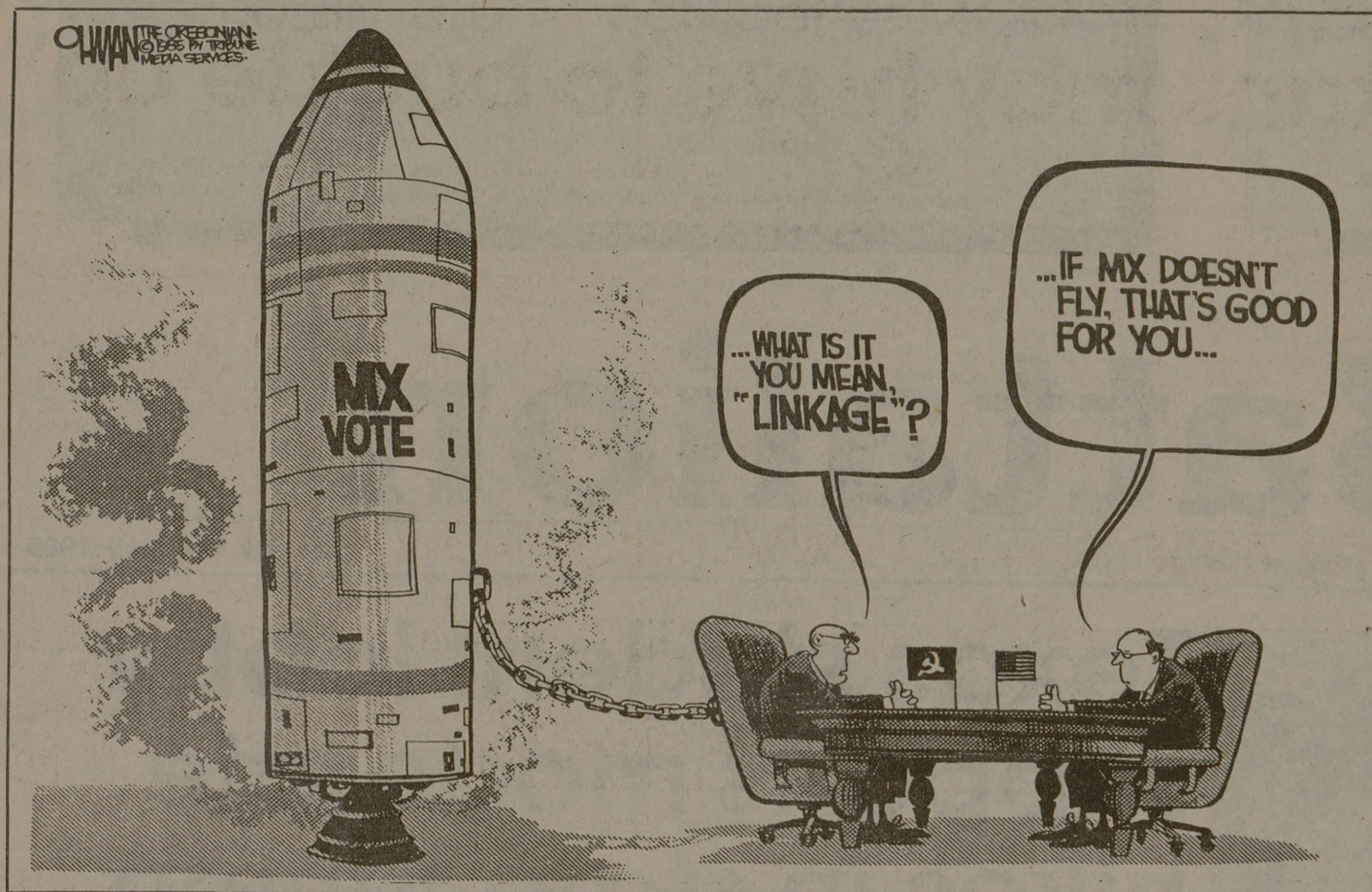


OPINION



Violence won't solve abortion problem

I paid a visit to Tulsa, Okla., during spring break and I noticed some anti-abortion demonstrators marching on the sidewalk. I felt some admiration for these people who believe so strongly in their cause that they are willing to speak out. But my conscience soon chimed in and reminded me that some people also demonstrate in favor of abortion and feel just as strongly about their side of this controversial issue. They, too, warrant admiration. Then I picked up the paper Monday morning and encountered a side of the abortion controversy which deserves no admiration.



