

Viewpoint

The Battalion
Texas A&M University

Monday
January 16, 1978

"Say, are any of you guys in charge?"

It all started innocently enough when Governor Dolph Briscoe appointed local district judge Bill Davis to the state's Court of Criminal Appeals.

The governor probably had no idea what impact that appointment would have on Brazos County politics, particularly in the county seat of Bryan.

But when Bill Davis resigned his 85th District Court seat last month, the usually calm Brazos County politics went berserk.

Though I cover College Station, I live in Bryan. And, like the governor, I had absolutely no idea what impact Davis's resignation would have.

That was until I called City Hall the other day:

"Good morning, Bryan City Hall. May I

help you?"

"Uh, yeah," I said. "I've got a complaint and I wanna talk to the mayor."

"The mayor?" she said. "I'm sorry, but we have no mayor."

"You're telling me?"

"I'm serious. Mr. Joyce quit last month to run for county judge."

"Moving up in the world, eh?" I said.

"And what makes him think he can beat Bill Vance?"

"Well, Mr. Vance has quit, too."

"What?"

"It's a long story," she said.

"Well, I've got time. And I'm not using a pay phone."

"Well," she said. "It all started when the governor put Judge Davis in the higher court. Judge Vance decided he wanted to take Judge Davis's place. So he quit and announced for it."

"So Joyce quit to run for Vance's old

office."

"Bingo."

"Now, let me see if I've got this straight," I said. "Bill Davis quit, so Bill Vance is running for district judge. And Vance quit as county judge, so Lloyd Joyce is running for that."

"You got it," she said. "But Judge Vance isn't a shoo-in. The district attorney quit and he's running too."

"Who, Tom McDonald?"

"Right again, Bonzo. Have you considered the \$20,000 Pyramid?"

"Don't get cute," I said. "I'm a taxpayer."

"You sound like a college student to me."

"Look, if the mayor isn't there, then let me talk to someone in charge. How about a councilman?"

"Name one."

"Okay," I said. "How about Richard Smith?"

"Sorry. He quit to run for mayor."

"Well then, how about Travis Bryan?"

"Nope," she said. "He's quitting to run for district attorney."

"Then who in the name of Billie Jean King is running the city?"

"I am," she said.

"The city secretary is running the city?"

"No," she said. "I'm not the city secretary. She quit to run for county secretary."

"Then who are you?"

"My name's Tess. I was the cleaning lady, but I'm quitting."

"And what are you going to do?" I asked.

"Run for city secretary?"

"Are you kidding?" she said. "I'm running for governor. If these clowns can run for those positions, I've got a real future."

R. C.

Write it wrong to make it sell

By FRANK K. VASOVSKI

"If words are devalued, so are ideas and so are human beings."

—Edwin Newman, NBC commentator, in "Strictly Speaking."

Edwin Newman published "Strictly Speaking" in 1974 to identify the extent of damage to the English language "through cruel and unusual punishment inflicted upon it by politicians, journalists and advertisers."

Readers Forum

The Newsweek issue of December 8, 1975, further explained the gravity of the problem and suggested the ways to stop further abuse.

"Why Johnny Can't Write," published in that issue of the Newsweek, identified two main reasons for the deterioration of the English language in the United States.

Ronald Berman, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, regards the decline of written English as only one among many symptoms "of a massive regression toward the intellectually invertebrate" among American academics.

Jacques Barzun, a historian interviewed by Newsweek, pinpoints the source of linguistic problems in a more precise manner. Barzun said the U.S. society "has ceased to think with words." In doing so, American are now unable to convey truth in messages because they have separated it from the right words.

Kenneth B. Clark, distinguished professor of psychology, The City University of New York, commenting upon Newman's book, appeals to "those who respect and



love the English language and who have been intimidated into silence, helplessly watching many forms of linguistic vandalism becoming the fashion of communication," to exert all efforts in "preventing the death of English."

Much water went over the dam since Newman's book and Newsweek's article were published but our linguistic problems still exist.

A stroll through the northwest section of Bryan provides enough evidence that, as Barzun explained, we are unable to clearly convey our messages because we distorted

our vocabulary to such a degree that we have lost the truth in our communication.

