

Mark Twain Unmasked

Hal Holbrook is shown here undergoing the transformation process from Mark Twain, back to himself, last August 29th.

Holbrook presented his show, "Mark Twain Tonight," to a near capacity crowd in the John A. Walker Auditorium. He has been traveling around the country doing this show for the past thirty-three years, and says he will continue to do so "until I drop dead."

Holbrook, an actor by profession, has appeared in many Hollywood movies, several television mini-series, and movies, and can be heard occasionally doing television documentaries.

He first got into doing Mark Twain as a one-time gig, but enjoyed playing the role, and the demand was there, so he continued for several years in New York before taking his show on the road.

When asked how he felt about Wilkes County, Holbrook said it was a beautiful, well-preserved county that had not yet been run over by big-city buildings, or vast cultural development. "The people here are simple, down to earth, good people; and religion is strong here, that's important."

Holbrook concluded the show, and held a small reception backstage in the green room. He then went to his dressing room, put Mark Twain in a drawer, and Hal Holbrook emerged. He continued talking throughout the change, and except for a younger sounding voice, Hal sounded identical to Twain in conversation. Only the insight he was producing was about the problems of today instead of the topics of one hundred years earlier. Hal Holbrook is the much needed Mark Twain of today.

Matt Cashion



Push Literacy

The National Assessment of Education Progress recently completed *Literacy: Profiles of America's Young Adults*. That study showed:

- Approximately 20 percent of young Americans between the ages of 21 and 25 read below the eighth grade level.

- Only 19 percent in that age



bracket can comparative shop in the grocery store.

- Approximately 57 percent can use a map to travel from one location to another.

Within the next decade it is expected that the total number of young adults aged 21 to 25 will shrink from 21 million to 17 million and will include increasing proportions of minorities.

The report explains: "If these population estimates are accurate, there will be a less literate pool of Americans from which colleges, universities, industry and the military will be able to draw to meet their human resource needs . . . Appropriate intervention strategies [should be] developed and implemented to meet the diverse needs of current young adults as well as to promote higher proficiencies among the younger, school-aged populations."

Don't Do Drugs Or They'll Do You —In!

The human body is a wonderful piece of equipment. It's owner can expect it to function for 70-some years, and with minimum care, it will function with minimum pain.

During those 70-some years of life, the body will take in more than 100 tons of food. That fuel will permit its heart to beat 103,680 times each day and move 750 major muscles. As it breathes, it can use countless symbols and speak about 4,800 different words. With some education — most humans take to instruction — it can learn and use thousands of others both in English and in other languages. One of the major purposes of the body, you see, is to support the head, the depository of the brain.

Most important is the fact that the brain and its vital thinking cells can continue to operate even if some or many bodily parts are missing. Indeed, a razor-sharp brain can be found in a human body that no longer contains an appendix or gall bladder or spleen. A body can even do without a kidney, eyes, every tooth, two quarts of blood, and one or more limbs.

Yes, the body is a marvelous piece of machinery. Still, one accident can ruin it forever. However, since accidents are accidental, one can only grieve at the loss, blame bad luck, and bury the remains.

But how can one grieve or blame bad luck on the intentional destruction of a body? How can one tolerate another with that horrible monkey on his or her back? What can one do to understand a body that believes it thrives on a joint and graduates to snorting coke and smoking crack?

That body is hooked. Addicted! That body's blood and guts and brain suffer the pains of hell in terms of intense depression, paranoia, hallucinations, and suicidal feelings. That body has joined those

who tried whatever — for kicks — and after a time, *must* have a fix before it feels "normal."

Accidents cannot be totally avoided. Drugs can!

The brain atop that wonderful piece of equipment has a choice.

Think! And give it a chance to live those 70-some years with minimum pain.

From the Science Dept.

Our House Needs Care

Ecology, a field of science, is the study of the *home* or the environment. The word itself comes from the Greek *Oikos*, meaning house, and *Logos*, which is discourse or expression. So ecology is the *Study of Our House* or, more broadly, our environment.

