

and the movie, attaches the premiere with director McG. Yep, that's his name.



Hutton faces leg surgery today

Model/actress **Lauren Hutton** remains in serious condition and will undergo leg surgery today after suffering multiple fractures in a motorcycle crash during a celebrity ride in Las Vegas on Saturday.

"Her whole right side took the hit," a spokeswoman at University Medical Center in Las Vegas said Monday.

Hutton, 56, also suffered a concussion, a broken right wrist, a fractured sternum, and multiple cuts and bruises, the spokes-

woman said.

She has been in serious condition since being admitted after her motorcycle went off the road near Lake Mead National Park.

Hutton, who was wearing a helmet, had been participating in the ride with celebrity bikers including **Jeremy Irons** and **Dennis Hopper** to celebrate the planned opening of a Guggenheim museum next spring at the Venetian Resort on the Las Vegas Strip.



By Brad Rickerty, Reuters

Hutton: Celebrity bike ride went bad.

Issues loom large in election year

Continued from 1D

state divisions or death knells to public education. Ultimately, however, the central issue is money. And a look at Milwaukee shows that voucher finance isn't as simple as either side would make it appear.

The confounding factor in Milwaukee is that in 1995, the state of Wisconsin decided to pick up two-thirds of local education costs, up from 40%. With the boost of the new money:

► District spending in 1999 was \$922.1 million, up nearly 25% from 1991 after adjusting for inflation.

► Between 1990 and 1998, the district increased instructional staff by 21%, including teachers and principals.

► State aid to the district, adjusted for inflation, jumped 57% between fiscal 1991 and 1999, to \$597.2 million.

With more money from the state, the district was able to live on less tax money. The district's tax levy in 1999, \$192.1 million, was 28% less than in 1991. "What we have here is the fortunate coincidence that when the voucher program got bigger, state aid to Milwaukee Public Schools also got bigger, and the tax levy and tax rate went down," says David Riemer, director of administration for the City of Milwaukee.

How much the tax levy and tax rate would have gone down without vouchers is unknown, Riemer says. "The formulas are very complicated."

The seeming windfalls occurred during explosive growth in the Milwaukee Parental School Choice Program. It began with 341 students in 1990, and enrollment has risen dramatically, particularly after a 1998 state Supreme Court decision allowed religious schools to participate. About 9,600 children from kindergarten through 12th grade are using voucher money to attend religious and non-sectarian private schools.

Payments to voucher schools skyrocketed to \$38.9 million last year. All told, the program has cost \$94.3 million since 1990.

Despite the growth, says Mayor John Norquist, a Democrat, the school system is "not suffering financially. That was a myth."

But others say the district's spending growth and additional state aid mask cracks in the financial foundation. For this fiscal year, for example, the district's projected costs exceeded the revenue it may raise under state-imposed limits by more than \$30 million, finance director Michelle Nate says.

"It is true that spending is up, but what would have happened if you did not have the voucher program?" says Elliot Minberg, education policy director at People for the American Way, which opposes vouchers. "Milwaukee had to cut programs and staff to close (the) budget shortfall. ... Voucher revenue could have been used for that."

But the financial difficulties Milwaukee faces go deeper than the voucher program, officials say.

"The voucher system contributes to (the problem), but it's not the major contributor," schools superintendent Spence Korte says.

The major cause: A state-imposed cap limits growth in per-pupil spending, and costs are rising faster than the district can increase revenue, says Karen Royster of the Institute for Wisconsin's Future, a policy research center. The limit was enacted by the state in the 1995-96 school year in tandem with its decision to fund two-thirds of education costs in all districts.

"What you're looking at is an urban district where the student population is changing and the costs of education are increasing substantially," Royster says.

Like many school districts, Milwaukee faces budget pressures from increases in students with learning disabilities and higher costs for teachers and benefits.

"The cost of a teacher is rising faster than our revenues," says Bruce Thompson, school board president. "One of the big factors is benefits, which have risen very fast. They've risen in a lot of places, but our previous board signed some contracts without bothering to figure out whether they can pay for them or not."

