

“It is an affront to treat falsehood with complacency.” Thomas Paine

CAMPUS REPORT

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TEACHABLE MOMENT AT MEDILL

By: Malcolm A. Kline

Meet the scholars at one of
America's top journalism schools.

One of the nation's premier journalism graduate programs is facing a credibility crisis over one of the programs it showcases on its website. "Northwestern spokesman Al Cabbage released a statement Wednesday afternoon accusing professor and former Medill Innocence Project Director David Protess of 'making false and misleading statements' to Medill Dean John Lavine and court prosecutors about documents the Cook County Court subpoenaed in 2009," a staff report in the Daily Northwestern that appeared on April 6, 2011 revealed. "The documents were related to Protess's work with the Medill Innocence Project on the case of convicted murderer Anthony McKinney from 2003 to 2006."

The Innocence Project is actually a national movement that began in 1992 at Yeshiva University's Cardozo Law School in New York City, and spawned the Innocence Network. The latter has chapters and branches in law schools and journalism schools around the country.

"The development of DNA testing has allowed the Innocence Project to help exonerate 238 factually innocent Americans – 17 of whom were on death row awaiting execution," Innocence Project co-founder Peter Neufeld claimed in testimony before the House Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on Crime in 2009.

The Medill School is based at Northwestern. As of this writing, Protess remains on leave but on the payroll.

When the county prosecutor in Illinois attempted to obtain information from Protess's students about the aforementioned case, Northwestern originally sided with Protess. "However, in June 2010 the University discovered that there were many inconsistencies emerging between Protess's representations and the facts," the Northwestern statement read. "Mr. McKinney's lawyers produced in court student memos they said were received from Protess or from the Medill Innocence Project at his direction – documents Protess had said were never shared outside Medill."

"As a result, it became clear that the position the University had taken in court concerning the students' memos was not supportable." Protess's students describe him as, among other things, "entertaining and interesting," but even one of his admirers noted that "he's sometimes too busy w/ other stuff to help out former students down the road."

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“David has charisma that carries over into his teaching,” another fan wrote on ratemyprofessors.com. “Some may see it as arrogance, but what he does is incredible.”

“Dave will watch your back if you hang out with him,” another protégé offered.

The professor’s detractors also offer some illuminating insights. “Full of himself,” one wrote. “Loves to see his name in the press.”

“But a magnetic personality.”

“I had this jerk as my advisor for one year,” another student remembered. “When I tried to switch schools he didn’t want anything to do with me.”

“More wrapped up in getting a Pulitzer than caring about his students.”

Although, thus far, the professor’s colleagues have stayed above the law, they are a colorful lot arguably more activist than academic or even journalistic:

- The author of *The Journalism of Outrage: Investigative Reporting and Agenda Building in America*, Medill professor Jack Doppelt runs three web sites— ImmigrantConnect.org, Immigration Here & There, and On The Docket;

- Brent Huffman “has been making social issue documentaries and environmental films for over ten years in Ohio, California, Afghanistan, China, Haiti, and Puerto Rico,” according to his IMDB profile;

- Medill professor Peter Slevin is an old favorite of *Accuracy in Academia*’s sister group, *Accuracy In Media*. In a story he filed while still at the *Washington Post* five years ago, “Slevin claimed in the second paragraph that the Constitution ‘forbids the government to show preference for any religious denomination,’” *AIM* editor Cliff Kincaid pointed out. “Oh really?” Kincaid asked. “Where does it say that?” It doesn’t:

- Another Medill professor, ex-priest Robert McClory, has written an admiring account of Jeremiah Wright’s favorite guest pastor, *Radical Disciple: Father Pfleger, St. Sabina Church, and the Fight for Social Justice*, who the Archdiocese of Chicago finally washed its hands of;

- The retiring Helen Gurley Brown professor at Medill, Abe Peck, played Boswell to the Johnson of Studs Terkel who the FBI described as “a radio/news commentator, actor, and award-winning author. Terkel was associated with a number of communist and com-

munist connected groups.”