Loren Steffy

An abortion clinic in San Diego was fire-bombed for the second time in seven months, bringing the grand total of attacks on abortion clinics nationwide to 33 since 1982. Whether abortion is an exercise in freedom of choice or the

murder of a defenseless child is not the issue. These bomb-toting anti-abortionists have twisted their admirable efforts of organized protest into a senseless play of domestic terrorism.

How ironic that a group of people concerned with the preservation of life would resort to violence and destruction to achieve their goal. If abortion is a social blemish which is to be loathed like the plague, wiping out abortion clinics will not provide a solution. Complex social problems can't be blown away by the explosion of a bomb.

Only through peaceful negotiation can a solution to the abortion situation be reached. Relying on terrorist tactics will not only turn away public support for these individuals, it will harm the overall image of anti-abortion protesters nationwide.

Differences may appear to be solved by violence in some instances, but with words or a handshake can the resolutions be finalized.

Loren Steffy is a sophomore journalism major and a weekly columnist for The Battalion.

Western films perpetuate myths about Texas

"La Casa Divertida de Tejas." Translated literally, it's "the most fun house in Texas." Translated freely, it's "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas."



Katherine Hurt

It was a cinematic blockbuster when I saw the Spanish-dubbed version in Madrid in the summer of 1983.

There they were, clear across the Atlantic Ocean: Dolly Parton, Burt Reynolds and a host of lascivious Aggies perpetuating all the favorite Texas myths — the ones about booted, Stetson-topped, drawing cowboys and endless plains enhanced with cattle, oil wells and tumbleweed. The Spaniards loved it. Even worse, they believed it!

"Whorehouse" has evolved from generations of Western films since 1908 that have created and sustained dozens

of similar myths about Texas and Texans, misinforming non-Texans everywhere.

Texas history supplies scores of stories that filmmakers have recreated in as many different ways. There's the San Jacinto or Sam Houston story ("Man of Conquest," "The First Texan"), the annexation story ("Lone Star"), the Ranger story and the Reconstruction story (both in hundreds of Westerns). And, ultimately, there's the Alamo story.

Texas history movies have always remembered the Alamo. Moviemakers have been making Alamo movies for 70 years (1911-1981) and they still haven't gotten it right, says Don Graham, University of Texas professor and author of "Cowboys and Cadillacs: How Hollywood Looks at Texas."

Why the factual deviations? Struggling to deal with history's facts, contradictions and legends presents a formidable challenge to narrative logic — it's easy to make careless errors and omissions or, paramount to the myths, creative innovations.

One Lone Star legend, the Texas oil man, has endured since his movie debut in 1922. In "Mr. Potter of Texas," the mythic oil man appeared in quintessential Texas garb: black broadcloth suit cut in Southwestern fashion, two large diamonds on his shirt and one on his finger, a "California quartz abomination of a watch chain" with a gold coin dangling from it, an "old-fashioned turndown collar," and cowboy boots with the trousers tucked in.

Potter was a rancher and an oil man, rich from a combination of luck, natural bounty and rugged individualism that often seems to bless the Texan frontiersman and empire builder.

He began with a small spread — 10,000 acres and 2,000 cattle — but "just a month ago today, I squinted around me and surveyed 500,000 acres of land, and 50,000 head of cattle and half a bank and half a hopera-house and half a railroad, all for my darter, the honorable Miss Hilda Potter, of the metropolis of Pottersville, Comanche County, State of Texas!"

"Giant" (1956) is probably the archetypical Texas movie, Graham says; it contains every significant element in the stereotype: cowboys, wildcatters, cattle empire, wealth, crassness of manners, garish taste, and barbecue.