Enter the voucher program, which is open to students whose household income is no more than 1.75 times the federal poverty level. A three-person household, for example, would need an income of \$24,970 or less to qualify.

This year, the program provides \$5,326 per pupil. To apply, parents need only to fill out a form and, as the school year progresses, parents sign four checks over to the voucher school.

For two years, Josetta Harrison has gladly signed over her voucher checks to Hickman Academy, a non-sectarian school in Milwaukee, to cover tuition for her children, Vernell, 7, and Victoria, 5. She teaches second-grade math and K-5 reading at Hickman, which does not offer free tuition for children of staff members.

"Even as a teacher, I wouldn't be able to send my children to Hickman" without the voucher, she

says. For Delone Rodriguez, the best part of vouchers is "I get to choose the surroundings of people I want my kids around." Ray Ann, 4, and Roman, 5, attend the Agape Center of Academic Excellence.

Center founder and director Yvonne Ali says vouchers support about 85 of the 280 pupils in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade.

"It's good for the parents, and it's good for the school. So I definitely see the value in it. I don't feel that it's draining from the public school system, because these are public school parents," Ali says.

Although the cost initially came entirely out of Milwaukee's state aid, the district now pays just half. Other districts in Wisconsin contribute the remainder. Korte estimates the potential cost this year at \$53 million, making the district's tab about \$26.5 million.

Though that amounts to about 3% of Milwaukee's \$972 million 2000-01 budget, some say it's an unwelcome burden for a district with stretched finances.

"It's like a family that is going through a financial crisis," Royster says. "The last thing you need is an additional drain on financial resources."

Voucher supporters in Milwaukee point out that, as the program grows and the public schools' enrollment declines, public schools can save money on teachers, buildings and other expenses. But Korte argues that losing students doesn't reduce costs appreciably.

"If we have 165 schools in the district ... and lost all the kids from one school, that's not a problem," he says. "What we do is lose a little bit everywhere instead of being able to lose it in such a way that we can consolidate in a particular building. We don't heat the building 2 degrees less because a few kids went to a choice program."

With the financial picture in Milwaukee subject to state influences, how applicable is it to the rest of the nation?

The funding process doesn't make Milwaukee typical, but James Cibulka, a University of Maryland researcher, says the city "is an instructive case."

For example, schools that lose students to vouchers will have to see large enrollment reductions before a teaching position can be cut to reduce the school's allocations.

Is there validity to the argument that vouchers drain money?

"Not certainly in great amounts such as critics of vouchers have suggested would happen," Cibulka says. "I do think that the market principle that's operative here is

if you're going to have to pay for it, you're going to have to pay for it. I saw the bride recently, and she is amazingly slim again, ready for what no doubt will be a spectacular gown."

Fast talk: Love triangle of the century? The queen of Camelot, the goddess of opera and the golden Greek—they're author **Nicholas Gage's** pick, and he could be right on the money.

Wealth figures largely, as well as love, in *Greek Fire* (Knopf, \$26.95). It's Gage's exploration of the affair between soprano **Maria Callas** and shipping magnate **Aristotle Onassis**, interrupted by Ari's fascination with and marriage to **Jacqueline Kennedy**. "The Widow," as he called her.

Gage, investigative reporter and Greek native, has unearthed some startling info, including that Onassis was a reluctant bridegroom to Jackie, that days after they wed he was back at Callas' door and that, as Callas' maid tells Gage, Callas gave birth to an Onassis son, who died hours after birth. It's not new, but he details the affair of Onassis and Jackie's sister, **Lee Radziwill Ross**, before Jackie wed Ari. (This didn't come up

about their birthdays together, but this year they were on different coasts. Princess Leia—can you believe she's 44?—had the party anyway Saturday in L.A., with couples including **Ellen DeGeneres** and new companion **Alexandra Hedison** (daughter of actor **David Hedison** and producer **Bridget Hedison**) and **Tom Hanks** and **Rita Wilson**. **Elizabeth Taylor** (who has been making *These Old Boys*, written by **Fisher** and **Elaine Pope**), **Meg Ryan** (solo), **Robin Williams** in a blond buzz cut for a movie, **DreamWorks' Jeffrey Katzenberg**, **Laura Dern**, **Courtney Love** and **Ben Affleck** also greeted Fisher.

