

Class of 1980: Diplomas will be harder to get

By Campus Digest News Service

Once upon a time, there was something called "grade inflation." This was when, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the radical chic more or less ruled the academic roost and grades were considered somewhat reactionary. As a result, grading was made considerably less harsh—to be blunt, professors and instructors were throwing "As" and "Bs" around like confetti. Hence, grade inflation.

Well, now like all inflation, we are paying for it. Lately, a crackdown on too-easy grading has swept the schools and colleges of the nation. Hard times, academically, have hit the campus. And the latest manifestation of this new trend bodes ill for the future.

The scene is the Newton Conover High School in Newton, N.C. The time is 1980. The story is that no student below a "C" average will be able to graduate.

This is the decree of the Newton school board. Alarmed over the ever-increasing number of high school graduates who cannot read their diplomas, the board has decided that beginning for the class of 1980, no one will be able to graduate without at least what the board calls a straight "C" average. That means that any grades a student earns below "C" would have to be offset by grades above "C".

Last spring, 22 of the schools 187 graduating seniors had "D" averages; nonetheless, they received their diplomas, the school board found.

Not only that, but the board has recently heard complaints that some of their graduating seniors were functioning at the level of semi-illiteracy.

"We heard gripes from employers who were hiring high school graduates who

couldn't read or write," Will Zintbaum, chairman of the school board, told the Associated Press. "We want this to happen less frequently and one way is through the stiffer requirements."

Newton's plan sounds logical, but some educationists are saying it's a pipe dream.

"I can't think of any high schools in the nation that have gone to a grade-point requirement," said H. T. Connor of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. "In a typical high school in North Carolina, this sort of thing would increase the number of students who don't get diplomas."

However, the school is trying to help. At this point, current sophomores will be affected by the new policy. School officials say they are going to provide extra help to those students who need it. These needy students will be found when the sophomores' grades are computed against the straight "C" average they will have to meet in two years.

What about those who complete their senior year and (literally) don't make the grade? They will be issued "substitute" certificates that specifically say the student holding them did not technically graduate. Some teachers have complained that such a certificate would hurt a student seeking a job.

But to the high school principal, Jerome Ingle, the new requirement's benefits outweigh its problems.

"I think all the students will buckle down and meet the average. They're all certainly capable of it," he said.

Time will tell. Meanwhile, if the Newton plan carries on, it might spread across the country...even to some college campuses.

MARYKNOLL WORLD

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IF LOVE IS A SIDELINE

His Christian name is Bernard and he looks like an ordinary American kid. But as one of the estimated 3,000 illegitimate offspring of U.S. soldiers stationed in Korea, he learned a bitter truth: in a society which traditionally esteems racial purity, his appearance was stigmatizing.

Bernard was luckier than most. His mother and stepfather loved him and did not abandon him, but they realized his features condemned him to life as an outcast in Korea. They turned to Father Al Keane, a Maryknoll Missioner for help.

Al's deep, personal involvement with the problems of racially mixed children began accidentally in 1970 during Christmas Eve festivities at San Kok Dong in the northern part of Inchon. "I glanced up and saw these kids who looked like Americans. Then I noticed how poorly they were dressed in old rags." After Christmas, Al found 25 of these Korean-Americans crowded together in an unheated room, surviving the cold by sharing their body heat. Originally wards of an orphanage that crumbled under financial pressures, the children were no longer small and cute and had no hope of adoption.

Al bought them clothes and food. Because

of his kindness they began coming around each day. He admits that he did not know what his next step should be.

"I figured that if I taught them English, somehow they'd survive," he explains. He tutored them and then undertook a far more difficult project—finding homes in America for them. With perseverance, the help of friends and cooperation of the Hope Adoption Agency, all but two eventually made it to the U.S.

Word of Al's efforts spread. As a consequence, his "family" expanded to include Billy and Danny, brothers retrieved from the custody of a "nice man" about to employ them in a house of prostitution.

