

B. AUBREY FISHER MEMORIAL

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LECTURE

How People Learn To Be Civic

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How People Learn To Be Civic

by
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A notion of citizenship is passed on from one generation to the next not only in formal education or through intentional efforts but indirectly or collaterally in the small details of everyday life. Lecturing in London a few years ago, I illustrated this point with a homely example. I said: Take, for instance, those moments in your own family where you assert your parental authority and declare, Eat Your Vegetables, Please. 'No.' Eat Your Vegetables. 'No.' Eat Your Vegetables Or Else! And one of those little wise guys retorts, 'You can't make me. It's a free country.'

Every time I use this illustration in this country, it is acknowledged with knowing chuckles or smiles around the room. In London, I looked out at a roomful of blank faces. Not a soul cracked a smile. They had politely puzzled expressions. Only then did it dawn on me. Only then did I realize that no British child in all of history has ever said, "You can't make me, it's a free country." And suddenly I knew that democracy is not just one thing you have more or less of, it comes in an assortment of flavors. Democratic citizenship is not just something one is more or less socialized into; there are different citizenships in different democracies and each of them is renewed in its own subtle fashion.

What I had taken as an invariant expression of children in any democratic society is, in fact, peculiarly American. It is America, not Britain, that conceives of itself self-importantly and extravagantly and naively and tragically and wonderfully as a "free country." And America's children pick that up early on. How do we learn these subtleties?



How is it American kids learn to say it's a free country and British kids learn not to? How do people acquire their sense of civic life and how does that sense become second nature? So I want to ask not how we learn the values we should learn. I am not asking how to make people better citizens, we who purportedly know what good citizenship should be. Instead, I am asking how people who learn to be citizens learn how to be citizens of the sort they learn how to be. How do they come to know what good citizenship is?

This may seem a bizarre question or, at any rate, a very academic one, a scholar's question rather than a reformer's question. It is a scholar's question. I do not know how to make more people into good citizens. I believe, nonetheless, that addressing the question I am addressing will, in the end, help us out.

I have no confidence that earnest efforts at teaching U.S. history or turning out the vote or getting more school children to pick up trash on the beach will make us good citizens.

I believe in the values of liberal education but I am not convinced that liberal education will do the trick either. Political theorist Richard Flathman writes that the greatest contribution liberal education can make to our common political life is to instill a "disposition...wary of politics and government."¹ That is not what you normally hear in circles of educators devoted to civics education. But I was reminded of it in the aftermath of September 11. One of the most noteworthy and, to my mind, admirable features of the American response so far has been that many of our leaders, from the President on down, have waved the flag proud-

ly while simultaneously cautioning us of the dangers of flag-waving. The only precedent I know for this kind of chastened patriotism in other countries is contemporary Germany where the Nazi past envelops even the most timid of patriotic demonstrations with a flood of second thoughts.² In the United States, I can think of no prior expression of this kind of proud but muted patriotism, a patriotism tempered by its own self-consciousness.

My own reforming instinct is only this: to urge that when people do learn civic-ness, they learn it correctly. My words are directed not to those who should be better educated in citizen-

ship but to those who presume to do the educating – the people like you and me, who teach classes,

write books, send letters to the editor, complain about low voter turnout, worry that we are bowling alone, and otherwise bemoan the sorry state of the American masses. To this audience, I do have a message. To this audience, I suggest that civic educators must begin by thinking more clearly, more deeply, and more historically about citizenship.

A citizen is a person who has full membership in a political community, especially a nation-state. In its common legal usage, citizenship means nationality and its mark would be a passport, a birth certificate, or other citizenship papers. In its political usage, citizenship refers to rights of political participation, and its chief sign is that a person is eligible to vote. In its sociocultural sense, citizenship refers to emotional identification with a nation and its flag, history, and culture. Finally, citizenship has a broad moral meaning, as in the phrase "good citizen." It may refer to a person loyal to the state, and in this sense it is related to patriotism. Even more, it suggests a person who is informed about and takes an active role in civic affairs. Although all of these meanings of "citizen" have some relevance to my inquiry here, it is the broad moral meaning of civic-ness that

is my primary concern.

