

Let Me Help You

Sell Your Homework

12-Week Course of Study:

*24 Ways to Write
What You Think*

Lesson 6

**ADVICE COLUMNS
POLITICAL ARTICLES
ARTICLES THAT CORRECT**

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Dick Bohrer's Glory Press
West Linn, Oregon

Introduction

- Lesson 1: SELL YOUR HOMEWORK
Stop, World! I Want to Speak
What's This About Libel
- Lesson 2: SELL YOUR HOMEWORK
Letters to the Editor
Praise Articles
Judgmental Articles
- Lesson 3: SELL YOUR HOMEWORK
Humorous Columns
Entertaining Articles
Revealing Articles
- Lesson 4: SELL YOUR HOMEWORK
Humorous Political
Analysis and Critique
- Lesson 5: SELL YOUR HOMEWORK
Music Recital Reviews
Articles that Instruct
Articles of Comment
- Lesson 6: SELL YOUR HOMEWORK**
Advice Columns
Political Articles
Articles That Correct
- Lesson 7: SELL YOUR HOMEWORK
The Commentary
- Lesson 8: SELL YOUR HOMEWORK
The Speech Critique
- Lesson 9: SELL YOUR HOMEWORK
The Article of Persuasion
- Lesson 10: SELL YOUR HOMEWORK
The Testimonial
Book Reviews
- Lesson 11: SELL YOUR HOMEWORK
The Exposé
The Nostalgia Piece
- Lesson 12: SELL YOUR HOMEWORK
The Discussion
The Performance Review
Personal Columns

AN ADVICE COLUMN WHEN YOU WANT TO SOLVE EVERYONE'S PROBLEMS

Sensible advice is impossible to give if you are not a sensible person.

That's not meant as a slam. It's just that good advice is hard to come by. That's why so many of us send letters to people who write columns to answer them. And all of us ask advice of relatives, friends and strangers.

Some people write letters asking advice because they feel purged when they have told someone their problem.

One man used to pick up hitchhikers and tell them his most personal problems. Down the road he would let them out, thinking they were taking his problems with them. Was he surprised! Not all the garbage got out of the car. He always needed another hitchhiker.

People do need help. Problems just don't go away. That's why the newspapers contain the columns of a multitude of counselors. Ann Landers, Abigail Van Buren and Dr. Laura have mastered the art of giving common

sense answers to personal problems.

Sylvia Porter gives advice on financial problems.

The Richmond (Va.) "Times-Dispatch" offers a columnist answering questions related to the "Working Woman."

People who play bridge get a column.

People who shop in supermarkets get a column.

People with physical aches and pains get columns.

People with spiritual problems can have Billy Graham or his son answer their questions.

Whatever you are an expert in, whether it be mixing paint or granola, you have something to tell about. Work up a few penetrating questions and supply a few penetrating answers and mail it to several editors. See if you can interest someone in publishing your material.

One problem is following the first column with a second and then a third. What if you catch on and they want

forty? You may need to hire a researcher. Consider this before you get too good.

But the key to a good advice column is looking closely at the question.

Then think!

Ann and Abigail’s answers are good because they’ve paid close attention to the problem. They’ve cut through it with a hot knife and seen what’s really wrong.

Then they answer it with “Why-couldn’t-I-have-thought-of-that” advice that hits the nerve head-on.

Also, they can see the human being and the humor behind questions. The reader walks away enlightened and amused. The advice is no bitter pill to swallow. It’s common good sense and it’s bright.

Let’s take a run at doing it ourselves. Read the problem.

Come up with an answer.

Then discover what Abigail responded when she was faced with the same problem.

A teenage boy writes complaining that his girl friend looks like a boy. She says it’s the new fashion. But he’s embarrassed that people might think he is cozying up to another young man. He objects to her. She calls him a “square.” He asks if he’s weird to want his girlfriend to look like a girl.

Your answer to BOB:

A man writes saying he thinks women are paranoid for not responding at a traffic light when a man in the next car speaks to them. He says he tries to tell the driver she has a faulty tail-light or her coat is caught in the door. He says not all men are ax murderers, and he wishes women would give men half a chance before cutting them off.

Your answer to INSULTED:

A girl writes that her mother objects that she wants to take her boyfriend upstairs to listen to records in her room. She says no one will see them and that they don’t do anything that she’d ever be ashamed of. She asks how she can get her mother to realize that how it looks doesn’t matter.

Your answer to I’M OK:

Remember now, don’t be cutesy. If the humor is there, Abigail brings it out. If it isn’t, she doesn’t. At no time does she talk down or humiliate anyone who consults with her.

