

# Opinion

## A letter for every occasion



John Hallett

A friend recently received a letter from President Reagan congratulating him on being selected as Sanitary Engineer of the Year by the local affiliate of the American Union of Sanitary Workers.

Dear Billy Bob McCaskill,

Well, here I go again but I just can't help myself. I couldn't resist taking time away from preparation for the summit to congratulate you. Sometimes America's vital security interests must be cast aside to recognize citizens such as yourself. It pleases me to know that there are still a few good men out there in our great country who aren't afraid to get their hands dirty.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely yours,  
Ronald Reagan

P.S. We could really use a reliable garbage man like you here in Washington. Just last week the trashman forgot to stop by the White House. Let me tell you, it certainly was embarrassing to show Chuck and Di around the place with all that mess piled up. Nancy nearly had a heart attack.

R.R.

Needless to say, Billy Bob was happier than a fox in a chicken coup. Keeping in the spirit of the president's graciousness, here are a few suggested congratulations the White House may have overlooked:

Upon checking out from the hospital, the newly expanded family would be greeted with their complimentary gift for the new-born, a birth certificate and a letter from the president.

Dear new parent(s),

Congratulations on your new addition to the family. Statistics show that every new-born child is born nearly \$10,000 in debt, taking into consideration the current federal budget deficit.

Please rest assured that I am doing everything possible to ensure that that debt does not become insurmountable for your son or daughter.

I know I can count on your continued support.

Sincerely yours,  
Ronald Reagan

P.S. Enclosed is a form to make tax-free contributions to pay off the national debt. Won't you take the time to invest in your child's future?

At commencement, to your astonishment you find that the piece of paper with the ribbon tied around it isn't blank, it's a letter from the president.

Dear graduate,

Congratulations, you finally made it! I know at times it seemed as if you may not make it this far, but you did and I admire your fortitude and perseverance.

I have worked hard to guarantee that your generation will live long and prosper at the expense of others who are not as fortunate as you.

Once again, congratulations — may all your dreams come true.

Sincerely yours,

Ronald Reagan  
P.S. Don't default on your government loans. Support Reaganomics.

And to ensure that no homesick serviceman goes without a letter at mailcall — here's Ronnie.

Dear new enlistee,

Thank you for joining the armed services.

The decision to defend your country against the Evil Empire is a noble one, indeed. However, it is with great sadness, that I must acknowledge there are few true patriots such as yourself left in our country today.

I know I can sleep peacefully at night with young men such as yourself protecting me.

Respectfully yours,  
Ronald Reagan  
Commander-in-Chief.

The president also could congratulate convicts granted parole on their newfound freedom, teenagers who get their drivers licenses, newlyweds, octogenarians, and couples celebrating their golden anniversaries, to name a few.

In short, no one's life would be complete without recognition from the nation's most exalted politician. But in this time of spreading communicable diseases, fast foods and computers, maybe there is something to be said for keeping a low profile.

Don't look now, the "Great Communicator" may be watching you. The letter may already be in the mail — with postage due.

John Hallett is a senior political science major, a columnist and News Editor 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.

### Show a little class

EDITOR:

I am amazed and appalled at the decision of Student Government to hold a legs contest to raise money for United Way.

Surely an organization representing a student body as large and diverse as Texas A&M's could have thought of other means of fundraising.

Legs contests are degrading to men and women alike. I don't care if it is "for a good cause" — it's tacky.

A legs contest is a poor choice for raising money for a charity. It is an excellent choice for proving the insensitivity of our elected representatives.

Are there no women (or men) in Student Government who care enough to vote against something this exploitative?

Yes, I know the contest is also open to men or "anything else with cute legs," but the point is that men (or anything else) are not exploited as women, especially on this campus.

Please, Student Government, remember who and what you are representing. If you are working toward a world-class University let's show a little class.

Stacey Roberts

### Couldn't have said it better myself

EDITOR:

As offensive as this may seem to the scores of traditionoholics strutting self-righteously about the campus, I simply must express my amens toward Karl Pallmeyer for having the courage to offer an alternate view of Texas A&M traditions in his column appearing in last Wednesday's Battalion. I am sure his sarcastic portrayal of tradition was found to be just as refreshing to my fellow "tradition-shock" suffering Aggies as it was to myself.

I would guess that Karl has had his share of bad experiences with these hard-core tradition fanatics. Here are two of the many experiences I have had in my two-month stay at A&M:

I was sternly reprimanded by an obnoxious person with a conspicuously shaved head for trying to park my bicycle in the bike racks around the MSC in accordance to University rules. Unfortunately, my stupidity did not allow me to realize that the section of mud I had to cross to get to the only available bike racks might be considered part of the MSC grass by a holier-than-thou, power hungry traditionalist.

