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a supplement section
of the gateway

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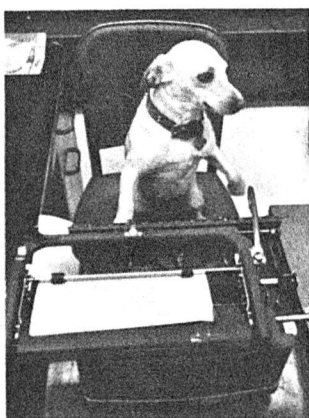
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This week we have some of the most interesting stories Casserole has printed this year. One of them got another Canadian student newspaper into trouble earlier this winter, and another takes a very pessimistic view of the sanity of English profs.

Rich Vivone is in great form as he takes a double-barreled slam at people who think a B.A. will automatically put them on everyone's most-wanted employee list.

His satire of a critical analysis should be the style guide for any freshman unacquainted with the form the English department requires.

Along the same mode, we are reprinting a story about how some profs (not yours of course) and administrators (not ours of course) treat their students (not us of course).

We do grant that the article does take a very strong point of view, but if any of you dare to say it is all wrong, we would like to hear from you.

And our third story also considers the education system, but on a much more elementary level. Are our schools educating children or are they training them to fill the empty slots in the immense system known as society, ask the "free school" thinkers. That is a lot of question to ask.

Now, for next week, expect a big story on heart surgery at the U of A cardiovascular surgery unit.

Till then, fare thee well.



COMPULSORY SCHOOLING ISN'T ENOUGH—YOU'VE GOT TO GO BECAUSE YOU WANT TO GO

The new free school movement meeting the needs of students

By TERRY CAMPBELL
For Canadian University Press

VANCOUVER—When 13-year-old Duncan Innes goes to school, he is going because his parents feel he is getting a far better education this year than in past years.

Duncan is a student at the Barker Free School in Vancouver—one of a new breed of schools that are rapidly cropping up across the nation.

Nobody knows exactly what a free school is. Between Christmas and New Year's representatives of eight free schools from across the country spent several days at the New School in Vancouver trying to answer, among other things, that very question.

The conclusions reached were more non-conclusions. Those present learned they agreed on some things, disagreed on others. The only thing they were unanimous upon was that the present public school system is incapable of coping with modern educational requirements.

WHO HOUSE TO KNOWPLACE

Represented at Vancouver were Toronto's Everdale Place, Toronto's Rochdale College, Winnipeg's Who House, the Winnipeg Free School, the Viewpoint non-school at Argonia, B.C., Vancouver's New School, Barker Free School, and Knowplace.

With the exception of Rochdale College, all these schools or non-schools cater to elementary or secondary school-age students. Rochdale is a co-operative residence for college-age students that strives to offer an unique educational environment.

But while those who staff the schools are less than certain how to describe their operations, the students who attend have few if any reservations.

Take Duncan Innes for example. Before he was sent to the Barker Free School, he was what is known as a "problem child."

"I didn't get along," says Duncan, an unusually articulate youngster for his age, describing his public school career. "I used to throw things and get into trouble."

Duncan says his mother sent him to Barker because of this rebelliousness. "I always liked to hear them shout at me," he says. "But now I like school."

JUST "SICK"

Last year, while attending public school, Duncan missed 30 days because he was "sick." "Sick of school, I guess," he says.

To date this year he has missed

only one day. "But I didn't have to say I was sick. I just didn't feel like going so I went somewhere else instead."

Each school day for Duncan begins with a meeting. The students at his school—all elementary age—attend a general meeting each morning at which they decide what they will do for the day.

This aspect of the free school is generally widespread—the active participation by students in the decision-making processes of the school. "If the teachers want one thing and we want another, we outvote them," Duncan says.

The crucial question however, is whether the free school gives a better education than the traditional public school. "I feel I am learning more now than I was before," says Duncan.

PUSHY TEACHERS

A schoolmate of Duncan's, 14-year-old Clay Ray, was less willing to assert this point, but admitted it was generally so. "But sometimes the teachers get pushy and try to run things. Then we won't talk to them, and we don't find out anything."

Clay, brushing back his shoulder-length blonde hair (there are

no dress restrictions in free schools), tells of the type of things he does at school.

"Well, one time we built a still," he says.

The question was obvious. What were they going to do with the still?

"Make booze, I guess."

Make booze: Wouldn't the teachers object?

"No, not really. But we never got to make the booze because the little kids wrecked the still."

Suppose they hadn't wrecked the still, would you have known how to make booze?

MAKE A MASH

"Oh, it's simple," explained Clay, somewhat eager to display his knowledge. "You make a mash and you put yeast in it . . ." He went on to explain quite clearly the process of fermentation.

Then he described how the different liquids in the mash boiled at different temperatures and how this enabled one to separate the vapors in a still and then condense the vapors to get booze. "Of course, you can use it for other things like making clean water," he added.

Here was a 14-year-old boy at

an elementary school level giving me a somewhat comprehensive high-school physics and chemistry lecture.

"The main thing is to meet the needs—both personal and academic—that the kids themselves recognize," explains Gordon Mackie, a student at the University of Manitoba and one of the most articulate spokesmen for the free school movement. He is currently involved in getting up a free school in Winnipeg for dissatisfied high school students and dropouts.

QUESTION OF NEEDS

The mainstream schools aren't meeting their needs," he says. "For the student, it is a question of what I need to know. You can't tell me what I need to know."

"For example, three-, four-, and five-year-old kids need to learn to read. They know this. Everything they see around them is in print. You give them books and you should watch them gobble them up," said Mackie.

With the youths he is working with in Winnipeg, the needs are different, Mackie says. "These kids need to know how to structure interpersonal relationships. At the conventional high school level, relationships seem to be based on economic rather than human grounds—you know, the best guy is the one with the flashiest car."

Bob Barker, the founder of the Barker Free School, generally agrees. A balding 54, he is a senior figure in the movement.

"What we are trying to do is bring people up so that they are best able to cope with life today and life tomorrow. The mainstream schools are failing at this for two reasons.

TOO LIMITED

"First, the means of the traditional school are too limited. You can't educate people when you have 40 to a class.

"Second, there is the bogey and fear of public opinion. Public school teachers, because they are public servants, are afraid to act. But so are politicians, and they are acting all the time. I call it a bogey because I don't think it actually exists."

Mr. Barker feels the "whip theory of education"—his label for the public school system—does not produce persons capable of coping with life. "All it produces are narrowly educated robots. We don't want kids to qualify for the status quo; we want them to qualify for changing the status quo. The most important thing is what we are doing for the kids."

On the cover

The African Ballet

Motion, color, motion: endless variety. That was the African Ballet two weeks ago as they put on their usual exciting representation of life in their native villages, at the Jubilee Auditorium.

And that is this week's Casserole cover—the African Ballet in motion as seen by a fine arts student.

The graceful dancers moved through the action in a day at the village, even enacting a rape scene.

This is the same group of dancers which in the past was interfered with by our police force in the name of morality, for the women were bare-breasted.

This is the same group of dancers that was harrassed by the police in Montreal last fall.

But the most recent Edmonton performance (yes, it was topless) was incident free.

