

## Old Sol, humidity take toll

The heat is beginning to take its toll — on the pet population, on the elderly, on the very young, and on — us.

Yes, us. We, the sweating student body that has decided to stick out the oppressing, body-boggling heat and humidity of Bryan-College Station to catch up on hours, to re-take a previously failed class, to try to graduate or just to have fun.

Have fun did you say? No one in their right mind could call this "fun." The heat and the accelerated summer pace have left us drained and in a rut.

Oh to be young again. To ride your bike to the city pool, buy popicles from the ice cream man, catch fireflies, or go swimming in a creek, all the while thinking "There's nothing to do!"

The University of Hawaii sounds right nice at this time. Going to class and hitting the beach sound like sun time, fun time, summer paradise. Forget going to class. Can we get credit for Suntan 101? Surfing 203? Bodywatching 404? Loafing 308?

This "greenhouse" we live in, work in and study in leaves something to be desired. We think the greenhouse should be air conditioned, or classes cancelled until the present air conditioning is fixed. It broke in April and the maintenance men say it won't be working again until October some time. Can we stand it? Or will we melt long before then?

Some paradise...

— The Battalion Editorial Board

### The Battalion USPS 045 360

Member of  
Texas Press Association  
Southwest Journalism Conference

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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.

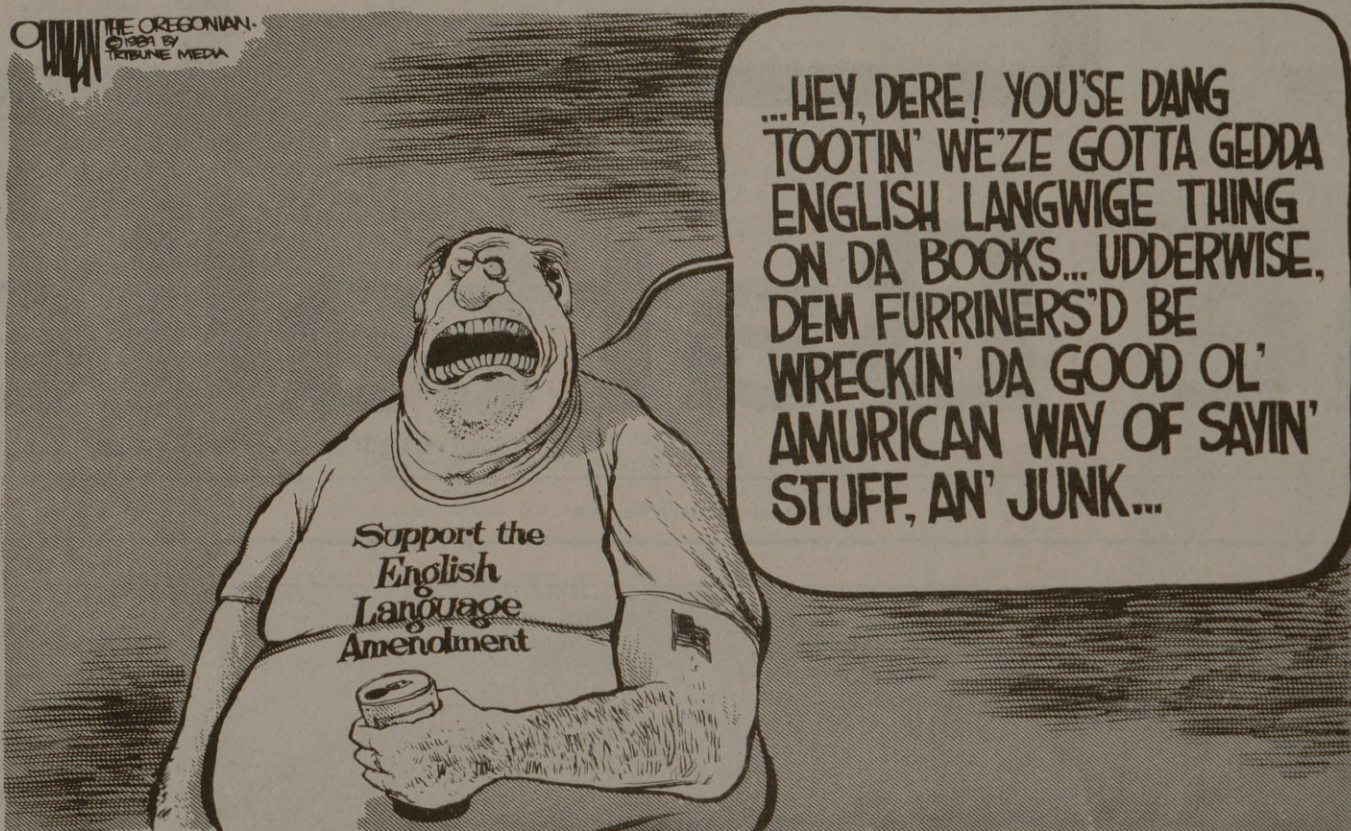
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The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods. Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester, \$33.25 per school year and \$55 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

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



## Southern votes important

By IRA R. ALLEN

Columnist for United Press International

WASHINGTON — When the South turned its back on native son Jimmy Carter in the 1980 election, it looked as if the conservative old confederacy might be locked up in the Republican column and taken for granted for years to come.

