

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

THURSDAY
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New 'fox test' paves way for whole series

by DICK WEST
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Along with most other segments of American life and endeavor, the newspaper business is becoming progressively more computerized.

I confess I am totally mystified by the technological aspects of the process. But even a poor sighted soul such as I can tell that basic changes are being wrought.

The extent to which computers are transforming the old ways of doing things was impressed upon me the other day as I was watching a "fox test" being run off on a computer print-out machine.

Anyone who has ever worked around electronic printers is aware that the standard line for checking out defective equipment is: "The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog's back."

But in the test I was watching of a new computer system the wording had been changed to "The quick brown fox jumps over the crazy cotton cat."

There are two possible explanations for this startling departure from tradition.

For years, dog lovers have agitated against the fox test on grounds it labeled their pets. It could be computer technicians finally crumbled under the pounding of this vociferous pressure group and replaced the lazy dog with a crazy cotton cat.

I reject that theory, however. Had it been merely a matter of placating affronted dog owners, they could simply have changed the wording to "The quick brown dog jumped over the lazy fox's back."

Furthermore, had the computer technicians been motivated solely by a desire to avoid

offending a special interest group they never have chosen a crazy cotton cat as the dog's replacement.

Cat lovers are, if anything, even more ardent and militant than dog owners. So the explanation seems more valid.

Note, if you haven't already done so, the original fox test contains all 26 letters of the alphabet. Note also that in the fox test amended three letters are missing — "d," "g" and "l" — and that the letter "c" appears only twice in the original, about four times.

This strongly suggests that modern computers have individual peculiarities that test lines tailored to specification.

If I am on the right track here, we may actually see a whole new catalogue of computer tests, viz:

"The athletically able artist ambled over the digressing demagogue's dimpled ardent atheist's ankle."

"The bounding bucolic bachelor bowed over the biased bison's bosom."

"The callow charismatic candidate climbed over the cautious carhop's clavicle."

"The doddering dilapidated dowager dived over the digressing demagogue's dimpled ardent atheist's ankle."

"The eager ebullient elk escaped over eccentric earthworm's elbow."

"The facetiously fastidious falcon flew the flaccid ferret's forehead."

"The gluttonous gilded gerbil glided over geometric gamecock's gallbladder."

And so on down the alphabet.

These lines may make some old-timers for a return to the good old days when a rapid carnivorous mammal of the Canine family could test every printer yet invented that's progress for you.

Most injuries result from mishandling Tips for fireworks on the Fourth

CHESTERTOWN, Md. — Family-type fireworks are legal in some form in 35 of the 50 United States and can be enjoyed safely over the Fourth of July holiday by following a few common-sense rules, according to John Conkling of the American Pyrotechnics Association.

In fact, Conkling says, fireworks are safer today than they were before the Consumer Product Safety Commission's rigid standards regulating family fireworks. The CPSC's 1979 hazards list ranks fireworks as safer than 80 other consumer products, including tables and chairs, cookware, money and jewelry.

Association records show injuries due to fireworks have decreased about 40 percent in the past three years.

Conkling says family-type Class C fireworks account for only a fraction of annual injuries. Most, he adds, are caused by illegally purch-

ased Class B explosives such as cherry bombs and M-80s.

CPSC experts say 75 percent of fireworks-related injuries result from flagrant mishandling and carelessness, not malfunctioning products.

The association and the CPSC offer these tips on buying and using fireworks:

— Look for the words, Class C Fireworks, on products or their packaging. This phrase must be clearly visible on all legal items.

— All legal fireworks must also show the name of the item and easy-to-read cautionary labeling and instructions for use.

— Look for sturdy construction, bases and fuses securely attached and devices that resist tipping over.

— Avoid any that are leaking powder or that appear to be quite old or show signs of mishandling or that appear to have been wet and dried.

— Buy from reliable fireworks stands. Fly-by-night dealers are more likely to handle defective merchandise.

— Always read and follow directions.

— Never allow children to play with fireworks without adult supervision.

— Never light fireworks indoors.

— Have water handy.

— Light one at a time.

