

Theories are not absolute truths

Once again the East Coast is snubbing its nose at the state of Texas—and this time it is justified.

"Deep in the Heart of Ignorance," an editorial published Jan. 23 in the New York Times, referred to the Texas Board of Education ruling that Charles Darwin's theory of evolution need not be in biology textbooks approved for Texas public schools.

The Battalion has received letters both in support and against the state's ruling, but most of the writers have relied heavily on faith, either in the Bible or science, rather than hard evidence to prove their points.

But the validity of evolution shouldn't be the determining factor in planning curricula for the public schools. Disclaimers stating "Evolution is a theory" would actually be redundant if science classes were taught correctly.

All science is theory. Some theories are more readily verified than others. All theories are based on assumptions. And the science of the Western world is based on the philosophy of the Western world.

Before relying on faith in either science or religion, all Americans should examine as many "theories" as they can. Schools should be the best environments for this sampling of ideas to take place.

If our schools would stress this point, instead of trying to teach "absolute truths," there would be no need for biology textbooks to make the distinction between "facts" and "theories."

And if Biblical or scientific concepts aren't strong enough to stand up to valid questioning, then they are probably not worth clinging to.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

Letters:

Death penalty isn't murder

Editor:

The Battalion Editorial Board printed an editorial Jan. 26 entitled "Execution Another Form of Murder." The Board is obviously confused. Webster's New World Dictionary defines the word execution as "a putting to death in accordance with a legal sentence." Webster's defines the word murder as "the unlawful and malicious or premeditated killing of a person." There is clearly a distinction between execution and murder. When a person murders someone, he has taken it upon himself to judge the other person's right to life. The people that represent the law, however, judge the convict's right to life.

Capital punishment is definitely needed. With no death penalty, convicts could only be given life sentences as maximum punishment. These convicts might have a chance to be paroled and could again be a threat to society.

These same convicts would have nothing to lose if they tried to escape and did not succeed. No time could be added to their life sentences. The only deterrent would be the death penalty. These convicts, knowing the possible results of failed escape attempts, would not be as eager to escape.

The Board also wrote, "But what if the man or woman on death row is innocent?" If the death penalty was not given as a punishment, this person would have been given some other punishment. Would it have been fair for that same "innocent" person to spend life in prison? I believe not. The problem of an innocent person being convicted does not lie with

in the punishment given, but within the courts that convicted that person. These courts are run by humans, and are therefore fallible.

The Board finished with the question, "If abortion is murder, what do you call executions?" I would call executions a necessary part of legal system. Some people say that it is unfair to execute a convicted criminal, but I ask you, would it be fair for a child to come home and find his mother splattered all over the kitchen floor? We must use capital punishment to deter these would-be murderers.

Patrick Kane
Class of '87

God condones death penalty

Editor:

I would like to address the editorial by the Battalion staff affirming execution as a form of murder. Is, then, incarceration a form of kidnapping?

What distinguishes imprisonment from kidnapping is not that human life is involved in one but not the other or that the will of the person is violated in one but not the other. Human life and human will are involved in both. These are not the defining characteristics of murder, either.

The reason that the Battalion staff and many people find it "impossible to determine right or wrong in such a case as this (execution)" is that they don't understand what issues are involved.

The staff judged correctly that execution, as well as abortion, are moral issues, and a moral issue implies responsibility to God. The key issue is that the life of man is owned by God, not man. If one person

(or group) determines to take the life of another, the focal point is not whether the other person is a human being—it is whether God, the creator and owner, agrees to it.

God not only agrees to the execution of murderers, he requires it. In Gen.9:6, God said to Noah, "Who so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man." If that isn't clear enough, consider Lev.24:17, "And he who killeth any man shall surely be put to death." Rom.13:4 says that rulers don't bear the sword in vain.

This is what distinguishes the abortion of the unborn from the execution of the murderer—God is the owner of the life. An expectant mother does not own the life of her baby; the choice to have that baby killed is not rightfully hers. God owns the life of the murderer as well and has required the state to take it.

Debbie Gilliam
Math Graduate Student

Jeans Day a joke

Editor:

A question: To whom does The Battalion refer in your "Is it in the Jeans?" section of the Bad Bull awards?

