

Texas still catching up on evolution

Texas is trying to catch up with the rest of the country. Trying, but not quite succeeding.

Saturday, the Texas State Board of Education repealed a rule restricting the way evolution can be discussed in textbooks. The 10-year-old rule required books to identify evolution "as one of only several explanations of the origins of humankind."

The decision came a month after state Attorney General Jim Mattox issued an opinion that the 1974 rule was unconstitutional. People for the American Way, a national anti-censorship group, had threatened a lawsuit if the board did not repeal the rule. The board wisely followed Mattox's opinion.

The repeal may have far-reaching consequences. Because the state's textbook market is so large, Texas has been affecting the publication of textbooks throughout the nation. Publishers tailor books for Texas — \$80

million a year on textbooks is no small order. It appears that other states' textbook selections will no longer hinge on an archaic Texas rule.

But that may not be the case. The board managed to water down the repeal by amending its guidelines on general textbook content. The guideline states that all theories in textbooks "be clearly distinguished from fact and presented in an objective educational manner."

The ambiguous wording of this guideline is still potentially dangerous to public education in Texas and other states. The loose wording may be applied to theories in any discipline, from psychology, sociology and economics, as well as science. Textbooks for these subjects ultimately may be affected by the guideline.

The board tried but fell short of catching up.

—The Battalion Editorial Board

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And the Nominees are...



Letters

Argument based on prejudice

Editor:
In his recent letter to the Battalion, Wahid Ibrahim tried to substantiate his anti-Israeli prejudice with flowing emotions and distorted facts.

He rejected his option to carry an Israeli passport because it bears "the name of a Jewish prophet and the royal symbol of a Jewish king." However, had he studied the facts he would have discovered that the Israeli passport bears neither a prophet's name nor any royal Jewish symbol. Why does Ibrahim refuse that document so vehemently?

Ibrahim claimed that Arabs in Israel are second class citizens, deliberately ignoring the fact that hundreds of thousands of Arabs enjoy in Israel political liberties unheard of in the Arab world.

Their parliamentary representatives of nationalistic political opinion object to the government policies openly and legally, trying to affect majority decisions in democratic ways. Second class citizens, Mr. Ibrahim, are the Jews in Syria, who have no civil rights, whose property is confiscated and whose immigration is forbidden.

and that any outrageous act of theirs must be condoned. Apparently there is no reason to become upset when someone else's ox is being gored.

Examples: On the very day that fifty civilians were wounded by Palestinian Arab terrorists in a wild rampage down a Jerusalem avenue, viewers at the "International Fest '84" were treated to the following: the Israelis, like almost all others, restricted their booth to culture, and eschewed politics, as stipulated by festival rules.

The Palestinian Arabs displayed vitriol, calumny and hatred.

Upon my making remonstrations, the chief student organizer of the festival promised the matter would be looked into. The next day some of the offending material was still there.

On the day after four Palestinian thugs hijacked a civilian Israeli bus with 35 people aboard, and the day the Bryan-College Station Eagle printed a front-page article on terrorism, The Battalion saw fit to print a letter by Wahid Ibrahim.

This Palestinian Arab who purports to be a fervent advocate of democracy (in the well-known style of the 22 Arab countries, no doubt), in true thousand-and-one-night fantasy form equated Israel with the Ku Klux Klan.

If it is controversy that you are looking for, I'd be glad to use the student's paper to teach Mr. Ibrahim a few things he might not know (or doesn't wish to admit) about Israel and the Palestinian Arabs.

I'll start with only one rebuttal: He complains "Why should I, a non-Jew, be forced to carry a passport with the name of a Jewish prophet and the royal symbol of a Jewish king on it?"

Yossi Mart
Department of Oceanography

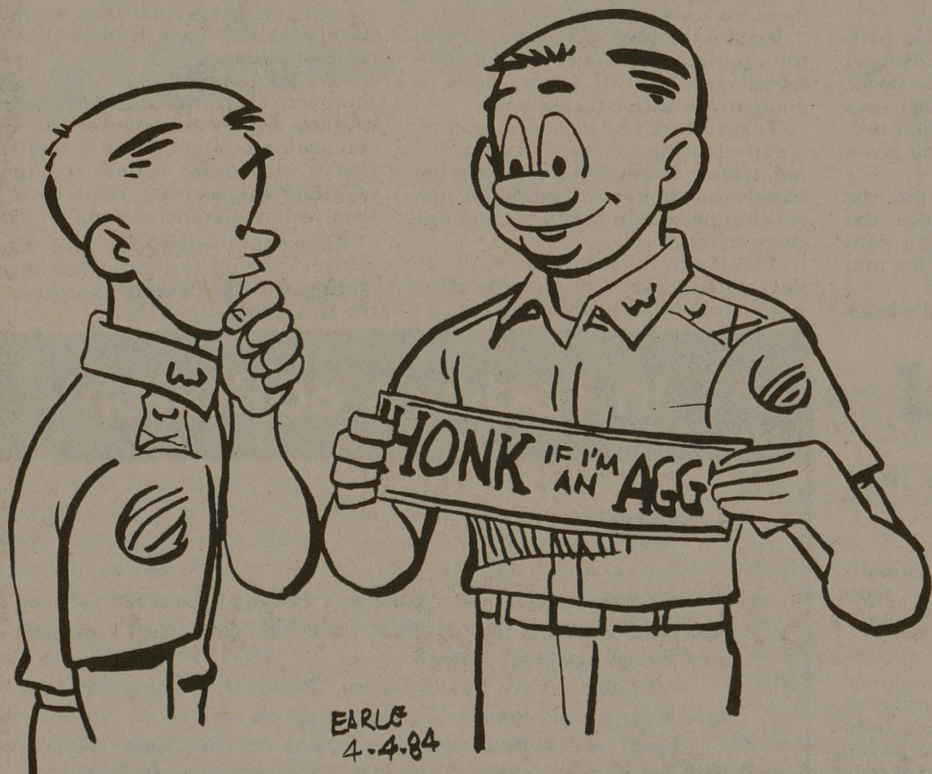
Aggies condone Palestinian acts

Editor:
It seems that Palestinian Arab feathers must not be ruffled at Texas A&M,

