

OPINION

Vigilantism doesn't solve the problem

A Manhattan grand jury Friday indicted subway 'vigilante' Bernhard H. Goetz on three charges of criminal weapons possession, instead of attempted murder, in the shooting of four youths on a subway last month.

In effect, Goetz was exonerated of any guilt in the shooting. The jury decided Goetz used justifiable force in defending himself against the youths. He was justified, the jury said, in shooting four teenagers — two of them in the back as they tried to run away. This man who said he had intended to kill the four and only stopped shooting because he ran out of ammunition was justified under the law.

The most seriously injured of the four youths — 19-year-old Darrel Cabey — has been in a coma for 18 days, breathing with the aid of a respirator. If Cabey does recover from the coma, he will be paralyzed from the waist down because his spine was severed when Goetz shot him in the back.

There is no question that crime in the New York subways, and in New York itself, is a very real, very dangerous problem. The tremendous outpouring of sympathy and support for Goetz is testimony for that fact.

But allowing people to take the law into their own hands is not the answer. Allowing people to seek revenge through any means flies in the face of our commitment to live in a country of law and order.

Obviously the legal system is not working effectively to protect New York's citizens. And those citizens obviously want their city to be safer.

So where is the outcry for better law enforcement, instead of praise and applause for needless, unjustified violence? It is a tragedy that New Yorkers aren't pulling together to fight for their city and their safety with the same force and enthusiasm they showed for vigilantism.

This subway shooting is a tragedy in all senses. It is a tragedy that crime is so out of control in New York that people are frightened and pushed to the point of violence. It is a tragedy that a young man is lying in a hospital in a coma, his chances of survival slim.

It is a tragedy that the likelihood of vigilantism and violence will increase because of the precedent set by this jury's decision.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Regents need to wake up and smell reality

Band battle is a losing one

No matter how many times a dead dog is kicked, it's still dead. Inevitably, U.S. District Judge Ross Sterling ruled in favor of Melanie Zentgraf, approving an out-of-court agreement which will allow women to enter the Aggie band. Naturally, our omnipotent Board of Regents will appeal the decision.



Loren Steffy

Constitutional rights aren't the issue here. It's a matter of principle and tradition, which are the same thing in Aggie-land. Since women have never been allowed in the band, the Ross Volunteers, or the drill team, why should they be now? Women wormed their way into the Corps, but we gotta stop them before they take over the whole University, right?

In a related incident, Texas A&M

President Frank E. Vandiver said 500 to 600 faculty members would have to be laid off and student enrollments cut if the Legislature slashes appropriations like it wants to.

Now, while A&M may lose valuable faculty and students, essentially the lifeblood of this University, the Regents are sitting on their fat bank rolls fighting a case which will be lost eventually. No way will the Supreme Court, if the case even gets that far, uphold a clearly discriminatory restriction such as keeping women out of a college band.

Instead of fighting frivolous lawsuits, the Regents could be putting their tens of thousands of dollars to use in preserving the precious jobs of faculty members, a function that would certainly benefit A&M more than an all-male band.

In all the turmoil surrounding changing traditions, the real purpose of A&M — education — is often lost. Whether the University has a coed band is trivial.

Whether professors are available to teach courses and enhance the education of students is not.

As a student, I'd like to know that the tax and tuition dollars A&M receives are being spent to better this learning environment for myself and my fellow students, enhance the research and training facilities for professors and preserve and maintain this institute of higher education. Of course, I'm sure Brad Bright would rather be able to lay down on Kyle Field and say "Yes, there's not a skirt in that entire band down there. It was a long, hard fight but I won." Even if he had to sell the University to do it.

The Regents need to wake up and smell reality. Fighting Sterling's decision is a hopeless case, and A&M could use the money to better use. Bright should follow his own advice and "cut out the fat."

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

Budget cutting, tax reforming more difficult than they sound

What we have here is "High Noon" played by the Marx brothers. The gunslingers are warily walking down the dusty street — Pennsylvania Avenue — but they are not eager to sling guns. The winner may be the one who draws last.



George Will

The President is going to submit a sort of budget, in a perfunctory sort of way. The House of Representatives, the last redoubt of Democrats, must (the law is picky about this) pass a budget. But it does not want to do that until Senate Republicans write one.

