

Viewpoint

The Battalion
Texas A&M University

Wednesday
November 2, 1977

Sometimes government can lend a hand

In 1971, when the Lockheed Aircraft Corp. was on the verge of bankruptcy and the federal government decided to bail out the company to the tune of \$250 million, we had strong reservations about the wisdom of the move.

But apparently it has all turned out well. Last month Lockheed announced it no longer needs the \$250 million loan guarantee from the federal government and added that the government never actually paid out any money. The loan guarantee was enough to hold off creditor banks until Lockheed got on its feet again.

So the aircraft company is making money as a free-enterprise, profit-making firm should. But it was not without some travail at the company. Two top officers were forced to resign because of the scandal over Lockheed's bribing foreign officials to get aircraft contracts. The head of the corporation, Robert W. Haak, who is now retiring, conducted a thorough cleanup of the corporation.

It's encouraging when things turn out well in a government bail-out operation. This doesn't mean that the government should set itself up as a life guard for any and all floundering companies, but it does show that in certain special circumstances jobs are saved and companies survive because the government lends a hand.

Sacramento Bee

Rusty Cawley

District court justice hardly 'speedy'

Walter Joe Coleman is waiting.

Coleman, the defendant in Brazos County's most publicized trial in years, will spend his birthday in the county jail. He will be 19 Dec. 20.

He is waiting to be tried for a crime that took place in January, the murder of a Texas A&M University graduate student Larry Baugh.

Coleman was arrested Jan. 12, the day of the murder. A team of divers pulled Baugh's body from the Navasota River three days later. He had been shot in the head.

A grand jury indicted Coleman for capital murder Jan. 20. But since then, the so-called wheels of justice have slowed to a near halt.

Coleman's pre-trial hearing ended earlier this month, and a trial date was set. March 27, 1978.

Walter Joe Coleman, supposedly innocent until proven guilty, supposedly

entitled to a fair and speedy trial, will have served a year and two months in the Brazos County jail before ever going before a jury.

His bond is set at \$15,000. Coleman's case is before Judge Bill Davis of the U.S. 85th District Court. The court serves only Brazos County.

Generally, district courts are set up to handle an area of about 50,000 residents. Brazos County has 92,821 people.

The judge's decision to set such a high bail for Coleman is justified by the nature of the crime, the strength of the prosecution's evidence and Coleman's past arson conviction.

But the speed with which the court is handling Coleman's case mocks the principle of fair and speedy trial. The 85th District Court is just another example of the nation's overburdened court system. It's getting nowhere, and fast.

The district court handles felony criminal cases, civil cases involving \$1000 or more, juvenile cases, divorces, adoptions, changes of name, land titles and contested elections.

In 1976, 348 criminal charges were filed. This, added to the 233 cases left over from the previous year, totals 603 criminal cases handled by the court. At year's end, 302 remained unsettled.

The court's civil record is worse. There were 965 civil actions lingering from 1975, and 1,030 more were filed in 1976. A total of 2,020 civil cases were handled in 1976 and, when the year ended, 1,093 remained.

The 85th District Court handled 2,623 criminal and civil cases in 1976. There are 365 days in a year.

All of this must funnel through one man, Judge Bill Davis. The solution seems simple: divide the court into two courts, one for civil cases

and one for criminal. But only the Texas Legislature can do that.

And it doesn't meet until 1979. In the meantime, Walter Joe Coleman and others like him wait. And wait.

With this column Battalion City Editor Rusty Cawley begins a weekly commentary on local affairs, government and politics, to appear in the Battalion each Wednesday.



Watching the world go by

By MARY ALICE WOODHAMS
Battalion Managing Editor

We didn't think we'd be talking about current events, of all things. It was Monday afternoon in Philosophy 205 — a course that had always dealt with the effects of factory work on the Italian working class or the theories of Lewis Mumford. We could always read the text or fake our way through class discussions. But current events — that's something else.

Monday's topic begun with the notion that America today is repeating the mistakes it made in the '20s. The idea, we gathered, was that world order was falling apart.

Remember the Depression? Now there's a state called 'stagflation.' And bread lines? That's been replaced with food stamps.

The instructor told the class of international terrorism and socialist movements in Middle-East countries, of oil embargoes

Commentary

and British intervention. It all sounded so familiar.

She looked at the lethargic group of students and presented another deep philosophical question to the class.

"How many of you watch the news?" We looked around the room. One, maybe two hands were raised. The stu-

dents gave a weak laugh. The discussion continued, except it really wasn't a discussion. The instructor presented a situation to her students, to which they either nodded approval or stared blank. They did admit to reading the newspaper.

"I read the Houston Chronicle," said a girl in the second row.

"I read Lynn Ashby," said a young man in the third row. "Did you read his column the day he wrote about Carter? Jimmy Carter's speech on Texas being bought from Mexico? It was great. He said that the Alamo was just a figment of our imaginations."