Meanwhile, Marshall was directing a movie in New York and was at that longest-ever World Series game Saturday, with fans such as **Jack Nicholson**. A 38th birthday cake was ready at Elaine's for Marshall, but she, like many, including **Keith Hernandez**, never made it to post-game parties. **Elaine Kaufman** is a good pal of Yankees owner **George Steinbrenner's**, but she left his box early to attend to her eatery.

Elaine's will be the scene of an Election Night bash hosted by **Michael Bloomberg**, **Harvey Weinstein** and **Tina Brown**.

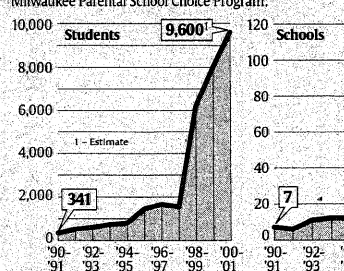
The city that made school vouchers famous

Although critics argue that school choice programs harm the finances of public school districts, financial data from Milwaukee, where a voucher program is entering its 11th year, don't necessarily support that theory. Even as the Milwaukee Parental School Choice Program has grown,

the district has added staff and increased spending. And test scores have improved. But voucher opponents say that as the program expands, the financial drain will have a greater effect. Among the key data:

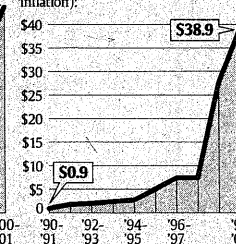
The school choice program grows

Students and private schools participating in the Milwaukee Parental School Choice Program:



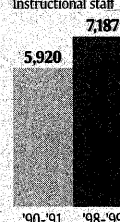
Choice funding increases

Total paid to choice schools by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (in millions; adjusted for inflation):



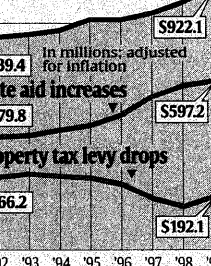
Meanwhile, public school resources grow

Instructional staff:



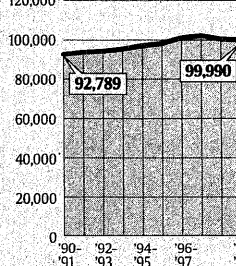
School district spending increases

In millions; adjusted for inflation:



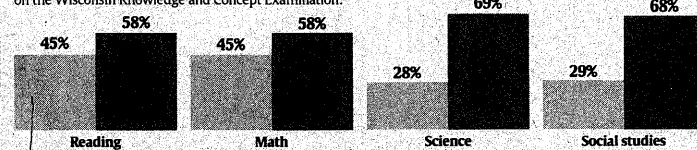
While district enrollment increases

Does not include voucher students



Test scores rise

Percentage of fourth-graders scoring at or above proficiency on the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concept Examination:



Sources: Milwaukee Public Schools; USA TODAY analysis by Anthony DeBarros

By Gary Vissalitti, USA TODAY

that there are rewards for good performance and penalties for poor performance. You expect some decline in revenues to occur and thereby create an incentive for the schools to try to win those students back and improve their performance."

Some object to politicians' efforts to insulate Milwaukee's public schools from competition. Until recently, for example, when a student left for a voucher school, the district still could include that student in its enrollment count. Because state aid depends in part on enroll-

ment, that formula lessened the financial impact of vouchers.

Since the 1999-2000 school year, voucher students are no longer counted in Milwaukee's enrollment. Still, the loss of a voucher student is minimized because the district can use a three-year average for its count.

"My belief is that any policy that says that dollars follow kids means that dollars follow kids, and that's what it ought to do," says Howard Fuller, a former Milwaukee schools superintendent and a voucher advocate at the Institute for the

Transformation of Learning at Marquette University. "School systems should not get paid for kids who are not there. One of the objectives of this is to have an impact on the existing system."

