

Thoughts on education

"The great fire of 1871 destroyed just about everything except these stone covered waterworks."

Vito is giving me the basics about Chicago. He is the driver of a trolley type tour bus — and he is the guide. A couple of other brave or crazy tourists and I are making the rounds of the Chicago downtown this cold, damp afternoon. Vito performs well — like the actor he wants to be.

"There, across the Chicago River is the Wrigley Building — same family that owned the Cubs and the chewing gum business.

Somewhere over there is the site of the first settler's home. Jean Baptiste Du Sable, and he came from Haiti. So the first non-Indian resident of Chicago was a black man. They didn't used to brag about that. But now that is a big part of Chicago's story.

"There is the Merchandise Mart. The Sears Tower is the tallest building in the world. No. I have to say the second tallest now. A new building in Malaysia is now the tallest. Just opened the other day."

Vito is on a roll. If he were a teacher he would get a good grade on "classroom performance."

Later, I ride up the fast elevators of the John Hancock Center — one of the tallest buildings in Chicago. From the top I look down on Vito's city and give his work another, more important test.

Can I take what he taught me and use it to learn more?

Down below are the landmarks that he showed me. From this height I can recognize them and see how they are related to each other. Without



One on One
D. G. Martin

Vito's introduction to Chicago, my view from the heights of the John Hancock Center would be only a beautiful intriguing maze.

I can also make out other features of the city that Vito did not mention. For instance, I see how big Lake Michigan is. Vast and endless. And right up against Chicago. But Chicago's lake shore is separated from the city by a giant multi-lane highway that moves cars quickly and efficiently from one end of the city to the other.

I see at once, what natives of Chicago may miss. The beautiful lake and the handsome city should be joined together. But the concrete and fast-moving cars divide Chicago from its lakefront just as brutally as the Berlin wall once separated that city from its soul.

Leaving the tower, I make my way to the center of the city to visit the editorial offices of the "Encyclopaedia Britannica." Here is the most famous compilation of knowledge on the planet. I want to see how it is done.

Quietly and carefully, Charles Trumbull, the editor of the Britannica Yearbook leads me through the halls. Ordinary people working behind ordinary desks. "How is it all put together?" I ask. "How can you assemble all that knowledge in this small

place?" Modestly, he explains that he and his colleagues are mostly editors and assemblers of the work of others. They send out assignments to a trusted core of scholars and writers. Then they check. They edit. They decide what to cut and what to add. They assemble and organize. They take the knowledge of others and make it accessible to you and me.

Charles Trumbull and his colleagues at Encyclopaedia Britannica don't spoon feed the basic information to me as Vito did. They have assembled volumes of information, catalogued them and arranged them where I can find them — when I know what I am looking for. They have given me a framework that helps me learn on my own.

Without the Vitos and the Charles Trumbulls of the world you and I would be lost. We would never figure out Chicago or very much of the rest of the world by ourselves.

And while we are at it, let's confess that Vito and Charles Trumbull couldn't do very much for us if we hadn't been made ready by the good teachers in our schools and colleges. Nor would Vito and Charles Trumbull had much to offer us if they didn't have a storehouse of information available to them from the scholarship of thousands of others — mostly in colleges and universities across this country.

Remember Vito and Charles Trumbull — and those who back them up — the next time somebody asks you to help our schools, colleges and universities.



"The only time of the year I can get him to clean out the garage is when he should be doing our taxes."

Letters

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ness decisions. I would ask the paper to reprint what promises the incumbents made when they were elected to their present offices, it might open some eyes. I hope the good people of Hoke County will look hard at the candidates and make the right decision on 7 May 96.

Robert E. Vaughn II

Justice system needs work

To the Editor:

Are you aware that our justice system is not what it should be? The Sheriff's Department and our City Police department are trying to do their jobs. They find and arrest these crooks, but they have no control over when they are brought to trial.

Back in 1994, I was owed a debt of \$4,000. This fellow made a payment

to me of \$1,500 by check. About 10 days later, my bank notified me the check would not clear, due to lack of funds in this person's account. I then called this person, with some difficulty and gave him 24 hours to make the check good. He didn't, so I began the legal process to get my money.

I really got an education of how our system is working. What I felt should have only taken maybe three or four months, at the most, took nearly a year and a half, even though this person was found guilty. This all came about because he was given a continuance every time he was to appear in court for not paying off the bad check. I also learned at this time that there were at least two other people who had charges against this person, for a \$600 check and a \$900 check, written on the same account. No one will ever convince me that was an honest mistake on this crook's part. This should have been taken care of

through the normal process of the law.

No one will ever know the stress something like this can put you through, until you have been there. Both my husband and myself are law-abiding, tax-paying citizens, who never thought something like this would ever happen to us. And believe me, it could happen to others.

It is still upsetting to me to think of all the time we wasted in court, waiting to see justice served, only to see this man walk month after month with a continuance and a grin.

Is this not a waste of our tax dollars? Is the county's best interest being served? Every citizen of Hoke County should spend some time in the courtrooms to observe what's happened to our legal system, as I have done and will continue to do. I think it's time to put an end to this revolving door policy, NOW!

Sarah B. Wood

Raz

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library club members. Needless to say I was right in my comfort zone. In my 20 years as a high school principal, I truly loved to work with teenagers. Therefore, when I was called again to be the speaker by the same good friend, I assumed that she was talking about the present club members. It was a beautiful talk I was going to lay on these young people. When I arrived at the Cumberland County Public Library, I noticed a lot of adults were headed towards the entrance. It suddenly dawned on me that perhaps I had assumed wrong. You are right, I was wrong. The people in the room

were close to my age, some older. I could see myself saying at the appropriate time, "It is a long climb over fool's hill, some folks make it, some don't." These are the words I used on my teenagers over the years. Another was "Stand in your own shoes." I felt like crying. My mind was clicking faster than it has in years. Standing in front of them, staring in space, wasn't what they came to see and hear. Since I was one of them, I didn't have a great deal of difficulty shooting the bull, which I did. Thankful they seemed to enjoy my bull. Never again will I accept an invitation without checking all my facts. I must admit I was about

as confused as Abigail and Adelaide, two elderly sisters, were taking their first trip on a jet. On the 737 Abigail said, "Do you know this plane travels faster than sound?"

Adelaide was quite alarmed about this, when they were settled she said to the flight attendant, "I beg your pardon Miss, but does this plane travel faster than sound?"

Proudly she said, "Yes Ma'am we fly faster than sound."

"Well," replied Adelaide, "Please slow it down a little, my sister and I want to talk."

My parting thought — It would be a lot easier to love our neighbors, if they weren't

Easter

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something that high cholesterol and chocolate are known to promise.

I must say that the Easter rituals of hiding and hunting eggs and biting off the ears of chocolate bunnies paled in comparison to watching the Sunday morning sun rise over the trees on a day when rain was supposed to have

spoiled everything. It was tooth-chattering cold outside, but not a single cloud marred the scene — blazing orange orb on one side of the sky, glowing moon and stars on the other. It was as if God was saying, "I'm still here, just wanted to see if you noticed."

Being reminded of that makes it a

little easier to wade through the dirty clothes and candy wrappers, and makes it harder to tire of smashed eggs and leftover ham and other bountiful blessings of the season. Someone's watching, Someone knows, Someone cares. Always. It's just up to us to notice.

And to remember to say, "Thanks."

Check Our Calendar To Find Out What's Going On In Hoke County

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