The movie has earned more than \$12 million (pre-inflation figures) and its popularity has affected the entire state. Baton-twirlers added its theme song to their half-time repertoires. John Connally proclaimed "Giant" his favorite movie and used its theme song for his 1961 gubernatorial campaign.

Money motivates the legendary Texas oil game. A character in "Wildcatter," a 1981 nonfiction book that celebrates the pioneer spirit, explains, "It's the money that makes you do it, money is always the motivation." Money in "The Wheeler Dealers" (1963) is style, a gauche expression of exuberance and boundless optimism, recognizable as Texas style.

All the Texas oil movies culminate in the TV drama, "Dallas," launched in 1978, coincidentally the year of the first

election of a Texas governor who made his fortune in the wildcat oil business.

Still popular seven years later in 11 countries and the United States (Texas included!), Dallas is the most modern perpetrator of the Texas myth. Its failure has been Japan, where farm concepts are at odds with the varied hijinks, betrayals and unpredictable realignments.

Unbelievable? Maybe. But non-Texans frequently misperceive the outline south of Oklahoma and north of the Grande, east of El Paso and west of the cogdoches, as a rich expanse of oil and cattle, teeming with cowboys. Ask the Spaniards, if you can catch one they're not fighting bulls.

And it's no wonder. By the way, ya' hear Miz Ellie, Bobby and J.R. have to divide the Ewing Oil fortune with Cliff Barnes and Ray, Jock's tart son? Oh, horrors!

Katherine Hurt is a senior journalism major and the photo editor for The Battalion.

Tuition hikes could decide some's education

Surviving college.

For some students at A&M, the battle to stay in college is going to intensify beginning in Fall 1985. This time the financial pressure comes in the form of higher resident and non-resident tuition charges.

The Senate Finance Committee has approved a plan that would triple tuition over the next two years for Texans.

Tuition would rise from \$4 per semester hour to \$8 this fall and to \$12 in Fall 1986. This is probably the best plan



Ed Cassavoy

set forward to date.

Most people agree that the dirt cheap tuition here at A&M does not accurately reflect the cost to the state of providing students with an education. More money is necessary.

Tuition fees are an obvious and valid choice. Theoretically everyone nods their head in agreement. It sounds like a logical solution to the state's budgetary woes. Nod, nod.

But then you have to look at the effect it will have on students here at A&M. On real people struggling to get an education.

Sure most students will whine and complain about the higher costs, but they will pay it. Or daddy will. But many

students don't have that luxurious option.

I happened to read a letter sent to The Battalion from one such student. She came to school each semester with barely enough money to pay the bills. School came first, it had to.

What is she suppose to do? Get more money from the government? Forget it, the ceiling on federal and state student aid has been pegged at \$4,000. Relief from that source will be tough.

But the problem goes beyond certain isolated cases.

One can only wonder what how these higher costs will affect the graduate program at A&M.

One reason grad students are attracted to A&M is the low tuition costs.

Most grad students are from other parts of the United States or are foreign students. Both groups pay non-resident tuition.

The Senate Finance Committee approved in the same plan an increase in tuition for non-students and foreign students from \$40 per semester hour to \$80 in Fall 1985.

That would go up to \$100 in Fall 1986, with \$20 increases per semester hour per year until tuition covered 100 percent of the cost of an education.

That is a staggering financial surprise to most of these students.

Then you hear the usual mumbled complaints that it is about time residents of Texas don't pay for the educations of non-residents.

Nod, nod. But what kind of damage will this do to the brain bank the University has to draw from?

Non-Texans have changed A&M perceptibly. Depending on who you talk to, options go either way on how "good" the change is.

But I don't think the University community can deny that maybe, just maybe, these non-Texans were the catalyst needed to improve the intellectual foundation of A&M.

New ideas are an important and necessary element for the future development of A&M and that flow may be seriously damaged by increased tuition. What is more important? Or a better question is how can the University minimize the effect.