Her answer to BOB assured him that he wasn’t weird but that the fashion designers were. She also said that his

girlfriend had every right to appear in public any way she wanted, and he had the right to refuse to be seen with someone whose appearance embarrassed him.

Then she wrote: "First, the bad news." She told him that the mannish look for women is "in." Then she told him the good news, that "a lot of women aren't buying it."

Notice the double meaning of the last sentence.

To **INSULTED** she wrote, telling him that he is 100 percent right; but that "I would rather mistake a good guy for an ax murderer than mistake an ax murderer for a good guy."

To **I'M OK** she wrote: "What you are constitutes your character, but what people say about you constitutes your reputation. Please care more about 'how it looks.' A girl's reputation is like the authenticity of a fine painting. Once questioned, it's never quite the same."

Again, notice the common sense, the serious tone, the willingness to be light and funny; yet the underlying tone, imbuing virtually everything she writes, says "I really want to help you."

Notice she keeps her sentences fairly short and her paragraphs either one or two sentences long.

Now, if your answers were even better than hers, you might well have a ministry in life.

Create your own column and send it out to several editors.

In your cover letter, be sure to say that the column is being offered to

other editors as well. Do this with all simultaneous submissions. It's a cardinal rule. **YOU MUST TELL THE EDITORS.**

But assure them that no other editor in their part of the state is being offered the column (and keep your word). Keep a record of each submission. See the appendix for sample newspapers.

Joyce Lain Kennedy writes a column giving advice to secretaries.

Dear Joyce: I am the executive assistant of a man who flies off the handle at the least provocation. . . . I'm afraid he'll blow up when I tell him it's quits. What if I sent him a letter?

Joyce answered:

Tell him. Let him vent his anger so he doesn't hoard it for a revenge trip. Time your resignation for a late Friday afternoon. Arrange for a friend to wait outside so you can truthfully explain you have an appointment and cannot stay to talk beyond 5 o'clock. Be pleasant, brief and objective. Explain that you are leaving for a better job.

Joyce thought it would be better if the girl did not confront him with the fact that he was so difficult to work for.

In another letter she advises a woman who is constantly late to work to get an alarm clock. The woman was going to ask her manager for a different time schedule. Joyce thought the

clock would be an easier and better arrangement.

Remember, again, anyone can write one or two columns. If you're going to be a success, you must have enough expertise to keep the column going and going and . . . going.

If readers don't send you questions, you'll have to write your own. The editor must know that you can sustain the column once he has given you the nod.

A key to success seems to be your willingness to consult an expert who knows even more than you do. Consult and tell. Give credit where it's due. The reader will trust you even more.

Landers and Van Buren have done this on tricky questions that were over their head. If a writer asks what kind of future does a 17-year-old boy have when doctors tell him he's contacted muscular dystrophy, they consult a foundation and report their findings.

Some columnists dig their finger into a nerve and provoke a tremendous response from readers on which they can

build column after column until the world gets tired of the subject.

Then they dig into another nerve.

Advice columns are not easy to write. But the one who writes the question gives the advisor an advantage by supplying a good percentage of the wording needed to fill the space.

Don't be afraid to rely on your savvy circle of friends to help you come up with helpful, substantial and maybe even witty responses. You could have parties in which you read the letters you receive. Record the responses. You don't want to have everybody repeat what they said while you write it down.

Some groups gather for prayer. They consult together over the problem, come up with a solution and then pray about it.

The editor doesn't mind how many sources you consult. He wants readers, and he needs only one name to put on the check when he buys your column.

A POLITICAL ARTICLE WHEN YOU HAVE AN OPINION THAT SHOULD BE HEARD

Democracy is not a spectator sport.

The people who live in one need to speak up to protect it, to nourish it, to sustain it. Speak up and you reach one. You may reach one hundred. You may reach thousands. But you're lucky if one tenth of all you say fixes itself in the minds of those who listen.

Write it and the odds rise.

When people can read and reread, think and rethink what you've said, you begin to make an impression.

But who will listen or read unless you've done your homework. Your authority lies in the amount and depth of what you know. If you have no more to say than the man next door, then we might as well read him.

But knowledge and scholarship aren't enough.

You've got to be able to say what you have to say with eclat. Good word, huh! It means "great bril-

liance." You've got to write interestingly. You've got to have enthusiasm yourself. You've got to whittle your mental tongue sharp so you use words interestingly and so your approach to what you say is brittle-bright.

Patrick Buchanan has this gift. Many political columnists do.

They are well read and articulate.

They think.

They research.

They remember.

And they hire assistants who help them keep sharp.

How does the average man write a political column when he can barely afford a subscription to his local paper, much less the "New York Times," "World" magazine, the "Wall Street Journal," a batch of private newsletters and a cluster of news-magazines?

