

Thtop it. Jus' thtop. What are you doing? Jus' thtop it.

"I are hooked on phonics"

In recent years public education has come under scrutiny; and why shouldn't it? The plebian school system lost its *raison d'etre* since corporal punishment was limited.[†] Gone are the days when teachers could take slackers, free thinkers, and retarded children out into the hall and beat the living BeeGeesus out of

them. Teachers, now limited to psychological torture, sleep deprivation,^f and high-power microwaves, aren't even allowed to fail students any-more...lest they damage the fragile egos of their tender, pistol-carrying wards.

Higher education should, well, for starters, be on a higher level than it is today. Public education needs a better system, faster teachers, with more arms, damnit!^Δ In order to get all that, it requires gads of cash. They could always try to get an NEA grant by calling classes a "creative happening," an exercise in absurdity if you will, but that kind of money is fleeting and fades fast—it couldn't possibly support all the public school systems across the nation. Hell, *we're* public education and are still waiting for RIT's Creative Arts Committee to finally approve the grant we sent in months ago.[√] After two years of printing they forget we exist? Oh God, the Republicans are winning! We've got to rally, guys!

Anywho.

What the educational system really needs is to start thinking in bigger terms and begin considering the bottom line. I think it's high time they cash in on public interests. The majority of the legislative bodies of our government have all kowtowed before commercialization, and it's time education got a little more greedy.

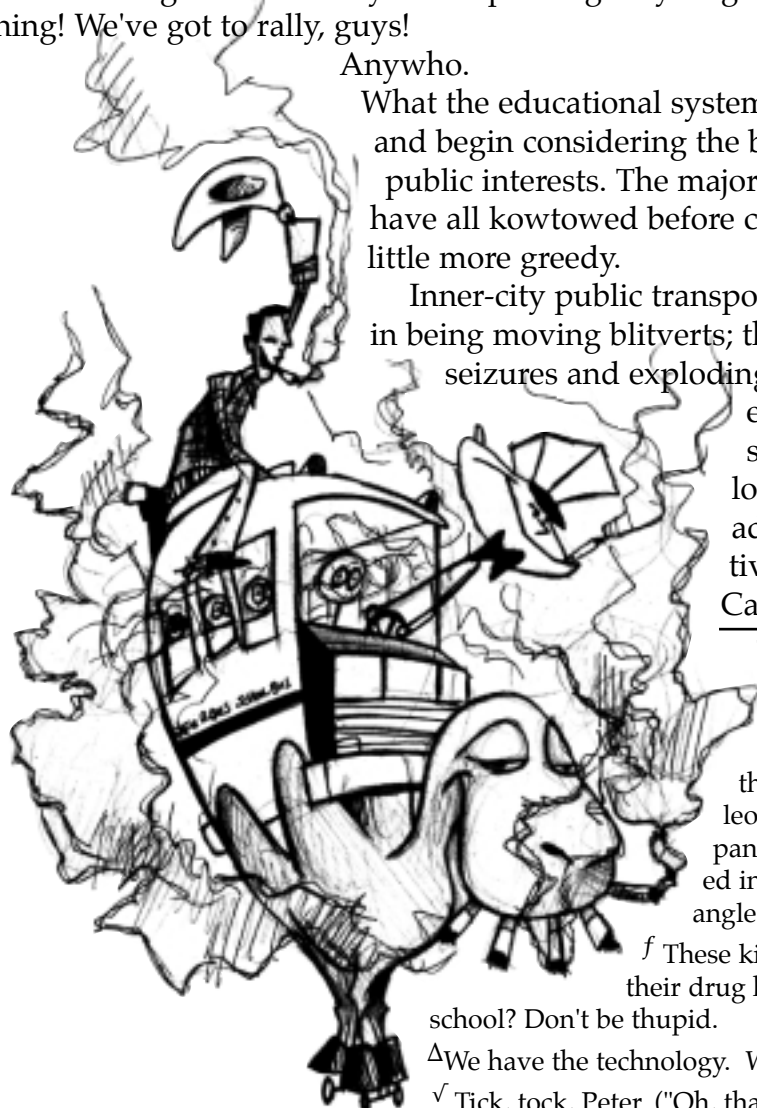
Inner-city public transport long ago recognized the inherent possibilities in being moving blitverts; they go zipping by and people are having seizures and exploding in their wake thanks to the intellectual doppler effect caused by the mind-numbing ads on their sides (the buses, not the people, stupid). The yellow behemoths of our childhood should sell advertising spaces on their sides and rear, effectively becoming Camel wagons. Just imagine Joe Camel in all his malproportioned splendor plas-