Fuller says the program creates incentives for schools to keep their kids. "I don't apologize for that. In my mind, in this city, for the first time, poor black children have value because these parents now have options that did not exist before. It doesn't just put pressure on Milwaukee Public Schools, it puts pressure on everybody."

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By Fred Prouser, Reuters
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December issue of

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and Jupiter.
"It's a new object, the brightest one out there past Neptune," says Yale astronomer David Rabinowitz, a member of the discovery team, which included researchers from Indiana University and Venezuela's University of the Andes.
They sifted the object from 600,000 hits recorded by a special telescope that covered a field of vision about 200 times larger than conventional telescopes, using detectors originally designed to measure subatomic particle tracks during physics experiments.
EB173 is large and bright enough for amateur astronomers armed with 12-inch telescopes to make out in January, when Earth's orbit carries it onto the same side of the sun as the plutino.

still lurking out there," says astrophysicist Alan Boss of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D.C. He heads an International Astronomical Union (IAU) working group that has long wrangled over the definition of a planet, a subject of contention among astronomers.
In recent years, some scientists have questioned whether puny Pluto, one-fifth the diameter of Earth, deserves to be considered a planet.
Size-wise, Boss says, both Ceres and EB173 dwell in a gray area between planets and asteroids. Astronomers classify finds like the plutino as "trans-Neptunian" or "Kuiper Belt" objects, a reference to a ring of cometary materials just outside the orbit of Pluto.
Broadly, the IAU group agrees that a planet should independently orbit a star, possess enough gravity to

million billion grains. EB173 just misses the last mark, Boss says.
The reddish surface of the sphere, which orbits 39.2 times farther from the sun than Earth does (about 3.6 billion miles away), may have a tarlike covering baked by radiation over billions of years.
Astronomers have spotted about 300 tinier ice balls beyond Neptune. Three faint Kuiper Belt objects beyond Pluto may rival the plutino in size, Rabinowitz says.
Similar planetary seeds perhaps grew, by feeding on comets, to form Uranus and Neptune, Boss says.
Pluto or EB173 might have grown, too, if more comets were at the edge of the solar system for another snowball effect to take place.

Vouchers enter second decade

Milwaukee finds no easy answers in school choice

By Tamara Henry and Anthony DeBarros
USA TODAY

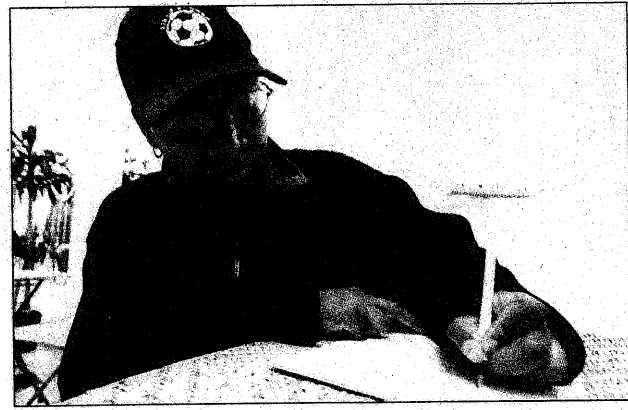
As the debate grows hotter this election season over whether public dollars should be used to pay for private education, the spotlight invariably falls on Milwaukee.
The nation's 25th-largest school district, where the longest-running voucher program enters its 11th year, has enjoyed increases in spending and state aid for public schools, decreases in taxes



Photos by Peter Zurzga for USA TODAY

Cover story

and improved test scores.
Critics of school choice have long argued that vouchers would have the opposite effect. Giving parents tax dollars to send children to private schools, the critics say, would reduce public school funding and siphon off good students, pulling public test scores down.
Voucher supporters say Milwaukee's numbers are proof that such education alternatives can exist without harming public schools. But opponents argue that, despite the rosy surface, the program is draining valuable resources as enrollment nears 10,000 children.
Even if the truth lies somewhere between, it's not easy to determine. The real financial impact of the voucher program on Milwaukee Public Schools, experts say, has been clouded by changes in state funding and the district's struggle with state-imposed spending caps.
The result is that Milwaukee's finances are open to interpretation and ultimately may not be an accurate indicator of whether such programs would work elsewhere.
Yet as Election Day nears, Milwaukee's experience may be the best voters can find when they search for examples of whether vouchers work.



