

Viewpoint

The Battalion
Texas A&M University

Tuesday
November 22, 1977

Top of the News Campus

Aggielands distributed today

Distribution of the 1977 Aggielands begins today in Building C behind the Reed McDonald building on the Texas A&M University campus. Annuals will be issued from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. A Texas A&M identification is required, and students will be allowed to pick up only their own Aggieland.

Admissions office to move

Admissions and Records will open for business in new offices in Heaton Hall Monday, Dec. 5. The offices will close Dec. 1 and 2 to move from the Coke Building. Senior grades will be accepted in the lobby of the Coke Building on Friday but all other services will be suspended during the move. The ring clerk and transcript office will be on the first floor along with freshman, transfer, international and graduate admissions. Scheduling and administrative offices will be on the second floor. The building was formerly Registration Headquarters and housed the old Exchange Store prior to that. It is located on Ross Street near Milner Hall.

Double check address cards

A new address card will be included in the spring preregistration packets. A current local address and home address will be included on the card. Students should check both addresses and make any needed corrections. Final grade reports, statement of expenses and spring schedules will be mailed to the address as listed on the card.

State

Hustler publisher converted

Publisher Larry Flynt says readers of his sexually explicit magazine, Hustler, will find healthy, rather than raunchy, articles about religion and sex, part of a new format prompted by his religious conversion. Flynt said content changes, planned because he said God "convicted" him of sin and converted him from unbelief, will not be made for a few months because of publication deadlines. During weekend appearances in San Antonio and Houston, he said his conversion "all sort of happened within the last few days" and is due in part to evangelist and faith healer Ruth Carter Stapleton.

Nation

Police break up Yale sit-in

Squads of police Monday dragged and carried about 50 striking Yale University blue collar workers and student sympathizers from a driveway where a sit-in was being staged to stop a convoy of police cars and fuel trucks from delivering heating oil to the school in New Haven, Conn. Ronald Sanbrook, president of the Federation of University Employees Local 35, said when the police started dragging the union strikers away, the students "started coming out of the woodwork when they saw what was going on and they joined right in." The union had threatened for more than a week to stop oil deliveries in an effort to force the university to loosen up in its latest contract offer.

Meteosat 1 launch cancelled

Air Force and space agency investigators at Cape Canaveral, Fla., began an inquiry into mysterious radio signals Monday, that caused cancellation of the scheduled launch of a European weather satellite. The launch of Meteosat 1 was scrubbed Sunday night because of unidentified signals received on the command-destroy system of the Delta rocket as it was being readied for the launch. Officials said the signals were discovered during a test of the rockets' electrical system last Wednesday. The source of the signals must be determined before a new launch date can be set, they said, because they could have an effect on the destruct system. Officials said the signals have not been picked up again since Wednesday.

World

Sadat offers Israel security

Egypt's President Anwar Sadat offered Monday to give Israel whatever guarantees it needs to ensure its security in exchange for permanent peace in the Middle East. Sadat delivered an hour-long address in Jerusalem to Israel's parliament Sunday reiterating longstanding Arab demands for Israel's withdrawal from occupied Arab lands and an establishment of a Palestinian state. He later commented that security for Israel was the main issue in the Arab-Israeli dispute. This was the first time any Arab leader has attached such importance to the matter.

Cyclone, tidal wave hit India

More than 6,000 persons were killed in a tropical cyclone and tidal wave that struck a south Indian state this week, India's news agency Samchar reported Monday. The agency said the figure was official but did not give any further information. Members of Parliament had said earlier the death toll was well over 3,000 in the cyclone—the regional equivalent of a hurricane. Officials said the tidal wave alone might have led to the drowning of thousands of villagers and swept the inhabitants into the Bay of Bengal. The cyclone roared in from the Bay of Bengal with winds of 50 to 90 miles an hour on Saturday and Sunday and the tidal wave struck early Sunday morning.

Weather

Mostly partly cloudy and mild today and tomorrow with northerly winds 5-10 mph. High today upper 60s. Low tomorrow mid-50s. High tomorrow mid-70s. 20 percent chance of rain.

The Battalion

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editor or of the writer of the article and are not necessarily those of the University administration or the Board of Regents. The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting enterprise operated by students as a university and community newspaper. Editorial policy is determined by the editor.

