

[A Mid-Term Report Card](#)

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Summer is over and school begins again this month, with the mandatory annual rites of new clothes, new teachers, new friends, new courses, new questions about growing up. Hinduism Today is growing up, too, entering our eighth year in the Hardnoks School of Journalism. In the spirit of the moment, we decided not to ask our real teacher and critic, Professor R. Neale Copple, Dean of the University of Nebraska's School of Journalism, to undertake the grading. It may not come as a surprise that, on the whole, we fared well. What schoolboy wouldn't love to take home a report card of his own making? Here then is our absolutely subjective critique of the paper's progress. Doing it, the staff recalled Will Durant's cogent warning about learning: "Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance."

SUBSCRIBERSHIP: We gave ourselves an A-, but only because others helped us through this tough course. The telemarketing staff in San Francisco did the real homework. These 20-30 dedicated men and women cracked the telephone books until vision blurred and voices rasped. They have reached into virtually every community in America where Hindus live, shared our purpose and received a resounding response - 1330 new subscribers in August alone.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING: We gave ourselves a B here, since major investigative articles on Rajneeshism, Siddha Yoga Dham, Sai Baba and in this issue ISKCON have brought facts to light not published anywhere else. There is a balance to be sought here - between being incisive and inciting. Some readers grade us low, judging our correspondents too trenchant, too critical. Others love our candor, and call for more. Our editorial staff happens to feel that Hinduism is great enough, possessed of sufficient strength, that it can sustain and benefit from critical self-examination. An ancient Hindu scripture says that only your best friends care enough to speak of your faults. To get an A here, we have to acquire a few more sleuths in countries like Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and India.

PRINTING CRAFTS: Some not-so-bright students buy term papers, pass courses effortlessly and go on to enduring entrepreneurial success. We bought our A in this course by hiring Howard Quinn Company in San Francisco to do it for us. For years we did our own printing in Hawaii, but the numbers outgrew our sheet-fed Heidelberg press. The good folks at Quinn (their head printer is a Fijian Hindu) use massive web presses. They do in a day what took us four weeks! We get the A for working smarter and not harder, but they get to cash our checks.

POSTAL STUDIES: Mail is all-important when you live on an island that is just 30 miles in diameter and lies many soggy nautical miles from civilization - 2,700 from California and 3,500 from Japan. The bulk of our information, foreign correspondents' reports, photos, etc., come through an old-fashioned post office in a sugarcane town called Hanamaulu (population about 500). We got a B-because we conquered the mysteries of Electronic Mail. Much of our message-making these days is sent through a satellite, the post office of the future.

ENGLISH: American English, that is. Our staff loves language - and that's the problem. They love it over much and thus get mired in meticulous metaphors, lost in labyrinthine loquacity, flummoxed by fluent phraseology, suckered by sesquipedalian sophistry - you get the idea. We have much to discover about simple, declarative sentences. Our C+ was issued more for being diligent proofreaders and humble wordsmiths than writers.

EDITORIAL POLICY: A rugged course, but required. We gave ourselves a B for "balance." Some readers want more philosophical material, less hard news. Others applaud the news and say "I'm glad to find out Hinduism Today is not just another bhakti rag." Some want us to take stronger positions on political issues, ethnic conflicts and the like. Others say we're already too political and urge us to lighten up, make our cartoons less captious and produce more homespun features. A few just plain don't want the news about Hinduism broadcast. Our advice: If you don't want to see it in print, don't do it. Our policies tend toward the religious and away from the political, though sometimes the twain do meet, especially in Asia. But we have never been afraid of tackling hard subjects or dispelling myths and misinformation. We can't stop believing that a more informed Hindu world is bound to be a stronger Hindu world.

FEATURES AND SECTIONS: A C-, our lowest grade. If excuses count (and we know they don't), space is ours. Not the time and space of Hindu metaphysics, but the

picas and column inches of newspaper making. Our financial masterminds have kept the paper strong and solvent (we are a non-profit educational institution, but a non-loss one, also) by not allowing the creative types to indulge our every whim and fancy.

COMPUTER SCIENCES: Our high grade here was earned. Readers of our last issue will know of the late nights, the cramming of technical manuals, the endless hours of field work we did these past few months to get our Macintosh network on line and functioning. We want and A. We deserve an A. We gave ourselves an A.

GLOBAL NETWORKING: An important goal of our paper is to reach the millions of Hindus outside of India. This month's inauguration of our Indian Ocean Edition furthers this immensely. Five thousand copies are being reprinted in Mauritius to be distributed throughout South Asia, cheaper and faster than ever. Our B - gives room to improve, especially in Europe where there are 2 million Hindus but few readers.

ADVERTISING IMPACT: A B+ here - mostly for moxy. Very professional people assured us that we would never run the paper on advertising revenues. Despite such sensible advice, our staff made it work. Our advertising is strong. Why? Because the ads work. If you use our advertisers, tell them you found them here. We're told that our 70,000 plus readers enjoy the ads almost as much as the articles. Now, either that's a compliment on the ads (which do have a homely charm) or...