

Letters

Potsdam Students Note Rockefeller Passing

To the Editor:
EDITOR'S NOTE: The following resolution was passed by the Student Senate of SUNY Potsdam, and mailed to the family of the late Nelson A. Rockefeller.

To the Family of Nelson A. Rockefeller:
The Student Senate of the State University College at Potsdam recently passed, by acclamation, a resolution

Education Pretty Good?

To the Editor:
John Gardner, the college teacher of writing, and who appeared on WNNY-TV Sunday Board Feb. 6, gave his assessment of today's education as "pretty good." He admitted they may not have grammar, but it doesn't mean they cannot read.

It might be well for Mr. Gardner to do some reading himself such as the book "Our Children's Crippled Future: How American Education Has Failed" by Frank E. Armbruster and reviewed by Allan C. Brownfield.

The fact that American public education is in a serious state of decline is well known. The evidence is all around us as scholastic aptitude test scores have reached all-time lows and many students who graduate from high school cannot read or write.

Perhaps somewhat less well-known is the fact that this decline has taken place at the same time during which public expenditures upon education have been rapidly increasing. Since 1950, for all forms of education, we have gone from four to eight percent of the gross national product. The 1976-77 school year's total cost for education was \$130 billion, outstripping the budget for defense.

In this thoroughly documented report about the state of American education, Frank Armbruster, director of interdisciplinary studies at the Hudson Institute, explores the reasons for the decline and disputes the popular idea that things might be better if only more money were spent. Mr. Armbruster reports, "although there was much emphasis on the need for more money for education, we could find no positive correlation between spending trends and trends in pupil academic achievement. We could not find correlations between lower student teacher ratio and higher achievement. In fact, since the mid-1960s, nationally, the reverse trend has generally been true; as student-teacher ratios dropped, achievement dropped, too. There was also no relation between the age of school buildings or even money spent per pupil and academic achievement. In fact, as money spent increased at an ever-faster rate since the mid-sixties, achievement consistently fell."

While money has been increased, the course of study has been watered down. The author reports that "A closer look at some electives in English in one downtown New York suburban high school district shows such...offerings...as 'I Love a Mystery,' 'Sports Communication,' and 'Responding to Media' and 'Art of Film.' Mothers find that their youngsters have been watching films like Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid in school for English credit."

The author declares that, "We must consider the possibility that all this elective activity detracts from traditional learning, for it is carried out within the few hours of the regular school day...Though there are at least nominally some good courses for the better college-bound students from homes where school issues are well understood, the required courses have declined."

This decline particularly harms the underprivileged. Mr. Armbruster declares that, "With parents who are unfamiliar with educational jargon, and who feel that since their children are going to high school things must be all right, students are free to take the easy way out. Some actually are encouraged to do so by educators and guidance counselors."

To the statement of the "innovators" that they believe it is their task to teach students how to "think" rather than the traditional skills of reading and writing or the basic data concerning history and literature, the author responds: "One is prompted to ask how one person teaches another to think, and how he knows when he has succeeded in such a task. Above all, how do we know that primary and secondary school teachers, who need only to be able to transfer acquired knowledge to pupils to qualify for teaching positions, have the skills to teach someone to think, even if we can define such a skill?"

The author describes the 1960s and early 1970s as "the era of gimmickry in education." He writes that "Many of the innovations that were supposed to accomplish with little scholastic effort what previously had taken considerable self-discipline and hard, sometimes tedious work seemed to fall into this category." Mr. Armbruster challenges the teachers, unions and others when he states that, "Virtually all children can learn to read, write, do basic mathematics and know some basic grammar, history and geography." He advocates a return to the fundamentals and believes that well structured classroom environments are essential for educational progress. When he calls for an end to the "age of gimmickry" in American education, he advocates what only a small number of professionals who have their own vested interest in that gimmickry would oppose. This book is a healthy dose of common sense concerning one of the nation's most serious problems.

concerning the passing of the former Governor of New York State. I pass it to you as an expression of our gratefulness to him as a friend of education and as an expression of our deep sorrow at his death.

Whereas, the former Vice-President of the United States and former Governor of New York State, Nelson A. Rockefeller, was the inspiration behind the construction of the State of the State University of New York as it exists today, and

Whereas, the many students who have attended SUNY are greatly indebted to the former Governor for expanding the SUNY system making higher education for them a reality, not just a dream, and Whereas, words cannot fully express our feelings of thankfulness.

