

...BOB BACON cont. from pg. 1

they can see the other side of the question. But the problem is getting through those closed doors somehow.

What I used to do when I was a kid--in high school, actually--when I got into a situation where I was so involved I couldn't really look at it objectively--I felt strongly about something and was real upset or uptight--I would back off and look at the situation I was in, the group I was talking with or arguing with and imagine it was on a stage and I was up over the stage looking down at them and here was this scene, with these people as the actors and I was one of them down there. I could sort of laugh at myself being so stupid as to be so stubborn and unable to see the big picture.

Alison: So it sounds like you were trying to get a more objective view of yourself.

Bob: Exactly--somehow backing off and looking at the whole thing and my part in it and why I was reacting the way I was. Was it reasonable for me to be reacting differently? What were the other opinions, really, that I was not listening to when I was right in the middle of it all?

Alison: Why do you think people are so resistant to new ideas?

Bob: I suppose change, if you have an established pattern of doing things--is threatening, essentially. But change is the one certainty of life. So one has to be prepared for it and be able to look at it objectively. Hopefully, most changes are improvements.

Alison: You would think that with cumulative years of wisdom, we would be more adapted to change.

Bob: Well, no, I'm not sure that's the sort of cumulation that occurs. (laughter) Basic securities have to be maintained and change is a threat to those securities.

Actually, if we hadn't been quite so resistant to change I think we would have learned something as the country developed. We have all that long period of time when we filled up the continent, starting on the east coast, but we're still doing the same unfortunate things in the construction of our cities, in our planning--there are things that need to be changed before it's too late to change them. Education is the answer.

Alison: I often think, with the Haystack Rock Program, that people come to the beach and see this incredibly beautiful geographical setting and they come down and see the tanks and microscopes and they say, 'Well, of course all of this is here, look at this!' And to get them to transfer that -- to think, 'Well, this is just one environment and when I go home, I have one of these. It doesn't look the same, but there's some little ecosystem that belongs right in my backyard that I could learn about and teach other people about.'

Bob: Precisely. Even a desert has all sorts of things interacting, dependent on one another for survival. A backyard, if you get down on your hands and knees with a hand lense and peer around in the grass to the level of the dirt, is astonishing.

Alison: Let's talk about the Elderhostel Program. Why do you think there was such an

overwhelming response to opening up these programs?

Bob: Most of the people who come to these are, in my experience, retired professional people--teachers, attorneys, chemists, engineers, geologists--all categories, actually.

One lady came cross-country on a train by herself. She'd never been out of her little town in Alabama before and decided she was going to do something and she packed her suitcase and came all the way to Portland on the train to go to this class.

She had a wonderful time. When she left she just felt that she'd learned so much. Opening new horizons can occur at any age. An awful lot of professional people become pretty narrow in their professional careers, they focus so intently, there's no time or space for anything else. Some of them have the feeling it's getting late and suddenly they realize there's a lot more out there than they've been paying attention to all their lives.

Alison: You and I have talked about this before--it's very easy to be pessimistic at this point in human history--to be aware that we're in serious trouble. I want to know what role education plays for you in maintaining some sense of hope or optimism about the future.

Bob: Contacting people out there--and seeing their responses and having people go away with opened eyes makes me feel even more that education is the answer. People do change if they understand. It's pretty late, but still, the hope is in education, in letting people look at the world--particularly that photograph the astronauts took of the earth--that blue ball floating out there in space--that's a closed system. And if we get at it, we can keep it operating. And it's going to take education to know how to manage it, how to live in it.

Alison: What feelings do you have when you look at that photograph?

Bob: There's a mixture, I think. I'll never forget the first time I saw that photograph. I think it's changed a lot of people's thinking. When that picture first appeared, a lot of people looked at it--they may not have realized it was changing them--but they can't have failed to see that it was all one little ball out there, that's it. It's a closed system. There's nothing coming out of there and nothing going in, except energy--from the sun. The green stuff converts the energy into new living materials. Primary producers are plants, everything else is a consumer. We are just at the top of the system. We, and a few of the mammals, are probably the expendable parts of the system. The system doesn't need us.

We're here--we contribute nothing to it, in our current system. We can, and we should. I think we're suppose to be making the system work better instead of purporting it to our own use.