One can hardly blame Johnny for being unable to decipher the message of a car wash establishment. The words "U-WASH-M" may or may not be interpreted properly by an average grownup but their meaning could probably have been rather confusing to little Johnny.

Another large sign nearby had to be explained by the attendant. Through his mouth one learns that "New Services!" should read "new Services." W identifies

White, and VTop is identical with vinyl top.

It would be relatively easy to forget the error in "Manhattan Cafe" were it not for the fact that the letters are approximately two feet tall.

Another sign spells out "Beer & Ice" so that there is no doubt about type of drink being available, but reduces the word "barbecue" to a "bar.B.Q." cryptogram.

"U-Lock-It," used as an adjective describing the type of storage facility, would also be a mind-boggling problem to illiterate Johnny, as would be the cryptic "U Stow & Go — Store Stuff!" message at another establishment, which hardly can be surpassed in brevity and directivity.

Would a woman enter the "nu-Way Beauty Shop" without knowing first what the "nu-Way" consists of?

Is it fair to expose little Johnny to a mixture of letters and pictures to create a word, as it was done by the Cycle Center? Would Johnny be able to associate the picture of a bike with the character "Y"?

The "Overcolaed? UNdo it!" sign stops one dead in his tracks. One cannot help but wonder how little Johnny would interpret it if he came upon it.

And yet, this sign, in its imperfect glory, is a creation of highly skilled, English-speaking marketing specialists, designed to appeal to English-speaking consumers.

Is it, perhaps, possible that little Johnny cannot read because his parents have the same problem compounded further by the inability to write?

Frank K. Vasovski is a junior journalism student.

An unnerving noise of another kind

By DICK WEST

United Press International

WASHINGTON — As if UFOs, unidentified flying objects, weren't baffling enough, Americans now are being nonplused by UBNs, unidentified booming noises.

Mysterious explosive sounds high in the firmament have been heard along the East

The Lighter side

Coast several times recently. The UBNs have attracted so much attention even Congress has become involved.

A report prepared by the research service of the Library of Congress recommends creation of a team of experts to look into the

matter and determine what the noise is all about.

Meanwhile, a private group called Vestigia, which does research on atmospheric phenomena, also has started an investigation.

"One of their spokesmen speculates the UBNs might be "related to secondary seismic or geologic activity," or possibly to piezoelectricity, which is generated by pressure in certain minerals.

Thunderclaps, supersonic planes and secret weapons testing likewise have been suggested as possible sources of the booms.

Not surprisingly in the circumstances there is a growing body of belief that UBNs have some sort of other-worldly origin.

"We call them Loud Bangs of the First Kind," one outer space buff told me. "By

that we mean there is auditory contact, but you can't see where the noise is coming from.

"The next encounter, we believe, will be Loud Bangs of the Second Kind, which will leave some evidence as to what caused them.

"Suppose you heard a big boom in the sky and later found the blackened, frazzled ends of a huge firecracker imprinted with the words 'Made on Saturn.' That would be a Loud Bang of the Second Kind."

I said, "Is there a third kind?"

"Oh, yes, dear boy. That occurs when you both hear the noise and can see what is causing it."

"Okay," I said. "Let's assume for the sake of argument that UBNs do come from outer space. What does it mean?"

"The best guess is that UBNs are some sort of signal or message, such as people who live in older apartment houses transmit by banging on radiator pipes.

"If, for example, a troupe of acrobats was living in the apartment above you and their practicing was keeping you awake, you would register your annoyance by banging on the radiator pipe.

"Now suppose the noise level on earth has risen to the point where it is beginning to annoy inhabitants of other planets. If you check back, I think you will find the blasts were heard on nights when there was an exceptionally heavy schedule of rock concerts along the East Coast.

"Since there aren't any radiator pipes in outer space, the UBNs may be their way of telling us to pipe down."

Letters to the editor

Married students need housing break

Mr. Bell, TAMU Board of Regents

This is a time when the institution of marriage is under a great amount of pressure. It is only fair to admire those young people today who choose to respect this institution. And even more, it is important to respect those who combine marriage with the desire to further their education.