Therefore, We the students of State University College, as represented in Senate, do express our deep sorrow regarding the passing of Nelson A. Rockefeller. His many years of loyal, dedicated public service serve as an inspiration to us all. His commitment to educating the children of New York has been unmatched in New York history. During his term as Governor SUNY grew from 138,000 students to 232,000 students on 64 colleges campuses. Additionally, many state financial aid programs, most notably the Tuition Assistance Program (T.A.P.), were enacted during his term which enabled the less financially independent family to send their children to college. These achievements have truly made Nelson Rockefeller a friend of education.

Sincerely,
Patrick Hoey
President of Senate
Executive Vice-President,
SGA

Use Surplus To Pay Towns, Say Taxpayers

CANTON — Potsdam Area Taxpayers, Inc. has asked the county legislature to use the \$3.4 million in unappropriated funds left over from 1978 to refund taxes paid by certain towns.

Richard Sanford, a representative of the organization, presented a resolution to the board Monday night asking it to "refund to all taxpayers their correct share of that amount of money, to be appropriated from the cash surplus, that would have given zero real property tax to those towns that elected to return any 'excess sales tax.'"

The board directed Administrative Assistant William Collins and the legislature's finance committee to review the proposal "for further action." PAT had asked the board not to table the resolution, "refer it to committee, or any of the other parliamentary maneuvers used to prevent a resolution from being brought to a vote."

The PAT resolution appears to address two issues. The first involves the matter of excess sales tax revenue, which towns were given the opportunity to accept in cash, rather than as credit against the town share of the county tax, for the first time in late 1978.

Some towns accepted the cash, but then when the county tax for residents in those towns skyrocketed, decided to return the money, for use as credit. Other towns agreed to keep the cash, while others never accepted it in cash to begin with.

Towns which returned the sales tax excess still showed, in most cases, a tax increase since \$150,000 was added onto the county tax levy.

The other matter involves an error in the extension of Workmen's Compensation charges to municipalities. The mistake was made during 1978 budget preparation, and former clerk of the board June O'Neill has said that the mistake only amounted

to "pennies," but residents and Collins have claimed otherwise.

The resolution predicts that some towns will, through the refund, receive

an "additional refund equal to the amount of error in extension of the compensation insurance charges to towns and villages. That extra amount

New Youth Club Hopes To Develop Intramural Sports

BY PHAE MARY GRIFFIN
Student Intern

The newly-formed Potsdam Youth Club is developing plans for organizing an after-school intramural sports program for high school students and if that goes well, they will attempt "something a lot bigger," according to Jeff Loo, temporary acting chairman of the club.

Last week when the Courier & Freeman questioned Loo on the purpose of the club he said, "Its main purpose, in conjunction with an anticipated walk-in youth center, is to establish things for high school students to do when there is nothing else to do."

He went on to say that "there are not many activities in the community open to high school students." He felt that there is a need beyond winter activities of ice-skating and skiing at Postwood Park and Big Tupper. He felt these are "oriented more toward college students."

When questioned about reaction of the student body to the club, it was Loo's personal opinion that "active members of the club are enthusiastic; whereas, other students are indifferent."

When asked what the club has in mind as its next step Loo said they hoped to establish a walk-in youth center "for us to get together as a group to have fun." An informal survey conducted recently by the Courier & Freeman

found that high school students want a walk-in youth center. They expressed a desire for "a place of our own" to gather for dancing, games, and socializing.

Loo explained that a subcommittee has been formed to look into the possibility of the center. The subcommittee consists of three adults who will work in conjunction with the center; three students will report back to the club, and a chairperson who will act as mediator.

This committee is under the co-chairmanship of Enid Ablowitz and Leroy Hansen. Other members are Beverly Brownell, Tanya Glasser, Karyn Merritt, John Stone Jr. and Richard Estrin (alternate). It is expected that in six to eight weeks this group will have examined various aspects of community life as it affects the high school age group and will offer a recommendation for action regarding a possible center.

Loo expressed hope that the young people of Potsdam would have a personal sense of responsibility toward a center of their own in an atmosphere unstructured by "too many rules." He felt that a sense of personal responsibility would be the "key to the success of the center."

Loo said, "We know it's a big job and will take two or three months to get underway, but we're enthusiastic about it and hope it will eventually be formed."

The adult counterpart, of the youth club, known as the Potsdam Youth Center, Inc., met on Feb. 6.

In business discussed at the Feb. 6 meeting, it was announced that Richard VanLeuven had resigned due to the pressure of other commitments. Persons interested in being considered for the position on the board are asked to contact the chairman, Mary Plane at 265-5782.

