

opinion

Drugs, payoffs and high schools

by Maxwell Glen and Cody Shearer

In May 1950, a group of businessmen and civic leaders in Mosinee, Wis., (1980 population 2,900) staged a mock "totalitarian" takeover for a day to teach a lesson about communism.

With cameras rolling, Mosinee's mayor, newspaper editor and town preacher were "imprisoned" behind barbed wire for being "disloyal" to the state. To complete the totalitarian imagery, some residents were shown passing the names of similarly dissident neighbors to local authorities.

Thirty-three years later, well-meaning civic leaders in another American town have asked local citizens to turn in their peers. This time, however, the American-style snitching is for real, and decidedly capitalistic town elders in Lewisville, Texas, (population 24,000) are offering a \$100 reward to students who provide information about drug users or sellers at the local high school.

Though various American high schools have encouraged students to make anonymous tips on local drug pushers, only Lewisville's has been desperate enough to post "wanted" signs and offer bounty.

Last September, Lewisville High School's principal, C. Douglas Killough, solicited community leaders for commitments to pay for the drug-reward program. The money, Killough explained to

them, would be filtered through the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA).

According to Killough's proposal, any student who turned in a name to school authorities would receive \$50. As they used to say on "Gunsmoke," "half now, half later."

Lewisville's business community responded enthusiastically to the proposed program. So many commitments were received, in fact, that the local PTSA ceased its solicitations. "It only took us a few days ..." recalled John Zepka, an executive committee member of the Lewisville group.

To date, the program's practical success has turned out to be less certain. An assistant principal at Lewisville High, Malcolm Dennis, told the Dallas Morning News last week that "you'd be astonished at how well the students are cooperating. Some have even turned in their best friends."

But of the 30 students turned in to school authorities, principal Killough himself told us, only half have actually been found in possession. In a school of 2,200 students, that's less than 1 percent. Comparisons with national averages would indicate that either students aren't snitching of Lewisville has really no drug "problem" to speak of.

It would be callous to rely simply on the latter possibility. Lewisville has neither the size nor the complexities of Dallas,

its neighbor to the south, but its fear of teenage drug use is probably many times greater. Around the U.S., small- and medium-sized towns have probably been the most persistent in seeking remedies to the "problem" before it gets too big. "If there was only one kid on marijuana," said Lewisville High trustee Jerry Dorman, "the program would be worth it."

Simple solutions, however, beg scrutiny, especially when the problem is so complicated, emotional and long-standing. And when the solution encourages problems that are as serious of worse, the ends don't justify the means.

In their own paranoia, Lewisville's leaders have cynically sought to play on that of a far more vulnerable group. Fear of authority has a way of turning friend against friend, brother against sister, as the Chinese, Soviet and other dictatorial regimes have found to their advantage.

To grease totalitarian tactics with bribery (rewards are nothing more in this case) is to encourage people's worst instincts.

But it also ignores that most younger Americans are more likely to consider drug use an abuse of oneself than a crime against the state. That fact alone makes the problem social in nature and explains why most Lewisville students, according to student body president Jeff Nowak, "have pretty much ignored the program ... It's not the way most of us handle things between each other."

Slouch By Jim Earle



"I never realized how much effect on my grading a touch of perfume would have."

Horatio Alger — learning new jobs get

by Art Buchwald

"Hi, Mr. Peters, remember me? Horatio Alger the Fourth. You laid me off from the company six months ago because I was unskilled labor. Well, I just completed a welding course, and I'm ready to go back to work."

"Sorry, Horatio, but since you've been gone, the company has decided to invest in robot welders. I don't believe your welding skills are necessary any longer. Now, if you knew something about robotics."

"I don't, sir, but I'll retrain myself and become a robot serviceman. I'll see you in six months."

"That's a good idea, son. Come back when you know something about robots, Horatio, and there will be a job waiting for you."

"Hi, Mr. Peters. Well, sir, here's my certificate from the Consolidated Robot School. It says I can repair any kind of robot now on the market."

"This is very impressive. Let's see, according to your file, you were in this personnel office last July. Since you were here the company has invested in a state of the art computer that can repair the robots that make our zits. We're no longer hiring service people to take care of the robots."

"But surely, sir, you must need someone to program the computers."

"As a matter of fact we do. Have you any experience in this field?"

"I don't at the moment, but I know I can be retrained to become a computer expert. If I do well in school may I have a job with your company?"

"Of course you can. You show the spirit this corporation is always looking for."

"Hello, Mr. Peters. Long time no see."

"As I live and breathe, it's Horatio Alger the Fourth. What have you been up to for the past two years?"

"I've been going to advanced computer programming school, sir, I am now fluent in BASIC, PASCAL and FORTRAN, and cna work with any software on the market. I assume the company is still looking for programmers?"

"We were for a while, Horatio, then we subcontracted all our programming work to a software company that specializes in improving robot production for zits. We no longer have a center division of our own, except for a section that devotes itself to collating on the zit market and then making nomic predictions on how the company should expand."