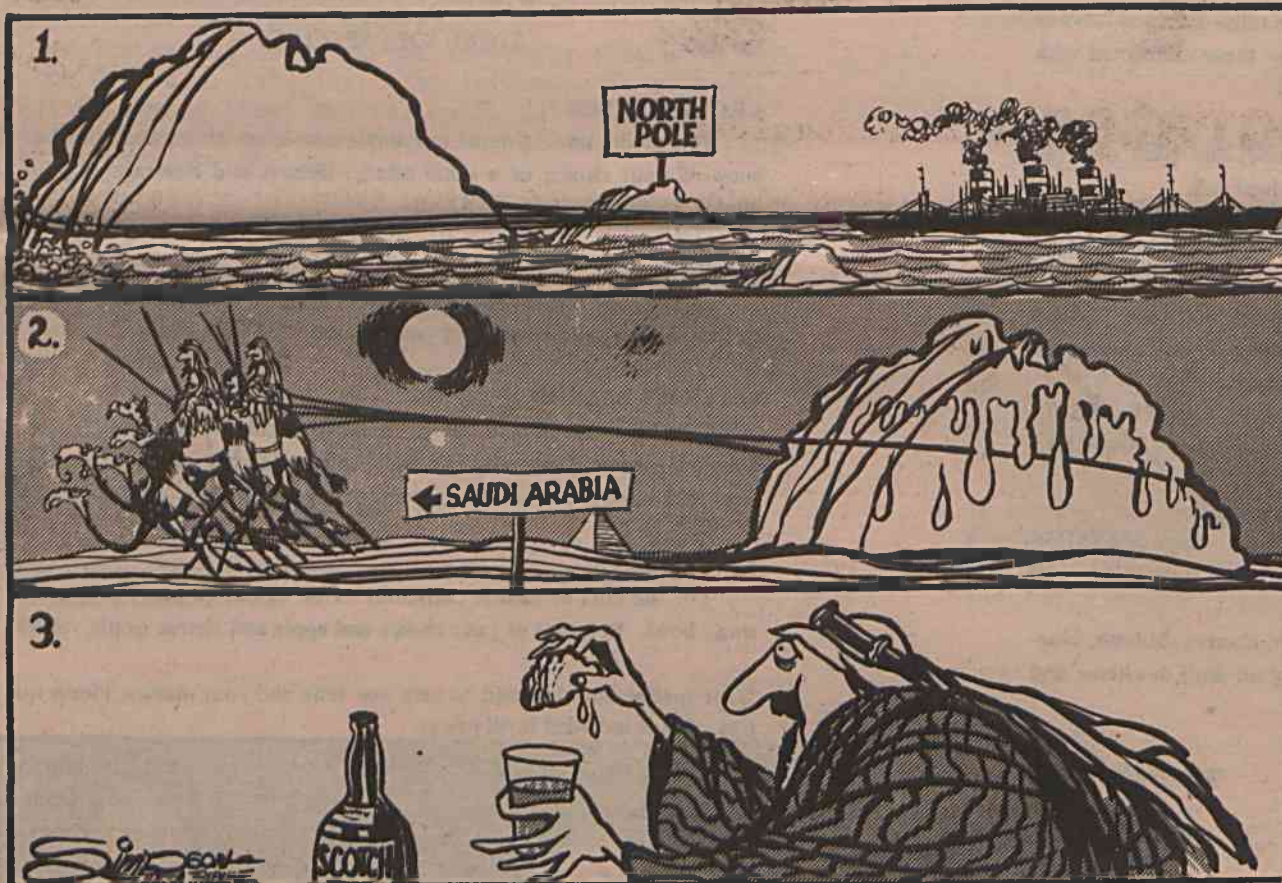
That was in 1971. Billy and Danny are still with Al and he provides for their support. Billy, 19, is a college student and Danny, 17, is in the first year of high school. For a time Al's household also included Jamie, an energetic 13 year old who left for the U.S. last summer to join his new family.

For Bernard, too, meeting Father Keane signaled a new beginning. Al arranged for his adoption by an American family who met his real family in Korea. "His new parents want him to be their son by love," says Al, "but they encourage contact with his mother and stepfather who will always have a place for him in their hearts." And later he reflected, "I thought I was doing something for them, but I realize now, I've gained far more."