"How do people become civic?" is in part the question: how do we come to understand or accept or take for granted what counts as civic? That is, how do people develop a particular sense of the public good, a willingness to participate in its advancement, and a view of what repertoire of acts will engender a better public life? That is perhaps the most ambitious version of what "civic" might mean

Is civic-ness (1) taking an interest and being informed about politics? Or (2) serving one's community? Or (3) a willingness to defend one's rights and interests in public according to

public norms of deliberation and discussion? Or (4) abiding by the laws of the land?

How do we become civic? This is in part the question: how do we come to understand or accept or

take for granted what counts as civic in our own culture? I think there are four different areas that need our attention.

First, we become civic if and when the civic penetrates into everyday life. Second, we become civic by what we are called to attend to and what we are called to ignore. Third, we become civic by joining with others in common enterprise. Fourth, we become civic when there is an infrastructure that allows, encourages, and supports individual civic engagement. I will say something about each of these points.

First, we become civic when civic activities become a part of everyday life. Think of the recycling bins that, in my community, the city provides so that each household can separate its own recyclables and get them recycled by putting them out at curbside when the city picks up the weekly trash. Think of the Pledge of Allegiance that children learn to say in school.

More is learned in these acts by their ritual repetition than by the actual words. I would be skeptical that school children understand the Pledge of Allegiance. Take the word "indivisible," for instance. They learn to say it years before they study John C. Calhoun and the

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doctrine of nullification, or the Lincoln-Douglas debates, or the Civil War. But the presence of the term "indivisible" in the Pledge is incomprehensible without knowing it to be a reference to the Civil War. In the end, however, that is less the point than that the school day is connected in some vague but unifying way to flag and country.

Think about what kind of education happens in the now widespread "red ribbon week" of drug education in our public schools. I remember when my daughter, then in first-grade, came home from Drug-Free School Day and told us happily it was Free Drug Day at school. I read a memoir recently by a woman who remembers watching the Mickey Mouse Club on television and singing along with the theme song – but she never quite got the words of it. When the Mouseketeers sang, "for-ever let us hold our banner high," this girl thought they were saying, "for every little polar bear to hide."³ Much more of education is like that than we would ever want to admit. Still, the ritual of something like saying the Pledge, the activity of it, the collective enterprise of it, all this leaves a residue.

Sometimes the ritual is between the lines and need only be invoked or evoked by a casual reference or joke. If you do not have a school-aged daughter, you may not have seen the recent movie, "Princess Diaries," but I had that honor. In the film, high schooler Lily Moskowitz, the nerdy friend of the heroine, runs her own cable news show that nobody watches. The program is called, "Shut Up and Listen!" It is the perfect name. Here is the little intellectual imploring the high school's unwashed masses to pay attention to the world beyond their eye shadow, but, without irony, she announces her contempt for them as soon as she names the show. We, the film audience, of course, are supposed to see the layers of irony in all of this. And we do, because we know that conversation and dialogue, not diatribe and demagoguery, are our ideals. But how do we know that?

The activity that enters into ordinary life need not be every day activity. We learn a great deal from ritual moments that come only on rare occasion – like Christmas once a year, or voting every year or so. And I do not think we really know how deeply these activities teach us until we imagine how they might be different. Think about what lessons eighteenth-century Virginians learned when they voted or nineteenth-century Americans, in contrast to us. Eighteenth-century Virginians, that is to say the white males who owned property, went to the polling place, spoke their vote out loud in front of the sheriff and in front of the candi-

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dates, and then went over to the candidate he had favored with his vote and shook hands. The whole activity was one of ritually reaffirming a

hierarchical social order in which each person knew his place. The whole experience reinforced an understanding of citizenship as appropriate deference to community leaders. There was no campaigning, there were no issues, there were no bombastic speeches, the whole point was to invest responsibility for decision-making in trusted senior members of the community.⁴

