effective tools to increase mobility" on signaled roads, could save motorists an added 17.2 million hours a year;

- Incident management — a coordinated effort to quickly remove stalled vehicles and other highway obstructions — could save motorists 100 million hours a year.

TTI also examined high-occupancy vehicle lanes but could not find evidence that they had significantly reduced congestion in most areas. TTI said this was partly due to a lack of data, but in fact many HOV lanes do not carry enough multipassenger vehicles to justify their use. TTI did not consider the effect of turning HOV lanes into high-occupancy/toll lanes, as proposed by the Reason Foundation and others ([www.rppi.org/ps305.pdf](http://www.rppi.org/ps305.pdf)).

In contrast to its statements on ramp

metering, signal coordination, and incident management, the TTI report makes no statements about the effects of investments in transit. Or does it?

A close look at the ranking of regions over the last two decades reveals that congestion grew fastest in those regions that invested mainly in rail transit. By contrast, regions that invested heavily in highways had much slower congestion growth, even in the case of many regions that grew faster than the rail regions.

To see this relationship, you can download the basic TTI data from <http://americandreamcoalition.org/tti2003.xls>. This spreadsheet shows population growth, growth of the "travel time index" (the institute's best measure of congestion), and other pertinent data for all 75 urban areas. To interpret the spreadsheet, read <http://americandreamcoalition.org/ttisheet.txt>.

Although you can sort the spreadsheet in any order you wish, it is currently sorted by the growth of the travel time index. The travel time index is a measure of how long it takes to get somewhere during rush hour compared to other times of the day. If, in uncongested conditions, it takes an hour to get somewhere, and it takes 1.5 hours in congested conditions, then the travel time index is 1.5. If the index in 1982 was 1.1 and in 2001 it was 1.4, then the growth is .3 or, as the institute puts it, 30 points.

The striking result is that nearly all of the 10 urban areas with the fastest congestion growth are rail cities. I include in this Seattle and Minneapolis-St. Paul because, while they did not start building rail lines until the end of the 1982-2001 period, they both adapted anti-highway policies by the early 1990s.

In contrast, fast-growing communities such as Orlando and Houston all have low rates of congestion growth, mainly because they invested in new highways rather than rails. Las Vegas, the nation's fastest growing major urban area, is particularly striking. New roads allowed it to have only the 17th-fastest growing rate of congestion.

Las Vegas also improved its bus service by contracting out buses to private operators, which led to a doubling of the region's transit market share in the last decade. No other urban area has been able to double transit's market share in this time period, and certainly none that focused on rail transit, many of which lost market share.

The American Public Transportation Association, which represents most transit agencies as well as rail transit engineering and construction firms, issued its press release within minutes of the Texas Transportation Institute's release of its report. It is disappointing that the institute, which in the past has presented its data in an objective manner, has allowed itself to become a tool of the transit lobby. *CJ*

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Randal O'Toole

## From Cherokee to Currituck

# Canton Frets About Challenge To Its Property Tax Valuation

By MICHAEL LOWREY

Associate Editor

CHARLOTTE

Canton is awaiting a ruling from the state Property Tax Commission on the valuation of the town's major industry. The outcome of the case will determine whether Canton has to raise its property taxes or reduce the services it provides to residents.

At issue is the valuation of the Blue Ridge Paper plant. Haywood County values the plant at \$211 million, a figure that company officials say is far too high.

The factory was originally operated by Champion International, which sold it in 1999 to an employee group that uses the name Blue Ridge Paper. Blue Ridge Paper contends that the amount it paid for the plant, \$142 million, represents the fair-market value of the facility and is what the county should base its valuation on.

The company notes that Champion's liquid packaging division had been for sale for two years previous to the employee buyout. A national real estate agency aggressively marketed the facility, and would have earned a larger commission had it sold the plant for a larger amount.

The county, in turn, contends that the sale by Champion to the employee group was not for fair-market value and that the \$211 valuation, which it also arrived at in 1999, was the plant's true value.

Blue Ridge Paper currently pays Canton more than \$1 million a year in property taxes. The town's operating budget is more than \$6 million per year.

"It depends on if the state reduces the value and how much it reduces the value," Mayor Pat Smathers told *The Citizen-Times* of Asheville. "Depending on that, (the town) could have to raise the tax rate, could have to do a cutback in the services that we currently offer."

### Expensive upgrade: burying wires

Winston-Salem officials are experiencing a case of sticker shock in their attempts to bury utility lines along a key corridor leading to downtown, reports the *News & Record* of Greensboro. Duke Power's cost estimate is far higher than what the city had projected it would cost.

In June or July, the Kivett Drive interchange on the U.S. 311 Bypass will open. A city task force has determined that the best way to improve the look of the new gateway to downtown is by burying the utility lines along Kivett Drive.

City electric officials estimated it would cost about \$1.25 million to bury electric, telephone, and cable TV lines along the route.

Duke Power's estimate came in much higher: \$3.7 million just for the electric lines. "You can build roads cheaper than you can get Duke Power to bury (power) lines," said Councilman Bill Bencini.

The city is exploring other option, including the possibility of having its crews do the work to Duke Power's standards. Duke Power also suggested some less-costly options, including burying telephone and cable TV lines while hanging the power lines higher off the ground to make them less visible.

### Flights to Raleigh grounded

The federal government has awarded a grant to six North Carolina cities to help subsidize flights to Raleigh. It appears, though, that the amount awarded is not large enough for the flights to begin.

Earlier this year, Fayetteville, New Bern, Kinston, Wilmington, Moore County (Southern Pines and Pinehurst), and Hickory formed a consortium and applied for a \$3.6 million grant from the federal Small Community AirService Development Pilot Program. The N.C. Department of Transportation filed the grant request on the consortium's behalf. The communities pledged a combined \$1.8 million in additional local support.

Corporate Airlines has indicated that it is willing to fly at least three times a day between the six cities and Raleigh if the grant were approved *in full*. Corporate, which is based in Tennessee, does most of its existing flying in support of American Airlines' hub in St. Louis. It operates 19-seat Jet-stream turboprop aircraft.

The U.S. Department of Transportation, however, awarded the N.C. consortium only \$1.2 million.

"The \$3.6 million... That's what we figured would happen," Don Howard, director of airport operations in Kinston, said to *The Free Press* of Kinston. "We didn't inflate our request. We asked for what we actually needed."

Officials from the six communities and the N.C. DOT are searching for additional funding to allow the flights to begin.

**Blue Ridge Paper contends that the amount it paid represents the fair-market value and is what the valuation should be based on.**

### Rutherford restrictions illegal

The N.C. Court of Appeals has ruled that Rutherford County violated public-notice requirements in adopting a new zoning restriction.

On June 21, 2001, the county ran an ad in a local newspaper announcing a July 2 public hearing on a proposed ordinance restricting where "polluting industries" could locate. At the public hearing, the county issued a 120-day moratorium on the siting of new heavy industries within 2,000 feet of a school. In September it approved a school zone protective ordinance with similar restrictions.

At the time Hanson Aggregates Southeast had an option to lease land from Sandy Mush Properties on which Hanson wanted to build a crushed-stone quarry. Hanson's building permit request was rejected because of the moratorium. Hanson and later Sandy Mush Properties challenged the legality of the moratorium, arguing that it was adopted without adequate notice.

The Court of Appeals agreed with the plaintiffs. Localities typically do not have to give notice before adopting an ordinance. North Carolina law, however, requires that localities "hold a public hearing on the ordinance... [and] shall cause notice of the hearing to be published once a week for two successive calendar weeks" when it involves zoning, subdivision regulation, building inspection (including issuance of building permits), and community development.

As Rutherford County ran an ad only once, it did not follow state law.

The case is *Sandy Mush Props., Inc. v. Rutherford Cty.*, (02-1587) *CJ*



# Dr. Williams: Apostle for Free Markets, Less Government

By CAROLINA JOURNAL STAFF

RALEIGH

**D**r. Walter Williams is the John A. Molan distinguished professor of economics at George Mason University in Virginia, but he is also well known for his extensive publications, syndicated column, and national radio and television appearances, including some relief pitching for Rush Limbaugh.

He was in Raleigh recently to speak at the inaugural event of the new Center for Citizenship, Enterprise, and Government ([www.cforceg.org](http://www.cforceg.org)) and was interviewed by Carolina Journal.

*CJ: You have been in North Carolina as part of the announcement of a new organization in the state that is devoted to promoting leadership and promoting better education of free-market principles among others for people who are interested in public policy.*

*In principle, in theory, lots of politicians, lots of community leaders say they believe in capitalism; they believe in competition; they believe in free markets. But then in practice they do things very differently.*

*In your role as sort of an apostle for freedom, do you find it difficult sometimes to get people in public life to apply what they say they believe in theory to practice?*



Dr. Walter Williams

**Williams:** Well, yes. It is very difficult. One of my jobs as an American is to try to sell my fellow Americans on the moral superiority of liberty, and in order to have liberty we must have limited government.