Their leader, Robert Dole, is going to run for President as a Responsible Republican, meaning one who will countenance some Social Security cuts and deeper defense cuts than the President wants. If Dole oversees Senate passage of a budget like that, House Democrats will stand back aghast, entropy will spread through Congress and there will be government by continuing resolution until 1986, which is an election year, so...

So let's kill time by reforming taxes. Rub, rub, rub, rub. There. We have erased every line in the wickedly complicated tax code, because Americans say they crave simplicity. And yet, and yet...

A few months ago the Reagan administration was said to be bent on establishing a theocracy, turning the government over to the nation's parsons. But lo! The administrations' tax-simplification plan would erase the provision whereby parsons are not taxed on the value of the compensation they receive in the form of their parsonage or housing allowance. Taxing that will give the government \$164 million in 1990. But that is \$164 million that congregations will have to make up, or take from charities.

So parsons and their flocks will put the fear of God into Congress.

Furthermore, America itself — meaning, of course, baseball — is endangered. Last year, 15 million tickets — one-third of all tickets sold — were deductible as business expense. The government, in one of its sweeter moods, has declared that a major league stadium is an "appropriate business setting." For business entertainment, that is. Change that, and much revenue will be drained from sports, and Dave Winfield will not be able to live in the manner to which he is accustomed. So, sports fans, let's keep a little complexity in the tax code, to protect sports.

Now, about that progressive idea of ending the deductibility of mortgage-interest payments on second homes. That change would persecute the plutocrats, right? Well, it will not amuse Aspen, Colo., Sun Valley, Idaho, and Jackson Hole, Wyo., for starters. And those states have as many senators as California, New York and Texas — where, come to think about it, there live many persons who have second homes.

The end of second-home deductibility would alarm lumbermen — the horny-handed sons of toil who harvest the trees that make the beams and shingles and floors in second homes. And the union members who make the plumbing fixtures may oppose any tax change that would inhibit construction. And so on.

Concerning the three-martini lunch, who will die in the last ditch in defense of current permissive rules on the deductibility of "business" meals? Not fat cats grown fat on too much gin and not enough vermouth. They are too fat to fight. No, the defenders will be the restaurant and hotel workers' unions. And (for starters) the two senators from Louisiana: New Orleans is kept afloat by deductible spending at business conventions and meetings.

Well, at least we can agree about radically restricting the right of state and lo-

cal governments to issue tax-exempt bonds, right? Such bonds finance construction of public works (school, highways, airports, hospitals, bridges). There were \$83 billion of such bonds issued in 1983. Restrict them and you restrict the wealth-amassing by the wealthy. But you also restrict construction, so you will hear from the construction unions (Democratic) and the contractors (Republican).

So what will happen in this year of budget cutting and tax reforming? The year will be momentous if much happens, or if nothing happens.

If much happens, that will be momentous. If nothing very much happens, we will have established the momentous fact that the modern state has grown weak by growing big — that it is immobilized by the constituencies it has created through the services it has rendered. By January 1986, we will either have no enlarged sense of the possible, or we will have the knowledge that the modern state has so woven itself into the fabric of society that it cannot move without ripping the fabric, and that cannot move.

George Will is a columnist for the Washington Post.

LETTERS:

People must live by their own morals

EDITOR:

When it comes to morals, everybody is right. People's opinions on moral issues stand as solid as granite and there are few people that can change their views. Gay rights are no exception. If people feel that homosexuality is wrong, they will continue to believe that. Even if they were the only ones left that did. That is their right and it would be a sad day in the country if we lost that freedom to live by our beliefs. What people do in private is their own business. Some people in Houston sounded as though the world would come to an end if those sexuality referendums were passed. The truth is, the laws would have had no effect whatsoever. There is not a law that can be made that would stop discriminations. However, if it had passed, it would certainly serve as a reminder of what this country is all about. We all have the right to choose our friends, place of worship, and how we conduct our lives, especially in private. The world would not come to an end if gay right legislation were passed but it certainly would if we eliminated any segment of our great society.

John R. Mugg
Class of '88

Campus cops carry guns? Yes and no

EDITOR:

Should campus cops carry guns? So far I have heard either yes or no arguments, but what about yes and no. In other words carry guns in their car, but not on their person, except if the officer is on a walking patrol. Here are a couple of scenarios to help explain.

