

# Opinion



## Solid education sadly lacking in American secondary schools

What's happened to secondary education? It is failing to satisfy its goal of providing a solid education to the country's youth. It's become too creative.



D.A. Jensen

Educators, believing students learn more effectively when they want to learn, have tried to make education an enjoyable experience by eliminating the unpleasant aspects of learning.

In some ways the results have been disastrous. Creative education has freed students from drudgery and enabled them to grow in the education process. Unfortunately, in many cases, they've grown away from a sound education as they've moved away from a strict, formal education.

The trend toward mediocrity in education should have all but the most unconcerned citizen alarmed. There are 23 million functionally illiterate adults in the United States. They did not crawl out of the woodwork; they were not adequately served by the public education system.

Education reform, especially in the area of curriculum development, is desperately needed to restore excellence in education.

The curriculum in contemporary high schools has become more diverse, but often it has done so at the cost of quality. Secondary school curriculum has become diluted and diffused to the point that it no longer achieves basic education. It has lost its focus.

Schools still offer quality academic courses, but students are lured away from them by offerings such as marriage training and preparation for adulthood.

Even bright students are leaving more challenging courses behind in favor of easier courses. The trend is understandable because diluted courses can be used as a means to make better grades while expending less effort. This trend can also be seen in the university setting with its relatively unstructured curriculum. Universities have started to change curriculum requirements to combat the problem.

The actual deficiency occurs when students are allowed to graduate with a minimum of academic courses and a majority of filler courses. Students are not receiving the basic education they need to function in society.

The curriculum problem is exacerbated by the attitude many boards of education take about their role in school districts. They see themselves as mainly a support vehicle. Under this method, local schools determine their own curriculum and requirements for graduation. They base these decisions on what they feel the needs of the students are. Often the textbooks used by the local schools do not even require state approval.

In order to reverse the direction curriculum development has taken, extensive reform is required. High school graduation requirements must be raised in order to promote a well-educated class of graduates. A nationally uniform program requiring four years of English, three years of math, three years of science, three years of social studies and one year of computer science for graduation would guarantee every individual a basic education. Statistics currently indicate that fewer than 2 percent of all students meet these standards.

Let's try to renew the original goals of education and return to reading, writing and arithmetic. Maybe then our kids will get the education they deserve.

D.A. Jensen is a senior journalism major and a columnist for *The Battalion*.

## Want to know if you're a bimbo? Take this easy, 16-question quiz

The headline on the cover of People magazine quoted Jessica Hahn, love-mate to the television ministry, as saying, "I am not a bimbo."



Lewis Grizzard

Upon seeing that headline jump out at me from a magazine rack at a convenience store, I asked myself, has the term "bimbo" ever been fully and exactly defined? I don't think so, even though the term — used basically to describe a slick-brained, air-headed young female — is being used more and more often in our language.

Because there seems to be an ever-increasing number of young women (see Hall, Fawn; Rice, Donna) who are being forced to deny their bimboness, it seemed natural for me — as a public service — to offer a quiz that will allow female readers to determine if they are already bimbos or are headed down the path to bimbohood.

With the help of my colleague, Raunch Botts, lounge lizard, deflowerer of young girls who come to the city to meet a man who wears underwear like Jim Palmer, and whose dates all have first names that end with "i," I developed the following quiz for those concerned about being bimbos:

1. Would you have trouble naming a single capital of any of the 50 states?
2. Did you say, "No. New York, New York"?
3. Were you ever a cheerleader?
4. Did you ever forget (or forget on purpose) those little shiny pants that went under your cheerleading skirt?
5. Do you wear matching leg warmers and headbands when you work out at "The Bod God"?
6. Does the name Ronald Reagan ring a bell?
7. Is it the one in your head that goes "Ding-dong" whenever you see a gold American Express card?
8. Do you own a cat?
9. Is a good suntan more important to you than life itself?

10. Do you think the public library is located in the checkout line at your local supermarket?

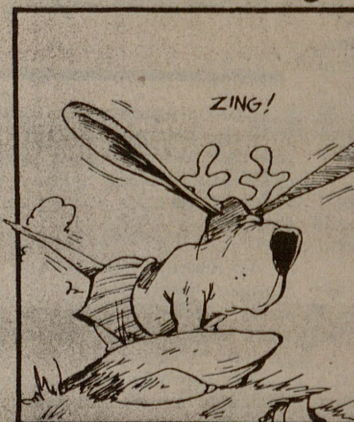
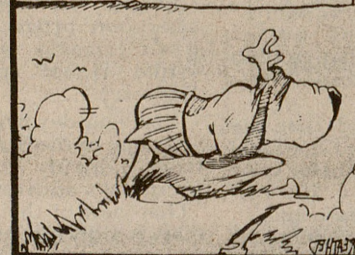
11. Are you from California?
  12. Do you think panty raid is the name of a feminine hygiene spray?
  13. Have you already forgotten why you are trying to answer these questions?
  14. Are you an Aquarius?
  15. Have you ever met a man named Raunch Botts?
  16. Did you believe him when he said he was an Aquarius, too?
- If you answered any of these questions, "Yes," you've got a better than average chance of being a bimbo. If you answered them all "Yes," then you are definitely a bimbo. Congratulations.