[†] The entire movement to abolish corporal punishment was waged by the little known Pink Panthers. Cool and froody, this group of lisping, fashion conscious crusaders founded in the speakeasies of San Francisco in the 1920's could be recognized by their fantabulous black leotards accessorized with a chestal pink triangle, and real panther stoles. It wasn't until the 1960's that a schism resulted in a more militant offshoot that turned its back on the triangle and leotards.

^f These kids are up all night working at Taco Bell to help support their drug habits, and then you expect them to stay awake at school? Don't be thupid.

^ΔWe have the technology. We can rebuild it.

[√] Tick, tock, Peter. ("Oh, that was supposed to be a bunny.")





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Despite rumors to the contrary, the staff meets weekly. People interested in *working* are welcome.

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tered all over the outside of juvenile transportation, while the insides are packed with noisy, boisterous, nubile, young scholars...all anticipating the first day of grade K. What's that you say? Joe Camel and the Marlboro Man have been given a restraining order against being in the presence of small children?[∂] Don't worry about it. Just remember: Joe and Mr. Marlboro are only on the outside of the bus, while Junior is safely nestled inside. Kids won't see the nicotine-stained role models in the bus, although they're liable to see the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers perched above the window just to the right of Ronald McDonald's smiling mug and an old ad for Planned Parenthood, while Barney and the Burger King Kids Club tend to mope about the emergency exits.

That's only the beginning of the fun. Schools themselves would almost become paid advertisements. Gone is the era in which students, in a frenzy of school spirit, would paint a jovial mural on one wall of the school indicating the importance of school and community in any fledgling student's life (Oh, Mr. B). Now those murals are covered up...by paying customers. Nike's just bought the right to embellish the entire front of the high school with it's trademark schwing. Gap and Gitano line the walls leading to the lunchroom, which itself looks like a giant montage. With overabundant phrases on the walls spilling such pearls of wisdom as "Real food for real people," and "Soup is good food," it's no surprise that the youth are beefcake. Beefcake!

The classrooms are far more reserved than the rest of the school in that each classroom may only have one sponsor to paper its walls—with style. Back in the elementary school the kids in the first grade always enjoy a good game of "Spot the Stealth Bomber," in their room tastefully decorated by the US Armed Forces. Strapping, buff soldiers cheerily encourage the pupils to be "all they can be" while standing aloft a large tank and caressing their trusted assault rifle, Charlene, in some tropical island paradise where young native boys are at their beck and call. Phallic symbols abound....

In later years, highschool teachers have to double as announcers in the tradition of the early Soap Operas. After twenty minutes of discussion, the Ecology professor pauses to thank Mobile Oil for their generous support. Mobile Oil: working to protect endangered wetlands by drilling the crap out of them. In Earth Science, DeBeers is footing the bill, and Microsoft is coughing up the dough to sponsor the math classes and guidance counselors. "Where do you want to go today?"

Taking a more subtle route, the text books for Health are supplied by Trojan and the makers of KY Jelly (With a name like KY, it's got to be good). An entire generation of sexually expressive sluts will be convinced that if they don't use Trojan Black Ribbed Nobblers (Now with Microdots!TM) they'll be sure to catch the preppers.

