

OPINION

TDC help wanted: Experience needed

The problem of violence in Texas prisons does not have an easy solution. In the past few years killings and beatings behind bars have increased and show no signs of declining in the years to come.

Gov. Mark White said Thursday he supports tougher measures to reduce violence in state prisons, including placing restrictions on mail between inmates. Prison officials suspect inmates have been plotting prison violence through the mails.

In 1985, inmate violence — especially gang-related incidents — has been responsible for 175 inmate attacks. Twenty-two inmates have been killed this year.

But "tougher restrictions" can't conceal the real problem which faces the Texas Department of Corrections. The state-imposed regulations aimed at making prisons more constitutional required the TDC to increase the inmate-guard ratio to 6-to-1.

Guards with no previous law-enforcement experience were hired, run through a three-week training program and put to work. Many will admit they have inadequate training.

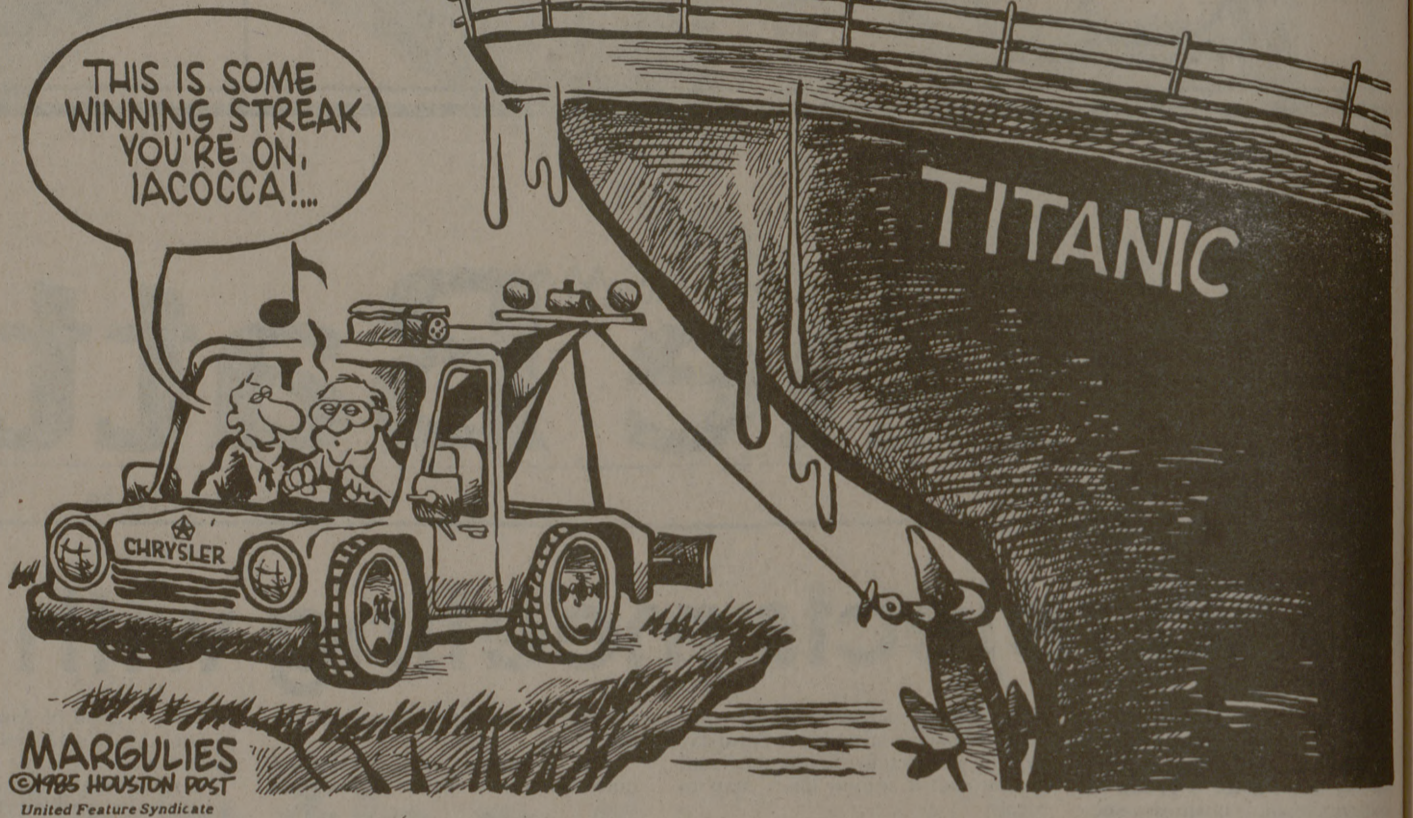
Meanwhile, inmate violence is rising steadily and even guards themselves are becoming involved in illegal activities such as drug sales to prisoners.

