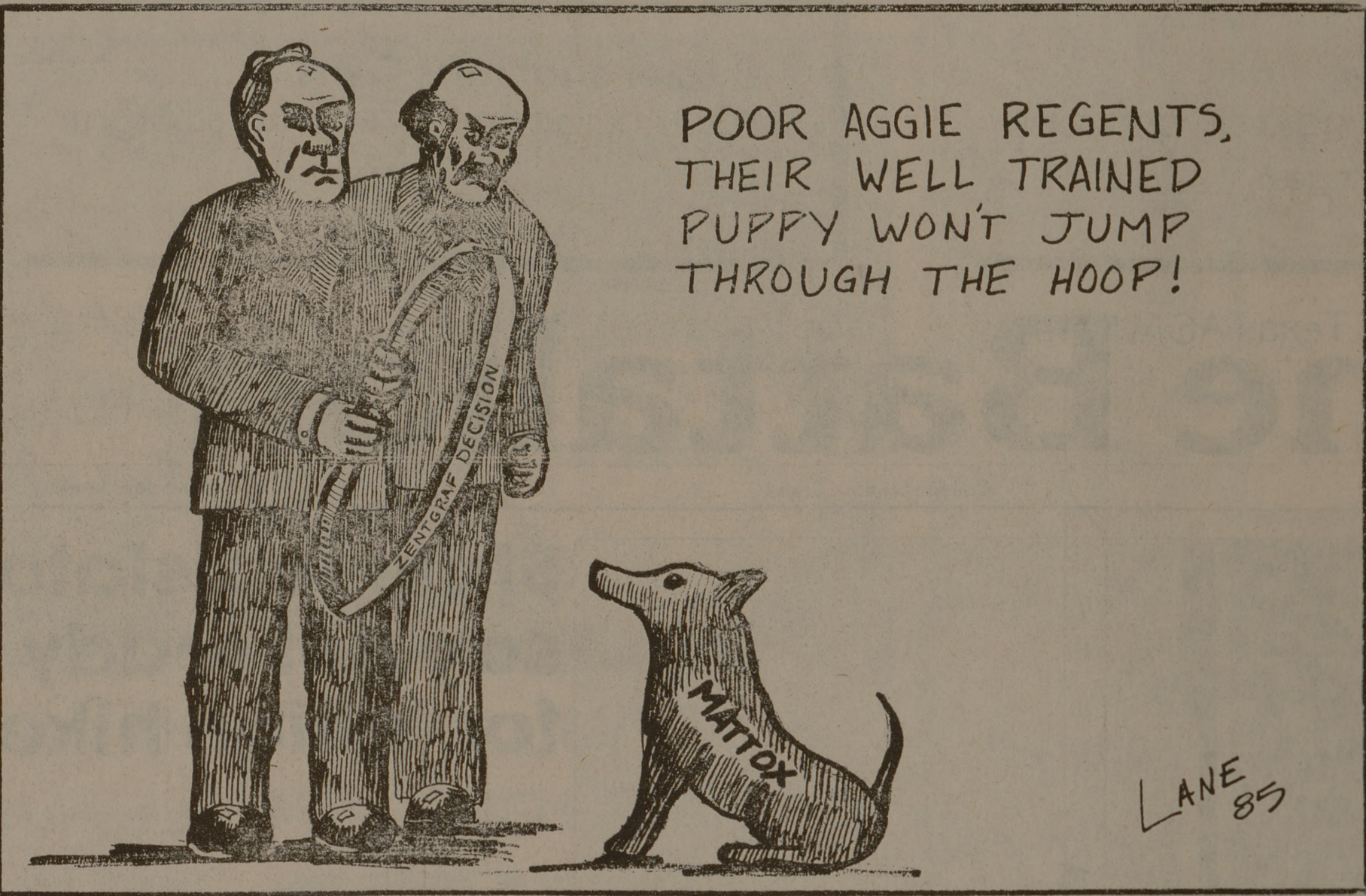


OPINION



Vigilante justified



Kevin Inda

What was that famous line? Oh, "And justice for all."  
On January 9, I wrote a column about citizens having the right to protect themselves. The piece was written in praise of a self-employed electronics expert named Bernhard Goetz.

Goetz is the real-life reincarnation of Dirty Harry who made hamburger of four teen-agers during a robbery attempt in subway train in Lower Manhattan. Goetz was charged with four counts of attempted murder and one count of criminal possession of a dangerous weapon.

I was outraged that a citizen was no longer able to protect his own life. What was the world coming to? The system just should have said, "Okay you criminals, we're going to crack down on citizens carrying weapons for protection. We're going to make it safer for you guys to commit crimes." By charging Goetz, that's basically what they did.

I was pleased to learn that last Friday a grand jury refused to indict Goetz for attempted murder. Instead, they indicted him only on three counts of criminal possession of a weapon. He still faces up to seven years in prison if convicted. But, even if convicted, the law allows judges to consider mitigating circumstances, especially when the defendant is a first-time offender. So, there is a good chance Goetz may serve no time at all — something I hoped for all along.

