

opinion

Professor disturbed by actions

by Donald L. Woods
guest columnist

As we head toward the year 2000 at Texas A&M, some of us perceive disarray among the University and System administration. The reasons for this perception are worth considering.

We have money to build a new building but no money to buy furniture to go in it.

We plan a new building to house two specific groups, arbitrarily put a third large group in the building, and then cannot figure out why the building is not sufficiently large to accommodate everyone.

We continue to hire consultants to study the campus parking problem when it long ago became apparent that the problem is the requirement that the user pay the cost of building and maintaining the parking areas (i.e. PUF Monies).

We are very short of parking in some areas of the campus, yet new buildings are being placed in existing parking areas requiring the limited funds available to be used to replace perfectly functional spaces consumed by the new building.

We have the money to hire Nobel Prize

winning professors to enhance our teaching capability but no monies for departmental operating budgets to provide the tools that would allow the existing faculty to do their job effectively.

We are striving for "greatness" but we have laboratory equipment from the 1930s and 40s.

We compare Texas A&M to Cal Tech, M.I.T., Stanford, & UT Austin as if these comparisons were valid. All these schools have a history of basic research while Texas A&M has been oriented toward applied research (i.e. helping people). Why not compare apples with apples?

For the first time in my twenty years at Texas A&M, we are not having a problem with freshman chemistry, so we dismantle the entire system as unworkable.

We continue to use a student registration process that was designed for and was reasonably workable for a university of 10 to 20 thousand students in spite of the availability of powerful computers that could do the job in seconds.

There seems to be a decided effort by University and System officials to split the teaching and research functions. Yet,

research has provided the bulk of the equipment and visual aids for the classroom for the last twenty years.

The list goes on and on. As I travel around this great country representing Texas A&M, frequently I find myself apologizing for the latest notoriety which we have generated in their local press. It is time for the University administration to stop telling us how weak the faculty is and how we need Nobel Prize winners to make it stronger, and give credit where credit is due. Ten, twenty, or even thirty Nobel Prize winners added to the faculty of 2,500 would have little effect on teaching quality. This is especially true since the University, based on its track record, will not be able to provide the operating budget to take advantage of the special skills of these new super faculty members.

We have all read a great deal about Target 2000. Let us pray that in search for "greatness" at Texas A&M we also may find a small touch of "reasonableness" along the way.

(Donald L. Woods is a civil engineering professor at Texas A&M.)



Attitudes on drinking change with experience

(Editor's note: Children's Express, a privately-funded news service, is real world journalism reported entirely by children 13 years of age or under whose tape-recorded interviews, discussions, reports and commentary are edited by teenagers and adults. This story is by Julie Horowitz, 13; Leslie Winslow, 11; Matthew Wolsk, 12; Assistant editor: Ken Staggers, 16.)

by Children's Express

NEW YORK — On Sept. 28, 1975, Helen Lapenta's 23-year-old son, Jamie, was driving home and he was hit by a drunk driver. He was put in the hospital and three days later he died.

Lapenta says the drunk driver paid a fine of \$50 and he was let off. Now in some elevators they have a sign, "If you smoke in the elevator, \$500 fine or 60 days in jail." And this man paid \$50 for killing someone? In an automobile accident? It's like you've done something really terrible and you're getting off with it very free.

Lapenta is part of the Plainview, N.Y., branch of Mothers Against Drunk Driving. MADD is an organization that formed four years ago in California, and now they have branches all over the country. A lot of the members are mothers who have had their son or daughter killed in a drunk driving accident. Fathers can join, also. And a lot of the other members are just concerned people. They meet and discuss what should be done to make people know what's going on. Their goal is to really stop drunk driving.

"I'm on the legislative committee there," Lapenta said, "which helps to pass laws to see that the drunk driver is stopped from killing. We've got to get even stronger laws, because a \$250 fine means nothing to some people. They don't mind paying that. They really don't care. And young people, when they see pictures of death and destruction in driver's education don't seem to be fazed at all. The thing that fazes them the most is having their driver's license taken away."

"In Scandinavia, when you have one drunk driving charge, you never get your license back. And as a result of that ruling in those countries, when people go out there's always one person who stays sober. Or they will take a taxi home. They

will never drive their car, because they know the first time they are arrested they will never drive in those countries again. They will never be issued another license again."

Lapenta's job is to work in the district criminal court, and she's handled a lot of drunk driving cases. She was always a little bit concerned about the thing, but once it actually happened to her, it changed her. She got active.

It changed her, after it happened to her. She had seen these hysterical mothers, but the only thing she could do was, "Really very sorry," and she could help them in the court system. She could feel for them, but when it happens to you, it's just more. The person was your son. He had a great future and everything, and now it's all gone because of this.

"To think that my son's life was taken away because someone drank too much," she said. These words give you a really funny feeling.

It's one of the worst crimes, because you can control it. It's a very stinky thing to do and it's uncaring to drive in a car when you know you're drunk. You know it's dangerous to other people. You know you do it because you want to. It's just your fault when you kill somebody in a drunk driving accident.

Lapenta thinks that the ultimate punishment is taking away the driver's license, but maybe they should be in jail. Drunk drivers should be pinned down. Tell them all to "watch where you're going."

"The turning point in the interview was when Lapenta said what she would do if the guy if she ever met him. She was calm and everything, but then she suddenly showed that she was just like everybody else and that she wanted to thrash this guy. She really wanted to yell at him and everything and thrash him."

Lapenta thinks that now some laws are being passed that are good. She knows it's not that easy — it's going to be hard. It's something wrong in the country that she's trying to stop.

