

## Letter to the Editor

### School choice is the answer

To the Editor:  
A few of my friends and acquaintances within the teaching community think my assessment of their colleagues is too pessimistic. Others agree with my observations.

As I reminisce about my K-12 school years primarily in the seventies, I remember few negative encounters with teachers and many positive ones.

One teacher, in particular, comes to mind.

Virginia (Ginny) Rhodes spoke on the topic of the theory of evolution in our anatomy/physiology class.

She prefaced her lecture with an explanation that she was a Christian and did not believe in the theory of evolution. She explained her faith in the biblical doctrine of creation briefly before launching into the lecture.

I was not a biblical Christian at that time. I was certainly not an atheist, though. As Charles Spurgeon said, "Atheism is a strange thing. Even the devil never fell into that vice, for the devils believe and tremble (James 2:19)."

I do not know the depths of Mrs. Rhodes' faith. Her boldness in expressing it was appreciated, though.

I will mention a few other positive, based teachers from my school years.

Don demonstrated his faith through charitable community activities. Patricia loved outdoor cooking with her family and demonstrated some simple campfire recipes to her students on one occasion. Steve, a newly graduated teacher, led the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA).

Other teachers may have expressed faith in some manner. I do not specifically remember them, though.

Teachers from previous generations are not my main concern. Most of them were based. Their worldviews reflected an essentially Christian consensus, whether they professed Christianity or not.

The key word is based. Based people have convictions grounded in reality.

Imagine a man that has broken through the ice in the middle of a lake.

Rescuers are trained in techniques and have specialized equipment to save him.

Maintaining connection with the shore is one of the principles of ice rescue.

Likewise, maintaining connection with reality is essential to teaching.

Christ said that the blind will lead the blind, and both will fall into the ditch (Matthew 15:14).

The woke claim supreme knowledge (like every other member of every other cult) but have lost connection with reality. They have entered into the delusional worldview of others.

Their essential worldview is not grounded in reality.

This is true whether the person is a public school teacher or a minister wearing a diversity stole at the local place of worship.

These education professionals cannot be trusted to instruct students and to respect parental wishes in reference to morality, sexuality and politics.

These teachers flatter themselves with descriptions like "progressive", viewing others as Neanderthals in need of enlightenment.

Parents are viewed as the uneducated masses, incompetent to guide their children on matters of faith, morality and sexuality, similar to the Native American parents of the late 1800s.

These teachers have been exposed to Neo-Marxist theories like critical theory, intersectionality, and gender ideology through their academic training.

The Neo-Marxist worldview is the foundation of diversity, equity, and inclusion programs actively supported by education professionals in public schools.

I suspect most teachers aren't deceived by wokeness. They lack the courage to confront their colleagues and administration, though. Criticism is likely to cost them their employment and status within the community.