This is probably the last time in your life you'll have to think.

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## BLOOM COUNTY

THE AMERICAN BASSELOPE: A STRANGE AND MYSTERIOUS BEAST WITH AN UNCANNY POLITICAL SIXTH SENSE FOR THINGS THAT YOU AND I CAN ONLY GUESS AT!



by Berke Breathed

## Mail Call

### An outdated attitude

EDITOR:

To Yale St. Clair, who stated, "I was shocked and horrified..." about the 84,000 abortions performed in Texas alone last year: I am shocked and horrified that you are lacking in the area of regard for women and their choices.

I have one question: Would you keep your narrow-minded opinion if your mother were raped — and impregnated by her attacker? How about your sister? I'll bet you would insist upon them having the child because you are pro-life, right? The disgrace and shame the mother and child would emotionally deal with is irrelevant, right?

St. Clair, you seem to be ignoring some major issues in this age-old debate. There are legitimate cases in which the emotional and physical health of the mother and/or baby is at risk. I'm not pro-abortion but pro-choice.

Your assumptions that our society has lost its sense of decency and any compassion for the unborn are complete exaggerations that are not factually based. Your chauvinistic attitude is outdated. Grow up, St. Clair. A mind is a terrible thing to waste.

Paige DiMaggio  
grad student

### Apartheid apathy appalling

EDITOR:

I am appalled at how apathetic college students are these days! It seems to me that they are more concerned with their afternoon soaps than they are about national or world matters that affect them. Students are more worried about what they are doing Friday night than they are about world suffering and discrimination.

I am referring to South Africa's system of apartheid. Blacks are not allowed to vote, and they have segregated educational facilities which offer less than adequate education. White students receive almost double the amount for schooling. And blacks make up the majority of the South African population. Clearly then, no true American would support such a system of inequality, injustice and oppression. Yet A&M organizations such as Students Against Apartheid have an active membership of about 15 people. This is a shocking display of indifference towards the blacks in South Africa, particularly in a school of 39,000 students. I believe that the blacks of South Africa someday will get their freedom, with or without our help, but would it be better to be on the winning side? I urge all students to get involved in the fight against racism and human suffering that exists in South Africa.

Susan Vint '90

### Wasting a finite environment

EDITOR:

It was very interesting to see the opposing opinions in Mail Call on Friday, Oct. 9. Coffman's opinion is that bonfire isn't worth the price, while Tiesman says the bonfire is valued by Aggies more than the woodlands it is made of.

As has been said before, whether it is from claimed land or not, the bonfire is built from local forest land, a habitat Coffman realizes is terribly finite and worth more than to burn and to roast weiners on.

There is a growing body of knowledge that seeks to get through to attitudes like Tiesman's. You have no idea how dangerous and wrong it is to think that water, air and even trees are expendable. If you knew anything about it, you would not mock those who try to make you understand, because you would be just as concerned. This "world" that you may think is healthy dies faster every day now; when once it only knew life building on life, now it dies literally at an exponential rate.

This is not a crazy religion or a fantasy — it is a reality that must be accepted, or we all lose. I support those who argue against bonfire because they obviously are aware of something Tiesman isn't: bonfire is not a positive event. It is, of course, a symbol of our school tradition, etc., but I know many people who would be a lot prouder to see (yes, to see) a bonfire that is smaller in size but immensely richer in practicality.

Peter Walton '87

### Start tradition of saving environment

EDITOR:

In answer to a few observations about bonfire, I think Aggie tradition is great. However, as a student who has been in the real world and returned to college for training, I can remember the time of the early to mid-1970s when I was in high school. It may be the biggest and best bonfire, but yet you were a bonfire to beat t.u.? The true waste of natural resources may be negligible for about 20 years. The young people today do not know about real pollution. Yet it is the environment suffering from the fumes and dumping of the 60s and 70s.

I believe the young students should know about issues that were before the public when they were just children. Thank God someone tried to stop pollution back then. I have asked several Aggies who Ralph Nader is. They think he is running for student office or on the football team. Personally, I respect A&M for rich tradition. But I can remember a midnight yell before game in Waco a couple of years ago. The site was donated by the Hilton. Contrary to popular belief, the Aggies showed no class. They littered the site extensively with beer cans and bottles, fast food sacks, cups and other assorted trash.

A friend of mine pleaded over the microphone for everyone to pick up their trash. It was all to no avail. So we spent hours cleaning up. If you want to start a new tradition — save the environment!

John White '87

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