

What news rates best coverage?

Ombudsman

By ROXIE HEARN
Assistant Editor

One of The Battalion's main problems this week was news emphasis — deciding which stories should be most prominent.

After the overwhelming defeat of the proposed Texas Constitution, The Battalion played up the County's rejection but completely ignored the more surprising fact that College Station was one of the few cities in the state to approve it.

The voting precinct map was an excellent idea, but it appeared much later than it should have. Since Tuesday's paper doesn't reach the stands until 2 p.m. many students had already gone through other channels to get their information, or had simply decided not to bother with voting at all.

Friday's leading story was definitely overplayed. No doubt the Student Government Judicial Board's denial of the appeal should have appeared in the paper, but not as the top news story. Possibly the plans for a Milner Hall renovation would have been a better choice,

since there have been so many rumors about the project. As it was, the Milner plans were incorporated in a 3-inch story on page 3.

The same J. Board story drew another justifiable complaint: the first paragraph did not reflect factual reporting. "Justice at A&M has a time limit" was not a decision made by the board, but an opinion held by the writer. It had no place in the news columns.

Another story that should have been reported was the Rice ticket system. Many students waited in line the whole weekend, never realizing that all the tickets would be general admission, no matter what the buyer's classification. A&M's allotment stretches from the 50-yard line into the horseshoe, so there is also little chance of running short.

This week's Battalions were also weak in their identification of political figures and political bodies.

In Tuesday's front page article on Texas Representative Bill Prenal, reference is made to the "Texas Appropriations Committee." No such group exists. It should have been either the Texas House or Texas Senate Appropriations Committee.

On the same page, John Anderson is referred to as a Congressman, so readers concluded that he was a federal representative, but nowhere in the article was his home state reported.

In Friday's paper, two short stories in "Top of the News" were guilty of the same type of error. The "House Ways and Means Committee" was referred to, but the story failed to mention whether it was the state or federal body.

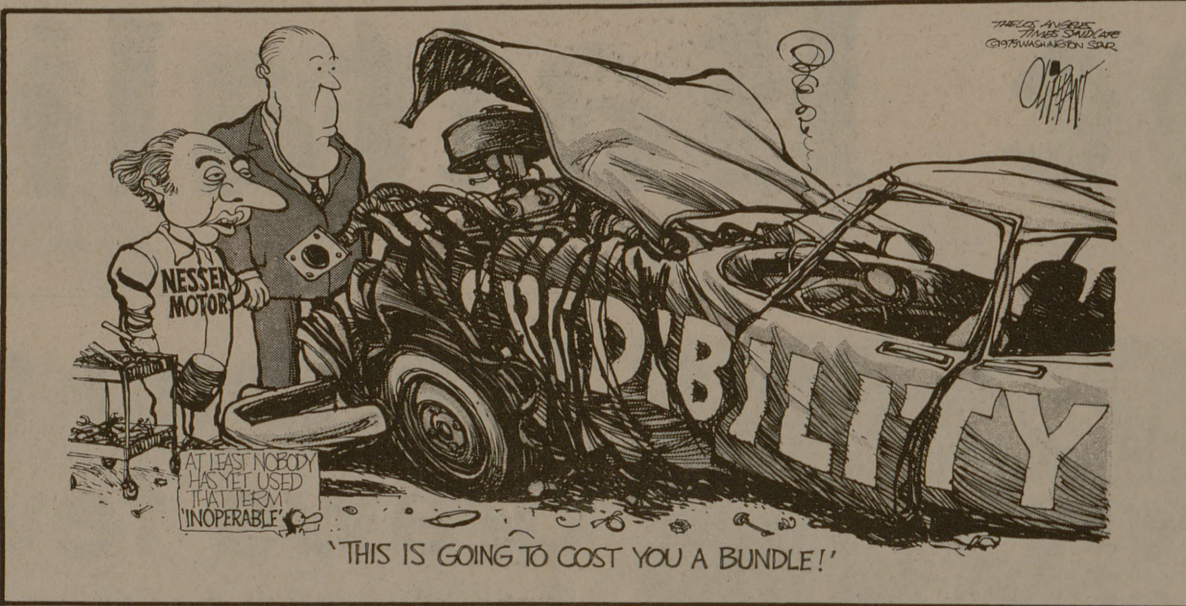
In the second news brief, Mark White was labeled "Secretary of State" — again, a distinction should have been made between White and Henry Kissinger.

Another complaint this week concerned the liberal use of legal terms in news reporting. Writers should be able to filter through technical jargon and present facts in easily understood sentences. Tuesday's leading story stated that a school board had approved "the execution of a legal order calling for a bond issue."