And many people find that they can use government to support their own agenda, and that is the problem. They will say, "I believe in liberty," but they will do things the exact opposite.

That is just like a husband who says, "I believe in fidelity," and he is running around with all the women.

*CJ: Yes. This would be similar to the Saturday night/Sunday morning Baptist problem. There are lots of Sunday morning Baptists who don't act that way on Saturday night.*

**Williams:** That is right.

*CJ: One example that comes to mind in North Carolina we see frequently— business leaders who in general espouse vaguely market-oriented principles.*

*They may vote for candidates who speak in those terms.*

*But then they come to the local government or the state government and say, "Give me money. Give me a special tax break. Give me a subsidy, because if not, I may go to a state that will."*

**Williams:** We should not be surprised when we see this, because Adam Smith, who wrote *The Wealth of Nations*, the so-called father of economics — he recognized that in many cases businessmen were the enemy of freedom.

He has a quote there. He says that very seldom do businessmen get together when the conversation does not turn into a conspiracy against the public.

So I am not surprised at all that businessmen are leading the charge against free market principles.

*CJ: But a lot of times when we have this debate for example about incentives — or corporate welfare I think would be a more accurate term — the argument is OK, you are right in theory. We shouldn't be subsidizing business. I agree with you.*

*But if North Carolina doesn't offer tax credits for job creation or some kind of subsidy program to a company that is looking to relocate in perhaps one of several competing states, they will just go somewhere else. You are right in theory, but in practice we have to do this.*

**Williams:** You know, the way I look at that — it is like if I beat you up, physically, and then I put Band-Aids on you to take care of you. Well, you should say, "Well, Williams, stop beating me up."

Now, many state governments make a very, very difficult environment for businessmen to operate in. They have this law that regulates their activities; they have all kinds of taxes, which raises the cost of business.

Now for North Carolina, if I were the governor, if I were in charge in North Carolina, I would eliminate those disincentives for businessmen to come in.

I would reduce taxes. I would reduce the level of regulation and reduce other things that raise the cost, that make our businessmen in our country less competitive with respect to the rest of the world.

*CJ: Speaking of the rest of the world, there is another application of this problem going on in North Carolina politics right now, and that is the resurgence of protectionism.*

*Actually, you mentioned Adam Smith earlier. You know, I kind of thought that Adam Smith settled this debate a couple of hundred years ago about whether free markets are better for a country's growth than protectionism or mercantilism is, but we seem to be having this argument again. We are having it in North Carolina, textile companies, furniture companies facing heightened competition from, now China, but certainly other countries as well.*

*Some of them are suffering under that competition. Some of them have been laying off or even going bankrupt. The reaction has been, "Protect us." And politicians, Democrats and Republicans, including some of President Bush's folks in Washington and some of our own Republicans in North Carolina, have been saying, "Well, China is not playing fair."*

*In principle we are free traders. But in practice, it's "let's slap a 27 percent tariff on Chinese goods."*

**Williams:** There are a couple of things. I think that the problem that businessmen face in North Carolina is not with the Chinese. It is with their fellow American consumers. That is their fellow American consumers say, "We prefer cheaper prices to higher prices."

Now, if they can convince their fellow Americans to buy U.S.-made goods then they would be off the hook. So their war is against the American consumer.

But in addition, so far as levying tariffs on foreign products, it doesn't make sense. For example take the Bush administration's steel tariffs.

It is estimated that it costs Americans

something like \$800,000 a year to save a \$55,000-a-year job. Does that make any kind of sense whatsoever? It doesn't. It would be better — I would much rather see Congress enact an Aid to Dependant Steel Workers Act or an Aid to Dependant Textile Workers Act and give them — let's say in the case of steel people — give them \$75,000. Say, "Just go lay out on the beach and enjoy yourself." That would be cheaper than \$800,000 to save one job.

*CJ: It would also be in the interest of public accountability because it would clarify what is going on which is that you are essentially offering a welfare benefit to a class of people.*

**Williams:** Absolutely right.

*CJ: And that is really what you are doing with tariffs. It just doesn't seem that way.*

**Williams:** That is absolutely right. And to use terms like protectionism and things like this to protect American industry — what it really is is ripping off American consumers.

As a matter of fact, during the Chrysler bailout I was testifying in Congress. I said, "Instead of imposing tariffs on foreign cars, why don't we just have an Aid to Dependant Auto Workers Act?"

Of course that did not go over big. But see, the question, as you said...

*CJ: Are you responsible for the Chrysler bailout? [LAUGHTER] That is pretty depressing.*

**Williams:** ...as you identified, it would make the transfer of wealth from consumers to these particular interest groups — it would make it explicit and less likely to happen.

*CJ: There is a specific allegation here, too, which is that the Chinese are manipulating their currency, the yuan, that had been set a certain ratio to the dollar, pegged to the dollar.*

*There also is a similar allegation about the yen in Japan. But the argument is that they have artificially kept the value of their currency low, and if they would just let the currency float, which essentially means let the dollar fall in value, we would all be better off.*

**Williams:** I think there are — a couple of colleagues of mine have done studies, and there is no evidence of manipulating the currency.

But suppose there were. Isn't it wonderful for foreign countries, particularly a poor country like China, to send us free goods?

We ought to be happy. And so we can let these other workers just kind of take off, and we will be better off. We can just get them on welfare and we all will be better off.

*CJ: Are you optimistic or pessimistic, perhaps in the long run, that politicians in our state, across the country, will come to apply the principles they say they believe in theory to practice?*

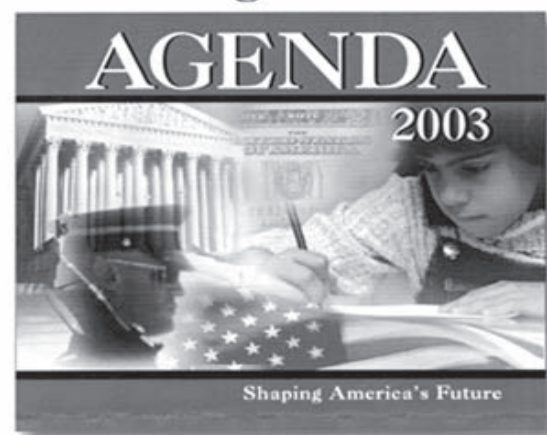
**Williams:** I think that if they have more pressure from free-market think-tanks they may indeed.

But if left to their own devices, I would say no.

*CJ: And so you are saying we need more ideas in the marketplace, more support for people who make the right decisions, and more criticism for those who make the wrong decisions?*

**Williams:** That is absolutely right. CJ

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## From the Liberty Library

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• *Human Accomplishment: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences, 800 B.C. to 1950* is Charles Murray's unique account of human excellence, from the age of Homer to our own time. Employing techniques that historians have developed over the last century but that rarely have been applied to books written for the general public, Murray compiles inventories of the people who have been essential to the stories of literature, music, art, philosophy, and the sciences — a total of 4,002 men and women from around the world, ranked according to their eminence. Murray takes on some controversial questions: Why has accomplishment been so concentrated in Europe? Among men? Since 1400? He offers a rich framework for thinking about the conditions under which the human spirit has expressed itself most gloriously. A HarperCollins book.

• Black and Hispanic students are not learning enough in our public schools. Their typically poor performance is the most important source of ongoing racial inequality in America today. Thus, say Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom in *No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning*, the racial gap in school achievement is the nation's most critical civil rights issue and an educational crisis. The Thernstroms marshal facts to examine the depth of the problem, the inadequacy of conventional explanations, and the limited impact of Title I, Head Start, and other familiar reforms. See [www.simonsays.com](http://www.simonsays.com) for more on this Simon & Schuster book.

