

OPINION

# SWAMP's charges reflect ignorance

SWAMP, Students Working Against Morons in Power, held a mini-rally Thursday in front of Rudder Fountain and offered solutions to A&M's "problems."

They attacked the campus police, the administration, Student Government and The Battalion.

That's fine. One of the great things about this country is that its citizens have the right to voice their opinions and the right to try and change policies they think need changing. Recognizing and addressing a problem — if indeed there is a problem — is the first step toward solving it.

But was the talk Thursday substantiated or was it just meaningless banter? If you want to get people to listen to you, you have to give them some facts, some good solid evidence, not just glittering generalities.

Among the charges directed against The Battalion were that the newspaper is a "lap-dog" for the administration, that its staff is handpicked by the administration. This charge is commonly made by people ignorant of the facts, and seemingly unwilling to find out the truth.

The editor of The Battalion is chosen by the Student Publication Board, a seven-member board, with a non-voting chairman presiding. The board consists of three faculty members; one administrator, appointed by Frank E. Vandiver; and three students, appointed by the student body president and approved by Vandiver. The board's nomination for editor is approved by the Provost Gordon P. Eaton.

The editor, in turn, chooses his or her own staff and is completely in charge of the paper's operations. The Battalion is not censored or controlled by faculty or administration in any way. If The Battalion was under the administration's control, there would never be any articles or editorials critical of the University, would there?

Just last week, the 1985 Summer and Fall staffs were chosen by the editors through applications and interviews, and as usual, the administration had no finger in the pie, nor did it try. It didn't even try to peek into the oven.

The Battalion's Fall staff, including a new editorial board, will take over Monday, April 29. With this being our last editorial, we want to make the point that every article, every editorial and every column in the paper was there because WE wanted it there.

There was no outside pressure of any kind from the administration or any other group at the University — not even SWAMP.

The Battalion Editorial Board



# Freedom from conformity makes life more enticing

This is a study in what it is like to be imperfect, or the quest for perfection. Lately I've noticed that perfection is getting a lot of hype.



Ed Cassavoy

I got to thinking about cutting a perfect figure in the '80s as I absently monitored a car commercial. I've never really thought about cars much, except wishing I had one, until I concentrated on the commercial.

The brand new car, the pretty girl, the cool guy. Everything in that 30 seconds looked slicker and glossier than anything I could imagine. And I fell for it.

I actually thought they looked sort of nice. It actually caught my attention.

The advertising had worked. That's a big step in recognition for me.

But David Letterman came on again so I switched off this line of thinking. Hours later I started to make notes of my world. After seeing the car commercial there sure appears to be a lot more propped perfection cropping up around me.

Take for instance the journalism department. Since the beginning of time, the A&M journalism department has been small, composed of people who wanted to be journalists.

They, to be general, had a rather tweedy kind of philosophy of life. Just imagine a good tweed jacket and you'll know what I mean.

But now times have changed. Perfection has hit the department, and The Battalion. I see a lot more people that look like business majors. They wear nice clothes, and they talk about advertising a lot.

They make me feel more imperfect. And out of step. I never thought my life was that unkempt or confused. Now I'll have to re-evaluate things.

On the other hand, I think you lose something when things are tidied up too much. Use television as an example.

Who was the more fun in the Odd Couple? Oscar or Felix? Oscar was. He ate junk food, stored food in the folds of his blankets, wore baggy warm-up outfits and was disorganized.

And he was a lot of fun.

Neatening things up past a point is just blatant sterilization to me. Mom can ask me to make my bed, but I sure won't dust my records.

The same holds true in this life and my past lives.

I sure would have had a ball with the ancient Greeks, and to a lesser degree the Romans. They just opened up the mind. They had orgies, and had a lot of different gods and they liked to be philosophical.

I know Plato didn't shave everyday. And Sophocles probably said a lot of things people didn't like.

The only problem with chaos and arguments, throughout history, is that a lot of people don't like the hassle these situations create.

People who argue, and bring up new or different ideas usually get the shaft from their contemporaries.

Galileo, Darwin and Columbus made enemies because they didn't follow the party line. They scared people.

Talking about a round earth, etc., got people pretty edgy back then.

To the vast majority of the population these "radicals" messed up the world, threw a wrench into a smooth running system. Or played an ace from the bottom of the deck.

These thinkers made everyone's life so complex. People sort of had to think about things. That's a tough thing to do on a regular basis for some.

So that's why I'm an advocate of free speech.

Most people talk of this right, the importance of that. But I say that we miss out on the most exciting and dynamic parts of life without the freedom to be weird.

The freedom to be Tiny Tim, Charlie Chaplin, Adolf Hitler or, God help us, Motley Crue.

Only an exquisitely imperfect mind could have created such a masterpiece as the mighty pizza.

I can't argue with success.

Ed Cassavoy is a senior journalism major and a weekly columnist for The Battalion.

# LETTERS:

## Apartheid policy must be stopped

EDITOR:

Last year South African ambassador to U.S. was paid a bundle to speak here and this year it is the consul. They come to try to justify an illegal, wicked system that is a disgrace to humanity: Apartheid. Whenever the pressures build up, they talk of reform. But it remains at that: talk.

It is disturbing to see a university-sanctioned group sponsor such hated figures every year and provide them a forum to defend their racist actions and bankrupt policies at a time when it is increasingly difficult for them to do so anywhere on the globe, especially on university campuses in this country. We have yet to see the representatives of the internationally recognized independence movement being sponsored to speak about the real issues and problems.