He specializes.

Every time the nation's merry-go-round reaches your particular brass ring, reach for it.

Become an authority on abortion or transplants or Cuba or revolutions or Democrats or feminists or states' rights or taxes.

Do your homework. Keep up-to-date. Develop hindsight and foresight. Analyze what goes on, what people do, what people say about your specialty. Become an authority.

Learn to express yourself with outrage.

Learn to bring illustration from many points.

Clip newspapers so you can report factually what someone said or did, when and where.

Be willing to be hostile.

Hold those responsible for government accountable for what they say and do.

Read between the lines. Our leaders say a lot. But what do they mean?

Find out.

Figure it out.

Then lash out.

Or send solutions.

The syndicated columnists do.

It'll keep you young!

Pat Buchanan in his column called, "Jackson of Arabia," called attention to the two Arab League contributions the Jackson campaign (Jesse Jackson had been in the running for the Democrat's nomination for President) had received.

He wrote:

When one reflects how another Jesse—Helms of North Carolina—

would have been treated by the Democratic National Committee had two unexplained checks for \$100,000 from the Republic of South Africa turned up in the accounts of his affiliated organizations, Jackson's free pass is all the more puzzling.

He analyzes ideology and finds that during the Vietnam War the Democrats gave up on the fundamental that the essential world struggle was between East and West—between communism and freedom—and decided it was between South and North—armed revolution versus armed reaction.

He writes:

To hear the Democratic candidates, to watch the party in action, is to conclude that the principal threat to peace and security in this world comes from the crusading anti-communism of Ronald Reagan.

"We must begin to have prayer pilgrimages and marches across the country . . . until the boys are home from Central America and Lebanon," cries the Rev. Jackson.

Walter Mondale does not condemn Jesse Jackson for opposing America's military objectives in Grenada and Central America because Mondale agrees with him that communism is not the enemy.

Now, what does Pat Buchanan know that you the reader don't know?

He collects quotes from the key figures of our time so that he has good grist for his column. He thinks. He puts two and two together.

He also collects information and files it.

Calling the American Civil Liberties Union the “Anti-Christian Liberties Union,” he recently wrote:

In recent years, the ACLU has led the fight to eliminate school prayer.

It has sought to remove “under God” from the Pledge of Allegiance.

It has sought to end all federal funding of military chaplains.

It has demanded that the posting of the Ten Commandments from the Old Testament be torn down from classroom walls.

It has moved against the singing of “Silent Night” by students at Christmas time, to end all Christmas plays and Easter pageants, to remove the Nativity scene from schools and public grounds.

It has made voluntary prayer groups in schools subject to court suits. One Tennessee football team, which took to saying a prayer on the field prior to each game, was made the target of a civil liberties suit.

In brief, the ACLU has been no less fanatical and considerably more successful than Gen. Jaruzelski (the Polish leader who ordered that crucifixes be removed from classroom walls in Poland) in driving religion out of public life.

Yet this same ACLU has yet to find a piece of pornography so filthy it will not defend its public distribution.

See? He has kept a record of suits and issues the ACLU has espoused. When he needs them, he brings them forward.

But he doesn’t end there. He thinks through to the final result of such a crusade by such an organization:

Something is at work here, friends, other than a concern that the Baptists or the Catholics might get themselves “established” by Congress as our official religion.

It is a virulent animosity toward any and all religious expression, utterly alien to American tradition, which only a weak and whimpering country will allow to prevail upon it.

What message does it send the non-religious child when teacher leads the class in prayer, we are asked.

Well, what message does it send the children in public school when every innocent expression of religious belief is sought out, hunted down, and extirpated as though it were an act of treason?

Put your hand on this page.

Do you feel the heat?

It’s there.

Buchanan also had a slap for another group when he referred to the

crucifixes in Polish classrooms where teens went on strike when Gen. Jaruzelski's government ordered the shrines out.

Do America's believing Christians have the same courage of their convictions as those Polish teenagers? For, where Gen. Jaruzelski has thus far failed, the United States Supreme Court has easily succeeded. By the order of the state, all symbols of and references to a Creator have been forcibly removed from America's public schools.

Where are the sit-down strikes in the United States?

Here again. Does Buchanan have access to information beyond the reach of anyone else? Not at all.

Let's look at other political columnists.

Anthony Lewis, writing in the *New York Times* (Jan. 9, 1984), looks beyond actions to meanings:

Look underneath the headlines from Washington and you can see a movement in American constitutionalism. It is there in President Reagan's insistence that Congress cannot limit his commitment of marines to Lebanon. It is there in other expansive claims of Presidential power, and in court decisions upholding them.

