

OPINION



Copyrighting presidency could be profitable

One president for sale; used

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

Now that the selling of the presidential inauguration has proved so successful, can the selling of the presidency be far behind?

The inauguration committee copyrighted the inaugural logo and licensed all rights to souvenir companies as well as corporations who could then advertise they were the "official company" of the presidential inauguration.

Obviously the committee got the idea from the Los Angeles Olympics. Inaugurations do cost money, but my fear is that the people who organized the presidential festivities won't stop there. They may soon start selling the rights to the presidency.

"White House Licensing Committee."

"This is the Fruitcake Cereal Company. We'd like to become the official cereal company to the president."

"We're sorry, those rights have already been spoken for. Do you make any other products?"

"We're the largest cupcake manufacturer in America."

"Well, cupcakes haven't been spoken for yet. We can let you have the presidential seal of approval for a million dollars."

"Will the president do our commercials?"

"He can't do that. But we'll give you permission to hang a tasteful cupcake banner behind him in the East Room when he's holding his press conferences."

"We'll take it. Send the contracts to us right away."

"Thank you . . . White House Licensing Committee."

"This is the president of the Real Instant Coffee Company. We wish to sign on as the official coffee supplier to the White House."

"What did you have in mind?"

"We want to produce one TV commercial showing Margaret Thatcher drinking our coffee at a state dinner, and expressing her surprise that it was an instant brand."

"I don't see any problem with that, but let me get back to you. White House Licensing Committee."

"This is the Cartilage Sneaker Company. Has anyone put in a bid yet for the official president's running shoes?"

"No, it's still up for grabs."

"Good. All we ask in exchange is that the president and his wife wear our sneakers when they're running for the helicopter to take them to Camp David."

"I don't think we could promise that. The First Lady has never publicly worn sneakers in her life. But we could get Vice President Bush to wear them as he's flying off to a state funeral."

"We don't want Bush, we want the president and his wife. If you can't deliver, then forget it."

"Sorry about that . . . White House Licensing Committee."

"This is Yakamura Film Company. We want to become the official film company to the White House."

"It will cost you."

"We don't care what it costs. But we'd have to be assured that the White House photographers will only use Yakamura film when they take pictures of the president."

"We can't do that because we have no control over the White House photographers. But what we can do for you is make sure that those photographers using Yakamura film will get the best places up front to shoot from while they're snapping away at the president."

"Put us down for the license."

"Will do . . . White House Licensing Committee."

"I'm a lawyer representing the Fourth of July Souvenir Company. The Secret Service informed my client he couldn't put the American Flag on his beer mugs any more."

"That's correct. We now hold the copyright on the Stars and Stripes. But for a small royalty your client can have exclusive beer mug rights to the American Flag for the next four years."

Belltower overshadows other A&M memorials

I was walking by the MSC, that bustling nerve center of Texas A&M, when I was besieged by childhood memories.



Loren Steffy

During my middle and high school days in College Station, the MSC was always an open frontier for youthful adventure. A favorite pastime was to sneak up on the roof at night, lay back, and contemplate the world as perceived through our young minds.

Once, my friends and I carelessly lounged against the side of a little building on the roof. Suddenly, a near-deafening sound sent the three of us to the verge of cardiac arrest. The MSC bells were proclaiming the hour of 10:00.

Every time I hear the amplified ring of the 25-bell carillon, a smile creeps across my face.

Enter Mr. Albritton who wants some new bells, ones with his name on them.

Albritton's Tower has 49 bells and they don't need electronic amplification like the ones in the MSC. Albritton's bells are bigger and louder.

The bells in the MSC originally rang faithfully on the hour every day, using a set of Westminster chimes. They also

rang for Silver Taps and other special occasions.

The bells are still in the little room on the roof of the MSC, but they may never ring again.

In all the hullabaloo concerning Albritton's Tower, no one ever considered the little MSC bells. They were a gift from the Class of '81, a token of appreciation from a group of former students.

Now they lie silent in the dark little room, the gift of appreciation is now solete. A rich man's pride in himself silenced them.

Many Aggies will say Mr. Albritton had A&M's best interest in mind when he built the Tower. Perhaps, but why relocate a memorial to Aggies who gave their lives for America? Why down trees designated as memorials? Why silence the proud gift of former students?

No, Albritton was more concerned with seeing his name on a frivolous structure than he was with bettering the University. The MSC bells may never be heard in Aggieland again. What shame that a monument to one man's ego has silenced a gift of respect and appreciation of many others.

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



LETTERS:

Good journalists must report good and bad

EDITOR:

This letter is in response to Bryan D. Jones' remarks attacking journalists.