But with the rise of Jesse Jackson as a Democratic presidential candidate, and phenomenal new registration among blacks, the South appears to be a make-or-break region for Reagan in 1984.

There are now enough new black, and presumably Democratic, voters in the seven Southern states the GOP narrowly won in 1980 to tip the balance away from Reagan.

So Reagan, as he begins contemplating a strategy for amassing the 270 electoral votes needed for re-election, must figure out a way to hold the South, and that means either dampening the black turnout or increasing the white turnout.

And in this day and age, open appeals to white voting blocs on the basis of race are passe, at least at the presidential level.

That leaves the Reagan-Bush '84 committee with few options.

In the South, as everywhere else, the Republicans are using their vast financial advantage over the Democrats to buy computer time to identify every possible GOP voter — using drivers' license information, mailing lists and zip codes as prospecting devices.

They also have recognized that America is more mobile than ever, and that when people move from a prosperous suburb in one state to prosperous GOP territory in another, they may have forgotten to re-register. In addition to gathering in unregistered natural Republicans, the party is taking advantage of easier state rules for absentee voting, planning to bombard likely absentees with mailings on behalf of Reagan.

But there is one other way that Reagan can go after the Southern white vote without appearing to be racist. And that is to campaign extensively in the region before crowds that by the nature of the event they are attending are sure to be almost all white.

The tip-off is Reagan's upcoming travel schedule. At the end of June, he will be in Baltimore — in certain respects still a Southern city — to attend the National Square Dance Convention.

And on the Fourth of July, Reagan

will celebrate Independence Day in Daytona, Fla., at the Firecracker 400 stock car race. He speaks on July 6 in San Antonio before the Texas Bar Association, not a whites-only audience per se, but his schedulers are looking for another event in the Deep South he can attend on July 5. If he stays South for three days, it is likely that the yet-to-be-scheduled event would put him before another all-white crowd.

It is no longer fashionable, or even polite, to call square dancers and stock car fans "rednecks" — a healthy segment of any Southern electorate — so the White House calls those folks "blue collars."

But the blue collars at the Firecracker 400 and the National Square Dance Convention identify more closely with the politically conservative mores of the Deep South than do unemployed factory workers in Cleveland and Buffalo, many of whom are black.

It is this Southern branch of blue collar America — not the traditional Democratic bastions of the industrial belt — that is in for a large dose of Ronald Reagan in the months ahead.

## Americans facing 'reality gap'

By CLAY F. RICHARDS

Columnist for United Press International

WASHINGTON — President Reagan's chances of winning re-election this November could well hinge on what could be termed a reality gap.

Poll after poll gives Reagan high marks for leadership and improving the economy. When Americans are asked today the question Reagan asked President Carter in 1976 — "Are you better off today than you were four years ago?" — a majority of the people answer yes.

But in those same polls when people are asked whether Reagan or Walter Mondale would be more likely to get us into war, people say Reagan. And often those same people say Reagan's programs are unfair; discriminate against blacks and women and hurt the poor.

So voters who say Reagan is doing a good job and is a strong leader on one

hand, don't believe some of his key specific policies on the other.

Some pollsters say this is because while in many cases they believe they are better off and the nation is better off, they also believe much of what is written and said by critics about Reagan either being warlike or anti-poor.

To date the Democratic strategy for beating Reagan has relied heavily on a massive turnout of anti-Reagan voters — blacks and feminists in particular — who are so unhappy with his record that they will participate in a system they have generally ignored over the years.

That is why getting Jesse Jackson on the Mondale bandwagon is considered so important. One network poll in the District of Columbia, where Jackson won the primary by a landslide, showed that 65 percent of those who voted for him had never voted in an election before.

Some Democrats also believe that getting Gary Hart on the ticket with Mondale is essential or that the "yuppies" — the young, upwardly mobile professionals, who backed the Colorado senator in the primaries will go in the Reagan column.

But while this added turnout is an important key to the Democratic battle plan, they should not forget that Reagan was elected by millions of blue collar and independent voters who joined the ranks of the Republican minority in the country in 1980.

Reagan has to keep those votes to win a second term. If they wake up on Election Day and believe they are better off than they were four years ago, Reagan will be re-elected. But if they wake up and see a reality gap — that they just thought they were better off when they really aren't — the president could be in trouble.

## Parking meters deserve recognition

By DICK WEST

Columnist for United Press International

WASHINGTON — Although 1984 still has six more months to run, it probably isn't too early to remind each other that next year marks the 50th anniversary of the invention of the parking meter.

Planning a celebration suitable for a milestone as significant as this takes time, you know. So let us get started without further delay.

Some science writers, notably Isaac Asimov, trace the beginning of America's technological leadership to 1879, the year Thomas Edison invented the light bulb.

