



## Star wars

The beauty is that everyone's an authority

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

The beauty of the Star Wars defense system is that everyone can discuss it with authority, because no one, including the people in charge, have any idea of what it is.

I realized this when I attended one of those Washington cocktail parties where the power elite gather to exchange gossip and information that only decision makers are privy to.

"Is it true," I asked a source, who has one of the largest offices in the Pentagon, "that Star Wars will become a bargaining chip in the Soviet-American arms talks?"

"Nuts," he said defiantly. "If we ever decide what it is, we will never give it up."

"Isn't it easier to give something up in arms talks that we don't have, than something that we do?"

"Not if they have it, and we don't."

"Do the Soviets have a Star Wars defense?"

"They must have or they wouldn't want us to give up ours."

"Maybe they don't have it, but hope we'll go ahead with it anyway," I suggested. "Did it ever occur to you that the reason the Soviets are making such a big thing of it is because they want us to spend all our money to develop it, so we won't have any left to make the weapons they don't want us to build?"

"Of course, it's occurred to us," he said. "But our answer to them is there's no price you can put on national security. Once we figure it out, all our other weapons will be obsolete."

"How can you say that when you have no idea what it is?" I asked.

"We may not have any idea what it is, but we do know what we want it to do — and that is blow up every Soviet missile before it hits its target."

"That's a tall order. Will Star Wars be able to do that?"

"We may never know, but neither will they. Once we install it in the sky no one will have the slightest idea if it can do the job. But it will keep the other side guessing. And that's the best deterrent there is."

A man who has one of the largest offices in the White House joined our group. "The president wants Star Wars because he believes once we develop it we will no longer have to depend on mutual terror to avoid nuclear war."

"But the president says he doesn't know what Star Wars is either," I pointed out.

"He's not a scientist and doesn't claim to be one. But he believes in it more that anything he has ever advocated. Besides, since he's proposed it he has to go ahead with it, or he would be sending another wrong message to the Soviets."

An assistant secretary, who has one of the largest offices in the State Department, said, "even if Star Wars doesn't pan out the way we envision, it will still be worth the cost just to show our NATO allies that we have no intention of leaving them in the lurch. If nothing else, it will strengthen the West's commitment to repelling the Soviet military threat."

"Then our allies are for it?"

"They are as long as it doesn't cost them any money."

A labor secretary said, "When you're talking about Star Wars, you're talking about the hundreds of thousands of jobs it will provide for every defense contractor in the nation."

"I take it then," I said, "that everyone in the government is sold on it?"

"They better be if they want to keep their jobs in this administration."

"But how much will it really cost?"

The Pentagon man tittered, "When it comes to funding Star Wars, the sky's the limit."

## Citizens have right to protect themselves

Guilty, or not guilty?

On Dec. 22, four teen-agers requested money from a man in a subway train in Lower Manhattan.

What each youth got, rather than money, was a bullet from a .38 revolver. The would-be victim fled, and a massive manhunt began.

The four were seriously wounded, and one seems to be paralyzed for life from the waist down. Three of the four teen-agers had police records, and police found three long, sharpened screwdrivers on them when they were taken to the hospital.

New York Mayor Ed Koch, a stern law-and-order advocate, quickly condemned the shooting and declared that "Vigilantism will not be tolerated in this city." Governor Mario Cuomo also denounced those who cheered the "Lone Ranger" and lectured that impatience with justice is "dangerous and ... wrong."

Even though many policemen felt good about the man plugging the punks, they also knew that once he had struck, and won praise, hundreds of other lone operators might be inspired.

Large numbers of New Yorkers, fed up with encountering bullying punks on the street or subway, phone in to declare their support for the unknown loner.

Eventually, Bernhard Hugo Goetz, 37, a self-employed electronics expert from Manhattan, turned himself over to police in New Hampshire.

Goetz, a victim of several muggings, was charged with four counts of attempted murder and one count of criminal possession of a dangerous weapon.



Kevin Inda

If convicted, Goetz faces a substantial prison sentence — and for what? The politicians we proudly call leaders, now making it a crime to protect one's own life.

If the police can't provide enough protection to the people, what are we supposed to do? Give in to all the criminals? I don't think so. Citizens should kill or catch as many criminals as the police do. Individuals have the right to protect themselves.

Every year, the U.S. Government spends much more money on foreign defense than on domestic defense. When, in fact, more people have been killed in violent acts in the U.S. than in acts of war. How do we expect our country to be safe from other countries when the government can't even protect its own citizens from domestic acts of violence?

The problem stems from a number of things, but the main problem is that laws are too lax. If criminals face tougher consequences for committing crimes, they might not resort to crime as a career.

The Goetz incident may deter other criminals from further crimes, but on the other hand, it may give criminals the comfort to commit further crimes. If a person is convicted to the fullest extent of the law, other citizens in Goetz's shoes may feel more intimidated by the authority than the criminals. With this in mind, the criminals will feel safer about committing crimes.