Robert G. Kenneth
Visiting Professor

Slouch

by Jim Earle



"Don't worry about that! If you put this bumper sticker on your car, they'll know you're an Aggie."

Free speech is the real issue

Editor:
Although my first reaction to Wahid Ibrahim's comments in the April 13 Battalion was indifference, upon reflection his use of my editorial as a springboard for a diatribe against the state of Israel bothered me.

Quite obviously we differ on our interpretations of the state of democracy in Israel.

However, I do not expect to resolve these differences in The Battalion, nor will I try. What is of more concern was your total lack of sensitivity to the problem I addressed.

Not only has the Israel Club had problems with approved and properly posted banners being torn down, but the Bahai and Amnesty International groups have suffered somewhat the same fate.

Regardless of our respective opinions about the state of Israel, these actions have no place on the campus of Texas A&M.

If Ibrahim chooses to become part of the Texas A&M community as we have, and give more than lip service to the ideals of democracy he is experiencing here, I invite him to join with the Israel Club and introduce a resolution at the

next meeting of the International Students Association stressing opposition to the limitations of free speech at Texas A&M.

Perhaps together we can constructively contribute to the continued development of our school and leave the rhetoric to the politicians.

Larry Rose
Israel Fest Coordinator

Reflect on losses at Aggie Muster

Editor:
It's time for Muster again, Aggies. Time to gather together, remember our times at Texas A&M, and honor the Aggies we've lost in the past year.

Also this weekend, take a moment to reflect on some losses that the University is experiencing: a memorial to our World War I dead, the view from the west gate, and our Board of Regents' loss of respect for time-honored traditions.

Next fall, when I look from the west gate towards the center of the campus, my spirit won't be "lifted and filled with the Spirit of Aggeland." I'll be filled with disgust at the enormous egos of some of our "distinguished" former students.

John C. Cain
Class of '82

Albritton's gift appreciated

Editor:
I, for one, appreciate the gift of D. Albritton. I think the carillon is a rather nice addition to this campus.

As you stated in your editorial, complaints will start. But most of the complaints I've heard concern only the gift, not the gift itself.

You also say that "strict guidelines" should be considered. Since the Board dictate what gifts this university will accept?

Maybe the money for the carillon should be spent on books. Perhaps all the money given to this University should be spent on books. But then, who should teach?

I'm not discounting the importance of books. They are a very valuable in the process of education. I just hope The Battalion Editorial Board has reasonable reasoning.

Albritton offered the bell tower money. So quit bitching and thank him.

Brian B...
Class of ...

Nixon doesn't understand his crime

By ARNOLD SAWISLAK
Columnist for United Press International

Richard Nixon still doesn't seem to understand.

He now is telling us (on CBS in three installments for a reported \$500,000) that the Watergate break-in was wrong and stupid and the effort to cover it up was even worse. He says giving up the presidency was the most profound way he could have said he was sorry.

Not quite. After 11 years, Nixon apparently still doesn't see what the worst part of Watergate was.

It is not that he and his agents broke the law and got caught because they weren't clever enough to get away with it. That is like relegating what happened in Watergate to the status of a technical violation of the tax code or a speeding violation. It trivializes the real crime of Watergate.

What Nixon did and cannot admit is that he hurt his country as surely and perhaps more seriously than the spy who sells military secrets to an enemy.

He and his people hurt the country by contributing to the decline of the idealism that Americans still have about their country and their system of governing themselves. The pervasive cynicism that underlay the entire Watergate episode was a sneering denial of some of the basic values of American life.

It is easy to point out that the ideals of fair play, equality before the law and the trust conferred on those who are given public office frequently are violated in this country.

But most Americans believe these values are worth striving for and are part of what makes the United States the best country in the world. To them, these and other "naive" ideas are what separate this country from the corrosive cor-

ruption that afflicts many older and more "sophisticated" nations.

For the man entrusted with the highest office the people can confer to wipe his feet on these ideals in the name of political expediency is a crime far worse than burglary or conspiracy to conceal a crime. It is the murder of a dream that sustains a national purpose.

Nixon twice took an oath to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution." Then he and people acting his name trampled on the Constitution and the laws that are based on it. They made a mockery of the proposition that all of us, presidents and paupers, must live by the same basic rules of conduct. They put themselves above the law.

Fascist and communist dictators that. Kings, claiming they have a right to rule, do that. Americans that their presidents won't do that won't allow the people who work them to do that.

But in his most recent public addresses, this former president of the United States does not speak of ideals or trust. He tells us only, "I broke the law. I got caught. I paid the penalty. I owe no more."

It is possible that Richard Nixon pay no more because he does not understand what it is. That indeed would be a tragedy. In human terms perhaps the saddest part of the whole sorry affair.

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Reader's Forum columns and guest editorials are also welcome. Address all inquiries to the Editorial Page Editor.

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