At precisely 1:50, a shuffling noise came from the hallway, and a head peeked

through the window on the classroom door. Inside, the white formica desk tops folded with a series of thuds.

"I want you to go home and watch the news tonight and tomorrow night," said the instructor.

"I can't," declared one student. "Giggles."

"What are you laughing about?" the instructor asked.

"Nothing."

"Is it so funny to be told about the news?"

"No."

She turned her back as the students headed for the door. But there was one more question.

"Which channel should I watch?"

Letters to the editor

Decision doesn't turn grass into thoroughfare

In response to the Friday article concerning the grass around the MSC, we believe the former rule should remain. In view of the fact that sidewalks are made for walking on, why is it necessary to walk on the grass? One of the differences between A&M and other campuses is the beauty of A&M. Most students refrain from walking on the grass all over campus because it tends to make trails of dirt. What are sidewalks for? Sure grass should be used and enjoyed, but can't you find another area amid the acres of grass on campus other than the MSC area? The area is one of the first places visitors see at A&M and I don't think that most students would like for the area to degenerate into mud and dirt when the grass is killed from people walking on it.

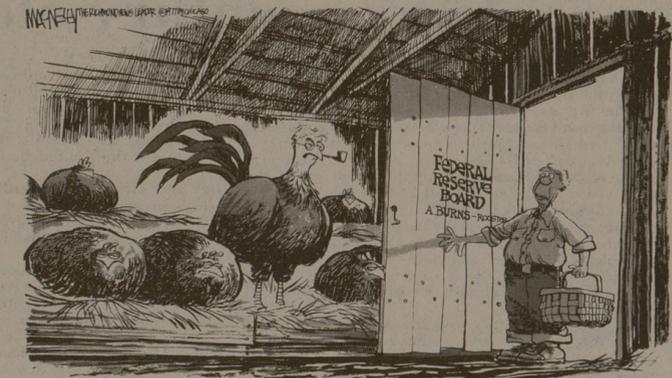
Sure traditions have to grow and be maintained; they cannot be forced on a reluctant student body, but a memorial is a sign of respect and is more than just an empty tradition. Besides, the views of a small section of the student body should not be forced on the majority. And we believe that most students uphold the rule respecting the grass.

In view of Aggies rudely telling visitors to stay off the grass, the visitors can be politely asked to stay off the grass. And how do the families of those who the MSC is in memory of feel about people walking on the grass — they probably consider it somewhat rude. We feel that the manner of enforcing the rule was successful. As freshmen, each of us were told to get off the grass. We were embarrassed, but now we recognize the reasoning behind the memorial and wish to support it. It is also possible that inconspicuous signs could be placed requesting people to refrain from walking on the grass.

Directed toward the MSC council: This is our campus as much as it is yours. We vote to retain the rule to stay off the grass and believe that the majority of the student body will also.

—David Lands '81, Dwayne Howell '80
Kyle James Zollers '80, Patricia A. Price
Debra Lanham '81

Editor's note: When the MSC Council voted to open the MSC grounds, it was careful to word its policy "the use of the



Memorial Student Center grounds shall not be discouraged." Apparently, the Battalion article reporting the policy change misled individuals into thinking the Council opened the grounds as a thoroughfare. Such is not the case. The Council recognizes the grounds as "a living part of a living campus" which merits the respect given any other area of our campus. Although the grass has been opened to be enjoyed by those wishing to use it, either in teaching or relaxation, it certainly has not been dedicated to lazy foot traffic. The Council, you can be sure, rests its decision on the premise that Aggies care for their campus without being denied its use.

Love it or leave it

In regards to the letter sent in by Mr. Kotara regarding the "childishness" of TAMU's efforts to keep the G.S.S.O. off of the campus I can immediately ask: who are you to be calling the opinions of others childish?

It seems that nowadays whenever a small group of self-proclaimed "persecuted individuals" feels that they are being wronged by someone it always turns out

the group doing the persecuting is, simply put, "the majority." In your letter you stated that you felt that "... ignorant opinions, opinions that gays are crazy or sick... reflect the general opinion of TAMU and its students." Maybe this is so. If it is, then why do you expect the majority to change or even bend its opinion on such a fundamentally personal subject merely to please a small group of activists? What you and your kind ask is closely akin to asking a Christian to renounce his faith, which by the way you are doing basically since the Christian faith flatly denounces homosexuality.

Furthermore, it is simply impossible for anyone on this campus or in this country to be ignorant of gays after the marvellous and thorough attempts that your kind have made at legally, morally and politically selling homosexuality to the people of the U.S.A.

And in regards to your statements regarding the "myth" of Aggie traditions which are used as a "ruse to justify narrow-minded hangups and camouflage unfair discrimination", I must point out that in no way are the traditions of this (or for that matter any other university) based on the contributions of homosexuality.

Writing the editor

The Battalion welcomes letters to the editor on any subject. However, to be acceptable for publication these letters must meet certain criteria. They should:

✓ Not exceed 300 words or 1800 characters in length.

