# Opinion

## Silly syllabus suit

A syllabus is designed to give students an idea of a course's structure, but interpreting it as a binding contract between professors and students is ridiculous.

A Canadian judge recently ruled that a Ryerson Polytechnical Institute student can sue the school for breach of contract because the professor deviated from the course-syllabus.

A syllabus is defined as "a summary or outline containing the main points, especially of a course of study." The key word is "outline." The syllabus is not a rigid commitment, it's a guide for students so they can have an idea of what the course will be covering.

Some professors do seem to make syllabuses just to get in some typing practice, straying so far from the outline that students wish there was some type of legal recourse to get the professors back on track.

But a binding legal agreement in the form of a syllabus is absurd. Such a contract would not allow for such last-minute complications as illness, films that arrive late, prolonged class discussion, postponed lectures or guest speakers who cancel.

Students may become frustrated when a course does not follow the outline given to them on the first day of class - but deviation from the syllabus can be equally frustrating for the professors.

Although instructors should make every effort to stick to the syllabus, students should not interpret the syllabus as law.

**The Battalion Editorial Board** 



### Adversaries of new holiday ignore King's achievements

Today marks<sup>t</sup> the first official recognition of the birthday of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. The establishment of this new national holiday signifies the recognition of King and his accomplishments =



**Loren Steffy** 

and the impact they had on America.

Opposition to the holiday was strong, led by such conservative pillars as Jesse Helms. Even President Reagan orignally was opposed to creating a national holiday to honor King.

Opponents of the holiday claim it is unfair to have a Martin Luther King Jr. Day when we don't even have holidays commemorating the birthdays of great presidents. The creation of Presidents Day means no other American heroes have a day of honor entirely to themselves.

Other opponents argue that King either knowingly or unknowingly was a civil rights to have to violate. King

King was not a man of non-violence as he preached, but actually depended on violence to get his message across.

Such opposition ignores the real issues. It ignores the accomplishments King and his followers made. It ignores the impact that King had on civil rights. It ignores the illogical accusations of communism and violence advocacy.

Many conservative groups have rallied against the establishment of the King holiday, labeling it a victory for communism and demanding the FBI files on King be released.

King did have ties to the Communist Party USA through friends who aided his movement. But King was hardly a subversive. He attempted to advance the rights of his people within the framework of the establishment.

If communists were using King to gain some sort of victory, they certainly couldn't have gained much. The last thing communists would want is more freedoms to have to surpress or more pawn of the Communist Party, and wasn't trying to overthrow the existing

He was trying to change discriminatory 1963 Saturday Review, in which King policies and help fulfill the democratic wrote it was necessary to "dramatize the ideals of equality – ideals which were the existence of injustice" in four steps: basis for our government. If anything, King's actions made our government

some King Day adversaries even claim government or change its foundations. by quoting King's article in the April gained the respect of a nation.

"1. Non-violent demonstrators go

King's methods may stir some controversy among his opponents, but his goals are unquestionable. He helped America realize the full significance of the words "all men are created equal."

#### stronger, not weaker.

The civil rights movement under King was based on non-violence. Even when his own home was bombed, King refused to advocate violent retaliation.

Opponents of the King holiday claim violence was an integral part of King's plan. Congressman Larry P. McDonald of Georgia, testifying before the House Census and Population Subcommittee on Feb. 23, 1982 said King "sought and provoked violence against his followers because he believed violence was necessary to achieve his ends."

into the streets to exercise their constitutional rights. 2. Racists resist them by unleashing their violence against them. 3. Americans of conscience, in the name of decency, demand federal intervention and legislation. 4. The administration, under mass pressure, initiates measures of immediate intervention and remedial legislation.'

King did not rely on violence, but he used the violent responses of opponents against them. Even if white civil rights adversaries had done nothing, King's tactics would have raised America's consciousness of social injustice. But by re-McDonald supported his statement fusing to fight back physically, blacks

roller Bob roposed la ian tribes would perm whites who resorted to violence made themselves the villains, whose own a sakes bing ority of st tics turned against them.

Perhaps violence was part of the Km But triba an, but never violence by his follow federal juri plan, but never violence by his follo versight, 1 ers. Such a "use" of violence can hard be considered subversive - smart is health and o more accurate description. The bill

King's methods may stir some control dd Coleman versy among his opponents, but Texas' Alal harles Wil goals are unquestionable. He helpe gua Indian America realize the full significance the words "all men are created equal"

Frue, King may not have been 12 and is being fect. Few of the people we honor wi national holidays were. But it's not personal shortcomings of these me honor, but their accomplishments what they stood for.