The nineteenth century experience of voting taught different civic lessons. In the nineteenth century, political parties controlled the elections. On election day, the parties hire tens of thousands of workers to get out the vote and to stand near the polling place to hand out the "tickets" they have printed. The voter approaches the polling place, takes a ticket from one of these "ticket peddlers" he knows to be of his own party and goes up to the voting station and deposits his ticket in the ballot box. He need not look at it. He need not mark it in any way. Clearly, he need not be literate. He may cast his ballot free of charge, but it would not be surprising if he received payment for his effort. In New Jersey, as many as one third of the electorate in the 1880s expected payment

for voting on election day, usually in an amount between \$1 and \$3.⁵

What did a vote express? Not a strong conviction that the party offered better public policies; parties tended to be more devoted to distributing offices than to advocating policies. Party was related more to comradeship than to policy, it was more an attachment than a choice, something like a contemporary loyalty to a high school or college and its teams. Voting was not a matter of assent to ideas but a statement of affiliation with people, and the connection of voter to party ticket peddler underscored that. So did the post-election visit to the party's favorite local tavern. Drink, dollars, and drama brought people to the polls, and, more than that, social connection, rarely anything more elevated.

Reformers at the end of the 19th century saw little in the parties to recommend them. The Mugwumps sought to make elections "educational" and the Progressives tried to insulate the independent, rational citizen from the distorting enthusiasms of party. It is to them that we owe the ideal of the informed citizen, not to the founding fathers. In the 1880s, political campaigns began to shift from parades to pamphlets, and so put a premium on literacy. In the 1890s, the Australian ballot swept the nation and so for the first time in American history literacy was required to cast a ballot. Voting changed from a social and public duty to a private right, from a social obligation to party enforceable by social pressure to a civic obligation or abstract loyalty, enforceable only by private conscience. In the early 1900s, non-partisan municipal elections, presidential primaries, and the initiative and referendum imposed more challenging cognitive tasks on prospective voters than ever before. These changes enshrined "the informed citizenry," incidentally provided a new mechanism and a new rationale for disenfranchising African-Americans and immigrants, and inaugurated an

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enduring tradition of hand-wringing over popular political ignorance.

From 1880 to 1910, the most basic understandings of American politics were challenged and reformed. Attacking the emotional enthusiasm of political participation, the corruption in campaign financing and campaign practices, and attacking broadside the parties for usurping the direct connection between citizens and their government, reformers invented the language by which we still measure our politics. It stresses being informed while it dismisses or demeans parties and partisanship. To put this more belligerently, the single most important agency ever invented for mass political participation is the institution we regularly abhor in current civics talk and current civics education, the political party. We are, in this, heirs to the Mugwumps and Progressives. I

think we should reconsider subscribing so fully to their views. In any event, the way we do vote is a set of enduring instructions to us about the way we should vote and the way we should think about voting. If anything, we learn too well this civics lesson and it blinds us to the fact that today we live in a fourth era of citizenship. This is the era of rights-conscious, court-centered citizenship. This is a contemporary citizenship of individuality, of irreverence, even of defiance but it is citizenship, rather than rebellion, because it operates in the name of state-guaranteed rights and in the venue ultimately of the courtroom. I will say more about this later.⁶

Second, we become civic by what we are called to attend to and what we are called to ignore. The media but, even more strenuously, political leaders make the decisions about what we will be called to attend. In the weeks after September 11, there were many stories in the media about the stifling of dissent as the country unified behind the President's war on terrorism. Why were we called to attend to this? How did we know, as we read these stories, that stifling dissent is a bad thing, because we assuredly are expected to get that point?

Let me step back to consider an important recent example of citizenship talk: "What you do is as important as anything government does. I ask you to seek a common good beyond your comfort, to defend needed reforms against easy attacks, to serve your nation, beginning with your neighbor. I ask you to be citizens. Citizens, not spectators. Citizens, not subjects. Responsible citizens, building communities of service and a nation of character."