• Is China America's next great ally? Veteran reporter David Aikman, in *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power*, says a tectonic shift is happening in global politics — and it's driven by religion. Within the next 30 years, he says, one-third of China's population could be Christian, making China one of the largest Christian nations in the world. Aikman, the former Beijing bureau chief for *Time* magazine, says that what is happening in China is what happened to the Roman Empire nearly two millennia ago. See [www.regnery.com](http://www.regnery.com) to learn more. *CF*

## Book review

## Nothing Is Sacred: Barro Writes Against the Grain

• Robert J. Barro: *Nothing Is Sacred*; MIT Press; 2002; 184pp.; \$27.95

By DAVID L. LITTMANN  
Guest Contributor

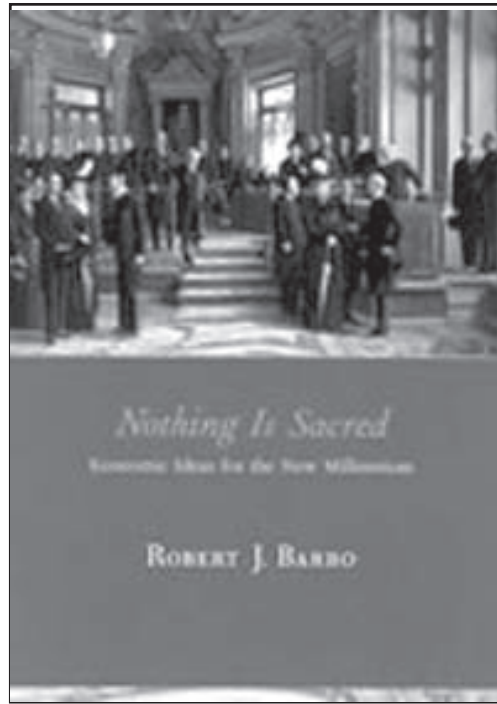
Considering the vast number of economists trained in leftist universities and fed socialist soup, it's refreshing to encounter some who found truth or who got mugged by economic reality. Economists Walter Williams and Thomas Sowell overcame the odds, made distinguished careers for themselves, and contributed immensely to the education of others through their writings, lectures, and the fortitude of their character.

Robert J. Barro is another such person. Noted Harvard professor, economic consultant, and author, Barro also admits to having experienced this deep-seated university tilt. He, too, matured beyond the conventional wisdom doled out on most campuses throughout the 1950-1990 era. How did he manage to emerge from socialist swamps? He lists two causes of his intellectual transformation:

(1) He deployed economic reasoning to combat widely held beliefs — which accounts for the wonderfully defiant title of his book; and (2) he managed to get to the University of Chicago between 1972-75 to learn how serious economic and financial debates are conducted.

Clearly, the Chicago school experiences produced the kind of enlightenment and research that eventually won Nobel Prize recognition for many of his colleagues. Fittingly, the interaction he enjoyed with luminaries like Friedman, Stigler, Becker, and Lucas became grist for Barro's first chapter containing various thoughts and analyses.

Barro's second chapter is a no-nonsense series of short discussions dealing with "Economics of Social Issues." This is a virtual catalog of all the toughies in today's world of legal and psychological sensibilities, from the economics of beauty, abortion, and crime



to drugs, Napster, and meritocracy in higher education. The breadth of his subject matter might be disconcerting to a reader were it not that Barro hits each with the common denominator of economic logic.

Readers of this newspaper will appreciate that Barro seeks to bind himself and his audience to the power of economic reasoning, rather than bowing to the political expedience of "PC" graces. This is especially laudable for a Harvard academician. He discusses how his economic diligence and focus occasionally make him the outsider or even pariah on campus. But this is refreshing and helps clarify what is happening here and abroad.

And indeed, Barro uses his third chapter to illustrate successes and failures on topics of economic growth, democracy, and international affairs. He superbly elucidates the several growth-enhancing agents that governments around the world need to embrace to promote prosperity. These passages are must reading for most consultants, administrations, and legislators be-

cause Barro is offering key truths about incentives that are essential to any well-functioning economic system. In this connection, readers will also appreciate Barro's pithy insights regarding myopic, fraudulent, or self-serving motivations of leftists.

Barro's concluding chapter focuses on monetary and fiscal policies and macroeconomics. Again, the reader is both informed and entertained.

For example, citing studies on the very topical question of reasons for federal budget deficits and mounting public debt, the author cuts to the chase and identifies the culprit: undisciplined spending by government officials. He notes that in cases of successful budget reform, 73 percent of deficit reduction involved less spending, whereas for the failures, only 44 percent took this form. He explains that spending cuts are most successful in removing deficits because they are most permanent. They endure "because they tackle the two items of the budget, government wages and welfare programs, which have the strongest tendency to automatically increase."

If there is a weakness or inconsistency to be found in Barro's book, it is the author's occasional hesitation on issues where you would expect him to be swinging for an argumentative home run. For example, Barro's treatment of the International Monetary Fund and West Germany's disastrous monetary accommodation during the East German economic merger suggest he shied away from the "Nothing Is Sacred" theme, possibly because of his prominence in consulting circles and his collegial association with so many notable economists who hold key posts at international agencies and in governments across the globe.

That, however, is only a minor irritation in the scope of an excellent and recommended read. *CF*

David Littmann is chief economist for Comerica Bank.

## Book Review

## Moneyball Reveals Beane's Success With Oakland

• Michael Lewis: *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game*; W.W. Norton & Company, 2003, 288pp., \$24.95

By PAUL CHESSER  
Associate Editor

As I write this review, the uproar persists over Manager Grady Little's ill-advised decision to leave tiring Red Sox starter Pedro Martinez in Game 7 of the American League Championship Series. Bostonians' simmering frustration boiled over into full-throated rage after the Sox (New England vernacular) once again blew a late lead at the hands of the New York Yankees. The genial Little, who lives in North Carolina, bore the brunt and lost his job.

Perhaps not quite paralleled, but similarly vitriolic, was the anger aimed at the Oakland Athletics, who for the last three years made the playoffs but didn't win a series. This year they lost three games in a row and the division series after holding a 2-0 lead against...yep, the Red Sox.

Instead of the manager, though, in the A's case the harsh criticism walloped General Manager Billy Beane.

The reasons were twofold. First, Oakland over the last few years has developed a choker reputation in the postseason, and

this year choked at the hands of the world's foremost chokers!

Second, the media has fawned over Beane because of his brilliance in assembling playoff-caliber teams with one of the lowest annual player payrolls.

The plaudits reached their pinnacle with the publication of Michael Lewis's *Moneyball* earlier this year. Since then envy and resentment have created a backlash against Beane, especially from other general managers, but also from the media that once pedestaled him.

Lewis, a curious baseball fan with a business writing background, sought to find out why "one of the poorest teams in baseball, the Oakland Athletics, [won] so many games." Unprecedented access to the team enabled him to uncover the answer, which is now (finally) reforming the game.

The revolution, the brainchild of statistician Bill James, is embodied in Beane. In 1977 James self-published his first *Baseball Abstract* book, which preached to an unwelcoming establishment a more logical way of digesting player statistics. He issued annual compilations of his quirky, but useful, findings until 1988.

As time passed James gained a wider audience, albeit not the one he wanted. His company, STATS Inc., where he served as creative director, became the source of so

many "how did they know that" ESPN factoids. But the brainpower failed to infiltrate the game itself.

"The Jamesian movement set the table for the geeks to rush in and take over the general management of the game," Lewis writes. "What was happening to capitalism should have happened to baseball: the technical man with his analytical magic should have risen to prominence in baseball management, just as he was rising to prominence on, say, Wall Street."

Enter Beane, who became the A's general manager in 1997. Physically talented but mentally apathetic as a ballplayer, Beane is intense and competitive as a general manager. His persuasiveness and adoption of Jamesian principles, combined with his drive, overcome the shortcomings in the Athletics' payroll budget.

Beane also cares little about traditional statistics such as batting average and home runs, instead favoring slugging percentage and on-base percentage.

Still Beane's success, despite postseason failures, cannot be disputed. Owners now see that victory is attainable without spending a fortune, and the game is experiencing a market correction.

Trends show the rest of baseball is getting it. *Moneyball*, with a gleeful smugness, shows how Billy Beane got it long ago. *CF*



## Book Review

**The Real Environmental Crisis: A Surprisingly Balanced Work**

• Jack M. Hollander: *The Real Environmental Crisis: Why Poverty, Not Affluence, Is the Environment's Number One Enemy*, University of California Press; 2003; 237 pp.

By JANE S. SHAW

Guest Contributor

BOZEMAN, MT

The extraordinary thing about this excellent book is not its content as much as its source. Jack M. Hollander is a retired professor of energy and resources at the University of California at Berkeley. Although he has had an impressive career in the field of energy (he has more than 100 publications to his credit), in the past he did not differentiate his views from those of scientists who are pessimistic and even alarmist about the environment.

For example, a 1992 book Hollander edited, *The Energy-Environment Connection*, featured scientists such as Stephen Schneider, a well-known proponent of government control to slow down global warming, and John Holdren, who expressed alarm about the "folly of failing to stabilize world population." Although it avoided inflammatory rhetoric, the book treated global warming as a severe problem and expressed pessimism about acid rain and air pollution.

