

## Politics hurting '84 Olympics

It is happening. The Soviet Union is boycotting the Summer Olympic Games.

An eerie sense of déjà vu pervades the issue. Boycotting the Olympics seems to be a trend.

In 1980, many people didn't believe President Carter was serious about the boycott, but he was. And our athletes stayed home that summer.

Likewise, when the Soviets began threatening to stay home from the Los Angeles Games, many believed it was just a publicity gimmick. But those of us who felt that way were wrong. The Russians say they are staying home.

The Soviet press release says the boycott is for safety reasons and an alleged violation of the Olympic charter by the Americans — President Reagan in particular.

But the prominent mention of the president in the Russian statements indicate another reason.

The sole motivation behind a Soviet and Soviet-bloc boycott of the games is the Kremlin's desire to discredit Reagan in the eyes of Americans and the world.

Soviet-American relations are at a low and Moscow would not be disappointed if a Russian absence from Los Angeles could affect Reagan's re-election hopes.

The use of the Olympics for such political ploys is abhorrent. But almost more abhorrent is the lame excuse presented by the Soviets. The Los Angeles Olympic Committee has worked an incredible number of hours to secure the safety of all the Olympic athletes — regardless of nationality.

In these days of terrorism, safety and security can no longer be guaranteed. Ask a British constable about that.

The LAOC is doing all it can. If other nations feel the Olympics are so unsafe that they refuse to send their athletes, then the purpose of the Olympic Games has been lost and the event should be cancelled.

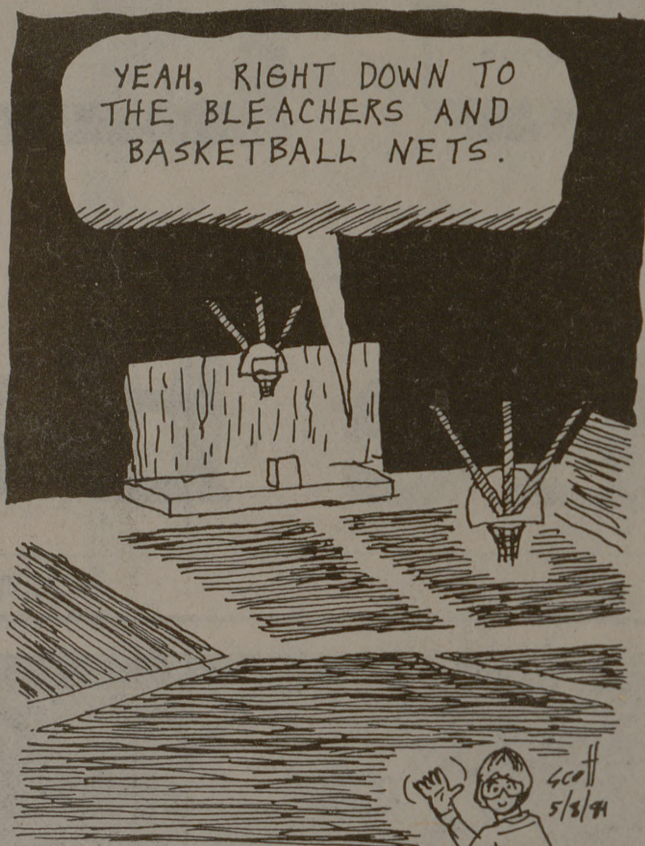
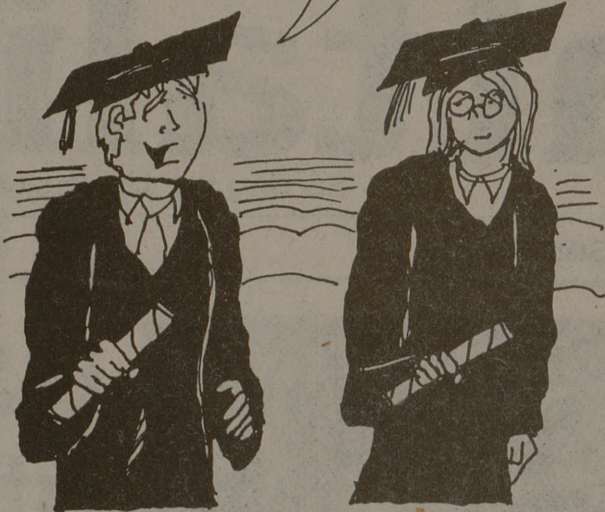
But most other nations — including the athletes — are willing to run that risk.

The Soviet argument about safety is a crock. Perhaps the real worry of the Soviet government is the danger of its athletes trying to defect.

Take politics out of the Games. Let the athletes decide if they are in danger. And if nations that help supply terrorist groups around the world would discontinue support of such atrocities, maybe security at the Olympic Games would cease to be a problem.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

GEE, WE'RE FINALLY GRADUATING FROM COLLEGE, FROM A UNIVERSITY, FROM AN INSTITUTE OF HIGHER LEARNING. AH, THIS REMINDS ME EXACTLY OF WHEN I GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL...



