

# Battalion EDITORIALS

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TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 1947

## Living in the Past Is Not Enough . . .

Experiment is the life of science. Is A. & M. ready for a major experiment in the science of collegiate living?

The military system of housing has been in use at this college for seventy-one years. Sometimes it has worked well. At other times it hasn't. Right now is one of those times when it hasn't.

Last year the corps included only one out of every four Aggies. The proportion of cadets will undoubtedly increase slowly during the next few years, but it will be some time before cadets again outnumber veterans. It will be quite a while before all veterans are gone.

If the corps' own definition is used, everyone not a cadet is, in some measure, an "outsider." We have a whopping number of outsiders now. This list includes veterans, transfers from our own junior colleges, transfers from other colleges, and the non-veteran—non-military group. What about these "misfits"?

Most veterans are ex-cadets, and will readily support the corps in any dispute. A few veterans have returned to the corps. Most, however, have taken the position, "We approve of the corps, but darned if we'll go back in it." The questionable treatment given transfers from A. & M.'s own junior colleges has already been discussed here. Transfers from outside the A. & M. system seldom have much to say, but there are quite a few here. The non-vet-non-reg group is small.

The school, however, still operates many of its activities primarily for the Cadet Corps. The senior and junior classes—which is to say, the seniors and juniors in the corps—are the final authority of many matters which are the concern of the entire student body. The veterans have been "cut in" on certain activities, such as the co-editorships of *The Battalion* and the Longhorn. But in most cases, it is a fifty-fifty cut.

For instance, in the case of the Exchange Store committee, representatives of the approximate 6,000 veterans had the same vote as the committeemen representing 1,500 cadets—and at the last meeting of the committee, the corps representatives were actually no longer in the corps!

### Does that make sense?

The ex-cadet veterans have had no desire

## Future Depends on August 23 . . .

A light vote among the people of Texas on August 23 may mean the difference between new and old facilities on the A. & M. campus. Oh that day Texans will have their say about the \$60,000,000 building amendment to finance a 30-year building program for A. & M., the University of Texas, and 14 other state-supported schools.

There is some opposition to the measure, and a matter of a thousand votes might mean a downfall of the bill for which 16 Texas colleges are awaiting the "go" signal.

The building program, Senate Joint Resolution 4, was passed by the senate during the past legislature. Neither a new nor an additional tax is called for under the amendment. It is merely a reallocation of an existing tax, under which the 16 state-supported schools will continue to progress.

If the vote is unfavorable, the schools will deteriorate for lack of building and instructional facilities.

A. & M. would be permitted to issue \$5,000,000 in bonds, and the University of Texas \$10,000,000 in bonds, payable out of income from the invested portion of the permanent university fund, an income which the two schools share.

As for the other 14 schools, the proposed amendment assigns from the presently authorized 7 cents per \$100 valuation property tax for Confederate pension purposes a 5-cent portion for a special fund to finance a 30-year building program. They would share in revenue from the special 5-cent tax which would be used to amortize a series of three ten-year bond issues at each institution. The revenue would be distributed proportionately among the 14 colleges according to enrollment, and it is estimated that at least \$45,000,000 would become available to these schools in 30 years. For instance, North Texas State College, a school of more than 4,500 students, will receive approximately one-eighth of the \$45,000,000 set aside for the 14 schools.

Voters of Texas students, faculty members, ex-students, and residents of the com-

to upset the apple-cart so far as the corps is concerned. But the fusses of last semester, on the part of both corps and veterans, have made it necessary to review the whole philosophy of life on the A. & M. campus. Corps leaders have said that the corps cannot get back to normal, cannot enforce military discipline, as long as the college is crowded with veterans not subject to the same discipline. If this is correct, might it not be wise to suspend the military-college rating and change temporarily to a civilian-college ROTC basis?

That's a big question, and a disturbing one. It is not answerable by the protest, "We've always been a military college!" If such a step would improve conditions on the A. & M. campus, even temporarily, it should be taken.

The reply might be made, "If the military-school system were dropped even temporarily, it would never be restored! No school has ever gone back to military system after dropping it!" If that is true, one must ask "Why not?" If experiment proves the civilian school basis to be better, then it should be kept. If experiment indicates that the merits of the military system outweigh the demerits, then the change-back should certainly be made.