Pleased with vouchers: Delone Rodriguez, left, welcomes the freedom to choose which school she wants her children, Ray Ann, 4, and Roman, 5, to attend in Milwaukee.

Vouchers loom large across the electoral landscape:
► California and Michigan voters will decide Nov. 7 on grass-roots voucher proposals. California's Proposition 38 ultimately would provide vouchers worth at least \$4,000 to any parent, regardless of income, who sends a child to a private school. Michigan would initially of-

fer vouchers only to students in failing school districts. Earlier in the 1990s, voucher initiatives were rejected in California, Colorado and Washington.
► The two leading presidential candidates have drawn lines in the sand. Texas Gov. George W. Bush wants to make vouchers available to children in all the nation's failing schools; Vice President Gore has said he would oppose spending public money in such a way.
► More limited voucher efforts are underway elsewhere. The 6-year-old program in Cleveland serves 3,708 students. Florida has the nation's only statewide program, but it reaches only 51 students because it is offered in schools deemed to be failing for two years.
The Florida and Cleveland programs have been regular visitors to the courthouse. Most recently, an appellate court upheld Florida's school choice program.
Including privately funded programs, about 74,000 students attend private school on vouchers, according to the Center for Education Reform.
In the national debate over these programs, most arguments center on whether vouchers are passports out of failing inner-city schools, windfalls for church coffers, violations of church-

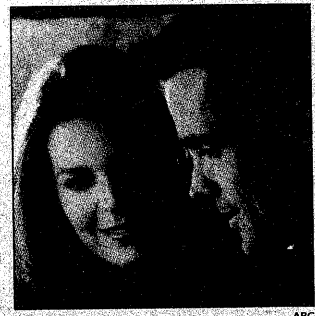
Please see COVER STORY next page ►

'Once and Again' still captures life's rich pageant

Once and Again
ABC (tonight, 10 ET/PT)
★★★★ (out of four)

All Lily and Rick want is one nice dinner together with their children. Is that too much to ask?

Well, yes, as a matter of fact, it is — and not just because *Once and Again* creators Marshall Herskovitz and Edward Zwick enjoy throwing roadblocks in front of this adorably conflicted pair, played by America's sexiest for-



Sexy fortysomethings: *Once and Again*'s Sela Ward and Billy Campbell.

the inner workings of the American family as they are.
The second season opens where the last one left off, exploring a world that has expanded beyond the romance of Rick and Lily to encompass their extended families.
In tonight's premiere, that exploration focuses on the show's extraordinary young actors, as Jessie (Evan Rachel Wood) faces a first-day-in-high-school with less help from Grace (Julia Whelan) than she might wish.
Eventually, Grace learns a lesson — then forgets it, then learns it again, which is the bumpy path progress usually takes. And while Jessie's suffering may be a bit exaggerated (wouldn't she have any friends left from eighth grade?), her father's terror at seeing "even the slightest shadow on that face"

show twists and turns, but it inevitably leads back to Campbell and Ward, two abnormally talented and attractive actors who are able to make ambivalence seem enticing.
At the core of the episode is a sobering examination of sibling rivalry. ("It's like someone handed me a pamphlet on how to be in the wrong," says a chastised Lily, "and I followed the directions exactly.")
But the show also supplies a touching story about modern loneliness and the lengths to which we'll go to escape it.
What distinguishes *Once and Again* is this stunning ability to hold life up to the light like a crystal and examine all its facets. Not everyone, however, will be enchanted by the trick: As with every show Herskovitz and Zwick have done, some people find this intense examina-