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WEIMAR JONES Editor
BOB S. SLOAN Business Manager

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What Is Education All About?

(Letter From a Dad to his College Freshman Daughter)

Dear Daughter:

This letter is an attempt to put on paper some of the things I believe most parents feel when their daughters (and sons, too) first go away to college. Probably nothing I shall say will be new, and some of it may seem a bit trite. I believe, though, it has the virtue of being true—and I am sure you already have begun to discover that the truth rarely is brand new.

I have intentionally delayed writing this until now, to give you time to become accustomed to college. By now you undoubtedly are beginning to feel at home. By now, too, I hope you are beginning to ask yourself a question:

"Why am I in college?"

You are there, for course, in part because you thought your parents wanted you to go to college; in part, too, because going to college is considered the thing to do. But if those are your only reasons, then the money spent on your education will be largely wasted; far more important, your time will be.

If you are like most young people—and many adults—you surely have begun to ask yourself such questions as . . .

"What good is a college education? To what practical use can I ever put physics and history and English literature? What is the purpose of all this? In short, how will spending four years in college help me to earn a living when I finish college?"

The answer, of course, is that it won't. And I think the rest of the answer is that it never was intended to. It is a mistake, it seems to me, to try to find a connection between a so-called liberal arts education and financial income in later years.

There is a connection, a very direct and important one, between purely vocational education and earning a living. Furthermore, each of us should be able to earn his own living, and any of us would be foolish to try to do it today without specialized training in how to do a specific kind of work.

Why, then, non-vocational training? If it won't help to earn a living, isn't it rather an impractical waste of money and time?

The answer obviously would be yes, except for one thing—life isn't always and solely a practical matter. If all of our thoughts and all of our actions were confined to the strictly practical, with never a moment for a sunset or a song or a book—if life were exclusively practical, I think most of us would commit suicide.

Fortunately life is more than just earning a living; life is made to be lived.

How can a college education help you to make a life? It can by giving you some understanding of life and of the world you live in. And there must be understanding before there can be the deep appreciation and enjoyment that make for a satisfying life.

Four years in college, if you use the time wisely, will give you some insight into the complexities of this modern world, and enough knowledge of people to enable you to get along with your fellows; and it will at least start you on the road to an understanding and appreciation of all the beautiful and fine things in the world and in life—an understanding broad enough, I hope, to make you tolerant—not of ignorance and ugliness and injustice, but of the many people you will find who are ignorant and ugly and unjust, but who, underneath, are much like you and me.

* * *

Then there is another side to the picture. None of us, even if we wished, can live alone. We must live with our fellows, and each of us owes something to them and to the society of which we are a part. We owe something, too, to the past, and to the future.

Consider our material blessings and, even more important to our happiness, our freedoms—these things most Americans take for granted. But stop

and think! They did not just happen; and you and I have done little either to win or to deserve them. Each of them was paid for, somewhere in the past, with the thought and the sweat and the determination and the tears and the blood of those indomitable men and women of the past who built for us nearly all we have today.

How can we even begin to repay that debt to the past unless we contribute something to the future. And how can we contribute to the future—and this is especially applicable under a democratic form of government—unless we are good citizens today? And how can we be good citizens unless we have some understanding of the complex world in which this relatively young democracy of ours is fighting for its life?

In the light of those questions, what inadequate citizens we would be indeed, if our education were designed to enable us to earn a living for ourselves and our families—and to do nothing more!

* * *

Now to come back to those specific questions about physics and history and literature.

Unless you major in it, the physics you will get in college will never have any financial value to you. But the whole world has been revolutionized by the splitting of the atom, and that process is based on physics. How, then, can any one begin to understand what is happening in this atomic age without a grasp of at least the basic laws of physics?