The protest might also be made, "Why, if the military system were dropped, even temporarily, next thing you know they would allow co-eds on the campus!" We have never been able to understand why the presence of co-eds should be looked upon as such a disaster. Other schools have them, and seem to do all right. Aggies take off every weekend to visit Austin or Huntville or Houston where co-eds are to be found. The only reason A. & M.'s main campus is not co-educational now is that there was no place for girls under the military system. (How drab this campus will look after the veteran's wives leave!)

During the years to come, many changes will have to be made at A. & M. A more liberal curriculum is necessary if our graduates are to compete successfully with men who have had a broader education. To broaden our educational basis and still not reduce technical training, it may be necessary to increase the number of five-year courses. Will the military basis help or hinder these changes?

Like all other institutions, A. & M. must constantly improve, or slowly die. We must not be afraid to break with the past, if that is the only way improvement can be made.

munity—support this amendment on August 23. A. & M. is YOUR school! The future of A. & M. depends on YOU!

## Understatement . . .

The following exchange of letters is self-explanatory. We think the second letter takes the prize for understatement. (These letters appeared in the *London, England Express*.)

I wrote to the Minister of Fuel and Power: "Although not a Socialist I must congratulate you and your colleagues on a remarkable achievement. In less than two years you have reduced this country to a state of coldness, starvation, and misery which the submarines and armed might of Germany could not do in six years."

I received this acknowledgement: "Mr. Shinwell is very grateful for your kind message of encouragement, which is much appreciated. He has received hundreds of similar letters from all over the country. The crisis is severe, but we shall win through. Mary Hughes, Little Ridge, Silverstone, Tewkester, Northants."

## One Man's Creed . . .

Bing Crosby was guesting on the Vox Pop program several weeks ago, but the performer who really stole the show was an 84-year-old gent from way down Maine, Dr. Cosmos. Parks Johnson and Warren Hall, interviewing the country doctor, finally asked him to explain his philosophy of life. "Well," the old-timer started, "real schminality and poetic (this is not 100% verbatim but it's close enough), "I want to live my days in such a way so that when I get the call to join the great majority in the far beyond, I will be able to face my fellowmen and say to each and all: 'You go to hell!'"

## B. O. or A. A.?

Until last week, life was a fairly simple affair. All we had to worry about was Pink Tooth Brush, the United Nations, Being Taller Than She Is, taxes, Gingivitis, the recession, Five O'Clock Shadow, the Federal Budget, Queasy Stomach, the price of butter, dandruff, a new car, Halitosis, the new Congress, Clothespin Nose and 1948.

Then, one morning we picked up the paper and there it was—Athletic Aroma. We felt a little better after reading the copy, though, for then we discovered that all we have to do to look athletic and feel athletic (without smelling athletic) is to use Barbasol's new Lotion Deodorant.

—Printers Ink

## Alphabet Hunting . . .

## Degree Value Down, as Mass Education Ups

By Dave Bruce  
(Based on an article by Henry M. Wriston, President, Brown University)

The value or the importance attached to a degree has reached a ridiculous stage in many fields. Thousands of students now attend school solely for the purpose of obtaining two or three letters to attach to the end of their name and thereby serve as the magic pass to the better jobs. This is a threat to real education since it tends to convert colleges into mass production industries turning out degrees instead of institutions where minds are enlarged, where real thinking takes place instead of rote memorization, and where desirable qualities of character are developed.

The qualifications for the success in a given job cannot be measured by a college degree. It doesn't even indicate that its possessor has an adequate education. People with determination and self-discipline get better educations than those who cheat their way through, or those who graduate and then fail to follow up their education by reading or practical work to develop their minds there-after. The value an individual gets out of a college education is directly proportional to the effort he puts into getting it.

Educational experience means a definite change in the whole outlook and mental structure of a person's life. A truly educated man does not look with contempt upon the manual laborer. But the man who seeks a degree solely because he wants to be a white collar worker and have callouses on places other than his hands, is headed for snobbery rather than real education. This snobbery makes a potentially skilled mechanic into a very poor "engineer", a competent into a bad ranch-manager.

It is naive to believe that the Bachelor of Arts degree or the Bachelor of Science degree stands for something specific, notwithstanding the specialized type of work done in colleges and universities. The prestige of the Bachelor of Arts degree is so great that other more specific degrees tend to disappear, and an A.B. is awarded in many institutions for work which has few or none of the elements of a liberal arts education. The situation is similar for the Bachelor of Science degree.

