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School and Your Child

By: John Corey

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Do We Overemphasize Competitive Athletics?

Football and other team sports from university to Junior high school stand to be thrown for a terrific loss if advice by Dr. James B. Conant, former Harvard University president, is heeded.

In his most blistering attack yet on unworthy school practices, the renowned education reformer flatly states in a national magazine article that there's a "vicious overemphasis on competitive athletics."

Conant points out that the "life of the school (sometimes revolves around the athletic field, not the classroom" and that "over-concern with the development of prize athletes might well jeopardize our future."

To win the real struggle, the Cold War, "we must improve the academic output of our educational system," says the better-schools crusader.

One step in this direction, Conant thinks, will be to shift glory from the field of sports to the realms of academics. Honor the students who excel in their books. Deemphasize importance of the "big game." Abolish completely

junior high school interscholastic competition and marching bands. Dr. Conant by no means underestimates the value of physical education and sports, however. He believes they're most valuable. But for all students, not just the outstanding athletes.

When Junior comes home, he should be able to tell his parents what he did on the field that day, not what he saw the stars do.

TV viewing and the automobile steer us toward the sedentary, onlooker role. To counteract this tendency, energies of school coaches should be aimed toward obtaining maximum participation in athletics by all students—not toward high-powered winning teams with five per cent of the youngsters participating while the other 95 per cent sit looking on.

Dr. Conant says that "all public school pupils should devote a period a day to developing their muscles and body co-ordination."

He implies that a well-managed intramural sports program in a school is good. Rather than emphasize the "big team" that plays other schools, a school should develop many teams to play each other. With proper organization,



KEEPING UP ON FARMING WITH UNCLE WALT

"Live and learn and die and forget it all." I hadn't heard that old saying in I don't know when 'til the other day when Ned Cunningham stopped by the house on his way to sell a load of corn.

I was out at the crib shuckin a few ears of corn for Nancy, my old brood sow, when Ned pulled in. First thing he said was, "Walt, what makes you crib your corn in the shucks ever year?" I allowed, as how he knew I didn't raise much corn and that I just soon shuck it as I needed it instead of doin it all at one time, so I sorta ignored his question. I jest passed it off by sayin, "Why, don't you know that people don't have corn shuckins no more?"

I asked Ned where he was gonna take his corn to sell and he told me up to Bill Spears place. He said Bill was puttin up a new storage bin at his place which would hold I forgot how many bushels but it was a passel more every pupil could be included.

What do schoolmarm say about Conant's strong remarks on athletic overemphasis?

Dr. Stanley Elam, editor of Phi Delta Kappan, the professional educators' journal, surveyed the reactions of nearly 200 schoolmen who at one time or another have had direct contact with the problem. Elam reports that a majority of the respondents agreed in a general way, with Conant's strongly-stated views. But they reserve blanket approval because of a feeling that Conant overgeneralizes from dubious facts.

A California principal said, "We need to emphasize intramural sports rather than interschool sports."

A Wisconsin college professor: "Training in individual sports is considerably more worthwhile. Why don't we leave team sports to pros?"

But there were defenders of interscholastic, competitive athletics, which Conant calls "the poison ivy in our schools."

Said a California school administrator, "For some individuals (such competition) provides the only opportunity to excel. For others, able academically, it provides the interest in school which increases holding power."

Probably the most common view was that taken by Editor Elam himself. A former coach and superintendent "who reads the sports page before the editorials," Elam admits warm sympathy for those who love athletic competition.

But the editor, who keeps in tune with the pulse-beat of the education world through his highly respected magazine, is "convinced that too many schoolmen have been unable or unwilling to withstand the pressures of overemphasis to which Conant objects."

In fact, Elam reveals he once fell into the net. Today he harbors a sense of shame for having organized an alumni "Bird Dog Club" to ferret out college-caliber athletics in small high schools without at the same time trying to spot and help prize scholars. Editor's note: Readers having questions concerning education are invited to send inquiries to School and Your Child, Appalachian State Teachers College, Boone, N. C.

than what Ned had on his truck. So, we got to talkin about all of these grain bins you see around at these different places and Ned knowed a lot more about it than I figgered he did.

