

OPINION

Drinking age hike just buck passing

Texas has been embroiled in controversy over the drinking age for years. The increase from 18 to 19 four years ago sparked legislative debate and grumbles from the public — especially high school students. However, it helped solve some of the alcohol-related problems on high school campuses.

But now Texas is increasing the legal drinking age again, and the results can't be justified as they were in 1981. The national government is using federal highway funds to blackmail state legislatures into raising the legal age nationwide by 1986.

The new minimum age is supposed to decrease the number of alcohol-related automobile accidents. But a closer examination of statistics shows that the 19 to 21 age group is merely being used as scapegoats in an ever-increasing national problem.

The U.S. Department of Commerce says the 18 to 20 group is involved in fewer (7 percent) alcohol-related accidents than the 21 to 24 group (11 percent).

A drinking age increase is supposed to reduce alcohol consumption by youth and thus reduce drunken driving. As a result, drinking-related highway deaths are supposed to decrease.

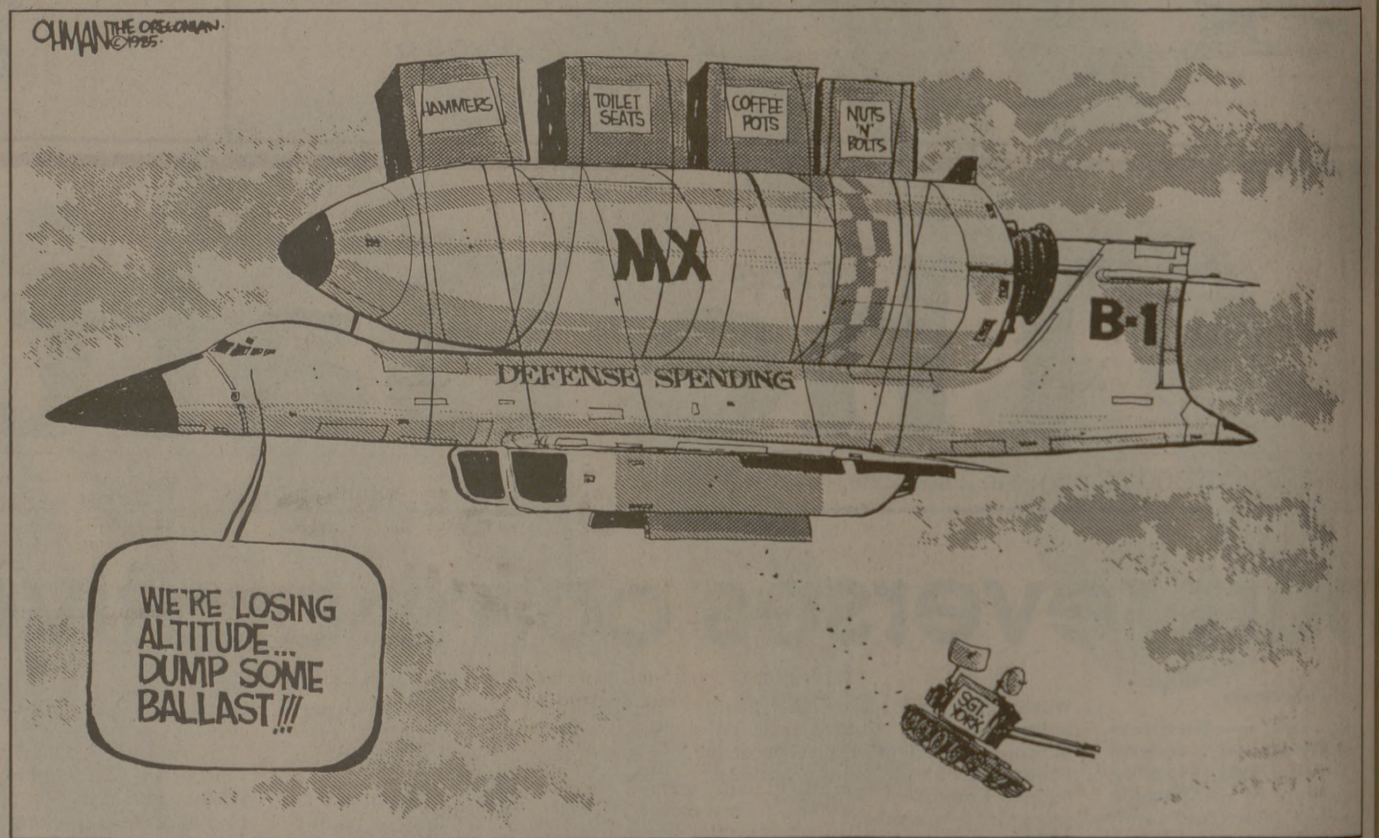
The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism found that if young adults are prohibited from drinking legally, they will drink illegally, consuming more alcohol in less safe settings. They are likely to drive more and experience more injuries.

