

Living and writing *Edcentric*-ly

By FATU GBAMA
Of the Emerald

It's a national publication. Published locally. And mainly concerned with broad-based educational change.

It's *Edcentric*, a unique magazine that deals with all levels of education from a radical point of view. *Edcentric* is produced by a collective in Eugene and is distributed both nationally and internationally.

An old white house on Orchard Street is the home of *Edcentric* and it is also the home of the collective that produces the magazine.

Sitting in the midst of young friends from the local Children's Community School, Larry Magid, a member of the collective from Los Angeles and Berkeley said, "The goal of *Edcentric* is to link educational change with the political movement, because educational change is a symptom of the wider change that needs to occur both nationally and internationally."

Abbey England, another member of the collective and formerly a University student, added that, "Although educational change is not the only important change that's needed, it is one of the most important, because education in America and all over the world is used as a political tool." It is a tool, she said, "that should be used to promote and not stifle change."

Until recently, the magazine was involved with only higher education, but the collective decided to include other education because "it's an artificial distinction if you don't get involved with lower education. The problems of higher education are related to those of lower levels," Magid said. The magazine, however, specializes in higher education.

Why is *Edcentric* produced by a collective?

The advantage of producing the magazine as a collective, rather than as an ordinary staff, according to Magid, is that "constant contact enables us to get more done and to have a higher level of commitment to the magazine. The collective set-up also eliminates authority roles."



Photos by Peter Grant

The editorial staff of *Edcentric* Magazine takes a break on the roof of their house. From left are: Sue Lanspery, Larry Magid, Joan Kalvelage and Mary England.

Commenting on the stand of *Edcentric*, Joan Kalvelage, a former student of Lewis & Clark and the third member of the collective, said "Our perspective is not narrowly nationalistic because the educational system discriminates against all people and especially minorities and other groups such as women."

Magid added that "*Edcentric* is both critical of the establishment and of alternative movements. We are critical of alternative movements because of the existence of sexism and racism in certain free schools, although our viewpoint toward these schools is sympathetic."

Does the magazine have any relevance to University students?

The producers think so.

As Magid put it, "It's important to

understand that the problems of the educational system are broad—both national and international in scope. You're likely to feel isolated if you think in terms of only your school; lots of problems students are having are not isolated. Other students have had them and have solved them. Information systems enable people with similar problems to solve them."

Edcentric is also unique because it is the only radical education magazine that has a "movement section"—an information system designed to put people concerned with problems of radical change in education in contact with other people all over the country who have similar problems or who have information available that they would be looking for. The movement section regularly lists and describes as many as 150 organizations, projects, clearinghouses, bibliographies, conferences, pamphlets, periodicals, films, tapes and other tools.

Because *Edcentric* would like to start a clearinghouse for information on educational change in the Eugene area, England, who is in charge of the movement section, said that the collective is urging the people of Eugene to call, make an appointment to talk or come in at any time to use their library books, and numerous publications on educational and political liberation. Such publications include review books, periodicals, magazines, underground information and information on interest groups and other groups around the country.

Edcentric has come a long way since its first winter in 1970 when the editorial staff moved to Eugene from Washington, D.C. Magid, the only member of the staff that moved to Eugene, came to Eugene because Washington, D.C., was a politically "frantic" place to live.

Eugene was chosen because, as England said, "It is noted for being a politically and educationally open community, and because it has a slower pace of life. Also, *Edcentric* had close friends like Ron Eachus in Eugene who urged the staff to move here."

Their first winter in Eugene was difficult due to lack of funds, a high turnover rate, a cramped, dark apartment and an office in the 'hole.' Then, the magazine did not come out regularly. Now, however, things are back to normal and as Kalvelage said, "We're happy."

"Although educational change should

be national and international in scope, organizing at the local level is also important," according to Sue Lanspery, also a member of the collective, who is from up-state New York and a present co-operative student from Antioch College in Ohio. Because they feel that concentration at the local level is also important, they have begun getting involved in local activities such as the Children's Community School, where Lanspery is a teacher, and in anti-war activities.

Articles in the magazine are written by members, contributors and professors interested in educational reform. In addition to local organizers around the country, contributors have included prominent authors such as John Holt, China expert William Hinton, child psychologist Robert Coles and Berkeley activist Michael Rossman.

Besides the regular issues, special issues on the following topics have been done—"Women in Education," "Education and Drugs" and "Chicano Education." Recent issues included in-depth reports about Cuba's new work-study program and the Los Angeles Open Space Program (which was set up within the public school system by citizens committed to imaginative co-education).

