
Youth Truth



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Hidden Agenda

Susan Wishnetsky

The “No Child Left Behind” Act of 2001 is an appropriations bill, authorizing the distribution of federal funds to states for public education. But, as we all should know, it is often through appropriations bills that federal policies are enforced. Take the national drinking age—it resulted from a transportation appropriations bill being amended to keep federal funds for highway construction from being given to any state that didn’t raise its drinking age to 21 (see *Youth Truth*, v. 1, issue 5). The fear of losing federal funding can make states do all sorts of things.

The Act, found at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/esea/>, was criticized by proponents of public schools even before its passage into law in January 2002. Many of the criticisms summarized in Gerald W. Bracey’s article “Poison Bill”, online at <http://www.america-tomorrow.com/bracey/EDDRA/EDDRA25.htm>, focus on the Act’s unrealistic demands on public schools. Students will be required to attain unprecedented levels of “proficiency” for their schools to continue getting funded. The qualifications required of teachers are also completely unrealistic. Bracey believes the authors of the bill were fully aware of this, and designed the bill to guarantee the failure of public schools to qualify for continued funding.

For those of us who would applaud the death of public schools, this might sound like good news. But it may actually bring about the replacement of public schools with private (for-profit) charter schools, which may receive the same federal funds but are specifically exempted from “State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools” (from section 5210 of the Act)—such as state minimum wages, labor laws, building codes, etc. These schools, benefitting from public funds without having to comply with public regulations, can be just as oppressive as public schools—but at lower costs!

In the end, the whole scheme may prove so disastrous that it *will* bring about the end of compulsory schooling. While we’re waiting (and hoping) for that to happen, there are some parts of the bill that affect students in the here and now.

Sex and drug education: while the Act doesn’t prohibit public schools from discussing birth control or sexually-transmitted disease prevention, they can’t use federal funding for it; federal funds are only for “abstinence only” sex ed (sect. 9526). Drug education classes “must convey a clear and consistent message” that illegal drugs are bad (sect. 4152). If a school offers any other kind of program, they’d better be prepared to prove they didn’t use federal funds for it. Rather than risk that kind of trouble, most schools will stick with the “just say no” line. But there’s money set aside for “character-building” programs (sect. 5431), so schools will probably have more of those.

Drug testing: A recent article at <http://www.cnsnews.com/ViewCulture.asp?Page=Culture\archive\200207\CUL20020719b.html> claims that the Act provides funding for this, and nothing in the section on “Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities” (sects. 4001-4155) seems to rule out this use of funds. So prepare to pee. There’s extra money for new security measures, too. Smile at the camera when you pee.

Computers: Public libraries won their battle over government-mandated web filtering (the CIPA law, struck down in May), but school libraries are another matter. The Act only pays for internet-connected computers that “protect” you from naughty words and images (sect. 2441). Web filters block everything under the sun, so your school computers won’t be of much value.

Snitching: The Act sets up a toll-free hotline for students to report drug use, violence, gang or cult activity, etc. (sect. 4128).

Armed Forces recruiting: This is a big one. Buried near the end of the 670-page Act (sect. 9528), it was just recently spotted by *New York Post* reporter Carl Campanile <http://www.nypost.com/news/nationalnews/52710.htm>. Schools receiving these federal funds must supply your name, address, and telephone number to any military recruiter who inquires—unless you ask them not to. *You or your legal guardian* can ask the school not to do this, and they *should* honor your request. Do it now.

Redirect

John Stossel's August 9th "Give Me A Break" segment on ABC News echoed the sentiments in *Youth Truth's* May/June cover story on child labor laws; it can be viewed at <http://abcnews.go.com/sections/2020/2020/stossel020809.html>.

An opinion piece at <http://www.prospect.org/webfeatures/2002/07/just-r-07-18.html> weighs in on how school vouchers are welcomed by people who hate American pluralism, and want to live only among "their own kind".

In December 2002, the first book in a new time-travel adventure series will be released by Brown Swan Publishers. The "Q&A" section of the series' web site <http://www.saveourstar.com> explains that kids in the future have equal rights "because it's right." It continues: "sometime in the 21st century, they started to realize that it wasn't right for people to treat kids differently from adults they looked at all the laws and rules that had been made to keep kids down, and at how unfair it was that kids weren't allowed to vote and were forced to labor in schools without getting paid. Kids could even be hit without the police doing anything about it ..." Stay tuned for a book review.