At first blush, it is hard to object to the concept of citizenship George W. Bush expressed in these words in his inaugural address. Citizenship, he says, is public-spirited rather than self-centered, neighborly rather than self-seeking, active and participatory rather than passive and spectator-like. And yet, President Bush advances a subtext here – do not expect too much from your government. "Americans are generous and strong and decent, not because we believe in ourselves but because we hold beliefs beyond ourselves. When this spirit of citizenship is missing, no government program can replace it. When this spirit is present, no wrong can stand against it." Government should not over-reach, government should not over-legislate, government should not over-react. The President favors people who take care of themselves and their neighbors, not those who depend on government for aid and comfort.

Note a second subtext: people are citizens insofar as they do not seek their own comfort, insofar as they serve the nation, and insofar as they hold beliefs beyond themselves. True citizens do not ask, to paraphrase a President from a different party, what the country can do for them but what they can do for the country. There is no place in this vision of citizenship for individuals to sue for their rights or to invoke the law on behalf of their liberties or to initiate actions for damages against tobacco companies or tire manufacturers. There is no acknowledgment that democracy has been enlarged in our lifetimes when individuals have

been driven not by a desire to serve but by an effort to overcome indignities they themselves have suffered. This is important. It seems to me that the most important extension of citizenship in this century was produced by the civil rights movement. It was not Thomas Jefferson so much as Martin Luther King, Jr. who made rights a household term and a household experience, and it was the civil rights movement that brought on the extraordinary wave of social movements and rights-centered litigation that has opened doors and windows for African-Americans, women, gays and lesbians, people with disabilities, and many others. Why,

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then, do we cling rhetorically to a vision of civic education and citizenship that excludes the raw power of self-

interested action? Why is citizenship reduced to service rather than linked to justice?

There is also an entirely missing text in President Bush's inaugural: in the idealized world he beckons his fellow citizens to join, there are citizens, there are neighbors, there are also communities of faith, but there are no parties, and in the good citizen no partisanship; there are no interest groups, and in the good citizen no joining with others in organized self-interest; there are no experts, and in the good citizen no considered judgment about when and how judgment should be delegated. Why are the organizations and individual actors that in fact are the most involved on a day-to-day basis with the operation of government omitted from his account of citizenship?

In times of national crisis, the citizen President Bush envisions is the soldier, serving country, ignoring personal comfort, and believing in a patriotic ideal. In ordinary times, Bush's ideal is the Rotarian, moved by a sense of neighborliness, Christian charity, and social responsibility, but untouched by any sense of having a personal stake in public justice.

Is this the kind of civic-ness we should be

instilling in our children? I don't think so, but that is not my topic today. My topic is how people learn to be civic. My point about the President's speech is that it offers one model of civic-ness, but not the only model. It is a powerful model, nonetheless, because the President is the country's best placed civic pedagogue. As Justice Felix Frankfurter said, "The Presidency is the most important educational system in the country."⁷ The President calls us to attention, and in a particular way, not in the only way.

We learn a standard of civic practice by practicing civics. We may not live up to it, but we know, roughly speaking, what it is, what we are supposed to be held accountable for. We learn by

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experience – as political theorist Stephen Elkin writes, "Experience...must be the teacher of democratic citizens," and this leads him to an interest in the design of local governments, not the design of school curricula.⁸ What we do not know or reflect on is that our present standard is only one of a number of possible standards. We have learned a model of civic-ness that President Bush expresses rather well, even if he inflects it in the direction of the Republican Party, and we have learned it so well we do not even recognize what alternatives we have excluded.

Third, we become civic by joining with others in common enterprise, common work, common prayer, or common struggle. I will speak about this only briefly because, in this instance, the same President George W. Bush, whom I have just criticized, has offered a very shrewd analysis. In his press conference October 11, he observed that his administration before September 11 was planning an initiative to be called "Communities of Character." It was, he said, "designed to help parents develop good character in our children and to strengthen the spirit of citizenship and service in our communities." But, he remarked, "the acts of

Sept. 11 have prompted that initiative to occur on its own, in ways far greater than I could have ever imagined." He is exactly right. He cited the cases of Christian and Jewish women who have gone shopping with Muslim women neighbors when the Muslim women were afraid to leave their homes alone. There has, indeed, been a rekindling of communal feelings, a reaching out to friends, neighbors, and strangers, and a joining in common enterprises of blood drives, fund raising, prayer services, and community memorials all across the country.