Reactions to Goetz's indictment varied. New York City Mayor Ed Koch, who previously denounced vigilante actions, didn't criticize the grand jury's action. Governor Mario Cuomo also felt the grand jury did the right thing. Of course, politicians never jump to conclusions or criticize actions without someone else first taking the blame — in this situation, the courts.

Shirley Cabey, the mother of the most seriously injured victim doesn't agree. According to her lawyer, "She said that what the government is now telling people is that it is all right to go out and pick up a gun and shoot black people."

Cabey's response was a normal one. Her son is paralyzed from the waist down and in a coma. Doctors say neurological tests indicate that some of his brain functions — involving comprehension and speech — are impaired. But her statement is ludicrous.

The government is giving people the right to defend themselves. It's not establishing open season on blacks — just on knife-wielding hoodlums.

The fact that four youths were injured — one seriously — is tragic. But, they had it coming. It would have been a greater tragedy if Goetz was convicted for attempted murder.

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

LETTERS:

Women will be asset to band, other groups

EDITOR:  
Three cheers to U.S. District Judge Ross Sterling for approving a settlement requiring Texas A&M University to encourage women students to join the all-male campus organizations.

Three more cheers to the women who stood their ground during the long legal battle. An appeal may lurk before them, but "they've come a long way, baby."

Women comprise more than 40 percent of Texas A&M's current student enrollment. It's a fine school for academic and leadership training, thanks to outstanding faculty and student organizations. Women have added a great deal to numerous campus groups, and the Aggie Band, Ross Volunteers and Fish Drill Team will benefit as well.

Sometimes traditions need to change. Men and women are learning to work together in the business world — why not begin this education on a college campus? It's time for former students and current students opposed to Judge Sterling's action to wake up. It's 1985, and there's a wonderful world around us, a world for men and women to share.

I'm proud to be a former student of Texas A&M myself, and I hope all students will continue to benefit from their experience on that campus.

Jane G. Brust  
Class of '83

Board of Regents should not appeal

EDITOR:  
We would like to applaud Judge Ross Sterling as well as Attorney General Jim Mattox for finally reaching a settlement in the Zentgraf discrimination case. It appears that, for once, justice has been done. But wait! Is that grumbling we hear coming from the distinguished Texas A&M University Board of Regents?

Yes, the whining is coming from the plush regent's annex in the MSC. It seems that they're dissatisfied with the settlement. Could it be that "a very distinctive and unique organization unlike any other volunteer organization in the country" has been attacked? Come on, regents, can't you do better than that? After all, the KKK is "a very distinctive and unique organization."

We now find out that the regents plan to appeal the ruling, although their legal standing in the case is, at best, dubious. After all, their legal representative, the Attorney General, has decided to uphold the state constitution by siding against them. In addition, the Texas Aggie Band Association, allied with the regents, was denied the right to intervene in the case. Apparently, they plan to try the same trick they used to appeal the GSS decision. That is, Mattox decides to let them appeal the case as long as no state money is used.

We sincerely hope that the Attorney General stands up to them this time, and thereby stands up for our rights.

After all, when the rights of some segment of society are repressed, it makes it easier to repress the rights of other groups. In this case, however, the repressors are not some faraway, untouchable bureaucracy, giving Big Brother orders which affect millions. Instead, they are a nearby, untouchable bureaucracy, firmly entrenched and with firm control over us. It's time for a re-evaluation of the power structure; maybe someday the highest power of the university won't continually embarrass the students and faculty, who are struggling for excellence.

Brian Sterling, '86  
accompanied by 8 signatures

Vigilante justified in defending himself

EDITOR:  
Concerning your editorial on Jan. 28 about Bernhard H. Goetz. You said, "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."

People can only be taking the law into their own hands or seeking revenge after the fact. This man was simply defending his personal body against injury. If Goetz would not have had a weapon and had justifiably refused to turn over the money, he would surely have been killed or badly injured. This would not even have made the newspaper in New York. Here, a man working to support his family is put out of work for some time, possibly permanently. Your heart should go out to a man that has to suffer the brow beating he has received from a newspaper for defending his right to live without harassment.

Perry D. Cortese  
Ruth Hicks

Embryos also are 'created equal'

EDITOR:  
In response to Kristin Parsons' letter stating that 15 million women are glad to have the right to choose life or death for their unborn babies — what about the United States Constitution which states that "all men are created equal"? This means to me that all men are created equal from the moment of conception. Isn't that what creation means? This does indeed mean that an "embryo" is as much as a "child" and a "person" as her 13 year-old. With the genetic code (DNA) imprinted in every cell, the child has every capability of being fully formed, if given the chance.

And what about the 15 million "women" mentioned? How many of these "women" are actually irresponsible teenagers who will not seek birth control methods because the escape of abortion is always there if they get "in trouble"?