The imperial Presidency is on the rise again.

He traces the efforts of other Presidents to exert control over Congress and the Constitution and closes that rehearsal with this sentence:

Justice Robert B. Jackson warned against the doctrine of elastic executive power in time of war or claimed emergency (when he said), "The Constitution did not contemplate that the title Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy will constitute him also Commander-in-Chief of the country."

He then closes with a summation of his essential point:

Today we must look to Congress to resist the aggressions of Presidential power.

And Congress is rising to the task—members of both parties questioning the President on Lebanon, voting to suspend his censorship order.

But the constitutional balance would be safer if judges would remember the vital lesson of the Steel Case (a key illustration he used earlier).

Political columnists are free to speak out on any subject they wish—so long as it has political overtones. Their biases and prejudices are known by the papers that buy their columns from the syndicates. It is expected that they will write colorful prose.

Your local library reference desk

will house a writer's guide that contains the addresses of syndicates across the country. It also lists newspaper names and addresses. Ask for the "Editors and Publishers Guide to Periodicals." Better yet, go to "Google" on the Internet (I mention this elsewhere) and insert in the window "_____ (your state) newspapers" if you want the list.

Jack Anderson, head of an investigative reporting team based in Washington, D.C., wrote after the 1984 Presidential election that he felt the election process and the pummeling that candidates receive from the media are what can be blamed for the lack of good men and women running for public office.

He wrote in a column published November 5 that year:

In the American tradition, the election campaign has been a period of limited anarchy, a time of frivolity and flummery, of hype and hypocrisy.

The beleaguered candidates have passed through the political gauntlet, pummeled by the opposition and ragged by the press.

He then deplores the abrasions of the press, saying, articles are having **"the effect of a bucket of sand on a grinding machine."**

They have paralyzed government.

He concludes with: **"In the world of 1984, the menace does not appear**

to be Big Brother so much as Little Brother."

His reference to "the world of 1984" sprang from the title of a book by George Orwell, who predicted that a "Big Brother" dictatorship would take over America in 1984.

Notice Jack's choice of words—flummery, beleaguered, gauntlet, pummeled. They are not limited to two syllables. He comes across as an educated man who has words at his command. That's part of being a craftsman. It may boost his fog index, but his editor lets him. That's Jack's style. Effective columnists know how to drive down one road and then switch lanes. They skewer you on the guard rail and you get their point.

Cal Thomas did this when he wrote of receiving mail from the International Fund for Animal Welfare. Inside was a poster in graphic color showing what is called a seal "harvest." A letter enclosed called for sympathetic readers to boycott Canadian fish in an effort to stop this "nauseating carnage" and "inhuman" treatment of seals.

Thomas pivoted into a topic much on his mind in this way:

The graphic and moving depiction of a seal harvest causes me to wonder why we have not been exposed to pictures of aborted baby humans. Abortion occurs at a rate of nearly 10 times that of the killing of baby seals. Like the seal harvests,

abortion has been turned into a “growth” industry.

He goes on to ask why pictures like these are allowed to circulate in the media. He’s seen similar coverage on television.

Attempts by pro-life groups to show pictures of what happens during an abortion have been rebuffed by the commercial networks and nearly all local stations because the pictures do not show “the other side” (is there a concern for the “other side” in seal hunting?).

Why the double standard, he asks. “Shouldn’t concepts behind ‘truth in packaging’ laws and the Freedom of Information Act be extended to abortion?” He concludes this way:

If the argument is that the pictures are too emotional, what about the seal pictures, or the pictures of blacks being beaten by clubs and bitten by dogs in the ‘60s, or of Jews in the death camps of Nazi Germany, or more recently of dead Palestinians and dead Americans lying in the streets of Lebanon and transmitted into our dinner hours via satellite?

Emotions are part of our makeup. To deny an appeal to emotions in the abortion of humans while appealing to them in the clubbing of seals is dishonest and forces women to make decisions without having all the facts.

Now, does Cal Thomas know more about abortion? More about seal harvests? Is he more irate at the double standard of media coverage than you? How come he got his material syndicated and you haven’t?

He’s writing down what he thinks. He writes clearly, simply, emotionally, effectively. He uses logic and he doesn’t take guff from anyone. He is not intimidated by what others say and think.

Go thou and do likewise.

But before you go, remember that your political columns will be all the more authentic if you do research before you write.

Check the Congressional Record or the congressional scorecard compiled by the American Security Council out of your local library. If it doesn’t have a copy, order it on inter-library loan.

James Kilpatrick used the latter when he did a column on Geraldine Ferraro’s voting record on issues in the field of national defense.

