

OPINION

Students have right to go to safe school

The Supreme Court, in a 6 to 3 ruling, last Tuesday said teachers and other school officials don't have to meet the police standard of "probable cause" or obtain a warrant before searching students.

Opponents of the ruling say students' Fourth Amendments rights must be protected. Obviously the ruling discriminates against the trouble makers, but what about the rights of the well-behaved students and school administrators?

The ruling did not strip students of all their rights. Instead, the Court said school officials can conduct "reasonable" searches of students for drugs or other contraband. Without set guidelines the "reasonable" standard will probably be abused, but it is a step in the right direction. As cases come up, guidelines and standards will be set.

One guideline which would probably work more effectively and discourage abuse of this ruling would be to allow only a few experienced administrators to conduct searches. These few administrators could show more consistency and fairness in deciding when searches are really needed.

Guidelines are needed to avoid situations like the recent one where a teacher ordered a classroom full of children strip-searched because money was found missing.

A school is a place for learning, not for violence or drugs.

The fact that we need such a ruling to protect the rights of the majority of people in our schools is a sad statement about our school system.

The attitude of students that it is normal to bring weapons and contraband to school is absurd.

Last year in a Houston public high school a student shot his teacher because the teacher "gave" him a F. Some schools fight a daily war to keep drugs and weapons out of their buildings. A recent survey done by the National Association of Secondary School Principals showed that 85 percent of school searches involve drugs and weapons.

The Supreme Court ruling should give schools a little more ammunition, because if they lose the war, society will pay the consequences with a generation that not only missed out on an education, but accepts violence as the norm.

Learning needs to take its rightful place as top priority in schools.

The Battalion Editorial Board

'Offensive' ratings are state of mind

America has become obsessed with the word "offensive." Groups like the Citizens for Decency are campaigning against pornography, calling it, among other things, offensive. A few years ago, violence on television was a primary concern. Recently, the PG-13 rating was tacked on certain films to protect younger moviegoers from scenes of sex and violence which might corrupt their impressionable little minds.



Loren Steffy

With all the fanaticism surrounding the suppression of offensiveness, something genuinely beneficial was bound to be smothered beneath the blanket of "social decency."

CBS and NBC have rejected a commercial by the American Cancer Society because it is too graphic. The advertisement depicts a human fetus puffing on a cigarette. The fetus, actually a plastic puppet, takes a long drag on his little cancer stick just as a narrator asks "Would you give a cigarette to your unborn child?" Obviously, the point of the commercial is that pregnant women who smoke endanger the life of their unborn child as well as their own.

The Cancer Society is trying to reach the expectant mothers of America and get them to think, and hopefully, act responsibly in caring for their children. Perhaps the commercial is a little graphic, but then so are birth defects, which can result from smoking during pregnancy. Perhaps the reason the ad may seem so "offensive" is because it hits close to home.

When Dirty Harry splatters the brains and entrails of thugs against

white walls, the audience cheers. At the end of "Sudden Impact," when Harry needs an even bigger gun to make even larger portions of organic strawberry marmalade, the spectators are ecstatic. When Eddie Murphy pumps his antagonist full of holes and the audience gets to see five minutes of slow-motion blood spurting, painful expressions and a cat-sup-smear tumble down the stairs, the onlookers roar. And when the audience has to see a simulated human fetus suck on a cigarette, they scream "offensive, startling, inappropriate."

Even the ad which depicts happy-go-lucky teenagers hopping in a car and turning into skeletons while a narrator says "Drinking and driving can KILL a friendship" didn't create the uproar that the Cancer Society's commercial has.

The fetus scenes in the movie "2001: A Space Odyssey," which has been aired on television several times, never caused so much as a whisper. Now a commercial which uses an almost identical fetus-puppet is branded "far too graphic for presentation on CBS."

