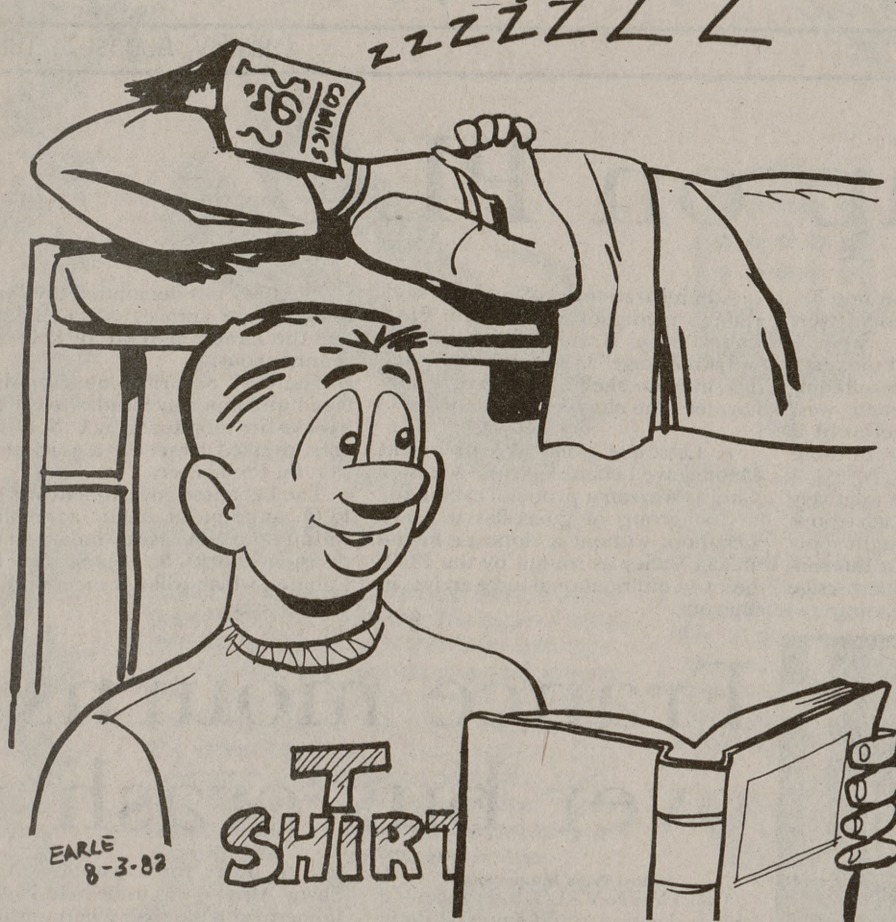


Slouch By Jim Earle



"I realize that you're behind on your homework, and you missed one test, but if you started now you could do extra work to make up that material, and you could start studying now so you could ... are you listening?"

Letters of support from Jim Watt

by Art Buchwald

Interior Secretary James Watt has been very busy lately drumming up support for Reagan's strip-mining and oil-drilling plans for America. In his now-famous letter to the Israeli ambassador to the U.S., Watt warned that opposition to the administration's energy program by American Jewish liberals would weaken this nation's "ability to be a good friend of Israel."

While the White House disavowed the letter, even though it was written on Interior stationery, Watt defended it, and said he was not threatening anyone. He claimed he was appealing for support from every identifiable group in America, whether they be "unions, the black community, Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Gentiles."

This means Watt's going to have to write an awful lot of letters to prove he doesn't just have it in for American Jewish liberals.

I can see him in his office right now.

"Miss Bloomsbury, take a letter to the Nigerian ambassador to the U.S. ... 'Dear Mr. Ambassador: As you know, the Reagan energy policy is very close to my heart, as it is to the President's. Unfortunately there are many liberal blacks in this country who are opposing us. The conservative blacks are for us, but the others are making our life difficult. Therefore I must inform you that unless you can persuade American blacks to back our program, relations between the United States and Nigeria could go very badly. Please do not take this as a threat but a fact of life.'"

"Okay, who's next?"

"The Catholics. Do you want to write to the ambassador of Ireland or Italy?"