In his first paragraphs he identified the source of his information and told how the American Security Council polls its members on security issues in order to ascertain which ones were unusually significant to the nation.

He then simply went down her voting record and reported what she had done:

She has voted to block funds for anti-satellite missile development. She has voted in favor of Interna-

tional Monetary Fund loans to communist nations. She has voted against military aid to El Salvador, and she has voted against assistance to the Nicaraguan freedom fighters. She has voted to kill a \$7.1 billion appropriation for continued work on the B-1.

He concludes with a two-sentence summary and evaluation of his findings. Political articles can be just this simple:

There is a clear pattern here. It is not a pattern that will give comfort to those who believe in modernized weapons, forward-looking research, and dependable aid to our anti-communist friends around the world.

Anyone could write that. And to say that does not take away from the brilliance of Kilpatrick.

Now, on the next two pages you will find material from which you can write a political column. One details how Arab-Americans are driving to gain positions of political influence so they can ultimately influence U.S. policy in the Middle East.

The second is a copy of an advertisement the Democrat Party of New York ran in the "New York Times" just before an election as it tried to scare the nation into believing that if you voted for one man to be president you would get another the "Times" didn't like. Use information from the article and the ad to write your opin-

ion in political columns.

Think.

Then write.

And write colorfully!

Arab-Americans Take an Increased Political Role

Arab-Americans are participating in this year's Presidential election campaign in larger numbers and with a greater sense of purpose than ever before, according to Arab-American leaders and campaign organizers.

For the first time, they say, Arab-Americans hold official jobs in the campaigns of the Democratic and Republican Presidential nominees. Three Arab-Americans are vice-chairmen of one candidate's campaign, and dozens of others have banded together in a committee supporting the election of the other.

The numbers are not large compared to other interest groups, and there is doubt that Arab-Americans will ever be able to seriously counter the strength of the pro-Israeli lobby in the United States. But Arab-American leaders are optimistic that they will someday be able to influence United States policy in the Middle East.

Peak of Participation

According to most recent estimates, there are two million to three million Americans of Arab

descent, concentrated in such areas as Detroit, Los Angeles and Dallas.

“This year marked the peak of participation so far, and I expect it to be greater,” said James Abourezk, an Arab-American who was a Senator from South Dakota. He now heads the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, a grass-roots organization with 20,000 members. “We are gathering momentum, strength and allies,” Mr. Abourezk said.

There (have been) two Arab-American governors, John H. Sununu of New Hampshire and Victor G. Atiyeh of Oregon, both Republicans; two Senators, James Abdnor, Republican of South Dakota and George J. Mitchell, Democrat of Maine, and three Representatives.

The Arab-Americans’ goal is a “more balanced” United States policy in the Middle East, said David Sadd, president of the National Association of American Arabs, a lobbying group. He said such a policy “does not automatically support Israel no matter what it does” and would support creation of a Palestinian state, which both (candidates) oppose.

Joining the Political Mainstream

Mr. Abourezk said he thought the goal could be realized despite the Israel lobby’s power. “I’ve been in politics all my life, and I have seen how things can change,” he said.

When Arab-Americans arrived from such countries as Lebanon, Syria and the area that is now Israel over the last 80 years, their first aim, like other ethnic groups, was to join the mainstream of American life.

“When my father came he just worked in his store,” said James Zogby, a Lebanese-American who was vice-chairman of the Rev. Jesse Jackson’s campaign for the Democrat Presidential nomination.

Arab-Americans say they have been negatively stereotyped in a country that considers Israel “flesh and blood,” as Governor Cuomo put it in his speech to the 1984 Democrat National Convention.

They say the image probably was exacerbated by the 1973 oil embargo and the 1979 seizure of American hostages in Iran.

Political column
STUDENT PAPER

Article: Arab-Americans Take an Increased Political Role

Author: Joella Knight, Liberty University

Arab-Americans are infiltrating the U.S. political scene with great enthusiasm. Their enthusiasm, however, doesn’t seem so concerned with Uncle Sam as it is with the Arab side of their descent. I overheard two politicians, one an Arab-American, talking the other day.

“So, who do you think the Conven-

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tion will nominate next time?” Congressman John Doe asked his Arab-American friend.

“I was hoping Aaron Floyd. He is favorable toward Arab concerns,” Rep. Hassan Abassi said.

“Isn’t he the one they caught cheating on his income tax?”

“Yes. He’s ‘our kinda guy,’ as you say.”

“Well, I guess at least he’s concerned with the economy.”

“This is true. Also, he wishes to help decrease the poverty situation in Kuwait.”

“How will he subsidize funds for that?”