Fact is, he knowed so much about it 'til I was almost sorry I even mentioned the subject. I'm one of these fellers who likes to put in his two-cents worth ever once in awhile and I jest didn't know enough about all of these things Ned was tellin me to hardly open my mouth. So I jest set there in the door of the corn crib and listened to him.

Come to find out though, before he got through, that he was jest quotin somebody else. He'd been over to the school house the night before to a meetin where a bunch of them got together to hear one of them fellers from Raleigh talk. Ned said the feller doin the talkin was a Mr. Lane, Pete Lane I believe he said, and that he worked with the State Agriculture Department on the marketin of grain all over the state. Anyhow, he must of been quite a talker 'cause I know old Ned didn't know nothin about all of this before he heard him the night before.

I asked Ned if this feller Lane said anything about why they was so many grain bins bein put up all over the state. That was another mistake I made because it took him a good twenty minutes to tell me jest what was said about 'em. The way Ned give it in, I reckon we're producin more grain in the state about ever year. Seems to me like he said Mr. Lane said we had around 127 million bushels produced in the state last year. That sounds like an awful lot but I know that's the figger he used. That bein the case, I guess we need all the bins that have been built so far and then some. Fact is, Ned said they weren't enough commercial storage space in the state to take care of a fourth of the grain we are producin.

That raised another question in my mind so I asked Ned if most of the farmers couldn't take care of what grain they produced right on their own farms. He said they weren't nearly enough good storage space on farms to where grain could be put up for a year or like it ought to be. He also said that a lot of people like to sell their grain as soon as they got it harvested and that filled up the storage bins in a hurry. I reckon they're a lot of people who'd ruther hold on to their grain and sell it later but they have to sell at harvest time because they need the money.

Ned went on to say that as more storage space for grain was built in the State it would mean more money to the farmer. Naturally, I wanted to know why. So he said "If we had enough space to store our grain ever year it wouldn't be necessary to ship so much of it out of state after all the storage space gifts filled up and then bring more grain back in the state later in the year to be made up into feed." That made sense to me.

Another interestin thing he

said was that the U. S. Department of Agriculture has worked out a plan where a farmer can borrow up to 95 percent of the cost for buyin storage and grain equipment for grain. I believe he said the loans run for three years at four percent interest. He told a whole bunch more about it but I didn't quite git everything he said. I do remember him sayin though that if a body wanted to git one of these loans, they would have to git it through their ASC office.

After Ned left, I set there in my little old crib and shucked a few more ears of corn and I got to thinkin. I figgered if they wasn't some place better to store corn and other grains in the state than in a crib like mine, then we was in a bad way. In my case though, I don't grow no grain for sale — jest enough for the rats which I have ever year and my few head of livestock is all.

MONTHLY REPORT

NORTH CAROLINA, YANCEY COUNTY.

APRIL 4th, 1961	
Exemptions	\$61.20
Poor	\$360.62
General	\$4,891.46
MAY 1, 1961	
Debt	\$18,472.57
Exemptions	\$32.20
Poor	\$263.00
General	\$4,433.06
I, Evelyn H. Pate, Clerk to the	

Board of County Commissioners, do hereby certify that the foregoing amounts are and true and exact copies of the minutes of the April and May meetings of the Board of County Commissioners.

Witness my signature and official seal this the 3rd day of May, 1961.
Evelyn H. Pate, Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners.

ENGLAND-DAVIS ENGAGEMENT ANNOUNCED
Mr. and Mrs. Marcus England of Burnsville announce the engagement of their daughter, Muriel to Gene Edward Davis, son of Mr. and Mrs. David Davis of Mobile, Alabama.
The wedding will be solemnized on June 24.

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