

# tools of the trade

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*"Tools of the Trade" this issue has a guest author, Jim Long from Washington State University. We welcome such contributions. Any time something comes across your desk that's particularly useful, please share it with us. "Tools of the Trade" items should be no longer than 1½ pages, double-spaced, of practical interest to Extension workers, and written in a simple, lively style. Send your contributions to: Jim Bromley, Rodman Hall, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI 02881.*

## **Shaping Public Policy**

*Shaping Public Policy: The Educator's Role. Verne W. House. Bozeman, Montana: Westridge Publishing Company, 1981. 116 pp. \$9.95.*

This paperback reads like the journal of a bold explorer whose mission is to raft companions and cargo through the white waters of the raging river of policy education.

In the first of four parts, House prepares us for rafting the white waters by sketching a well-documented conceptual map. The map reveals our guide's philosophy:

Policy education is to facilitate citizenship . . . by assisting people to identify problems rather than symptoms; it improves the informational basis for public choices and encourages people to participate in policymaking . . . . Policy educators have a very special role . . . ; the role . . . is that of the educator engaging in public choices, in contrast to the politician advocating a solution.

In Part II, our guide introduces us to recent runs on selected stretches of the stream of policy education—programs in northwestern states, California, Kentucky, Michigan, and

Pennsylvania. The case studies are so current and vivid, I can feel the embers of the campfires still!

In Part III, House links practice with theory. He says, with some openness and pride: here's what my colleagues and I have experienced.

But in Part IV, he argues that the past alone can't guide our future ventures into policy education. The terrain downstream is changing; the waters there are yet uncharted; the navigational crafts themselves will be different.

House doesn't write a fifth part. Instead, he challenges us to "write" it by launching new experiments in policy education by further preparing university faculty for more expeditions, and by working more effectively in areas that determine appropriations to public institutions of higher education to do policy education.

*Shaping Public Policy: The Educator's Role* is a well-told tale about rafting the rapids of policy education. This earthy, fast-moving account is a lot like the rough and tumble of shaping public policy and the pace and flow of effective policy education.

The book bolstered my confidence; some folks *are* putting intellectual and political centers together.

Anyone else for a rafting excursion?

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