The networks argue that the commercial could show up without warning and thus might startle some people. Good. The ad presents a startling message, it's not supposed to make people happy and cheerful. NBC said the commercial "might be offensive to some people." Too bad. Birth defects and women smoking during pregnancy cannot be ignored.

Ironically, our society advocates entertainment depicting exploding heads, people ripping their own faces off and humans being blown to Chicken McNuggets in slow motion, but we find a public service announcement aimed at preserving the quality of life offensive.

Loren Steffy is a sophomore journalism major and weekly columnist for The Battalion.

LETTER:

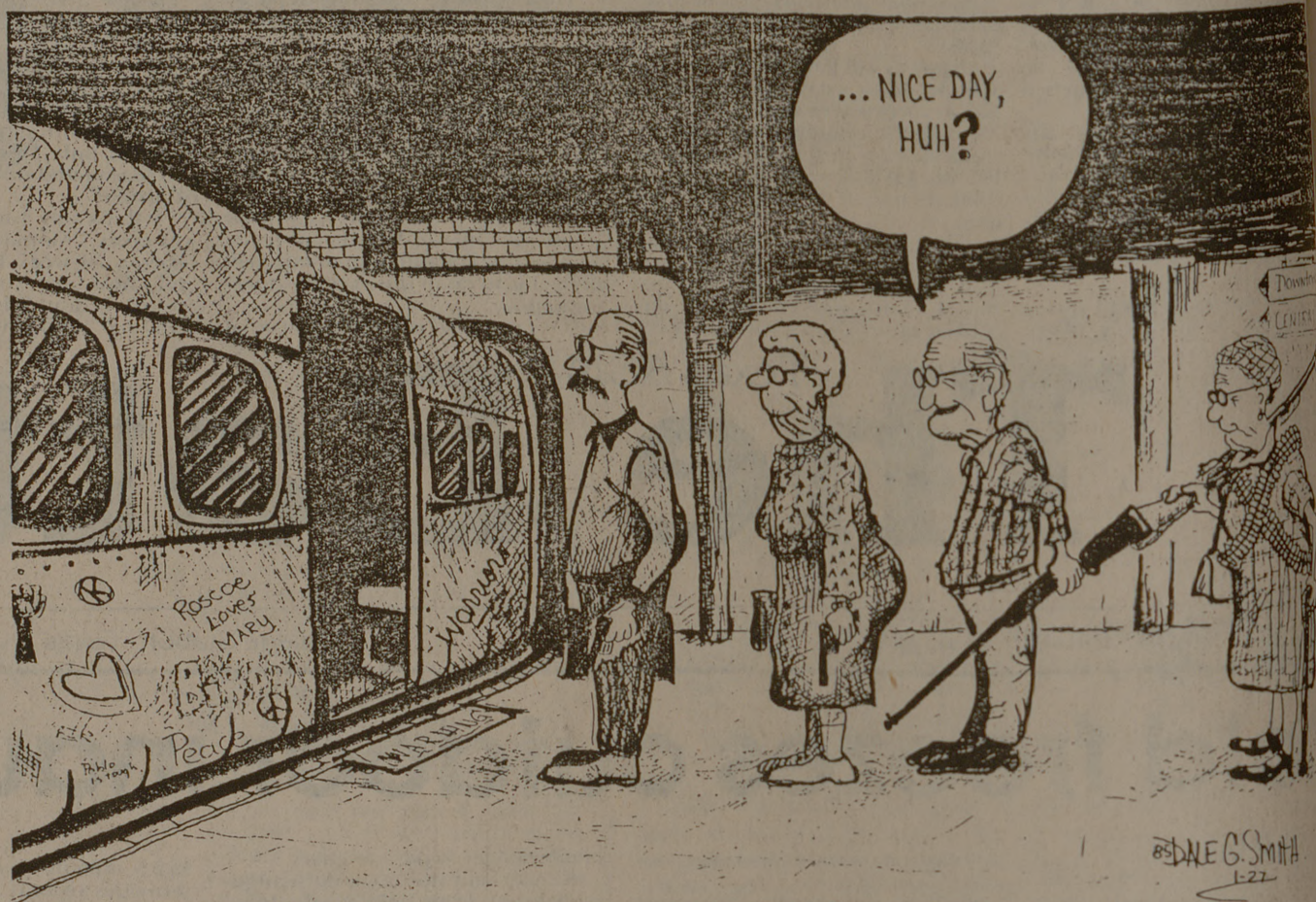
Gays shouldn't be accepted as normal

EDITOR: My letter concerns Mr. Loren Steffy's article regarding the recent activities of the Ku Klux Klan. Mr. Steffy asks, "After gays become accepted by society, who will be next on the Klan's list?" I do not agree with the Klan's methods or philosophy. However, Mr. Steffy seems

to think that our society will accept homosexuals and their abnormal lifestyle in the very near future.

I would hate to see the day Americans view homosexuality as an ordinary, condonable lifestyle. Yes Mr. Steffy, it is true that "all men are created equal," but that doesn't mean that they can't become warped as time goes on.

**Eddie Klein
Class of '88**



Some congressmen do better after losing

Staying on as rainmaker

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

Well, everyone seems to be back in town, not only the winners, but the losers in last November's election. The victors have taken their seats in the House and Senate, and the losers have taken theirs in one of Washington's 100,000 prestigious law firms.

Ex-Congressman Turtleback is one of the losers, if you call making \$350,000 a year with Tort & Tort a losing proposition.

"I thought you'd go back to Wistful County after you lost your seat," I said.

"You ever been in Wistful County?" Turtleback asked me.