- Medill professor Ellen Shearer bisected a long journalism career with a stint as public affairs director for the American Federation of Teachers teachers’ union;

- According to her one ratemyprofessors.com review, Medill professor Rachel Davis Mersey is so egalitarian that students grade each other, at least on the group project;

- Medill’s Ashlee Humphreys “studies consumer collaboration, both consumer interactions with other consumers and with companies. Her current research focuses on online communities. One project looks at the development of norms and institutions on Wikipedia, and the other project assesses the exchange of value on YouTube. She also studies the effects of institutional barriers (legal, social, and cultural) on consumer practices. Her current work in this area traces the development of the casino gambling industry from 1976 to the present.”

- Medill’s Patti Wolter “spent five years as the managing editor and Editor in chief of *The Neighborhood Works*, a small advocacy magazine then-published by the Chicago-based Center for Neighborhood Technology.”

All of the above, moreover, are not aberrations but represent one-third of the faculty highlighted by Medill on the cover of its faculty newsletter. If you actually open the publication you meet others such as Michelle Weinberger, who “presented research on ‘Non-Participation in Consumption Rituals—A Christmas Story’ at the American Sociological Association Conference in August [2010],” *Medill Matters*, “a newsletter of the faculty’s research and creative/professional accomplishments” reports. “The project focuses on those who choose *not* to engage in consumption rituals like Christmas.”

“She finds that people strategically use four means to cope: avoiding Christmas practices, partially participating in selective community-oriented practices, hybridizing by participating in similar non-Christmas rituals, and educating.” Most of us view Christmas as something more than a “consumption ritual.”

Malcolm A. Kline is the Executive Director of *Accuracy in Academia*.

If you would like to comment on this article, e-mail mal.kline@academia.org

SQUEAKY CHALK

by Deborah Lambert



KIND AND GENTLE RECESS

A program called Playworks has recently been introduced in Utah to help provide conflict resolution during recess with a “seminar that essentially “teaches . . . students how to play,” according to Education News.

Coordinator Abby Rotwain noted that “the program dispatched coaches to nine Salt Lake City County schools, which then gave kids lectures on children’s games and conflict resolutions in hope of recasting recess as a time of relaxation and rejuvenation for both students and teachers.”

One of the methods involves using a form of dodge ball. The idea is for kids to form a circle and roll the ball toward those in the middle to try to tag their legs. The kids who are tagged change places with those around the circle.

“To resolve any issues that might arise during playtime, the program also teaches students games like ro-sham-bo, or rock-paper-scissors.”

“They need somebody to tell them this is what it’s like to be fair,” noted Kathleen Ware, a physical education teacher at Lincoln Elementary, which is testing the Playworks program.

“It’s more fun to be fair,” she said, adding that “to try to dominate games, with one person winning every game, isn’t fun.”

At least one fourth grader agrees. “I think it’s better,” said Daniel Archuletta,” saying that the old recess got kind of rough, and “it was kind of more boring.”

However, a more contrarian view was offered by someone who protested that trying to integrate conflict resolution into recess is a tall order. Besides, she added, “Conflict is one of the ways children learn to cope. . . . Experiencing these feelings is what helps children grow and develop character. That’s part of what is wrong with the younger generation, they were not allowed to play and experience hurt feelings, inadequacy, etc. . . . And by the way, the writer added, “recess is a free time to play and unwind, not a structured time to feel more stress!”

LEARN LESS, EARN MORE?

Here’s some good news. You can still realize the American dream, without the college degree. Reporter Katie Keiffer recently noted that the downward spiral

in the quality of American education combined with the downward spiral of the economy may actually do American students a favor by allowing them to rethink and re-assess their futures. After all, the “cost of college tuition is rising faster than inflation and wages are not keeping up with inflation,” according to the Wall Street Journal.