The Reducing Americans' Vulnerability to Ecstasy (RAVE) Act (S. 2633), introduced by Senator Joseph Biden on June 18, has prompted a number of commentaries and letter-writing campaigns. A few of the more mainstream ones can be found at <http://www.drugpolicy.org/action/RaveAnalysis.html>, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,58663,00.html>, http://www.salon.com/mwt/feature/2002/07/16/rave_act/, and the "harm-reduction program" DanceSafe at <http://www.dancesafe.org> (many more are available on rave culture sites). The RAVE act would expand the old "crackhouse" law to cover dance parties where ecstasy—or its "paraphernalia," now defined to include glow sticks—may be used, and to permit property owners to be civilly as well as criminally charged.

News Links

New Surgeon General High School Drop-Out

Sure, he passed his high-school equivalency exam, and went on to college and medical school—but Richard Carmona did it on his own schedule. A brief bio of this fascinating man, confirmed July 23 as the 17th U.S. Surgeon General, can be seen at <http://www.ahsc.arizona.edu/opa/ahsnews/apr02/carmona.htm>.

Chicago Columnist Bob Greene Resigns

Bob Greene, a *Chicago Tribune* columnist known for emotional exposes of children forced to live in abusive situations, has resigned under pressure after an anonymous tip informed the newspaper of Greene's improper relationship with a "girl in her late teens". Turns out, according to <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,63136,00.html>, the "affair" took place over ten years ago (one source reports having heard that the "girl" was 18 at the time, although we cannot confirm this). A recent and very typical Bob Greene column about two abused children appears at <http://www.jewishworldreview.com/bob/greene070102.asp>.

Facility Fined

Allredge Academy in Tucker, West Virginia has agreed to a slap on the wrist—a \$5000 fine—rather than fight a charge of child neglect for the suicide of 14-year-old Ryan Lewis in February 2001. According to <http://www.wvgazette.com/news/News/200206139/>, a three-month stay at the private "wilderness treatment center" costs parents more than \$17,000.

South Dakota School Sics Dogs on Students

A school in Wagner, South Dakota conducted a "suspicionless drug sweep" last May, allowing police with a drug-sniffing German Shepherd to search all the classrooms. According to <http://www.aclu.org/news/2002/n072502c.html>, the principal announced a "lockdown" over the loudspeaker, and students were warned to keep their hands on their desks and remain still, since any sudden movement might cause the dog to attack!

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Opinions expressed may not reflect the views of ASFAR.

What it means to do something

ASFAR—and the youth rights movement in general—is often criticized for “not doing anything.” In this essay I ask the following questions: What would it mean for ASFAR to be “doing something”? Is ASFAR in fact doing anything important? And, finally, how can we improve ASFAR’s “productivity”?

ASFAR has a Declaration of Principles (<http://www.asfar.org/declaration/>), listing 37 statements in 16 separate categories which we would like to see accepted and enacted by our society. Among them: the right for young people to vote, not to be forced to go to school, to be free from curfews, and to own their own bodies (i.e. to have the right to medical consent, to drink, and to have sex). ASFAR is now six years old, and not a single one of those ideas have been implemented, anywhere.

So, people ask, “what the hell has ASFAR accomplished?” The answer is: a lot. Much more than any individual law change, ASFAR’s objective is to persuade our society of a simple *idea*: that age discrimination doesn’t make sense; that all people, regardless of their age, have the right to determine their own destiny; that people are *individuals*, and should be judged as individuals, not by demographic qualities over which they have no control.

That’s a radical, crazy concept, the opposite of which is embedded deep within our culture, and perhaps every culture that has ever existed. It’s a sad fact that even the very youth who are oppressed are usually in support of their own oppression, or at least the oppression of all the *other* kids. And those that aren’t often don’t give the issues the careful consideration they deserve, so that, when they turn 18 and the issues are not as relevant to their own lives, they can scoff at their former selves, chalk their crazy opinions up to the “stupidity of youth” (a rather circular argument), and do the same for anyone else who might harbor those thoughts.

The picture I’ve painted looks bleak, but in fact the ultimate success of the youth rights movement, like every civil rights movement before it, is inevitable. The reason is simple: the ideas make sense. Anyone who understands, on a deep level, *why* they make sense, can never be convinced otherwise, just as anyone who understands why racism doesn’t make sense can never be persuaded to be a racist.