Death rates for 18- to 20-year-olds in states with a minimum age of 21 have gone up since the law was instated.

Drunken driving and the fatalities related to it are a problem. But increasing the drinking age could have a more detrimental effect. In areas such as Bryan-College Station, raising the drinking age means less income for the community and fewer jobs for college students.

If drunken driving is going to be curbed, it must be done by stricter enforcement of existing laws, not by pushing the problem off on young people.

The Battalion Editorial Board



8 years after Biko's death, apartheid still unchecked

It was eight years ago today that Stephen Biko was taken to a police station for interrogation and beaten. Six days later he died.



Karl Pallmeyer

Unfortunately, few Americans know who Biko was. Few Americans know the circumstances under which Biko was killed.

Stephen Biko was a black man who wrote about the unfair way blacks were being treated. That was nothing new, blacks have been writing about black problems for hundreds of years.

Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in 1852, during a time when blacks were held in slavery. Ralph Ellison wrote "Invisible Man" in 1952, during a time when blacks were legally free but were not able to fully enjoy their freedom. Gwendolyn Brooks wrote "The Chicago Defender Sends a Man to Little Rock" in 1960, shortly after Little Rock had been the scene of a famous battle over whether blacks should be allowed to go to school with whites.

Stowe, Ellison and Brooks were not killed because of their writings. Biko was. Stowe, Ellison and Brooks lived in America. Biko lived in South Africa.

Biko was more than a just a writer, he was a leader. He formed the South African Students Organization and several other groups that were interested in obtaining civil rights for blacks. In 1972 Biko wrote several articles for a book, *Student Perspectives on South Africa*, that promoted the idea of equal rights for blacks. The articles and the book, although banned in South Africa, gained support throughout the world in the struggle to end apartheid.

Apartheid is a South African word meaning "apartness." It describes the government's policy of strict racial segregation and discrimination against the native blacks in South Africa.

Apartheid means that blacks can own land and live only in certain areas. Apartheid means that blacks can only go to certain beaches, swim in certain pools, sit on certain benches, ride on certain buses, eat in certain restaurants, go to certain theaters, hold certain jobs and attend certain schools. Apartheid means that blacks can't be paid the same amount of money as whites for equal work. Apartheid means that blacks can't hold political meetings. Apartheid means blacks can't run for

office. Apartheid means that blacks can't vote.

Biko fought long and hard against apartheid. He became a "banned" person. He could not speak to more than one person at a time, could not leave his home in King William's Town, could not be quoted or photographed and was kept under constant surveillance by the Security Police, South Africa's version of the Gestapo.

In 1976 Biko came to testify in a trial in which nine black leaders were charged with "subversion by intent." The Supreme Court of South Africa wanted to prove that the idea of equal rights was dangerous to the safety of the public. The court, merely a tool of the government, declared that the nine black leaders were guilty and sentenced them to five years of imprisonment. The court's ruling also made it a crime for any black to speak out against white rule.

Biko had been arrested by the Security Police on several occasions. He was usually made the scapegoat whenever there was a riot involving blacks but because he was so popular with the blacks he was never imprisoned for very long. After Biko's testimony at the trial had reached the outside world, many countries began to put pressure on the South African government to end apartheid. The South African government thought Biko was becoming too powerful and decided to stop him.

On Aug. 18, 1977, Biko was arrested for breaking his banning order when he was found outside of King William's Town. On Sept. 6 he was taken to Room 619 of the police station in Port Elizabeth. His hands and legs were chained to a grille and he was "interrogated" for 22 hours. During the "interrogation" he was beaten and tortured until he lapsed into a coma. Biko died six days later.

More than 20,000 people attended the funeral of Stephen Biko. Around the world millions of people mourned the death of this great man. Although Biko never advocated violence, his death triggered some of the bloodiest riots South Africa had ever seen. Biko was not the first man to die because of apartheid. Nor was he the last.

In the past year alone over 600 blacks in South Africa have been killed. As you are reading this article it is likely that another man is being beaten or killed simply because he is black and wants to be treated like any other man.

The plight of Stephen Biko and other South Africans has affected people across the world. There are many organizations in the United States dedicated to stopping apartheid. This week, eight years after Biko's death, Students Against Apartheid has become a recognized student organization at Texas A&M.

Our country was founded on the idea that all men are created equal. In South Africa all men are not being treated as equals. It is our duty as freedom-loving Americans to stop apartheid. We have the power — economic power — to stop apartheid. Because South Africa is one of the world's richest sources of gold and diamonds we have been somewhat reluctant to wield that power. But there are things that are more important than gold and diamonds: freedom and human life.

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

Mail Call

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.

Welcome from Jackie

EDITOR:

With fall approaching, and the new school year already here, let me be among the first to welcome all students to Texas A&M.

A group of you are arriving on the campus for the first time while many of you are returning to continue your studies. To the freshmen, I want to be one of the first to congratulate you on the choice of such an excellent academic institution. All of us in the athletic department consider it a great privilege to be associated with a university that prides itself on such fine academic and athletic standards.

We want you to know that we appreciate your great support for our athletic program. In fact, a national survey recently concluded that Texas A&M was second in the nation in 1984 in student football tickets sold for home football games. We appreciate this kind of support.

When you look at everything involved, it is doubtful to me that any university in this nation has a student body that has taken such an active role in supporting their school. It is something that no one in the athletic department takes lightly; rather, we feel it is something to be proud of and to boast about.

Again, welcome to the campus, we are glad you are here. See you at the games.

Jackie Sherrill
Head Football Coach
and Athletic Director

Clearing the record

EDITOR:

I am writing concerning the article printed in your back-to-school issue of September 2 on the Placement Center. While we certainly appreciate the publicity, and the information in the article was generally correct, there were some items that were inaccurate and need to be corrected.

1. The article states that our alumni service provides registrants with lists of upcoming interviews. This is not the case. We have an alumni service which includes resume referrals and an alumni job bulletin, but alumni do not generally take part in on-campus interviews. A few alumni who remain in town are granted limited access to interviews for only one semester after graduation. They must discuss their situation with a

member of our professional staff, and the points they have remaining at graduation have nothing to do with their eligibility for Placement Center services.

2. The article states that we have employment opportunities posted in binders in our library. So far so good. These postings are for student information, and students apply directly to the employer. The article states that the employer may come to campus to interview if sufficient applications are received. This is not the case.

3. Major firms spend a large amount of money on their college recruiting programs in order to assure themselves access to the most qualified student applicants. That sounds a little different than "The large firms come here ready to spend big bucks," which was a quote in the article. I might have said it that way, but I sure hope not!

As all this suggests, the Placement Center has a wide variety of services, and attempts to assist students as well as alumni in their job search. To find out what service is best for you, and the exact mechanics of how it all works, I would suggest that you attend one of our orientation sessions advertised in *The Battalion*.

Judith L. Vulliet
Assistant Director
Texas A&M Career Planning
and Placement Center

Unfair coverage

EDITOR:

After reading the two articles on Sept. 3 and 4 on the anti-pornography rally and the gay protest to the Texas Sodomy Law, I thought the coverage was typical anti-Falwell.

First of all, the anti-pornography rally was headed by the National Federation for Decency (NFD), not Jerry Falwell (as the article implies). There were many other speakers other than Falwell. Rather than focus on what these speakers said, and their cause, which I believe is worthy (hopefully you agree), over half the article dwells on Falwell and South Africa.

Instead of quoting anything the speakers said, the article dwells on Falwell calling Bishop Tutu a "phony" and angry reactions to that by anti-Falwell protesters. Nowhere in this article was a quote, from any of the other 5 speakers, on what this rally hoped to accomplish.

On the other side of the coin is the "Gays Angry" article on Sept. 4. Com-

Mail Call

plete coverage is given to the gays, who had less than half as many protesters as did the NFD. Their cause was fully explained and numerous quotations given by the leaders and speakers.

Nobody was interviewed who opposed the gays and wanted to uphold the Texas Sodomy Law.

Then, there is Don Eastman, pastor of a large gay church in Dallas, who says in the article "tradition is wrong — let's change tradition." Each year at his church, a "Holy Ghost" convention is held, where gay "delegates" meet. Upon entering, each delegate is given two

"boy" magazines and a list of gay bars. How credible is a man such as this?

In contrasting these two articles, one can see the apparent belittlement of the anti-pornography cause and the sympathetic treatment given to gay protesters. Hopefully, *The Battalion* will give more fair treatment to a cause such as this in the future.

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Graduate Student M.E

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