Is the mere idea of corporate contributions offensive to you? RIT

[∂] "So you want to know when you should smoke a cigarette, little boy?"



and other universities have been cashing in on this idea for years. Kodak, Xerox, Microsoft, the CIA...they all give money and materials to colleges that pander to their interests. Why shouldn't the preparatory schools jump on the bandwagon? Think about it: a captive audience of intellectually and morally malleable people guaranteed to be in any of the demographics between the ages of five and eighteen. Advertisers would pay through the nose[≈] for a spot like that. It would guarantee each school system millions of dollars above what they already receive. Forget the gaudy surroundings and the totally immoral use of school children. Just remember that your children, and all of the other children, would be receiving the best education that money could buy.

[≈] Or any other orifice for that matter.



Look it up in your New Grove!

Mark Nowak

Howdy, troopers! I've been given a space to rant by the Supreme Exalted Bumvirate, so I've chosen a topic near and dear to my heart (and, by extension, the inside of my ribs): Music. First off, let me say that "Squirrel Nut Zippers" is a GREAT name for a band. It sounds like the band members got drunk one night and played the word association game until they hit upon the best three word group. Try it with your friends! Secondly, as a music major, it depresses and frustrates me to know that the average life span of a jazz musician is equal to that of a serf in twelfth century England, and that in the time it took you to read this sentence John Tesh made more money than the entire Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra did last season. So I've got a few things to get off my chest.

Since we're speaking of chests, I hope everyone realizes by now that the Spice Girls are a joke. J. S. Bach's music has remained relevant for over 200 years, but 200 days from now people will be talking of the Spice Girls with the same kind of respect and admiration normally reserved for Milli Vanilli and the Macarena. *And* they may mention the Spice Girls and Milli Vanilli together for more than just that...because if these prepackaged fluffballs are singing their own songs, then I'm willing to be Pavoratti's next mistress.

Quite frankly, I have never understood the I-have-no-accent-when-I-sing phenomenon, made famous by Olivia Newton-John in "Grease," but these Girls are extreme. Singing, they sound like diction coaches. In interviews, all I can hear is, "Freshen ya' drink, guv'-nah?"

Speaking of the Decline and Fall of Vocal Diction, one of the summer's big smash hits was "Mmm Bop", by Hanson. If you're not familiar, Hanson is a prank band comprised of three life-like Muppets put together by Henson Enterprises in an effort to reclaim the prestige and money it lost after the new, revamped Muppet Show bombed. "Mmm Bop," if you're not familiar, is a song featuring no actual words, and was perhaps inspired by an informal conversation Frank Oz had with a drunk on the subway. I imagine it went something like this:

Drunk: Ahma jus widdle flinkin goda nohn. Maka ham ida plinky mista goes

Frank Oz: Mmmm...

(*Subway train hitting a bump*): BOP!

This freedom from the heavy burden of lyrics (although the New York Transit Authority got a writing credit, which I thought was a nice gesture) allowed the Henson crew to focus their energies into the demanding and delicate task of rehashing the same song nine or ten times to make an album. Which they succeeded at admirably...if you've heard the second single off the record. Now, to be fair, some classical composers made whole careers out of rehashing the same stuff. The standard joke in music school is that Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741, Italian composer of the Baroque era) didn't write 500 concertos; he wrote the same concerto 500 times. But at least he kept writing a great piece of music again and again, one that has stood the test of time until this very day, to be ripped off by the DeBeers people in their damn "You just finished paying off the ring, time for the necklace!" commercials.

Next time, some bitching about the unspoken vocal diction double standard that exists in American music, as well as a frank and earnest discussion of my favorite type of Diction Impairment, Jamaican reggae rap.

Americana

Recently back from Bulgaria, Christopher Lane returns to share tales of Americana, with a little fear and loathing thrown in. But don't fear! Our agents are recruiting Bulgarians to fill-in as foreign correspondents.

JUNE 6TH, 1997–

It's D-Day.

