

OPINION

Better late than never

While the recent crackdown on alcohol-related crimes for motorists has had a noticeable effect on crimes such as drunken driving, another facet of the transportation industry had been unaffected by any restrictions — until now.

After 12 years of deliberation, the federal government announced Wednesday new safety regulations which will prohibit railroad employees from showing up for work under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Employees will be prohibited from using intoxicating substances while on the job and new employees will be screened for drugs. Toxicological testing will be used in accidents where worker impairment is suspected.

Railroad workers previously were not bound by any restrictions, although the National Transportation Safety Board recommended such rules be adopted 12 years ago.

It's about time the federal government took action in this area. Why did it take 12 years for the government to determine railroad employees shouldn't be allowed to show up for work drunk?

Since 1975, 48 train accidents have been linked to alcohol and drugs. Thirty-seven people have been killed, 80 injured and \$34 million worth of property has been damaged.

People who ride trains, as well as people who work on them, deserve the same protection that motorists currently receive. The obvious threat that alcohol and drugs pose to the safety of all involved with railroad operations has been ignored by the government for long enough.

Finally action has been taken — the new regulations go into effect Nov. 1. But if the obvious solution to the problem had been in effect years ago, the fatality rates for alcohol and drug-related train accidents could have been much lower.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Madonna never stops taking her clothes off

Rock star Madonna is having recurring blasts from her past. When "Penthouse" publisher Bob Guccione announced his magazine would run a 17-page spread of nude photos taken several years before Madonna's stardom, she shrugged it off.

Then "Penthouse's" primary competitor, "Playboy," also released Madonna-bares-all pictures, but the singer claimed she wasn't ashamed of her past.

Now Madonna is suing to prevent the release of "A Certain Sacrifice," a soft-core pornographic movie made about five years ago. The film features Madonna in an orgy scene.

Supposedly, Madonna only authorized that her body and voice be used but not her name.

What's the difference? By now, nude pictures of Madonna are almost as common as clothed ones. Of course, true Madonna groupies wouldn't want to miss her in a live-action orgy.

But even if Madonna wins her lawsuit and gets her name removed from the film, "A Certain Sacrifice" will still benefit from the publicity surrounding the case. The movie will simply be referred to as "the flick Madonna wanted her name out of but not her body."

How ironic that after all the sexually-explicit photos, it's her name Madonna's worried about having exploited. She ought to try wearing a suit instead of filing one.

The Battalion Editorial Board



More to people of Nicaragua than meets the blinded eye

A few weeks ago I wrote an article about Amistad, a tour of Nicaragua being organized by Abbie Hoffman. Hoffman, who was involved in many protest movements during the 1960s, will lead a group to Nicaragua this August to observe the effects war has had on the country.



Karl Pallmeyer

Amistad is an attempt to make friends with the people of Nicaragua despite political differences. In the article, I urged people to get involved and protest American support of the war in Nicaragua.

The article got some response. Some people thought that I was an anarchist for advocating a peaceful, instead of a military, solution in Nicaragua. Some people were interested in the trip and asked how they could participate in Amistad.

I got a call from a young man last week who had a more personal interest in the trip. His mother was ill and needed medicine that she couldn't get in Nicaragua. He had tried to send the medicine through the mail but postal service to Nicaragua has been cut off due to Reagan's trade embargo.

Many people have a limited view of Nicaragua. It is all too easy to say that the entire problem is that two warring

factions are struggling for power. Or that the rebel Contras are trying to overthrow the Marxist Sandinistas. Or that the Sandinista government is being usurped by Contra guerillas. But there is more to it than any of these explanations.

There are about 2.4 million people in Nicaragua. The country was ruled by a military dictatorship under Gen. Anastasio Somoza-Debayle.

In 1974 martial law was imposed after the Sandinistas captured several government officials. Between 1974 and 1979, the Somoza regime went on bloody manhunt to punish the Sandinistas. These manhunt resulted in the death or torture of many civilians. Civil war broke out in 1978.

