

Opinion

Put holiday season back in its place

On most calendars Christmas is still Dec. 25. But apparently some local merchants feel the Christmas season begins in October.

Commercial exploitation of any sacred holiday is sad.

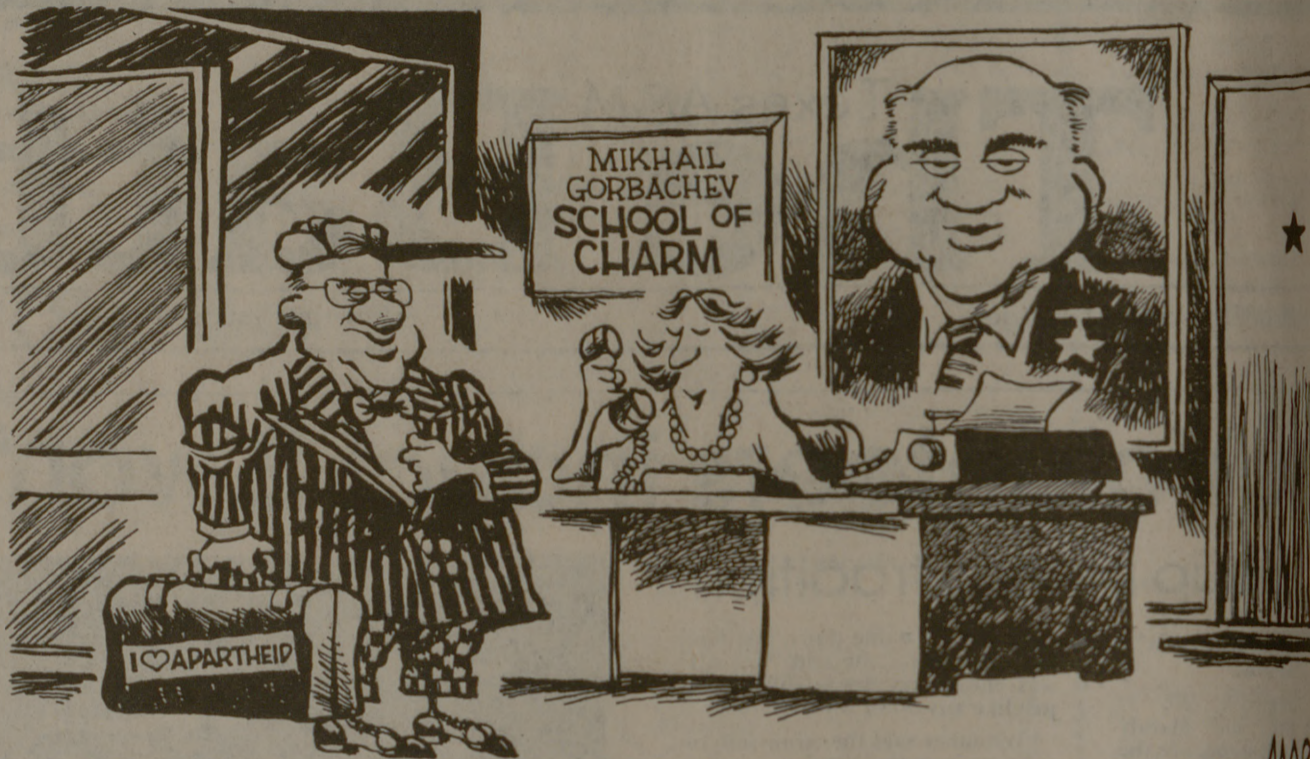
We haven't gotten past trick-or-treating or eating turkey and yet several local stores already are displaying Christmas trees, ornaments, stockings and artificial Santas and reindeer. Radio spots and advertising mailouts invite us to "shop early" and to "buy your Christmas presents now."

Most people enjoy getting into the Christmas spirit during the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas day. But attempting to stretch the Christmas season to the first of October is ridiculous. Next year it may be August or September.

We don't argue with the merchants' right of free enterprise. However, this freedom should not be used to "sale" a religious celebration.