I can still feel Bulgaria in the pit of my stomach as I walk through the Austin airport, out into the sensual, sweaty air of a warm Texas night. The next day, I'm heading into a huge grocery superstore to get supplies for my summer apartment. The shelves are jammed with products and it takes me five minutes to choose from the 75 different brands of soap because I'm not used to having more than two choices. In the produce section, fruit is stacked so high I realize that half of it is going to be crushed just to keep up the idea of unlimited supply.

Dazed by an overload of signs, labels, oversaturated colors and the staggering vision of fat people (nowhere else in the world will you find so many people so horrifyingly overweight as in this country), I find myself wandering confused and slackjawed through the aisles, like a child in shell-shock. Stopping to find out what they put in cranapple juice, I'm jammed against the aisle by two women adamant about pushing their carts past each other. The PA pipes along about specials in the butcher shop and the air is filled with a disorienting stench of chemical-rich cleaning products. Concentrating on the label, I read it back to myself: "Cranberry juice, water, apple juice, high-fructose corn syrup, pork sausage, sodium sorbate, natural flavors and preservatives."

Beaten and confused, I leave the store with a small sack of fruit and soap. Scurrying to my car, I wonder why my eyes feel so overwhelmed by the information-dense landscape.

America again.

That night I dream of Maggi. She's standing on the platform in Sofia Centralna station, holding my hand out the train window. The train pulls away slowly while her eyes fill with tears. My hand is pulled away from her, and she stands silent, eyes flushed and her face a brittle mask for what's screaming beneath it all. The train seems

to move in slow motion and I watch her leave me in reverse for hours.

Maggi! You'll always be the best part of a dream I left behind...

JUNE 29TH, 1997–

Driving home from a late movie, I see a sight that has always fascinated me: a huge highway interchange. A great coiling tangle of concrete which holds the skyline like some terrifying ancient ruin. Hot-lit in sodium vapour flood-lights, it's an alien shape in a coldly spotless world of glowing signs, dark streets and parked cars. The air is warm and still, and after parking the car by the side of the highway, only the swish of a few passing cars brings any wind through the open window.

I wonder what Maggi would think if she could see it. The William Orbit tape drones along and my evening shave remains smooth to fingertips. The concrete superstructure is suddenly symbolic of everything that is so different about these two cultures. One day there may be supermarkets and computerized checkouts in Bulgaria. But there will never be highways that stretch across the sky like angry serpents.

I'm still not sure if I'm glad to be back home. Sometimes America seems like a delusion.

AUGUST 7TH, 1997–

In the midst of a long horrendous drive across the New Mexico desert, I stop the car on a small overlook that is filled by a sweeping view of mesas, blue sky and incredible clouds. The sun is a hammer, and the air is dry and unforgiving.

Slipping off my clothes I can feel moisture being sucked from me by the merciless environment. My camera is perched on the hood, set on a timer. Ass to the camera, in the middle of the long, snaky highway, I bask in the heat, waiting for the "shloop-click" of the shutter. The sun and sky make time stretch out and my mind is crowded with memories of a childhood under these huge Western skies.

"Shloop-Click" says the camera.

I was wrong. I still love this country. And my heart will always return to the deserts and blue skies of America.

Attic Inferno

-Alex Whitman



OK. So, like, two years ago I was at Thanksgiving at my aunt's house in Massachusetts and I have this other aunt I love to shop with cause she loves to shop almost as much as me.

And the rest of the family can't deal with shopping with either one of us.

So we went shopping.

And, ok: We're at the mall

and I see this Kenneth Cole store. And I needed shoes but I wasn't really going to buy shoes 'cause I can't afford shoes. So I saw this pair of shoes that were shiny black. And, like, I'm a little bird: I'm attracted to anything shiny. I'm like, "Must have these shoes." So. But they were like super expens-
(The phone rings.)

Phone. Phone. Phone. Tell'um to go away.

(Someone answers the phone.)

So, ok. I try them on, and my aunt's like, "Oh, Kenneth Cole.... These are the best shoes ever." So, I buy the shoes; I'm all happy; I go home. And of course since I buy my own Christmas presents I find someone to reimburse me for them. So I didn't really buy them entirely. Only a little bit.