Houston Police Go Nuts At K-Mart

One August night, police officers suddenly “swarmed” onto the site of a K-Mart store and an adjoining restaurant, apparently targeting everyone who looked young. According to <http://www.chron.com/cs/CDA/story.hts/special/raid/1539629> about 425 people, including those who were sitting and eating, were herded into the parking lot, handcuffed, and taken to jail. A ten-year-old girl who hadn’t stayed close enough to her father in the store was one of those arrested.

Just In My Opinion

David Schneider-Joseph
ASFAR Board Member

None of ASFAR’s objectives will be achieved in a vacuum. We can’t just lobby strongly for lowering the voting age by holding lots of protests, publishing flyers, wearing t-shirts, writing our congressmen (though those are all important activities), and expect it to happen. *All* of ASFAR’s objectives require that first our culture understand that simple, radical concept which I laid forth above. They can’t just be exposed to it either. They have to *understand* it. That’s why we have to understand it first, in order to explain it to them as a deep, consistent, and principled philosophy.

So what has ASFAR achieved in the past six years? It’s been a community—a hub of ideas—for the youth rights movement. It’s allowed people with vastly different political views to come together and discuss what exactly it means for young people to have rights.

This type of beginning is no stranger to civil rights movements in history. It took over *forty years* from the time the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing the right of women to vote, was drafted, until it was finally passed by Congress in 1920. In the meantime, the members of the woman’s rights movement couldn’t even agree *amongst themselves* how far their movement should go. There were decades of introspection (or bickering, if you like) before any ideas gained mainstream consideration.

We shouldn’t expect to change laws in any substantial way any time soon. However, our movement has a tool available to us that past movements haven’t had: the Internet. So we *can* expect to form strong communities online that also manifest themselves locally. *That’s* how ASFAR can be most effective right now.

So think deep thoughts. Write an essay. Talk to a friend. Start a local chapter. Don’t be discouraged if the fruits of your actions aren’t noticeable. They won’t be for a long time to come. But they *will* be there, sowing the seeds for a tidal wave of change.

And it will happen sooner than you think.

News Links

Zero Tolerance Expulsion Overturned

An Illinois fourth-grade student who borrowed his aunt’s lunchbox last December was punished with a yearlong expulsion when the box was found to contain two boxcutters the aunt used at her factory job. His lawyers’ proudly announce at <http://www.jenner.com/service/service.asp?type=probono> that in August a judge overturned the expulsion and criticized the school officials who imposed it.

The Sickness Unto Breath

Siobhan Mangal

“...Provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare,
and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity,
do ordain and establish this Constitution
for the United States of America.”
These words were written, certified,
and then placed on a wall of government,
in short, the days of oppression were to be supposedly over,
and America had gotten on its soap box.
All well and fine if that were the case
and we were all destined for a happily ever after,
but there is no story book ending
and whatever elimination of disorder and chaos
that was to come from this is no longer a dream, but an afterthought.
“Back this up,” you say.
“Walk the streets,” I say.

We the people of the United States
have nothing to fear but fear itself.
On the other hand to be totally honest,
we the people, we the human race, have nothing to fear
but the shadows of our shells that stop us common folk from
accepting what is different from us.
This is what we live and is a far cry from
whatever was signed by whoever it was signed by,
because the plain fact of the matter is that
these are the times, and the times they are changing.
The change however is just a cycle of repetition
that has but one facade
and that is its colorless generation.

HATE.

I hate the people who don't find it hard to judge others.
I mean, don't you?
It's fine really, let's be open, we're all people here.
We all forget to learn from our mistakes,
we all bleed the same blood, we all believe the same things.
It simply ticks me off that there was ever
a Sylvia Plath, a woman who saw all of our regurgitated bodies
and sought to show us the remains of them. A complete renegade.
This is why she and people like her make me sick to my stomach
to where I am in a catatonic state of mind.

I rather be pushed with the crowds in one bundle
of neverending nothingness with my peers,
who in essence begin the cycle of it all.
I rather sit in class and listen to another drone
speak of why she doesn't like her counterpart
for her counterpart acts only as a staple in her busy life.
I don't want anything except to dine with my teenage adversaries
and overhear their stereotypes and mellow dramatic controversies.
This is what I want to do with my life, just like the rest of you.
The only difference is, unlike the rest of you,
I am not afraid to admit it. Well then ...

Dear Soapbox,
Hear me roar.

