

Opinion

Preserving academic values through 'no play, no pass'

In the beginning, there was evolutionary science. Then people calling themselves "creationists" rallied and lobbied to have religion taught in science classes.



Loren Steffy

Now we have the no-pass, no-play rule that attempts to realign academic values. If the new law succeeds, children actually may go to school to learn rather than to play football. The long-term effects could be devastating to the nation. What will happen when our high schools can no longer generate blue-chip athletes? Colleges can't be expected to buy cars for players who consistently have losing seasons.

But just as creationists crusaded for a "balanced" education, football loyalists also will demand similar equality. I'm speaking, of course, of the controversial "no-play, no-pass" rule.

The rule would prohibit students from passing any of their courses unless they take at least one football prep course each semester. Opposition has been strong, but advocates are glad to see a return to traditional academic values.

High school counselors are advising students to get as much football background as possible, because colleges are expected to raise their football entrance requirements before the next fiscal year.

Some students with heavy course loads — future mathematicians, nuclear physicists and microbiologists — already have voiced concerns.

"I'm not here to play football, I'm

here to study microprogramming of digit-control dynamic stochastic systems," says Poindexter Q. Magillicutty, a high school senior and president of Future High Tech Corporate Magnates of America. "I'll never pass if I have to take football, which means I'll never get into MIT."

But Coach Rusty Kleates, a high school football instructor, disagrees. "How can a boy be well-rounded if he hasn't learned how to smear some other kid's face across the AstroTurf?"

Kleates feels that if the integrity of the nation is to be preserved, football must be kept as an integral part of the American educational system.

"Look," Kleates says, "every other nation has their claim to fame. Japan has its cameras, cars and computers. Germany's got its cars, beer and Berlin Wall. London has its buses, royalty and tea. Switzerland has its summits, chocolate and peace. America's cars, cameras, computers, beer, tea and chocolate pale in comparison. But, by God, America has its football. This nation is known for grown men who like to brutalize each other over a ball you can't bounce and beer with German-sounding names."

Kleates and other coaches feel that without proper football training, the youth of America will turn into calculator-wielding wimps.

"It'll be like 'Peanuts,' Kleates explains. "First, girls will start wanting to play. Obviously, they can't play linebacker, it's chromosomally impossible. So, we'll have to let 'em hold the ball for the place kicker. But without proper instruction, the boys'll be too wimpy to kick the ball."

Kleates insists that football education is vital for any child. "You got kids today who don't know the difference between

home plate and the end zone. Who would have thought our education system could become so lax?"

The no-play, no-pass rule hasn't been well received by non-athletic teachers. Many teachers feel it's unfair to expect them to incorporate sports into the classroom. "Anatomy isn't too bad, the students can learn the parts of the body by what gets broken in an average game," says Frederick Phormaldehyde, a science teacher. "But just try to explain how many first downs ago the earth was formed (or created)."

