

The curriculum reform that was enacted in the Prussia of Friedrich Schiller's time, a half-century after Franklin's proposal, by Minister of Education Wilhelm von Humboldt, Schiller's close friend and collaborator, was based on the same Classical model. It was that reform which created in Germany generations of gifted students in all fields of knowledge, from music to science—including the German scientists who fled Nazi Germany to comprise the core of America's successful space program—and has served as a model since that time.

LaRouche has detailed his ideas for reform of America's education system, based on the Classical model, in many locations in recent years. Because the full treatment of LaRouche's proposals is not within the scope of this article, we refer the reader to two crucial sources: The *EIR Special Report*, "The Libertarian Conspiracy To Destroy America's Schools" (April 30, 1986); and FDR-PAC's book, *The LaRouche Program To Save the Nation*, especially Chapter 7: Restore Literacy and Classical Education (1997).

The shortest way to achieving this necessary reform, of course, is to elect LaRouche President of the United States. The revolution required to do this is precisely that which our Founding Fathers left uncompleted for us to do.

Interview: William H. McCann, Jr.

Mr. McCann is a former Assistant Whip of the New Hampshire State Legislature (D-Dover), President of Chapter 41 of the Service Employees (SEIU) Local 1984, and a board member of the New Hampshire SEIU. He was interviewed on May 17 by Marianna Wertz.

EIR: What is the status of the school funding crisis, now that the May 15 deadline to come up with full funding has passed?

McCann: The legislature tried to resolve the crisis, and they're now admitting that they are probably \$100 million short. With the compromise that was struck ten days ago, on paper it will fund an "adequate" education to the tune of \$4,200 per pupil in the state. When you get through figuring it out, there's an increase in the real estate transfer tax, there's a statewide property tax, there's an increase in business taxes. When all is said and done, the best estimate is that it probably raises \$725 million and spends \$825 million. So, now they're trying to figure out how to make that balance.

EIR: So at this point there's no prospect for immediate

'Virtual reality' plagues computer-dependent students

Civil engineer and historian Henry Petroski, who chairs the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Duke University, identifies the displacement of mechanical play by virtual reality as a leading problem in engineering education today.

Writing in the May-June *American Scientist*, Petroski says: "So many students majoring in engineering today seem to have few if any experiences with the artifacts of engineering, other than consuming and using them. For example, some students may have significant expertise with regard to interfacing with a computer and may even engage in a degree of programming and hacking, but the vast majority appear to use the computer as a black box. They seem disinclined to open up the box to see what makes it tick. Neither are they drawn to fix their own cars, let alone their own bicycles.

"Indeed, judging from my own experiences with today's affluent first- and second-year engineering students, many of them appear to have led deprived childhoods when it comes to having learned the innards of machines by taking them apart and putting them together again. Moreover, not a few engineering students seem not to have even handled some of the most basic tools with which to

do so. Because they have not had the tactile experience of being mechanics, they also seem to lack the visual sense that develops from it. Thus, when asked to draw a machine part, they are at a loss for lines."

Petroski discusses how the roots of the problem lie in part in the nature of toys. Formerly, budding engineers wrestled with the nuts and bolts of Erector sets, while today's engineers play electronic games. "One begins to wonder what these children of cyberspace will do when they encounter the real world of engineering, which does not come with prepackaged software or with everything preprogrammed," he writes.

Petroski concludes: "Because these concerns are widespread, at least among my generation, some engineering educators are coming to assume that virtually all incoming students are deficient in real tactile, spatial, and mechanical experiences. Thus, what might be called remedial play courses have been developed. One such course is taught at Stanford University under the title Mechanical Dissection. In it, students disassemble and then reassemble such machines and devices as laser printers, fishing reels, and ten-speed bicycles. The hands-on experiences are intended to provide a feel for engineering that a generation or two ago students would have brought with them to the classroom. It remains to be seen if such remedial activity will produce as many engineers who become business leaders as did my generation's untrammled use of chemistry sets and construction toys." — *Marjorie Mazel Hecht*

layoffs?

