

Don't Kid Around in the Classroom

Think back to when you were six years old. What was your world like? Mine consisted of playing baseball, cowboys and Indians (I didn't know from Native Americans), and watching a goofy guy named Howdy Doody on TV. That filled much of my leisure time.

In school, a glaring nun named Sister Lurana taught me to read 'Dick and Jane' stories. I had a book that said stuff like, "Look at Jane. See Jane run. Dick likes Jane." It really didn't matter to me whether Dick liked Jane or not—I wanted to climb a tree. But the nun insisted I learn to read the book, so I did.

Today, in Lexington, Massachusetts, six year-olds have another book. It is called "Who's In a Family?" This book features not only Dick and Jane but Jennifer and Lauren and Charles and Henry. The pages tell little kids about different kinds of families: mixed race, gay and lesbian, and even traditional family units. They are all discussed in very positive ways.

A father named David Parker took one look at the same sex part of the book and made an appointment to see the principal of the Estabrook Elementary School, a woman named Joni Jay. Mr. Parker asked Ms. Jay to inform him when the gay family stuff was going to be presented, because he felt his little son was too young to learn about homosexuality and he would keep him home that day. Sounds reasonable, right?

Not so fast.

Ms. Jay informed Mr. Parker that the family book had nothing to do with sexuality, and so he was not entitled under the Massachusetts sex-ed law to get a heads up. When Mr. Parker pointed out that same sex situations contain the word 'sex,'

he was asked to leave the principal's office. He refused. So the Lexington police arrested him on trespassing charges.

See Dad get arrested. What does Jane think?

Very quietly all over the country, these kinds of culture war expositions are being played out in assorted public school systems. Under the banner of teaching tolerance, many school boards have okayed books that delve into social issues far beyond the comprehension of most six-year-olds. I don't know about you, but I thought gay meant "happy" until I was eleven years old, and even then, I could not have cared less whether Lenny and Squiggy were a couple. I wanted to steal second and see monster movies, not understand what happens in Key West.

But today we have a massive mission of indoctrination going on in America, and millions of traditional parents don't like it. I am siding with that group. I don't want to tell my little kids about "alternative lifestyles" unless we're talking about the Munchkins in the "Wizard of Oz."

I think both Dick and Jane would agree that we should all back off and give the kids a break. Let's bring back childhood in America, okay? No more "diversity" books for kindergarteners. No more bare midriffs for nine-year-old girls. No more gold chains for boys going into third grade. Got it? Let's work together on this.

The world is a tough, nasty place and children will learn that soon enough. Shouldn't we make their first years fun years, free of political and social agendas? Why do some little kids these days look like Britney Spears and Kid Rock? What the deuce is wrong with us?

Summing up, Dick likes Jane and that's enough for six-year-olds. Larry and Bruce can wait a few years.

The Politics of Cowardice

It took the brutal sexual assault and murder of a nine year-old girl to force the state of Florida to pass a law to protect children. Just days after Jessica Lunsford was found murdered, buried alive, the state legislature passed a law mandating a penalty of 25 years to life for any person convicted of molesting a child under 12 years of age. And if the molester ever did get out of prison, he or she would have to wear an electronic monitor for life.

The law passed because of citizen outrage; the guy who confessed to killing Jessica, John Couey, was a convicted sex offender who was running around unsupervised.

The media made a big deal out of photographing Governor Jeb Bush signing the law, but why didn't he and every other American governor sign a law like this years ago? Everybody knows that kids are being molested in great numbers. A new study out of Hofstra University says that 10% of American school kids are molested by their **teachers!** Unbelievable.

The system that is supposed to protect children has broken down in the United States for two reasons: first, there is no national database for sexual offenders, so they can roam from state to state without people knowing who they are.

And second, the apathy of some judges and prosecutors is stunning. In Jessica Lunsford's case, John Couey failed to register as a sex offender as required by Florida law and the state did not track him down. In fact, Couey's sister, his niece and another man, admit they hid the pervert when police were searching for Jessica. According to the niece, Couey's sister then bought him a bus ticket so he could flee the

state.

Investigators also believe that Jessica was being tortured inside the trailer where those people lived with Couey. Yet no charges have been filed by Florida prosecutor Brad King against the three individuals who protected Couey and may have known about Jessica's abduction and murder.

This is simply obscene, but it is not unusual. King has told the local media there is no law in Florida that would allow him to prosecute these three revolting people. Lawyers I've spoken with disagree, but King is standing firm despite growing outrage.