**Author takes fresh, new approach**

Hollander has not repudiated his past work, but has shifted gears. It's as though he sat down one day and completely rethought, without bias, the seriousness and extent of environmental problems. However it happened, he has come to the conclusion that poor people in developing



countries suffer from the worst environmental problems: hunger, disease, and dangerously unsanitary water. Environmental problems in Europe and North America simply pale in comparison. "Reducing poverty throughout the world should be a top priority for environmentalists," he writes.

The environmental crisis of poverty is the theme of the book, but another theme is inextricably entwined and almost more dominant. That is Hollander's reassessment of the severity of environmental issues. For example, he doesn't call global warming an imminent catastrophe. He says there are still many scientific uncertainties, and "if it turns out that human activity is adding to the natural warming, the amount will prob-

ably be small, and society can adjust to that as well, at relatively low cost or even net benefit." In some circles, this is heresy.

Hollander is optimistic about reducing pollution from automobiles, too. Already on the decline, this pollution is likely to disappear entirely, he says, as competition develops between the hybrids (electric and gasoline-powered cars) and cars powered by hydrogen fuel cells. He predicts that the "worldwide deterioration of air quality that accompanied the rise of the automobile culture will be permanently reversed, and the world's dependence on petroleum will probably be drastically reduced, as well."

Nor does Hollander blindly support alternative energy such as solar or wind power. He concludes that much effort to jump-start these alternatives is misplaced. The governments of wealthy nations such as the United States are subsidizing "large-scale renewable technologies for which there is little need," yet ignoring solar applications that could help poor people in rural regions lacking electricity. He says that "poor countries have tremendous need for renewable energy sources, and a number of ingenious yet affordable technologies have been available for years."

As these examples illustrate, Hollander has written a book that, like Bjorn Lomborg's *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, offers upbeat views about issues usually treated as crises. Unlike Lomborg, Hollander doesn't seem to be challenging the establishment. He is an insider telling it the way he sees it. Perhaps his moderate stance is one reason why this book hasn't received as much attention as has the Danish statistician's.

Of course, energy has always been a little at odds with environmentalism, be-

cause many environmentalists consider fossil fuels the enemy. During the 1970s and 1980s, however, the two approaches came together to promote conservation. Indeed, Hollander helped found the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy and he remains committed to energy efficiency.

**An effort to balance the debate**

Hollander has made an effort to consider literature from both the doomsday and skeptical sides of the issues. I was, however, dismayed by his selection of a passage from Dickens novel *Hard Times* to illustrate air pollution in the 19th century. ("It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it," the passage begins). Dickens, a master of fictional exaggeration, is hardly a reliable authority on air pollution. I'm also a little surprised that Hollander is unaware of the growing literature (started by economists) surrounding the environmental Kuznets curve. This correlation between income and pollution shows that as countries become more wealthy their environments initially deteriorate but then become cleaner. Discussion of this would have underscored his point.

These are minor criticisms. Although it comes as no surprise to many of us that poverty is the environment's No. 1 enemy, at long last, thanks to Hollander, others will find it out, too. *cj*

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## Book Review

**Can Gun Control Work? A Calm, Rational Approach To Public Policy**

• James B. Jacobs: *Can Gun Control Work?*; Oxford; 2002; 304pp.; \$27.50

By JEFFREY A. MIRON

Guest Contributor

BOSTON

*Can Gun Control Work?* is a first-rate addition to the literature on gun control. The book is not an attempt to advocate either side of the gun-control debate. Instead, it is an analysis of whether various types of control can achieve their stated objectives, especially reducing violence and crime. Jacobs concludes that gun control cannot work, by which he means it cannot effectively keep firearms out of the wrong hands or reduce crime to any significant degree.

**Scholarly approach to gun control**

This is an unusual piece of scholarship, especially in the literature on gun control. It argues strenuously that gun controls are unlikely to have the effects hoped for by their advocates; yet Jacobs is not a gun devotee. It appears he is saddened by his conclusions, that he would prefer to live in a world without guns, and that he perceives guns to have far more negatives than positives. Yet Jacobs consistently concludes that essentially all currently envisaged types of gun control fail to have the desired effects.

The book begins by identifying the problem for which gun control might be the "solution." Jacobs concludes that the key problem is violent crime, rather than sui-

cides or accidents. Suicide is a quantitatively important issue, but suicides are not a critical factor creating a demand for gun control. Accidents with firearms are a cause for concern, but these incidents are rare and mainly affect people who have "assumed the risk" of being around guns. Jacobs dismisses the notion that society should pass gun-control laws, knowing they will be minimally effective, simply for the sake of "doing something."

After outlining the question to be addressed, Jacobs reviews the history of gun-control laws in America. This is an excellent summary for those new to the subject and a useful review for almost anyone. Four features of current law are relevant to the subsequent discussion. First, federal law bans the sale of firearms to "inappropriate" people such as felons. Second, federal law requires primary sales of guns to go through a Federal Firearms Licensee. Third, the Brady Law subjects all sales through licensees to a background check on the purchaser. Fourth, background checks are not required for secondary transfers, including sales from private collections.

Jacobs then discusses the impediments to further gun control. One is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment and the widespread belief among gun owners that it guarantees an individual right to keep and bear arms. Jacobs suggests

that even under an individualist interpretation of the amendment, there is still scope for regulation of firearms. But he sees the technical implications of the Constitution as less relevant than long-standing hostility to gun regulation by a substantial fraction of the country.

A second critical difficulty that faces additional controls is the large number of guns in circulation. This fact, combined with the durability of most guns, implies that

even if no new firearms are obtained by anyone in the United States from some point forward, there will still be a high rate of gun ownership for decades. Thus, even perfectly effective controls on new ownership cannot address problems related to existing guns.

The third key impediment that Jacobs emphasizes is the multitude of mechanisms by which new and existing gun-control laws can be circumvented or evaded. Any restrictions on the sale of guns are undone to a substantial degree by straw purchases, fake IDs, gun thefts, or unscrupulous licensees. Jacobs notes that all of these avenues for circumventing control apply even if both primary and secondary purchases are subject to background checks and even if all guns are registered. The only possible mechanism for addressing the multiple opportunities for criminals to get guns is confiscation of

existing guns combined with prohibition of all new guns. Jacobs dismisses this approach as utterly impractical, both because of the large existing stock of weapons that owners will give up only under duress and because prohibition will generate a black market.

**Bittersweet for gun-control foes**

Given the author's conclusions, it might appear that gun-control opponents would welcome this book with open arms. That is not quite right, however. Those opposed to controls will share most of Jacobs' conclusions, and they will be pleased to see those conclusions coming from someone who is not a fan of guns.

Nevertheless, opponents of gun control will find Jacobs' book unsatisfying. The reason is that while Jacobs is thoughtful and persuasive in his criticism of most gun-control policies, his critiques are about the limits of controls rather than about the possible benefits of guns.

That approach leaves unaddressed a deeper question: Would eliminating guns be desirable if the existing impediments were removed? Jacobs doesn't answer that question, and the omission will give control opponents pause.

*Can Gun Control Work?* is the kind of calm, rational evaluation of public policies that is all too rare today. *cj*

Jeffrey Miron is a professor of economics at Boston University.

*Jacobs dismisses the notion that society should pass gun-control laws... simply for the sake of doing something.*



## The Confused State Of John Edwards

I can't recall the last time Northern rhetoric piqued Dixie sensitivities, but Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean's remarks last month flustered North Carolina Sen. John Edwards.

Dean expanded his diversity umbrella in an effort to win more Southern voters, telling the *Des Moines Register*, "I still want to be the candidate for guys with Confederate flags in their pickup trucks."

He tempered his statement later, but his opponents for the nomination seized the chance to take the acerbic liberal — leading the Democratic pack in fund-raising and in many polls — down a few pegs.

"I will win the Democratic nomination because I will be the candidate for guys with American flags in their pickup trucks," said Rep. Richard Gephardt of Missouri.



Paul Chesser

But the goofiest retort came from Edwards.

"Some of the greatest civil rights leaders, white and black, have come from the South," he said. "To assume that Southerners who drive trucks would embrace this symbol is offensive."

Huh? Dean's comments struck two of Edwards's favorite campaign chords — his Southern-ness and race relations — but his response sounded more confused than anything he said when Tim Russert flummoxed him on "Meet the Press" in May 2002.

Clearly, as a Southerner, Edwards wants to establish his race credentials. Although he skipped 90 percent of its votes in September, the U.S. Senate has become one of Edwards's campaign stops every time Judge Charles Pickering's nomination comes up for a vote. He never fails to remind colleagues that Pickering, despite a solid civil rights record in his home state of Mississippi, asked the Justice Department to investigate whether a lesser sentence applied to a man convicted of cross burning.