But I, among others, am convinced that we could never have achieved no. 1 ranking had it not been for the late Carl Magee, an Oklahoma City newspaper editor.

It was Mcgee who conceived the idea of using coin-operated machines to limit the hogging of prime parking spaces on city streets. According to popular folklore and other reliable sources, experimental parking meters were first installed in 1935.

From that humble beginning has come all sorts of technological spin-offs, including the inventions of the parking ticket and the meter maid.

Today, with our highly developed urban gridlocks, when rush hour traffic jams are twice-daily occurrences in most metropolitan areas, a motorist can scarcely imagine life without parking meters.

Edison, as you are well aware, having celebrated the light bulb centennial just five years ago, hit upon the basic design for an incandescent lamp fully two years before he actually in-

vented it. His biggest hangup was finding the proper filament material.

Before he finally tried carbonized thread, many unsatisfactory items were tested, including hair from a red beard.

Edison, however, was a piker compared to the inventive ingenuity displayed by illegal parkers. Items tried in parking meters, in lieu of coins, include hair pins, paper clips, chewing gum, beer can tabs and round metal washers customarily used with bolts.

Any of those items probably would have made a better light bulb filament than hair from a red beard.

Nevertheless, the list illustrates how much technological progress this country has racked up since 1935. In New York City alone, parking meter coin boxes have yielded as many as

200,000 slugs in a single month.

As the first step toward making 1985 a banner year for celebration, I recommend at the federal level the creation of a National Parking Meter Golden Jubilee Commission, with half of the members appointed by the president and the other half named by Congress.

To help raise funds for the festivities, the commission might sell special commemorative sets of golden slugs, the size of nickles, dimes and quarters and beer can tabs, that would fit meter slots.

I mean, if the 1984 Olympics can have an "official beer," there is no reason the 1985 parking meter celebration shouldn't have an official counterfeit coin.

And if the Soviet Union chooses to boycott the anniversary, so much the better.

## Letters: Wrong decision behind legislation

Editor:

This letter is written in response to your editorial, "Abortion a private decision." I am a little puzzled by your arguments for the legality of abortion. It appears to me that your editorial argues that abortions should be legal because abortion "(is an) issue that is intensely personal and emotional, and "abortion... affects people — not a movement."

It seems to me that your argument must rest on more than the emotional and personal nature of the question. I would guess that what you mean is this: The decision to have an abortion, or to have a baby, will be affected by different circumstances for each individual or family and will ultimately affect only that family; therefore such a decision should be made by that family. Doesn't such a position beg the question entirely?

The question is, when should the baby-to-be be considered a person — an individual — whose right to live is protected by the Constitution? If the fetus is a person, then no argument justifies abortion. It is nonsense to say that each family, with their doctor, can decide whether their particular fetus is a human being. We as a society answer the question of when personhood begins whether we want to or not. If we allow abortion up to twelve weeks, then we tacitly say that the eleven-week fetus is not a person. If there are no laws against aborting a nine-month fetus, then we as a society have decided that no one is a human being until they are born. Therefore it is nonsense to say that we will let each person decide on their own, because we as a society are making a decision.

It must be admitted that the question of personhood is a difficult one to answer, but an answer will be given. There is no instrument to measure when one becomes a person, so the criteria must be found on moral and ethical grounds. Some would say that for this very reason no decision can be legislated, but I repeat a decision is legislated already. The question to be addressed is: Have we made the right decision?

I would say we have not made the right decision. The fetus is alive, whether one believes it is a person or not.

Randy Davy  
Graduate student, chemistry

## Abortion argument ignores moral code

Editor:

Much to the distress of concerned students, or at least to me, The Battalion has once again managed to come to an erroneous conclusion by ignoring the basic points of an argument.

The Editorial Board's argument ignores the the viewpoint that looks upon abortion as murder. If abortion is the taking of a human life, by whatever means, then saying that the mother and father must live with their decision is like saying that a murderer should not be controlled by society because it is enough that he or she must live with their decision to kill someone.

The Board stated: "abortion must remain a choice. If not it opens the way for coat hangers in the back rooms and sleazy back alley operations."

This statement implies that we should invite criminals to shoot people out on the front streets as compared to the back alleys so that if the criminal is injured he or she might be better taken care of. This ignores the fact that many more people would die.

All of the above statements assume, as mentioned earlier, that the unborn child is alive. In the Jan. 11, 1982, issue of Newsweek there was a cover story that concluded that life begins at conception. The next article was titled "But is it a Person." The conclusion of that article being: "The problem is not determining when actual human life begins, but when the value of that life begins to outweigh other considerations, such as the health or even the happiness of the mother."

Finally, the Board's reasoning on the issue of when life begins seems to discard the idea of a concrete right of wrong, or truth or falsehood. The viewpoint seems to be this is true for me but it might not be true for you. This, taken to its logical conclusion, advocates any moral code whatsoever — which, upon any thought at all, is idiotic.

Buckey Lee Turk, Jr.  
Class of '83