No matter how much Obama & Company urge the private sector to create jobs, they can’t create them out of thin air like the government can, especially with a 35 percent corporate tax rate.

That’s why more and more college grads who can’t find jobs end up working for the government, so they can pay the bills.

The fact is that a plumber with a high school degree can out-earn a teacher, an MBA holder and even a doctor, because of the years spent on the job, instead of learning and acquiring higher student loan debt.

FOOD POLICE UPDATE

For Tatyana Gray, the end of the school day used to mean a quick stop at the corner store to gulp down a sugary soft drink and some chips before heading home. But a couple of months ago, Tatyana and many other elementary school kids in Philadelphia were shocked to discover that access to their mid-afternoon treats was often being obstructed by a “protective phalanx of parents with bright-colored safety vests and walkie talkies that prevented them from getting their after school snacks at the corner store,” according to the New York Times.

It was Philadelphia’s epidemic of childhood obesity that sparked a high-octane effort to keep kids away from the high calorie treats they love and build new healthy food habits.

In a city renowned for its mouth-watering cheese-steaks, many parents have suddenly become foot soldiers in the intervention efforts. They’re even helping to re-write nursery rhymes for first grade, “And on his farm he had some carrots,” expelling sweet snacks in favor of water and green vegetables.

But a few small victories do not win a war. Just ask Jack Sagan, sales and marketing distributor of Jatro Cash and Carry.

Sagan noted that he “recently lost \$500 buying several dozen cases of sliced apples that perished before they caught on with the stores.”

SQUEAKY CHALK

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During an interview, Sagan stopped at a display of stuffed tortilla snacks. “These will kill you,” he said, adding that “they are one of our best sellers.”



ZERO TOLERANCE, ZERO LOGIC

The Education Reporter recently noted that “disciplinary actions taken against students in three states once again highlight disproportionate punishment for minor or unintended infractions under zero tolerance weapon policies in schools. Even when school policies permit leniency based on context, some officials insist on taking a hard line for petty violations.

“In Kansas, fifth-grader Alyssa Cornish was suspended in mid September for the remainder of the semester for playing with another child’s toy gun on the playground of her school.

“Shawnee Mission school district officials said it did not matter that the incident occurred on a Sunday when school was not in session. The school board declined to modify the suspension period of the straight-A student council member, saying that the rules against weapons of any kind on school grounds are ironclad.

“The girl’s mother, Tracey Cornish, expressed concern that the long-term suspension would make it difficult for Alyssa to catch up during the second half of the school year. ‘She’s very bright,’ Cornish said, ‘but is she going to be able to walk back in after four months and be where the rest of those children are academically?’”



THE SCREWED GENERATION

Matthew Segal, who heads a non-profit group called Our Time, recently noted that “with 85 percent of college graduates moving back home and an average debt of \$22,000 per student, thousands are staring at a bleak economic future.”

Undaunted, Segal claims that “although new grads are entering an economy with an almost 17 percent unemployment rate for Americans under the age of 30, . . . we know there is still a bright future out there.”

But these and other statistics have convinced columnist/commentator Alan Caruba otherwise. Also, the fact that so many jobless college grads have to move back home and cope with skyrocketing debt is hardly the recipe for a bright and happy future — it means that today’s generation is screwed. Caruba is

the founder of the National Anxiety Center.

Recalling how education has been dumbed down by political correctness during the past half-century, Caruba bemoans the lack of discussion about how “colleges and universities have become sausage factories, squeezing parents and working students for every dollar, pushing them through, and conferring degrees that, with the exception of the professions, often have dubious value.”

While today’s grads have become connected by Internet machinery like Facebook and Twitter, this does not appear to have helped them launch careers in a world full of “faltering economies,” . . . “outsourced jobs,” . . . and “rapacious bankers making money on housing loans they knew were bad for those in search of the American Dream.”



STUDENT BARRED FROM PROM

A Connecticut student was recently “barred from attending his senior prom after pasting an oversized message to the front of his high school asking his classmate to go with him,” according to FoxNews.com.

