

PENNSYLVANIA HOMESCHOOLERS

masthead handlettered by Molly Richman, age 10

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A STATEWIDE NETWORK FOR SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT HOME EDUCATION SPRING MAY 1994 ISSUE #47

Homeschooled Students Changing the World

from Howard Richman

When our Pennsylvania homeschool law was passed in December 1988, our children played an important role in teaching legislators about homeschooling at hearings and legislative breakfasts as documented in my book *Story of a Bill*. Homeschooled children changed the world then, and they continue to do so today as two incidents from different parts of Pennsylvania illustrate.

Homeschooler Extends Bowhunting Season

Ryan Wagner, son of John and Barbara Wagner, an eighth grade homeschooled boy from the Lehigh-Berks County area, loves to hunt. He is also an excellent writer.

Last year he entered an essay contest through the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania and won second runner up for his essay entitled *What Safe and Responsible Bow Hunting Means to Me*. Like his other compositions he typed it himself on his family's home computer. It was informative and well organized.

This year an article that he wrote was published in the May 1994 issue of the national *Bowhunting News*. This article, entitled *The Torch is Passed: Learning from Dad*, tells the story of his experience shooting a buck with his bow last fall. It includes good hunting wisdom and a strong poetic ending which ties the story back to its title.

But his most successful composition to date was a letter that he wrote to each of the officers on the Pennsylvania Game Commission urging that the bow hunting season be extended by two weeks in order to give children, like himself, more quality time with their fathers. He did not stop with just writing to the commissioners, however. He also sent copies of his letters to the Bow Hunters Association.

In June 1993, he read in the PA section of *Bowhunting News* about a banquet that the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania had held for the PA game commissioners. At the banquet the head of the United Bowhunters had argued for an extension of the season. In doing so he introduced Ryan's letter, by noting that Ryan had been one of their essay contest winners, and then he read a portion of Ryan's

letter aloud to the commissioners. Soon after the banquet, the game commission met and decided to extend next year's bow hunting seasons by two weeks.

Homeschooler Fights "Political Correctness"

Karina Hyldahl, one of our 1993 PA Homeschoolers graduates, is now a Freshman at Allegheny College in Meadville. She has begun a campaign against courses which teach "politically correct" values instead of content. She told me that homeschooling gave her a different outlook about what should be taught, and confidence in her own values.

When she started at college she found that a number of her classes were trying to push values on students instead of real education. First, she wrote a letter to the Dean asking why so much time was spent in courses that featured political correctness. The Dean met with her and told her that parents wanted "relevant" courses, not "academically rigorous" ones for their children. Karina was not satisfied with the answer, but let the matter drop.

She did find some courses to her liking, however. She was especially pleased with a French history course that required much reading and writing. The oft-published professor was trying to teach history, not his values. In her opinion, he was just the type of professor who should be encouraged. But when the promotion list came out, she found that he had been passed over for a promotion.

So Karina wrote the President of Allegheny College telling him about the professor and that she felt that he was doing exactly what a professor ought to do. She got a letter back from the President, thanking her for her input and saying he would keep it on file and consider it when the professor came up for promotion the next year.

I was talking about these two stories with Karina's mother, Dr. Amanda Tillotson-Hyldahl, homeschool mother and former college-level political science teacher. She said that homeschooled students have a "sense of efficacy" meaning: They feel they can change the world and so they will! ●