

What's Doing

Some Video Programs Here and There

Alright, we're going to say it again. We know you've heard it before but we'll say it just once. We promise. "EDUCATION TODAY IS IN BAD SHAPE," Okay, so what else is new? And that's the point. A lot.

Most of us don't have to be told that, in general, schools have failed in their attempt at providing kids with knowledge of the basic survival skills they'll need in the 21st century. Yet, there is somehow a built in implication in the writings of today's critics that schools, in the past, didn't "Fail." There is a notion that somehow, in the mid-sixties we suddenly found ourselves in the midst of an educational crisis of unmanageable proportions. What's important, however, is to look back, just a bit, to see where we've come from, to understand that our ideas of what schools should be are recent history.

Much of this ideology can be directly traced to the influence of men like John Dewey along with the educational explosion that followed the second world war. The GI Bill gave many men a college education who otherwise never would have had a chance. The quonset hut campuses that dotted the landscape in the late forties provided second generation immigrants and the American working class with career opportunities previously inaccessible.

The Baby Boom

Meanwhile, back on the home front men and women were increasing the elementary school population. The baby boom was on. The concentric rings

of suburban growth spread around the urban cores like rings around a stone dropped into water. The rapid-fire growth of the economy provided a tax base which enabled communities to pour tremendous resources into the schooling of their young. New schools call for new plans. The educational theorists had a field day. With an education population growing, educators were forced to become more conscious of community concerns and desires.

By the early 50s, the Doctor Spock generation was entering those bright shiny classrooms in the morning and rushing home in the afternoon to sit in front of the new American landscape - television.

Discovery of "The Ghetto"

Back in the inner cities those same Victorian structures that had housed three generations of immigrant children now faced a new wave of kids with which they were not familiar. The magnet of the suburb had drawn off much of the cities' experienced teaching and administrative staff leaving to those new college graduates, schools which were not prepared to deal with a growing third world population.

Yet changes did not take place despite the articulate writings of the "new" educators. Most inner city schools were powerless to affect change. The automobile left behind a blight which would increasingly decay urban centers across America. The blight was left to run rampant. Northeast liberals could decry segregation in the South and