"Can't say that I have," I admitted. "All I know about it is what you said on the floor of the House — that it was America's biblical Garden of Eden."

"I'm not on the floor anymore, and Wistful County is the pits. I'm not just saying that because I lost the election after serving the people there for 20 years. It was the pits when I first came to Congress, and it's the pits now."

"Did you ever practice law before you got elected to public office?"

"No, and I don't intend to practice it now. I'm going to be the rainmaker at Tort & Tort."

"What's a rainmaker?"

"The fellow that makes it rain new business on the firm because of the people he knows. I may be out of office but

I still have friends who owe me a few favors."

"Then you're going to be an influence peddler."

"Never. My job is to provide advice and consent to the private sector which can't operate under the oppressive laws passed by a vindictive anti-business Congress," he said. "Clients will come to me, not because of the influence I still wield, but because of my expertise in getting around the overbearing rules and regulations I demanded when I served the people."

"I can see where Tort & Tort would want you to be a partner in their firm," I said. "Will you also provide lobbying services?"

"You can't be a rainmaker in Washington if you are not willing to stand up for the things your clients believe in. The reason ex-congressmen and ex-senators are in demand by Washington law firms is that we have access to our former colleagues on the floor, not to mention the use of the congressional dining rooms and the gym. It's amazing how much law you can practice when you're doing Jane Fonda exercises with the chairman of a House or Senate committee."

"And they don't treat you any differently because you are no longer a member of Congress?"

"They treat you better, because now that you're with a big law firm you are a

potential source of funds for their future political campaigns."

"What about the administration? How do they look on you?"