While expressing my displeasure at an official's call during the A&M-SMU game, a young lady in front of me turned around, glared into my eyes and snarled, "Good Ags don't boo!"

Maybe these and the many other confrontations I've had with traditions in only two months seem perfectly reasonable to some of The Battalion's readers. And maybe the handful of girls who responded to Karl's Nov. 6 column with the painfully dramatic and awe-striking questions, "Why did you come to A&M?" think I should take Highway 6 or whatever.

Well, sorry to disappoint you, but I'm not leaving A&M because I love it here. I love the people, I'll stand up all day to support our team, and I think midnight yells are a blast. Now if only we can turn down the volume of the brow-beating, closed-minded traditionalists, I won't have any reasons to write letters to the editor.

I think Karl Pallmeyer's sarcastic column on Nov. 6 and the follow-up on Nov. 8 expressed my views perfectly. Perhaps the readers who cringe at the words "Karl Pallmeyer" as if it were a dirty word should open their minds to the deeper meaning of his column and make A&M a better, friendlier place.

Greg Deans '88

### Missing the message

EDITOR:

I am writing in response to Brian Koontz's letter concerning MSC Great Issues' presentation of the program entitled "Does Love Prevail Over Hate?" featuring Auschwitz survivor Marc Berkowitz.

Koontz states "Preventing a massacre such as the Holocaust through public education and awareness is one thing." And it's one thing that MSC Great Issues intended as the purpose of the program.

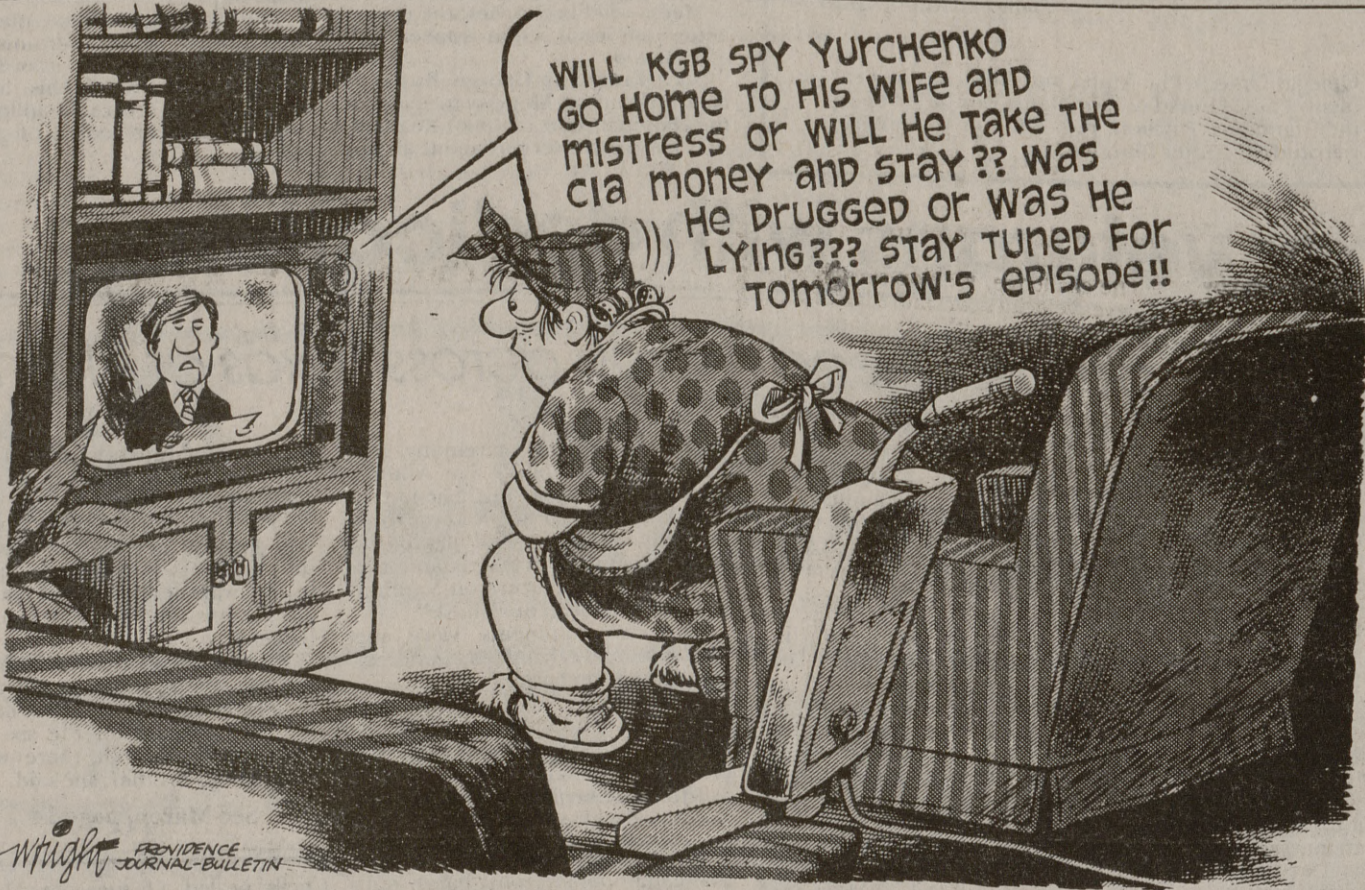
Koontz belittles the committee for charging \$1 to attend this program. He must assume that we are attempting to profit by sensationalizing such a tragedy. If he would have inquired further he would have realized that Great Issues has never profited from a program. What we do charge merely serves to reduce our losses on each presentation so that we may present one more program this year that addresses some other interest of the Texas A&M students and faculty.