There was a statement in this Battalion article quoting you and I repeat it here. "I don't think we should take care of people that went off and got married and then decided they want to come back to school." I resent that statement. You make us sound like a burden. And I resent that, too. You see, my husband is a student here, and we live in married housing. And I hardly consider my husband, as a married student, a burden. In fact, in my own prejudice way I consider him very much an asset to this University. I suppose I owe some amount of thanks to married housing for that. If it would not have been for the low cost of married housing we could not have afforded to live on my salary alone.

As it was, however, my husband was able to devote his full attention to his studies — which certainly paid off. You see, Mr. Bell, my husband graduates in May with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, and at this point he is a member of three honor fraternities (Pi Tau Sigma — Mechanical Engineering Honor Society, Tau Beta Pi — Engineering Honor Society, Phi Eta Sigma — Freshman Honor Society), a representative on the Married Student Council, and holds a 3.94 grade point average. That is pretty com-

mendable, isn't it, Mr. Bell? And he never would have been able to do so well without married housing to lessen the financial burden placed on married students.

It is true, we did make the choice to get married. But we also chose to make the necessary sacrifices so we could do as much with our life as we felt capable of doing.

Who are you, Mr. Bell, to criticize married students? Who are you to criticize people who not only chose to respect the institution of marriage, but respect themselves and their minds?

Open your eyes. Married housing is a very important asset to married students. I tend to wonder who's interest you represent — local apartment owners or the students. I was under the impression that TAMU was for students and education. I did not realize it was here just to promote business for local merchants. Perhaps this is not TAMU's philosophy, but yours.

I do not know what you had in mind when you made that statement quoted in The Battalion article. But I sure hope the married students who go on to become something in this society did not read it. Who knows? It might influence the amount they put down on their annual (or monthly) contribution check to the Alumni Association.

Jennifer Seale

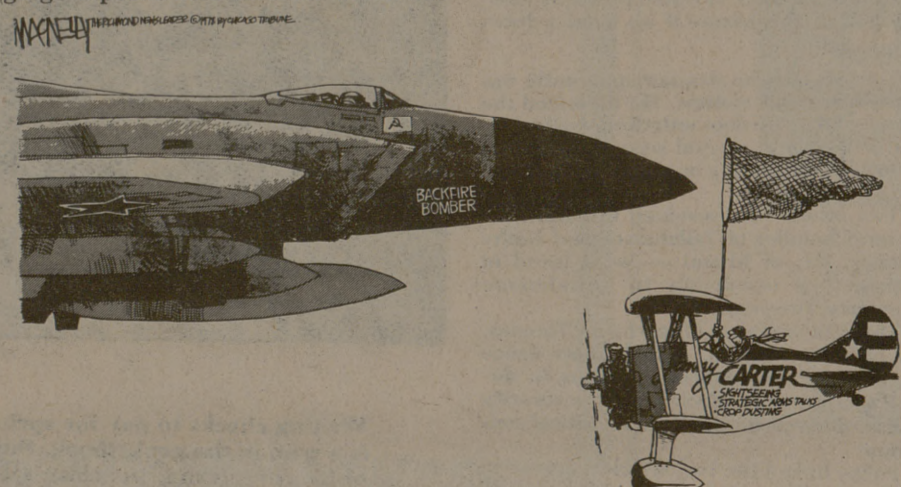
Language offensive

Editor: This 1977 fall football season I attended, with my family, four home games and one

graduation exercise. It took some solemn moments at the Dec. 10 graduation to make me decide to write this letter.

As I sat there and thought of this great school, its distinguished student body, the band, the Corps, its fine traditions, and all the other good things associated with Texas A&M, I became upset again over the two items that earlier in the year had upset me . . . namely, the use of certain offensive words at midnight yell practice, and the use of some of those same words as substitutes in the t.u. fight song. Army, it just isn't necessary.

Aggies are associated closely with being gentlemen, and the use of offensive language in public does not come within this



Top of the News Campus

Announcement orders available

Spring degree candidates may order graduation announcements through Feb. 17 at the Student Finance Center in the Memorial Student Center. Students expecting to graduate May 5 or 6 should place orders between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. weekdays. The Finance Center is in 217 MSC.