So when Dean blundered, Edwards had a chance to further bolster that image. But given his nonsensical utterance, it appears that he and his staff rushed their discussions to come up with a response:

Edwards: "All right, Dean's a buffoon. Give me some ideas, quick!"

His spokeswoman: "How about, 'While I don't have a Confederate flag, I do own a pickup and on behalf of all Southerners, I resent that remark.'"

Edwards: "That makes me sound hypersensitive."

Campaign chairman: "I know! Governor Dean, I've known a lot of guys with pickup trucks, and believe me, you're no Confederate."

"No wait...I mean, 'Governor Dean, I'm a Southerner, and I know those Confederate guys, and believe me you're no pickup for them!' Aw, that won't work either. We need a zinger like Lloyd Bentson's in 1988!"

Edwards: "We don't want to be copycats..."

Spokeswoman: "Gov. Dean, I've known a lot of Confederates like Judge Charles Pickering who sought a reduced sentence for a cross burner, so if you want to be their candidate, go right ahead!"

Edwards: "Well, we might still need Mississippi..."

Chairman: "You know, governor, many truck drivers from the South supported the civil rights movement, so to paint them as Confederates is a vicious stereotype."

Edwards: "Naw, too spiteful — too much like Dean himself."

Spokeswoman: "Would it be too politically incorrect to say, 'We'll trade the redneck truck driver vote from the South to Governor Dean in exchange for Vermont's sap-sucking socialist vote?'"

Edwards: "I gotta go... Associated Press needs to talk to me now."

When you're a Southerner who's eager to prove he's progressive on race — or just plain trying to pander — it's easy to choke on the "Confederate flags in their pickup trucks" bait.

CJ

### Editorials

## BACKING BRAC

*Pep rallies are nice, but they won't work*

On a November afternoon, a collection of state and local officials held a pep rally in Fayetteville in support of the state's military bases. The reason for the summit was obvious enough: The Pentagon will go through a special process for the first time in 10 years in 2005 that allows for the closing or downsizing of military installations in the United States. The defense department thinks that perhaps 25 percent of its bases are unneeded and should be closed. It estimates savings in the billions of dollars per year. But many people fear the cutbacks.

The military is, of course, a big deal in North Carolina. About 100,000 troops are based here (only California and Texas host more) and their impact on the state economy is tremendous. Gov. Mike Easley and other state leaders want to show the military that North Carolina cares about "its" bases and its troops. To highlight the point, the General Assembly has appropriated \$2 million to help in the fight to keep bases open in the state. Easley even declared North Carolina "the most military-friendly state in the nation."

While it is nice to see state officials rallying around the bases, ultimately it is also a predictable act of no great significance. It's predictable because there are few communities in America that do not appreciate their bases or (at the very minimum) the purchasing power of the troops stationed at them and the jobs of civilians employed on base. When a base closing round comes along, state and local officials throughout the country hold the same sort of events as happened last month in Fayetteville.

### Defense isn't politics as usual

Politics to many involved is either a horse race or a sport. The object is not so much to get something done but to simply have power. It's all about being ahead at the end of the day — and the next day, and the next. In this all-too-common worldview, ideas and facts don't matter much, just as long as you can spin the media and public better than the other guy. With this view also comes a strong desire to bring home some fat to local constituents.

Too many politicians view the defense budget as essentially just another big jobs program. Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue put it bluntly at the Fayetteville rally: "The long-term objective is to grow our military economy, to create jobs for our citizens, to obtain added contracts for military supplies and services for businesses, and in a different and better way, utilize the talents and the expertise of all the military retirees and families in this state."

This is precisely the wrong view. Defense is different. Every dollar wasted in keeping unneeded military installa-

tions open is a dollar that could have gone to buying more modern equipment for our troops or to better train them. Eliminating unneeded bases also creates a leaner, more combat-ready force. The benefits of this are far from merely fiscal — better training and equipment also save the lives of American troops.

The Pentagon understands this, which is why it wants to rid itself of unneeded infrastructure. Unfortunately, many politicians don't, which is why the Pentagon was not allowed to close a single base between the mid-1970s and 1988. Finally, Congress relented and adopted a nonpartisan base review process that has become known as BRAC. The fifth round of BRAC will be in 2005.

### The BRAC process

The base closing process is built upon the presumption that it is possible to choose which bases to keep and which to eliminate based upon objective criteria. The Pentagon develops measures to quantify the capability and worth of each base. It also computes the cost of closing a base, including building new facilities at other installations, and the annual savings from a potential closure. Obviously, and properly, a base closure must pay for itself in a relatively short number of years for the proposition to make sense.

The base-closing process will begin in earnest when the secretary of defense releases a list of proposed closures and realignments in May 2005. A specially appointed nine-member Base Closure and Realignment Commission will review the list. The purpose of the commission is to assure that all base closures or reductions are justified and that the right bases have been selected.

By definition, this task involves making comparisons between bases. To assure that the proper installations are selected, the commission in the past has added comparable bases to the possible closure list. These facilities receive the same sort of intense scrutiny as the bases listed by the secretary of defense. By doing so, the commission preserves its options should its review show the Pentagon identified a wrong base for closure.

In the second phase of its work, the BRAC will go through the list of bases and make its recommendations for closure or realignment. Its final list is forwarded to the president and Congress. The president can either approve the list as a whole or return it to the commission. Congress may not make any changes. It can only accept or reject the list of proposed closings in its entirety.

It is possible that some military installations in North Carolina will be closed or reduced as a result of BRAC 2005. Certainly, other communities that have been highly supportive of the local fort or air base have seen their base close — the military's basing needs, after all, are determined by its force structure, not local public support or the economic impact on the local community.

While any such potential closure would be highly disruptive locally, it also would be in our country's best interest. The base closing process also assures that it will be the correct one and free from political influence.

CJ



## DON'T PRIVATIZE

*Incentive games aren't worth playing*

Senate President Pro Tem Marc Basnight has been representing northeastern North Carolina long enough in the state legislature to have hatched or helped to hatch some pretty bad "economic development" projects. State taxpayers have spent millions of dollars on the Global TransPark, for example, and the Wanchese Seafood Industrial Park and Dare County tourist attractions. Taxpayers have also lost millions of their own dollars to the higher taxes Basnight supported.

Perhaps as penance, Basnight actually has been the source of some praiseworthy ideas recently. He's been urging Gov. Mike Easley and fellow lawmakers to reduce North Carolina's marginal tax rate on corporate income, which would do more to improve the economic climate of the state than dozens of additional make-work schemes. Another idea of Basnight's rated front-page treatment last month by *The News & Observer* of Raleigh: privatizing the state's job-recruitment efforts contained in the N.C. Department of Commerce.

The privatization option isn't unprecedented. Florida and Virginia have already set up private contracts to identify and solicit industrial prospects. Moreover, it is certainly conceivable that privatizing a large swath of the Department of Commerce could result in cost savings and the leveraging of additional private dollars and assistance. If North Carolina is going to spend tax dollars on this function, we're all for pursuing a different and more private-centered approach.

But contracting out a government service is a policy option you undertake after first determining that the service should truly be financed by the government. Given that, as evidenced by the *N&O* exposition of the idea, privatizing Commerce seems to invite the notion of tossing additional grants or tax subsidies for industrial prospects into the mix, we're worried that state policymakers have yet to find the courage of their convictions on the issue of economic development.

Spend any time at all in Raleigh political circles and you will discover that virtually anything championed by a politician, a lobbyist, or a self-appointed "advocate" for a cause is predicted to result in an economic bonanza. The connection can often be obviously tenuous — such as the fatuous nonsense you will hear about how spending a dollar on the arts will return six or seven or eight dollars in "spinoffs" and "economic multipliers." With regard to incentives, lawmakers are treated to a parade of contract players — lobbyists, developers, salesmen, brokers — all proclaiming the inevitability of competing for business through bribes and all, no doubt coincidentally, sticking out their hands to get some for themselves or their clients.

Plenty of longtime politicians say they are tired of hearing this pitch. But they also exhibit little willingness to say no. They say that if North Carolina doesn't play the game, it can't possibly win it. But some of them know that such a rigged game isn't worth playing in the first place, and that it isn't the game that most North Carolinians want them to play.

As it happens, the available empirical evidence is firmly on the side of incentive opponents, though you'd never know it if all you read was the aforementioned, poorly sourced *N&O* piece. The reporters apparently took at face value the notion that special giveaways and governmental powers to "assemble parcels" and the like constitute the reason why other states' economies have outperformed North Carolina's over the past couple of years. Careful investigation suggests otherwise.

Here are some research findings to keep in mind:

- Business executives themselves don't rate the importance of incentive policies very highly. In a John Locke Foundation survey last year, factors such as state and local taxes, regulations, and the skill level of available workers were ranked far above incentives in determining the economic competitiveness of North Carolina.