It is equally foolish to think that degrees from all institutions are fairly comparable, in spite of the fact that all may be "approved", "certified", or "accredited". A multitude believe that a degree is the result of 120 to 160 "semester hours" of instruction. However, this criterion only measures the number of times that a student physically attended class and in no way measures what entered his head. People of marginal mentality and people of genius receive the same degrees, and the standards of instruction vary so much from one institution to another that, by itself, the degree means absolutely nothing. The difference between the competence of a person who graduates at the bottom of his class in a poor institution and that of a man who graduates at the top of his class in a good institution is so pronounced that the degree gives no index of capacity. One might say with complete safety that as the pursuit of college degrees for the prestige they bring becomes more general, the number of degrees representing inferior scholastic accomplishment will increase.

In addition, a degree is no better measure of the character of the person who receives it than of his competence. The same degree is given to the scholar and the social climber, to the man of highest integrity and the culprit who cheated his way through.

As said before, the possession of a degree is no indication of per-

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## Yantis Comes Home To Roost

## Goat Skins Too Odoriferous, Says Bedraggled Mountaineer

By Ivan Yantis

Tourists riding along US 64 between Taos and Raton New Mexico are startled to see a shaggy, bearded creature clinging to the side of a mountain. He chews voraciously on drumsticks carved from living bears, and when approached, snarls wildly and lumbers up the mountain till the crags block him from view.



He was not always thus. Only last semester he attended A. & M. and lived a quiet, sober life. For *The Battalion* he turned out copy that the editors used when in a pinch.

Then something snapped within him. Ivan Yantis began winking at Casey's waitresses. He took to drink and squandered his \$65 on cards. His grades improved remarkably, but his refusal to bathe made him a persona non grata at social gatherings. Taking the broad hints offered him, he rode his bicycle to New Mexico and began scaring the bejabbers out of tourists.

Every fortnight or so Ivan Yantis suffers a lapse into normalcy. On freshly peeled and highly odoriferous goat skins he scrawls some more of what he considers deathless prose. The editors have a soft spot in their hearts for Ivan, knowing the same can happen to any budding journalist, so they print the tripe hoping he may see it and return to the drab, uneventful rut of life of before. The articles he sends you will agree, smell as badly as the goat skins, but we beg your indulgence. It's in a good cause.

In future issues of *The Battalion* Ivan Yantis' articles will be printed, but they will all be marked and by-lined in order that wives of nervous caliber may avoid them. The *Battalion* refuses to accept any responsibility for the effect.

sonal qualifications pertinent to success. Such qualities as industry, integrity, adaptability, and capacity to get on with people do not come automatically with a degree. Neither do courses in classrooms offer a cure for laziness, slowness, inattention, or carelessness. The first mentioned qualities are frequently more important than the quantity of knowledge a person carries in his head.

Despite the fact that a degree can mean much or absolutely nothing, the requirement of a college degree is becoming so general as to stimulate a rush to college in order to acquire the label. This headlong rush is not entirely the fault of the individual; the Federal Government is forcing many through the educational mill by using the degree as a yardstick by which applicants for the more important positions are measured. There is no surer way to make bureaucracy a burden upon the public than to put symbols in place of reality as an indication of fitness and to set up formal requirements in place of substantive achievement. Government agencies are not unique in their insistence upon degrees. Journalism and banking are outstanding examples of fields that make a fetish of letters after a man's name. Teaching is one place where degrees may be regarded as a proper requirement, but even in this field

the fetish of degrees has sometimes been carried to extremes. In many colleges attainment of a master's or doctor's degree results in an increase in pay; the outcome has been such pressure on these degrees that they have been virtually destroyed as meaningful symbols.

Some learn more rapidly by experience and observation, some by the use of books, and some through laboratory techniques. Each method is valid in particular cases, but a general prescription is like a uniform diet for everybody. The easiest advice to give anyone is to take further training. Though experience is a hard teacher, it is a very effective one, and it has the advantage of continuing instruction



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tion long after formal schooling is over. One of the curses of the degree mania is that it tends to put an end to growth. If "education" stops with schooling, it rapidly becomes obsolete.

Schools cannot supply intelligence and are limited in their efficiency unless the student has verbal aptitudes and learns readily—and practically—from books. Enormous amounts of experimentation during the war showed that some people, such as artists and musicians, do not think in symbols like words or numbers, but deal very effectively with concrete situations.

The whole thing boils down to the fact that certain people should be training in college and others training in different ways. Those who are in college will get out of it what they put in it; they won't gain much if they are alphabet hunting.

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**The Battalion**

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