"Do not worry, Mr. Peters, I will train myself to become an economist with an emphasis on long-range zit planning."

"You'll need a doctorate before we hire you."

"Do not fear, sir. I will drive during the daytime and go to school at night. If becoming an economist is only way I can get a job, so be it — become one."

"You show gumption, boy. Bring that sheepskin and you'll be on payroll."

(Three years later.)

"Do my eyes deceive me? Is this little Horatio Alger the Fourth who used to drop in here to see me about a job?"

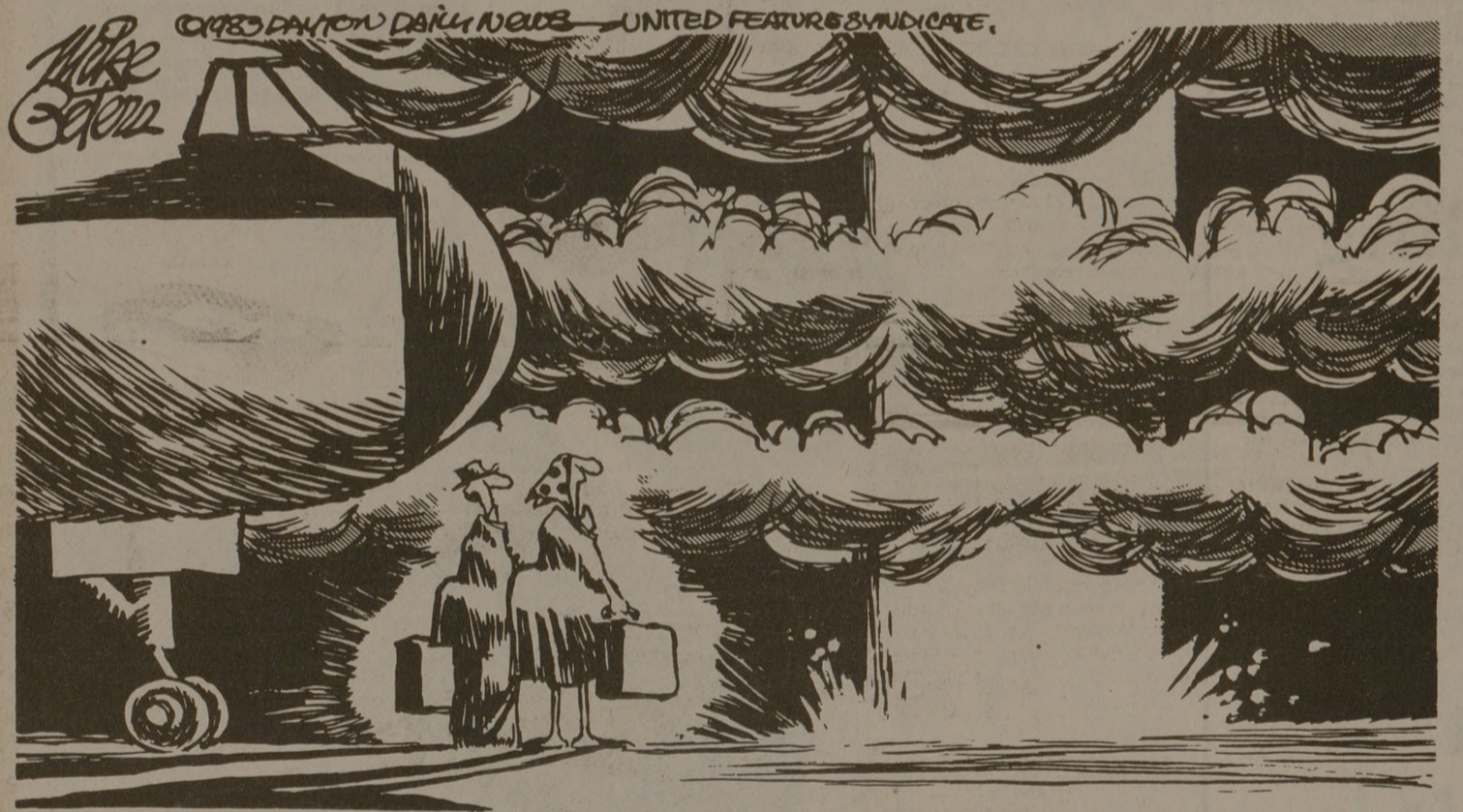
"The very same, and I have something to show you. Here, sir, from the Harvard Business School, is my doctorate in Tech Economics. And here is my doctoral thesis on the future of the zit market in the 21st century, as broken down by continents and countries throughout non-Communist world. Now that I'm retrained, may I have a position with your company?"

"Horatio, please sit down. Since you went off to get your economics degree we've moved the entire company's operations to South Korea. We don't do anything here except distribute zits to dealers."

"I understand, sir, and I certainly don't blame you for going where you make a better product for much less cost."

"What are you going to do now, Horatio?"

"The same thing any ambitious American boy would do. I'm going to retrain myself to be a South Korean."