We are all dough.
Our parental figures are our bakers and their job is quite simple,
yet the most realistic, complex, and important job of them all.
These bakers have to mold the dough,
and believe me if they screw up on this one,
there will be more than just a share of unhappy customers.
So they mold, and mold until it's time to stick us,
the unbaked, unrisen dough,
into the oven.

The oven, a hot abyss of social disorder,
frequent changes in allies and a world of fiery everything
is where we seek the end point of this mold, the bread phase.
In the oven, we all in our own ways fall victim to blunder,
some more than others,
but in this process of bread making,
the process of it all, by human default is always blunder.
In the oven we come across all types of other dough,
different colors, different shapes, different everything.
This is where it all begins.
Now depending on who was molding the dough,
there will be some dough who look at other dough and
wonder why on earth the dough is so different.

These are the beginning stages
of the process of bread making and sadly
the beginning stages of a small minded youth.
From our beginning we are taught in our parents' opinions,
so that in some way they can compensate
for their own parents flop ups.
In this we are created in what we see.
We become mini figures of our parental guardians.
After this consumption of our one environment
we are suddenly pushed to the extreme into a world of unknown.
This world is where no one is there feeding you opinions
and to be right is to be right in someone else's mind.

All of this in just the beginning stages?

Yes. Definitely.

Right on your local playground somewhere during play time.
Sadly though, the cycle moves on, and quickly,
so quick that it may hurt if you blink.
A few years pass and the playground manner is more matured,
a middle school where it is evident
that there are differences, a lot of them.
Choose your weaponry.

With this understanding,
one begins to understand where they fit in,
and slowly they become what they are supposed to be,
or rather what they think they should be.
What they should be and what they think they should be
take control of them so that the rest of their childhood population
is nonexistent. They are now in their own "crowd".
In this crowd of their peers who seem to be
what they are looking for in themselves
they shut themselves out to all of the other crowds.
So begins a lifetime of hate, prejudice, and bias,
which really means
so begins another author writing a best seller
on the youth of the nation.

Why does this mean anything?
Why do I make this preamble of mine such a big part of this?
Why I am so set at pointing the finger at people?
Good question. I ask you this ...
Why did the chicken cross the road?
To get to the other side of course.
The other side of this road
is the other side of the cosmos.

The human brain grows
until the age of at least sixteen.
Sixteen years of acknowledgment in depths.
These depths are of course all subliminal
but will be quickly realized in the future.
Subliminal messages!?
I must be not only out of mind but at most very bold.
It's true though.
We are all taught in one way or another
that we are in some sort of class,
some sort of higher or lower than someone else
and we make our next moves based on just that.
This is not to say that we are all archaic, predators
on our prey's class rather than our prey alone;
we are worse than that.
The archaic know at least that they are archaic,
we just believe we are following the norm.

We at the ages of 5 and 6 start to set others apart from us.
In a society where there are so many faces,
so many of us hide from those faces
so that we can mesh with the ones that look more like ours
or more like our mothers or fathers.
I for one can't stand this. At least back in the good old days
we would take the different and burn them at the stake,
letting them know exactly what we felt about them.
Now we poke the abnormal a fake smile
and plan against them in our basements.
In the old days we had some guts.
We knew how self serving we were and we were proud of it.
Now though, now there are windows for us to crawl in
and back alleys for us to roam.

You may be reading this right
and saying how much of a pessimist I am,
but honesty nowadays is always being mistaken for pessimism.
Not to bleed into it but if you read our school motto it states
One Heart, One Mind.
A motto that was thought up back in the old days
which boldly states that
Hey, think alike and everything will go smoothly.
How subliminal is that really?

Our neighborhoods are divided into
the families who can afford luxury or can't.
Our kids coincide on their DVD players and game systems.
Gays and rock fans are dismissed from our churches.
Blacks and Hispanics get their own demographic
for their lack of education and imprisonment
so that some Channel 11 news anchor can report on it.
Women feel so oppressed that they decide to establish
their own television network.

And just like the cycle goes,
men everywhere alike find comfort in
some sort of physical brutality like a bunch of neanderthals
so that they can find comfort in their foul memories
of a father who screwed with their mold of dough
so that their bread was left cooked unevenly.
I'm not the insane one, I'm not the bold and brash one,
the bold insane brash individuals are the ones who can
wave their flags under their constitutional rights
yet look over their shoulder because the person next to them
wearing the same red, white and blue trademark
falls under another class.