## Ceremony marred by racial slur

**Editor:**  
I am writing to express my feelings concerning the commencement exercises Saturday in which I last received a degree in M.E. The ceremony gave me a chance to shake hands and joke around, perhaps the last time, with some of my classmates.

It is simply amazing how one individual can ruin such a pleasant occasion for an entire family. As I left Rollie White immediately after the ceremony, I found my girlfriend and then she and I walked back to the van where we were supposed to meet my family. When we arrived, my sister told me that she had just been a skirmish between my uncle and some supposedly drunk guy. From what I was told this son first stuck his head inside the open van door in which my mothers and brother were sitting at the time. Of course, they asked the stranger to get his head out of the van and then they shut the door. This man then began to walk away and called my mother a nigger, which of course upset her more than his getting in the van door. At that particular time everyone yelled for my uncle, who had not yet arrived. My mother was hysterical. When my uncle arrived, the skirmish broke out.

The reason that I am most upset is that no one passing by seemed to give a damn. From what I can tell, one offered to help control this man and no one tried to stop the

### reader's forum

mish which partly took place in the street, blocking oncoming traffic. Some individual as I was told, was kind enough to inform them that the guy was drunk and that they should pay him no attention.

Anyway, as this was related to me I began to utter some offensive language for which I would like to apologize. I sincerely hope that one, white, black, brown, yellow, red will ever have to experience what I did on Saturday night. Racial slurs are quite offensive and often lead to bloody noses, scratched knees and elbows, puffy faces and who knows what else.

As I leave here I urge — no I beg you all to see that nothing like this happens again. I detest the idea of my eight-year-old sister having to witness this happen and is now anything but burning with desire to attend TAMU someday.

I thank the campus police for their help generosity, understanding and concern that they showed for my family. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

Kevin Johnson is a 1984 graduate in mechanical engineering.

## Drinking age discriminates

by Ed Alanis

David Barnett is 18 years old. He is a high school graduate, and is a freshman at a major university. He lives with a friend in an apartment, and works part time to help pay his bills. He pays a federal income tax, as well as local property taxes. He votes in elections. He has registered for the draft. Should he break the law, he would be tried in an adult criminal court.



By ordinary standards, David can be considered a responsible adult. However, due to state legislation, he cannot stop by a local bar on his way home from work and have a beer with the guys.

David lives in Texas, where the legal drinking age is 19. However, his problem is shared by young adults living in the many other states that separate the legal drinking age from the magical age of 18, when we all become official members of that illustrious social group known as adults.

Rather than official members, I should say quasi-members. 18-year-olds are old enough to register for a draft, but they are not considered old enough to have a beer in many states. Sometimes this privilege to drink alcoholic beverages comes with just one more year of "growing up." In some states, however, three more years of growing up is required.

A legal drinking age of 19 is in direct conflict with a legal adult age of 18. A legal drinking age of 21 is ar-

chaic and nothing short of ludicrous.

Although I disagree with it, a legal drinking age of 19 or 21 is not altogether bad, in and of itself. What is ridiculous is the separation of a drinking age and an adult age.

To say that a person is adult and can do this, this and this, but not this is in effect saying that they are not really adult. A more practical move would be to raise the adult legal age to 19 or 21, so that it matches the legal drinking age.

However, the best solution to this problem of incongruity would be to lower the legal drinking age to 18, nationwide, to match the current legal adult age.

But legislators could never consider this as a possible solution to the problem. If their own personal convictions did not stop them, then the political clout of various special interest groups surely would. This leads to another interesting point.

Granted, drunk driving and the resulting deaths and injuries is a serious problem, nationwide. But is raising the drinking age by one to three years a viable solution? No. In fact, it is a narrow-minded solution that is at best ineffective. To punish one group for a problem common to all social groups is a simple avoidance of the issue.

A more direct solution to the problem would be to simply create stiffer penalties for drunk driving. Special interest groups should concentrate their efforts on the passing of such legislation and the strict enforcement of it, rather than on punishing teenagers. Teenagers cannot be the scapegoat for a problem that knows no age or social barriers.

Some might think that legal drinking ages of 19 or 21 help by eliminating alcohol related problems altogether among a group with a high average of these problems.

But do higher drinking ages really eliminate these problems, or even make a dent in them? I don't think so. Again, more progress could be made if efforts were concentrated in a different area.

Teenagers who are irresponsible enough to drive while they are drunk, with no regard for the safety of others, are also ones who will not think twice about violating a legal drinking age. Possibly they might be denied a purchase on some occasions when their IDs might be checked, but alcohol is easily obtained in today's society, by virtually anyone.

There is also a hidden problem with the higher legal drinking ages, one that people as old as our legislators often overlook.