- These survey results comport with the best available econometric models of what makes state economies grow. Taxes do matter. When a state's marginal tax rates are measured, they do bear a statistically significant relationship to economic growth, though often the overall tax burden per capita does not (the latter is affected not only by tax rates but by population and growth factors, and is thus the wrong variable to measure). Other factors under the control of public authorities that seem to matter, at least in some models, are investment in public infrastructure, primarily highways, and the level of spending on police and fire protection. Education spending, by the way, is usually found to have only a small affect, or none at all.

This is not to suggest that better-educated and better-trained workers aren't an economic asset, but instead that there isn't necessarily a relationship between a state's education spending and such an outcome — either because of poor performance by schools or because the labor force is mobile, large, and hard to affect in the short run by government education expenditures.

- Lastly, there is little evidence that suggests states with more-generous incentive policies grow more rapidly, have lower unemployment rates, or otherwise enjoy an economic advantage over states with less-generous incentives. Sure, individual projects may be influenced by incentive grants — though even this possibility is often exaggerated or even actually denied by executives of recipient corporations. But the policy as a whole, considering all the costs imposed on small businesses and those without political pull, is a failed one, with one recent study concluding that the vast majority of jobs for which state tax credits have been awarded would have been created in the state without them. Actually, it's worse than that, in that for every rare "success" in the incentives game there are many more failed bids, many more examples of states and localities going all out to subsidize a business enterprise that turns out to be underwhelming or a complete dud. Just a few weeks ago our publisher visited the Alleghany County town of Sparta, where a high-profile Bristol Compressors project was to employ hundreds and receive millions of dollars in state and local incentives. The project never amounted to much and is now gone, leaving local governments trying to recover some of their funds in court.

Here's where politicians really miss the boat on the incentives issue: the best econometric models do show a set of government variables to have an even stronger effect on state economic growth than marginal tax rates. These consist of measures of government "rent-seeking," such as lobbying expenditures, the ranks of lawyers, and the size of the government bureaucracy.

All three are connected closely with state "industrial policy" initiatives such as incentives. We are all for contracting out governmental functions, but the best form of privatization is "load-shedding": simply getting the government out of businesses where it has no legitimate role. If privatizing the Commerce Department is nothing more than an excuse to blur further the lines between the responsibilities of the public sector and those of the private sector, then here's one form of privatization we must wholeheartedly oppose.

## POVERTY & CRIME

*There's a link, but not the purported one*

Advocates of the "root causes" approach to fighting crime argue that only by addressing social ills such as poverty can a state hope to reduce its level of criminality. Conservatives often have been seen ridiculing this idea, pointing out that there is little historical correlation between poverty rates and crime rates. A good case in point is the Great Depression, during which the crime rate was for the most part far lower than it is today.

But by challenging the "root-causes" folks on crime, their critics have thrown something out with the bathwater — if not a baby, then at least mildly interesting bath toys.

One possibility, for example, is that there is a correlation — but that the direction of the causality is the opposite of the one theorized. It could be that crime causes poverty rather than the other way around. In fact, there is pretty good evidence for this effect. For example, a recent *Business Week* article reported the interesting fact that during the 1990s, American inner cities actually grew faster than the nation as a whole did — in population, in income, in home ownership, and in families exiting poverty.

While there were undoubtedly many factors at work, including a strong overall national economy, these factors had been at work during previous periods without a similar improvement in life in the inner city. One thing that did change in the 1990s, vs. recent decades, is that the crime rate fell. Cities and states changed their approach to law enforcement, putting more cops into the community, increasing the certainty of punishment, and making that punishment more severe through lengthier sentences. Private actors also helped to reduce crime through better security, lighting, and community watches. Increased security is a prerequisite for the kind of commercial activity that creates economic opportunities in inner cities.

Inner cities remain poorer than the rest of the country. But their relative improvement during the 1990s was heartening — and could well mean that there is a link between crime and poverty, only it works differently than the activist set might have expected.

## 2003 Elections Offer Some Telling Signs

Cary has a more conservative mayor with the election Nov. 4 of Ernie McAllister to replace Glen Lang, who was defeated in the October primary. At the same time, Raleigh elected a less-conservative city council. Longtime High Point Mayor Becky Smothers is back in office after a one-term hiatus, Asheville has elected two new council members without changing its ideological balance, Charlotte has elected Pat McCrory as mayor — again — and Fayetteville's mayoral choice is a Democrat.

Hmmm. These results aren't much to work with in writing a post-election column. The election of 2003 in North Carolina turned out to be somewhat less than revolutionary. With mayors re-elected in virtually all the major cities, save Cary and Wilmington, and power staying pretty much in the hands of the parties or factions that held it before, the political season hasn't delivered much of the way of exciting developments.

The real news of the 2003 political season is outside North Carolina.

That news is big, and arguably has more relevance for our state's political future than the fact that school bond referenda in Guilford, Durham, and Davie passed easily (a \$59 million bond did fail miserably in Surry County, the only one of the four where significant opposition was evident beforehand).

There were two gubernatorial contests settled Nov. 4. Both involved Democrats trying to hold their party's control of state government against strong Republican challenges. Both Democrats also defended themselves against attacks on fiscal policy by blaming President Bush and his tax and trade policies for the economic woes afflicting their states.

Both defenses failed.

In Kentucky, Republican Rep. Ernie Fletcher easily defeated Democratic Attorney Gen. Ben Chandler to become the first GOP governor there in decades. Chandler, the grandson of a former Kentucky governor, sought to retain his party's control in Frankfort despite the fiscal mess and scandal left by outgoing Gov. Paul Patton. Chandler tried desperately to change the subject to the "Fletcher-Bush" economy, but this dodge didn't work.

Similarly, in Mississippi a closer race pitted GOP lobbyist and activist Haley Barbour against incumbent Democrat Ronnie Musgrove, who won one of the closest gubernatorial elections in history in 1999. Barbour prevailed, becoming only the second governor elected from the GOP in Mississippi since Reconstruction. Even more than Fletcher perhaps, Barbour had been attached at the hip to Bush and his policies — and not unwillingly. Musgrove blasted Bush, who came to the state to campaign for his old friend Barbour.

The significance for North Carolina politics should be obvious. Gov. Mike Easley has been pursuing the Chandler-Musgrove approach for months: blaming Bush and trade for the state's economic woes. I just don't think it's going to fly. Not only do these gubernatorial elections demonstrate its limits, but also the national economy is growing rapidly now. If North Carolina grows at a similar rate, the political risk to Easley will ease. But if it lags behind the nation, as it has been for much of the past two years, Easley will inevitably take the brunt of the blame, unless he can convince voters that Bush has singled out North Carolina's economy to be devastated while leaving our neighbors with growing economies.

CJ

*Hood is president of the John Locke Foundation, publisher of Carolina Journal, a syndicated columnist, and host of "Carolina Journal Radio," now broadcast each week on 16 stations across the state.*

John Hood



## Editorial Briefs

**Bush to privatize federal work**

President Bush has proposed opening hundreds of thousands of jobs in the federal workforce to private-sector competition.

One agency that has made a modest beginning in this effort is the Federal Aviation Administration, which is allowing private companies to run Air Traffic Control operations at a number of small airports. But the ATC union is opposed, and is trying to get Congress to kill the plan.

The FAA's Contract Towers Program allows private (FAA-certified) controllers to man more than 200 smaller airport towers. So far the program has saved taxpayers an estimated \$54 million a year, or about \$900,000 per tower. The Contract Towers safety records are four times better than similar FAA-staffed towers, according to a Department of Transportation Inspector General's report.

The Bush administration wants to build on this by putting 15 percent of ATC jobs out for competitive bid by the end of the year. This is the first step in a larger plan to put all 850,000 commercial jobs, nearly half of the 1.8 million federal civilian workforce, out to bid in the next four years.

Reported in the *Wall Street Journal*.

**More states exceed federal minimum wage**

The number of states having minimum wages higher than the federal level has increased from six to 14, despite high unemployment rates.

Higher minimum-wage laws lock the least-skilled workers out of the labor force, experts say. According to a study by the Employment Policies Institute, states with high minimum-wage rates also have high unemployment rates.

Alaska, Oregon, Washington, Illinois, California, Massachusetts and Connecticut have the highest minimum wages in the country and account for 20 percent of America's unemployment "black spots." The states with the highest minimum wages — Alaska, Oregon, and Washington — have the highest unemployment rates in the United States.

Leaders from the three states have asked Congress for a doubling of federal job-training dollars to help their less-skilled workers enter the labor market. But these workers are most likely to be harmed by minimum-wage increases, and less likely to be able to take advantage of on-the-job training. High wage mandates tend to hurt the entry-level job market, because it increases labor costs and makes competition for jobs fiercer. Less-skilled workers aren't able to take advantage of on-the-job training that can boost their skill levels and wages, EPI says.