— Never reignite malfunctioning fireworks.

— Keep a safe distance.

— Never give fireworks to small children, not even sparklers.

— Ideally, you should buy fireworks just before using them. If they must be stored, pick a cool, dry place.

— Dispose of them properly.

— Don't try making fireworks at home — that's an invitation to disaster.

It's Your Turn

Pro-draft letter showed 'complete ignorance' of American ideals

Editor: Regarding Tuesday's letter by Robby Nohn, Bill Thomas, et. al., I would like to offer the following comments.

While the idea of fighting and dying for our way of life is not a pleasant one, I do believe enough in personal freedom to do so. But this is not the argument the writers chose to present. Rather, they chose to show their asinine mentality and complete ignorance of the American ideals by resorting to name-calling and idiotic threats.

The writers cite "our forefathers" who fought for our freedom, something no reasonable person can dispute. I'll take bets, though, that those same forefathers would be rolling over in their graves after reading that letter. To want to deport those who demonstrate against the draft (and therefore the government) is absurd and in direct opposition to what the forefathers fought for. Open criticism of the government is a freedom Americans enjoy because of the forefathers.

The thinking behind Tuesday's letter is the same type of mentality that produced those gems in history like Adolf Hitler and Joe McCarthy. Blindly following the whims of an offer short-sighted and inept government is the most serious threat to our way of life.

Protecting democracy is admirable, but the solution offered by those writers was something straight out of Stalin's handbook. America, love

it or leave it? You're damn right, if people like those gain control!

Kevin D. Higginbotham '79

More intelligence needed

I was here attending college as an undergraduate in 1971 when I had to make one of my most difficult and confusing decisions of my life. Should I comply with the law and go fight in a war (that wasn't a war), a war that was personally an act of national insanity? Should I ignore my part of the social contract and refuse military service, could I face jail? Finally, could I leave behind my friends, my family, my country? I made my choice, a choice that is damned hard when you're just 18. But it was the American way. I find myself occasionally questioning the wisdom of that decision still.

So this recollection makes one wonder where Mr. Nohn, '81, and his friends got the wisdom and experience to call Vietnam a cop-out? I've heard Nam called many things but never a cop-out. I wish to address another point Mr. Nohn raised in his letter, notably deportation. Just where do you deport American citizens — back to their birthplace? Certainly! Essentially it is a good idea — a bus ride back home to Topeka, St. Louis, New Orleans, or wherever, is certainly cheaper than jet fare to some European country. But perhaps I misunderstood — perhaps they should first be stripped of their

American citizenship (which provides for demonstrations and other sundry items under the Constitution) and then sent off fishing boats or cruise ships (crowd dependent). No, somehow creating the plight of the American refugee doesn't seem to be a very viable idea except a TV sitcom.

Hopefully these few lines regarding Mr. Nohn's published banality will defuse his rather extremist letter. The draft topic requires far more input than the narrow-mindedness his letter demonstrates and an acceptance of the reality the Libertarian party somehow manages to transcend.

Jeff Bogert

Blood article disputed

Editor: Regarding your article of 6/25/80, "Two groups seek student blood."

The impression left by this article is that the Aggie Blood Club is trying to justify Aggie support of the Wadley Central Blood Bank by making the Red Cross organization look bad. I feel that this is unnecessary and that certain key points need to be clarified.

Wadley Central Blood Bank operates out of Dallas and supplies blood directly to about fifteen hospitals — mostly in the Dallas area. Aggies who donate to Wadley are covered "wherever they go" in the sense that Wadley will pay for the blood that an Aggie receives in any hospital, provided that the recipient notifies Wadley and the hospital involved verifies the use of blood. This does not mean that the Aggie will get "Wadley" blood, nor that Wadley will replace the blood used. In the case of local hospitals, St. Joseph and Bryan, this means that blood is used without replacement. Since most Texas A&M students are local residents, blood used in local hospitals is for them as well as other local residents. Many A&M students are given blood at local hospitals and it seems that they should support these hospitals. The atti-

tude of donating blood to get the "best deal" for yourself is contrary to the spirit of voluntarily donating blood.