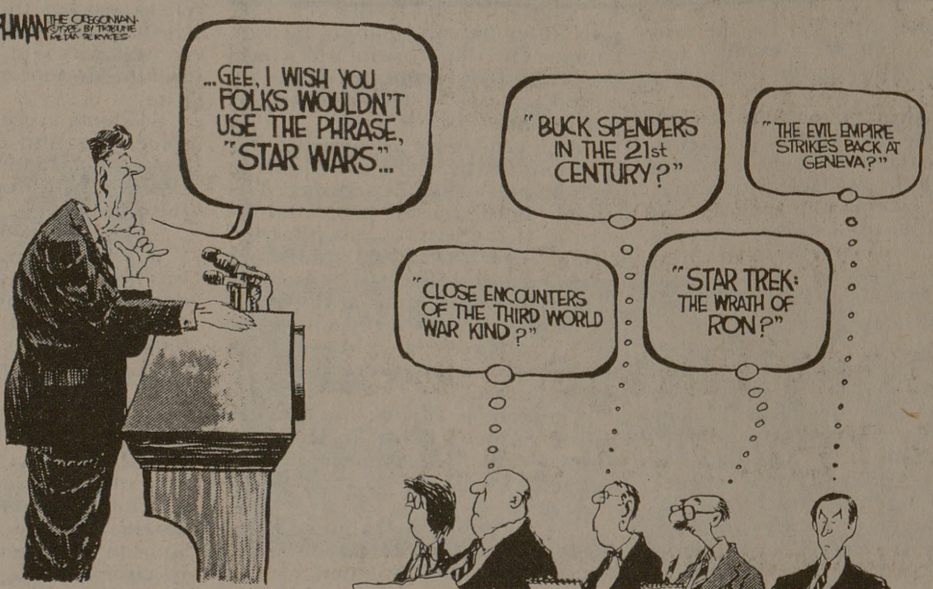
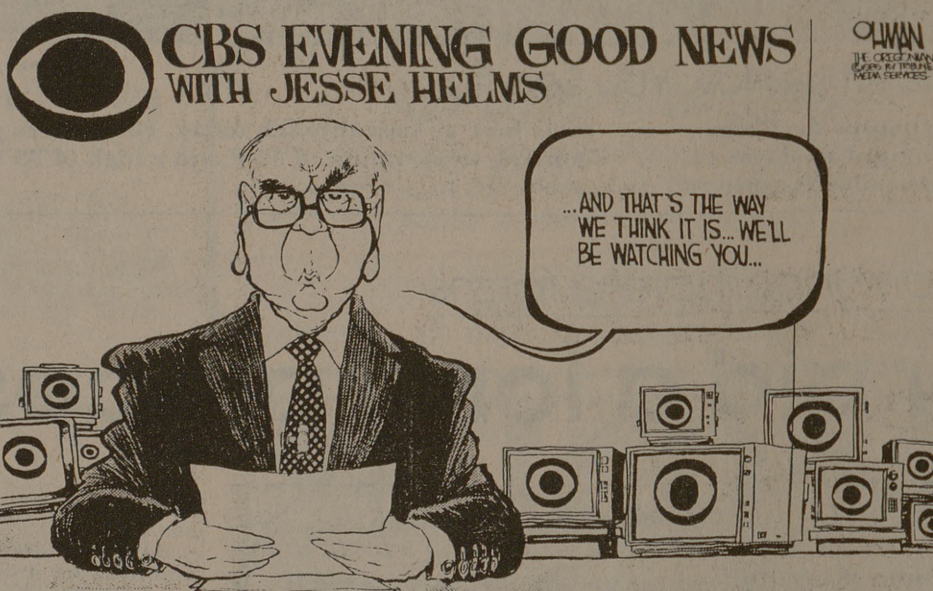
"Kindly. If you were a former Republican congressman, they want to make up to you for losing your election. If you were a former Democratic congressman, they are so delighted that you are no longer in opposition that they go overboard to show they don't begrudge."

"You can't say Washington doesn't take care of its own."

"Had I known then what I know now I would have lost an election 10 years ago," he said.

The phone rang and Turtleback picked it up. "Willy, how are you? Are things at Wistful Tools? ... don't say? The Navy refuses to part for the Snail Darter tool kit? ... claim you overcharged them by \$100 million? No problem, Willy, we'll now get your money, but we'll get an apology from the Pentagon." Turtleback hit Tort & Tort timer on his desk and said, "Tell me a story."

After 20 minutes he hung up and winked at me. Then he broke into a grin. "I'm singing in the rain, singing in the rain. What a glorious feeling da da da da."



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