

From James Harvey <harvey324@earthlink.net>
 Sent Friday, June 20, 2008 5:35 pm
 To irotberg@gwu.edu
 Subject Kudos on Quick Fixes

Dear Iris:

I have meant to get in touch with you before, but you know how it goes. First, one thing gets in the way, then another. But I am compelled to write to congratulate you "Quick Fixes" in the latest Education Week. Of course, that means I agree with every word. Some of your examples are particularly telling -- did the Italians outsource designer shoes to China because Italy ran out of skilled craftsmen, being particularly clever.

I think I've concluded that a lot of the school discussion here is a smokescreen and a convenient excuse to outsource jobs. The current superintendent of public instruction in Washington State (a genuine corporate tool) has been quoted in the newspapers to the effect that we're losing jobs to China because our graduates have such low skills. It makes no sense -- we're taking jobs away from high school graduates in the US and asking illiterate peasants in China and Mexico to do them because we can't? What I found very valuable about your piece was the way you pulled so much of that together.

I hope all is well with you and Gene and the girls (and any grandchildren that are around!). I'm a grandfather. Jamey is married to a lovely young woman from the former Soviet republic of Georgia and they have two boys -- Niko and Connor. Niko (4) looks like a Slavic prince and Connor (6 months) looks like an Irish one! Jamey is IT director for support operations (or something like that) for the DC Metro. He's responsible for a new procurement they're putting through to bring some advertising revenue into the system.

Janet has fulfilled your predictions for her of writing and artistic success. She has a writing MFA from Columbia and has written and directed a few of her own short films in Los Angeles. She makes no money, of course, but she has a great time. She recently went to Cannes where she sold one of her short films (for peanuts) to a European distribution network.

I think you met Patrick, our red-headed son. He's just finished his first year at the NYU Tisch School. Very talented actor, so we'll probably be supporting him for a long time too! But he loves what he does and has turned into a terrific young man.

I'm still helping out with Paul and trying to tone down his wilder inclinations, with some success. I'm also doing a lot of work with the College Board and with school superintendents network I've created. Anne continues to write about medical issues and in the last couple of years, she's begun producing short videos for non-profits. You can see one of them on the website below. (We'll have to change it and put it on UTube. Just takes too long to download on this site.)

Again, congratulations on the piece. Thanks for saying it. I think people are ready to hear this message now.

Best,

Jim

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