The war, which had the popular support of the majority of the people of Nicaragua, resulted in the resignation and exile of Somoza on July 17, 1979. Free elections were held and the Sandinistas set up a Marxist government.

Many of the officials from the Somoza regime fled to neighboring Honduras. In Honduras they formed guerrilla forces to try to re-establish their rule in Nicaragua.

These guerrillas, the Contras, asked for U.S. military aid for their cause. In June Congress approved \$14 million in aid to the Contras. This brings the total to \$87 million spent to overthrow Nicaragua's properly-elected government. Currently there are seven U.S. airbases, two U.S. munitions storage depots, two

radar stations and about 10,000 U.S. soldiers in Honduras. There are plans to build at least two more bases. Honduras is full of the same type of "advisers" who were responsible for Vietnam.

The CIA has been training U.S. soldiers along with Contra guerillas in Honduras for the past five years. During that time the Contras have made several attacks in Nicaragua and have been responsible for thousands of deaths.

With this buildup of military strength and Reagan's trade embargo, an all-out war between the Contras and the Sandinistas is inevitable. The Reagan administration would much rather support kill than help a Marxist government.

As with all wars, it will not be the governments that will suffer. It will be the people who will suffer. Because of the embargo, a person's mother can't get the medicine she needs. Because of the Contras, thousands have died. The mother and 2 million other Nicaraguans are trying their best to live a normal life in an abnormal situation. So far we have done our best to make that situation worse.

The people of Nicaragua, regardless of their political beliefs, could be made a valuable friend if that \$87 million was used for other purposes.

Karl Pallmeyer is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.

A testy situation or invasion of privacy?

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

Psychological testing in the U.S. government has come under fire from several congressional committees, who feel that asking job applicants a series of questions to gauge their personalities is an invasion of privacy. The test that has come in for the most criticism is the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, a 566-question true or false quiz.

As an answer to the MMPI, one of its critics has developed the North Dakota Null-Hypothesis Brain Inventory, which the reader is invited to take right now. Answer true or false:

1. I salivate at the sight of mittens.
2. If I go into the street, I'm apt to be bitten by a horse.
3. Some people never look at me.
4. Spinach makes me feel alone.
5. My sex life is A-okay.
6. When I look down from a high spot, I want to spit.
7. I like to kill mosquitoes.
8. Cousins are not to be trusted.
9. It makes me embarrassed to fall down.
10. I get nauseous from too much roller skating.
11. I think most people would cry to gain a point.
12. I cannot read or write.
13. I am bored by thoughts of death.
14. I become homicidal when people try to reason with me.

15. I would enjoy the work of a chicken flicker.
16. I am never startled by a fish.
17. My mother's uncle was a good man.
18. I don't like it when somebody is rotten.
19. People who break the law are wise guys.
20. I have never gone to pieces over the weekend.
21. I think beavers work too hard.
22. I use shoe polish to excess.
23. God is love.
24. I like mannish children.
25. I have always been disturbed by the size of Lincoln's ears.
26. I always let people get ahead of me at swimming pools.
27. Most of the time I go to sleep without saying goodbye.
28. I am not afraid of picking up door knobs.
29. I believe I smell as good as most people.
30. Frantic screams make me nervous.
31. It's hard for me to say the right thing when I find myself in a room full of mice.
32. I would never tell my nickname in a crisis.
33. A wide necktie is a sign of disease.
34. As a child I was deprived of lico-rice.
35. I would never shake hands with a gardener.
36. My eyes are always cold.

Now for the results. If you have answered more questions false than true, you should try for the Peace Corps.

If you answered 18 true and 18 false, you should apply for work with the Voice of America.

If you refused to answer some of the questions, you might work for the White House.

If you held your hand over the questions while you answered them, you should go into the FBI.

If you talk about this test to anybody else, then you could never get a security clearance and you'd better stay where you are.



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