

# opinion Letters

## Why follow Falwell?

**Editor:**  
In reference to Jerry Falwell's "Morality in Democracy" speech Tuesday:

I think Jerry Falwell is a very paranoid man. Why is he one of the 25 most influential people in America? Because America trusts his predictable, hypocritical, empty political and religious cliches and his bland clone-like demeanor.

My impression is he'd do anything to protect his nuclear family from the "national sins" (abortion, homosexuality, pornography). I think Falwell shouts the name of God and of Jesus Christ from every TV set in America to keep his own sizeable chunk of the American Dream safe from the communists because he says "they are not like us."

Why does he own a gun and why does he support increased defense spending to protect America?

If Jerry Falwell really is a holy man on a personal mission from God, then why is he so afraid?

Joanna Sklan  
Graduate Student

## 'Satire' questionable

**Editor:**  
I realize that last night's book burning was intended to be a "satire" statement against Jerry Falwell's proposed "New Morality," but it is my understanding that satire is intended to be constructive rather than destructive.

Could not these modern revolutionaries find a more suitable, less odious means of demonstrating their beliefs? I don't think that in this case, one can fight fire with more fire.

Janet Whyde '85

## Buying books: a costly, frustrating task at best

A student's life is full of expenses: food, beverages (of varying types and content), clothes and school supplies. But even with running a tab up at the Dixie Chicken, textbooks are probably the most expensive, but least used, item in a student's life.

One good aspect about textbooks is that they can be used in ways other than for classes. A book makes an excellent insect exterminator and works just as well as a rain shield. I also have an old English book that makes a great door-stop.

Just buying books can be a hassle. If my staying at A&M would have depended on how smooth book buying went, I would be enrolled at t.u. now.

After fighting my way through the throngs of people to get into the bookstore, I dug through stacks of books searching for any used books in semi-decent condition. I discovered that I was lucky and did have an option. I could either buy a used book with 13 pages missing or a new book costing twice its worth.

There seems to be an irony in buying books that can be found nowhere else. It seems fitting that an economics book is one of the most expensive books in the store.

After buying his books, it is not unusual for a lucky student to find out that he only needed to get one English book instead of the three the bookstore clerk advised him to buy.

Sadly, the purchase of books is quite often the least frustrating experience students have with them, because after the books are bought, a student is actually expected to read them.

Of all the textbooks in the world, the most frustrating to read are math books. With "X's and "Y's" jumping throughout it's often hard, if not impossible, to figure out where "Z" came from.

However, reading a math book is easy



Kari fluegel

compared to working the story problems in it.

Jane and John went to the store to buy rat poison, string and milk for a school project. Each has \$1.50. John departed from their house 15 minutes before Jane and traveled on his bicycle at the rate of three miles per hour. Jane took a longer route to the store but stopped to talk to Bill for five minutes. Bill was on his way to a meeting of Hitler's Youth four blocks away from the grocery store. How old is Bill's younger brother Erwin?

Science books are almost as confusing as math books. My high school chemistry book boasted that it was written for students at the eighth grade level. What the book didn't say was that it also was written to keep students at the eighth grade level.

Not all textbooks were written to send students screaming to a rubber room. In fact, there have been a few books that I have actually enjoyed . . . very few.