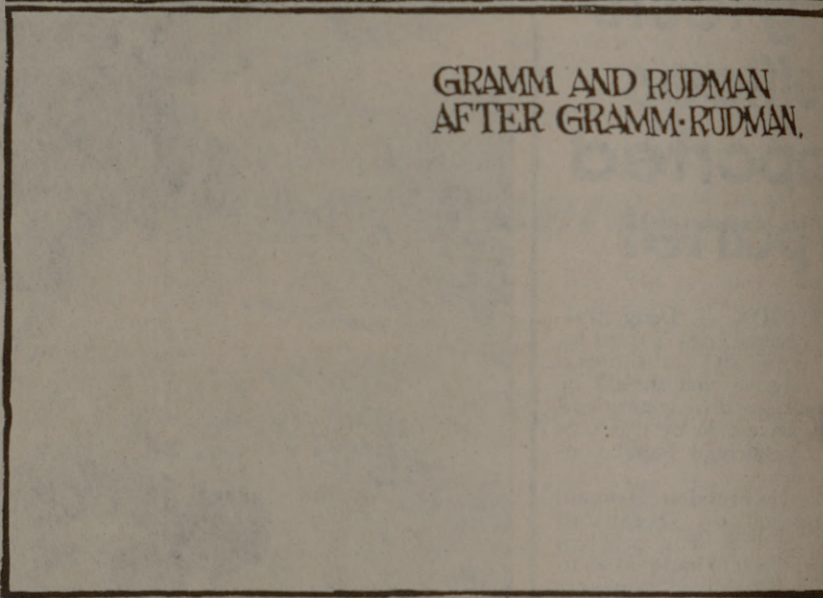
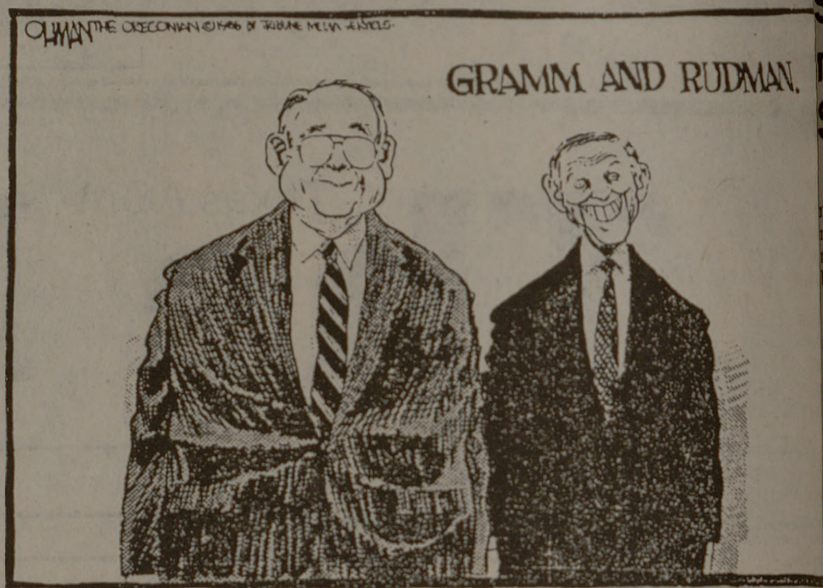
However, the recent wave of complaints by prospective employers that "Johnny can't pass, Johnny can't run and Johnny can't kick" have begun to change the public's opinion.

"I don't want an employee who can punch buttons on a keyboard, I want an employee who can do two miles with me at lunch," says Archimedes P. Throckmorton VI, president of Throckmorton, Fisk, Worley, Spindfelder, Blibdoolpoop & Snorph Ltd. "Nowadays, high schools and colleges are producing scholars who don't even have the stamina to walk up stairs. We've had to put escalators in all our buildings."

The new rule isn't infallible. Egbert K. Quigley, a National Merit scholar, says he is planning to buy most of his plays from the school quarterback to boost his grades. Other kids feel their fathers will be more inclined to help with homework if all they have to do is throw a few screen passes after dinner.

Kleates also expresses some concern over mandatory football instruction. "You may see a lot more kids running around with tape in the middle of their face mask to hold it together."

Loren Steffy is a junior journalism major and the Opinion Page editor for The Battalion.



Mail Call

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. A letter must be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

Desperately seeking backpack

EDITOR:

After my Friday tests I went to the Chicken to relax and lift a few beers. While I was there, someone accidentally picked up my backpack which contained about everything that I owned. I have more tests Friday and need my notes back desperately. If you have my backpack, please call me at 779-8688 so I don't fail anything.

Craig Browning

Calculator found

EDITOR:

I recently found a calculator in Harrington Education Center. I can be reached at 260-6304. Thank you.

Jan Welch

Stupid decisions

EDITOR:

With all the usual fanfare, the president's blue-ribbon panel of specialists appointed to investigate the Challenger catastrophe, has announced the new director of NASA. And, as has become commonplace with the Reagan administration, they have rewarded ineptness and poor professionalism, rather than stifling it.

Jesse Moore was NASA's associate administrator of space flight and the man who made the final decision to launch the Challenger to its fate. The papers say he was not advised of the shuttle's problems, so supposedly is not responsible for them. Yet, any administrator worth his pay should not only know what is happening "in the ranks", but should have an organization in which his people feel free to contact him — directly, if need be — in the event of any dangerous circumstances. Obviously, Jesse Moore satisfied neither of these criteria as associate administrator of the Johnson Space Center.

Yet, he was promoted to head of the center shortly after the accident — further insulating him from the chaotic investigation which ensued. Now he is head of all of NASA. Something is amiss, not only at NASA, but in Washington, and with those who are making these kind of stupid decisions.