Far from helping the poorest residents of a state, as a 1995 Michigan State University study found, minimum-wage laws may actually keep the least-skilled workers out of the job market.

Reported in *Investor's Business Daily*, and "Indexing the Minimum Wage: A Vise on Entry-Level Wages," March 2003, Employment Policies Institute.

**Information on Chinese jobs incorrect**

Efforts to stir up "public agitation" about loss of manufacturing jobs to China are based on lies, says Alan Reynolds of the Cato Institute.

China accounts for only 18 percent of our imports of merchandise. However, Chinese imports seem bigger, he explains, because they are concentrated in clothing and consumer goods, which are far more visible than more costly industrial supplies and equipment. Apparel accounts for only about 6 percent of U.S. imports, industrial supplies and equipment for 55 percent. Major industrial countries supply almost 48 percent of U.S. imports of manufactured goods, while all newly industrialized Asian countries account for 9.3 percent. Another factor that is rarely reported correctly, Reynolds says, is that American workers are more productive than their Chinese counterparts.

The level of value-added per Chinese worker in 1999 was only 8 percent of U.S. worker productivity, according to the International Labor Organization. Or to put it another way: It takes a dozen Chinese manufacturing workers to match one American.

Reported in *Investor's Business Daily*. CJ

**Regulatory Reform to Clean Air, Lower Costs**

By Dr. ROY CORDATO

Contributing Editor

**T**he Bush administration has decided to make it easier for electric utility companies to undertake improvements and repairs at older coal-fired power plants. The decision will give utilities more leeway under the so-called "new source review" requirements of the Clean Air Act to upgrade and modernize equipment in ways that will increase energy efficiency and reduce pollution. Despite this, some state governments, under influence from environmental pressure groups, have chosen to challenge the reforms in the courts. This is because the changes will allow the companies to make these upgrades without having to install costly new pollution control equipment. North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper should be commended. He has shown concern for both the environment and utility customers and resisted this pressure.

The purpose of the rules change is to enable utilities to make better use of existing facilities by allowing upgrades that will increase energy efficiency, i.e., burn less coal per unit of electricity. If less coal is burned, less pollution is emitted. Under rules put in place by the Clinton administration, routine repairs or plant modernizations are categorized as "major plant modifications." This requires the utility to install expensive pollution control equipment that is unrelated to the repair or modernization.

**Rules discouraged maintenance**

Over the 40 years or more life of a coal-fired electricity plant continuous maintenance is required. When replacing worn-out parts, utilities typically take advantage of new technology. For example, it makes sense to replace original turbine blades and boilers with more modern and efficiency enhancing designs, taking advantage of computer-aided technology that is frequently less polluting. Under the Clinton era rules, many of these upgrades are made too costly and are not being pursued. Instead, worn-out components are replaced with exactly the same old technology thus avoiding the "major plant modification" designation. This wastes resources and often results in higher emissions. Rules meant to reduce pollution are causing more pollution than necessary.

Coal provides more than half of the nation's power. The EPA should be helping to facilitate ways of making

power generation from coal more efficient and less polluting, not hindering it.

Coal is plentiful, and it is being burned cleaner than at any time in history. While over the last 20 years the use of coal to produce electricity has risen more than 60 percent, all categories of air pollution have declined. From 1981 to 2000 ambient levels of sulfur dioxide declined 50 percent, nitrogen oxide 27 percent, and ozone 12 percent. Certainly a number of factors, including cleaner running cars, have contributed to these improvements. But part of this trend can be attributed to coal that has lower sulfur content and more efficient electricity generating technologies of the kind that President Bush is attempting to facilitate.

**Why natural gas instead of coal?**

Over the past decade there has been a great deal of pressure to substitute natural gas for coal. This is because of the perception that global warming is a serious environmental threat, ignoring temperature data from satellites and weather balloons showing no warming trend for more than two decades. Natural gas emits less carbon dioxide than coal, the greenhouse gas seen as the culprit behind the global warming scare. It should be pointed out that carbon dioxide is essential for all life on Earth and is considered an "air born fertilizer" for vegetation growth. It is not a pollutant.

Succumbing to the politics of global warming, nearly all power plants built in recent years use natural gas as the basic fuel. Consequently, as gas supplies have tightened, demand and therefore price have soared. Given that domestic supplies of coal are plentiful and can offset some of the high prices of natural gas, the EPA should ignore the junk science of global-warming hysteria and attempt to find ways of making the use of coal easier, not more difficult.

If opponents succeed in thwarting this rule change, utilities will be required to install costly new pollution controls when relatively minor upgrades are made to plant and equipment. Consumers and society will pay the price. On the other hand, upgrading power plants to improve energy efficiency would help keep prices down and improve air quality — to everyone's benefit. CJ

RALEIGH  
decided



Dr. Roy Cordato

*...upgrading power plants to improve energy efficiency would help keep prices down and improve air quality...*

Dr. Roy Cordato is vice president for research and resident scholar at the John Locke Foundation in Raleigh.



# Solving Government's Spending Puzzle: It's All About Transfers

By MICHAEL L. WALDEN  
Contributing Editor

How many times have you come across someone who complains about taxes being too high, but then in the next breath says roads are too congested, the police are overworked, or the parks aren't open long enough? Sounds inconsistent, right? Not necessarily. To many people it does seem as if government is taking more in taxes but doing less with the revenues.

I call this the "government spending puzzle." Although I'm not generally good solving puzzles, this one does have a logical solution that says much about how government has evolved in our country over the past 50-plus years.

## The wasteful answer

Now I know what many of you are thinking — the answer is a five-letter word (no, not that one) — waste. Isn't it that government is simply "wasting" more of our tax revenues, and that's why we're paying more in taxes but getting less back?

There are two problems with this explanation. First, although most would concede there is waste in government, there's no necessary reason why the percentage of waste would have increased in the last 50 years.

Second, identifying waste in government spending is easier said than done. There is no line-item in any government budget termed "waste." Waste in government spending is very much in the eye of the beholder. I can identify some wasteful government spending, and I'm sure you can also. The problem is getting agreement. One person's wasteful government program is another person's necessary and vital program. Every government program has a constituency that backs it. Also, it's difficult to apply business efficiency concepts to government because government doesn't follow a simple objective — such as the profit motive — like business.

RALEIGH



Michael L. Walden

## All government spending is not created equal

The puzzle's solution lies in realizing all government spending is not the same. Economists divide government spending into two broad categories: spending on providing products and services, and spending on transfers.

Spending on the provision of products and services encompasses the traditional roles of government, and includes such things as police protection, the military, the court system, building and maintaining roads, building and maintaining parks, and building schools and teaching students. Although everyone doesn't agree on all these functions, they are functions government in the United States has essentially provided since the nation's founding.

Spending on transfers is different. Transfers spending is taking tax revenues and using them to directly increase the purchasing power of targeted groups of individuals. The transfer can be in the form of cash, or it can be in the form of reimbursement of designated expenditures. Major government transfer programs are Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and the host of programs called "welfare."

Government transfer spending is relatively recent, not starting in full until the 1930s. There's also much, much more controversy about whether government transfer spending is a legitimate function of government.

## The puzzle solved

We're now in a position to solve the puzzle. First, let me note the total tax burden has edged upward in the past 50 years. Total local, state, and federal taxes have increased from 25 percent of citizen income in the 1950s to 30 percent today. The upward trend is even sharper if the starting year

is earlier.

Now let's look at what's happened to traditional government spending on providing products and services and to government transfer spending. Between 1959 and 2002, government spending on providing products and services fell from 16 percent of national income to 15 percent, while government spending on transfers increased from 5 percent to 12 percent of national income. And while the decrease in spending on products and services may seem trivial, it translates to more than \$100 billion less spending in today's dollars.

How does this solve the apparent puzzle expressed in the first sentence? It solves the puzzle in this way. Government spending on providing products and services is largely government spending that all citizens can see: police on the beat, schools and teachers, park space, and soldiers and military hardware. If we see fewer of these products and services, we conclude government is doing less.

In contrast, government spending on transfers is largely invisible unless you're the one receiving a check or bill marked "paid by the government." Although some may observe the elderly or the poor are better off, the improvement isn't necessarily associated with government transfers.

What does all this mean? To me it ultimately suggests a big problem for government.

As the tax burden rises to support more government transfers, more and more people will see government doing less with more. Support for government taxes and transfers will wane, and government eventually may be reduced to its traditional functions of providing products and services.