Let's keep the holy in holiday. Let's celebrate Christmas at Christmas time.

The Battalion Editorial Board



"A PRESIDENT BOTHA TO SEE YOU ..."

Happy Divorce!

Breaking vows can be as joyous as taking them

Last month I received an invitation to attend a party celebrating the divorce of some good friends.



John Hallett

Mr. and Mrs. N. O. Love request the honor of your presence at the Woe-is-me County Courthouse, 3rd District Court, at 3:30 p.m. Friday, September 28, 1985, to witness the termination of 15 years of miserable matrimony.

Reception to follow at the Watering Hole, 96 East Kinsey.

Unsure of what to bring and how to dress, I asked one of the reception's planners about divorce party etiquette.

"Whale, ah guess it ain't much different than a weddin' reception 'cept that they's be gettin' dee-voiced 'stedda gettin' hitched. An' since the party's gonna be at the "Hole," I 'magine ya don't hafta get decked out none . . . butcha bring geefs jes' like et weddins an' such."

"What kind of gifts?" I queried.

"Whale, ya know . . . ah guess jes' 'bout anythin' ya like, really. They's gonna be needin' plenty since they's a's-plittin'."

"Thanks," I responded not anymore enlightened than before.

Just what do you give to an estranged couple? Certainly not his 'n hers bath towels or satin bed sheets.

Being a pragmatic kind of guy I arrived at the party (I decided to bypass the court proceedings) bearing gifts for the 'pair-no-more' — a book entitled "How to Train Men" for the former missus and a helpful guide called "How to Pick Up Women," a must for bachelors (the cover was slightly crinkled, I admit to flipping through it the night before).

Over the entrance to the Watering Hole was a sign that read: No Guns Allowed. "Must be a tough crowd — I hope this doesn't turn into a family feud," I thought out loud as I meandered in.

To my surprise, in the middle of the barroom dance floor was an arch like the kind you might see at a garden wedding except it was decorated with dead

flowers. I asked around and found that it was for the divorce ceremony.

"Won't they make it official at the courthouse?" I inquired.

"Whale, yes'n'no," replied the same insightful person who was so helpful with my questions about proper party etiquette.

"What do you mean by that? I queried.

"Ah was gettin' to et, ef ya'd give me a chance now. Yea, they's gettin' de-voiced at the courthouse an' then they's a comin' here an' they's gonna brang Judge Stone with 'em."

Great, I thought, it's going to be a scene right out of "Night Court."

"An' when they git here, they's gonna have a ceremony kinda like a weddin' with your Honor precidin'."

"Thanks."

"Don't mention et."

Seeing that it was only 3:15 I headed to the bar to down a few belts before the festivities began. I was already getting into a somber mood. Someone had

picked out "Melancholy Baby," "The Way We Were" and "You Don't Bring Me Flowers" on the jukebox. I thought the party was supposed to cheer up the litigants so I went over to the jukebox and selected "The Bitch Is Back." Now that's more like it, I thought.

About five minutes later the divorce party entered the premises. Nick and Emily Zelda (the guests of honor) strode to the arch.

Judge Stone stood several steps behind the arch holding a lit candle. When Nick and Emily Zelda reached the arch he handed the candle to the ex-Loves.

"The candle that Nick and Emily Zelda are holding, and I must admit they are showing admirable restraint, represents the life they led as man and wife. The two candles before them represent their separate lives . . ."

A minor ruckus began at this point when Nick and Emily Zelda tugged on the single candle trying to light his or her candle first.

Emily Zelda finally gave in. "I waited this long so I guess I can wait another minute you (expletives deleted) . . ."

After the candles were lit, Judge Stone continued.

"Do you Emily Zelda take your lawful ex, to shun and ignore his death does you in?"

"I do."

"Do you Nick promise to pay child support until your youngest child reaches 18?"

"Say again?"

"I said," Judge Stone repeated, "Do you Nick promise to pay child support until your youngest child reaches 18?"

"Wait a minute, who said anything about child support?" Nick demanded.

"It's all here in the papers so you calm down or I hold you for contempt. Now let me have the rings please, and Emily Zelda proceeded to place their wedding rings.

