

It's Perrin's turn again

Student Government viewpoint evaluated

By MIKE PERRIN

Tom Walker criticized my Feb. 25 column in yesterday's paper. He made several statements in that critique which require clarification.

In my last column, I never argued that the Student Government, "in large part or as whole," is conspiring against the student body. I observed that the Necktie Party thinks that six people have split up six positions for next year among themselves.

Since there are 70 senators and six top positions plus nine Judicial Board members plus an Executive Director, which makes 86 people at least, I fail to see where the reported conspiracy of six is a majority or large part of SG.

I have always argued that people are not evil, but that SG's structure makes it behave contrary to the best interests of all concerned.

Blaming Student Government's lack of effectiveness on poor voter turnout won't wash. It won't wash because after arguing that SG can't be effective, Walker turns around and tries to show how it really is effective. Walker also ignores the point that there are good SGs around in spite of poor voter turnouts everywhere. So Walker either has to argue that poor turnouts make poor SG or that SG is good. He can't argue both.

Passing the buck to the Administration on Student Service Fees won't work, either. The SG makes recommendations to the Administration and so far, the Administration has always abided by those recommendations.

He also tries to pass the \$9.50 Aggeland off on Student Publications. This won't work, either, since it has to be approved by the SG before it goes to the Administration.

Walker points out that the Batt gets services fees. I lamented this fact in a column last semester. Nei-

ther I nor any student who works on the Battalion voted on the Battalion student service fee request.

But when Walker asserts that the Executive Committee of SG serves without compensation, he has to be kidding. The Student Body President receives money from University National Bank and from the Former Students. Several thousands of dollars are spent by SG traveling around to conventions and meetings. The Batt staff is taking 18 people to a convention this week. Fourteen are paying their own complete way. SG officers also receive other niceties — parking privileges, dining privileges, private office for the President, invitations to social events, dinners with the Administration, and so forth and so on.

This type of patronage is compensation, although it is not labeled paycheck. Except for the bank and Former Students money.

Walker says that I should see to it that the Senate is strong if I want it strong. As a member of the Judicial Board, the only way I can do this is to make sure that everyone knows that their senator can be unseated if he does not meet constitu-

tional requirements in fulfilling his office.

I guess that this information is what Walker wants out. Anyone who thinks that his Senator does not belong to a committee or who does not report his constituents' views to the Senate should contact Jerri Ward, Judicial Board Chairperson at 845-3051. A hearing can be called and the senator removed if the charges are true.

Walker says that he was at the Board of Directors meeting. I didn't see where he made any student input at that meeting. I didn't see him at the University Rules and Regulations meeting the other day, although I saw him at the service fee allocation hearing last night. We didn't see each other at the Academic Council, Thursday. All this is meaningless since I can play the "I went to a meeting" game as long as anybody else. In my three years with SG, I've been to a lot of them.

If another university has a good idea, use it. But why can't we have a good idea of our own? If we've had one, what is it?

I ask for more services and less services fees because services fees

are a dull, political and stifling method of finance; a little dynamism and you have OPAS — a little salesmanship and you have Aggie Cinema. Neither of these outfits gets fees. A little more imagination would cure a lot of problems without forced outlays from students.

I easily accept that I have been timid on the Judicial Board. But my personal failures do not excuse the other 85 members of SG. I believe that the J-Board has been more active this year, with injunctions and writs of mandamus and throwing senators out. I mean, a lot of people in the rest of the SG are worried about the "monster" that the J-Board has become. And we did it all in this one semester.

Student Government should compromise, but as it is, we are compromised right out of the game. Compromise at the University of Houston means a real student lawyers, discount pharmacy, day care center, alcohol on campus and waiver of building use fees for students with economic hardships. At A&M, compromise meant "Highway 6 runs both ways" and "Suck it up."



'I WANT YOU ALL TO FEEL SECURE ABOUT AMERICA'S FOREIGN POLICY COMMITMENTS. ... HAVE A CIGARI!'

Cloud 9 ... a bird's eye view

Captain America comes to town

By ROD SPEER

The first order of business for Cloud 9 is an apology to County Judge Bill Vance for misinformation and a misunderstanding resulting from a previous Cloud 9 column.

Two weeks ago this column reported that Vance told the local chamber of commerce he endorsed using funds authorized under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 to build the Brazos County Park. However, Vance was talking about funding available under the act to governments in urban areas other than cities — money which the county can seek since it has a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (an urban region with more than 50,000 population) within its boundaries.

Vance's funding source is totally separate from grants available to the twin cities, a confusion made in the previous column. The cities are using their grants to improve low-income neighborhoods by paving streets, improving drainage, establishing neighborhood parks and similar projects.

Again, Cloud 9 apologizes for any

misunderstanding resulting from the article.

***** Last week more than 500 local businessmen attended the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce annual banquet. I didn't think the event deserved a big play-up in the news columns (The Eagle ran a banner headline which read, "American System Emphasized," referring to the banquet speaker's theme); however, observing the three-hour dinner reveals something about the political philosophy of local businessmen as well as the business mood of the times.

The Chamber's executive director, Pat Mann, said the organization paid approximately \$1,000 in fees and expenses for the dinner's main event, Dr. Kenneth McFarland, a professional speaker who tours the country preaching a conservative political doctrine.