OH SWELL, WE GO TO CALIFORNIA AND IT RAINS... WE GO TO FLORIDA AND IT SNOWS... AND NOW WE COME HERE TO EUROPE...

Arms control: Reagan vs Andropov

by Donald A. Davis
United Press International

WASHINGTON — President Reagan is applying steady and mounting pressure on the Soviet Union in an unwavering belief that unless Moscow feels menaced by U.S. military might, the Soviet Union will not seriously negotiate disarmament.

It is a very dangerous gambit to play against an opponent that lost millions of its citizens in the last world war and openly vows never again to be placed in jeopardy.

"If you're going to negotiate, you have to have some strength on your side," the president said this week. "You have to have some reason for them to look at and weigh the value of reducing their own weaponry."

Therefore, Reagan sees success for the odd process of launching a massive and expensive improvement of the U.S. armed forces while at the same time bargaining for reductions of forces and weaponry.

The Soviet Union sees it differently and views the U.S. expansion of its military muscle as an open threat by Washington.

The latest move — Reagan's proposal to build a space-age supersystem to destroy missiles zooming toward U.S. targets

— clearly demonstrates the far extremes at which the White House and the Kremlin are operating. Reagan says it is only a defensive measure and Soviet leader Yuri Andropov treated it an "insane" offensive strategy.

When he announced the program last week, Reagan said the bottom line was that since the dawn of the atomic age, the "strategy of deterrence has not changed."

"We maintain the peace through our strength; weakness only invites aggression," he said. The president likened the superpowers pointing arsenals of missiles to card players sitting at the same table pointing loaded pistols at each other, and that it didn't matter who pulled the trigger first because everyone would suffer.

So he outlined the high tech answer — a shield made up of advanced lasers and such things to wipe out any incoming missile. As when he named the MX missile the "Peacekeeper," Reagan said the new system would be solely for defensive purposes and help push nuclear missiles into the sunset.

The Soviet leadership immediately viewed the proposal with gloom. In a return to cold war rhetoric Andropov denounced Reagan's futuristic proposals and charged they could "open the floodgates to a runaway race for all types of

strategic arms, both defensive and offensive."

Reagan then shifted the focus again with his newest proposal for reducing medium range missiles in Europe. And he said Tuesday that there is "no change" in U.S. determination to put Pershing II and cruise missiles into Europe if Moscow doesn't come to terms in those talks in Geneva.

Early next month, he is expected to announce a decision on basing the nuclear-tipped MX missile.

The main question at this point is whether either side is listening to any possible peace overtures from the other or is the arms race overheating once again.

According to Reagan, he doesn't think "there's anything particularly new in the rhetoric that was used by Andropov."

And the Kremlin clearly does not view Reagan's intentions as peaceful. "Let there be no mistake about it in Washington," Andropov said last week. "It is time they stopped devising one option after another in the search of the best ways of unleashing nuclear war in the hope of winning it."

Perhaps the rising tensions and polemical rhetoric between the two superpowers will only be reduced if the two leaders find a way to sit down at a summit meeting sometime this year.

USPS 045 360

Member of
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Conference

The Battalion

- Editor Diana Sultenfuss
- Managing Editor Gary Barker
- Associate Editor Denise Richter
- City Editor Hope E. Pasch
- Assistant City Editor Beverly Hamilton
- Sports Editor John Wagner
- Entertainment Editor Colette Hutchings
- Assistant Entertainment Editor Diane Yount
- News Editors Daran Bishop, Brian Boyer, Jennifer Carr, Elaine Engstrom, Shelley Hoekstra, Johna Jo Maurer, Jan Werner, Rebeca Zimmermann
- Staff Writers Melissa Adair, Maureen Carmody, Frank Christlieb, Connie Edelman, Patrice Koranek, John Lopez, Robert McGlohn, Ann Ramsbottom, Kim Schmidt, Patti Schwierzke, Kelley Smith, Angel Stokes, Tracey Taylor, Joe Tindel, Kathy Wiesepape
- Copy editor Jan Swanner
- Cartoonist Scott McCullar
- Graphic Artists Pam Starasinic, Sergio Galvez Thompson, Fernando Andrade
- Photographers David Fisher, Guy Hood, Eric Lee, Irene Mees, William Schulz

Editorial Policy

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting news-

paper operated as a community service to Texas University and Bryan-College Station. Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editor and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the author's intent. Each letter must also be accompanied by the address and phone number of the writer.

The Battalion also serves as a laboratory for students in reporting, editing and photography within the Department of Communications. Questions or comments concerning an editorial matter should be directed to the editor.

Letters Policy

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are too long. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to meet the author's intent. Each letter must also be accompanied by the address and phone number of the writer. Columns and guest editorials are also welcome and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843, or phone (713) 261-1.

The Battalion is published daily during Texas fall and spring semesters, except for holidays and vacation periods. Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per year, \$35.25 per school year and \$35 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

United Press International is entitled exclusive use for reproduction of all news dispatches sent to it. Rights of reproduction of all other matter reserved.

Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.