State

Soccer player killed in SMU fire

Varsity soccer player Stephen Lewis of St. Louis has been identified as the victim of a weekend fraternity house fire at Southern Methodist University in University Park. Thirty-four other men sleeping in the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity house credited their escape early Saturday to a newly installed smoke alarm system. The colonial-style brick building was gutted by the fire that officials believe began in a dining area. Fire officials were investigating the cause of the blaze that did an estimated \$400,000 damage. A rush party had been held at the fraternity house Friday night and the ground floor had been decorated with straw to resemble a Mexican cantina. "We don't know exactly what ignited the fire, but the straw was a contributing factor," one official said. Lewis, 19, was a sophomore journalism and public relations student.

Ex-convict dies in police chase

An ex-convict who tried to evade police on a high speed chase through East Dallas pointed a revolver at a policeman and was shot to death early Sunday. Police identified the dead man as Timothy Blane Taylor, 20, of Dallas. A police spokesman said Taylor was spotted speeding and refused officers' signals to pull over. According to police accounts, when Taylor drove into a parking lot, officers warned him to come out of the car slowly with his hands visible. Officer Lawrence E. Hall saw Taylor had a gun and yelled for him to "freeze." A moment later Taylor pointed the pistol directly at Hall's partner, Sergeant E. E. Williams, and Hall fired his .38-caliber revolver, striking Taylor once in the chest.

Red Adair loses partners

Oil well disaster fighter Red Adair said he was surprised and hurt by the departure last month of his two chief lieutenants to start their own business. Asger "Boots" Hansen and E.O. "Coots" Matthews announced a few weeks ago they were leaving Red Adair Oil Well Fires & Blowouts Control Co. to form Boots & Coots Inc. Adair was optimistic younger hands would fill the shoes of Hansen and Matthews, who were key men on important operations. In Houston, Adair said, "It's like having a ballclub and your halfback quits you. Sometimes you find out your second-string player is better. I've got some young men who have been with me 12 or 14 years. They're experienced." He said he doubted there were enough runaway oil and gas wells to support another operation of the same type. "A lot of other people have tried to go into this business and failed," he said. "I will still be in business when they, Hansen and Matthews, are out of business. They're going to have to root hog and root me out."

Nation

Corporation chiefs studied

Most chief executive officers of major American corporations are from the Midwest, earn more than \$200,000 a year and are in their late 50s, according to a profile of the "typical" executive done by a management consulting firm. The study, by Heidrick & Struggles, said the typical chief executive is 57 years of age, earns \$261,720 in annual salary, has an undergraduate degree in liberal arts and did graduate work in business and has spent nearly 23 years with his present employers. The firm said two-thirds of the chief executive officers earned more than \$200,000 in salary, compared to only one-sixth five years ago. "The Midwest continues to produce more corporate leaders than any other region," the study said. It said among industrial corporations under \$500 million in sales nearly 60 percent of the chief executives were natives of the Midwest.

Wheat growers prepare to meet

International trade issues dominated a meeting of the directors of the Western Wheat Associates Inc. Sunday in Wichita, Kan. and set the stage for the National Association of Wheat Growers Convention meeting through Thursday. Sir Leslie Price, chairman of the Australian Wheat Board, told the directors the United States holds the major share of exportable wheat supplies available on the world market. Price questioned, under those conditions, low wheat prices. The directors said low wheat prices may be caused, in part, by U.S. producers competing with each other for market shares.

Weather

Cloudy and mild with rain Monday. Decreasing cloudiness and colder tonight. Partly cloudy and cold Tuesday. High today in mid 60s. Low tonight in mid 20s. High Tuesday low to mid 40s. Westerly winds today, becoming northerly at 15-25 mph tonight.

The Battalion

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Address correspondence to Letters to the Editor, The Battalion, Room 216, Reed McDonald Building, College Station, Texas 77843.

Represented nationally by National Educational Advertising Services, Inc., New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles.

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday from September through May except during exam and holiday periods and the summer, when it is published on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester; \$33.25 per school year; \$35.00 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request. Address: The Battalion, Room 216.

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