

COLUMBIA FEATURES, INC.

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JOSEPH M. BOYCHUK, PRESIDENT

MURRAY HILL 7-3655

Dear Editor;

The task of providing adequate education for our children is probably the biggest single problem faced by communities in the United States and, in fact, in the entire country. In virtually every city the educational budget is the lion's share of the tax bite. Compounding the sheer problem of paying for education are the myriads of difficulties: adequate classroom and school facilities, teacher shortages, teacher pay, educational quality and scores of others.

Our American newspapers have done an admirable job of keeping their readers informed on the subject, particularly as it applies to local news. However, no newspaper can afford not to have an educational column. And, in dealing with this subject no newspaper can afford not to have the best, most authoritative column published in the syndicate field--
WOODRING ON EDUCATION.

Who is Dr. Paul Woodring? Dr. Woodring, author, educator, lecturer and full time consultant for the Fund for the Advancement of Education of the Ford Foundation, brings to his column an authority second to none in the field of educational writing. He is critical, but constructively so, of our current school systems as attested to in his books: A Fourth of a Nation, Let's Talk Sense About Our Schools, and New Directions in Teacher Education. His provocative and stimulating views have appeared in such publications as HARPERS, LIFE, THE JOURNAL OF TEACHER EDUCATION, SCHOOL AND SOCIETY and many others.

WOODRING ON EDUCATION, a once-a-week feature, released in October of 1958 has built a reputation for authority and interest in such papers as the Detroit Free Press, St. Louis Globe-Democrat, New York Mirror, Newark News, Indianapolis Star, Minneapolis Star & Tribune, Dallas Times-Herald, Houston Post, Cincinnati Post, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Tulsa World, San Antonio Express & News, Wisconsin State Journal, Memphis Commercial Appeal, Nashville Tennessean, Columbus Dispatch, Des Moines Register & Tribune, New Orleans Times-Picayune, Cleveland Press, Washington Daily News, Miami Herald, Wichita Eagle, Louisville Times, Raleigh News & Observer, etc. etc.

lege tragedy, parents in Birmingham, Alabama reported that seven boys had been severely beaten with baseball bats after having been forced to eat the usual disgusting filth. Similar brutality was reported as a part of hazing in two cities in Indiana.

If these atrocities were committed in a foreign land we would rise up in wrath and condemn them for the evil they are. If they were the work of the police we would properly call it "police brutality." If these things happened in the army we would demand a senatorial investigation, as we should. But when they are the work of college boys we seem to accept it all as good, clean, fun.

It's neither good nor clean and no fun for anyone but sadists. Most fraternity members are normal American boys who really don't enjoy such things but stand by and watch because they are pledged to their juvenile secret code. The initiations fall into the hands of the occasional brutal or sadistic "brother" who does enjoy humiliating or mistreating his fellow-men.

Most high schools have banned secret organizations, as they should, for there is no excuse whatever for their existence. Where they continue to operate the initiations do not occur during school hours or on school grounds and the problem is one for parents and the local police.

In many colleges, however, fraternities continue to be a recognized part of college life with powerful support and the backing of national organizations. They have, in the past, served a useful purpose as eating clubs, boarding houses, and social groups but now that colleges have dormitories and provide a great deal of social life for all students much of the reason for fraternities is gone. No doubt they provide some feeling of group membership for the socially insecure but there is little excuse for secret mumbo-jumbo or barbarous initiation ceremonies. These things contribute nothing to education and do much to interfere with it --- during the annual "hell-week" the intellectual life of the college comes to a virtual standstill.

College presidents and deans who have tried to reduce the brutality of initiations or to get rid of fraternities have been denounced by fraternity leaders who often have strong alumni support. There appears to be no solution so long as fraternities are secret organizations, beyond the control of the proper authorities.

Fraternities will no doubt continue to exist and to control the social and political life on many campuses. In such a college the boy who wants to take part in things often feels he must join or be left out in the cold. But there is an easy solution for the boy who does not want to be subjected to a year of fear, humiliation and brutality in order to get a college education. He can select a college where fraternities do not exist; there are many of these and they include some of the best colleges in the nation.