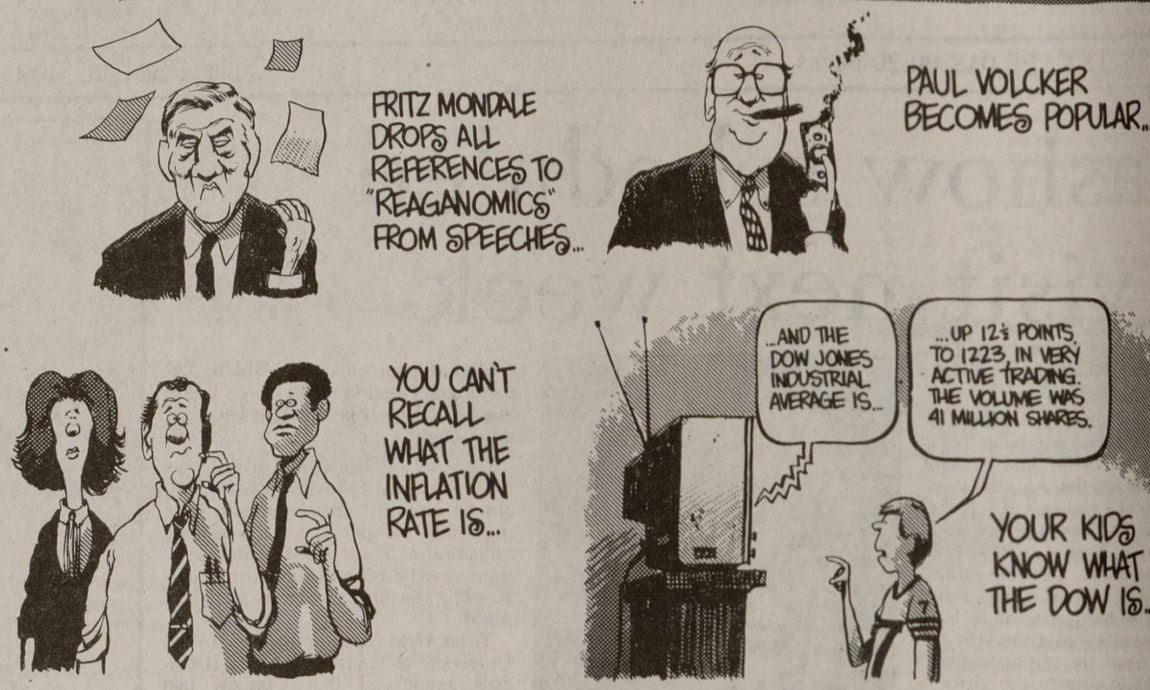
There seems to be a textbook for every class any administrator could possibly think of, and some for classes I did not think could have textbooks.

I wonder what sex education classes use for textbooks: Playboy, Playgirl, "The Joy of Sex?"

Forget books, I wonder what sex education classes do in lab.

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## LEADING ECONOMIC INDICATORS:



FRITZ MONDALE DROPS ALL REFERENCES TO "REAGANOMICS" FROM SPEECHES...

PAUL VOLCKER BECOMES POPULAR...

YOU CAN'T RECALL WHAT THE INFLATION RATE IS...

...AND THE DOW JONES INDUSTRIAL AVERAGE IS...

...UP 12 1/2 POINTS TO 1223, IN VERY ACTIVE TRADING. THE VOLUME WAS 41 MILLION SHARES.

YOUR KIDS KNOW WHAT THE DOW IS...

## Big federal dollars awarded to schools with most hustle

by Maxwell Glen and Cody Shearer

WASHINGTON — Last September, Father William Byron looked around his campus at Catholic University, a 7,000-student institution here, for a project worthy of federal government support.

Byron eventually set his sights on Catholic's Vitreous State Laboratory. Scattered among three buildings, the lab is home to 50 scientists whose work on fiber optics and other "materials research" has been widely recognized.

Hoping to house the lab in a single new building constructed at government expense, Byron said, he began to package (the lab's) strengths and match them with national policy.

A year — and many trips to Capitol Hill — later, Byron's dream has come true. Late in July, Catholic received a congressional promise for \$5 million, payable on or after Oct. 1, the beginning of a new fiscal year.

An additional \$8.9 million will probably follow next year. Already, Byron has begun to select a site and talk with architects.

Yet many of Byron's colleagues, impressed with his enterprise, take exception to his methods. There is widespread agreement in academia and in government that, by hiring lobbyists and ignoring traditional channels for research projects, Byron has set an unprecedented — and questionable — example for other schools to follow.

In time, many worry, lawmakers could dish out cash to colleges just as they roll the pork barrel for other interest groups.

Adding to such fears is New York's Columbia University, which also received \$5 million during the summer for a \$20 million chemistry center — again, with aid from lobbyists and some unorthodox shortcuts.

According to Dr. Jim Kane, deputy director of the Energy Department's research office, a university hoping to garner federal support for a research project traditionally makes a formal proposal to the appropriate federal agency.

Federal officials, in turn, seek the advice of experts in the field, asking questions about each proposal's efficacy, potential and merit.

While "peer review" methods vary and are rarely part of an agency's official policy, they routinely determine whether a school's proposal is included in budgets sent to Congress.

Officials at Catholic and Columbia, however, preferred a more direct approach. With an assist from the Washington lobbying firm of Scholssberg and Cassidy, they convinced the full House to divert from other Energy Department projects two \$5 million parcels.