One feature of what constitutes common enterprise is especially relevant to scholars and students of communication. People can feel connections with one another and a sense of public purpose at one remove, through the Internet, or through a novel, a film, or a news

story. I do not know anyone who died at the World Trade Centers but I feel intimately linked to what happened there. But, even here, my link is not really as much through the media as one might imagine. I do not have a private relationship with Peter Jennings but a social relationship that in the days after September 11 was reaffirmed and reinforced in almost every conversation and in almost every glance from person to person, family member to family member, and co-worker to co-worker. It was not the foundation of my life that was shaken September 11, it was the foundation of our lives. What people have experienced in the aftermath of September 11 has been Durkheimian, the sense of both power and meaning beyond the personal that comes from face-to-face contact and collective work, collective action embodied, not at a distance. As for Peter Jennings, Tom Brokaw, and Dan Rather, they have adopted their journalism to serve Durkheimian solidarity.⁹

There is a great deal of attention to that generation, now rapidly aging and dying, that fought World War II, and it has been lionized in the title of Tom Brokaw's book, as "the greatest generation." Brokaw is not modest

about his claims for his parents' generation: "I think this is the greatest generation any society has ever produced."¹⁰ Well, I am not going to quibble over rankings here; surely this generation accomplished a great deal. And, as Robert Putnam has assiduously documented, this same generation continued doggedly civic in voting in large numbers, attending community meetings, getting to know neighbors, maintaining church membership and attendance, exceeding the marks of the generation before them and the generations that followed them.¹¹ All of this I accept as true. What I do not accept is any implication that this generation was unusually endowed with moral virtue or community fervor. What it was endowed with was the Great Depression and World War II, great collective experiences that forged this generation.

Fourth, we cannot become civic if there is not an infrastructure of civic-ness for people to fit into or enroll in. Civic life requires maintenance. It requires staff. It requires investment. It requires access. Democracy does not come cheap. Elections cost money. Courts cost money. Justice requires dollars.¹² This is not very dramatic stuff. In fact, it is invisible to most of us most of the time. The work of maintenance of society is largely invisible. As a first-time administrator at a large university this year, I see what is invisible to almost all faculty and most students. I see the computer tech people making registration work better, I see the academic advisers steering students to the right courses, I see the business managers and accountants, I see the physical plant people who clean the carpets and trim the trees, I see the people who pick up and deliver the mail, who repair the photocopier, who order the textbooks, who answer the phones. It's all very well to imagine the great teacher at one end of a log and the eager student at the other, but that does not represent contemporary reality.

The work of the maintenance of the civic is also invisible. I saw some of it, however, in the

last election, as I watched the mounting of the electoral machinery in San Diego. Let me just give you a little sense of it.

On November 7, in one sixteen hour period, 100 million people broke from their daily routine and voted. It is a mammoth exercise. In California, there were about 100,000 volunteers spending 15 hour days manning the polling places. In San Diego County, running the election cost \$3.5 million in taxpayer dollars to produce 552 separate ballots and 552 separate voter information guides mailed out to citizens to prepare them to vote as informed citizens. There were 100 training sessions for 6000 poll workers at 1500 polling places, 300 of which

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had special provision for Spanish-speaking voters and all of which were designed to be accessible

for the disabled. This is a massive activity, and a great deal of meaning is still to be found in it, what Walt Whitman called this "ballot-shower from East to West, America's choosing day."

There are 552 different ballots because there are 120 political jurisdictions in San Diego County – hospital districts, water districts, community college districts, school districts, Congressional districts, assembly and state senate districts, etc. There were some 800 candidates on the ballot in November. Mikel Haas, then the Registrar of Voters, told me: "It's like a watch, there are a whole lot of moving parts. Any one of them can trip you up."

The Registrar has a core staff of 48 supplemented in the election season by about 300 temporary workers, not to mention the 6000 poll workers on election day.