Scenario One: Last semester the campus police were called to break up a domestic disturbance in the north side quad. It would seem that dorm X had more of than their share of dorm spirit. So they began to spread it around in the best way that they knew, naturally by throwing pizza dough at dorm Z. Before dorm Z was able to show their appreciation the campus cops arrived, billy clubs in hand and guns in holsters. Children in dorm X were spanked and let go. Everything okay dokey.

What could have happened: Redneck in dorm X gets in a skuffle with the cop

resulting in gun play, and the death of an innocent surf-punk (me) in dorm Y. This tragic death of mine could have been prevented had the police been allowed to leave the guns in the cars and brought pizza dough.

Scenario Two: An officer walking through campus at 4 a.m. sees a girl being mugged. The suspect flees, the cop has his gun; make my day — blow him away.

I believe that this simple solution will make both conservative ("Happiness is a warm gun") types and liberal (afraid of another Kent State) journalists happy content citizens.

Kelvin Callaghan

Male cadets are perfect gentlemen

EDITOR:

In response to Berkowitz's "twisted" article regarding Cadets, we have a few comments of our own. First, how can anyone pass judgement on the Corps without ever experiencing it? Issues shouldn't be condemned based on hearsay.

Although we're not members of the Corps, we're still thankful it exists. Cadets are "the mirror of all courtesy." Not only do they go out of their way to open doors for ladies, but they never seem to break that old Aggie tradition of "HOWDY." They also provide the service of protective escorting which insures our safety. We're not alone in our appreciation.

The unity of the Corps has an undying influence on all of those who are exposed to it. It is this unity that creates the aura we are all inspired by. This organization provides A&M with a unique identity. What would A&M be without the Corps?

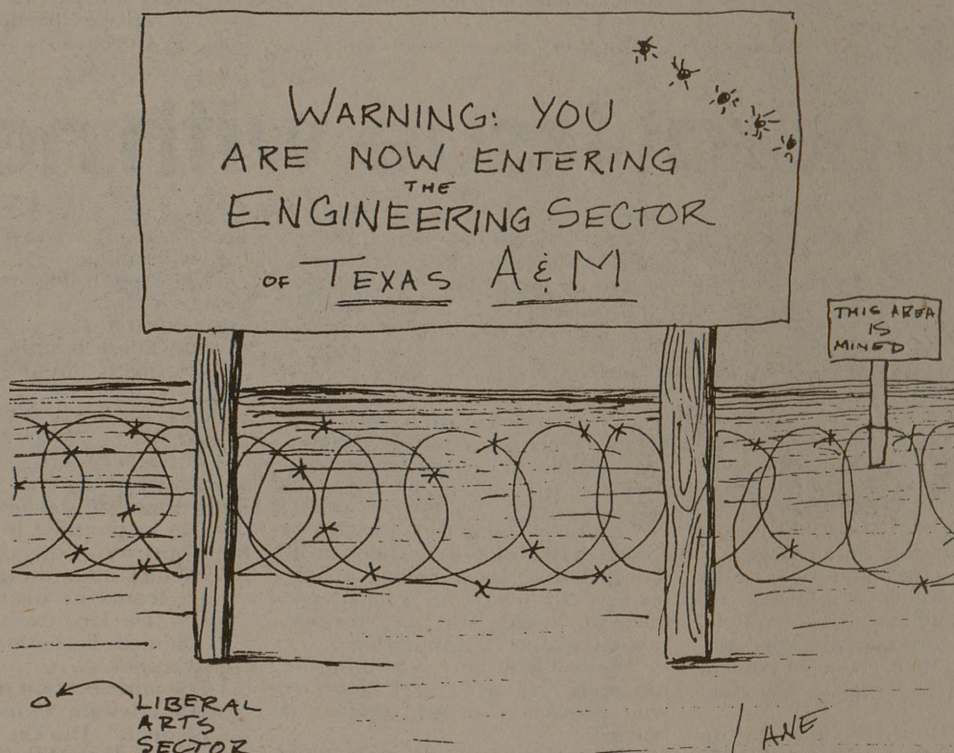
Allison Meyer, Class of '85
Holly Helt, Class of '86

At Ease staffers praised for work

EDITOR:

Dear Battalion At Ease Staff:
WHOOPII!

Thanks for a nice and intelligent whole issue. Keep up the good work.
Agustin Restrep



The Battalion

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