Disc dancing for teenagers was discussed in light of the legal problems that have surfaced. The board examined various alternatives to relying on local business to meet the need. Several possibilities will be suggested to the Potsdam Youth Club Executive Committee for action.

A subcommittee to study sources of funding for programs and activities for young people was appointed: Scott Bush, chairman, Terry Colf and Jeff Loo members. This committee will report at the March 5 meeting.

The regular meeting scheduled for the Potsdam Youth Center Inc. is the first Monday of the month, 7:30 p.m. at 71 Pierrepont Ave. Tuesday meetings are open to interested community members.

that villages should have paid these past two years is to be charged against those villages."

PAT claims that the refund should not cost more than \$1.5 million.

The resolution notes that "under two administrations the county taxes have been in error and these errors have not been corrected." PAT cites "considerable confusion in the minds of many legislators when the 1979 budget was adopted and turned out to require a \$150,000 addition to the tax levy which gave the county a property tax increase instead of the decrease expected."

Also, "there is some question as to whether this tax levy is legal since it was changed after adoption and without a further public hearing."

The confusion over excess sales tax revenue, the announcement of a \$3.4 million surplus, and the allocation of some \$700,000 into the 1979 contingency fund have "tended to cause the general public to lose confidence in their county government."

"PAT hopes that since these confusions and errors occurred under two different administrations and were definitely a bipartisan effort, that this attempt at renewing our faith in the integrity of county government will also be a bipartisan effort."

Families Needed For American Host Program

Potsdam Area families are still needed to host English-speaking European teachers as guests in their homes for a seven-to-ten-day period this summer, it has been announced by the Potsdam American Host Program.

American Host is the only non-profit, non-governmental program designed to show the American way of life to European teachers by pairing them with American families. It is a nation-wide home hospitality program which is endorsed by the Department of State.

Being a host family is open to anyone who has the desire to increase understanding and friendship between Europeans and Americans. A host family is required to provide a private room and meals for its guest and to give the guest the opportunity to meet friends, neighbors, and to see local sights.

The American Host Foundation arranges all transportation but Host Families are asked to meet their guests on arrival in the area. Visitors and host families have the opportunity to correspond for a month prior to the visit.

Anyone interested in being a host family or learning more about the Foundation's activities may call or write to: Potsdam American Host Program, State University College at Potsdam, 13676. Telephone (315)268-3393.



MALONE BLAZE — Some 400 firemen from 15 departments, including St. Lawrence County companies, battled a spectacular blaze Monday evening and overnight in the downtown section of the Franklin County community of Malone. It was the second major fire in downtown Malone in the past 10 months. By early this morning, the flames had destroyed an entire block of businesses along Main Street, leaving dozens of people homeless. (Photo Courtesy of Malone Evening Telegram, Marc Pepin)

'Up With People!' In Burg, Canton; Locals May Try Out

Their casts have performed from Peking, China, to Belfast, Ireland; and before millions at Super Bowl X; at Carnegie Hall.

Now they will perform in Canton and Ogdensburg.

An international cast of "Up With People" will appear in Ogdensburg on Feb. 15 and then will perform in Canton on Feb. 20.

In Ogdensburg, the cast will perform in one show at 8:15 p.m. in the George Hall Auditorium at the high school, Ogdensburg Free Academy. Tickets for the Ogdensburg show will be \$5. The appearance in Ogdensburg will benefit the Boy's Club and the Ogdensburg Rescue Squad.

In Canton, the group will perform at 8 p.m. in the auditorium of the E.J. Noble

Center at St. Lawrence University. Tickets will be \$2 for students and \$3 for the general public.

The Ogdensburg performance will be sponsored by the Ogdensburg Rotary Club. The Canton show is supported by a grant from the Mandeville Foundation and coordinated by St. Lawrence University.

Known for the youthful enthusiasm they employ to promote understanding among people, the college-aged performers are in the area on part of a ten-month tour which will take them to some 107 cities in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, South America and Europe.

Approximately 425 young men and women from 18 countries are currently traveling with five casts of Up With People, representing a cross section of

economic backgrounds and ethnic origins.

The performers do their own stage work, promotion, day-to-day logistics, and may work for college credits through a program of independent study projects. An essential part of their education is living with families in the communities they visit.

During their stay in the North Country, the cast, numbering about 65, will be staying in host homes.