And history. Why is it worth while to know what happened to men long since dead and gone? The answer, I think, is that the only possible way to understand today, and to meet its problems, is through a knowledge of yesterday—which was today's parent. How can you understand anything at all about Soviet Russia without some knowledge of the hundreds of years of Russian slavery under the czars? Or how can you understand, and try to preserve, American freedoms unless you know something about the American Bill of Rights, and why it was written?

Literature? Nowhere can you become better acquainted with the workings of human nature than in great literature! And while we could not have split the atom without physics, we cannot understand why that achievement was translated into a bomb without an understanding of people.

But again, life isn't all practicalities. And literature has its place if it had no practical value whatever. Many times in your life you are likely to feel lonely and friendless; given a taste for good literature, and you need never be alone or without friends.

* * *

Master these subjects you study! That mastery will be worth while all your life. But find time, too, to know the folk you live with, to try to understand them and thus come to like them, and to learn to get along with them by the old system of give and take.

To become educated, you must develop your mind, yes. But that is not enough. Nobody is so lopsided as the person who is all intellect; and nothing is so unattractive as a woman who is hard . . . a brain in skirts.

A real education develops a mind that is keen, honest, searching; along with that, it develops a warm, wholesome, likeable, understanding human being.

Understanding, and the tolerance it creates, are the world's greatest needs today. And I hope you will not think me too old-fashioned when I suggest that they are doubly important in a woman; that understanding and sympathy are the first requisites for the biggest job any woman ever undertakes, the creation of a home for her husband and children.

Devotedly,

Dad.

* * *

Still Think So

No criticism, direct or implied, was intended in last week's editorial to which Mayor R. M. Dillard refers in his letter on this page. On the contrary, The Press feels that the present town administration is doing a good job, and has said so on more than one occasion.

We simply offered a suggestion.

Commenting on the cutting of a big shade tree near the courthouse, we suggested that the town adopt the policy of planting a young tree when it is necessary to cut an old one.

We thought that was a good idea.

We still think so.

Our American Civilization

All of us talking about progress; each of us meaning something different.

+

Shouting about majority rule; forgetting that majorities can be tyrants, too.

+

North Carolinians battling for years for anti-stream pollution legislation; those same Tar Heels feeling very virtuous when they get a law on the books as toothless as a new-born babe.



Carl P. Cabe, machinist-operator at The Press, is shown above at his Intertype. On this complicated machine he sets the type for all reading matter, most of advertisements and the headlines, besides the general run of job and book work. Mr. Cabe, who has a wide range of experience with typesetting machinery, keeps this one in such condition that it rarely gives serious trouble.

Newspaper Shop Talk

Mostly About Us

One of the marvels of any when it was invented in 1885 newspaper is the typesetting by Ottmar Mergenthaler, a naturalized American of German birth. Even today, in this machine age, it remains one of the most intricate of devices.

In the old days, type had to be set by hand, one letter at a time. Then, after the paper was printed, all this type had to be distributed—that is, returned to the operator turns the words into type, not of single letters but of lines—hence the name, Lin-o-Type. (The Intertype The Press uses is a variation of the speed in production it has attained.)

A modern typesetting machine is equipped with several magazine parts, this machine was one of the most complex known to man

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Letters

MAIN STREET TREES

Dear Mr. Editor:

Your brief editorial under the title of "A Simple Solution" was very timely and one that should interest all citizens of our little town.

When the maples mentioned were ordered removed by your Board of aldermen, it was not done to satisfy the wishes of any group, nor was it done without due consideration to the beautifying of that part of Main street from which they were taken.

The trees west of the courthouse, which have already been removed, were just ready to fall. As a matter of fact, one of these trees was pushed down by the workmen who were employed to remove them.

The maples now standing on that side of Main street have been so crowded by the concrete sidewalk and curbing that their roots are now almost atop the ground. The sidewalk, as you will observe, has been pushed up and broken in many places. These trees in their present condition have become dangerous not only to pedestrians but to driven or parked automobiles as well.