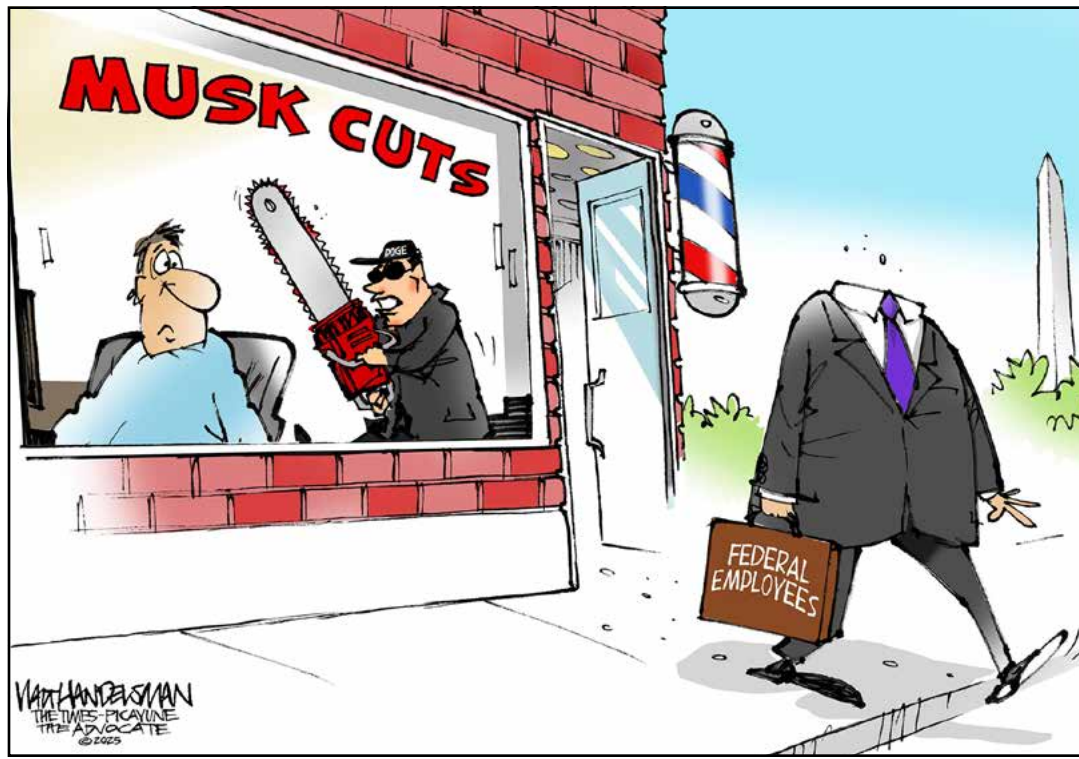
I hope the woke revolution has been struck a fatal blow through the counter-revolution of the Trump administration.

I don't think so, though. A lot more effort will be required to weed out this insidious worldview pervading the public (government) school system.

School choice is the answer, in my opinion.

For a detailed version of this letter, see my blog at christiannewsjunkie.com.

**Robert Sparkman**  
Rome City



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## Monica Corbin, Alisa Bloom to head East Noble AFS

### AFS goal: increased understanding and a more peaceful world

For more than half a century East Noble AFS has welcomed exchange students from around the world. Each year one or more students from Europe, Latin America, Asia and even Australia — have come here and/or an East Noble student has gone there.

AFS Intercultural Programs began as the American Ambulance Field Service, a volunteer ambulance corps created in April 1915.

Stephen Galatti in World War II transformed AFS from a wartime humanitarian aid organization into an international secondary school exchange, volunteer and intercultural learning organization to promote understanding among cultures and a more peaceful world.

The legacy of northeast Indiana's AFS students — both coming and going — includes lifelong friendships, language skills, a few marriages, a couple of business ventures, ongoing visits and travel, better informed world views ... and even new favorite cooking ingredients.

This year Macy Blackman, who graduated from East Noble last year, is with AFS in Paraguay, prior to beginning her studies at Valparaiso University this fall. As well as new friendships and experiences, she is moving forward in her goal to become fluent in Spanish.

As longtime leaders of East Noble AFS, Debra Hockley and I are grateful to be stepping aside for Monica Corbin and Alisa Bloom, both of Kendallville and both long-time AFS host mothers.

Monica and Alisa have set up a new email address for East Noble AFS — [afs.en.chapter@gmail.com](mailto:afs.en.chapter@gmail.com) — and they said it is a good way to contact them.

I asked Monica, Alisa and Deb to share how they got involved with AFS and some of their AFS memories.

Monica said her AFS experience began when she was invited to an AFS meeting at our house "and it just kind of snowballed from there." They have hosted Liselotte from Denmark (2010-2011); Mikkel (brother of Liselotte) 2011-2012; Monique from South Africa and Jasmine from Indonesia (2013-2014); Benjamin from Germany (2017-2018); Ryoya from Japan (2019-2020); and Jan from Germany (2021-2022).