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WOODRING ON EDUCATION

BRUTALITY ON THE CAMPUS

By
Dr. Paul Woodring

Another college boy has died as the result of a fraternity initiation. According to news reports he had been forced by his "brothers" to swallow a thick slice of oil-soaked raw liver which lodged in his throat and choked him.

It wasn't the first such tragedy and it won't be the last. We must expect such things as long as fraternities are secret organizations, beyond the control of adult authority. The next victim may be your son.

When a death occurs the boys responsible are gently chided and placed on "probation" by the college authorities --- a totally meaningless gesture. Sometimes the fraternity is closed down until the storm of public criticism blows over. There is rarely any effective legal action; yet if a gang of boys from the wrong side of the tracks committed the same acts they would certainly be charged with manslaughter.

The occasional death is only a part of the problem. For every boy who dies thousands are brutally beaten, left naked in the woods far from home, and otherwise humiliated. This is said to make them good "brothers" --- a curious conception of the meaning of brotherhood. Many are forced to eat filthy and nauseating substances and to any sensitive human being this is a most extreme form of torture.

No matter how brutal a college initiation may be we rarely hear about it unless it leads to death or a very serious injury. Because the fraternity is a secret organization a neophyte may not report mistreatment even to his parents or the police. There is no college supervision of initiations for the fraternity is a national organization and beyond effective local college control even though the college recognizes it. If a faculty member is present he is usually a member of the fraternity who has taken an oath not to reveal its secrets even to college authorities.

In high school, because the victims must go home afterward, the brutality more often comes to light. Only a week or two after the col-

WOODRING ON EDUCATION

THE CASE FOR BASIC EDUCATION

By
Dr. Paul Woodring

Nearly everyone agrees that we ought to get rid of the "frills" of education and get back to the fundamentals. But which subjects are "basic"? A new book titled The Case for Basic Education (Atlantic--Little, Brown) offers an answer, tells us what a student should know about each subject by the time he completes high school.

The book was prepared by The Council for Basic Education, a non-profit organization of people who are not happy about the recent trends in education. The Council's goal is the restoration of an academic and intellectual emphasis in all our schools and the elimination of activities not consistent with such an emphasis.

The subjects considered "basic" by the Council are: government, history, geography, English composition and literature, classical and foreign languages, mathematics, biology, chemistry, and physics. A chapter titled "some electives" discusses art, music, philosophy, and speech. It seems curious that there should be a chapter on electives in a book on basic education. If these subjects are basic they should be required rather than elective. If they are not basic they do not belong in this book.

Each chapter is written by a scholar or scientist who makes a strong case for his own subject; explains why he thinks it important, and what part of it he thinks should be learned in high school. Professor Ray Billington of Northwestern University says, "American history is to the people of the United States what memory is to an individual; with no knowledge of their past they would suffer from collective amnesia, groping blindly into the future without guideposts of precedence to shape their course."

Writing on the importance of composition, Professor Donald Tuttle of Fenn College says that "to be a member of our society without command of the written language is to be partly excluded from it. Few persons become leaders in any profession who have not learned to write effectively." Professor Clyde Kohn of Iowa says, "The student who possesses geographic understandings and skills...will be better pre-

pared to cope with the world in which he will live, and to deal with the wide array of complex human affairs in his local community, his state and nation, and in the world as a whole."

Professor Bower Aly of the University of Oregon states the case for the teaching of speech: "If the American people are to persevere --- indeed if they are to survive --- they must learn in every generation, in school or out, the great arts of discourse that enable free men to live together and even to prosper in the midst of perils. They must become again the kind of people to whom such persuasions as those of the Federalist papers were once addressed, to whom such speeches as those of Lincoln and Douglas were once presented."

Few educators would quarrel with any of these assertions. Still The Case for Basic Education is, to me, a disappointing book, ineffective in the sense that it is not likely to bring about any important changes. The subjects listed as "basic" already are taught in most high schools and the people who teach them know they are important. They know that the high goals set by the authors of the book are not usually achieved in high school but neither are they achieved in the colleges and universities in which these professors teach.

Few college graduates are able to write and speak with clarity and force. Many graduate without an adequate understanding of history, science, or literature. Many are ignorant of the geography of the world. These deficiencies are serious but they cannot be repaired merely by having college professors blame them all on the high school teachers.