King is gone, and his personal affi tions and other imperfections are go with him. What remains is his mes and his achievements - which an based in violence or communism, but peace and humanism.

Loren Steffy is a junior journalism jor and the Opinion Page Editor The Battalion.

The bill

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### What does it take to be a great teachernaut?

On Jan. 24, or thereabouts, Christa McAuliffe, of Concord, N.H., will be the first public school teacher to go into space. I say thereabouts because shuttle flights are now as depend- Art Buchwald able as the Long

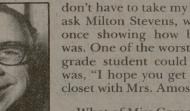


Island Railroad. In any case, Mrs. McAuliffe beat out 11,000 applicants for the ride.

If you're like me you will not be thinking of Mrs. McAuliffe at liftoff, but your own schoolteachers, and wondering what kind of fliers they would have been had they applied for the trip.

As much as I admired her, I don't think Mrs. Dunlap would have made a good teachernaut. Her subject was geography. Although she would have been a great help pointing out the interesting mountain ranges and rivers on earth to the captain, Mrs. Dunlap was a very tough disciplinarian and I fear she would have made the crew stand in the corner most of the trip for whispering without permission. She also had a practice of making students who didn't do their homework leave the classroom. Since no one ever dared disobey, I'm afraid half the astronauts would wind up hanging on the outside of the shuttle waiting for permission to come back in.

Our homeroom teacher, Mrs. Amos, would have been another story. She might have been just the right person that she would for the shuttle ride — except for one thing. Mrs. Amos was very broad in the hips - too broad, I'm afraid, to have her. I don't besqueezed into the cabin - certainly too lieve Miss Adams broad to be weightless in space. You would willingly



don't have to take my word for this. Just strike any of the astronauts. But if she she would never let anybody go to the time to orbit the earth. If she had a ask Milton Stevens, who made a sketch hasn't lost her touch, her ruler would bathroom unless they raised their hand. once showing how broad Mrs. Amos was. One of the worst threats a seventhgrade student could make to another was, "I hope you get caught in the coat

closet with Mrs. Amos.'

What of Miss Gomez? She would have been a good choice except she was already famous. Her brother was Thomas Gomez, the movie actor. As long as I knew her. Miss Gomez was never introduced by her own name, but always as 'the sister of Thomas Gomez." So while

Miss Gomez might have been excellent, I'm certain

NASA would never let a teacher who had a famous brother lift off from the Cape.

The next person that comes to mind is Miss Adams. She would have had a lot going for her as a candidate because she taught science. (It doesn't hurt to have someone on a shuttle trip who knows a little on the subject.) The down side of

Miss Adams is insist on taking her ruler with get much closer to their fingers than NASA regulations permit.

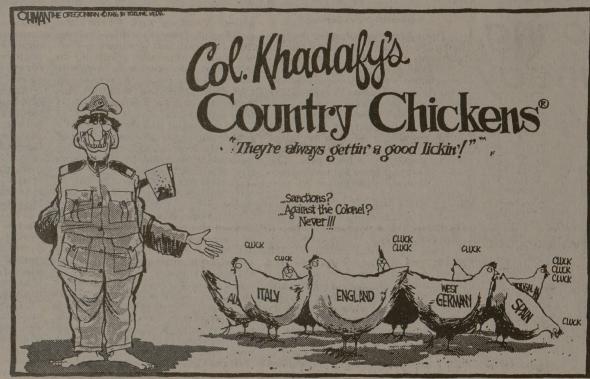
The next candidate that would have been considered if the shuttle flight had taken place 47 years ago is Mrs. Egorkin, my English teacher. If she had a fault it was that she always insisted on being in charge. I don't believe Mrs. Egorkin would go on the space trip unless she was assured in writing that she cover of People magazine, or walking would be captain of the mission.

My mind drifts to the final nominee - Mrs. Laub, a potential winner. Mrs. Laub would have met all the NASA public relations criteria. First, she was adored by her pupils. Second, she would have looked great in an astronaut's suit. She would have had no problem posing upside down for the every teacher in the country has, when along Cocoa Beach with Barbara Walters telling what it's like to be a wife,

it was that she would never go o space mission if it interfered with give a test.

Well, there is my list of candidate Every child and grown-up has some ucator he or she would like to send into space. What makes America gre that not only you, Mrs. McAuliffe, call for lack of a better name, **Right Stuff.**"

Art Buchwald is a columnist for Mrs. Egorkin's other weakness was mother and teacher - and still have Los Angeles Times Syndicate.



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