Upgrading the conditions in Texas prisons was a necessary move, but in doing so the hiring standards for guards were lowered. The surge in inmate violence seems to be a result of inexperienced guards rather than lax policies.

Prison violence will not decrease with stricter regulations. Each time the TDC has imposed rules aimed at limiting prisoners' access to potential weapons, the inmates find new ways to make weapons.

Without more qualified help, Texas prisons will continue to be a battleground for gang warfare.

The Battalion Editorial Board



Subscription film series offers foreign movies as art form

Three weeks ago a new theater opened in College Station. Those of us who enjoy seeing good quality films were hoping that the new theater would start showing some good quality films. We were disappointed.



Karl Pallmeyer

I'm sure that there are a few other film fans who would much rather see Francois Truffaut's "Jules and Jim," Ingmar Bergman's "Seventh Seal," Luis Bunuel's "An Andalusian Dog," Federico Fellini's "8 1/2," Michelangelo Antonioni's "Blow Up" or Sergei Eisenstein's "Potemkin" than "Rambo: First Blood II," "Fright Night," "Return of the Living Dead," "St. Elmo's Fire" or "Godzilla 1985." The theaters in College Station and Bryan don't offer much choice. But there is an alternative.

In the fall of 1984 Larry Hickman, an associate professor in the philosophy department, started the Alternative Cinema subscription film series. This fall Alternative Cinema, now in its third

season, will be showing 10 classic foreign films including Marcel Carne's "Children of Paradise," Ingmar Bergman's "Virgin Spring," Jean Cocteau's "Beauty and the Beast," Luis Bunuel's "That Obscure Object of Desire" and Leontine Sagan's "Maedchen in Uniform."

Alternative Cinema differs from Aggie Cinema's Sunday International Film Series in that Alternative Cinema is available to everyone while Aggie Cinema is only available to the students and faculty of Texas A&M. For the most part Aggie Cinema tries to bring in huge audiences by showing the most popular foreign films made in the past ten years.

Alternative Cinema, which relies on subscriptions instead of box office sales, shows the older foreign films considered to be classics. Alternative Cinema is not trying to compete with Aggie Cinema. By showing films that preceded and influenced later movies, the Alternative Cinema films compliment the films Aggie Cinema is showing.

Despite most of the crap coming out of Hollywood, film is a valuable art form. During its relatively short history, film has been used to ask important questions and provide intuitive answers about mankind and the world he lives

in. There have been many film masterpieces, just as da Vinci's Mona Lisa is a masterpiece of art, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is a masterpiece of music and Shakespeare's "Hamlet" is a masterpiece of literature.

Film is often a more accessible art form than painting, music or literature. Film combines aspects of painting, music, literature, history, sociology, psychology and philosophy. A well-educated person should know something about film as well as painting, music, literature, history, sociology, psychology and philosophy. A person should become "film literate." Many schools offer degrees in filmmaking and history. Even Texas A&M offers courses in the history, philosophy and social aspects of film.

Alternative Cinema films are shown at 8 p.m. on Tuesdays at the Architecture Auditorium. Seating is limited to 110 persons but many subscriptions are still available. Contact Larry Hickman at the Department of Philosophy for more information.

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

Letter to the Readers

What we did this weekend

This is a new column that we hope will allow us, the editors at The Battalion, to communicate more effectively with you, the readers.

Rhonda Snider
Editor

In this column, we will attempt to answer questions, discuss our policies and keep you updated on happenings at The Battalion.

We, at The Battalion, want to make our newspaper the best it can be. We are making an effort this semester to learn more about how we can do a better job at getting well-written, accurate news to the campus.

To give The Battalion staff a better perspective on how the campus and community perceive the newspaper and its contents, we invited representatives from major organizations to give us their views on The Battalion.

During a seminar Saturday, they told us what we do wrong and how we can improve. We received some valid criticism, but we also received some praise. One seminar participant gave us an "A minus" for overall effort. Another speaker gave us a "B."