Each of the authors of this book defends his own subject well but none seems to have a well thought out philosophy of education on which a curriculum can be based. There is no examination of the problem of priorities and relative emphasis among the different subjects, no explanation of why such subjects as psychology, sociology, and economics are completely omitted from the list or of why philosophy, art, and music are listed only as electives.

If the Council for Basic Education is to achieve its high aims for the American high school it must do more than state and defend a list of subjects. It must present a clear philosophy of secondary education and then help high school teachers to achieve the proper goals by working closely with them in discovering more effective ways of teaching. In this respect some of the better high schools already are ahead of the Council and this book might have been more effective if some of the nation's best high school teachers had been asked to contribute chapters.

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Columbia Features, Inc.

Some recent titles will give you an idea of the scope of coverage of this superbly written column:

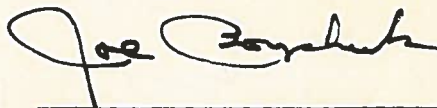
JOHNNY AND HIS READING PROBLEMS
HOW MUCH SHOULD OUR SCHOOLS COST
WHO'S AN EXPERT ON EDUCATION
RETURN OF THE HICKORY STICK
CLASS SIZE

EDUCATION AND IGNORANCE
FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE SCHOOLS
WHAT DO AMERICANS READ
WHO SHOULD BE PROMOTED
T.V. IN THE CLASSROOM

Enclosed are three recent samples of Dr. Woodring's columns which we feel certain will interest you and your readers. Because your area is, as yet, uncovered we are enclosing a reply card for your use in requesting rate and territory information.

If you can afford an educational column, you can afford the best in the field--WOODRING ON EDUCATION. Why not mail for additional information today?

Sincerely,



Joseph M. Boychuk

ABOUT DR. PAUL WOODRING

In the past few years, Dr. Paul Woodring has successfully established himself as the nation's leading critic of the public schools. Unlike some others with whom he must compete for the title, however, he is generally acceptable to those who have spent their professional lives working in and for those schools. This is because he forsakes the easy road of scornful and witty denigration for the more moderate path of highly constructive criticism. He is not wildly enthusiastic about the schools as they are now; in fact he finds them confused and seriously at fault, but he is willing to work to reconstruct them along practical lines that at least have some chance of being accepted by the public, the professional educators and the academicians.

In April, 1958, he addressed the members of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington, D.C., and as a result of the tremendous impact that his address made upon the newspaper editors, Columbia Features prevailed on him to write a weekly column on the subject of education.

Except for four years as an army officer and two as a clinical psychologist in the criminal courts of Detroit, Dr. Woodring has been a teacher for most of his adult years. He has been, in turn, a country school teacher, high school English teacher, instructor in a university, professor in a liberal arts college and professor in a teachers college. He came to his present position from Western Washington College of Education in Bellingham where he taught courses in psychology, education and philosophy.

Dr. Paul Woodring is best known as an analyst and interpreter of educational problems. He is the author of A Fourth of a Nation, Let's Talk Sense About Our Schools, New Directions in Teacher Education, and of numerous articles on schools and colleges which have been published in HARPERS, LIFE, THE JOURNAL OF TEACHER EDUCATION, SCHOOL AND SOCIETY, and other professional and popular magazines. He has delivered lectures on educational problems at Yale, Harvard, the Universities of Oregon, Pittsburgh, North Carolina, Minnesota, and many other colleges and universities.

He was consultant and visiting professor of the Carleton College Study of Teacher Education in 1954, for the Educational Survey of the University of Pennsylvania in 1957, and has been consultant to the National Citizens Committee for the Public Schools. Since September 1956, he has been a full-time consultant for the Fund for the Advancement of Education of the Ford Foundation, a position which gives him an opportunity to visit schools and colleges throughout the country.

Dr. Woodring is a graduate of Bowling Green University and received his Ph.D. in psychology from the Ohio State University. He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, is listed in "American Men of Science", and is a Diplomate in Clinical Psychology. In 1958 he was selected by a jury of magazine and newspaper editors to receive the Tuition Plan Award, "For Outstanding Service to Education".