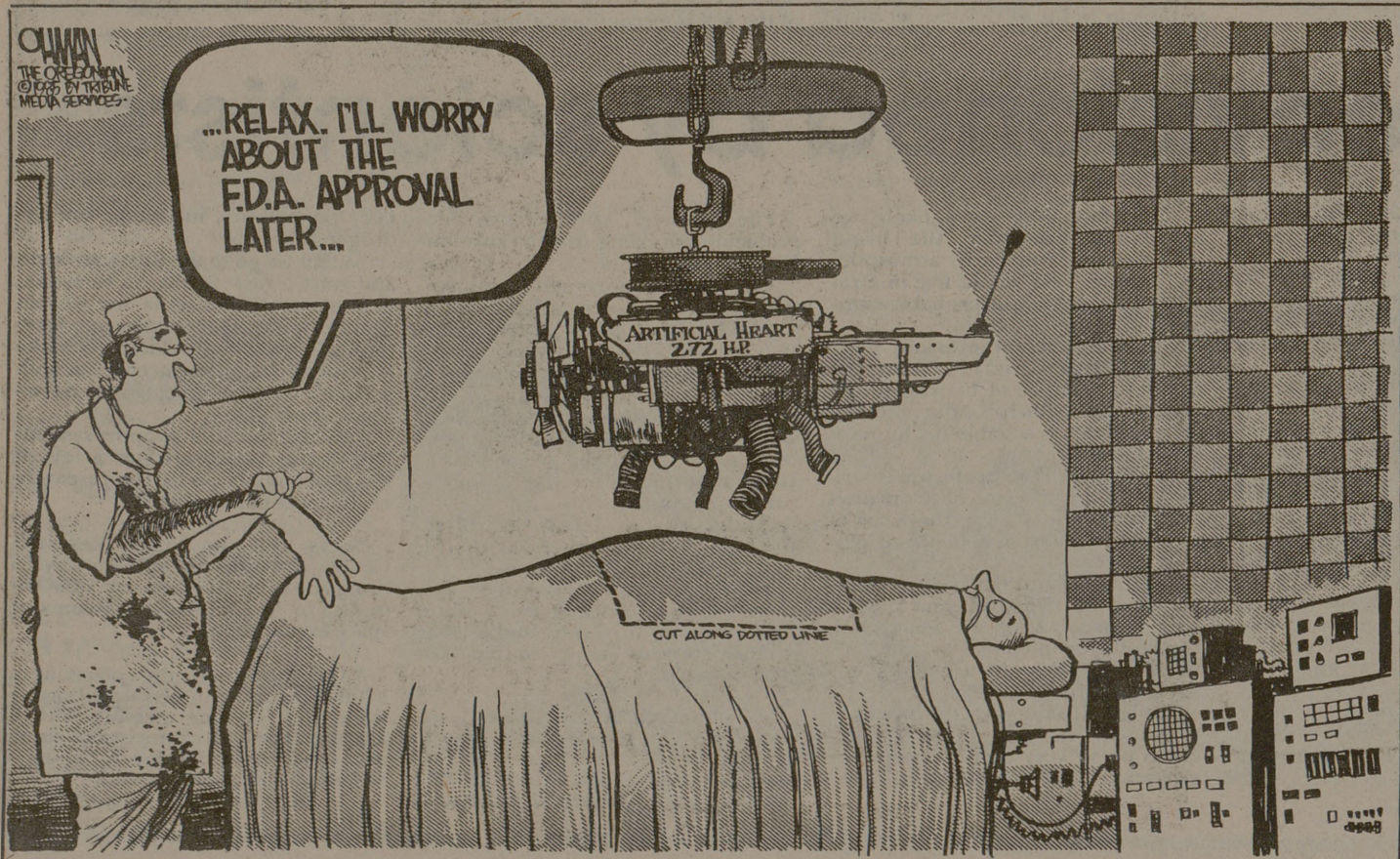
Some sort of dialogue between the parties involved is necessary. Solutions can be found that can benefit both the University and the students.

There has to be a way. The alternatives are not enjoyable to contemplate.

I want A&M to become a better institution of learning through the absorption of as many different ideas as possible.

Money should not decide the future of anyone's mind or intellectual future.

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

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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. Each letter must be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.
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