It all started when James Tate, an advanced placement student at Shelton High School, posted a sign with “12-inch tall cardboard letters outside the school, . . . reading: ‘Sonali Rodriguez, Will you go to the prom with me?’”

Although Rodriguez said yes, the school said no. In fact, Tate and the two friends that helped him put the sign up not only received one-day suspensions from school, but have been barred from attending the prom.

Tate noted that the reason he created the oversized request was that he was “waiting for a special time, special way to ask her. . . and this is what happened.”

While the school did not respond to inquiries from FoxNews.com, James Tate told The Connecticut Post the school explained that “the posting constituted trespassing and posed a safety risk.”

City Mayor Mark Lauretti has already jumped in to defend Tate, noting that the situation may “need a second look,” because “part of the problem in today’s world is that we make policies or recommendations without common sense or flexibility . . . and lose sight of the big picture.”



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EDUCATION REFORMS = NAZI OVENS?

After the Indiana legislature passed education reforms that “lifted the cap on charter schools . . . that will transform the state’s education system,” a barrage of emails accused Kyle Olson’s Education Action Group of “attacking public education” and “bashing” teachers. Among the dissatisfied backers of the status quo was an “educator” who said this:

“Why do you distribute this propaganda? Do you have a conscience? . . . The education agenda is a holocaust against our children. Please understand I am speaking as a grandson of a holocaust survivor. This is truly as bad or worse than what was done to the Jewish people, only it is happening to innocent young people.”

This “educator” went on to say that “allowing children to attend a charter school was ‘worse than’ placing children in ovens like the Nazis did.”



CHURCH LADY GAMES A CAMPUS HIT

If you think bingo is only the refuge of little old ladies in church basements, read on.

Bryant University and Salve Regina University, both in Rhode Island, are witnessing the dawn of bingo-mania where hundreds of students show up on a regular basis “for a comforting whiff of childhood and a shot at iPads and a Play Station 3,” according to nytimes.com.

“It’s kind of crazy that students are going to these games that people play in rec halls and churches,” says Sharon Blumenstock, assistant director of programming at Boston College. “The good thing is that they stay to the last prize.”

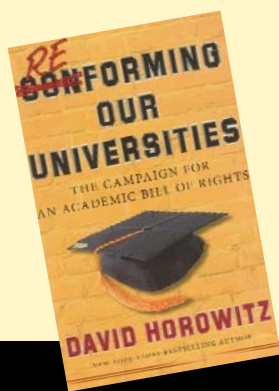
This is definitely not your grandmother’s bingo game – “it’s geared to the Xbox generation: to break a

tie, players bust moves in a frenetic dance-off.” In fact, Bryant U. recently “unveiled its latest acquisition – a \$1,500 Gemstone bingo console, with black light – christened by its president, with some 400 students in attendance.”

College administrators like the fact that bingo has become an “alcohol-free, late-night option” that keeps students entertained, on campus.

The ongoing program has become a huge draw at the University of Buffalo where once a year, “students invite local cross-dressers to call out numbers” at the annual “Drag Queen Bingo.”

While it’s impossible to get 20 people to see a comedian, “you can get 200 to a bingo game,” says Ken Abrahams, a v.p. at Fun Enterprises, which “helps colleges with late-night diversions.” And he knows the reason why – “It all comes down to the prizes.”



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WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

by Malcolm A. Kline



Academics love to forecast. For the sake of college graduates, let's hope their latest one proves to be more warranted than now seems possible.

"Students seeking full-time jobs after graduation will face a more optimistic job market this year, as the National Association of Colleges and Employers predicts a nearly 20 percent rise in hiring of graduates," Katherine Rodriguez wrote in *The GW Hatchet Online*. "The association's spring job outlook survey anticipates employers will hire 19.3 percent more graduates this year than in 2010, the first time employers have reported a double-digit increase in spring hiring projections since 2007."