This is our common defense, this is our general Welfare,
this is our security of the Blessings of Liberty
to ourselves and our Posterity.
These were and still are the words of our government,
the same government that not only shakes the hand
of the makers of this social anarchism
but created the materialistic social castes
that feed on a NIKE generation.

What can I do about this?
What exactly can I do, how can I fix the mess that is around,
the prejudice, the hate, the world as we know it?
Sadly I can't. I wish it were that easy,
I wish I could make this a storybook ending and have the answer.
I just know what is wrong and what doesn't rub me the right way.
Then again, what do I know?
I'm just a tenth grader who lives life under my own mind
instead of making my pre-written statements in front of cameras
for people who need people to live life for them
instead of taking life into their own hands
including the hands of other hues, religions, and sexual preferences.

Come to think of it ... Where is that darn soap box?

Land without end
stories that blend
youthful adventure with
aged discontent
Young go and reach out
invest in your elders
show them that we can
rise to the show
hope seems elusive
victory far
neither advancement nor education
nor freedom is nigh
quickens the pace
forgetting former pace
light speed to the frontlines,
but there is no race

Untitled
Daniel McGuire

revolution is dreamt of
authority stalking
open your eyes, kind security guard
become an ally
enemies beware
allies aware
gently smiling
enlightening
frightening to those
without understanding

Two hard books on youth and culture.

Giroux, Henry A. *Stealing innocence: youth, corporate power, and the politics of culture*. New York : Palgrave, 2000.

I just got me a pair of bifocals. I don't like 'em. Bifocals force you to read entire books, computer screens and newspapers through a tiny little space at the bottom of the lenses. (The reading area can be bigger, but then you can't *walk* with them.) When I get tired of struggling with them, I switch to my old glasses.

Plunging again into Henry Giroux's *Stealing Innocence*, I found that some things are difficult to read no matter which glasses you're wearing. I've been rereading this book for the past year, never quite feeling ready to write a review. On my first reading, I found the book, with its emphasis on how corporate culture defines youth, not too sympathetic to youth rights. Liberal, pro-public school, critical of the private sector, the author appealed to me in many ways; then he smacked me in the face in the middle of an entire chapter damning child beauty pageants:

The view of the home as a safe space for children also became questionable, as it became clear that the Ramseys imposed their own strange fantasies on their daughter and in doing so denied her an identity suitable for a six-year-old Not allowed to be a child, JonBenet was given the unfortunate job of projecting herself through a degrading aesthetic that sexualized and commodified her.

I snorted. As if "the home" could *ever* have been relied upon to provide a safe space for children. Would the author have preferred that they impose "fantasies" upon their daughter—as most parents do—that he would *not* have found so "strange", such as insisting upon the highest academic achievement, or pushing her to excel in sports, or making her practice the violin until her fingers bled? Does he prefer the much more common practice of *desexualizing* one's children, forbidding all sexual talk, reading, exploration? Who can say what identity was "suitable" for this particular six-year-old?

On my second reading I decided that, although he could have explained himself better, the author probably picked out

JonBenet as an example of how children are defined by culture, instead of being allowed to define themselves. The child beauty pageant scene was just a particularly blatant and current example, one that might attract a wide readership for this often abstruse book. And of course, he is quite right. JonBenet, like most other kids, was certainly forced to play the role adults expected of her, for the mere reward of their approving gaze.

Giroux does not forget to blame the societally-imposed powerlessness of youth for their vulnerability to these types of exploitation. He notes the increasing exclusion of youth from "public spaces outside of schools" while "new services arise in the private sector to take 'care' of kids," from private day care and after-school centers to private "treatment centers" and other prisons. Deprived of actual public spaces, young people turn to cyberspace to engage in "profoundly important forms of social communication," only to find that adults "mistrust the new technologies—in the name of protecting childhood innocence," and respond by imposing still more restrictions.

In his introduction, Giroux promises to challenge the "myth" of childhood innocence; as far as I could tell, he never seriously attacked this topic and perhaps never really intended to. Instead, he devotes a whole chapter denouncing a culture that produced the notion of "heroin chic." His concerns seem overblown and even censorious, but he does explain the origins and appeal of the 1990s trend in some very interesting ways. Another chapter decries the commercialization and privatization of schooling—but also argues for the empowerment of students.