The terribly witty comment on the reprint was "Need more be written?" Rather nebulous, that. All of the Brazos Valley gay organizations know full well that Jeans Day made fools of many last semester, but whom from the multitude do you award? The bus driver who wore an olive leisure suit to work that day? The jeans-clad teaching assistant who could not convince his students of his quite extant non-gay proclivity? My effeminate friend H—, deep in his closet, who wore pinstripes so "no one would suspect"? All the world-class university students who have no idea that places like LSU and Central Michigan have Jeans Day every semester, who seemed to assume Mr. DePalma got the idea as he buttered his toast that morning? The intellectuals who could only fatuously mimic our attempts at explaining our purpose and goals with Jeans Day? Ms. Paasch, formerly of Battalion fame, who ex post facto consistently ignored our many success stories and letters of follow-up in favor of fundamentalists' ravings?

Truthfully, we at Alternatives/GSS/MCCBV/"News and Views" have been laughing about Jeans Day ever since then. You are 101 percent right in discerning that somebody deserves your esteemed award, but I certainly hope it can be stretched to extend to every homophobe and closet-case who earned it.

To quote the inimitable Rev. Jon Miller paraphrasing Bette Midler: "Love 'em if they can't take a joke."

Jaye McShawney

Abstinence, not abortion

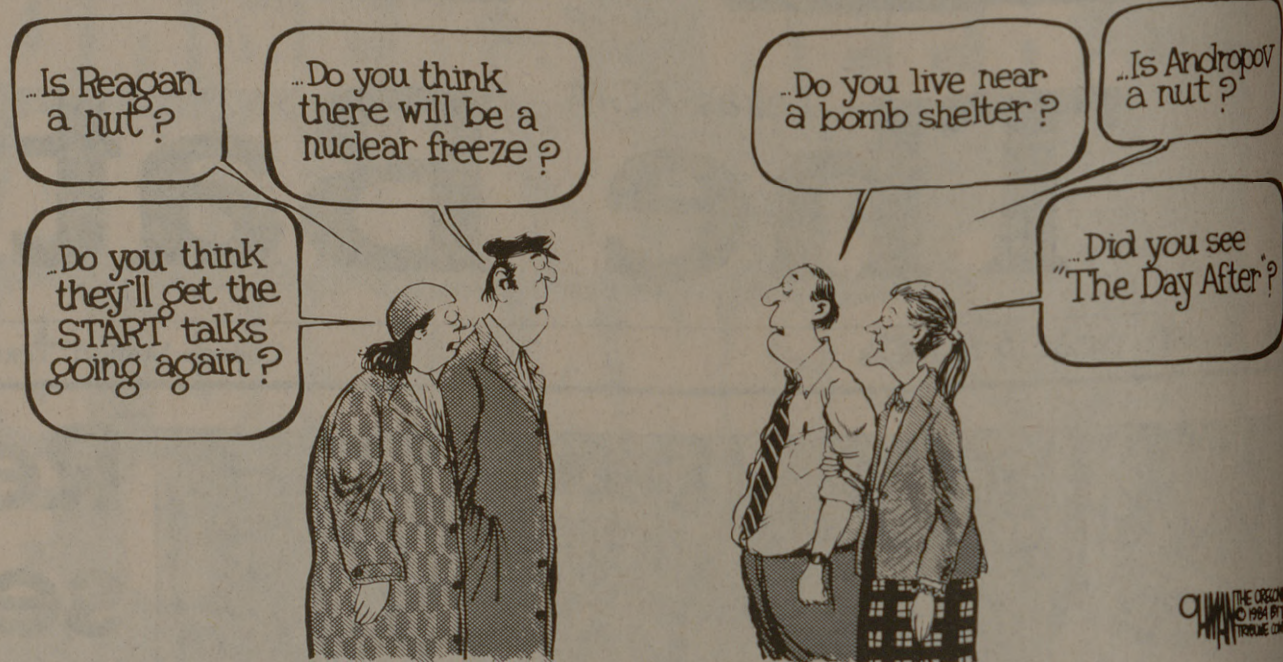
Editor:

I would like to add my comments to the recent letters on abortion. There are other choices, as was pointed out by Dawn Wright's letter of Jan. 25.

I think that there is one more thing to bear in mind. Any couple who willingly enters into a sexual relationship should realize that sex has a purpose other than personal gratification. Procreation is also part of the process.