McCann: Cities and towns have been told by the state that they can now set tax rates and go ahead with business as usual. I would suspect within the next couple of weeks, that's what's going to happen. In the meantime, the pressure came to lay people off. It wasn't done. It sort of just postponed the crisis. It probably will get us into the summer, and then we'll see if the court accepts what they've done or if someone challenges it. And, it appears that two or more of the so-called "property rich" towns in New Hampshire are going to go to court and challenge it, saying that it's unfair to them.

EIR: Because they want to spend more?

McCann: Because they're going to make them spend more. Of course, the original plaintiffs haven't gone back to court, but their lead lawyers pretty much said they don't think this cuts it. So, it's just a question of when do they get to court and what's going to happen.

The thing that has now happened is something different than when we talked last. Republicans are saying one alternative to bringing the educational funding into balance would be to cut the operating budget by \$100 million. To give the \$100 million to the schools if they take \$100 million out of the state's budget, which, of course, a lot of people, including myself, don't think you can do. It's a pretty lean budget now.

That's one alternative. It's going to have an impact on the adoption of the state budget, because that battle is yet to be fought.

It's typical New Hampshire. They came up to the crisis and stepped back, but they didn't solve the problem, and the crisis can come back, probably June 30 if the budget isn't passed. That's going to be the next crisis date, because the state budget has to be passed by the end of this fiscal year. They gave themselves 45 days, in essence. Whether they'll do something, I don't know. I've talked to some legislators who are pretty discouraged that what has transpired doesn't really solve the problem in the long run, and then, more immediately, within hours of when the deal was agreed to, it became apparent. First, it started out being \$42 million in the red, and has grown to \$100 million or thereabouts since then. You can see that it wasn't well put together to start with.

Interview: Ulysses Jones, Jr.

Ulysses Jones, Jr. (D-Memphis) is a Tennessee State Representative and Chair of the State and Local Government Committee of the Tennessee House. He was interviewed on May 19 by Marianna Wertz.

Gore's computer-classrooms guru is gambler D.E. Shaw

A prime mover to have every classroom in America wired to the Internet is David E. Shaw, whose Wall Street firm, bearing his name, is one of the world's largest derivatives traders. Shaw, a major financial backer of Vice President Al Gore, has had some irregular dealings with Gore.

D.E. Shaw & Co. investment bank made headlines last year, when it became known that Shaw had sustained heavy losses on hedge-derivatives bets. The Oct. 15, 1998 *Wall Street Journal* reported that BankAmerica had taken "a \$372 million write-down due to a loan to D.E. Shaw & Co." BankAmerica had formed a strategic alliance with Shaw in March 1997. The losses that Shaw sustained, resulting in a \$372 million hit for BankAmerica, had been sustained during the summer, but the information was withheld until Oct. 13.

In late August 1998, Shaw and a group of Wall Street bankers, including speculator George Soros, met with Vice President Gore. The meeting followed the Aug. 17, 1998 Russian declaration of suspension of payment on debt and Russian Treasury securities, called GKOs. The Russian debt suspension sent the world financial markets into tur-

moil, causing large losses for Shaw. At the meeting with Gore, Shaw and others attempted to define for Gore a strategy whose effect would be to deploy U.S. policy to protect their assets. Only weeks before this meeting, around July 21, Shaw and seven members of his firm had poured \$40,000 into Friends of Al Gore, Jr., Inc., Gore's political action committee. This raised the issue of bribery on national security matters, an impeachable offense for Gore, and an action that raises all sorts of questions for Shaw.

Speculator Shaw is one of the leading New Age kooks on Wall Street. The offices of D.E. Shaw are located on the top two floors of a skyscraper in Manhattan. One magazine described the offices: "The walls have geometric patterns cut into them and lit up with different colors. Almost every stick of furniture is black." *Wired* magazine, a New Age publication, reported that the office "is meant to evoke the feeling of sitting inside a computer chip."

With this worldview, Shaw is attempting to wire all of America's classrooms into the Internet—an assault on the cognitive ability of children. Shaw serves on the President's Committee of Advisers on Science and Technology, and he has been chairman of the Panel on Educational Technology. From that position, he wrote a report that is the "blueprint . . . to wire every American classroom to the Internet," according to the January 1997 *Wired*.

—Richard Freeman