After rereading *Stealing Innocence* this last time, there are still many sections I wish had been clearer, and many points with which I could argue. But it contains so many good and thought-provoking passages, I do recommend it, not only as an exercise in concentration, but as a starting point for further discussion.

News Links

British Fight Fingerprinting

A fingerprint-recognition system sold to UK school libraries to replace library cards is under fire from parents and human rights groups, reports <http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/dynamic/news/story.html?in_review_id=647948&in_review_text_id=619058>.

School Desegregation Policy Challenged

This October, some parents in Lynn, Massachusetts will appear in federal court to challenge their school district's policy of ensuring racial balance among its students. According to <<http://www.washingtontimes.com/national/20020827-29442067.htm>>, Massachusetts' "Racial Imbalance Act" gives local communities additional education funding if schools are integrated.

Editor's note: Content of reviewed books may not represent the views of ASFAR.

Lesko, Nancy. *Act your age! a cultural construction of adolescence.* (Critical social thought series.) New York : Routledge Falmer, 2001.

Sue's Review

Susan Wishnetsky
Treasurer, ASFAR
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Another challenging book that is slow but worthwhile reading is Nancy Lesko's *Act Your Age!* Lesko presents a long history of western civilization, presenting in each chapter concepts and notions introduced at various times in our history, then relating them to the ways our present society views childhood and adolescence.

Lesko spends the first part of each chapter telling the reader what she intends to discuss or show, and closes each chapter with a summary. Much of this foreshadowing and reiteration seemed unnecessary—I found myself often wishing she'd get to the point already. This book really requires a great deal of patience, but it's largely worth the effort to follow Lesko's train of thought, because she does introduce some interesting information and ideas.

One of the first topics explored is "recapitulation theory", popular at the end of the 19th century, holding that each child's growth *recapitulates* the evolution of mankind. Children were viewed as primitive, savage people, and actual "primitive" peoples (with whom anthropologists and colonial governments increasingly came into contact) were treated like children. The logic became circular, used to justify slavery and imperialism, as well as subjugation of children.

Another concept is that of "panoptical time," a term coined to describe the experience of time by prisoners who find themselves under constant watch. Panoptical time is a framework of progression evaluated by an overseer in a role of dominance. The definition of stages of childhood and youth by psychologists such as G. Stanley Hall (subsequently accepted by doctors, teachers, parents, and others who took on the role of supervising young people) may have influenced the way young people experience time. Lesko describes the way late 19th- and early 20th-century "scientists" evaluated young people's

bodies and mental progress on the basis of detailed and rigid descriptions of expected development. The replacement of one-room schoolhouses with the strict segregation of children into different grade levels increased the regimentation:

... because of the panoptical gaze, the institutional frame around the discourse on adolescence, nothing much is supposed to happen. Avoiding precocity through slow development means that the present is emptied of meaningful events ... *only the future matters* only deviations or pitfalls along the prescribed plot merit attention. The panoptical gaze makes youth into cartoonlike or clownish figures. Although youth themselves are expected to take each moment seriously, we, the adult audience, know that these things are relatively trivial we may watch and comment on adolescence with detachment and humor.

Children also grow up in "expectant time," in which one passively awaits what may come. Lesko ties it together:

... within a confinement of total passivity, the suspension of temporal identity and the ability to act and master one's environment can be "salvational". This means that youths' refusal to consider the consequences of their actions (a familiar refrain in secondary schools) could be considered as salvational rather than as evidence of immaturity youths' passive temporal position, always "becoming," waiting for the future to arrive, may *effect* the identity crises that, in turn, *prove* adolescents' need to be kept with little power and few decisions.

Drawing from wide-ranging sources, Lesko comments on peer pressure and conformity, teenage motherhood, racism and intolerance, team spirit, and a host of other topics. But like *Stealing Innocence*, *Act Your Age!* takes quite a while to get through, and because Lesko constantly refers back to previously-introduced facts and concepts, skimming or skipping just doesn't work with this book. When you've got a lot of time and your mind feels ready to absorb a lot of background material, give this book a try—and be prepared to stick with it.

Prevention Programs Panned Again

A new University of North Carolina study described at <<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,60918,00.html>> backs up previous findings on the drug and crime prevention programs DARE, "McGruff the Crime Dog", and "Here's Looking at You", used in 80 percent of American schools. The study found no significant change in kids who'd been in the programs.