Several of their students (sometimes with their families) returned for Corbin family weddings and the Corbins traveled to Denmark for Mikkel's wedding. Prior to that Liselotte and Mikkel spent a summer with the Corbins and worked at the YMCAs summer camp program.

In addition to in-person visits, Facetime helps to keep them connected, especially with Ryoya and Jan.

Alisa said her family "had a blast hanging out with the Corbin family and their exchange students" so they decided to host. Their students have been Abdo from Egypt, Zaid from Jordan, Alain from Switzerland, Abbas from Lebanon and Felicia from Sweden.

It's a slim possibility, that if the stars are aligned just right, they will have all their students home in November for their daughter Erin's wedding reception.

They stay in close contact with all of them. Their oldest son Kyle visited Abdo and his family in Egypt along with Monique (Corbin's daughter) in South Africa.

Zaid from Jordan has visited at least three times. Alisa and Brad saw Zaid for a few hours in Amsterdam while they had a 14-hour



The Corbin family of Kendallville has hosted numerous AFS students over the years. Several times weddings (both here and abroad) have provided opportunities for happy reunions. This photo was taken at the Corbin home in June 2024. In back, from left, are Mikkel Karulf, Liselotte Karulf, Kyle Corbin, Michaela Campbell (Corbin), Ryoya Oikawa, Benjamin Gerhards and Keegan Corbin. Monica Corbin and Dr. Phill Corbin are in front.



This photo of the Bloom family was taken Christmas Eve 2024. Abbas of Lebanon (in the center) was an AFS student with the Bloom family. With a full scholarship at the University of Notre Dame, he is double majoring in physics and math.

layover during a summer of 2023 anniversary trip. Kyle went to see him when he lived in Budapest in March of 2020 (just before the world shut down). Alain and his family came for a visit during the summer of 2019; Brad, Kyle, daughter-in-law Ann and Alisa visited Alain and his family in Switzerland during the summer of 2023. Ryan and his wife Liv went for a quick visit this past fall.

Abbas from Lebanon is a student at Notre Dame (he received a full scholarship) so they see him often.

Deb (Moran) Hockley and I both first became involved with AFS through our parents.

"While I was in school, my parents would host AFS students in the summer who were finishing up their year by taking a bus trip and visiting other parts of the U.S. prior to their return home," Deb recalled. "These visits were my first introduction to people from other countries. They were always fun and eye-opening experiences. The many AFS students we met impressed my family so much that, when I was a senior in high school, Maitena from France joined our family for the whole school year. She was a wonderful AFS sister!

"These experiences opened my eyes to different points of view, different ideas, different cultures, and different ways of living. While in college, I had the opportunity to travel and study abroad. AFS had whetted my appetite to learn and experience life outside our little corner of Indiana. Ultimately, I married a person from another country, and many years later welcomed a daughter-in-law from another country. My family expanded. International understanding became a way of life! All of these good things stemmed from my early AFS experiences.

Deb and David have hosted Pernille from Denmark, Huong from Vietnam, Anna from Japan, Zainab from Pakistan, and Oho from Thailand and kept in touch with most of them to this day.

"Our family learned and grew from our interactions with these students. We became involved with AFS to offer others the opportunities to help people from around the world become acquainted and informed. We really believe that AFS can lead to global understanding and world peace," she said.

My husband Terry and I have hosted about a dozen times over the years; AFS has been, and continues to be, one of the most rewarding components of our life. For Terry and me, Deb and David, Alisa and Brad and Monica and Phill — and our children — favorite memories include when the students first arrive, when they become part of the family, living "in the moment" with them and watching them experience their "firsts" here in the U.S., when a daughter has her first sister and/or a son has his first brother, meeting their students in their home countries or elsewhere, students' return visits and following their students' careers and adventures.

Monica summed it up this way: "I really feel the impact of having these kids in our lives ... I can't imagine what it would have been like without them."

Some of our students are in areas rife with conflict. We hope their experiences here help them navigate the challenges. Wherever they are, we hope they can be instrumental in finding solutions. Our thoughts and prayers are with them.

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