So I'm wearing them. And they are true items of beauty. And, ah, like, the patch in back starts to crack, and I'm like, "Ok, well, I'm too lazy to do anything about it." But then the sole starts to rip, and I'm like, "This is absurd. Shoes that cost this much...we really should have quality."

So I call the company and they're like, "No. You have to go back to the store you bought them in and return them." And I'm like, "The store's nine hours away. I'm not going to drive there to return a pair of shoes." And she's like, "Did you charge them?" And I'm like, "Yeah." And she's like, "Well, call your credit card and they'll tell you where you bought it whatever, whatever." But I didn't even know what card I charged it on, and I wasn't about to look it up. So I got mad and hung up. Then I called them back again

after and I'm like, "This is stupid. I'm not driving to the store." So they had me send them to their headquarters in Jerrrrzzzey.

They kept them for, like, four months. And finally they were like, "Well, we're fixing them," and they sent them back with this crappy glue on them.

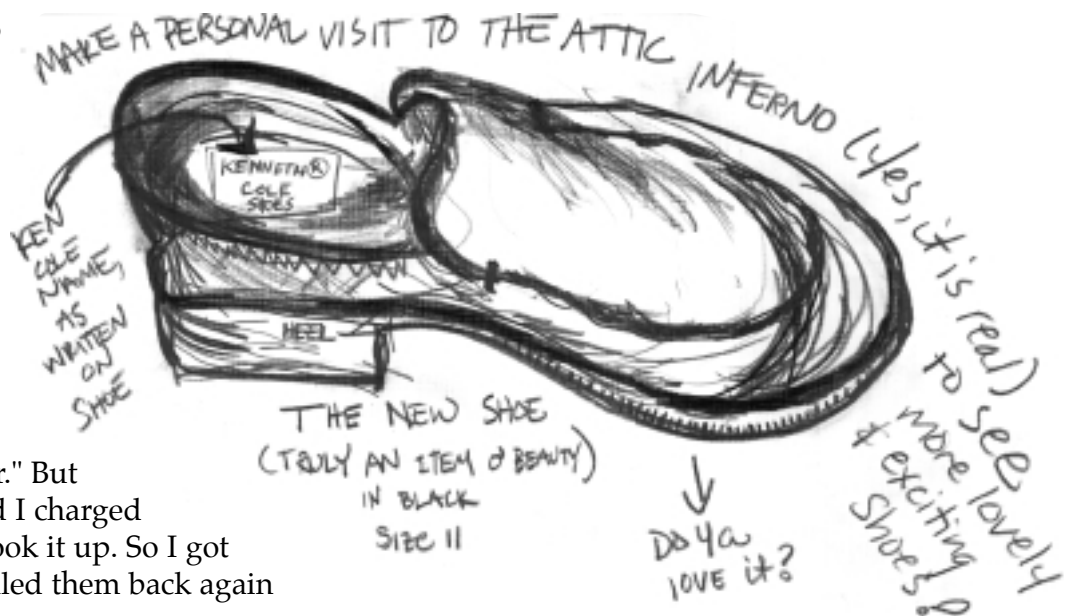
Two weeks later they fell apart, and like, the whole sole fell off. And shoes that cost \$150 shouldn't fall apart like that. I've had shoes like that that lasted 4 years. That's why you spend \$150 on shoes.

So I called them back again. And I yelled at them. And I said, "Shoes that cost this much shouldn't fall apart." She's like, "Write a letter to the President." And I said, "I think I will." So I got his address and I sent the shoes back, and they're like, "Oh. These *are* defective."

But they didn't have any shoes left, and I loved that pair of shoes, and that's all I wanted. So they sent me a credit for any pair of shoes up to a certain amount of money, whatever, whatever, and a catalog. And all the shoes in the catalog just were not what I wanted. And the only pair of shoes I wanted were some golf shoes...that weren't in my size. My feet are bigger than most people's.