Texas Teacher Terminated for Tantrum

At <http://abclocal.go.com/ktrk/news/51702_news_chair.html>: 37-year-old middle school teacher Julie Gaye Millegan was suspended and charged with abuse in April for allegedly throwing a chair at a student in her behavior management class.

News Links

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Edison Schools Burned Out?

Many still believe it's the wave of the future, but recent articles at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/newstory.cfm?slug=37edison.h21>, <http://www.rethinkingschools.org/Archives/16-03/Elus163.htm>, <http://www.smallschoolsworkshop.org/bg061402dzjackson.html>, and <http://www.time.com/time/education/article/0,8599,238633,00.html> point out that Edison's charter school "chain" is running deeper in the red than ever, its stock is in the toilet, and the performance of its schools and students have been criticized too.

New Trouble for Florida Agency

Reporters recently discovered 183 Florida social service workers, about half of whom work in direct contact with children or the elderly, with criminal records. Dept. of Children & Families head Jerry Rieger promises to increase the DCF's scrutiny of its current and prospective employees. The item at <http://www.heraldtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?Site=SH&Date=20020911&Category=NEWS&ArtNo=209110304&Ref=AR&Profile=1001&SectionCat=NEWS0105> recalls that Rieger himself has been criticized for his support of "manly" discipline of children and men's "authority" over wives.

Football Death Prompts Extreme Reactions

When ten-year-old Taylor Davison—the only girl on her Bartlett, Illinois school football team—died after collapsing during practice, the media response was sharply divided. Some commentators seemed to call for an end to football for kids—or for *girls*; others saw the tragedy as a rare consequence of a worthwhile activity. There was a discrepancy in the facts, too: some reported that Taylor had complained of headaches and "not feeling well" before that practice, others didn't. One story that did mention her complaints is at http://www.tucsoncitizen.com/national/9_6_02football_death.html.

Boston U Chancellor Nixes Gay Support Group

Gay students at a prep school run by Boston University can no longer operate their gay/lesbian support group—University Chancellor John Silber felt it was inappropriate. At http://www.seacoastonline.com/news/09072002/south_of/23138.htm, Silber was quoted as saying, "If they want that kind of program, they can go to Newton High School. They can go to public school and learn how to put a condom over a banana." (Not necessarily—see cover story.) Former members responded that teaching sex practices was not the purpose of the group.

Amber Alerts Questioned

Despite media hype over an apparent "rash" of child abductions by strangers, some are questioning the value of "Amber Alerts" which enlist the public's help to recover missing children. Articles at <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0809/p02s02-usju.html> and http://www.twincities.com/mld/twincities/entertainment/columnists/brian_lambert/3566109.htm raise issues of costs versus benefits, credibility with the public, the likelihood of hoaxes, and the privacy of kids and families.

Indiana Boy Hiked to Death

The owners of Triple Cross Anchor Youth Camp, a Baptist church-affiliated program in Florida for "troubled youth"—but "not a boot camp," they insist at <http://www.naplesnews.com/02/08/florida/d804697a.htm>—are defending themselves after the death of 12-year-old Derek Bufkin following a camp hike. Camp director Bill Sullivan admits that he ignored Derek's complaining and falling down during the hike; according to <http://www.news-journalonline.com/2002/Jul/20/STAT26.htm>, he thought Derek was "being defiant".

Missouri Officials Send Child Home to Abuser

His foster father says the two-year-old "went limp" after he "vigorously dried the child's hair". But Dominic James, who died on August 21, was seen less than a week earlier in the hospital by a Missouri Division of Family Services caseworker. According to <http://krd.realcities.com/ads/media/kansas-city/news/popup3.htm>, a hospital worker reported abuse, but the caseworker arrived after Dominic's bruises had already faded and found the report unsubstantiated. Dominic left the hospital, only to return four days later, to die.

Maryville Mess

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services needed help finding places to put abused and abandoned kids, and increasingly turned to Maryville Academy's City of Youth (originally a church-based facility) for help. Unfortunately, Maryville wasn't quite up to the job. A suicide in February and two attempted suicides since then have prompted a state investigation, described at <http://www.suntimes.com/output/news/cst-nws-mary10.html>.

Anti-Sex Program Must Keep Religion Out

At <http://www.aclu.org/news/2002/n072502d.html>, the ACLU reports that on July 25 a federal court blocked the Louisiana Governor's Program on Abstinence from using federal dollars to run religious programs, such as classes in scripture and presenting skits with Jesus as a character.

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