

Opinion

Part of the job

"If we die, we want people to accept it," said astronaut Gus Grissom, who was killed in the launch pad fire of Apollo 1 in 1967. "We are in a risky business and we hope that if anything happens to us, it will not delay the program. The conquest of space is worth the risk of life.

His words don't make Tuesday's space shuttle disaster any easier to handle, but they do help put the deaths of the Challenger's crew in perspective.

America has enjoyed a healthy space record. But Tuesday's crash, the first in-air accident in 56 manned missions, dashed America's expectations of "routine" space flights. The shuttle launch, which had been casually shuffled to the back pages of newspapers, returned to the front page with a vengeance.

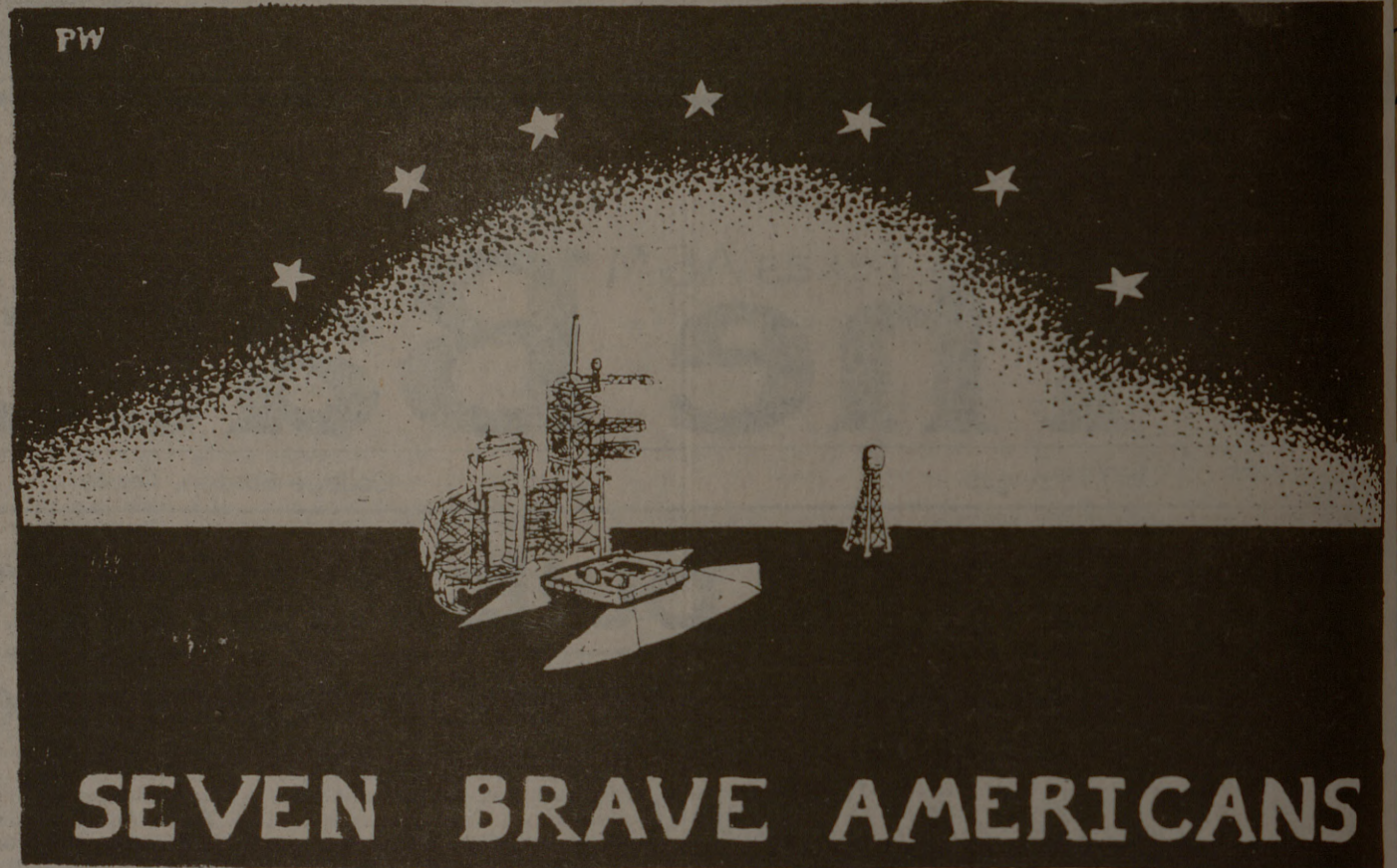
But is the demise of the Challenger a major setback? Certainly, the initial reaction to the catastrophic events would be to completely shut down operations. But the space program will continue. The crew of the Challenger wouldn't have had it any other way.