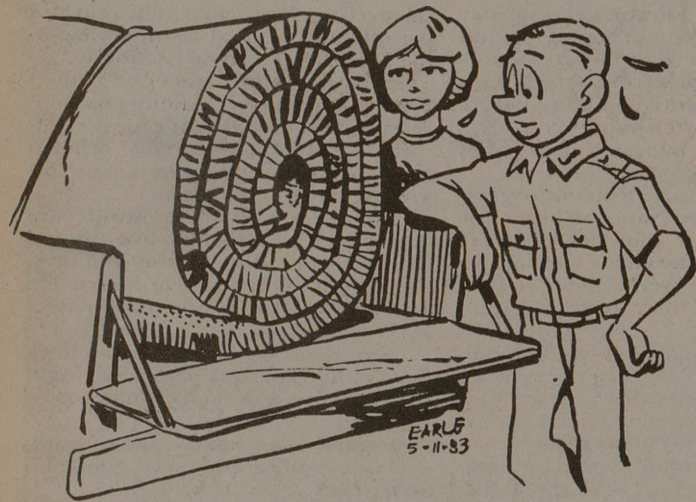
In today's society, many young people leave home somewhere around the age of 18. Some leave for college, while others move on to start their careers and to begin families of their own. They are out on their own, but because they are not old enough to drink, they cannot get into bars and nightclubs. They can't even enjoy a glass of wine with a meal in a restaurant. This barrier to social activity is the price young people pay, for the shortcomings of everyone.

A government that perceives a person to be old enough to vote and be responsible for his actions in a court of law, but does not perceive that same person to be old enough to drink, is in need of reform.

Drunk driving and other alcohol related problems have reached epidemic proportions. It is time we took a serious and practical approach to the problem and stopped placing so much of the blame on young adults.

Ed Alanis is a senior journalism major.

## Slouch by Jim Earle



"When you pack up for next fall, don't even think about carpets!"

## Letters:

### Paper applauded

**Editor:**  
I would like to give The Battalion staff a "pat-on-the-back."

I think you have done an excellent job publishing a well-written, provocative paper with good campus coverage and a wide range of national, state and local news.

And since students often take the time to write in and express differing opinions and negative views of the paper, I decided I should take a moment to thank you for your efforts and to tell you how much I have enjoyed reading The Battalion this year.

Keep up the good work.

Dana Adams  
Class of '87

### Baha'i atrocities

**Editor:**  
I would like to call to the attention of Battalion readers the execution of four more members of the Baha'i

Faith in Iran during the month of April.

According to Gerald Knight, spokesman for the Baha'i International Community's United Nations office, over 700 Baha'is are currently being held in Iranian prisons without charges, 111 of these having been arrested in the past three months. Reliable information has been received describing torture of several Baha'i prisoners. All Baha'i holy places have been confiscated and in some cases destroyed. Thousands of Baha'is have been dismissed from their jobs, denied education, and driven from their homes.

The fact that many Baha'is have been promised that their lives would be spared if they renounce their faith amply testifies that these persecutions are religiously motivated.

President Reagan, in a statement whereby he agrees with a joint congressional resolution, evaluated the situation thusly:

"America and the world are increasingly alarmed and dismayed at the persecution and severe repression of the Baha'is in Iran ... these individuals are not guilty of any politi-

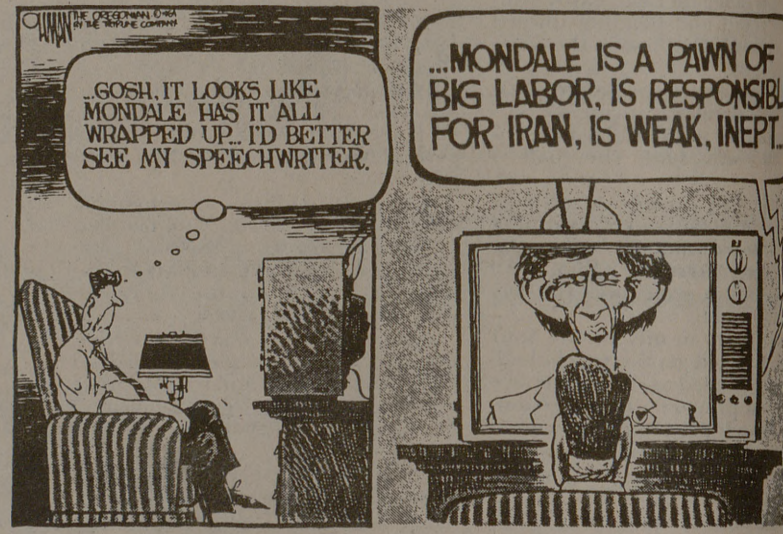
cal offense or crime. They only wish to live according to the dictates of

their own consciences. I strongly urge other world leaders to join me in an appeal to the Ayatollah Khomeini not to implement the sentences that have been pronounced on these innocent people."

The only means we have to lessen the degree of these shameful actions is the dissemination of the

shocking facts so that public world opinion might be brought to bear on Iran's leaders. May our combined voices lead to the cessation of these persecutions.

John Wentz  
Secretary, TAMU Baha'i Club



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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

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Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

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