There is also no basis for the impression that Wadley shows superior planning and organization by drawing blood before the July 4 weekend. Blood donated is useable up to 35 days and it makes as much sense to draw after the holiday to restore stock as to draw before to build up stock. Central Red Cross of Waco holds drives in Bryan-College Station at monthly intervals and this is no their only source. They collect blood in the Waco area daily and their mobile units travel continuously throughout the area that they serve.

There is a need in the Bryan-College Station area for better publicity for the Red Cross drives in order to encourage students and other residents to donate blood. There should be no need for competition between the Wadley and Red Cross groups. A normal, healthy adult is able to donate blood every eight weeks, therefore it is possible to support both groups. The local hospitals use about 200 pints of blood monthly and it should be no problem for a community like Bryan-College Station, students and permanent residents, to replace this blood.

One final point, whether misinformed or misquoted, O-positive is not a universal donor, O-negative is.

Anne Dillinger

About dishonest Ags

Editor: I am writing in a response to Timothy W. Purcell's letter entitled "Behavior shocking." I completely agree, it is a bad situation. It is getting easier and easier for a person to come to school here and never learn what it means to be an Ag. Go to Silver Taps next time you get a chance and see how many good Ags there really are. If you go to Muster next year, you'll be going to G. Rollie. G. Rollie only holds 7,000 and there were 30,000 here at that time. G. Rollie was almost full at Muster, but take away 2,000 CT's

Battalion solicits letters, opinions

The Battalion solicits guest opinions and letters to the editor for the Viewpoint page. Letters or guest pieces may be written on anything of campus, local, state, national or world concern.

To be accepted for publication, letters should meet the following criteria:

— They should be typed or printed legibly, and double-spaced.

— They should bear the author's campus address and home and/or office phone number.

The Battalion reserves the right to edit letters for style and length. Letters will not be edited for content.

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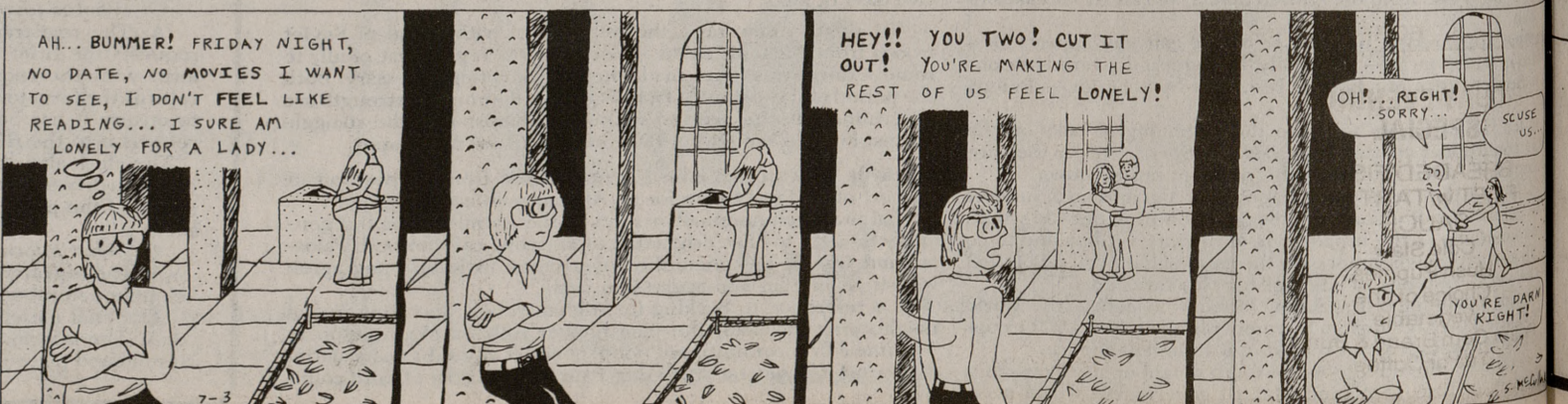
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Warped



by Scott McCuller