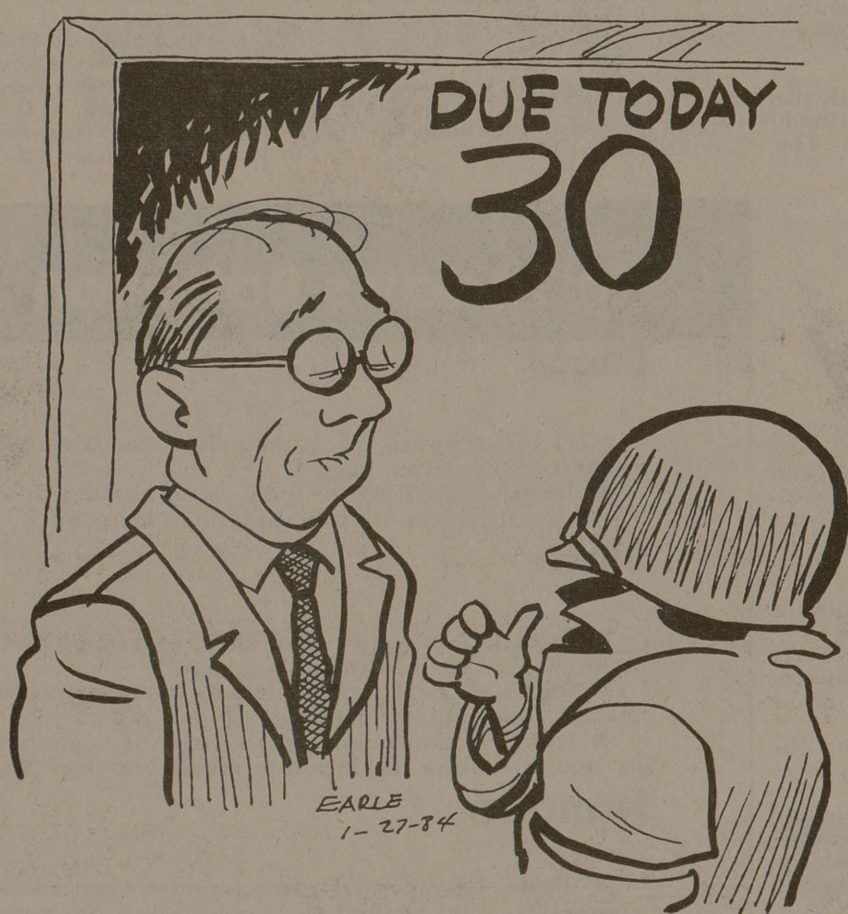
There are ways of preventing pregnancy today. We aren't stupid as far as

WHAT NAN & ANYA AND JIM & SALLY WILL REALLY TALK ABOUT...



Slouch

by Jim Earle



"Did you tell us which assignment was due today?"

Election unfairly scheduled

By GRANT SWARTZWELDER

On Jan. 24, Gov. Mark White arranged three special elections. The first was set for April 7. The third, the contest for Bill Presnal's seat on the state legislature, is scheduled for March 10 in Brazos County.

March 10 just happens to be a day during Texas A&M's spring break. The majority of students and faculty have left for the week. If White is concerned about voter participation, it is counterproductive to schedule an election when one-third of the population will be out of town.

White is claiming that an early election is imperative to ensure representation for Brazos County as soon as possible. I'm glad to know we'll get our representation. It's just too bad our representative will have to wait to represent the Legislature will not be in until June at the earliest.

reader's forum

Brazos County's representation is vital that White avoided combining special election with a municipal election already scheduled for April 7. He combined the two, he would have the county approximately \$22,000.

If the welfare of Brazos County really at stake, why didn't White propose a March 3 election? This would have given us an additional week of representation at the out-of-session legislative session.

A March 3 election date would pose one problem, however. This date would have allowed the student body and faculty of Texas A&M to participate.

A turnout of 10,000 voters could be expected, judging from past elections. Considering that between 4,000 and 6,000 students are registered in Brazos County, Texas A&M's student body could exert considerable influence.

Voter registration only lasts one day. Registering to vote in Brazos County would allow you to vote in the election and the upcoming primary. A good student turnout is the best way to show Austin that Texas will not tolerate political manipulation and injustice.

Grant Swartzwelder is a junior role engineering major and Student Vice President of Academic Affairs.

The Battalion

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