I didn't order anything. Then I get the next catalog. This took, like, four months. Finally I ordered another pair of shoes. And I'm waiting, and waiting, and they finally came. The UPS man delivered them and I told him the whole shoe story I'm telling you now. He's like, "Uh-huh. Ok. Thanks," and left. So I'm so excited to have them, and I have them.

Ya' love'um?



IN THE INTERESTS OF BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE MEMBER AND INITIATE PUBLICATIONS OF HELL'S KITCHEN, GDT OFFERS THIS PAGE OF ANGST AS A TRANSITION INTO THE *MELANCHOLY* *Heather's name should never* *have an exclamation mark after it* *HOMEWRECKER*. TO START THINGS OFF, WELCOME GDT'S OWN LITTLE BALL OF NEUROSES, HEATHER DANIELSON!

Moral Elitism

Heather Danielson

Lately I have had random, passing thoughts questioning why I live my life by some of the standards and rules I do. I wonder whether I follow the rules simply because I have been doing just that for so many years, or if there are valid reasons somewhere in my head, and how much weight those reasons have. I have never tried drinking, smoking, or taking drugs. I suppose that during high school that may have been due to lack of exposure. Very few of the people I spent time with did those things or at least did them rarely.

As long as I can remember I have thought of those habits as self-detrimental, childish, and just plain stupid. I am definitely not tempted to try cigarette smoking. Most of the people I know who are smokers want to quit and don't gain anything from smoking...other than respite from nicotine withdrawal. I do find myself curious

about alcohol and some drugs. When used in moderation the things I am interested in don't appear to be detrimental. Also, isn't it childish to refuse to try new things, since I don't even know what they are like? Yet I think that I would be sacrificing some of my self-respect if I allowed myself to have some of these experiences. I can understand why I don't approve of abuse of these substances, but what is wrong with moderate consumption periodically to enjoy altered sensations? It's not like my parents preached at me and beat these beliefs through my still soft skull into my unformed brain, or like they abused these substances and I am attempting to avoid repeating their fate. At this point in my life I enjoy being able to say I don't drink (and never have aside from sips of coffee brandy with milk and Bud from my parents when I was little) and don't do drugs or smoke except second hand. It provides me with a

sense of accomplishment and some notoriety, especially since I have been working at a bar for more than a year.

I think that fear may play a part in my continued abstinence. I fear addiction (at least while looking at myself from inside my head, I seem to have a moderately addictive personality). I fear doing things that may cause me to lose respect for myself. My inhibitions are few enough and I am satisfied with the things I will and won't let myself do and have the courage to do. I'm very afraid of surrendering the reins of control in my life, but I feel that loosening my white knuckled grip could be beneficial. Even with this collection of fears, I still contemplate trying, but no reason seems monumental enough or just plain strong enough to get me to change the way I have lived the first 22 years of my life. Still, I feel that I may be denying myself some pleasure to be able to stand on my moral high ground...alone.

Personal Ads

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WHINEY BP SG F, POSSIBLY WITH TB, FREQUENTLY FOUND WSP. ISO M FOR RB WHO KNOWS MANY PT AND MUST BE ABLE TO WIF DESPONDENT F.

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A - Asian
B - Black
BP - Bipolar
C - Circumsized
D - Divorced
EM - Electronic Mail
F - Female
FL - Feline Leukemia
ISO - In Search Of
LTS - Little Teapot Song
M - Male
MEYRC - Maximum Expansion of Your Rectal Cavity
NOK - Next of Kin
OCD - Obscenely Co-dependent
OW- Off White

Legend:

P - Perryvail
PT - Parlor Tricks
PCOC - Pitching Children Out of Cars
PWE - Previous Work Experience
RB - Reciprocal Biting
SG - Slightly Green
TB - Tuberculosis
TBMJ - The Brunt of My Jokes
TH - Top Heavy
USPSWWO - United States Postal Service Worker With Oozie
W - White
WIF - Whip Into Frenzy
WSP - Wallowing in Self Pity