

The economic reply

Batt columnist spares no one

By MIKE PERRIN
The Battalion gets \$65,000 a year from student services fees. It shouldn't get a penny, since the money leads to four harms: hassle from student organizations, indirect administration control, forced payment from the student body and sloppy technique, which weakens the paper.

Before I go any further in the column, let me make it plain that evil people do not make these results—they are the inevitable end of an inept system. Student organizations like the Memorial Student Government feel

that the money given to The Battalion every year entitles them to a certain amount of free coverage. Of course, the obvious point here is that it is not the organizations which pay student services fees, but rather the individual students—yet each student does not demand his two column inches a year.

The Student Government in particular has a powerful club to hold over the Battalion receiving a large allocation every year—the threat to revoke it or not renew it. Used in this way, the subsidy is no longer a subsidy, but a tax on the Battalion.

The administration also has this club over The Battalion although it

has not been used since I have been here. But the administration does use editor selection as a device to control the campus press through the Student Publications Board. Although many on the Board are my friends, I don't really think that they are that vital to the day to day running of The Battalion.

The Board is made up of the man in charge of University public relations, the assistant to the university president, three faculty members, only one connected with journalism and three students—the student body president and two of his appointees, who traditionally know lit-

tle or nothing about a newspaper. Let me make it clear that none of these are evil people; in fact, several are my personal friends.

But many times, their positions put them in conflict with The Batt; for example, Jim Lindsey, the chairman, is in charge of putting out information about the University to the world at large—a tough job, but not really reconcilable with the notion of a campus press which owes nothing to anyone and who must not do favors for any side.

The assistant to the president, Tom Adair, naturally wants to ensure the Batt comes across as the paper he'd enjoy showing his friends, which is not necessarily the same as what The Batt should be doing.

The faculty members are merely irrelevant, with the possible exception of William Harrison, a journalism prof. He could be helpful to The Batt, but he would not have to be on the Board for that.

Steve Eberhard, student body president, certainly is not necessary to the smooth functioning of the paper and neither are the other two students. Although these folks are charged with representing the student body on the Board, the fact that there are 21,000 of us and only 3 of them tells the true story.

So the controlling body is mostly irrelevant and is certainly not necessary for the day to day running of The Batt.

The student body is also forced to subsidize views which some may find repugnant. No forced press can claim the title of true servant to the public. The students shouldn't be forced to subsidize the Battalion for another good reason—it can be self-supporting.

The two month period ending October 31, 1974 shows that total advertising revenues for the paper were \$50,919.28, while total expenses were \$50,455.17! This clears over \$400 without the student services fee subsidy and without subscriptions, which totaled \$13,267.62. This brings The Battalion's total profit to \$13,731.73 for those two months. So you can see that the services fee revenue is just so much gravy. This is partially because of this year's boosted advertising rate. With the current rate, The Battalion is self-supporting. A 10 per cent hike would leave revenue for future expansion without any need for services fees. The 10 per cent hike in ad rates would have brought in an extra \$5,000 over the two months; this amount of money could have tripled present staff salaries or doubled the staff with 50 per cent wage boosts for everyone.

Or new equipment could be bought or new techniques brought in or any of the things which go with an expanding and progressive business. The forth danger of services fees

is that it can lead to complacency of the staff. Knowing, for example, that your organization can lose \$65,000 a year and make it up from a forced tax does not lead to efficiency. Hustlers are born of necessity.

By forcing the Batt to be independent, slow and inefficient news-gathering methods would be scrapped. More and better news coverage would follow.

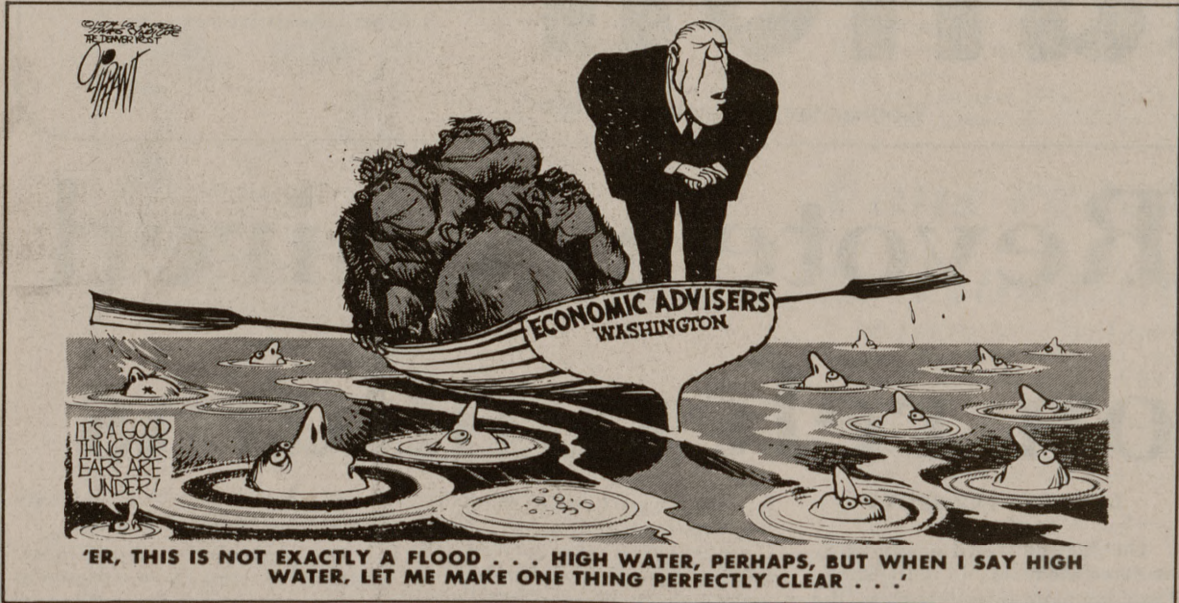
The Batt's job, in a way, is a little easier than SG's or the MSC's because there are newspapers in the real world. We know what they do and how they operate; college courses are offered in newspaper production.