As a spokesman for the American Physical Society told our reporter, Michael Duffy: "They sold their projects on the floor of the House. Some big shots said, 'Hey! Let's just

transfer some money.'"

Catholic President Byron defended Capitol Hill Hustle, contending that the tactics feign innocence. Most colleges employ outside consultants, he says, many retain Washington lobbyists.

He justifies his own actions by pointing to a Reagan administration initiative spring that would have granted \$13 million outright to the University of California Berkeley without benefit of peer review (Congress eventually scrapped that). Other schools, he adds, have even similar runarounds in the past.

At issue, of course, is not the merit of research at either Catholic or Columbia (though peer review would have had those issues).

The chief concern, instead, is that schools will try to solve their financial problems by appealing directly to Congress. Such a prospect is almost inevitable, as state and federal appropriations to education decline, Uncle Sam is expected to continue to shoulder 80 percent of university research costs.

It may only seem increasingly likely that every institution deserves a slice of pie. In fact, many Energy Department officials are already preparing for Byron's maneuvers next year.

## Life teaches appreciation

by Red Earl Scheart

"To hear one long note of his," our philosophy prof told us, "is to hear the feeling and experience of melancholy years. You should go buy a record of his and play it tonight!"

So like a good Ag I went and bought a Pablo Casals album and listened to his cello music. The notes were oddly disturbing; there were no words, no rhythmic drum beating, and certainly nothing resembling a singing electric guitar.

It was melody, and it swirled around my mind and tried to touch something. It was interesting, but of no great interest. I could not really grasp what the prof had meant, and if you can't understand it, why bother with it.

Still, he must of known something, they do not give away Ph.D's for fun.

I puzzled over this very little until I read my newspaper the next day. It reported the deaths of two Marines in Lebanon and I wondered why they were dead. Reagan sent them there to be part of an international peacekeeping force.

Other men from other countries had died or been wounded, but I wondered if maybe this was not a method for Reagan to arouse the wrath of the American people and then find backing for a military confrontation in Lebanon.

A terrible purpose, if true, but we have already learned that the moral integrity of a president is no absolute. I am uncertain as to what the truth could be, yet I am still bothered by it.

It was in a class that same day, when I talked with a lovely girl I had met in a class over summer, that I remembered something.

During the summer, her infant nephew had died. She missed class for three days, and when she returned, her eyes were still red and swollen. Remembering her eyes, I thought of Casals. Thinking on the all too clear mystery of death, I knew I would play Casals that night.

This time, as I listened, the melody touched me, a memory was pulled free, and I began to understand.

In high school there had been a girl I knew. She was short and overweight with weak knees. She used to say that all her

friends were boys.

I was always wary of that sort of girl, yet she somehow managed to latch onto me. I took her home one night from a party and stopped in front of her house. She did not heed my not too subtle hints to get out of the car, but instead started to tell me about her father.

He had died the year before. She told me that he had gone jogging and when he came back to the house, he collapsed onto the kitchen floor suffering from a heart attack.

She came into the living room and watched TV for several minutes so that by the time she went into the kitchen, her father was dead. The doctor told the remaining family that if they could have gotten to him a few minutes sooner, he might

sadness, and finally learned how to put feelings into music.

Yet even so, life has beauty and we experience happiness. Perhaps by being one another, we can grow strong by giving of strength to others.

Then we may come to know that beauty and meaning are both in the eye of the beholder, and that it is up to us to see them.

## Slouch

By Jim Earls

## Readers' Forum

have lived.

When she finished telling me this, she leaned over, grasping me in her arms and crying into my shoulder, and told me she felt so guilty that she had not gone into the kitchen just a few minutes sooner and perhaps saved her father.

What could I say, I knew nothing of such guilt, knew little enough about her, so I just let her cry. It was later that I came to understand why all her friends were men, she needed the strength, the security that a man supposedly offers a woman.

That night, I could provide neither. Listening to Casals, I remembered all this and more, at last coming to understand what the professor had meant, what Casals must have known all along.

To go through life is to see failure, to feel sadness, to come to know tragedy all too intimately. As we grow older, we will learn the sorrowful stories of others and live some ourselves.

It is the true reality of life that we are not guaranteed happiness, that we have to search and fight for it. There is no living without sadness.

This is what Casals knew, he who had gone through so much of life, seen so much



"How about let's holding up our heads that until Christmas is a little closer."

## The Battalion

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Columns and guest editorials also are welcome, and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843, or phone (409) 845-2611.

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