King's inaction is what kills children. An aggressive prosecutor finds a way to bring those three to justice. A judge who cares puts child molesters away for the longest time possible. But all over the USA this is not happening.

Florida is ground zero for attacks on children, but they are happening everywhere. Don't believe the propagandists who say the problem has always been there, that it is no worse now. It is worse. That's because our justice system is chaotic and many judges are consumed by politics, making liberal rulings that allow the most vicious people imaginable to roam the streets.

Jessica Lunsford died for our sins. In the end, her gruesome demise did motivate Florida pols to at least do something. But three people who did nothing to save Jessica are still not being held accountable. And the shame of our society continues.

Happy Birthday, Mike Wallace

Word for word, the best American broadcaster in history has to be Mike Wallace. The guy turns 87 in a few days and he's still hitting cleanup for CBS on Sunday night. Wallace must have some kind of Dorian Gray thing going on, because he looks 25 years younger than he is, and can still put your fanny on the canvas during an interview. Here's the absolute bottom line on Mike Wallace: If you see him in a restaurant, have what he's having.

For those of you without a calculator, Mike Wallace was around for Al Capone, Adolf Hitler, Hiroshima, the birth of television and all the chaos that followed. In the 1950's, he hosted a TV program called "Nightbeat" which featured confrontational interviews with the powerful and the pompous. My late father thought most TV guys were wimps and phonies but he liked Wallace. He thought the broadcaster had, well, manhood.

The New York Times reports that Mr. Wallace did his full complement of 20 stories this season on "60 Minutes." At his age, the man's public persona should be a likeness at Madame Tussaud's, not a slot in prime time. But, somehow, he continues to be the best interviewer in the business. A few weeks ago he brushed back steroid monster Jose Canseco to such an extent that Canseco pretty much repudiated the key parts of his tell-all-book. Jose never knew what hit him. Wallace picked his pocket and left him for dead.

This whole Mike Wallace deal is downright spooky. Even Dick Clark has faltered, but Wallace just keeps humming along. When he interviewed me last fall, I had to be on guard at all times. Any inconsistency, any statement I couldn't back up, any bit of hesitation, the guy was on it. I kept repeating in my mind: "The man is 86 years old, I am much younger and stronger. The guy can't touch me." A fairy tale. Wallace

controlled the interview.

To be honest, there are few television broadcasters that I respect. Most are politically correct robots driven by ego to do only what is best for them. In my 30 years of broadcasting, I have seen behind-the-scenes atrocities that would turn even Mike Wallace's hair gray. So my praise for Wallace does not come from a cheerleader.

Like most network news people, Mike Wallace is a liberal thinker, but he is not an ideologue. He's made some mistakes in his career, but everyone in the business has. Most of all, I believe Wallace is a fair man who does not go out of his way to hammer a person without cause. Maybe I'm wrong about this, but I've watched him closely for decades.

As everyone knows, the old school of broadcasters is closing down. Brokaw, Walters, Rather, Koppel, and maybe even Jennings are cutting back. In their place are some highly skilled people without much panache. Americans are incredibly distracted with all the new gadgets, and to get their attention, you almost have to break into their homes. The age of broadcast superstars is almost over. The age of "Who's that, again?" is just about here.

So, happy birthday, Mike Wallace; I hope you get some nice presents and a big cake. And, with all due respect, you know what you can do with those 87 candles. Throw them at Morley Safer. You, sir, need just one candle, signifying your status in the broadcasting industry.

Happy Birthday, Mike Wallace

Word for word, the best American broadcaster in history has to be Mike Wallace. The guy turns 87 in a few days and he's still hitting cleanup for CBS on Sunday night. Wallace must have some kind of Dorian Gray thing going on, because he looks 25 years younger than he is, and can still put your fanny on the canvas during an interview. Here's the absolute bottom line on Mike Wallace: If you see him in a restaurant, have what he's having.

For those of you without a calculator, Mike Wallace was around for Al Capone, Adolf Hitler, Hiroshima, the birth of television and all the chaos that followed. In the 1950's, he hosted a TV program called "Nightbeat" which featured confrontational interviews with the powerful and the pompous. My late father thought most TV guys were wimps and phonies but he liked Wallace. He thought the broadcaster had, well, manhood.

The New York Times reports that Mr. Wallace did his full complement of 20 stories this season on "60 Minutes." At his age, the man's public persona should be a likeness at Madame Tussaud's, not a slot in prime time. But, somehow, he continues to be the best interviewer in the business. A few weeks ago he brushed back steroid monster Jose Canseco to such an extent that Canseco pretty much repudiated the key parts of his tell-all-book. Jose never knew what hit him. Wallace picked his pocket and left him for dead.