Sara Mitchell  
Class of '88

Men should have vote on abortion

EDITOR:  
I would like to respond to the letter from Scott Ferguson entitled "Men Shouldn't Have Vote on Abortion" (1/25/85). I would like to present my case in the form of four questions:

1. Are men not affected by abortion? At the present time a man has no legal means to fight the abortion of HIS child. Shouldn't a minimum requirement for an abortion be the consent of BOTH would-be parents?

2. Should laws be made by only those they will affect? If this is the case then we should only allow male congressmen to vote on war issues. Only males are drafted in war-time. And, only those convicted of murder should make laws dealing with murder; they are the ones the law will affect.

3. Why do all pro-abortion/pro-choice advocates always stress the rape and incest victims? Very few abortions are performed for these reasons. Special sections of anti-abortion law could provide for these circumstances as well as when the mother's life is in danger.

4. Mr. Ferguson stated in his closing that many anti-abortionists are proponents of capital punishment. What do abortion and capital punishment have in common? Capital punishment is handed out to the very deserving. Show me an unborn child that has committed the same crimes as Gary Gilmore and I'll pay for the abortion myself.

I don't think all the solutions have been found to the abortion issue and I am not ready to prohibit half of our population from looking for them.

B. Keith Byer  
Class of '85

Androgyny article in At Ease praised

EDITOR:  
I was very happy to see the articles on androgyny in "At Ease" on Jan. 25. I hope now that the student body will understand a little better what is going on inside the heads of the "eccentric minority" on campus.

I am a male senior environmental design major, and my pierced ear, spiked hair (that means it's short on-top, cowboys) and 10 inch blonde tail have shocked more than a few people on campus. Hey, somebody must do it! Wouldn't class be boring if you didn't have me to stare at?

I enjoy being different, androgynous if you want to call me that (sometimes I wear mascara and eyeliner, too). I do it to make people question their association with life's social groups and realize that there are people who stand out as individuals. Individuality is not only a haircut and strange clothes, but a way of thinking and of living. It is only another level of education, one that you won't discover sitting in a classroom staring at a chalkboard.

Tres Wright  
Class of '85

Orchestra coverage not professional

EDITOR:  
After viewing last Thursday's performance by Pinchas Zukerman and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) sponsored by MSC OPAS, I am having difficulty understanding the coverage given the performance. Several aspects of the article appearing in the Battalion edition of Jan. 25 are difficult to understand.

It was very curious to me that a photograph of the SPCO, led by three time Grammy award winning Pinchas Zukerman, should be captioned "The Brazos Valley Symphony." I also saw little need to report "chuckles" from junior high students and a lack of standing ovation before intermission. No mention was made of the final piece played in the second half of the program which received a standing ovation as well as three encores.

I do realize The Battalion is a student newspaper, but it is also our only university newspaper; world renown artists presented by MSC OPAS and other student committees are a rare opportunity and should be reported with more professionalism.

Shelley Henderson

Ignoring opponents petty and rude

EDITOR:  
The front page photo entitled "Read it, Ag" (1-28-85) displays a particularly rude Aggie tradition. The petty refusal to recognize our opponents can only engender disrespect and resentment in return. Aggie spirit is a fine thing but, not at the expense of simple courtesy.

David Bear

Professor in minority glad to be there

EDITOR:  
I have one correction and one comment on Jeff Brady's article in the Jan. 21 issue of the Battalion.

Correction: I am not teaching graduate courses part-time in the basement of the Chemistry Building. I have a pleasant office on the ground floor and teach two sections of undergraduate Organic Chemistry.

Comment: I am pleased to be "in the minority" in view of the earlier comment from Dr. Davenport to the effect that "most of the time the majority is wrong." I have long suspected that such is the case.

Rod O'Connor  
Full-Time Iconoclast and Part-Time Professor

**The Battalion**  
USPS 045-360  
Member of  
Texas Press Association  
Southwest Journalism Conference

**The Battalion Editorial Board**  
Brigid Brockman, Editor  
Shelley Hoekstra, Managing Editor  
Ed Cassavoy, City Editor  
Kellie Dworaczky, News Editor  
Michelle Powe, Editorial Page Editor  
Travis Tingle, Sports Editor

**The Battalion Staff**  
Assistant City Editors ..... Kari Fluegel, Rhonda Snider  
Assistant News Editors ..... Tammy Bell, Cami Brown, John Hallett  
Assistant Sports Editor ..... Charean Williams  
Copy Editor ..... Kay Mallett  
Make-up Editors ..... Karen Bloch, Karla Marim  
Columnists ..... Kevin Inda, Loren Stelfy  
Editorial Cartoonist ..... Mike Lane  
Sports Cartoonist ..... Dale Smith  
Copy Writer ..... Cathy Bennett

**Editorial Policy**  
The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.  
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 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. 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.