No similar analogues are found for SG and the MSC. Other governmental bodies have the power to tax and imprison and receive salaries; they don't merely make suggestions to an all-powerful higher source for better or for worse. And there is no such thing as a general purpose programming body out there. So these two outfits seem doomed to amateurism forever.

This is why excellence is an achievable goal for the Batt, as opposed to SG and the MSC. And nothing less should be accepted.

So this is my proposal—end student services fees, have the staff select their own editor and have the advertising pay for the paper so that free distribution can still take place. These changes will remove controls, direct and indirect, reduce inter-organizational flak, eliminate a \$65,000 a year burden on the student body, promote efficiency and professionalism and ensure a truly free press on campus.

So support the Batt. Don't pay services fees. My apologies to John Oeffinger.



Listen up

Nice but unwanted fungi shares students' room

Editor: What does it take to get maintenance to repair your room at this place? For the last 11 weeks I've been sharing my room with this nice, but unwanted, fungus that moved in the second day of school.

I have complained to the resident advisers and counselors along with the head of housing about removing this unwanted guest but so far only the fungi's friend, the dripping water, has been removed from the premises.

The dripping water was ejected five weeks ago and a promise was made that his fungus friend would be eliminated early the next week. Along with his removal I was to receive a fresh coat of paint for the injured wall.

All I have received is the runaround from the housing office but I hope this letter might initiate some action. I'm sure this problem could have been corrected some ten weeks ago if I was of the opposite sex.

Darrell Pye '77

Courts taken

Editor: Three times in the last week we have wanted to play basketball but have been unable to find an available gym floor. What with the university's male and female basketball teams, the volleyball team and intramural volleyball, we learned that there was no place for "regular" students to play.

Usually this domination begins at 5 or 6 p.m. and continues until 8 p.m. Why can't these groups at least get organized so that one of the three main gym floors (G, Rollie White Coliseum's upper and lower

floors and the Deware Fieldhouse) is available for general student use at all times?

Do these groups have to work out at the same time? Well, if so, it just so happens that this is the only time some of us can play basketball, too.

Our main point is this, though. There are over 20,000 students at TAMU yet as few as 100 (maybe fewer) have complete control of the gyms for three of the evening hours. This isn't fair and we are getting tired of it.

We ask you to do something or at least tell us who is in charge of scheduling when the gyms are in use, so we may talk to them and get this unfair practice changed.

Mark Chastain
Ron Felderhoff
Lyle Kelmet

An investigation of both complaints will be explained in tomorrow's Your Man at Batt — Ed.

Economist cut

Editor: For several weeks I have been reading Mike Perrin's opinions with mounting disgust. I have watched him condemn U.S. government policy (Nov. 13), student policy (Oct. 9, Nov. 5), government funding (Oct. 31), student funding (Oct. 9 and 24), our student government (Oct. 18), our U.S. government (Nov. 13), and government period (Nov. 1), asserting his opinions on these topics as established fact with no documentation or evidence of personal qualification whatsoever. I'm through watching.

Mr. Perrin might be knowledgeable in his field (what is it?), but is he? His assertions might be fact, but are they? The readers don't know. Witness his logic from November 13:

"But we shouldn't be self-sufficient... self-sufficiency can lead to one of three results: either U.S. oil prices will be higher, the same, or lower than the world oil price."

I ask you: Does self sufficiency or complete dependency or rain in November in any way make U.S. oil prices higher, lower, or the same as world oil price?

If the prices are the same, then why be self sufficient? The administrative costs of the system must be paid for, so that is still a loss to consumers.

Count a) so that we aren't dependent upon unpredictable nations for vital national resources and count b) administrative costs must be paid for regardless of self-sufficiency or partial-sufficiency. But we only lose if they're labelled "self-sufficient", right, Mr. Perrin?

With these examples, Perrin and the Battalion expect us to trust Perrin's acute observations and sage critiques? Bunk!

If a statement is an opinion, it should be expressed as such. If it's fact, it should in some way be documented. Until we see either from Perrin, his "replies" are empty and should be taken so.

I'm sorely disappointed with the Battalion for endorsing Mike Perrin's opinions as fact.

To put it lightly. David Newman

Perrin is a senior economics major. — Ed.

The Battalion

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Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words and are subject to being cut to that length or less if longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit such letters and does not guarantee to publish any letter. Each letter must be signed, show the address of the writer and list a telephone number for verification.

Address correspondence to Listen Up, The Battalion, Room 217, Services Building, College Station, Texas 77843.

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