

Memory seminar defended

This letter is to the students at NU who found themselves swayed by the seemingly knowing and misinformed John Osborn, (DN, March 12). Granted, Osborn may have felt he was doing everyone a great service; it's too bad he failed so miserably in his attempt to get the story straight.

In Osborn's own words, he does make one very accurate and revealing statement: "I acknowledge that I know very little about this field, nor have I ever attended Kittell's seminar." After this admission, Osborn feels qualified to discourage any participation in a seminar he's never attended. He also alludes to the fact that all information on this material can be had in the library. (Information on tax laws can also be found, but 1) Is it current? and 2) Is it easily understood?)

Guest Opinion

So, on to the facts. Setting the record straight, a page out of the phone book was memorized (4 columns, about 91 names per column). It was memorized as a promotion to recruit members of athletic teams to attend my seminar in its beginning stages. They may have seen that if one could memorize more than 2,500 numbers in such a short period of time, and numbers being one of the more difficult symbols to memorize, that perhaps the skills could be used in such difficult subjects as chemistry, physics and algebra. Not to mention foreign languages, scientific terms and vocabulary.

As to the existence of Memory Improvement systems one need only call "Salt Lake County Department of Public Works, business license division, (801) 468-2000 for verification."

Now we have a testimonial from a learned professor, who, in Osborn's words, "should be discounted as highly biased" because he works for a company that organizes seminars. In addition, because my name and number are on file there, I must work for them as a presenter.

Dr. Paul Timm first attended my seminar more than two years ago when he organized a group of teen-agers from his neighborhood to attend my seminar at no cost. Since Timm has taught presentation skills to the MBA students at Brigham-Young University, I valued his help and comments as to how to improve my presentation

skills. It was a few months later that he was kind enough to provide me with his testimonial as to my seminar.

Granted, he does now work with Prime Learning International; however, he started with them a few months ago as part of a professional development leave from his teaching duties. My name and phone number are on file with Prime Learning because I did some consulting work for them to show them how to incorporate a small memory module in their secretarial workshops on learning names and faces.

Claiming that I developed these systems is the grossest case of misinformation or miscommunication I've witnessed to date. I researched the techniques from books in the library, seminars and tapes. I have refined, broken down and developed easy progressive steps to learning these techniques, and, most importantly, shown students how to apply these mnemonic devices to the real-life problems of college memorization.

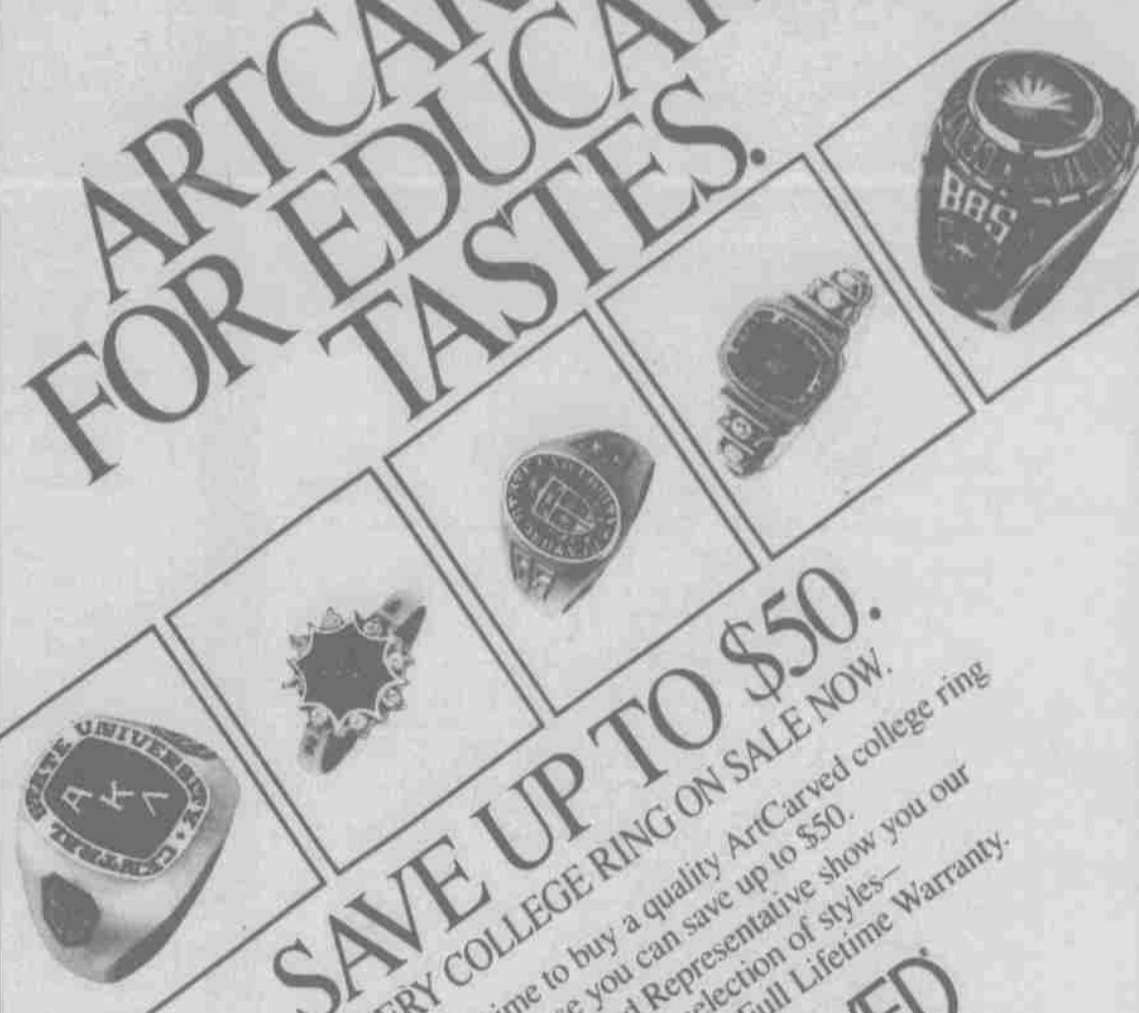
The allegation of mysticism, voodoo, etc., was quite interesting. In all of my demonstrations, I explained to my audiences that any 6-year-old could learn this system, that it's quite simple. Once again, it was intended, as was the phone-book page, to impress on students' minds that memory techniques can make a seemingly impossible task very possible. For now, this demonstration using a phonetic peg system will have to do, because in the limited time we have in each fraternity or sorority to present our program, one hardly has the time to memorize a page out of a student's biology book.

Osborn also failed to mention that the seminar had a money-back guarantee. This was done for a specific purpose. Some students know some of these techniques, and if \$25 was not justified in their minds; they had nothing to lose, the refund was available upon request at the conclusion of the seminar. (None of the 84 students who attended Thursday nights' seminar requested a refund, though many asked about the refund on the way into the seminar, clutching Osborn's article in their hands).

Students who couldn't learn the techniques or saw no applicability also were refunded. So why would anyone ever want to discourage participation in a seminar that teaches and provides an opportunity for progression?

Bob Kittell
Memory Improvement

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