This can mean the total biosphere of the Earth, a continent, or smaller units such as forests, islands, or even the tiny world of a square foot of soil.

Ecology used to be practiced by a rather small group of scientists, often misleadingly portrayed as simple collectors of butterflies or shells. Actually, they have a profound curiosity about everything that goes on in the environment. They are among those who continually add to our knowledge of the delicate balances in nature.

If we had listened more carefully to their teachings, we might have prevented many of our predicaments: acid rain killing lakes and streams; bulldozers plowing under valuable rainforest, home to countless species now extinct before they could even be "discovered" and catalogued; man-caused erosion making deserts of land needed to grow food. And so forth.

If we had listened, we could also have learned much earlier on that we, too, are a part of the total system and that a thorough knowledge of the functioning of our *house* is fundamental to our survival.

Many past civilizations have succumbed partly due to a lack of understanding the laws of nature. These laws cannot be flouted for long without the severest punishment of all: extinction.

Hopefully, we are learning from the mistakes of the past.

What's Valuable in Life?

In a society that openly equates quality of life with possessions or the ability to afford the good life, attitudes of a group of centenarians offer a vivid contrast in terms of most precious possessions.

A nationwide Older Americans survey conducted recently among more than 200 of its customers over the age of 100 by Colonial Penn Group revealed that material possessions are low on the list of precious commodities among the old.

The survey results showed that well over one half of those responding believe children, friends and relatives to be life's most precious possessions. When asked what they miss most about the good old days, personal relationships top the list, with good health, mobility and outside activities following close behind. Material possessions were rarely mentioned as being important.

How to Cram

(Continued from page 3)

terial quickly to find the main points and the answers to your questions; recite those main ideas, taking brief notes; and review. Even when you're pressed for time, the strategy can help. "It may take a little longer," says Yates, "but it's worth the effort."

Get some sleep. UF's Schank quit allnighters after his freshman year. "I'd go into a final and be so wired from staying up all night that I'd lose my concentration," he says. "I'd miss questions that I knew I wouldn't miss if I were in a good frame of mind." Now he crams until about 3 a.m., sleeps for about four hours, and hits the books again at 8 a.m.

Psychologists and memory researchers can't specify how much sleep you need—everyone has his or her own threshold—but they do stress its importance. Says Lapp, "You're better off getting some sleep so that your mind is rested for the exam than you are cramming the whole night." Just don't forget to set that alarm clock before you go to bed.

For an early-morning exam, it's best to do heavy-duty studying right before you go to sleep. In other words, unless you've got back-to-back exams, don't cram and then do something else for a few hours before a test. Freshly learned material is remembered much better after a period of sleep than after an equal period of daytime activity.

Relax. It may sound simplistic, but it's key to good test performance. "Anxiety is enemy number one of memory," Lapp explains. She compares a student taking a test to a singer performing onstage. There's no way a completely anxious singer can utter a sound," she says.

Cramming is like going to the dentist; if you have to do it, you want it to be as painless and as productive as it can be. After all, no one goes to college to take a semester-long class and promptly forget all the new information that's been taught. At least Frances Avila didn't. After her disastrous midterm, she didn't dare risk cramming for her "Major British Writers" final exam. This time, she spaced her studying over a period of weeks, earned an A, and salvaged her grade for the semester.

That doesn't mean she's quit cramming for good—in fact, she hasn't even tried to. Instead she's perfected her technique. Ditto for Reilly, who's tried unsuccessfully to break the habit. "Every semester I kick myself a million times and scream that I'm not going to cram next semester," he laments. "But it never seems to work."

Jill Young Miller, a Fort Lauderdale writer, worked right up to the deadline to finish this article

No Extra Brains or Brawn - Just Learn to Get Along

To learn what errors young people starting on their first jobs should be warned about, a group of vocational teachers wrote to several thousand employers asking them to look up the last three people

dismissed and tell why they had been let go.

The teachers had expected a long catalogue of reasons. They were surprised that more than two-thirds of the people losing jobs had been fired for one reason. It was the same in every sort of business for workers of all ages and both sexes.

It amounted to this: "They couldn't get along with other people."

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