“Oh, he says if we raise \$300,000 for his campaign, he will section off enough money to give each Kuwait home 40 acres and a mule.”

“My, how generous.”

“That’s not all. To the starving Libyans he promises--”

“Two chickens in every pot?”

“How did you know?”

“Never mind. Who did you vote for in the primaries?”

“Oh, Jimmie Neal,” Abassi said.

“The Republican? I thought you were a Democrat.”

“Republican, Democrat, what’s the difference? I wish to stick to important matters. Didn’t you know Jimmie has a half-Lebanese wife?”

“No kidding! Well, if I’d known that, he would’ve gotten my vote for sure. Tell me, Hassan, just what U.S. legislative policies are you interested in, anyway?”

“Basically, I would like to see a more balanced United States policy in the Middle East.”

“What about the good of the U.S. as a whole?”

“What about it?”

“Isn’t that why you’re a U.S. Representative?”

“All I know is like I told you before. I would like to see a more balanced U. S. policy—”

“In the Middle East. I know, I know. You just want the U.S. to belly up and give you all whatever you please. I guess you guys figure the terrorist route is getting old so now you’re playing really dirty by getting into politics.”

“You’re still sore over the 1973 oil embargo and the Iranian hostage situation, aren’t you?” Abassi said.

“That might be affecting my sympathies, yes.”

“Would it make you feel any better if we offered to support your next term’s campaign?”

“Why, that . . . would . . . be . . . nice!”

“All you have to do is endorse this bill supplying ammunition for Iran and Iraq to fight each other with.”

“That IS a definite need. We wouldn’t want to stifle tradition now, would we?”

“\$150,000?”

“You got it. . . .”

As Ronald Reagan was running for his second term, the opposition from the Democrat Party became more and

more intense. The President had the power of his incumbency.

Efforts to derail the Reagan campaign went to every corner to find ammunition to paint the candidate with the color of those supporting him.

They thought they had a winner when they picked up on Jerry Falwell, pastor of the Thomas Road Baptist Church of Lynchburg, VA, and chancellor of Liberty University which he founded.

A pronounced conservative with an immense following and an equally immense army of enemies, Falwell's support of Reagan gave the Democrats grist for their newspaper ad (next page).

A quick thinker and an ardent opponent of abortionists and deviates

and all lawbreakers, he raised a ruckus whenever he spoke on secular university campuses.

Reportedly, the student reception at Princeton was so loud he couldn't speak. He waited at the lectern. And waited. When the booing and crowing ended, he leaned into the microphone and said, "You guys don't scare me. I've talked at Harvard." It brought down the house and they listened.

Debating an atheist who denounced Christians for hogging all the holidays on the calendar—and he named them—the man complained that Christians hadn't left any holidays for atheists.

"Oh, you've got yours," Jerry said. "You've got April first."

Under four more years of Ronald Reagan and Jerry Falwell, will we really have a prayer?

Under Reagan and Falwell, will the Supreme Court really have a prayer?

The next President of the United States may well appoint a majority of the Supreme Court. Reverend Jerry

Falwell has said that if Reagan is elected, "We will get at least two more appointments to the Supreme Court." Do you want Reagan's court deciding issues like prayer in school, the ERA and civil rights. On Novem-

ber 6, you be the judge.

Under Reagan and Star Wars, will peace really have a prayer?

Before you vote on November 6, think about the day after Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford and Carter all completed nuclear arms agreements with the Soviet Union. Reagan has ignored our efforts at arms control. He is even starting a new arms race—putting weapons in space. When it comes to arms control, your vote will make all the difference in the world. .

..
Under Reagan and the Moral Majority, which religion will really have a prayer?

Religious freedom is guaranteed only so long as we maintain the sepa-

ration of church and state. Reagan has pushed for “approved” prayer in school. He even called those who disagree with him “intolerant of religion.” Reagan’s close political ally, Jerry Falwell, has said that “The idea that religion and politics don’t mix was invented by the devil to keep Christians from running their own country.” Even conservative columnist William Safire wrote that “No President . . . has done more to marshal the political clout of these evangelicals than Ronald Reagan.” Will Reagan really fight to protect our freedoms? On Tuesday, we must draw the line between Jerry Falwell and the U.S. Constitution.

VOTE MONDALE/FERRARO BECAUSE OUR FUTURE IS THE ISSUE

Paid for by the New York State Democratic Committee and the Democratic National Committee, Inc.

How To Write . . .

AN ARTICLE TO CORRECT WHEN YOU KNOW HOW SOMETHING SHOULD BE DONE

The Bible says that righteousness exalts a nation.