The space shuttle was a monumental step in the history of space exploration. For the first time, space was attainable for the average citizen — and it still is. The shuttle will never be flawless. Nothing is. Even commercial airliners and automobiles have accidents. The only way we can reduce space accidents to a manageable level is to continue our efforts.

The crew of the Challenger sacrificed their lives to further the cause of space exploration. We should not belittle their deaths by discontinuing the conquest of our newest frontier.

"Astronaut" means explorer of the stars — and exploration of any kind can be dangerous. Tuesday's disaster brought that danger home, but for the astronauts, that danger was an occupational hazard they have lived with from the beginning. Besides, the name of the shuttle says it all — "Challenger."

The Battalion Editorial Board



SEVEN BRAVE AMERICANS

Mail Call

Several points on abortion

EDITOR:

This letter is written with regard to several points concerning abortion raised in the Jan. 23 issue of The Battalion, particularly in relation to a column by Glenn Murtha.

In the abortion controversy, I take an anti-abortion stand, and base my judgement upon two basic premises.

The first deals with the question of life at conception. I believe this dilemma is mute, as the organism obviously possesses the most basic qualities that define life: respiration, growth, expenditure of energy, etc.

Secondly, is the fetus human? Although this can be argued, I believe scientific evidence indicates that it is. Modern theories of the generation of life are based on the conclusion that one life form does not spring forth spontaneously, but instead, develops from pre-existing cells of the same form. The fetus has, from the moment of conception, the 46 chromosomes of a human organism and a unique genetic make-up. It does not magically metamorphose into a human being at some legally set point in time; it simply matures.

As to the quality of life which Murtha discussed, I pose the question: Have we the capacity or the right to judge the quality of another's life to the point of passing sentences of death? When this was done to handicapped persons in Nazi Germany, we called it a crime against nature.

Murtha also questions the situation of a pregnant woman's financial state. Can poverty justify murder? The same argument used by Murtha could excuse infanticide in the case of a woman who could not afford her newborn. I find a sad trend in our society toward self-centeredness and weakness, rather than strength and courage, in the face of hardship. Have we no backbone?

I believe firmly in the rights of the individual, which I think should include the unborn. The most basic right in our society is the right to life.

It is true that it has not been conclusively proven that a fetus is human from the time of conception. However, it has not been proven that it isn't. Is human life something that should be gambling with?

Meghan A. Carmody
Class of '87

Comments on terrorism

EDITOR:

I would like to comment on Mark Ude's column in Monday's Battalion. He makes several statements I feel require reply.

Are we not "exporting terrorism" if we aid rebels against an established government? Whether we agree with that government's philosophies or not, they are in power, and Communist actions can logically be regarded as terroristic.

Also, please remember that in this case the United States aided the establishment of the Sandinista regime in the first place.

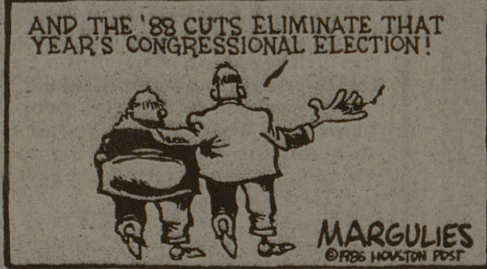
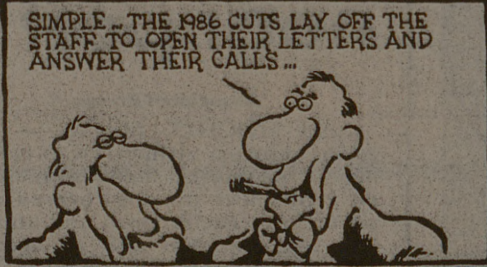
Ude also disagrees with Tip O'Neill's desire to negotiate. Negotiation could be a viable, non-violent alternative to the use of weapons.