Indeed, some might say, this would be a good thing. *cj*

*Michael L. Walden is a William Neal Reynolds distinguished professor of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at North Carolina State University and an adjunct scholar of the Locke Foundation.*

# Previewing the 2004 Elections: A Conservative Point of View

By MARC ROTTERMAN  
Contributing Editor

Predicting elections a year before they happen is always a dangerous business, but here we go. Obviously the economy and Iraq will be the two central issues framing the presidential, congressional, and statewide elections. Also, the recent ruling in Massachusetts legitimizing gay marriages will be an issue as well.

## In North Carolina, it's about jobs

Jobs and job creation in North Carolina will play a large part in not only the gubernatorial campaign, but in the congressional, Senate and presidential races as well.

Nationally, the Democrats' message will be that three million jobs were lost during the Bush administration's first term.

The Bush administration had good news in October as the Labor Department reported payrolls increased by 126,000, the sharpest growth in nine months and third-quarter growth was at 7.2 percent.

It is my perception that there is a segment of the electorate that is very frustrated and angry over their inability to find work. Whether that anger manifests itself against the occupant in the White House or other incumbents remains to be seen.

I would point out that since the election of 2002 and including the California recall, 22 states have kicked the party in power out of the governor's mansion while 15 have kept the same party in office. Thirteen states have not held elections. The election of Republican governors in Mississippi and Kentucky may well be a barometer of good things to come for Republicans — particularly in the South. For instance, many believe that Republicans have an excellent shot to pick up Senate seats in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, and now with Sen. Bob Graham retiring, in Florida as well.

Here at home, it appears to me that the Democrats have the upper hand in the governor's race, in that Gov. Mike

RALEIGH



Marc Rotterman

Easley does not seem to be getting the blame for a poor economy. In fact, recently Easley has sounded more like a Republican than a Democrat on economic policy, particularly in regard to corporate taxes.

Now — on to handicapping the upcoming Senate race. It would not be unexpected if this race goes down to the wire with U.S. Rep. Richard Burr as the eventual winner.

Last year's race between Elizabeth Dole and Eskin Bowles was an aberration in that the campaign was not fought on traditional ideological grounds. It was not a typical North Carolina Senate race. Mrs. Dole, because of both her gender and her resume, was not an easy and accessible target. If history is any guide, the upcoming Senate battle between Bowles and Burr will be much more like a Hunt-Helms race.

Burr's fate and that of his opposition to a certain extent will be directly tied to the success or failure of President Bush's economic and foreign policy.

## Developments in Iraq

The ongoing hostilities in Iraq are an election variable that is yet to be quantified. After the Gulf War, the American people became accustomed to push-button battles, quick victories, and low casualties. Since the experience of Vietnam, many in the Baby Boomer generation have a low tolerance for American casualties on foreign soil. What that threshold for American casualties is remains to be seen.

If in the next six months it appears that the president and his foreign-policy team have not gotten a handle on internal security in Iraq, then this will be a much closer election than the president's campaign team would like. On the flip side, if the public perceives that the president's team and the military have a handle on the internal security in Iraq, then I would predict that the president and the Republican Party are well on their way to a decisive victory.

One of the key questions in the upcoming election is whether the American people have the resolve to stay the course in Iraq through thick or thin with Bush. A recent

ABC News Washington Post poll released Nov. 2 shows that the president's policies in Iraq enjoy only a 47 percent approval rating, and for the first time a bare majority, 51 percent, disapprove. Less than one in 10 respondents say the president has made the nation more prosperous. But it is worth pointing out that this poll was taken before the release of the Labor Department's economic numbers for October.

## Bush's lead over Democrats

Bush still tops his Democratic competition in head-to-head matchups with margins of 9 to 18 points, depending on the rival. Three-fourths of Democrats are still shopping for a nominee. And, as we look at the red and blue states, this country is still a 52-48 nation electorally.

As of now, Gov. Howard Dean and U.S. Rep. Richard Gephardt are the front-runners for the Democratic presidential nomination. If Dean becomes the nominee, look for a Republican sweep across the nation. The middle class will not buy into Dean's antiwar rhetoric and endorsement of civil unions for gays. Culturally, one cannot underestimate the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruling on gay marriages. The majority of Americans do not favor legitimizing gay marriage, and it will be a key issue working in Republicans' favor in the South and in the Midwest. If the Democrats nominate Gephardt, then this will be a much closer race.

Culturally, Gephardt is much closer to Middle America than is Dean, and the congressman would be an easier electoral sell for the Democrats. He is well-positioned in key Midwest states, and on trade issues could possibly cut into Bush's margins in the South.

For the record, here are my fearless predictions... Bush beats any Democrat by a 52-48 margin nationally, Burr wins a squeaker, 51-49, over Bowles, and Easley is re-elected — defeating N.C. Sen. Patrick Ballentine by a three-point margin.

*Marc Rotterman is a senior fellow at the John Locke Foundation and treasurer of the American Conservative Union.*



# Tall Tales at Very Best University in the Nation

*Little people arouse political support after study shows they get short end of the stick in the workplace*

By GULLIVER SWIFT

A recently released study done at the Very Best Public University in the Whole United States (UNC-Chapel Hill) shows that tall people tend to have higher earnings than do short people.

The author of the study, Professor Dalton R. Kurtz, analyzed loads of data on people's height and incomes and was shocked to find that tall people have a built-in advantage in the workplace, beyond the fact that they don't have to go looking for a stool if someone has rudely put the stapler on a high shelf. They earn more.

Interviewed in his office on campus, Kurtz said, "It is an affront to the American ideals of fairness and equality to find that just because of genetic happenstance, some Americans have an advantage over others. On average, tall people earn an extra \$783 per inch of height over the norm. I think it's outrageous."

Many others were quick to agree with Kurtz.

## Politicians come to the rescue

Sen. Ted Kennedy, said, "Height discrimination is just as odious and un-American as is discrimination based on race, sex, age, weight, looks, intelligence, literacy, or anything else. I plan to introduce a new height tax bill in order to restore justice and equality to our great nation."

Out on the campaign trail, Howard



*Even in biblical days, Goliath earned more than David simply because he was taller.*

Dean said to a meeting of senior citizens in Nashua, N.H., "See what happens with a Republican in the White House — the little guy gets beaten down! No doubt people in wheelchairs suffer the most from this inequality. Vote for me if you want to see things put right!"

Not to be outdone, Sen. John Kerry, speaking at a rally in Concord, N.H., proposed that December be made National Short Persons Month.

Half an hour later, at a campaign event

in Manchester, N.H., retired Gen. Wesley Clark said that if elected president, he would declare 2005 "the year of the short person."

## Little man on campus

Back in North Carolina, UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor James Moeser issued a press release saying that the Greatest Public University That Ever Was would immediately create an academic department offering a degree in Height Studies.

"We are deeply indebted to Professor Kurtz for his trailblazing research. With the creation of our Height Studies Department, students will be able to learn about all of the many aspects of height, from the history of height to metaphysics of height."

The vice chancellor for Goodness, Fairness and Diversity at UNC, Dr. Eleanor Obayu-Cosfortingham, announced that she was beginning a new diversity training program on campus to make tall people more sensitive to the culture of shortness. She declared "Height Awareness Day" on which men over 5 feet 10 and women over 5 feet 6 would have to go around campus on their knees so they would "understand the plight of the vertically challenged individual."

Several UNC students who were walking across campus volunteered their opinions on Kurtz's findings.

Tabitha DeMott, a junior majoring in political science said, "This seems like real unfair. Isn't there some constitutional amendment that makes it a crime to pay tall

people more money?"

Lorraine Burton, a senior majoring in peace studies, said, "This kind of disparate treatment of people is unconscionable and reeks of capitalist oppression. Let's go smash some businesses to send them a message!"

Billy Ray Magruder, a sophomore majoring in business, asked, "This isn't going to hurt the Tar Heels basketball team, is it?"

Spencer Hollingshead, executive director of the newly formed group Don't Overlook Vertical Equity (DOVE), said that his organization had been contacted by several lawyers, including Johnny Cochran, with offers to file a class-action lawsuit on behalf of all short people seeking reparations from tall people. "Height discrimination has been going on even longer than slavery," Hollingshead said. "We have to balance the scales of justice, and I'd say that we won't take any less than \$500 billion."

Another activist group, Up With Short People, plans to hold a candlelight vigil in front of the White House next Saturday. Spokesperson Sheila Castelnuovo said, "We're going to show the world that short people won't tolerate being treated as second-class citizens any longer. Our vigil will commemorate the inhumanity of the tall to the short since the very dawn of time."

Not everyone was so positive, however. When asked what he thought of the idea that tall people should be hit with extra taxes to "even things up," former NBA star Charles Barkley threw the reporter out the window. CJ



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