"An increase in hiring is also expected to bring an increase in starting salary offers. The average salary offer to all Class of 2011 graduates now stands at \$50,462, according to results of a recent National Association of Colleges and Employers survey, 5.9 percent more than the average for 2010 graduates."

The *GW Hatchet* is the daily student newspaper, with an online edition, at George Washington University.

Meanwhile, "Employers ramped up their hiring in April, the Labor Department said Friday, giving hope that recent signs of weakening growth have not undermined job creation," Neal Irwin reported in *The Washington Post* on May 6, 2011. "But the unemployment rate also rose, showing that American workers are still having a rough time finding jobs."

"Employers added 244,000 jobs in April, the agency said, with the gain in private-sector jobs — 268,000 — the strongest in five years. The unem-

ployment rate, meanwhile, moved up to 9 percent from 8.8 percent, rising for the first time since November."

That the unemployment rate went up despite the job gains indicates that the latter is not a net figure. Moreover, a look at the quarter of a million job wind-fall shows that this economic indicator is even less impressive.

"McDonald's Corp. (MCD), the world's biggest restaurant chain, said it hired 24 percent more people than planned during an employment event this month," Leslie Patton reported in the *Bloomberg News* on April 28, 2011. "McDonald's and its franchisees hired 62,000 people in the U.S. after receiving more than one million applications, the Oak Brook, Illinois-based company said today in an e-mailed statement."

"Previously, it said it planned to hire 50,000."

At least one economist wants to see more evidence before agreeing with the NACE prediction. "Well, we're in an uptick economy so there could be more jobs starting at \$50,000," Ohio University economics professor Richard Vedder said in an appearance in Washington, D. C. on May 10, 2011. "But how will we know?"

"Nobody keeps earnings information on recent college graduates." Vedder heads the Center for College Affordability and Productivity.

He spoke at a conference organized by the North Carolina-based John William Pope Center for Higher Education Policy. Vedder also notes that there a number of stories coming out about recent college graduates hired at \$8 an hour.

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER



By *Malcolm A. Kline*

June, 2011

Dear Reader,

There is a chasm between how consumers view higher education and how the academic establishment views itself. The May 20, 2011 issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education reports that “57 % of the public says American higher education is doing a poor or only fair job of providing value for the money families spend.”

Meanwhile, “76 % of college presidents say higher education is doing an excellent or good job of providing value for the money spent by families.” Part of the reason for the dichotomy is that the former are concerned about the outcomes of higher education while the latter are focused more on the incomes in colleges and universities.

Consequently, “The public is much more concerned about college affordability than presidents are,” the Chronicle informs us. Against this backdrop, it is hardly surprising to note that, “The number of jobs in higher education continues to grow and is outpacing growth in the U. S. economy as a whole,” as HigherEdJobs.com reveals.

“There is a disconnect between the labor force and higher education,” Ohio University economist Richard Vedder noted in a seminar on May 10, 2011 that was sponsored by the North Carolina-based John William Pope Center for Higher Education Policy. Vedder heads the Center for College Affordability and Productivity.

He also pointed out in the symposium that “The Golden Economic Age in the United States occurred before 1 % of the population went to college.” Vedder was the featured speaker at an Accuracy in Academia author’s night that was held on April 7, 2011.

At the AIA author’s night, Vedder was particularly skeptical of schools of education that train the teachers of tomorrow. “The average grade point average in schools of education is a 3.8,” Vedder noted wryly. “If you can breathe on the glass and fog it up, they give you a 3.8.”

“If you don’t fog up the glass, they mark you incomplete.” Because we mark the entire higher educational system as incomplete, we stay in business in order to show you, who are paying for them, where the loose ends are.

We could not do this work without you.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mal Kline'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Mal Kline
Executive Director

Voodoo Anyone?

How to Understand Economics Without Really Trying



by

Christopher T. Warden

Forewords by M. Stanton Evans & Malcolm A. Kline



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