

# UT abounding in trendy bad ideas

**N**ow that the Ministers of English (the ME, for short) have determined E346K to be a "bad idea" and that Vice President Fonken has not only agreed but decided that as such it should be held "in abeyance," several revolutionary possibilities pop into view.

Personally, I welcome this courageous and forthright response to "bad ideas." I would particularly hope that a few other bad ideas might receive a similar response from the Vice President's Office.

Hence I propose the creation of The Quick Committee for the Good Ridance of Bad Ideas — the duties of which would be to ferret out bad ideas currently infesting our otherwise first-class university. The members of this committee should be selected from a special collection of university personnel, namely, recently dismissed lecturers, professors who have been denied

tenure, graduate students who have failed oral comprehensives at least once, and other students currently on scholastic probation. After all, to determine an idea's relative worth one must have that elusive quality commonly known as disinterested objectivity, which, to judge from their latest remarks, the ME manifests in the purest form.

As it happens, I would qualify for such a committee, and in view of the inestimable good it might do, I would like to bring a few bad ideas to the University's attention.

First, the Ministers of English have a point. E346K is a very bad idea. This fact is well known in the English department, particularly since it was the ME who originally proposed it. In all honesty, however, the same undeviating commitment to truth, which has

## Terry McDonald Guest Columnist

finally enlightened the ME, can only lead to the further revelation that in the English curriculum there is more than one bad idea. Let us be bold, for truth demands it. Since English courses meet the needs of very few self-respecting students, and since everybody knows English majors can't get jobs anyway, it seems only consistent with our new spirit of creative catharsis to put the whole English curriculum into abeyance. This would render its entire faculty no longer necessary, which, in a single sweep, would rid the University of more bad ideas than any other imaginable measure. Also, in this period of budget uncertainty, it would save the University literally millions of dollars — not to mention disposing of several tenured embarrassments.

This measure would not, of course, exhaust the University's vast reserve of bad ideas. But similar action with regard to other mainly outmoded liberal arts departments would, more likely than not, distinguish the University as one unafraid to assert itself as an enlightened trendsetter. Admittedly reading, writing and thinking skills would suffer, but surely a few "RWT" component courses here and there could take up the slack. From all available evidence (the present ME notwithstanding), these skills are overrated anyway.

If, after this purge, there remain a few bad ideas here and there, I believe we could live with them. After all, contrast and variety are important to a rich intellectual environment. And should there occur the rare, misguided student who despite advice to the contrary, perversely sought the skills

once taught by liberal arts, we could, for a nominal fee, put him in possession of the official "Dean King Reading List."

One must admit it is a plan of elegant simplicity and near limitless potential. Nor should it be rejected too quickly as just another bad idea. As an alternative, imagine Dan Rather living on the UT campus, and Ross Perot leading a helicopter raid on Parlin Hall, his hooded commandoes rappelling down the walls and crashing into the English department office to hordes of young Republicans chanting "Rehire the lecturers, rehire the lecturers." Things could be worse.

P.S. I've decided to become a professional piano tuner, as it could hardly be more cacophonous than the profession I will depart. Furthermore, it emphasizes harmony, which if not perfectly attainable may at least be well tempered.

*McDonald is a lecturer in English.*