For decades, the black people of South Africa have been subjected to racist brutality and injustices in their own homeland. For decades they have been struggling under harsh and inhumane conditions. And for decades the world has been crying out against apartheid and has been denouncing the South African racist rulers. But all of this has been falling on deaf ears. The regime's response has always been more brutality and more oppression.

After all these years, the black people are fed up and are rising up en masse to claim what is rightfully theirs: their freedom and the inalienable right to govern themselves. Now that the movement is gaining momentum and the white minority finds its powers and privileges in jeopardy, it has decided to show some carrots along with the deadly sticks it has always been using. But it's too little, too late. Apartheid and the criminal South African regime are doomed. Of course, those who have "interests" in rich South African don't like anyone making waves and rocking the boat! And that's exactly why much too often we hear the just struggle of the black people labeled as "violence," while the repressive government forces gun down unarmed demonstrators everyday!

Those who have quietly been supporting the South African racist regime, including the Reagan administration,

are not expected to reverse their policies on their own. It is the responsibility of all the conscientious and freedom-loving people to send them a message, loud and clear, that: enough is enough!

Saeid Minaei accompanied by 9 signatures

## Joe Bob's satire needs no defending

EDITOR:

This letter concerns a recent editorial in your paper which criticized Joe Bob Briggs' column rather severely. Although the esteemed Briggs needs no defending, a few points brought up by your editorial perhaps need clarifying.

To begin with, the subject of "We Are The World" is one which is undoubtedly worthy of satire. This is a typically American version of charity: not only do you feel good about helping the poor, starving Ethiopians, but you get an album as well. What more could you ask? The whole U.S. Aid For Africa program smacks of the same kind of tastelessness that recently made it possible for consumers to buy the official string beans of the 1984 Summer Olympics.

In addition, one wonders why these "Black leaders" were so upset about being insulted by Joe Bob Briggs. Being insulted by Joe Bob is something akin to being insulted by Adolf Hitler. It is kind of an oblique compliment. Obviously, the problem arises because people do not realize that Joe Bob Briggs is merely a "persona" used by an author for a calculated effect. Such a realization, I am sure, would make people wonder if Joe Bob is making fun of black people, or if he is making fun of people who make fun of black people. Naturally, we live in a world where the masses of men seldom read anything which cannot be bought in the check-out line at Safeway, and it is too much to expect it would be nice if people read things all the way through before they started calling their congressmen. Perhaps if each one of Joe Bob's columns came with its own set of Cliff Notes...

The only thing that Joe Bob Briggs can be truthfully accused of is that he does hide behind a persona to take his shots at the world. However, this is a familiar enough practice. A few journalists have been hiding behind the impressive facade of the "Battalion Editorial Board" for quite some time.

Howard Cox

# Network takeovers are the latest trend

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

The move by Ted Turner to take over the CBS company has unleashed a series of other attempts by entrepreneurs to go after communications companies.

A week ago P.T. Raider, who owns a FM radio station in Zero Degrees, Wyo., announced he was declaring war on the multibillion-dollar Starfish Broadcasting Company.

At a press conference in New York, P.T. said he always desired to own a network, and he felt he could do a much better job than Starfish in serving the public.

Although he refused to say how he would manage the company, he did vow to fire the entire news staff and replace them with "American citizens who believe in God and Jesse Helms."

Asked how much cash he was willing to put up for Starfish stock, Raider said he was offering something better than money. "I will swap one share of Raider Communications stock for one share of Starfish Broadcasting."

When it was pointed out that Starfish was worth \$3 billion dollars and the sole Raider property, FM station YUK, was only worth \$1,200, P.T. said, "I might sweeten the pot by throwing in a dead cat with each junk bond."

Asked where he would get the money to pay for the dead cats, Raider said once he got control he would sell off the Starfish publishing company, the Starfish record division and the Starfish motion picture studios. "While all these companies make money, I will not sad-

dle Starfish with more debt than it can handle."

A Wall Street Journal reporter asked Raider if it wasn't true that the only reason Starfish would be in such heavy debt was because of his hostile takeover bid.

P.T. told the reporter if he didn't retract the question Raider Communications would buy the Journal as well.

A year ago Raider would have been laughed at for trying to pull off such a deal. But with the recent mergers in which takeover barons have been getting rich by highflying tactics, no one on Wall Street is laughing at anybody anymore.

An analyst for Strong & Hairy, the brokerage firm, said, "Raider has a good chance of taking over Starfish. The dead cat strategy has been used very successfully in a lot of merger deals this year. As long as there are people out there who would rather have a dead cat than a live company, P.T. is a threat."

Belton Lewish, who follows the entertainment business for Goose & Gander, thought Starfish could fight off Raider. "But," he warned, "it won't be cheap. The big boys who invest for the institutions don't care what happens to Starfish as long as they make money out of it. If they can get in and out of the stock before the company goes belly up, they couldn't care if the Ayatollah Khomeini takes over the company."

Dalton Dunkirk, chairman of Starfish Broadcasting, told Louis Rukeysen on PBS that he didn't mind Raider's attempt to take over Starfish as much as he did having to put P.T. on his network news every night.

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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 administration, 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 include the address and telephone number of the writer.  
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