After the performances, anyone who is interested in signing up to be in one of the Up With People casts is invited to come backstage for an interview. You do not have to be able to sing or dance to be included in the cast. Those who try out must be between the ages of 17 and 25, and have finished high school.

Up With People is an independent, non-profit, educational corporation headquartered in Tucson, Ariz. The organization endeavors to establish a creative format for communication and interaction between people of different cultures, nationalities, ages and points of view.

Neighbors Go To Court Over Dog

Potsdam resident Philip Mongada, 59 Lower Pine St., will go to court Wednesday to seek a \$350 settlement from a neighbor, Fred Barto, the man who shot Mongada's dog.

The case will be heard at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday morning in small claims court before Village Justice Robert Halliday.

The action stems from a Nov. 15, 1978 incident, in which Mongada's seven-year-old Labrador retriever was killed by Barto while it was on his property. Barto, who lives at 73 Pine St., told police at the time that Mongada's dog had been bothering his own dog, which he said was tied up in his yard.

Barto reportedly told police that when he attempted to chase Mongada's dog away, the animal attacked him. He said that he then went into his house, came out with a shotgun and killed the retriever.

Mongada has stated that he does not

believe that his dog would have attacked Barto. He has also said that since Barto had retreated into the house, there would have been no need to reappear and shoot his dog.

Both men received summonses after the incident. A charge that Mongada had violated the village ordinance by allowing his dog to run loose was later dismissed. Barto was charged with discharging a firearm within the village limits.

Massena Woman Named To Sunmount Board

MASSENA — Mrs. Carolyn Smith of Massena, vice-president of the St. Lawrence County Association for Retarded Children, has been appointed by Governor Carey to the Board of Visitors of the Sunmount Development Center.

Lions Offer Vacation Chance; The Local Hospital Will Benefit

As partial fulfillment of a \$4,000 pledge to the Canton-Potsdam Hospital, the Potsdam Lions Club will be conducting a vacation fund-raiser.

Support of the event will help to purchase a much-needed, updated, defibrillating unit for the emergency room. This portable unit will be used for immediate emergency care. It will also be easily transported with the patient should transfer to another hospital be required.

George Sullivan, chairman for the fund raiser outlined the details. The winner will be entitled to an eight-day, seven-night vacation in the Bahamas. Accommodations will be at the Holiday Inn. Meals are not included but \$100

spending money will be provided. Scheduled vacation dates will be March 24-31. These dates can be changed if necessary.

Tickets will be available from local businesses that display a specially prepared poster. Tickets will also be available from all members of the local Lions Club and some fraternities and sororities.

Donations will be \$1 per ticket and six for \$5.

Local Lions and their immediate families are not eligible to win. Drawings of the winning ticket will take place at 4:30 p.m., March 12, at the Bobart Travel Agency.



MORE FOR HOSPITAL—The Order of Prometheus Society of the State University College presents a contribution of \$1,884.45 to the Canton-Potsdam Hospital annual fund campaign. Left to right, are, Jody Norton and Don Greenfield of Prometheus; Dr. Frank Citro, chief of staff, and Loren Edwards, vice-president, from Canton-Potsdam Hospital; and William Hart of Prometheus.

Miller Receives Promotion

Richard J. Miller has been named an associate professor in Clarkson's Department of Mathematics, according to an announcement by Dr. Brian A. Pethica, Dean of Arts and Sciences.

Professor Miller, the son of George and Kathryn Miller of Watertown and a graduate of Watertown High School, has been a member of the Clarkson faculty since 1956 when he joined the mathematics department as an instructor. He holds a bachelor's degree from Hamilton College, master's degrees from Syracuse University and the University of Washington, and a Ph.D. from Clarkson.

Miller has been an active member of the West Potsdam Volunteer Fire Department for 15 years. He is also a founder and charter member of Alpha Phi Omega, the Clarkson service fraternity which serves both the community and the college.

Along with his regular courses in the mathematics department, Miller has taught in Clarkson's High School Enrichment Program, in the Summer College Orientation Program for Engineering, Science and Management (SCOPE), and in Clarkson's Western Electric Summer Program. He is a recipient of the Tau Delta Kappa Excellent Teaching Award.

Professor Miller's current research in investigating linear control input-output relations by matrix methods. This in-

volves using mathematics to attack models of physical situations that occur in the control areas of engineering.

Miller, and his wife, Mary Ann, a correspondent for the Potsdam Courier and Freeman, resides in West Potsdam. They are the parents of four children.



RICHARD J. MILLER