

SPECTRUM

Excellence in education

I would like to extend to everyone best wishes for a new year, even at this late date. That is still possible according to European custom. Best wishes can be extended all through the month of January.

It would not at all be inappropriate either to direct these wishes toward our educational pursuits. Success at university cannot be taken lightly. Such is becoming more and more pronounced today.

We assert increasingly that higher education is to prepare us, individually and corporately, to face the challenges of tomorrow. University students of today are preparing to become the leaders of tomorrow. They will be expected to carry on past traditions in light of new opportunities and possibilities in a changing world. Indeed, no insignificant task!

Formal education, of course, is not the only factor that will give us fortitude for tomorrow. Yet, we know it gives a certain edge, a distinct advantage. But, what is that advantage?

Students are keenly aware that a university degree is the gateway to a better job and a higher salary. That appeals to most of us. Higher education also gives one greater choice. Those with a university education are better able to determine their own future. A university education can be liberating; it offers a greater degree of freedom.

So the reasoning goes. But, do we limit our notion of freedom, of choice, of prosperity? It is no secret that education today is closely linked to business and industry. Examine the sources of numerous and substantial grants awarded to the uni-

versity, and particularly the departments to which they are directed. Some say business and industry ought to have even closer links. Read the Downey-Landry report on public education in New Brunswick.

If we are earnestly striving for excellence in preparing for the challenges of tomorrow, we must not limit our efforts to material pursuits.

Would it not be important also to continually explore other basic and crucial questions? Granted, our nation needs expertise in business and industry. But, must we limit ourselves to that?

What we do in our business and industry depends a lot on how we define ourselves. Perhaps we put the cart before the horse. Before we discuss career aspiration, we ought to ask ourselves what kind of person, or people, we want to be - now and in the future.

Youth are at a distinct advantage here. They still dream of a better world. Frequently they are free from the disillusionment brought on when dreams are forced into the Procrustean bed of big business, industry and government.

Educational leaders hold high the goal of graduating students who are critical and independent thinkers. Such is a noble aspiration. But, does that goal assume autonomous individuals, ultimately responsible to no one other than themselves.

Charles Taylor, in his recent book *Malaise of Modernity*, asserts that modernity has secured rights and freedoms for the individual. There is no turning back. But to prevent the modern enterprise from collapsing into a rampant self-centered individualism, we need to transcend

METANOIA
by John Valk

the notion that the autonomous individual has unlimited and unfettered freedom. Individual rights are not absolute. Taylor asserts that we must establish some criteria for determining what is worth pursuing and what is not.

If higher education gives us economic freedom, can we say that exercising that freedom as we choose is what we really want or ought to do? Much of our economic freedom has exacted a devastating toll on our environment. Moreover, striving for that (elusive?) economic dream has all too often made many slaves to their jobs, with spin-off effects producing "alienated" spouses and "orphaned" children.

Who then is free? Is greater personal freedom and choice to be celebrated in increased broken marriages and disruptive families? Furthermore, we seek the freedom to determine our own morals and values. Yet we cry out from the devastation of AIDS, abortion and sexual abuse. What freedom have we gained? Surely this is not the freedom of which we dreamed.

Education can prepare us to meet the economic challenges of tomorrow. It ought also prepare us for the human challenges. Can we educate ourselves in determining what is worth pursuing and what is not?

We are in bondage when we use our educational advantage to pursue self-centered and unfettered individual desires. We are free when we can distinguish needs from wants, and when we exercise our personal freedom for the benefit of all. May 1992 be a turning point.

universe."

I responded, "it's that big? So we can do nothing about it."
"Right. The law plainly says, 'The IQ of the driver is the direct inverse of the amount of precipitation'."

S.W.A.T.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a contagious infection caused by the Hepatitis B Virus (HBV). At least 5% of Canadians become infected with hepatitis B at some point in their lives. Data received from the UNB population indicates that the rate of infection among students is 0.7%.

The incubation period, the length of time between exposure to the virus and onset of the infection, is around 60 to 90 days depending on the amount of virus an individual has received. Infection by injection or needlestick results in a much shorter incubation period than if HBV is acquired through small abrasions in the mucous membranes.

The Hepatitis B Virus is most highly concentrated in blood, semen, and vaginal secretions but is also found in saliva, breast milk, urine, and stool. HBV is very small and can easily enter the body through intact mucous membranes, minor wounds in the skin, and even mild rashes. Those at increased risk of contracting hepatitis B are intravenous drug abusers, persons receiving haemodialysis, health care workers, and individuals who have unprotected sexual intercourse, especially gay men. Women infected with HBV during the later stages of pregnancy are at great risk (80% to 90%) of transmitting Hepatitis B to their fetus via the placenta or during delivery and early infancy. Hepatitis B can be transmitted through indirect contact, such as shared utensils. Consequently 30% of family members of a person who has hepatitis B will acquire the infection in this manner.

The hepatitis B virus is extremely virulent. Thin films of dried blood

have been found to contain highly infective HBV after days and weeks at room temperature. Subsequently if you are aware that an individual is infected with hepatitis B avoid sharing razors, toothbrushes, towels, washcloths, or other personal items. During sexual intercourse with an infected individual use a condom which will prevent the transmission of the hepatitis B virus through blood, semen and vaginal fluids.

A few infected individuals will either not experience any symptoms or only a very mild illness which may pass unnoticed. Many symptoms of the illness may be mistaken for the flu, such as lethargy, nausea, stomach cramps, and a disinterest in food. More severe symptoms include fever, vomiting and diarrhoea, a skin rash, jaundice, intolerance of fats, and arthritis, and only in a small number of cases will hospitalization be required.

Although there is no formal treatment for hepatitis B doctors commonly recommend that an individual infected with HBV get a good amount of rest, drink lots of clear liquids and avoid alcohol and foods rich in protein and fat. In Canada, a Hepatitis B vaccine has been in use since 1982 for protection from possible hepatitis B infection.

Although about 90% of patients recover completely, the duration of illness is variable and they may take weeks or months to recover. The remaining 10% will develop chronic hepatitis or inflammation of the liver which may gradually resolve after months or sometimes years. Five to 10% of infected individuals will

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"This is what I think.." continued from page 13

Oh, I've also noticed that the people who drive the mini-vans, are descended from the nannies who drove VW Beetles. They think they're invisible.

On Monday, I'm coming in on the TCH, I seem to have gotten behind a little old lady, wearing a cap, driving a mini-van, with one head light working, so slowly, that I thought she'd back into me. I wonder if she thought there was a "parade" behind her, or that she was the leader of the pack. In town, my native reflexes had me glancing at the plates of the yahoos, spinning tires faster and faster, to see if they had Florida plates. Instinct, I guess. Why don't people who get a driver's licence, have to take a test in the summer and in the winter? These jerks are dangerous! So I trudged over to the all wise Dr. Know. S/he seems to be able to impart wisdom and shed understanding into virtually any situation.

I queried, "Dr. Know, I realize that Fredericton is 'the Boston of Canada' (worst drivers in their respective country), but what happens to these people when it snows, etc.?" Dr. Know just smiled and said,

"D.J., my boy, this is simply an irrefutable law of nature and the

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