In simple terms, the board voted to call for a bond issue. A few paragraphs later, the district's present bonds would be "retired," causing a drop in the tax rate. What does "retired" mean? Used up, paid off. Substituting either of those terms would have cleared up many questions and misconceptions.

Two other items: The headline "Toby Rives helps students through personal contact" made A&M's assistant director of student affairs sound like some sort of masseuse, but her "personal contact" is definitely through counseling and advice.

Another large headline boldly spelled congestion with a "j" instead of a "g." Not too swift there.



Student says MSC prices high, quality good, but servings small

Editor,

Inflation is a fact of life we all live with daily, and as students on tight budgets, prices can be horrendous to our life styles. How is inflation combated? Some companies and organizations fight inflation by raising their prices while others decide not to raise theirs, thus taking a slightly less profit margin.

Unfortunately, a certain campus organization has decided that the students it serves do not matter and so it keeps raising its prices. I lovingly speak of the MSC cafeteria, a student service I feel is serving highly inflated meals at under inflated servings for the prices they ask.

Since I first arrived at this campus, the price of the MSC's daily special has increased 20 cents. Not a tremendous amount of money you say. However, consider that one more price increase will bring up the items served on the special to what they would cost ala carte. All around one sees signs asking you to please buy your own trays to hold down costs. What happened? Their motto is "Quality First" and it is quite good, however, it sure isn't quantity. Have you ever noticed how the person serving you is afraid of giving you too much? Or the way they kind of spread your main dish around on your plate, so it looks like a lot? Why for the prices they charge, they won't even give you a package of crackers with your soup or a pat of margarine with a roll.

However the final indignation is what they charge for milk. Based on a price of 25 cents for a 1/2 pint carton, it figures that the students are paying approximately 4 dollars a gallon for milk. What makes this appalling is the fact that their milk is pasteurized, processed and bottled right here on campus.

Someone, somewhere, is getting too much for too little.

Allan Stern

Batt is voice

Editor,

As a periodic reader of the Batt, I wondered why this year's issues seemed void of any articles similar to last year's expose of money spent

Listen Up

on the MSC. Could it be that all was well in Aggieland? That hopeful dream was quickly shattered when I read Tony Gallucci's ad in the Nov. 7 Batt. The reason the paper read like an ad for a detergent was because control of its operations had been taken over by the very people it attacked. This situation is analogous to the hypothesis of Nixon taking over the Washington Post in order to preserve his office. No news is not always good news.

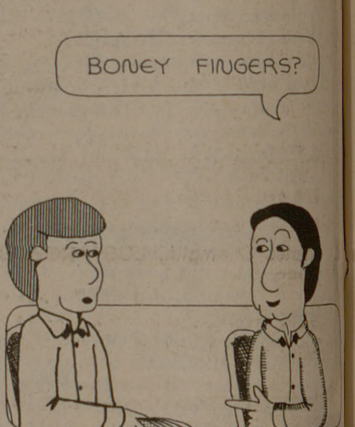
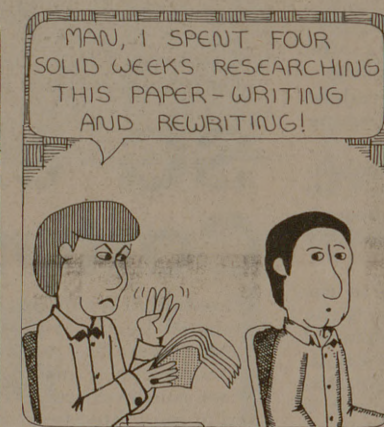
Last year the administration feared budgetary cutbacks due to the turmoil of the MSC construction, caused primarily by Batt reporters. Unfortunately, the goal of

their reporting, forcing the administration to consider students' rights, was not met. Instead, the administration quietly plucked the burr from its side by indirectly taking over the paper. The injustice of that is fairly obvious. Many students may not care about this; but I ask them, who will we turn to next time we have a complaint. Our main tool of criticism has been stripped from us. Now our campus newspaper deals with "Gigag" and problems of such worldwide importance as the ticket distribution system.

Remember, as Gallucci tells us, the Batt is our paper and we pay the salaries of the administration. We have a right to run it as we see fit. We've lost our voice, let's get it back.

Bob Limbacher

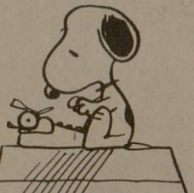
Aggiemoons



Brad Foster

PEANUTS

Dear Spike,



Thank you for inviting me to have Thanksgiving dinner with you and the coyotes.



It sounds like fun. However....



How do I know the coyotes won't eat ME?



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.

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