

One for the road

As of Sunday, driving without a seatbelt is illegal in Texas. The law won't be strictly enforced until December 1 to give Texans a chance to become accustomed to the new law.

Many foreign countries also employ a seat belt law. In Israel, not buckling up can result in indefinite suspension of a driver's license. But in this country, where personal freedoms abound, some people say the new law is an infringement on their rights. They feel the government shouldn't have such control over their lives that it can force them to take safety measures if they don't want to.

The new seat belt law is akin to the laws which prohibit suicide. Self-murder is against the law, even though it's difficult to prevent. The belt-law breakers also will be hard to catch, but now dying in an accident because of the victim's own lack of concern for himself is illegal.

We already have laws which regulate how fast we can drive, what direction we can drive, what side of the street we can drive on and what kinds of emissions our cars can have. The seat belt law is another vehicle restriction which is designed to improve the safety of automobile travel.

While the seat belt law may be a thorn in many sides, the far-reaching benefits will be worth the slight inconvenience. Sometimes it's necessary for the government to intervene and help people protect themselves.

The law also protects those who cannot protect themselves. The child of non-belt-wearing parents now has protection under the law. The infant's life no longer has to be endangered because of his parents' negligence.

The law's only shortcoming is its partiality to trucks. Unbuckled pickup drivers can die just as easily as unbuckled car drivers.

The Battalion Editorial Board



Mutual happiness found in mutual unhappiness

By ART BUCHWALD
Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

(Whilst Art Buchwald is on vacation we reprint some columns from the past.)

As someone who has made a close study of tourism (there must be a cure for it), I believe I have isolated a certain type of tourist that for some reason has become more prevalent in recent years. This is the type of tourist who hates traveling.

While I've written in the past about individual tourists who hated traveling, I have discovered a new type of tourist who needs somebody else to hate it with.

There are couples now traveling who know before they leave the United States they're going to hate it. But no matter how bad they think it's going to be, the reality is even worse than their wildest nightmares.

I met a couple like that not long ago. They had been touring Europe for a month and they were on the home-stretch in Paris. When I caught up with them they couldn't decide which they hated more, Venice or Rome.

"Jane," the man said, "didn't like Rome, but I still thought it was better than Venice."

Jane said, "That's because Harry didn't have the experiences I had. I still maintain I'd rather spend four days in Venice than two in Rome."

"It was that bad, huh?"

Harry said, "Well, it wasn't as bad as Zurich."

Jane agreed. "We both hated Zurich. We didn't have any fun in Zurich at all.

It was almost as bad as Copenhagen."

"You didn't like Copenhagen, huh?"

I asked.

"Does anyone like Copenhagen?" Harry wanted to know. "Would you like to hear what happened to us in Copenhagen?"

"Not particularly," I said.

"We were terribly disappointed in Amsterdam," Jane said.

"Almost as disappointed as we were in Brussels," Harry said. "We couldn't wait till we got out of there and got to London."

"Which," said Jane, "turned out to be dreadful."

"The funny thing is," said Harry, "I hated it, but I thought Jane liked it, so I said I liked it."

"And," said Jane, "I thought Harry liked it so I didn't tell him I hated it. You can imagine our surprise when we discovered we both hated it. If we had known it at the beginning we would have left right away."

"But where would you have gone?" I asked.

"Not to Monte Carlo, that's for sure," Harry said.

"I don't know what anybody sees in that place," Jane said.

"You can have the entire Riviera as far as we're concerned," Harry added. "Just try to get a good dry martini on the Riviera. Just try."

"Well, what about Paris?" I foolishly asked.

"The worst," said Jane. "The people are so unfriendly and the prices

are high, and I don't see what there is that's so special about Paris."

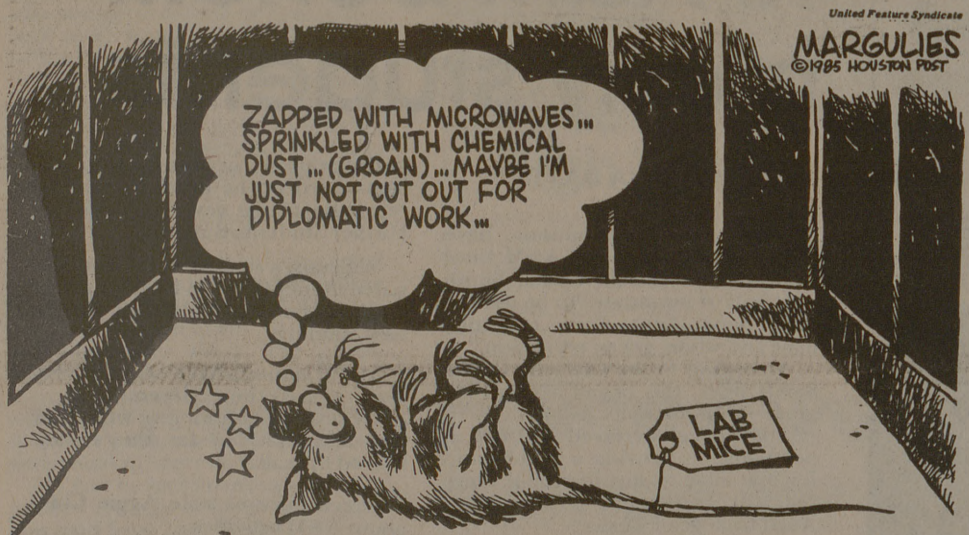
"Jane and I hate it," Harry said.

"You two seem to hate the same things," I said.

"Well, we know what we don't like," Jane said.

Harry said, "Europe's overrated. But we're glad we made the trip because now we can understand why other people don't like it either."

As I left the couple Harry was explaining to Jane why he didn't like the Arc de Triomphe and Jane was telling Harry why she didn't like the Place de la Concorde. You couldn't find two happier people.



'Sillybus' is not worth paper it's printed on

About this time every semester professors give their students a sheet of paper dubbed "the syllabus."

Trent Leopold
Guest Columnist

I've taken a lot of classes and have been handed a variety of syllabi (plural for syllabus) in my college days.

The Latin root of syllabus is "sillybus." I'm not sure where the word originated — it was probably somewhere fancy like Harvard — but I am convinced that syllabi indeed are silly.

What I've found is that syllabi aren't worth the paper they're written on or the time it takes professors to write them.

The thickest syllabus ever handed to me was about 10 pages in freshman chemistry 101. Those were the carefree days. I would sit and listen to Dr. Kuni Tatsumoto explain how to make dynamite while reading the syllabus to decide where we were suppose to be.

One of the most colorful syllabi given to me was a hot pink one-pager in an English class at another university. The professor who wrote it was a smart old bird. The day he handed it to us he said:

"Now let me show you the trash can, that's where this syllabus needs to go on your way out today. Or, if you prefer, you can write a note to your girlfriend or boyfriend on the back, but don't think for a minute we're going to talk about everything listed here."

I opted to write the note to a girl (not necessarily girlfriend) but she wasn't impressed.

Last spring in one of my journalism classes the professor handed us a syllabus about once every two weeks. By the end of the semester I had a lot of syllabi for that one class.

But even with a bi-weekly syllabus the due dates and times still changed.

Journalists have a habit of using a lot of paper. Maybe that's what I learned in that class.