Several weeks before the election, I attended what the Registrar's office has entitled "Midnight Madness." On the last day to register to vote in San Diego County, the Registrar's office is open till midnight for "drive-through" registration. I came by around 8 p.m. to take a look. Cars were lined up for most of a long

block and then in a single-file line through half the length of the building in the dark and the drizzle. The whole area, though, was flood-lit by a set of four flood lights illuminating not only the building and the proceedings outside it but a newly anchored "Uncle Sam" roughly 40 feet high, a vast, cheery, red-white-and-blue inflated Uncle Sam. Registrar of Voters Haas had seen it displayed at a Chevrolet dealer. He had driven by and thought, "I have to have that," and he worked out a rental deal to use the inflatable for Midnight madness.

There must have been between 15 and 20 Registrar personnel in yellow slickers at Midnight Madness. A number of them were directing traffic.

In 3 lines, 3 people handed registration affidavits on clipboards to the driver-voters in their cars, S.U.V.'s, and pick-ups. The drivers were then directed to park while they filled out the form. When completed, they started up their cars again and another yellow-slickered official would come over to the car, take the affidavit, check it to see that it was filled out properly, and then send the new registrant on his or her way.

One senior civil servant I spoke to began her career with court reporting school, then worked in the DA's office, then took the test for ROV senior clerk and took the job in 1977 at age 26. In 1980 she left and went to work with one of the vendors who mail the sample ballots. "But I missed it...I missed the excitement." "Not many people leave here. No one will quit." It's not just this office – from email with her counterparts in other counties, "it sounds the same way." There's a lot of stress in the job but people love it. She is married to a political consultant as interested in politics as she is. "When our child was born", she told me, "our birth announcement said "height" and "weight" and "eligible to vote in 2007."

Despite the high morale of workers at the registrar's office, not everyone loves every part of it. One of the least popular sections is candi-

date services, dealing with candidates and would-be candidates as they learn how to file their papers, as they write up their statements for the voter information guides that in California are sent out to all voters, as they submit required campaign finance disclosure forms. "The candidates..." my informant began, and then rolled her eyes. She talked about the people who walk in and say, "Here's where I live. What can I run for?" "Who ARE these people?" she asked. When someone wants to file who has no chance at all, who has never even turned up at a meeting of the body they're running for, the personnel in candidate services try to act on behalf of democracy

without entering improperly into the process: "We try to politely – well, not talk them out of it, but explain what's involved."

I attended some training sessions for the poll workers, as well as the training session for the trainers. This session was run by Registrar staff plus a motivational speaker. There was a strong emphasis on getting people to participate and to have a good time in the training. As one of the trainers said, "adult learning really can be fun, it doesn't have to be toothpicks-in-the-eyelid time."

The training sessions for the poll workers were centered on a "railroad" theme and the trainers were equipped with train engineers' hats, red bandannas, a loud train whistle, and a small flashing light that mimicked the lights at a railroad crossing. The trainers I observed, two vigorous women in their sixties, blew their train whistles together to start the session, and then they sang a song they themselves had written: "We've been working on the election all the live long day,/We've been working on the election, so the voters have their say." Trained to get people talking and involved from the beginning, they asked people to talk among themselves about why they were volunteering their time. After a few minutes they blew the train whistles again and asked people to tell the whole group what they had found out. Some people talked about the free tacos

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poll workers would get from a local fast food chain, many others spoke of wanting to do their civic duty. Many volunteered election after election and spoke of it as a kind of addiction – “Once you do it, you’re hooked.”

Multiply these stories of one registrar’s office in one county of one state. Multiply it by the seventy California counties, multiply it again by the fifty states, multiply it by the journalists who write about politics, the teachers who teach history and civics, the pre-school teachers and kindergarten teachers who instruct children about sharing, the counselors, clergy, clerks of court and others who are all civics teachers on a full-time basis, and you can see that the possibility of civic-ness for individuals has less to do with individual virtue than social investment and collective maintenance.