(For more information about Children's Express, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Children's Express, Charles St., New York, N.Y. 10014.)



Shallow-breathing made easy

by Dick West

United Press International

WASHINGTON — Recent medical research has confirmed what I had long suspected — jogging in urban environments may do your body more harm than good.

Specifically, experiments with laboratory rats have shown that running in smog and other forms of air pollution damages the lungs far more than sitting still.

According to Omni magazine, University of California physiologists had mice "run on a motorized treadmill while breathing polluted air."

"Rats that exercised rigorously had up to 14 times as many lesions" in their lungs as those that remained stationary, Omni reported.

These tests point up the value of what I call shallow-breathing exercises.

It is patent that for those of us who live in large cities — where the air is fouled

with auto exhaust fumes, tree emissions and Ralph Nader-knows-what-all — the less deeply we breathe, the better.

Especially on days when the Air Quality Index is high, we need to reduce our respiration rate. Regular shallow-breathing exercises help develop good short-winded habits that provide a natural barrier against dirty air, even when we are asleep.

Without any conscious intention of muscling in on Jane Fonda's empire, I have devised a workout program calculated to diminish your need for oxygen.

Don't overdo at first. You may find yourself turning blue in the face. It is better to begin on a modest scale and gradually lessen the intake of air until you find yourself able to go several minutes without breathing at all.

For beginners — Lie flat on back on the floor. (The air is better down there.) At the count of one, raise right thumb to

nose and close off one nostril, inhaling through only half of the nose.

Hold for 10 counts and repeat with left thumb, blocking the passage of air through the other nostril.

Continue this regimen as long as you can lie on the floor without attracting a crowd.

A word of caution: Avoid wiggling the other fingers while holding a thumb against the nose. That gesture can give onlookers the wrong impression.

Another word of caution: The mouth should be in a closed position throughout the exercise. If necessary, pick up a package of commercial lipsealant from your sporting good dealer.

Advanced training — Lie on stomach and bury face in pillow, thereby forcing self to breath through the ears.

Tests show that only 68.7 percent as much air inhaled through the ears reaches the lungs.

Chicken cannon deserves Fleece

Editor:

On June 21, The Battalion reported a United Press International story describing a 20-foot cannon, developed by the Air Force that "was said to be capable of propelling 4-pound chickens through the lower atmosphere at speeds up to 700 miles per hour."

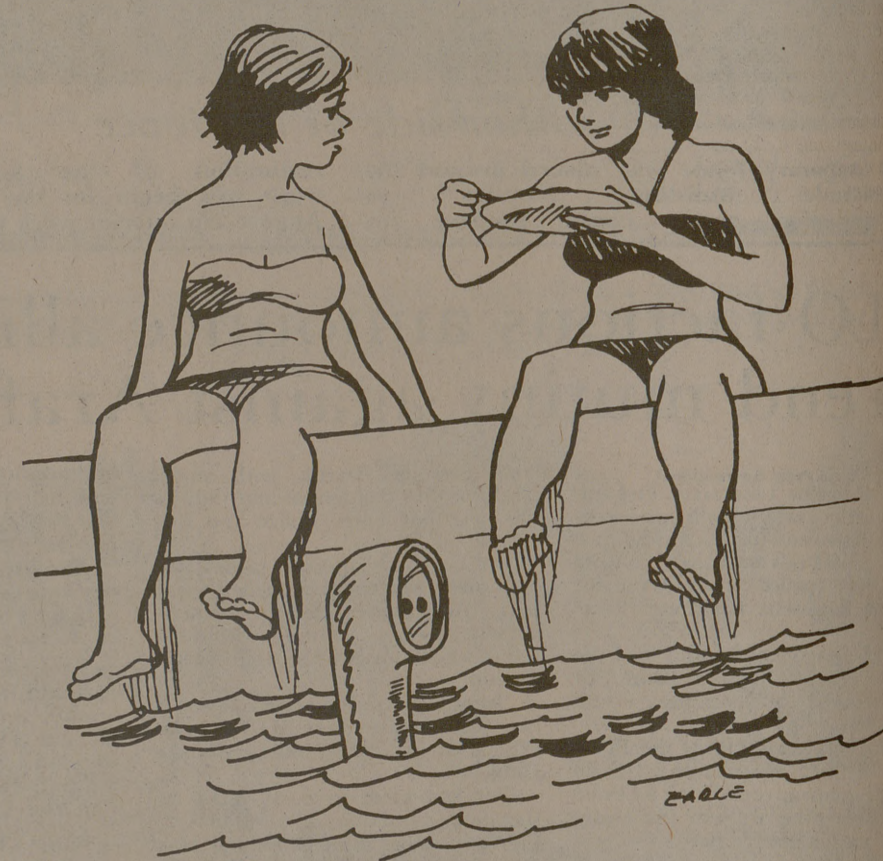
Your headline asked the question, "Is America winning cold chicken race?"

The answer to your question is that America lost this race over ten years ago. Environment (Jan/Feb 1971) reported that "a pneumatic cannon that fires dead chickens at speeds of up to 620 mph has been developed by the National Research Council of Canada."

It appears as if the Air Force has reinvented the dead chicken cannon. Surely this is a candidate for Senator Proxmire's Golden Fleece Award. Perhaps in this case it should be called the "Golden Feather Award."

Jay Martin Poole
Sterling C. Evans Library

Slouch By Jim Earle



"Is there something about this pool that makes you nervous?"

The Battalion

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

Questions or comments concerning any editorial matter should be directed to the editor.

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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 and show the address and telephone number of the writer.

Columns and guest editorials also are 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 (409) 845-2611.

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