Since Berkowitz received a standing ovation from an over-capacity crowd, we feel we have not failed in this instance to provide a program that the campus was interested in. Perhaps we need to hear from people who actually attended the program.

As for the desire to "change history" which Koontz accuses Berkowitz of possessing, it does not exist. Not once in his presentation did he voice any intent that could be remotely construed as a wish to change history. Neither did this incredibly gentle man, with whom we had the privilege to spend the better part of two days, ever convey anything that could be interpreted as "feelings of vengeance."

If anyone is interested in having a voice in choosing the programs Great Issues presents, we have open membership and encourage all interested students to drop by 216 MSC and become involved.

Jim Schicker, MSC Great Issues Chairman  
Jerry Rosiek, Vice Chairman for Programming



## More to apartheid than capitalism vs. communism

I would like to thank J. Byron Schlomach for his Oct. 31 guest column on human rights and apartheid in South Africa. As the president for Students Against Apartheid I must respond to his statements.

Norman Muraya  
Guest Columnist

Schlomach states that "black-on-black oppression" in many African nations is "worse than the white-on-black oppression in South Africa." Why is it then that the United Nations has not condemned all those other nations in Africa, like it has done many times against South Africa?

Because no other nation in the world during the last 40 years has so consistently violated human rights as South Africa. No other country on the African continent has a constitution and government which excludes by law the rights and needs of over 70 percent of the population.

The second mistake Schlomach makes is stating that blacks in South Africa are there as "migrants" from neighboring countries escaping persecution from their own black leaders or escaping intertribal strife. Every black in South Africa is a descendant of one of the many ethnic population groups that have been living or migrating across southern Africa for the last thousand years.

Schlomach also mentions that many blacks have jobs in South Africa. True, but he did not mention that they make about one-seventh of what a white would make in the same occupation. Indexed for inflation, black wages have not risen since 1911.

After all, the largest concentration of natural resources on the continent is located in South Africa and blacks will not simply jump into the ocean and allow the Apart-Hate regime to hoard all the gold and diamonds.

Schlomach continues by stating that those opposed to apartheid are only liberals (Jesse Jackson, Edward Kennedy and Desmond Tutu) who are "sucking up to the Russians on the one hand while fomenting revolution and fanning the flames in South Africa on the other."

Both Republican and Democratic Congressmen have been arrested protesting apartheid in front of the South African Embassy in Washington, D.C. Both American political parties are interested in democracy and human rights, and President Reagan has instituted economic sanctions against the repressive regime in South Africa. Finally, Bishop Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his nonviolent advocacy at a time when his family and relatives were being violently brutalized by the regime in Pretoria.

Locally, anti-apartheid leaders con-

ducted a most peaceful march on National Anti-Apartheid Day, Oct. 11, one in which over 200 citizens walked silently across campus.

For some strange reason Schlomach feels that those who oppose apartheid also are pro-Russian. This is nonsense. Those who detest human rights violations in South Africa also detest them in any nation.

The issue, however, is not the Soviet Union, but South Africa, and both the United States and the Soviet Union have publicly condemned the government of South Africa.

I resent that Schlomach has attempted to reduce human rights violations to the old tired debate of communism versus capitalism. Anti-apartheiders, especially those who advocate divestment, are capitalists who are speaking as consumers, tax- and tuition-payers. We do not want our money supporting statutory race discrimination wherever it may exist. In particular, we do not want our money funding an apartheid regime which denies 24 million black citizens political and economic rights, one which has murdered over 750 blacks during the last thirteen months.

Norman Muraya is president of Students Against Apartheid

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