LETTERS POLICY

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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Newspapers under 'back door' attack

Freedom of the Press is under attack in the United States. But this time the attacker, in the guise of the Federal Communications Commission, is coming through the back door.

Since the First Amendment guaranteeing Freedom of Speech was written into the Constitution, American newspapers have been more or less free from government influence over their business operations. Real Freedom of the Press is a fairly modern innovation, but it was "hands off" as far as business was concerned.

The broadcast media were quite another matter. Because almost from the first murmurs of broadcasting in this country, federal officials realized the public airways were a limited public resource. So the FCC was established in 1934 to regulate public broadcasters.

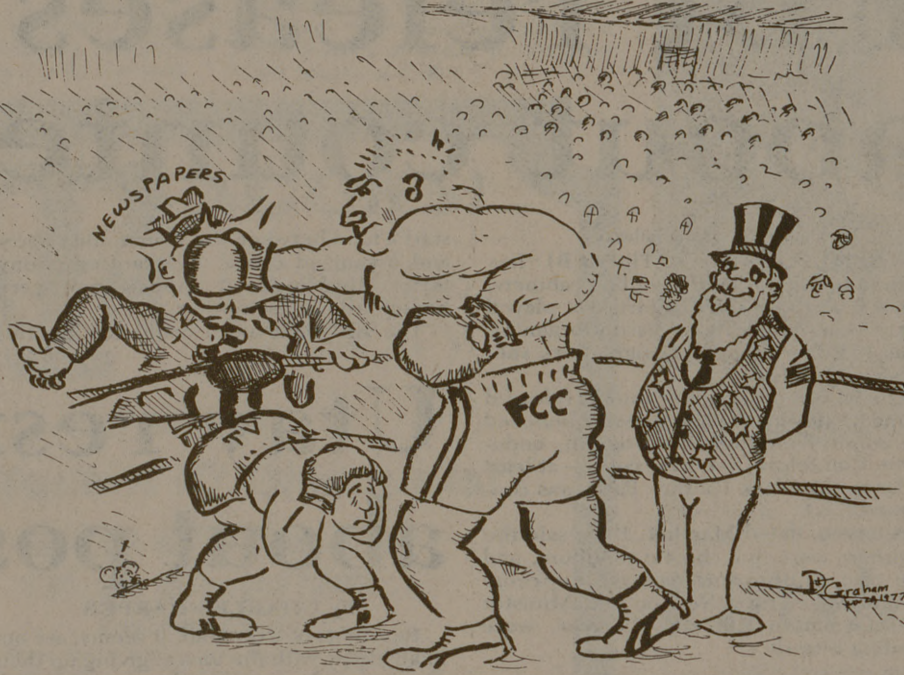
Thus the broadcast media know the weight of Uncle Sam's hand well. But now that hand is reaching through the FCC's role in licensing new broadcast stations to grab many newspapers by the throat.

The Supreme Court is now reviewing a U.S. Court of Appeals order which could break up 150 newspaper-radio-television combinations in 44 states. The order would require some newspapers to sell the broadcast stations they own in the same city where they publish and would bar future joint newspaper-broadcast station ownership.

"Nothing can be more important than insuring that there is a free flow of information from as many divergent sources as possible," the appeals court said in issuing the order. But the free flow of information and common media ownership are not mutually exclusive.

Often a newspaper or a television station can not survive in a limited market without a companion medium to share capital expenses and bring in extra revenue. If that newspaper or station goes out of business, it surely won't be contributing anything to that "free flow of information."

But the really dangerous precedent is that the order, if it stands, allows the FCC as a governmental licensing agency say who can or can not own a newspaper. The newspaper business has always been, first and foremost, a



business and nothing influences it faster than something that makes business impossible.

The high court's justices will do well to remember that information is one commodity which does not fit textbook definitions of supply and demand and monopoly.

L.R.L.

Rusty Cawley

College Station surrenders to bonfire

The College Station City Council has given up. Raised the white flag. Thrown in the towel.

And the Texas A&M University bonfire seems destined to remain where it is, no matter how much it threatens the safety of homes along the south gate.

Just how much danger the annual bonfire presents to the neighborhood along Jersey Street hasn't been determined. But in the past, the council proceeded each bonfire with a tradition of its own, asking university officials to move the bonfire site.