The seminar was like a good workout: it hurt, but the results of what happened Saturday will be great. We learned our weaknesses and strengths. We know we have plenty of room for improvement. But most importantly, we had a chance to meet and hear a group of people who are concerned about what we are doing here.

Among those who sacrificed part of their Saturday morning to talk to us were Col. Donald Burton, commandant of the Corps; Wayne Stark, special assistant to the president; Gary Halter, mayor of College Station; Houston Chronicle reporter Roy Bragg; Student Body President Sean Royall; Tom Turbiville, sports information director; Bob Wiatt, director of security and traffic; Fritz Lanham, Eagle features editor; Dr. John Koldus, vice president for student services; and several journalism professors.

These prominent people gave us a variety of views of The Battalion. Student Government has had a very negative view of The Battalion in the past, Royall said.

Some administrators are scared of us, Koldus said, because they've been "burned" in the past.

Halter said the community probably has little or no opinion at all of us because they seldom see the newspaper.

At the seminar we learned, not only how we are perceived, but also what we can do to improve. Most of the tips were suggestions we've heard before, but needed to be reminded of again.

One of the most important things that came out of the sessions was learning the difficulties that some administrators face in their jobs. Often we, as students, see things only as they affect us.

For instance, Wiatt reminded us, as he paced about the seminar room reading a letter from an irate staff member, that the faculty and staff are as upset about the parking situation as students are.

Koldus reminded us that when administrators won't release information, it's not necessarily that they are trying to cover up something. It could be that the issue is involved in a legal battle or is a discipline case and they cannot release the information.

Royall reminded us that Student Government and The Battalion should think of each other as students and not as institutions.

We also learned some unexpected bits of trivia. We learned:

- President Frank Vandiver's car has been towed three times in the recent past by the police department.
- The U.S. Army is the largest employer of Texas A&M graduates.
- Halter says he has given one Eagle reporter permission to make up quotes and attribute them to him because Halter says he was doing it already.
- Koldus generally works from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays.
- About 450 people are involved in Student Government.
- Football players are punished for missing classes and are regularly tested for traces of drugs in their bodies.

The seminar was a success because it helped us get a better view of ourselves and the consequences of our actions. Knowing that, we can continue to improve and make The Battalion better.

Rhonda Snider is editor of 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.

Reagan's cancer — just hemorrhoids?

EDITOR:

Several weeks ago our elderly President was hospitalized for the removal of a cancerous growth in his intestinal tract — major surgery which no doubt required an abdominal incision, since he was placed under anesthesia. During this time his authority was transferred to Vice President George Bush, by a circuitous route in direct violation of the legal processes stipulated by Constitutional principles.

In four short days after that abdominal surgery, President Reagan was back up on his feet — as spry and vigorous as ever. Quite a miraculous recovery, for a man of his advanced age. I doubt if even a man in his prime could recover so quickly — much less be able to ride horseback three short weeks after such surgery, while ostensibly recuperating!

If you ask me, I'd say the President was hospitalized and operated on for nothing more than the removal of a hemorrhoid or two — and not for major surgery.

If such is indeed the case — as the facts would seem to indicate — then he was anesthetized under false pretenses, as indeed the President is currently vacationing away from Washington under similar pretenses, of

which — as indicated by the recent flap over apartheid, which he was abysmally informed about by his advisors — he is probably not aware.

William H. Clark

Why lot 71 is empty

EDITOR:

In Wednesday's Batt Bob Wiatt whines that no one is using lot 71 near the Meat Science Center because no one wants to park there. Take a look at the bus service to that area and you'll see why.

The shuttle buses, 99 percent of which are not air conditioned, Bob, don't make a stop coming and going to that area. The Academic bus will pick you up at Kleberg and take you on a 20-minute ride to Zachry or Blocker. If you want to get back to that spot you have to catch the Agronomy Road bus somewhere near the Coke Building and take a 20-minute tour of the vet school.

In all fairness, the Academic bus will drop you off close, if you call 80 yards close. This may not seem like much, but wait until the cold and rain get here.

Surely, the bus operation people could modify the route or maybe even put in a new route that covers the heavy-traffic areas a little better. Surely... but probably not.

David Baca

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Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Conference

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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 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.

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 \$35 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) 845-3316. 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