✓ Be neatly typed whenever possible. Hand-written letters are acceptable.

✓ Include the author's name, address and telephone number for verification. Names will be withheld on request.

Letters to the editor are printed as a service to our readers. Publication of a letter is never guaranteed. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters to remove grammatical errors and to avoid litigation.

Address letters to the editor to:
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The Battalion
Room 216
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College Station, Texas 77843

Top of the News

Campus

Freshmen runoff election

Run off elections for Freshman Class officers (vice president and social secretary) will be held Thursday between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Tentatively, polling places have been set at the Commons, Sbia, the Guardroom and the MSC, pending the approval of the Student Senate at their regular meeting Wednesday night. Candidates for vice-president are Jess Mason and Brenda Kallina. Candidates for social secretary are Kay Whitcomb and Tammi Dodson.

State

Lopez to run for governor

Ricardo Lopez, 31, a former state employee who once was a migrant farm worker, announced Tuesday he will be an independent candidate for governor. He said the state's three largest political parties have failed to provide answers to Texas' problems. He said that he decided to enter politics because of frustration with the state's bureaucracy. Lopez proposes to limit the salary of state employees, who he said should have a commitment to serve the people. He also proposes abolishing county government in Texas and suggested county judges and commissioners serve without pay in city administration if they want to serve the public.

Boy dies from Halloween 'fun'

A 14-year-old boy, Michael Anthony Carter, was found hanging in a simulated haunted house set up at the North Main Baptist Church carnival in Houston. The boy was found at about 7:15 p.m. Monday and was pronounced dead about an hour later at a hospital. He was playing the part of a hanging man in the Halloween haunted house. The Rev. J.D. Grimes said the boy apparently tried to make his "hanging man" more realistic by putting the rope around his neck, rather than under his arms.

Man charged as cause of oil spill

Jimmie D. Franks, 36, a tugboat master of Cleveland Mississippi, faced charges of failure to maintain a safe lookout prior to a barge collision that dumped 42,000 barrels of oil into Galveston Bay. In the Monday accident, one of two oil barges pushed by Frank's tug was punctured by a barge of phosphate which was being pushed by another tug. No one was hurt in the collision. A cleanup crew of 50 with a vacuum truck and a skimmer barge raced a cold front approaching from the north to clean up the tar-like oil.

Nation

ERA may get more time

The Justice Department has decided it is possible for Congress to extend the time state legislatures have to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment says an administration source. A bill by Elizabeth Holtzman, D-N.Y., has been presented to the House Judiciary Subcommittee that would extend the time for ratifying the amendment from seven years to 14 years. The 1972 amendment proposal has been ratified by 35 of the required 38 states but three of the ratifying states have since voted to rescind ratification - a move of questionable constitutional validity. The present deadline for full ratification is March 22, 1979.

World

African students rebel

About 77,000 students are boycotting end-of-the-year exams in the black ghetto of Soweto, South Africa, thus forfeiting their chance to move up a grade in 1978. The black students in both primary and secondary schools are fighting South Africa's system of education, which requires separate schools for blacks and whites. South Africa spends about \$400 a year per white student, but only \$40 on each black. More than 400 black of Soweto's 700 black teachers quit a month ago in support of their pupils. Another 90,000 students around the country are also on strike.

Soviet Concordski has noisy flight

The Soviet Union's answer to the Concorde, the new TU-144 supersonic airliner, completed a noisy inaugural passenger flight Tuesday, covering 2,000 miles from Moscow to Alma Ata in under two hours. The plane, nicknamed the Concordski, hit speeds of over 1,250 mph about 20 minutes after liftoff from a suburban Moscow airport. It was noisy every inch of the way and passengers had to shout to make themselves heard by their seatmates in the cramped cabin. At an airport news conference after landing in Alma Ata, the craft's designer Alexei Tupolev, said the high speeds cause the skin of the aircraft to reach temperatures of 248 degrees Fahrenheit.

Nigerian plane misses runway

A Nigerian Airlines Boeing-707 with 151 passengers and a crew aboard overshot the runway at Lagos, Nigeria airport in foggy conditions Monday on arrival from a flight from London, civil aviation officials said Tuesday. The officials said there were no fatalities and only a few persons suffered slight injuries, none serious enough to require hospitalization. Airport officials said that while visibility was poor, the fog was not thick. The control tower kept the plane circling for about an hour before it attempted to land. It overshot the runway by about 400 yards coming to a halt on flat ground beyond the runway, the officials said.

Weather

Fair and cool today and tomorrow with west to northwesterly winds 8-12 mph. High today upper 60s. Low tonight upper 30s. High tomorrow mid-70s. No rain.

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 Letters to the Editor, The Battalion, Room 216, Reed McDonald Building, College Station, Texas 77843. Represented nationally by National Educational Advertising Services, Inc., New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles.

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