This year that tradition has died. It costs the city somewhere between

\$500 and \$2500 every time the bonfire is lit. The estimate varies from official to official. Most of the costs go for additional manpower: firemen to fight the fires and policemen to fight the traffic.

All stay on duty until the centerpole falls. That's been as late as 2 a.m.

The weather doesn't help. Fall is usually dry and this year is no exception. And each year Mother Nature seems to deliver what fire officials dread most, a strong north wind.

The wind carries glowing embers from the bonfire, across Jersey Street, into the southgate neighborhood. The potential for fire is there. And if one occurs, the problems for the fire department just begin.

The streets in the neighborhood are narrow. And on bonfire night, when these

streets are lined with parked cars, navigation for a vehicle as large as a fire truck is impossible.

The fire department will limit parking on these streets to residents. If they are successful, firemen should be able to take care of any fire.

But is the bonfire a threat? History seems to justify concern. Take the 1964 bonfire, in which several small fires and a major house fire were started by the embers. Or the 1975 bonfire whose embers set fire to the roof of Duncan Hall.

Little damage, true. But how much damage does it take to prove there is a danger? Some alternatives to moving the site have been suggested. None of them are popular. One councilman suggested last year that the fire be extinguished at

midnight. That idea got the horselaugh.

This year, there has been one suggestion, that to move the bonfire to Texas World Speedway. And that didn't come from the city council, but from the speedway's owner. The council has been strangely mute on the subject. The attitude seems to be one of acceptance and inevitability.

Perhaps, after years of trying, the council is too tired to fight over the bonfire any more.

City Editor Rusty Cawley writes a weekly commentary on local affairs, government and politics.

Education: Why not back to teaching?

By WILLIAM RASPBERRY

WASHINGTON—Some months ago, I got a letter (subsequently misplaced) from a reader in a small Texas town. She wanted to tell me her local school district's plan for coping with declining test scores.

They had built a brand new building, she said, complete with open space, ungraded primaries, team teaching, Joplin plans and the latest in electronic learning aids.

She was dismayed. It was a terrible waste of money, she told me, and she felt certain that very little good would come of it.

I had planned, before I lost the letter, to wait about a year and then try to wrangle a visit to the town. It's probably just as well. I'm sure the thing is a disaster by now, but there is no news in that. Any newspaper reader could have predicted that much.

"Innovation," the educational buzz word of the '60s, is the swear word of the '70s.

Time magazine spent a good deal of last week's issue attacking a variety of

innovations—the soft-sell approach to education, the dizzying array of elective courses (and the diminishing list of required ones), the everybody-do-his-own-thing-and-we'll-give-it-a-passing-grade non-sense and, above all, the proliferation of "relevant" courses, ranging from "Interior Decorating" to "The Great Sleuths."

The Time assault echoes a feeling that is sweeping the country: The swing to "innovation" was a big mistake. It seems to follow that if innovation is the disease, then a "return to basics" must be the cure.

And that may be the second big mistake. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with either innovative or basic education. The mistake is in supposing that we can cure what ails education by changing the adjectives we put in front of it.

A return to basics, if it is projected as a cure, is bound to prove as disappointing as open-space architecture and whole-child jargon. For one thing, it's easier to return to an old curriculum than to the old situa-

tion in which the curriculum was taught.

One thing that used to help test scores (and discipline) considerably was the fact that many of the slower, more disruptive children simply left school. With the variety of programs aimed at preventing drop-outs, it's virtually impossible for anyone to leave school now.

They don't necessarily learn more; they merely stay longer. And there's another reason why "return to basics" is a deceptive battle-cry: If they stay long enough, they'll get a diploma. Not to have at least a high school diploma is such a handicap to gainful employment that we have virtually decreed every child's right to a high school diploma, whether he bothers to earn one or not.

Having to teach a large number of students who, on the whole, would rather be in Philadelphia, not only pulls down grade averages; it also frustrates and demoralizes teachers.

Teachers no longer expect to be successful as teachers once were, and we don't expect them to be. Some of the best

ones give up teaching altogether, frequently leaving their places to incompetent successors.

Which, emphatically, is not to say that all (or even most) teachers are incompetent. But an awful lot of them are, and to the degree that they are, there is no cure either in innovation or back-to-basics.

There would be one big chance to make a change if we hadn't given it away. I refer to the declining school populations which, across the country, are forcing school closings and teacher lay-offs.