I think one of our functions should be to assist the system, the whole world system, and control our own malignant growth, for one thing, and allow normal patterns to exist on the earth.

Alison: I really think we'd be better off if people were open to education. Education doesn't have to be coercive.

Bob: No, just open the eyes, look at things, at people, at societies, look at the world. See what's really there.

Alison: Does education make you arrogant or make you humble?

Bob: I think it's humbling if you really look and see the big picture. I don't think it provides arrogance. I guess it could--the acquisition of knowledge, of huge amounts of data--that's very satisfying and could make one arrogant if you felt that you really knew it, particularly if you felt

that others didn't, but I don't think it should make people arrogant at all. I think it can be very humbling, satisfying, that your brain is doing what it's there for--it's understanding.

Alison: I'm really happy that something like the Elderhostel Program exists, because there's so much more emphasis on educating children--

Bob: --and sort of assuming that it's going to stop.

Alison: We have this attitude in our society--

Bob: --that there's a time when education is completed. There's no such thing. The only place where growth continues to expand and develop (in the brain) is in the association areas. And that is, if there is such a thing, a structural basis for wisdom--and that's very encouraging to an old person. (laughter)

For more information about Elderhostel call Sid Stuller 639-8950 for more information about the Haystack Awareness Program call Bob Bacon 238-3528 or Ed John 436-1665

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SHUTTLE SCHEDULE 10-6 Friday - Tuesday

* TIMES MAY VARY SLIGHTLY DEPENDING ON CONDITIONS *

GOING SOUTH		Leaves from Les Shirley Park (Northpoint)														
Les Shirley Park	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30	12:00	12:30	1:00	—	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00	4:30	5:00	5:30	6:00
Candy Kitchen	10:03	10:33	11:03	11:33	12:03	12:33	1:03	—	2:33	3:03	3:33	4:03	4:33	5:03	5:33	6:03
Coastal	10:06	10:36	11:06	11:36	12:06	12:36	1:06	—	2:36	3:06	3:36	4:06	4:36	5:06	5:36	6:06
Midtown	10:09	10:39	11:09	11:39	12:09	12:39	1:09	—	2:39	3:09	3:39	4:09	4:39	5:09	5:39	6:09
Surfcrest	10:12	10:42	11:12	11:42	12:12	12:42	1:12	—	2:42	3:12	3:42	4:12	4:42	5:12	5:42	6:12
Tolovana Wayside	10:15	10:45	11:15	11:45	12:15	12:45	1:15	—	2:45	3:15	3:45	4:15	4:45	5:15	5:45	6:15
Wave Crest	10:18	10:48	11:18	11:48	12:18	12:48	1:18	—	2:48	3:18	3:48	4:18	4:48	5:18	5:48	6:18
Maher	10:21	10:51	11:21	11:51	12:21	12:51	1:21	—	2:51	3:21	3:51	4:21	4:51	5:21	5:51	6:21
GOING NORTH		Leaves from Maher & Hemlock (Southpoint)														
Maher & Hemlock	10:15	10:45	11:15	11:45	12:15	12:45	—	2:15	2:45	3:15	3:45	4:15	4:45	5:15	5:45	—
Tolovana Wayside	10:18	10:48	11:18	11:48	12:18	12:48	—	2:18	2:48	3:18	3:48	4:18	4:48	5:18	5:48	—
R.V. Park	10:24	10:54	11:24	11:54	12:24	12:54	—	2:24	2:54	3:24	3:54	4:24	4:54	5:24	5:54	—
Midtown	10:25	10:55	11:25	11:55	12:25	12:55	—	2:25	2:55	3:25	3:55	4:25	4:55	5:25	5:55	—
Ecola Square	10:28	10:58	11:28	11:58	12:28	12:58	—	2:28	2:58	3:28	3:58	4:28	4:58	5:28	5:58	—
White Bird Gallery	10:28	10:58	11:28	11:58	12:28	12:58	—	2:28	2:58	3:28	3:58	4:28	4:58	5:28	5:58	—
Les Shirley Park	10:30	11:00	11:30	12:00	12:30	1:00	—	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00	4:30	5:00	5:30	6:00	—

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