The local businessmen apparently liked the man, his doctrine or both. McFarland spoke at a chamber banquet 10 years ago and the group was willing to pay the fee for a second talk. The man received a standing ovation and was interrupted several times with applause.

But the conservative philosophy espoused by McFarland was not the average conservatism seen today, it was an extremist point-of-view reminiscent of the Cold War days

in the Fifties and early Sixties, and of the backlash to anti-war demonstrations of the late Sixties.

McFarland called today's leaders of Communist nations "international thieves, murderers and outlaws." He said the Communists, (not referring to any particular Communist nation, but to Communists in general) are still as much as ever bent on world take-over and already have half the world under their control. He declared it was the military of the United States that has saved the other half of the world from Communist domination. The 500 plus attending the banquet were solemn when he discussed the current economic problems in socialist England and announced that England will go to the Communists in five years.

McFarland compared non-democratic countries to the Titanic, where people think they are doing fine until the proud ship hits the iceberg and sinks. The United States, he contended, is like a raft, which never sinks. He said "the enemy" (I presume he meant Communist sympathizers) is on-board the raft. He added that sometimes the enemy doesn't realize he's the enemy, but thinks the enemy is you!

He called on Americans to proudly display the flag, honor the armed forces, teach the Bible in public

schools and "respect our institutions," leaving out only motherhood and apple pie.

He criticized "left-wing professors from Far-out U," who are quoted in the national media telling us things are bad, when they're not so bad.

The banquet program pointed out that McFarland received the Captain Eddie Rickenbacker Award for being America's Number One Air Passenger. In my opinion, that qualifies him for flying out of town, but not for flying in.

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The Battalion

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Stop, look, listen Freedom goes down the drain

STOP: Tom Adair, faculty member of the "Student" Publications Board, has one more item to consider before the board adjourns. Who are the likely candidates for editor of "The Battalion"? he asks. Will Anderson, assistant editor, and LaTonya Perrin, managing editor, he is told. Two others are considering the job and more are eligible. Anderson may have trouble with grades. "That leaves LaTonya Perrin," says Adair. He suggests the board waive, for one year, the requirement that applicants need one year's experience on The Battalion. The motion passes with one dissenting vote.

LOOK: Student Body President Steve Eberhard, a member of the publications board, writes a letter to Rules and Regulations Chairman Dr. Haskell Monroe. He tells Monroe that this year's competition for editor is narrowing:

"The rationale for the resolution," writes Eberhard, "is simply that under this regulation, there is effectively no competition for the position of editor. For the past two years, there has been only one viable applicant each year, and it seems that LaTonya Perrin may be the only one this year. It is the feeling of the Board that there may be other capable students who fail to meet only this one qualification, and that some sort of competition would be healthy."

Rules and Regulations Committee rubber stamps the resolution and passes it to the Academic Council.

LISTEN: President Jack K. Williams tells the Academic Council that one candidate for editor will not be editor as long as he is president of Texas A&M — even if no paper is published. Applause follows from a section of people around Dr. Haskell Monroe, dean of faculties. Williams' remark is made during discussion following Monroe's presentation of the one-year waiver. Eberhard and Adair also speak in favor of the resolution. One member of the council questions the intent of the change. He wonders how the publications board can insure an editor who knows how to run The Battalion. Williams, chairman of the council, says he must approve the publication board recommendation — he says he is a check against any unwise choices the board might make. Dr. Monroe then assures the council that the motives behind the resolution are pure. The motion carries overwhelmingly, with a few muffled no's.

That's it! Three easy steps toward control and censorship of the student newspaper at Texas A&M.

Rationales which simply favor open competition for a powerful student position fall flat when one considers the timing of the change. The motion is originally made after the names of the candidates for editor are known. And the exemption is made for this year only. It's hard to pretend the resolution is in the best interests of The Battalion. And it's hard to pretend we can trust Williams to consider the best interests of The Battalion when he considers the publications board nomination. He vetoes one candidate, before applications were submitted. He has said a paper will not be published if that candidate is selected. It is hard to pretend that the publications board will not weigh Williams' comments when it considers the applicants.

Williams told the Academic Council that the present system creates a danger of inbreeding. He's right. There is a danger. But there is also some assurance that an editor will know how to manage The Battalion. The dangers in the new system are worse, especially in light of Williams' unfounded and irresponsible comments. What assurance does The Battalion now have for its constitutionally guaranteed freedom of expression? What Battalion staff member, seeking the editorship, can write without fear that he (she) might be stricken from the list of editor hopefuls because of that writing?

The Battalion has witnessed a decay in freedom of public expression at Texas A&M. Two employees of the Housing Office were fired because of a letter to the editor. One faculty member in a high academic position resigned because of reaction to public comments against policies of the Board of Directors and the administration (until he (she) comments "for the record" we can give no more details). During Christmas vacation, two Battalion reporters canvassed the campus to ask people what they thought of A&M. Too many times they were told, "But you can't print that or I'll be fired." It's hard to pretend that this is a great university in a free society.

It took a revolution and 200 years to make the presses of America free. It took 10 days to snuff freedom of the press at Texas A&M. Implications here cannot be overstated. The Battalion hopes the university community understands these implications. But it's hard to pretend that many will give as much thought to these implications as they do to the sex of people who lead cheers at football games.

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