For all the disruption this trend entails, it would provide an excellent opportunity for school boards to get rid of the weakest teachers and keep only the very best. In some few jurisdictions it may actually work that way.

But what has happened more frequently, especially in the big cities, is that teacher's unions, preferring seniority to excellence, have won work rules that make it impossible to keep the best teachers—only the oldest.

And isn't that a lovely innovation!
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Letters to the editor

Councilman answers helmet law confusion

Editor: I have been reading so many strange letters to the editor and hearing so many strange comments regarding the motorcycle helmet law that "the College Station City Council is going to pass" that I thought I should, at least try, and clear up some of the misconceptions. Actually I feel like addressing this letter to Emily Lotello.

What has happened was the following: A citizen of College Station and a student at TAMU asked the council to consider and pass an ordinance requiring helmets to be worn within the city limits. It is the right of every citizen to request that an item be placed on the agenda of a regular council meeting. You can even appear without notice twice a month under "hear visitors." We even have been known to consider requests from foreign students, residents of other states and cities.

This is one of the unique features of American local government. Citizens are supposed to be able to ask for actions from local councils. For all those out there who think the council should have refused to even consider the request of this well informed and concerned citizen, ask yourself what kind of council would you rather have, one that will not consider requests from students at TAMU or one that will? For the record, the council heard the

request, asked the city attorney to determine if a law such as this would be legal and report back. On Nov. 17, the city attorney stated that such an ordinance would be in conflict with state law and not practical to enforce. Therefore, all cycle jocks can relax and let your hair blow in the breeze. The mean ol' council ain't gonna make you wear no helmet.

—Gary Halter
City Councilman, Place 1,
College Station

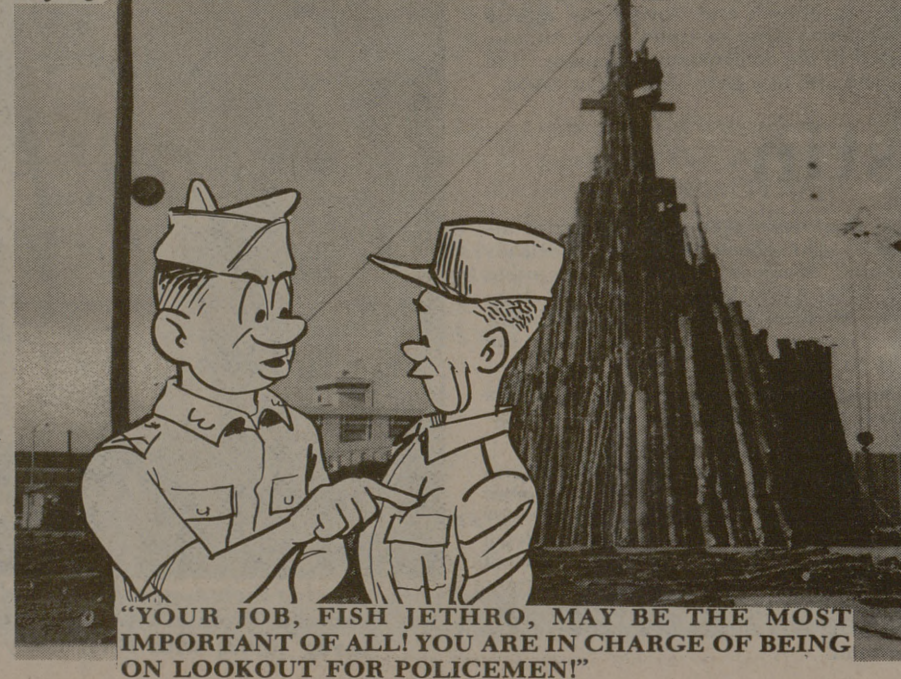
Ticket come home

Editor:

Help Ags! Yesterday I went to get two date tickets and one student ticket for the A&M-t.u. game Saturday. I found someone getting one student ticket so I gave him all my books to get them all at once. He got the tickets and left me two student tickets and one date ticket accidentally. Check those tickets! I need seat number 4 in section 150 row 17 south end bleachers. If you find this ticket, call 822-1606 or 822-2516.

—Peter Kruse

Slouch by Jim Earle



"YOUR JOB, FISH JETHRO, MAY BE THE MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL YOU ARE IN CHARGE OF BEING ON LOOKOUT FOR POLICEMEN!"