William H. Clark II

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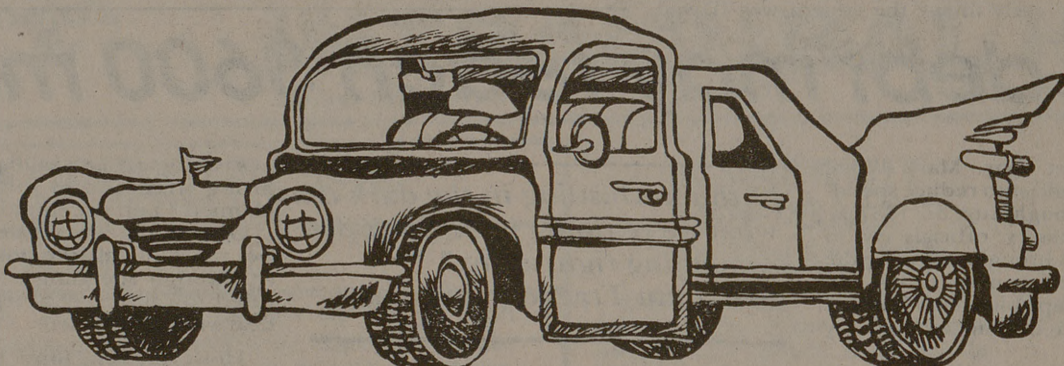
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Q. WHAT HAS THE WHEELS OF A CHEVY, TRANSMISSION OF A DATSUN, FENDER OF A DODGE, MUFFLER OF A MERCEDES, AND REAR AXLE OF A FORD PICKUP ?



A. A NEARBY POTHOLE

MARGULIES
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United Feature Syndicate

Helping the hole neighborhood

"The Pothole Man" is happy to report the mailbox has been overflowing with letters. Thanks to a cold and wet winter, potholes are now flowering in neighborhoods that have never seen them before.



Art Buchwald

Unfortunately there is still a lot of ignorance about the care and feeding of potholes — and that's where The Pothole Man comes in.

Our first letter is from Laurie Kramer who writes:

"I have a beautiful pothole in front of my house measuring two feet by two feet, and one-and-a-half feet deep. What would you advise me to plant in it?"

Dear Laurie: What you plant in your pothole depends on whether you want to use it for show or eat from it. Since I assume it will be run over at least 200 times a day, I would plant something low to the ground, such as petunias for show or dwarf pear trees for food. Make sure you have a good drainage system in your pothole, or it will fill with water and become a breeding ground for malaria mosquitoes.

The second letter, from Connie Coopersmith, asks us to discuss pothole ownership:

"We bought a home last month with an art deco pothole that the previous owner insisted was at least 50 years old. Actually, we bought the house for the hole. Now it turns out we do not own the pothole — the city does. Can we still fertilize it and treat it as our own?"

Dear Connie: It is interesting that the city would claim ownership of a pothole on your street. Municipal authorities, when called, not only deny they own the pothole, but an attempt to prove your street is not even within the city limits. Consider the street hole your own.

A letter from Joey Fontana deals with fixing up potholes:

"My hobby is finding run-down potholes in the neighborhood and improving them so they look almost brand-new. I drive a cement truck so I think I do as good a job as anyone. The other day at Cathedral and 44th Street, I made beaut — I mean a Greyhound bus could disappear in it and never be heard from again.

"Well, this guy Charlie Guggenheim, who owns a house right there, said I was getting too close to his pothole. He told me to fill it in or take it somewhere else. I'm not taking it anywhere. Am I right?"

Dear Joey: You certainly are. Guggenheim should be pleased with having your pothole in front of his house. If he had any class he'd fill it up with humus and plant some tulips. Recently the courts have ruled that a pothole belongs to all the people. Our founding fathers wanted America's potholes to be shared by everyone — from sea to shining sea. By enlarging and widening the pothole in front of Guggenheim's house you enhanced all the real estate values in the area.

Dana Williams wrote one of the most interesting letters:

"There was this pothole at the end of the block and it kept getting larger and larger. Every time a car went 'kerplunk,' an axle broke. Then one day a neighbor planted a bush in it so people could see it. The following Friday, for no reason at all, the bush caught on fire and burned. The next morning a city repair truck came by and filled in the hole. My question: Was the burning bush a miracle?"

Dear Dana: I'm not sure about the burning bush, but the city truck showing up to repair the pothole sure as heck was.

Art Buchwald is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate.