

# Opinion

## Music masterpieces a phone call away

There was a time when, if you wanted to hear good music, you put on a record or attended a concert. Now all you have to do is pick up the telephone and dial an institution. As soon as they put you on HOLD you can enjoy the great masterpieces of all time.



Art Buchwald

"I can take him or leave him. My problem with Stravinsky is that when you have the telephone up to your ear, he can blow you out of the booth. When I'm waiting to speak to someone on the phone I prefer a Chopin sonata."

"If I wanted to hear some good music what company would you suggest I dial?"

"American Express has excellent taste. If you call their credit card complaint department they will pipe in the 'Blue Danube.'"

"That's no big deal. My gas company plays the 'Blue Danube' every time they put me on hold."

"The difference is American Express pipes theirs in live from Vienna."

He then explained to me what was going on. "In the beginning most firms didn't pay much attention to the music they played. But as they kept cutting personnel, there were fewer employees to answer the phone. So with a smaller staff the companies had to play longer pieces. The days of piping in 'Begin the Beguine' are over. The average wait for a car rental agency to take your call now is at least a Beethoven symphony."

"I didn't realize so much thinking went into institutional answering services."

"I'll prove it to you," Stuart said. "I'm going to dial the IRS. They always put you on HOLD."

He handed the receiver to me. I listened and then said, "I don't believe it. The IRS is playing Wagner's 'Götterdämmerung.'"

"Why are you surprised?"

"It's a funeral march."

"What did you expect — 'Happy Days Are Here Again'?"

Art Buchwald is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate.

A big fan of this type of music is Stuart Brotman. He maintains the only way you can really appreciate the classics is to be left hanging on the line waiting for a live person to talk to you.

"Once you listen to Mozart on the phone you never want to hear him live again," Stuart said.

"I didn't know you could get Mozart on the telephone," I said.

"You'd be surprised what you can get," he said. "The other day I called to make an airline reservation to Atlanta and was plugged into Handel's 'Messiah.'"

"Is 'Messiah' a favorite of yours?"

"It wasn't. But I had to wait so long that now I know the lyrics by heart."

"What has been the most memorable music ever played for you on the phone?" I asked Stuart.

"I once dialed Sears Roebuck about a lawn mower and they immediately switched me to 'Aida.' At the finish I lost my head and started shouting 'Encore! Encore!' and the clerk hung up on me."

"I've called Sears many times and I've never heard Verdi."

"They only play him during Columbus Day sales," Stuart said.

"How do you feel about Stravinsky?"

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**MARGULIES**  
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## Abortion Difference between life and existence

Glenn Murtha

Wednesday was the 13th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision which legalized abortion nationwide. Many people have the misconception that abortion was not legal anywhere in the United States before the decision, but this is not true. Abortion was legal primarily in more liberal northern and western states, illegal in more conservative southern states.

The case was initiated by a Texas woman named Roe. Names used in cases are sometimes pseudonyms to protect the participants. Wade was and is presently the Dallas County District Attorney.

Roe became pregnant and decided to terminate her pregnancy. She visited various doctors to discover if any would perform an abortion but was turned down. Her only other option was to travel to a state where abortion was legal or to Mexico where surgical procedures were often unsafe. During this time, a flight left Love Field in Dallas every Saturday morning primarily carrying pregnant women to California to have abortions performed. Other women opted to travel to Mexico.

Roe filed a lawsuit claiming that the state of Texas violated her right to terminate her pregnancy. She could not afford to travel to another state and thus,

could not have an abortion legally performed. The law needlessly discriminated against women who could not afford the cost of travel.

The case eventually reached the U.S. Supreme Court. After examining testimony from medical, women's and religious groups, the court reached a decision. The court stated, in effect, that because various groups could not completely agree as to when life began and to the morality of abortion, the decision to terminate a pregnancy should lie with the individual.

Thus, state laws which prevented abortion were declared unconstitutional for violating a woman's right to privacy, her ability to freely make a decision without interference from the government.

Women should possess the right to have an abortion. I sympathize with the cause of anti-abortionists. I believe that existence begins with conception, though not necessarily life. There is more to life than just physical existence, namely the quality of life. Simply claiming that abortion is wrong, period, is not enough. Other issues must be addressed.

What about poverty? Judging from my circumstances, if I were a woman I could adequately provide for a new life. I have never known a life of poverty and have never experienced the misery which accompanies it.