A keen sense of moral uprightness is essential if a people and their nation are going to stand tall. Lessons from history tell us that the great empires fell because of moral decay.

A newspaper's role is to keep the public informed about the use of public monies as well as about those who use—and misuse—them.

By means of opinion articles that correct, editors can rattle the windows of legislative and executive government buildings and can effect significant change.

What they're doing is bringing the power of an informed electorate to bear on elected officials.

Naturally, not all opinion articles to correct will be aimed at the government.

Educators, businessmen, athletes, blue and white-collar workers, house-

wives—every organization, class and group can come under editorial scrutiny and criticism.

One Virginia newspaper printed the following editorial regarding the spending of public funds by agencies of government. Part of it follows:

“Performance contract” may be a dirty word for the Central Virginia Community Services Board, but more state involvement in the variety of programs run by the agency ultimately should lead to a stricter accounting of the public funds spent on those programs.

We're not suggesting in any way that the local community services board has improperly spent its allocations from the state. Nor have we seen evidence of local programs being operated inefficiently. The performance contracts appear to be a good management tool to ensure such operations continue.

The state has a moral obligation

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to see that the money it contributes to the programs is spent effectively and efficiently. That's good business. And, in the long run, it should provide for a more efficient operation of the community services board here and elsewhere in Virginia.

That was a warning that the newspaper has its eye on what's going on. In a sense, it was an editorial that corrects because it focused public attention on an area where abuse of privilege might easily occur.

But it's important to notice the dignified, almost judicial tone with which the editorial is written. It's not folksy.

When the Federal Bureau of Justice Statistics released a study that showed half the convicts sentenced to life in prison walked out of jail after serving only 51 months, editors around the country spoke up.

The study revealed the results of a survey of prison admissions and discharges in 33 states and the District of Columbia in 1981. It said that about 40,000 of the nearly 102,000 offenders sentenced to life terms served 12 months or less. Only one percent served more than ten years. The median (as many served less as served more) time for rape was 33 months; for robbery, 25 months; for convicted drug abuse, 13 months.

One editor wrote:

The entire minimum-maximum

punishments are, therefore a charade, a travesty of justice—but the courts make no pretense of being courts of justice. They are courts of law.

And the law, as this little example makes all too clear, is not what it seems. It really doesn't take a very stern view of murder, rape, robbery and other violent crimes.

When a federal appeals court struck down as unconstitutional new rules that would make "dial-a-porn" telephone services less available to children under the age of 18, editors spoke up.

So the distribution of smut over the telephone lines to children is a freedom of expression that must be protected? Hogwash!

They pointed out that there are limits to free speech.

Twenty-four hours of filth over the telephone lines is tantamount to shouting fire in a crowded theater. The court should consider that the next time it hears a dial-a-porn case.

The writer of this kind of article—and this material can go as well in a letter to an editor—must make his point in his first paragraph, support it with an explanation of why the subject at hand is significant, tell the ramifications of the abuse, select an alternative that is righteous and then

conclude by driving his point home.

Use the two stories that follow as grist for your moral righteousness.

Lash out.

Correct the abuse.

Speak up!

Street-gang murders now an epidemic

LOS ANGELES (AP) - An epidemic of 1980s-style gang warfare, a far cry from the romanticized street scenes of "West Side Story," is making the sound of gunfire and anguished screams commonplace in this city's ghettos.

The classic gang "rumble" with tire irons and chains is outmoded, say police, a tame relic of the past now replaced by random shootings and multiple murders.

Money and guns, the byproducts of drug dealing, are the new trademarks of street gangs; and law enforcement officials, reeling from a recent outbreak of gang violence, are working overtime to try to prevent more killings.

"Part of the problem is the proliferation of guns," said Cmdr. Matthew Hunt of the Los Angeles Police Department's CRASH unit, which is seeking to battle gang violence at the street level. CRASH stands for Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums.

"Teen-agers have no business with guns," Hunt said in exaspera-

tion.

He cited the seven murders last weekend as symptomatic of the lethal power now in the hands of gangs with such names as the Outlaws, Bounty Hunter, Playboys, Neighborhood Crips, Swans, Brim, Harpys and Watts Barrio Crips.

By week's end, three more were dead in gang shootings. No arrests had been made in any of the incidents.

On Oct. 12 alone, five died when a car full of shotgun-wielding youths opened fire on a house where young people attending a birthday party had spilled out onto the lawn. The eldest victim was 20; the youngest, 14.

"I was just standing there talking to some people when someone said, 'Watch out,' and this car came by," said Harold Hall, 54, a neighbor. "They just started shooting."

The party shooting is now believed to have been retaliation for the theft of a gang member's car by a member of a rival gang. Most gang shootings are either in retaliation or to establish territorial control, authorities say.