Judge Stone turned to the guests and announced "May I present Nick Love and Ms. Emily Zelda Stone."

John Hallett is a senior political science major, a columnist and Newsletter for The Battalion.

Health center should take better care of students

Last year, the A.P. Beutel Health Center treated 70 people for injuries received during preparations for bonfire. If we no longer had bonfire the health center would not have to treat those injuries. If no one at Texas A&M had sex then the health center would not have to provide birth control services. If there were no women at Texas A&M then the health center would no longer have to provide gynecological examinations.



Karl Pallmeyer

Getting rid of bonfire would be stupid. Getting rid of sex would be impossible. Getting rid of women would be illegal. The health center will treat bonfire injuries but will not provide birth control services or gynecological examinations. That's discrimination.

On Sept. 1 the health center stopped giving physical examinations and prescriptions for birth control pills. Dr. Claude Goswick, director of the health center, said the center is so understaffed and overworked that it can no longer afford provide these "routine" services. Goswick said that this was a logical place for the chop.

Due to this "logical chop," more than 14,000 women attending Texas A&M are being denied the right to see a gynecologist and students who are sexually

active, both female and male, can no longer get prescriptions for birth control pills.

Goswick said that the purpose of the health center is to take care of illnesses and injuries. The purpose of a student health center should be to provide for the health care needs for students. If the health center would practice preventive medicine, they might not have to take care of as many cases. It's a lot easier to prevent a disease than it is to cure it.

Doctors recommend that women over 18 should see a gynecologist at least once a year to check for cancer of the ovaries, breasts, cervix and various other problems such as cysts. Gynecological examinations are an important health care need of all women students at Texas A&M.

All students pay a \$15 fee each semester for health center services. Before the health center did away with the service, women having gynecological examinations would have to pay an additional \$17 for lab fees. Most gynecologists in the Bryan-College Station area charge about \$50 for the examination plus lab fees up to \$25. It is ridiculous to require women students to pay \$15 a semester so that the health center can tell them they have to go pay a gynecologist \$75.

Despite what some people choose to believe, many college students are sexually active. To prevent unwanted pregnancies, some form of birth control should be available to these students. Birth control is the responsibility of the couple, not just the female partner. Birth control services are an important health care need of students at Texas A&M.

The health center is frequently called the "quack shack" instead of the A.P. Beutel Health Center — apparently there is a general dissatisfaction with the quality of services offered . . . Tonight at 8:30 a group of concerned students will meet at the MSC Main Lounge to discuss what we as students can do to get better care from our health center.

Goswick said one of the reasons examinations for birth control were discontinued was because some doctors prefer not to give prescriptions for birth control. He said that a woman shouldn't want a prescription from a doctor who doesn't believe she should have it. On the other hand, many doctors do prefer to prescribe birth control devices and women should have the opportunity to go to another doctor for another opinion.

If a doctor doesn't want to prescribe birth control for medical reasons, his decision should be respected due to his expertise on the matter. But if a doctor refuses to prescribe birth control for moral reasons, it would be like a doctor

refusing to treat a car crash victim because he doesn't like wreckless drivers.

The idea that the availability of birth control devices only promotes premarital sex is the height of stupidity. Premarital sex has existed much longer than birth control devices, and many married couples also use some form of birth control. Because so many people find abortion morally repulsive they should promote the use of birth control to prevent the unwanted pregnancies that sometimes result in abortion.

The A.P. Beutel Health Center, being the student's health center, should take better care of the students at Texas A&M. By discontinuing gynecological examinations and birth control services, the health center is not taking good care of the students. The health center is frequently called the "quack shack" instead of the A.P. Beutel Health Center — apparently there is a general dissatisfaction with the quality of services offered.

The health center, for the most part, is funded by the \$15 health center service the students pay each semester. Since the money comes from the students, the students should have some say in how their money is spent.

Tonight at 8:30 a group of concerned students will meet at the MSC Main

Lounge to discuss what we as students can do to get better care from health center. Let your voice be heard.

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