Remarkably, Father Keane's concern for these children, human war surplus who have experienced so much scorn and so much suffering has been very much a sideline to his many other responsibilities. That is, if you can call love a sideline.

I'm Fr. Ron Saucii.

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High times in Maine

By Campus Digest News Service

Think lobsters are the high point in Maine? Not quite—at least in Augusta. There, local pushers have proven that "high times" are everywhere in the U.S. Forty-nine bales of marijuana was confiscated there last week with a street value of some \$1,500,000.

A 22-year-old student, Jeffrey Boylan, from the Virgin Islands, had the pot in a truck he was driving.

And apparently, this was not all the pot that was going to be pushed in Maine. Boylan's arrest was prompted by the seizure by the Coast Guard of a sailboat and 30 more bales of pot at dockside in an unidentified point on the Maine coastline.

Looks like "fish and chips" might be replaced by "the evil weed" as the Maine heartthrob.



Newspaper awards given

By Campus Digest News Service

Recently, the Society of Professional Journalists, otherwise known as Sigma Delta Chi, made its annual student newspaper awards. Read 'em or weep (or cheer):

The Daily Illini, at the University of Champaign-Urbana won the award as best newspaper.

Anthony H. Woller of Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, won the best news story award for his version of the execution of Gary Gilmore. (Who?)

Laura Bloodworth, Jackie Medley and Jerry Fannin, students at the University of Georgia, Milledgeville, won the radio reporting award for his broadcast "An Educational Emergency."

Phillip Benson, a student at Drake University, won in the television reporting category for a story on a nursing home fire in Altoona, Ia.

Rhonda Dickey of the University of Iowa, Iowa City, won the editorial writing competition with an editorial calling for an investigation of local law enforcement officials. (Qui custodiet custodientis?)

Craig Newman, a student at Arizona State University, Tempe, won in the news

photography award for a picture of a woman praying after a tornado.

David Griffin, of Woodstown, N.J., won the feature photography award for a photo of a dog straddling a doghouse (no kidding). And Robert M. Goldstein of Oregon State University, Corvallis, won the feature writing award for an article on defoliants.

The editorial cartooning competition was won by Brain Basset at Ohio State University at Columbus. We have no description of the cartoon.

The prize-winning nonfiction magazine article award went to Mark Sackett of Marquette University in Milwaukee for an article concerning the next 200 years.

Finally, the top student magazine according to the professional journalism fraternity is Kilpsun, produced at Western Washington State College, Bellingham Wash.

Four of the society's chapters performed the judging: greater Buffalo, greater Kansas City, and plain old Los Angeles and Connecticut.

To those of you who made it: CONGRATS from CDNS. To those who didn't make it: you're not alone.

Medical schools rate high

By Campus Digest News Service

Recently, the Bakke case has thrown U.S. medical schools into some disrepute. Well, be that as it may, but compared to those outside the U.S., our medical schools seem to still be no. 1.

An investigation of scores on 1975 and 1976 certification examinations of the American Board of Internal Medicine shows that graduates of foreign medical schools did not perform as well as graduates of U.S. and Canadian medical schools.

An article appearing in the New England Journal of Medicine reported that their had been much discussion over the part foreign medical school graduates play in U.S. medicine, "particularly about the preparation for practice in the United States afforded them."

As a result of that discussion, the authors of the article, Drs. John A. Meakauskas and John A. Benson, and

Elizabeth Hopkins, investigated the performance of 2,630 foreign medical school graduates, most of whom with three years of residency training in the U.S.

The result? The authors found that the over-all composite score performance of the total group "is significantly lower" than that of U.S. or Canadian medical school graduates.

Holders of the lowest mean score were graduates of Philippine medical schools, and those who moved to the head of the class included graduates of medical schools in India, Peru and Thailand.

Interestingly, there was considerable variability within the groups as well as between them. Said the authors, "The performance of the very best foreign medical graduates was equal to that of the best of the graduates of United States medical schools."

Also interesting is the finding by the authors of the article that U.S. students who studies at medical schools in Italy, Switzerland, Mexico and Belgium also did poorly on the exams.

Well, now you know where not to get sick.