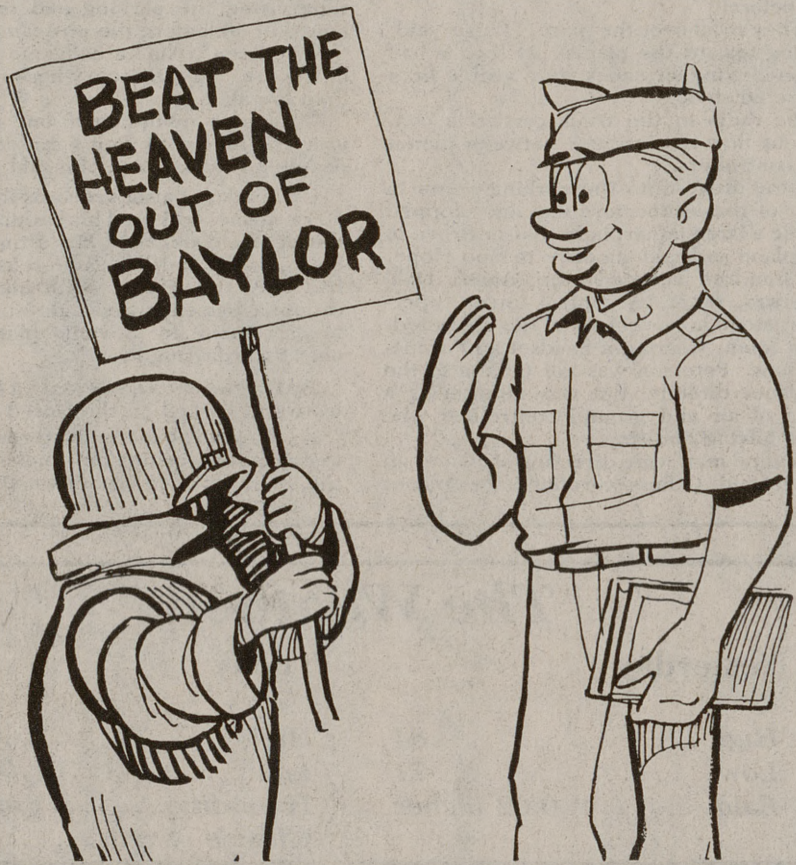


# VIEWPOINT

## Slouch

By Jim Earle



"I thought that we might ought to take a different approach with a church school."

## Education needs new humanities emphasis

By PATRICIA McCORMACK  
United Press International

Heavy thinkers on the education scene claim: There's a good chance the United States of America will go down the tube as a civilized nation unless there is "a dramatic improvement in the quality of elementary and secondary education" — and an infusion of the humanities.

It's no longer, they say, just a matter of why Johnny can't read, Janie can't add and Georgie can't write. Rather, it's a matter of why they can't ponder the question: what does it mean to be human?

(Philosophers and poets spend a lifetime on that question's answer and even then some don't make it. On her deathbed, the poet Gertrude Stein was asked, "What is the answer?"

She replied, "What is the question?" The reason kids have a hard time just thinking of new curriculum specialists feeding education to the nation's kids.

And another major reason, they say, is that some teachers need to shape up. These thoughts on American education come from the 32-member Rockefeller Foundation Commission on the Humanities. About teachers, the commission, in a report on the humanities made these points:

— Greater selectivity is needed in the certification of teachers. State departments of education tend to base requirements for certification on narrow competency tests and large numbers of education courses.

— Certification should be based primarily on a solid liberal (in the educational sense of the word) education.

William O. Baker, a member of the commission and board chairman of Bell Laboratories, said about 10 years remain to save the country by injecting more of the humanities into education.

He said humanities have a lot to do with values and morality.

"It will take about five years to get the schools in shape," he said, "and about five more years to restore the humanities."

Just exactly what is meant by "the humanities?"

"The essence of the humanities is a spirit or an attitude toward humanity," the report said. "They show how the individual is autonomous and at the same time, bound, in the ligatures of language and history, to humankind across time."

"The humanities mirror our own image and our image of the world. Through the humani-

ties we reflect on the fundamental question: what does it mean to be human?"

"The humanities offer clues but never a complete answer. They reveal how people have tried to make moral, spiritual and intellectual sense of a world in which irrationality, despair, loneliness, and death are as conspicuous as birth, friendship, hope and reason."

"We learn how individuals or societies define the moral life and try to attain it, attempt to reconcile freedom and the responsibilities of citizenship and express themselves artistically."

The report said, "The humanities must be established as a priority in school curricula, for through the study of literature, language and history one acquires not only literacy, but critical and aesthetic capacities as basic as literacy itself."

Restoring the humanities, as the commission sees it, requires that:

— Children have the direct experience of literature and the arts in primary grades.

— The link between writing and critical thinking be emphasized in the secondary school curriculum.

— Higher education must formulate anew the ideals of a liberal education. The commission recognizes the problems of the liberal arts graduate in the job market but said it considers vocationalism — preparing for a specific job or trade — a dangerous trend.

The commission, chaired by Dr. Richard Lyman, until recently president of Stanford University and now president of the Rockefeller Foundation, called for more public and private support humanities research.