I am glad to see that narrow-mindedness is alive and well here at TAMU. If you are looking for light, fluffy, "good news" articles, Jones, maybe "People Magazine," "US," or "The Sure Word" will be more to your liking.

In the real world of news reporting however, a good journalist is supposed to report the good, as well as the bad, and sometimes even the ugly.

Most forms of the news media are also in business to make money, so some embellishments and over-sensationalism may occur, which is unfortunate. What you suggest, Jones, is nothing short of oppressive censorship.

I, for one, will put up with the system just the way it is.

Kevin H. Goff
Class of '83

Journalist-hater needs to check facts

EDITOR:

I would like to direct this editorial to Bryan D. Jones, journalist-hater.

My dear Mr. Jones: it is quite obvious that you know little or nothing about journalism.

I understand your frustration at the situation in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, however, not ALL journalists value a "hot" story over telling the truth.

You suggest that journalists neither add nor detract anything from a news story. OK, let's say that all journalists decide to follow your rule. But, who will

decide what will go in the lead paragraph?

Isn't it bias when the writer must decide what the most important aspect of a story is when he/she writes it? Of course it is! However, journalists are trained to find the important, newsworthy issues in a story. (Notice I said "trained to find," not "trained to make up.")

But, Mr. Jones, if you feel you know of a better way to write a news story, I do wish you would tell us.

You also suggest that journalists only report stories when they are "truly most beneficial to the United States alone."

Oh, how biased you are! Was it not scandal? Would you rather those two men had not reported their findings simply because they were not praising our government 100 percent?

Journalists don't make the bad news, (about our government or any other area of news); they only do their job and report it.

Mr. Jones, you belong in the period when messengers were killed simply because they carried bad news. I can sense your hand on the trigger; I would appreciate it if you wouldn't pull it until you come to a better understanding of journalists and their duty.

I find a personal insult in your accusation that all journalists slant the news to the "left." Not only do I come from a family where most of the men have served in the armed forces, but I also voted for our president. I sound like quite a "Commie," don't I?

Cheryl Clements
Journalism major, Class of '88

Battalion Ed Board invited to film

EDITOR:

Quality journalists today are ones that go out of their way to be exposed to all perspectives surrounding an issue.

On Wednesday, Jan. 23 you wrote a very clear opinion on your own perspective surrounding abortion. I would like to challenge each member of your board to view another perspective on the issue by watching a documented 20 minute video entitled "Silent Scream" on Thursday and next Tuesday from 10 to 3 p.m. in the MSC.

Taking the time to view it is not easy—especially if you already disagree with it. But then again, becoming truly open-minded journalists that have earned the respect of their readers is probably just as difficult.

Brad Dacus
Finance, '86

Campus police need guns to curb crime

EDITOR:

I waited today for the rumored retraction of the article published (Tuesday, Jan. 15) pertaining to Dr. Das' views on University Police and their need to carry a weapon. After reading the retraction, it is my understanding that the views expressed were only those of Dr. Das and not the Faculty Senate. To this my reaction is, Thank Goodness.

As for you Dr. Das, I could not believe what I saw in print. While I would also like to believe that the University is an educational utopia free from serious crime, this is not a realistic view point. With a student population of around

35,000, about 9,000 of which live on campus, and close to 10,000 faculty and staff, we are the size of a small city, the chance still exists. How is an officer going to deal with these situations without the opportunity to use, if needed, a weapon to protect himself or any bystanders?

As for your suggestions that weapons be available on a check-in, check-out basis at the station, let me remind you of a situation which occurred about two years ago. A University police officer came upon a burglary of a vehicle in process one night. When he identified himself, the subject opened fire on the officer. Under your plan, he should have yelled "time out; you guys stay here please while I run back to the station, get my gun and return so that we can continue this encounter."

Believe me Dr. Das, I would like to see us living in a society free of crime. Unfortunately, it is a fact of life that we do not. Mr. Bob Wiatt and his staff do an excellent job of protecting you, myself and the 45,000 other members of the University family. It is through their hard work and visible image that the incidence of serious crimes is kept to a minimum. These officers have gone through hundreds of hours of training which have included the proper use of firearms. They are just as qualified to carry a weapon as any of the municipal or state police in Texas. To not allow them to do so may become an invitation to criminals to come and 'visit' Texas A&M.

I encourage you and the members of the Faculty Senate to think about this prior to making any decision which they may regret in the future.

Dave Bergen

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Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the Editorial Board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

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

Letters Policy

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.

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holidays and examination periods. Mail subscriptions are \$15.00 per semester, \$33.25 per school year and \$35 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: The Battalion, 216 Reed McNeal Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843. Editorial staff phone number: (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.