People shouldn't become vigilantes and set out to rid the world of crime, but they do have the right to protect themselves when the need occurs.

The only thing Goetz is guilty of is not fighting back sooner.

Kevin Inda is a senior journalism major and a weekly columnist for The Battalion.

## There is more to your food than meets the eye

So you think all those crunchy bits in peanut butter are peanuts? And you think that all those little pieces in your orange juice are the pulp from oranges? Think again.

Patrice Koranek

One of the most enlightening classes I have taken in college was VPH 404 - Food Toxicology and Safety.

We learned that the first federal food laws, the Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act, passed in 1906, were not strictly enforced because government agencies didn't have the power to inspect factories or restaurants.

In 1938 the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act was passed giving inspectors the power to shut down establishments that were unclean. The 1938 law made it harder for processors to cheat on the ingredients in its products.

Through the years many more laws and amendments to the laws have been passed to ensure food sanitation. After all of that you would think that the food you buy is free from filth and foreign substances. Well, think again.

The professor in VPH 404 uses transparencies. The last transparency he put up was headed "1972 Filth Guidelines. According to the guidelines every three

and a half ounces of peanut butter can have two rodent hairs and 50 insect fragments. And that is the allowable amount. So much for peanuts being the crunch in your sandwich.

Wait, don't think changing the kind of sandwich you eat will help. Wheat can have one rodent pellet in every pint. That means the bread you eat is yukky, too.

Fruit juice, that delectable beverage you drink to wash down the peanut butter and jelly sandwich or use to quench your thirst after a long walk from G. Rollie to Zachry can have up to 10 fly eggs in every eight and a half ounces.

Chocolate lovers beware. According to the guidelines chocolate can have 150 insect fragments per eight ounces. And all this time you thought chocolate was only fattening.

Now that you've read this and decided to drastically change your dietary habits, stop. The Food and Drug Administration has tested all of these products and many more and have found that it is perfectly safe to eat them. So go on, enjoy your next dinner.

Patrice Koranek is a senior journalism major and is a staff writer for The Battalion.

## LETTERS:

### New video game proposed

EDITOR:

I propose a new video game: Indiana Jones Goes to the Library. It would portray the saga of one who sets out on the long perilous journey between Medical

Sciences and the Vet School Library. To achieve his objective, Jones must either drive or walk. Walking gives a higher score but he must:

- negotiate a construction zone, with giant machines rushing around blindly, steep drops of about three or four feet, metal lattice and wire entanglements and broken boards with nails sticking up, or
- skirt or climb a giant dirt mound, an avalanche waiting for a person to drop on;
- negotiate a parking lot between swampy lawns, where cars move randomly and parked cars pounce (some say this is the hardest who do it daily);
- find the right door in without getting stopped by construction fences, locked doors or falling into a Bottomless Pitfall; and
- negotiate an interminable windowless maze of passages and detours.

For extra points, it can be round trip, with Jones at least one way carrying a stack of very expensive books and irreplaceable papers which will be ruined if dropped or blown away in the Texas wind if not clenched tightly.

- If Jones drives, he must negotiate:
- the winding litui (plural of lituus) of driveways going the wrong way to go the right way, with cross traffic that doesn't stop or yield, and pedestrians who think the laws of right of way surmount the laws of momentum of moving vehicles;
  - finding the right parking lot and then finding a parking space amid randomly moving cars that don't stop, and parked cars that leap out;
  - crossing the lot if parking is possible, as in above;
  - finding the right door as above, and;
  - negotiating the maze from another direction.

Brooks H. Rohde, Ph.D  
Research Associate

### Campus lacks nice atmosphere

EDITOR:

I would like to be told: why are the

benches throughout our campus so uncomfortable?

Why are they made of concrete, without back support, too big and long, without the cover of neighboring trees? Why are the benches so ill arranged?

More generally, why are the plazas throughout our campus hardly ever used?

What can be done to create a friendly atmosphere?

Ben Aguirre  
College Station

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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 \$53 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843. Editorial staff phone numbers: (409) 845-2630. Advertising: (409) 845-2611. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843.

**New Year's Resolutions:**

- ...I WILL NOT DOZE OFF IN A CABINET.
- ...I WILL NOT SAY, "THERE YOU GO AGAIN" WHEN REAGAN RAISES TAXES.
- ...I WILL LEAVE MY AGE, NAME, AND SIGNATURE THE WAY THEY ARE.
- ...I WILL BUY ALL SPARE PARTS AND COFFEE MAKERS AT THE HARDWARE STORE.
- ...NO MORE TWINKIES UNTIL 1988.
- ...I WILL NEVER GROVEL IN PUBLIC FOR A JOB FOR MORE THAN TWO MONTHS.
- I WILL NOT SALIVATE WHEN I HEAR THE YEAR 1988.