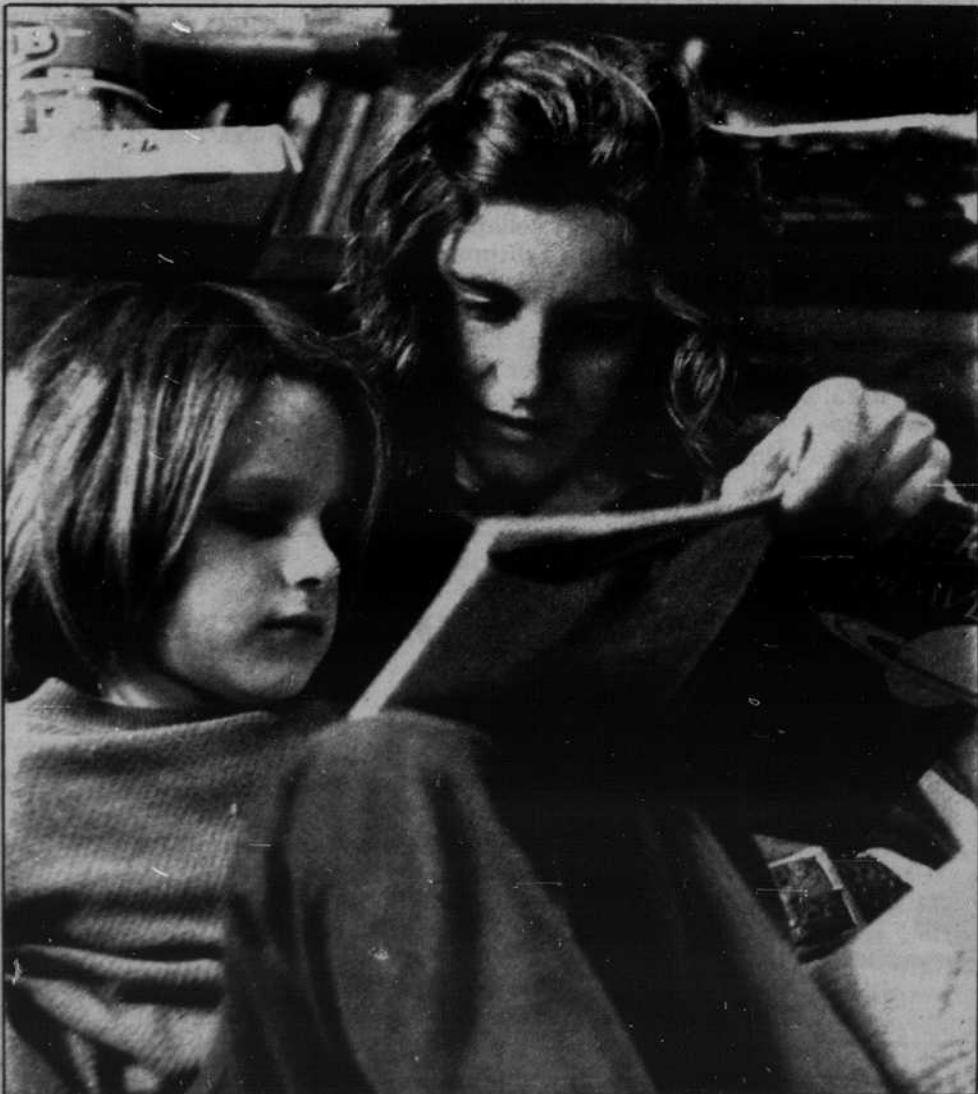
The magazine is not generally distributed on the newsstands because "it costs too much and because there are no alternative distribution systems besides those controlled by large corporations," said Magid.

Presently, *Edcentric* is financed by a Ford Foundation grant which is dwindling rapidly. As they do not anticipate further funding from private foundations, they feel that the magazine won't last another year unless they double their circulation soon. People willing to help them distribute their issues, posters and brochures are asked to contact them at the Eugene address, Kalvelage said.

Sample copies of the magazine can be obtained for 50 cents for students and \$1.00 for others. A year's subscription (8 issues) costs \$5.00. Manuscripts and information for the movement section should be sent to their Eugene address: P.O. Box 1802, Eugene, Oregon 97401, phone: 343-0810.

Subscription orders can also be sent to: *Edcentric*, 2115 "S" Street, N.W. Washington D.C. 20008.

Edcentric wants you to become a part of them.



Joan Kalvelage helps a young student from the Eugene Free School with reading lessons. To integrate their educational theory with practice editorial staff members do volunteer work at such institutions.