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***"Freedom of the Press belongs to those who own one."***

*A. J. Liebling of the New Yorker*

**August 14, 2001**



**Edukatn**

**W**ell, the latest results of the 2000 National Assessment of Educational Progress (U.S. Department of Education) scores for 36 States gives both good news and bad news. The bad news is that California students in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades were awful. The good news is that four of the participating states were even worse! (Hallelujah - Mississippi finished lower than California, as did Arkansas, Louisiana and New Mexico. Now that is an accomplishment!)

*(I think that paragraph qualifies for the sobriquet "Damning with faint praise.")*

*The Governor says that the tests are not indicative of the current situation because the tests were taken before his administration designated \$22 billion more for schools. Our Governor believes that money is the solution to the problem - but he has spent more than \$75 billion of the taxpayer's money and not solved the energy problem. What makes him think money will solve the education problem is beyond my understanding. Records at the U.S. Department of (ha-ha) Education show that several states with the lowest per capita spending are at the top of the ladder, and several states with the highest spending are mired in the bottom five states.*

*The education problem is a parent problem. John and Mary are working 70-hour weeks and leaving their children's education to their teacher. John and Mary are perfectly happy with their children's education since they never see the little tykes anyway,*

**Commentary**



*and there is no alternative that does not require John and Mary to either spend time or money. After all, they figure the schools are why they pay taxes, so the schools must be doing something.*

*Yes, California constantly tests near or at the bottom of EVERY national test, year after year after year, but the Parent Teachers Association has become a cheerleader corps for the Teachers Union. John and Mary are convinced that even if California Schools are awful, THEIR school is excellent, and THEIR little darling is an absolute genius. Their teacher told them so, so it must be true. Doting mothers all think their darlings are budding Da Vincis anyway, so they don't need much persuading.*

*California has a deserved reputation for earthquakes and two of them were man made. The first was the Tax Revolt that brought in Prop. 13, and the last was the one that threw State Supreme Court Justice Rose Bird out on her ear.*

*It will take nothing less than a man made earthquake, led by concerned parents, to change the California education fiasco. Unfortunately, after several generations of failure, our schools do not recognize good education, and the downward spiral continues, with each new generation's education worse than the last*

*So long as the parents are satisfied, nothing will change. Parents are satisfied, and nothing is changing.*

*For the complete 74-page article documenting the results of the national assessment, visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2000/2001517a.pdf>*

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**“People leave college with their teacher certificate in hand and they go into a classroom and come to find out they’ve never really learned how to teach somebody to read. “**

—First Lady (and former librarian) Laura Bush