There are many signs of the public's growing interest in the humanities, the report said, citing "phenomenal growth of public interest in the arts over the past 15 years."

"Each year, in fact, more Americans attend exhibitions of the visual arts and presentations of the performing arts than attend spectator sports," it said.

Gaines Post, University of Texas at Austin, is executive director of the commission; Jole Colton, foundation director for the humanities, liaison between the commission and the foundation.

Other commission members include Henry Rosovsky, dean of the faculty of art and sciences, Harvard University; Lewis Thomas, president, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center; Darwin T. Turner, department of English, University of Iowa; Richard D. Lamm, governor of Colorado; Hanna H. Gray, president, University of Chicago.

## Joiners' amputation puzzling

By DICK WEST

United Press International

WASHINGTON — The union's full name is the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. But in its television spots, it usually refers to itself simply as the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, or by the initials UBC.

I, for one, hardly know what to make of this amputation.

The most obvious conclusion to jump to is that the union is striving to create a new public image as a carpenter-oriented labor organization that is ridding itself of joiners.

But when you examine that assumption closely, it doesn't seem quite rational.

If joining were on the decline in America, such a public relations policy might make sense.

If joining were on the verge of dying out, a union that has represented joiners over the years might very well be feeling a trifle anachronistic.

In those circumstances, the union could hardly be blamed for playing down the joiner connection — sweeping the joiners under the rug, as it were — in the interest of modernization.

But the facts read otherwise.

Joining is not dying out in America. To the contrary, there probably is more joining taking place these days than at any other time in the history of the republic.

Membership in just about any organization you might name is increasing and new organizations are springing up right and left, day in, day out.

As things now stand, people will join just about anything. Impulsive joining has been replaced by compulsive joining. For millions of Americans, signing membership cards has become a way of life.

With joining at an all-time high, any union that deliberately gave joiners short shrift would be foolish indeed. I am, therefore, entirely mystified by the union's commercials and cannot even guess what might be behind them.

This much I will say, however. If the joining continues, I think the joiners of the future would be justified in severing their historical liation with the carpenters and forming their own union.

When you come right down to it, joiner carpentry don't have much in common more anyhow.

In the old days, I'm told, carpenters were extremely gregarious. So when the time for them to form a labor organization, they only natural they would associate themselves with joiners.

But carpenters have changed a great deal over the years. The carpenters one meets are apt to be a bit standoffish, if not aloof. Which is why I suggest that joiners might more congenial to have a union to themselves.

In any event, if you are a joiner you hardly be blamed for protesting the commercials. Just because carpenters have become self-assertive is no reason joiners should be treated like second class citizens.



It's your turn

## Source on canned cans 'narrow-minded'

Editor: This letter is a reaction to an article in the Batt concerning a "ban on can collecting" by A&M custodial employees.

We can see Mr. Haugens' viewpoint — it must surely be irritating to see employees digging through garbage collecting cans to sell. It creates a bad impression — almost appears to be a desperate tactic to increase their income enough to support a family; and that reflects poorly on the University System.

What amazes us is Haugens' narrow-mindedness. It appears he is not even open to alternative solutions.

One employee reportedly had some ecologically minded individuals voluntarily separating and storing aluminum cans. Haugen claims this is unfeasible because lack of sufficient space in storage closets.

But what if we brought this problem "out of the closet"? What if students voluntarily disposed of their drink cans in extra receptacles designated "for aluminum cans only"? These could then be collected by the custodians at the end of their shift. The state would no longer be "losing employee hours."

If this was done on a University-wide scale quite a bit of money would be generated. With 17 to 18 cans weighing a pound, and aluminum bringing 25 cents per pound, money would add up very fast.

Perhaps A&M should consider starting a recycling center as other universities and colleges have. We feel the student body would approve and support such a project, especially if the

profits were ear-marked for scholarship programs or charitable organizations.

Remember, it is A&M's research for alternatives that has made it great, not its refusal to look at them.

Ed Tokarek  
Lisa Hartmann

## Cans typify bureaucracy

I would like to comment upon the Oct. 10 story about the administrator who has prohibited the collection of aluminum cans.

First, his decision will almost certainly get less from his employees than more. The custodial staff do a difficult job quite well for low wages and he has insulted all of them. His directive suggests that they will simply stand around if not ordered to work. That attitude will

create hard feelings from his staff and the turnover rate will probably go up.

Second, this decision makes it seem the University is against recycling and energy conservation. Even if the employees were "stealing time" from the school — which most are — most cans can be collected easily and neatly as people work — should not the university energy and not waste it?

Third, I am sure some employees are fringing upon the time they owe the University — why not tell those transgressors to stop? You are punishing all for the sins of a few.

The whole situation is simply typical of modern bureaucracy. Rather than take the responsibility to sort out good and bad individual behavior, a rule is passed that makes the situation worse. The intention of the rule is unimpeachable but the effect of the rule is not.

Richard Saunders

## Warped



By Scott McCullar

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USPS 045 360

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Columns and guest editorials are also welcome, and are subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

The Battalion is published daily during Texas A&M's fall and spring semesters, except for holiday and examination periods. Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester, \$33.25 per year and \$35 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

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