Civic-ness requires both volunteers and professionals, both ordinary citizens and experts. The kind of populism one finds in communication studies that is distrustful of expertise, that likes participatory democracy over representation or delegation, that likes Dewey rather than Lippmann is so dreamy as to be ultimately irresponsible.

In thinking through the matter of civic education, my own education as a sociologist becomes apparent. I find myself looking more to structures and contexts and institutions within which and through which education happens than at the specific psychological processes that succeed or fail to attach individuals to the messages about civic engagement they hear. I am more inclined to point to the multiple meanings of citizenship afloat in the land and the various meanings of citizenship emphasized or de-emphasized in the prevailing rhetorics of citizenship.

I have tried to issue a reminder that citizens learn citizenship (a) in everyday life and especially in participating in common civic exercises (b) in structures of attention shaped by political leaders, the media, and other voices of authority (c) in experiences of community solidarity that forge attachments to people beyond

us (it is a familiar finding of social research that soldiers fight not so much for their flag as for their comrades); and (d) in structures and institutions that are cultivated and cared for by full-time staff whose work is required to make citizenship possible.



Notes

- ¹ Richard Flathman, “Liberal Versus Civic, Republican, Democratic, and Other Vocational Educations,” *Political Theory* 24 (February 1996) 4-32 at 26.
- ² See, for instance, Frederick Kempe, *Father/Land: A Personal Search for the New Germany* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s, 1999) p. 148.
- ³ Sarah Vowell, *Take the Cannoli: Stories from the New World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).
- ⁴ On this point and the subsequent paragraphs on American political history, I draw directly on my book, *The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life* (New York: Free Press, 1998).
- ⁵ John F. Reynolds, *Testing Democracy: Electoral Behavior and Progressive Reform in New Jersey, 1880-1910* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988) p. 54. See also Schudson, pp. 144-187.
- ⁶ But not very much more. For a fuller discussion, see Schudson, pp. 240-293.
- ⁷ Cited in Douglas Cater, *The Fourth Branch of Government* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959) p. 169.
- ⁸ Stephen Elkin, “Citizen Competence and the Design of Democratic Institutions” in Stephen L. Elkin and Karol Edward Soltan, eds., *Citizen Competence and Democratic Institutions* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999) p. 394.
- ⁹ See Lori Robertson, “Anchoring the Nation,” *American Journalism Review* (November, 2001) pp. 40-45.
- ¹⁰ Tom Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation* (New York: Random House, 1998).
- ¹¹ Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).
- ¹² See Stephen Holmes and Cass Sunstein, *The Cost of Rights: Why Liberty Depends on Taxes* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999).

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Professor Fisher was a prominent scholar in interpersonal communication and communication theory. His published work includes three books and more than thirty-five articles and book chapters. He was considered one of the most notable and influential communication scholars of his time. He held numerous offices in professional organizations, including president of the Western Speech Communication Association, president of the International Communication Association, and editor of the *Western Speech Communication Journal*.

The B. Aubrey Fisher Memorial Lecture was established by the Department of Communication in 1986 to recognize Professor Fisher's outstanding achievements and to provide a forum for presenting original research and theory in communication.

Michael Schudson

Michael Schudson is Professor of Communication and Adjunct Professor of Sociology at the University of California, San Diego. He joined the UCSD faculty in 1980 and served as the department's chair from 1986 to 1989. Professor Schudson received his B.A. degree from Swarthmore College, the M.A. degree in Social Anthropology from Harvard University, and the Ph.D. degree in Sociology from Harvard. He was an Assistant Professor at the University of Chicago from 1976 to 1980, and a Visiting Professor at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, in 1988.

Dr. Schudson is one of the world's most distinguished scholars in the field of mass communication. Among his books are *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers*, *Advertising: The Uneasy Persuasion*, *Origins of the Ideal of Objectivity in the Professions*, *Watergate in American Memory: How We Remember, Forget, and Reconstruct the Past*, *The Power of News*, and *The Good Citizen: A History of American Public Life*. He also has written nearly a hundred scholarly and professional articles, and served on numerous editorial boards. Among his many awards are the Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Fellowship, the Guggenheim Fellowship, and the MacArthur Prize Fellowship.

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