This whole Mike Wallace deal is downright spooky. Even Dick Clark has faltered, but Wallace just keeps humming along. When he interviewed me last fall, I had to be on guard at all times. Any inconsistency, any statement I couldn't back up, any bit of hesitation, the guy was on it. I kept repeating in my mind: "The man is 86 years old, I am much younger and stronger. The guy can't touch me." A fairy tale. Wallace

controlled the interview.

To be honest, there are few television broadcasters that I respect. Most are politically correct robots driven by ego to do only what is best for them. In my 30 years of broadcasting, I have seen behind-the-scenes atrocities that would turn even Mike Wallace's hair gray. So my praise for Wallace does not come from a cheerleader.

Like most network news people, Mike Wallace is a liberal thinker, but he is not an ideologue. He's made some mistakes in his career, but everyone in the business has. Most of all, I believe Wallace is a fair man who does not go out of his way to hammer a person without cause. Maybe I'm wrong about this, but I've watched him closely for decades.

As everyone knows, the old school of broadcasters is closing down. Brokaw, Walters, Rather, Koppel, and maybe even Jennings are cutting back. In their place are some highly skilled people without much panache. Americans are incredibly distracted with all the new gadgets, and to get their attention, you almost have to break into their homes. The age of broadcast superstars is almost over. The age of "Who's that, again?" is just about here.

So, happy birthday, Mike Wallace; I hope you get some nice presents and a big cake. And, with all due respect, you know what you can do with those 87 candles. Throw them at Morley Safer. You, sir, need just one candle, signifying your status in the broadcasting industry.

The Wrath of God

The elevation of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger to head the Roman Catholic Church is a clear and concise message from the College of Cardinals: "We are royally teed off."

Everybody knows that the new Pontiff is a tough guy who will not only throw the moneychangers out of the Temple, he'll kick them in the behind as they leave the building. Pope Benedict believes strongly in good and evil and he's not shy about pointing fingers. His letter to American bishops about politicians and abortion cost John Kerry dearly in the last election.

The Cardinals, of course, perfectly understand that Benedict is not exactly a cuddly guy, and will not be "reaching out," as they say in California. But his hard-line theological approach appeals to Church elders who have had enough.

In the past three decades, church attendance in the USA and Western Europe has dropped through the floor. Just 25% of American Catholics attend mass weekly and the number is in the single digits in long-standing Catholic countries like France. Secularism now rules the western world, and there are not enough priests to serve the remaining faithful. How do you say things are not good in Latin?

In the face of this spiritual decline, the Catholic Church has decided to make a stand. It will not compromise and it will not pander. You either toe the line or hit the bricks. Up to you.

As a life-long Catholic, I don't like this approach, but I understand it. The west is now besieged by forces that want to wipe spirituality completely out of the public square. The American Civil Liberties Union is the point organization in this effort. It supports all abortion-on-demand, including late term, no parental consent for minors having abortions,

euthanasia with consent, gay marriage, and the free speech rights of the North American Man-Boy Love Association, which has posted instructions on how to rape children on its website.

The ACLU opposes public funding for the Boy Scouts because their oath mentions God, the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools, public displays of the baby Jesus at Christmas and any restraint on internet pornography in public libraries.

For the most part, the western media sympathizes with the ACLU and promotes its point-of-view. Thus, the secular message is a constant in our society, and the hits just keep on coming.

And where is the opposing point-of-view? Well, there are a few media outlets that give traditionalists a fair shake, but very few.

So the Catholic Cardinals feel isolated and surrounded. They can preach to the choir on Sunday but get battered by the news and entertainment media the rest of the week. A strong Papal voice countering that situation is soothing. And that's why Cardinal Ratzinger is now Pope Benedict XVI.

I believe organized religion can be a champion of human rights and provide resistance to secular societies which, if they progress much further, will never be able to defeat the fanatical Islamic fundamentalists. The more permissive the western world becomes, the more it rejects discipline and avoids confronting evil, the greater the danger to freedom will be.

Pope Benedict is facing a rapidly changing world and perhaps he will be a strong and persuasive shepherd against evil. The danger is that he will be so rigid that he will erode the spiritual core even further, thereby helping the secularists.

But the new Pope may have an epiphany and realize good people will rally against evil if the case of clear and present

danger is made rationally and with compassion. I am praying that happens. The other side is hoping it will not.