Drive-by neighborhood shootings, guns fired at random from passing cars, "are a typical gang method of operation," said Los Angeles police Lt. Dick Simmons. "They just go back for the territorial imperative. . . Not so much to take over an area, but to bulge out their chests."

"It seems we get killings every

day in which gangs just start shooting indiscriminately,” said CRASH Detective Michael Anderson. “It’s so common it’s unbelievable.”

Hunt points to three major trends in street warfare—guns, drugs and the increase of gangs in the black neighborhoods of South Central Los Angeles.

“Years ago, when we’d find out that two gangs were meeting in a park, we’d try to get there first and stop the rumble,” he recalled. “Even if we didn’t, they’d take tire irons and baseball bats and beat each other up. But they didn’t have guns.”

In those days, Hunt said, gangs were primarily Hispanic. Such groups still dominate East Los Angeles, but they have been less violent. “There’s an occasional knifing, but fewer shootings,” he said.

“Gangs in the black community are relatively new,” he continued. “They’ve sprung up in the last 10 to 12 years. They may start out as a social group and then get into the criminal element. They begin selling dope to finance their operations.”

The sale of marijuana and cocaine is frequently the financial backbone of the gang, Hunt said, and drug profits go to buy guns and cars. Gang members may be as young as 10 or 11, he said.

“The gangs have more money now,” he said. “As a result, their firepower is becoming increasingly more deadly.”

The sound of gunfire on the south

side has become so frequent that residents know what to do when it comes.

“When you hear shots, you’re supposed to cut off the lights and hit the floor,” said Shirley Austin, a South Central Los Angeles resident who saw a teen-ager gunned down in front of her home last weekend.

A spray of bullets from a passing car hit 14-year-old Sullivan Kelly. Ms. Austin peeked out the window and saw the mortally wounded boy staggering toward a fence shouting, “Oh, no . . . help me!”

Citizens were outraged after the weekend.

“We want some action, not talk,” said Gwen Cordoba of the South Central Organizing Committee.

“It’s too far gone to talk about it anymore. You can’t stand on your front porch anymore. What are we to do? We’re living in a war zone.”

While your thoughts are on this subject, react to the following:

Court reimposes fine on anti-abortionists

The 9th U. S. Circuit reverses a lower court ruling that eased penalties facing abortion protesters

The First Amendment does not protect anti-abortion protestors who posted Wild West “Wanted” lists containing the names and ad-

dresses of physicians who perform abortions, the 9th U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled Thursday in a 6-5 decision.

Although the posters did not threaten violence against the named doctors, the court said that, in light of the backdrop of violence already perpetrated by anti-abortion protesters, the posters were illegal.

“Some threats do not need to be explicit” to be reprehensible, the court said.

“The posters are a true threat because like Ryder trucks or burning crosses, they connote something they do not literally say, yet both the actor and the recipient get the message,” it wrote.

“To the doctor who performs abortions, these posters meant, ‘You’re Wanted or You’re Guilty; you’ll be shot or killed.’”

The 6-5 ruling overturns a previous judgment by a three-judge panel of the Circuit Court and reinstates a \$109 million judgment a Portland, Ore., jury imposed in 1999.

The defendants argued that the posters did not explicitly threaten violence and thus were protected political speech.

“Political speech may not be punished just because it makes it more likely that someone will be harmed at some unknown time in the future by an unrelated third party,” Judge Alex Kozinski wrote for the three-judge panel in 2001.

A spokesman for the plaintiffs said the latest decision was a “victory for anyone who was intimidated by threats of violence and is a reaffirmation that abortion providers have the same protections of the law as the president or anyone else who is threatened by violence.”

Edward White, representing several protestors, said this latest decision “goes against this country’s history of political protest.”

I’ve put a lot of heavy stuff on your plate in this lesson.

I’m calling on you to read your newspapers aggressively and find issues on which you can speak. The more you do this, the easier it will become. The more you do this the more trust your readers will have in you because they recognize your name as a person who thinks and makes a difference in community affairs.

A professor at the University of Virginia has done this and now some television commentators call on him regularly when they bring up his specialty.

In my locality, a person who wrote his opinion frequently became so popular he was able to announce his candidacy for a responsible position.

Practice for your public performance by writing up these sample exercises I’m giving you in these lessons. They will equip you to write in a variety of ways in your efforts to share your opinions.

Our next lesson will examine the

longer commentary, a vehicle you can use when you have a lot to say, when your research has been unusually fruitful, when your passionate response to an issue is bubbling over.

Keep studying.
Keep practicing.
Keep writing.

Professor Dick