A landscape architect is to be consulted to determine the best method of the beautification of the space (in front of the new Nantahala Power and Light company building) from which other trees are to be removed. Due to the crowded conditions caused by the sidewalk and curbing, it would seem impracticable to undertake to replace these trees with other shade trees. There is not sufficient space to support the roots.

These old trees have been a source of beauty and have been

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Others' Opinions

PRAISE WITH CAUSE

Utilities commissions often find much to criticize in the operation of private power companies—sometimes with cause, sometimes not. Reversing this role, the State Utilities commission finds much to praise in approving an application of the Nantahala Power and Light company of Franklin for authority to build a new hydro-electric plant on the east fork of the Tuckasegee River.

"This company," says the commission, "has followed a policy of expanding its facilities steadily to keep ahead of the growing power needs of the citizens of the area which it serves. . . . By using the latest in construction methods, Nantahala has been able to develop water power economically so that farmers and townspeople, industries and commercial users have all the power they need. In the extension of lines to rural people, Nantahala leads the state. More than 95 per cent of the rural homes in their territory have electricity, and it is planned by the end of 1952 that every home in the territory will have electricity available."

Nantahala's record is praised with good cause. It is a record in which the people of the counties west of Asheville take more than a little pride. Where a private utility serves its people by anticipating their needs, there need be no fear of—and no need for—the competition of public power. More than incidentally

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Business Making News

By BOB SLOAN

The other day an incident occurred which brought to my mind a problem which Franklin and the people out in the country in surrounding communities face.

One day last week the fire alarm sounded and the Franklin Fire department (which I think is a credit to the town and one of the best in a town this size in the state) responded. The fire was out in the country. The Franklin fire department went to this fire, quite rightly without asking questions as to the regulations. But while they were out there they had with them all of the town of Franklin's fire fighting equipment. We wonder if it is good business for a town the size of Franklin (population 1975) with a tax valuation of \$2,505,590.00, to be left without fire protection.

If the town of Franklin (as it has always in the past) is going to provide fire protection for adjoining communities at the same time leaving its own property unprotected that's a risky business. We have a suggestion to make which we believe would help this situation. To insure that there is fire fighting equipment available at all times another fire truck is needed. We suggest that since this equipment at times would be used outside the city limits that the county share part of the expense of purchasing an additional truck for the Franklin fire department. We believe that this would be good business and fair business.

We note with pride that the Nantahala Power and Light company has been cited by the State Utilities Commission for its outstanding work in the development of rural electric service in the mountain counties it serves. Included in the citation was the statement "that Nantahala has brought light and power to more than 95% of the rural homes in its territory and plans to have the perfect 100% by the end of 1952". We feel sure that under the present

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Do You Remember?

(Looking backward through the files of The Press)

50 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Charley Reese now wears the town marshal's badge, having been selected to succeed Jule Jacobs.

Too many people have gone into the church under the impression that "salvation is free", thinking it meant they would not be duty bound to help pay the preacher.

Franklin's "cussing club" seems to be doing a prosperous business if cuss words are any indication. It has quite a number of active members.

It's just about the season now that the great meteoric shower is expected to be ripe. All who wish can sit up tonight and tomorrow night and star-gaze, provided clouds are not in the way.

25 YEARS AGO

At the football game last Thursday Major S. A. Harris found a fifty-cent piece. He foolishly spoke of his good luck and within 15 minutes there were, by actual count, 16 men and one boy who claimed to have lost the coin.

Mr. Van B. Shepherd and family, of Gastonia, have been visiting friends and relatives in Macon this week. Mr. Shepherd is a native of this county and has numerous friends here who are always glad to welcome him home.

10 YEARS AGO

Last week the Clark's Chapel school organized a literary society in each room, naming them "The Busy Bees", and "The Willing Workers".

Sanders Department store is now established in the new building adjoining the Bank of Franklin.

The senior class of Highlands High school attended the Anderson county fair in Anderson, S. C., last Friday, under the chaperonage of Mayor and Mrs. W. H. Cobb.