



Reason, Individualism, Freedom Institute

Newsletter

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Meet RIFI Team Member Don Baldino

“Thousands of colleges are dedicated to ‘social justice’—to discredited socialism. Let no one tell me that there is not room in America for one college dedicated to liberty, free markets, and individualism. “

Don Baldino's work life exemplifies the kind of adaptability and creativity Thomas Friedman lauds in his book *The World Is Flat* (see discussion in the article below on “Global Outsourcing”).

Currently, Don is an Adjunct Instructor teaching ethics at Holy Family University in Philadelphia while pursuing a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Temple University. He aims to specialize in Social and Political Philosophy, concentrating on Rights Theory. This fall he will begin teaching philosophy at LaSalle University in Philadelphia. However, a circuitous path brought Don to this, his second career.

Shortly after getting a B.A. in English, he thought that as a librarian he could be surrounded by books, helping patrons and afforded time to think, which led him to pursue a degree in Library Science at Drexel University. Don was turned on to systems work through courses for radically changing library technology, graduating with an M.S. in Library and Information Science. However, rather than as Librarian, he began a twenty year career as a Telecom Systems Analyst and manager, working on some exciting projects.

He built and operated the largest private data network in New Hampshire, as well as managed the telecom and cable plant at Philadelphia International Airport. Despite such successes, Don was eating his heart out, feeling that he was *supposed* to be involved with ideas. Consequently, he earned an M.A. in Philosophy at West Chester University in 2001. The events of 9/11 dictated his exit from Telecom. Coming full circle he is finally working as a librarian to put himself through school. His skills in collection development will be important to the College's accreditation.

Don became interested in Ayn Rand's ideas on May 11, 1975. That's when he stopped speed reading *The Fountainhead* and began the book again from page one, savoring every word. He remembers the exact date because it marked, fittingly, his commencement from a Jesuit college, St. Joseph's, in Philadelphia.

Global Outsourcing and Education, Part 1

In the past twenty plus years, the creative destruction of capitalism has changed the face of the U.S. economy, destroying many former giants of industry like TWA and integrating others into colossal conglomerates, like GE. Simultaneously, thousands of new, small businesses grew from the work and talent of retired, outplaced, ‘RIFed’ workers. These developments were made possibly by the adaptability and creativity of Americans.

Thomas Friedman's 2005 bestseller, *The World Is Flat*, argues that our remarkably cheap, world-wide communications technology, from Internet email to websites to satellite links, and the rapidly expanded use of computer technology to automate many functions is changing the nature of work even further— a change

as fundamental as the Gutenberg press.

At root, these changes are empowering individuals around the globe. Most apparent is the ability of skilled millions with good technical skills in far away lands to offer excellent work for half or less of U.S. labor prices. "Global Outsourcing for the Little Guy," in the Chicago Tribune (5/29/2006) reports on this phenomena. Website designs which cost thousands in the U.S., can be created for \$750 in India. India's system of IIT's (Indian Institutes of Technology) and the powerful ambition of its long impoverished people makes their huge population an awesome pool of talent.



Happily, Elance.com, a job-bidding website also mentioned in the article, empowers individuals and small businesses in the U.S., too. Friedman argues it especially helps those with the abilities that keep U.S. business in the forefront of innovation, and rich: creativity, adaptability, and great collaborative skills. These key ingredients enable individuals to offer unique skills and products to the market, thereby maintaining a market edge. How can we nurture these traits in young people?

This is not a new puzzle to those familiar with the Montessori Method, and our new college's approach grows out of the application of Montessori principles to the adult level of education. Maria Montessori used almost 50 years of scientific observation to hone her ideas and her methods of stoking individual curiosity and ingenuity while insuring that students master basic skills and ingest huge amounts of information effectively. University of Virginia psychology professor Angeline Stoll Lillard's new book, *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius* succinctly explains Montessori's principles and the research evidence supporting them.

Maintaining attention to the material is one of the most important elements of successful learning, especially because attentional resources ('focus') are limited. In his studies on intensely productive and creative people, University of Chicago psychological researcher Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi found that certain conditions elevate the ability to pay attention, and pay attention deeply for long periods of time. He recognized that specially-designed practices in Montessori classrooms provide these conditions throughout the school day. His research group has found many exceptional outcomes from these Montessori practices. The use of the Three-Period Lesson is a case in point. In the next issue of the Newsletter, we will discuss the Three-Period Lesson and other Montessori approaches that maximize attention and learning. (*To be continued.*)

Successful Campaign to Expedite 501(c)(3) Exemption

In response to our request for pledges in order to expedite RIFI's tax-exemption application, we have raised nearly \$70,000. Thanks to all who responded to our call for help!

Website Re-Design

We are looking for a donor willing to fund this project. Research finds effective website design is key to driving interest and donations in non-profit projects. *Please contact Marsha at the email address below if you can help with this!*

Pledges, comments, questions, or requests to be removed from the mailing list, please email, write or call Marsha .

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