

CONGRADUATIONS

Needless to say, June weekends are busy around here, since an idol of modern youth like The Weekend Warrior is in great demand as a commencement speaker. In fact since there are so many graduation exercises and I can't be in two places at once (seeing double is NOT the same), it would seem to be in the public interest to print one of my commencement addresses as an open letter to those graduates who have managed to learn how to read. So I will. Here it is, in fact. Please have the common decency to clip this out, save it a few years, then send it in to "Dear Abby" to be gushingly reprinted for the benefit of future degenerations. Ahem...

Students, parents, distinguished old farts. It's a dubious pleasure to be here today at LaCaglia Falls High School. As I look out on all these bright and dilated pupils, I can sense the high ideals of this generation. Namely, that it's ideal to be high. When the older generation looks at the history-making actions of the students in China it's hard not to think to oneself, "Gee, those Chinese really know what to do with students." Here, of course, we have no better solution than to let obnoxious students (if you'll pardon the redundancy) graduate and become as normal as the rest of us. This system, though less dramatic, is probably more fiendish in the long run.

Because, in many ways, the world today is tougher than the one we elders graduated into. For one thing, it's crammed full of increasingly moronic and ugly kids, all hustling to get their's and screw the world. We know you look to us, if not for leadership, at least for a piece of the action. We know you want to take your places among us, standing strong and proud on our faces. What you don't know is that we wish we were back in high school screwing around, partying, knocking each other up, and doing long drugs. So let's trade. We'll wear those dumbass robes and you work

these mindless jobs, slaving to pay taxes to support free education for the unable, unwilling, and unpalatable. Well, all in good time.

There might be those among you who think the older generation hasn't left you much of a world. But in time you'll learn the wisdom of the old saying, "Hey, so sue us, kid." I know that each and every one of you wants to get the big picture. Or at least a piece of the big pie. To stand up and say for all the world to hear, "I'm all right Jack, get yer hands off my stack!" That's the spirit, but this focus on riches is not the whole story. More significant is debt. You probably think the world owes you a living. Well, speaking for the world, let me just say, "Har de har har". Fact is YOU owe the world--billions and billions if Carl Sagan can be beleived (or even understood). You were born with a price on your head and your rear in arrears, a squalling little deficit-spent unit. And you will quickly start piling up new debt, wrecking the universe to protect your credit rating. You'll get behind on Exorcist payments and get your soul repossessed. You're screwed before you even start.

They will tell you that the educational process never ends, that life is a never-ending schooling from birth to death. Forget it, they're just trying to bum you out, as usual. In fact you never learn anything worthwhile, ever. Now I know that we tend to think of schools as vast repositories of knowledge; and to an extent this is true. Each frosh brings some little dab of knowledge in with them and nobody ever takes any out, so it grd gradually accumulates.

You are about to step from this huge suppository of wisdom into what various jokesters like to call "the real world". You will learn new lessons there. You'll learn the value of a job done well enough to look right. You'll learn the importance of having nice tits and a decent haircut. You'll learn the powerful aphorisms (and euphemisms) of success. Like, When the going gets tough, it's tough to get going. Or, Don't be afraid to make mistakes--only to admit them. Never put off until tomorrow what you can delegate to a

chump. Neither a borrower nor a lender be--the future is in leveraged buyouts. Know thyself--who else matters?

Perhaps the most famous comment on education is a telling parable from the Chinese: If you give a man a fish you have fed him for a day; if you teach him to fish, you have fed him for life. And, the saying goes without saying, if you start selling him fish you have him right where you want him. There is more than one way to handle a hook, line, and sinker.

Forget that lifelong learning junk: education is the occupation of the uneducated. Suffice it to say that you are leaving behind the joys of school, but the crapola goes on forever. Especially if you're dumb enough to go to college. Even if you haven't had up to your ying-yang with papers, books, and teachers' dirty looks, think about this: If you haven't learned whatever the hell it is you want to know by now, four more years aren't going to do it either, Especially since you'll be older, more debauched, and a step slower. Face it kids, this is the peak. It's all downhill from here on out.