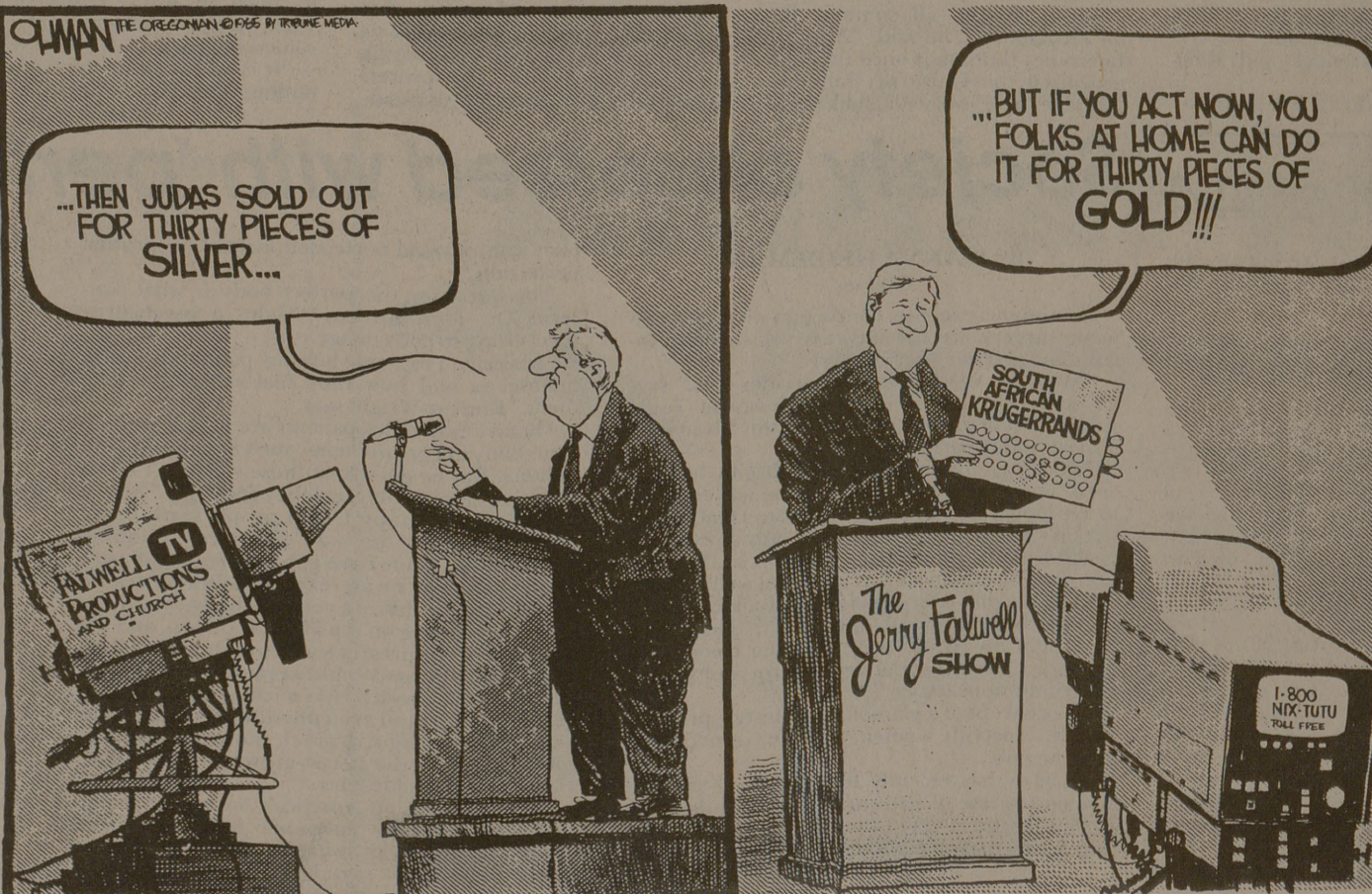
Last summer one of my marketing professors handed the class a rela-

tively detailed syllabus. At the top was an asterisk and at the bottom were the words: "This course outline is tentative."

It was, so why did he bother to write it?

If you're a freshman and are about to get handed your first syllabus you really don't need to take it home and lock it in a safe, although you probably will. And, if you're an upperclassman, you already know the myriad others uses for syllabi: bird cage liners, paper hats, charcoal starters...

Trent Leopold is a senior journalism major and a Senior Staff Writer for The Battalion.



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