Suppose that a woman faced an unexpected pregnancy and could not afford to leave work to carry her pregnancy term. Would you be willing to provide financial support so that she could carry her pregnancy to term?

And what if she did have her child yet had no means to support it? Would you be willing to provide support?

What about adoption? Easier than done. An emotional attachment quickly develops between mother and child. Many women recognize this and the potential problem of parting with the child after its birth.

What about handicapped children? Would it be fair to bring a severely mentally or physically handicapped child into the world? Would it be fair to anyone to live this type of existence? What about rape and incest? Would it be fair to force a woman to have a child conceived in hate? Rape and incest are degrading experiences. A pregnancy resulting from these acts may serve as a reminder to the degradation.

Abortion is a difficult decision to make and a difficult issue to resolve. The fact that strong differences of opinion exist indicates no absolute right or wrong. I could not bring a child into the world to face a life of misery. You call life may be no life at all.

Glenn Murtha is a senior political science major and a columnist for *The Battalion*.



## Mail Call

### Barton should reconsider

EDITOR:

In the Jan. 18 edition of the *Eagle*, Congressman Joe Barton was quoted as saying he would support President Reagan if he chose to bomb terrorist training camps in Libya. Barton stated, "If they (the terrorist) have to pay a price, it may lessen the degree of terrorism. We should not only raise the price to terrorists, but also to those who support them." Barton would not view the strike against the camps in Libya as an act of war; "It is one thing to conduct a strategic military strike and another to occupy."

I find this attitude not only asinine, but an affront to those of us who voted for him. One of the primary reasons for terrorist attacks against our citizens is a deep seated hatred and mistrust of the American government created by positions and actions taken by the United States in the past.

Is it logical to assume that by killing more people we will reduce these feelings? Can we raise the price so high that these feelings will no longer be expressed in terrorist acts?

Military action will only serve the terrorist cause by creating additional martyrs, reinforcing the negative image of America and increasing hatred. These will be valuable tools for recruitment into the terrorist ranks, thus increasing terrorist activity.

I do not know how to stop terrorism. Perhaps it must run its course. Perhaps disproving the terrorist propaganda and reflecting a less-warlike image can help.

As a participant and a victim of the Vietnam conflict

I have a realistic view of war. I believe it to be the most inhuman act of humanity. Sadly, there are times when we must sacrifice our young men to protect our way of life, but we must be absolutely positive that such a great sacrifice is justified.

I believe that not only Libya, but most of the world, would view a military strike as an act of war. At a time when a rational dialog with the Soviets is developing and the dream of nuclear disarmament may become a reality we cannot afford to involve ourselves in a conflict the majority of the world will condemn. Terrorism is not an American problem, it is a global problem and must be dealt with on a worldwide basis.

Our elected officials, such as Barton, must now, more than ever before become voices of reason. The time for a "Bomb the Bastards" attitude is past, and espousing these attitudes will only result in adding fuel to the fire. I urge you to write Barton and ask him to reconsider his stand.

G. Ray White  
Graduate Assistant

### Farmers should unite

EDITOR:

The American farmer is having a hard time holding on to the last bastion of freedom in the United States. Over the last few decades the federal government has gradually regulated his land, his job and his fiscal responsibilities. Now Uncle Sam has suddenly pulled the rug out from under the farmers by threatening to foreclose on all the massive loans the federal government has forced them to depend on over the years.

And nobody in Congress, much less the Executive Branch, gives a hoot.

The farmers' plight has been ignored by the media and the people of America — they've not even the wherewithal to band together to save their land and their livelihood. Not that it would do much good, though.

About the only way they're going to keep their farms, bought with so much toil, is — as a group — declare bankruptcy, citing the federal government, much as would any debtor harassed by bill collectors. It is their right by law, their duty to themselves, their farms and the people who need their produce.

What, you say, but such a massive debt disclosure would likely bankrupt the federal government — at the time the Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction bill is gearing up to cut the fat from the federal bureaucracy. The two actions together, if accomplished, would put the government in big trouble. Better, I say, to have food on the table than to serve up the last supper to our so-called leaders in our Rome on the Potomac.

At least an attempt by farmers to formally declare bankruptcy would get them a little attention, which they seem to be able to achieve no other way.

William H. Clark II

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