One thing I hate to hear (other than that trash-ass rap music) is the idea that today's graduates face diminishing opportunities. Sheer twaddle! There are a myriad of opportunities for people your age. You could star in a Rob Lowe video, for instance. Who cares if you can't spell MTV? You can still Serve Mankind. In fact, MacDonalds has served billions and billions (according to a census by Carl Sagan) and they don't even have numbers on their cash registers. I believe it was John Milton, the blind, arrogant, egomaniacal, probably syphilitically demented English poet who said, "They also serve who only stand and wait." And today, over 300 years after those words were minced, there is still demand for waiters.

Some of you will want to work in a field that has growth potential, to be picky, to get to the roots of things, to grab hold with both hands, and reap ripe results. And for you,

there are hundreds of strawberry fields. Forever.

I'm sure there are those who will seek careers in the arts: future musicians, painters, authors, ballerinas, authors. Just let me give you two heartfelt bits of advice: "Get real," and, "Don't make me laugh." Not everyone can be cowboys, astronauts, football stars, junkbond manipulators or porn actresses. Worse yet, almost nobody can be award-deserving weekend columnists--only a select few of the very cream of the gene pool. This state of affairs is technically known as Tough Titty.

Some will tell you that your diploma is just a piece of paper, worthless in the real world. No big; when you go job-hunting, they won't look at your diploma or grades, they won't look at your athletic letters, they won't look at your four color salt and flour tortilla map of the principal iron-producing areas of Europe--in fact they won't even look at your application. Why should they when they can get somebody with four years work experience instead of four years sitting around some jerky campus putting on airs and getting weird ideas? It's not to late to start working on your tits and hairstyle.

But in closing, I would like to remind you that life is more than money. The true value of education lies in learning that material things are immaterial; that what counts is having a hearty heart, a spirited spirit, some lovely love, sensible sense, and credible credit. So follow your dreams; the ones you've never dreamed of. Dare to be what you wouldn't be on a dare. Be compassionate and caring to those you don't give a damn about. Be practical and honest, or at least practically honest. Have a sense of fair play, even if you don't play fair. Above all, it is important to have something to believe in. I, for instance, believe your haircut sucks. The most important thing is to remind yourself that you shall pass this way but once. In fact, it's a miracle you passed at all. Don't be another cog in the machine--be unique. That's what everyone else is doing.

Be all you can be. Do all you can do. Eat all you can eat. Dream the impossible dream. Right the unrightable wrong. Believe the unbelievable bullshit. Like the unlikely event. Eth the unethical ethnic. Do the undoable dude. Go forth and multiply. If you didn't learn to multiply, learn to add fast. If you can't go forth, go for a fifth, young man. A fifth a day keeps life insurance agents away.

In closing, I'd just like to remind you that only an hour ago you were students, an hour from now you will be has-been students. You'll bob happily off to whatever kind of future starts out with rented robes and a dorky little board with dingleballs dangling off it. Well, you can't spell "diploma" without the d-i-p. Good luck. Congraduations. Welcome to a classless society. Pop a champagne cork. Pop several. Might as well graduate "Magnum Come Loudly".

In closing, I just want you to remember three things as long as you live, or at least as long as your memories hold out. One, Get a job, twerps. Two, Do something with that damn hair. And last but not least on the list: Three, Shut the hell up and make yourselves scarce. Grads should aspire to being unheard, unseen and unsmelt.

So now, at long last, little Junior is a Senior. Ya freaking hoo. I can think of no finer closing words than to echo the sentiments I see reflected in your parents' misty eyes. And I'm sure they would join me in saying to you, "No more free ride, punks." In closing, I would like to leave that thought with you as a a remembrance of this day, which I hope you will always think of as the last day of the best part of your life. Now, get the hell out of my face and take those stupid caps with you.