"I think I'll send this directly to the Pope. Start with 'Your Holiness: Forgive me for intruding on your time, but I believe that you should be aware that there are many Catholics in this country who are trying to preserve the environment and keep us from becoming self-sufficient in coal and oil. This adminis-

tration will not stand by and allow religious groups to interfere with energy policies. Relations with the can, up until now, have been good. The Catholic liberals in this country be made to realize that when the support the President, they are making it impossible for him to support us. I don't think that's too strong, do you?"

"No, sir. I think it's just right. So write to the Protestants?"

"Send the same letter to Queen Elizabeth. If we mail it to the Archbishop of Canterbury he'll throw it in the paper basket. Does that take care of the religious liberals?"

"I think so, unless you want to write to Khomeini."

"Let's skip that for a moment, and with the ethnic groups that have opposing us. How about one to Gandhi warning her that if she doesn't get the liberal American Indians opposing us, we'll cut off all food shipments to Bombay?"

Where's the cure to those video blues?

— Johnny was 5 years old when he became addicted. His parents noticed he began to come home later and later after school. His eyes were glassy. He began to lose weight. By the time he was 6 he was spending his lunch money to support his habit.

— Susie, 12, was a model student. Then her parents began to notice her

old and could barely reach the "fire" button on an Asteroids game.

"Do you know what an asteroid really is?" I asked him.

"Sumpin' to shoot at," he said.

"Well, do you know where they come from?" I asked.

"Atari?" he asked and then he racked up 350,000 points and got four bonus ships.

It is obvious that the problem has reached epidemic proportions. A generation of children is growing up in the video craze. Their heroes are Pac man, Tron and Donkey Kong.

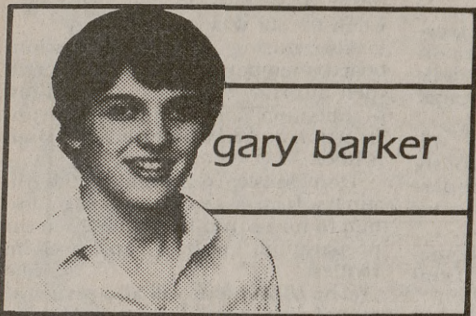
What is happening to the youth of America? Boys don't fish in ponds, catch tadpoles or build soap-box derby cars anymore. Girls may soon abandon Barbies, kittens and telephones for video games.

Few of these children have read "Tom Sawyer" or "Little Women" or even Dr. Seuss. Even Walt Disney Productions, that last great bastion of romantic children's fiction, has fallen to the feet of the video god. With its production of a ludicrous movie called "Tron," Disney may be signaling the end of an era.

Can you imagine childhood without "Bambi"? Or "Mary Poppins" or Mickey Mouse? NBC has announced plans for a Pac man cartoon for the fall. Even Bugs Bunny isn't sacred.

Before you begin to feel safe, thinking these games are harmless fun, limited to video arcades, think again. These video games are beginning to infiltrate the home. Soon there could be a video game in every room. Cars will have them built into the dashboard. Fine restaurants will build the games into their tables. Moet et Chandon will sit next to Space Invaders. Entrees will include four free games of Defender. Public restrooms will be filled with them. Have they no shame?

Where are you Huck Finn? America needs you.



gary barker

grades slipping. She began to study less and spend hours at unknown places. She wore sunglasses to hide her eyes from her parents. Her addiction became so severe she began to talk to herself. "Watch out for the ghosts," she would shout.

— Billy was an average 10-year-old boy before he became addicted. Within the first few months of his addiction, he had started an extortion and thievery ring to pay for his habit.

What happened to these three children is becoming epidemic in the United States. There is no known cure. There are no established rehabilitation centers. These children are video game addicts.

They drop countless numbers of quarters into video games daily. They can be found at grocery stores, game rooms, movie theaters, convenience stores, bowling alleys, restaurants — perhaps even in your own home.

Recently I interviewed a video addict at a theater in Houston. He was on his way to see "Tron." He was only 4 years



Response to Middle East letter

Editor:

I would like to respond to some of the distortions and half-truths that have been recently passed off as facts to readers of The Battalion regarding the situation in the Middle East. There is a double standard among nations in regard to this part of the world in general, and to Israel in particular. A recent letter in this forum stated that "terrorism aimed at innocent people is a heinous crime toward all mankind." Deplorably, this is not the case when such acts are committed against Israel. Nations of the world, depending on political alliances, do not consider these acts crimes. Terrorism is not only condoned but actually encouraged in some organizations today — the PLO is such an organization.

No nation is totally innocent in regard to acts of terror carried out against others — not Israel and not even the United States. To point out that every nation is guilty to some extent does not lessen the wrong done, but the difference here is that in the case of Israel and the United States, these acts are not a matter of national policy.

Some of those acts attributed to Israel happened, although they have become exaggerated through time. Dir Yasin and the King David Hotel are so often written about by Israel's opponents because there are practically no other examples. What is important to note here is that these two incidents were performed by splinter extremist groups (the Irgun and Stern gangs seceded from the Haganah, the pre-state Israeli army). These acts were deplored and condemned by the Jewish community in Palestine, and around the world for that matter, as well as by the Yishuv (the pre-state Israeli government). Acts of this type are exceptions to the rule for Israel, not the rule as they are for the PLO.

It would serve no useful purpose to try to list atrocities committed against inno-

cent people around the world by the PLO — the list would be endless. After such acts, the PLO proudly claims credit for the deeds of its freedom fighters. For killing Israeli schoolchildren in Ma'alot, murdering 11 Israeli Olympic athletes in Munich and blowing up planes worldwide, they claim credit! Only now are

Reader's Forum

the horror stories committed by the PLO against Christian Lebanese during their six-year occupation in Lebanon coming to light.

This letter would not be complete without mentioning the civilian losses in Lebanon. The 14,000 civilian casualties claimed recently in this column for the first few days of the fighting, and also reported initially by some respectable American newspapers, have since been proven to be grossly exaggerated.

These early figures came not from the Red Cross, but from the Palestinian Red Crescent (whose director happens to be Arafat's brother). Now, the International Red Cross has substantiated Israeli claims of approximately 300 casualties for these first few days. Unfortunately, civilian losses continue to mount as the PLO stalls for time in Beirut. Lebanese civilians are paying a heavy price for the PLO's delaying tactics. Hopefully, rumored PLO acceptance of the latest six-point plan is not also a ploy.

The PLO has a large responsibility for many of the civilian losses in Lebanon by placing its military headquarters, training camps and ammunition dumps in heavily populated areas. The hope that this fact would forestall any Israeli action proved correct, until the situation became intolerable in northern Israel when daily life came to a standstill because of PLO artillery.

Civilian casualties surely would have been, as falsely reported, "in the 14,000" if not for Israel's efforts to minimize civilian losses. The costs for Israel were terms of its high loss of soldiers. There is no doubt that it is easier to level an area than engage in house-to-house combat. Israel chose the more costly second method. Other efforts to minimize civilian losses by Israel have been disrupted by the PLO — by not allowing residents of West Beirut to leave for other areas after being so advised by Israeli leaflets. The PLO, in order to retain human shield, unscrupulously informed Beirut residents that the Israeli leaflets had been contaminated with poison.

There have been protests lodged over civilian losses in Lebanon from every corner of the world, and rightly so. Between July 1981 and June 1982 over 1,000 Israelis and Jews in different parts of the world were killed or wounded by PLO terrorism. These casualties, which provoked Israel into its eventual entry into Lebanon, occurred during the long "cease-fire" arranged by the Americans. This cease-fire was conveniently interpreted by the PLO as covering terrorist acts carried out directly across the Lebanese border and, of course, including artillery and Katyusha rockets.

But for these 150 casualties, there is no outcry. There were no protests when there were no condemnations. This is the double standard the world holds for Israel. If Israeli civilians, and Jews around the world, are not included in "innocent people" we speak of when we condemn terrorism, not only will there never be an end to terrorism, but it is unlikely there will ever be a solution to the Palestinian problem.

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The Battalion

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Letters Policy

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed, show the address and phone number of the writer.

Columns and guest editorials are also welcome, and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843, or phone (713) 845-2611.

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