The definition of an ally is not one I found in any dictionary. Whose judgement is used to decide when a nation is in trouble? Using the example of Grenada, other nations in the region requested U.S. intervention.

We cannot go on changing governments to suit our own purposes.

Susan Shorn

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editor 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 include the address and telephone number of the writer.



The Liberty Federation: new name, same game

I've got some good news and some bad news. First, the good news: The Moral Majority is no more. Now, the bad news: in its place we have the Liberty Federation.



Karl Palmeyer

At the first of the year Jerry Falwell decided it was time the Moral Majority expanded into political, as well as religious and moral, matters. This came as a big surprise for most of us since Falwell always had kept such a low profile on political matters before. It's nice to know that Falwell has finally decided to grace the political arena with his divine intervention.

Falwell also felt that the name "Moral Majority" had gotten so much bad press that it was time for a new name to go along with the new direction. Falwell must have called some of the best advertising agencies in the business to help him come up with an ad campaign to promote his new cult.

Here's how Falwell's conversation with the ad agency might have gone:

R-R-Ring!
Secretary: "Alpheratz Advertising Agency, may I help you?"

Falwell: "Yes, I would like to speak to your best ad man."

Secretary: "Yes sir, you would want our president, Mr. Fred J. Alpheratz. Can you hold please?"

Falwell: "Sure."
Bleep!
Boring Music.
Bleep!

Alpheratz: "Good day Reverend! Mind if I call you Jerry? Good! This is Mr. Alpheratz, just call me Fred! How can I help you?"

Falwell: "Well, I've decided that the Moral Majority needs a new image..."

Alpheratz: "Say no more, say no more! I've been following your organization for years and I know just what you need!"

Falwell: "Let's hear it."

Alpheratz: "Your group is based in the South and most of its members are religious. How about 'Keep Christ as King'? You can spell it with three K's."

Falwell: "That sounds good but we want to cover political matters as well as religion."

Alpheratz: "How about 'Keep Kommies Controlled'? You can still use the three K's."

Falwell: "That sounds a little better but wouldn't the other KKK get mad?"

Alpheratz: "Maybe, but considering your stand on South Africa they might want to form a coalition."

Falwell: "I would really like a name that combined our religious goals and our fight against communism."

Alpheratz: "How about 'Baptists Against Russian Folks' or 'Falwell's Universal Commie Killers'?"

Falwell: "I like those names but I don't think those initials are very attractive. I think that our new name should somehow show our support for President Reagan."

Alpheratz: "I'm way ahead of you. How about 'Reagan As President, Evermore?'"

Falwell: "I'm not too fond of the word 'Evermore.' It sounds too much like that horrid poem by that Satanist Poe. What

we want is a name that somehow reflects our interest in helping our leaders to think and grow in the right direction."

Alpheratz: "Kind of like a father or mother?"

Falwell: "Not really. A father figure is too stuffy while a mother's place is in the kitchen. Maybe an older brother."

Alpheratz: "A Big Brother?"

Falwell: "I really like that name but it sounds too much like something in that awful book by that liberal Orwell. Maybe once our group gets control of this nation's libraries we can do something about those books by Orwell, Huxley, Darwin, Salinger, Vonnegut, Freud, Swift and Socrates that might mislead our youth."

Alpheratz: "It will be just like the good old days when the church controlled what the people read. We could call it the 'Baptist Inquisition!'"

Falwell: "I don't know, it does have a certain ring to it but we're getting away from the ideals of God, Reagan and money."

Alpheratz: "OK. I've got a name that combines all of those things. How about the 'Society for Christ, Reagan, and Economic Wealth?'"

Falwell: "Watch those initials Fred."

Alpheratz: "Sorry Jerry."

Falwell: "What we really need is a return to traditional American values."

Alpheratz: "How about Falwell's Army for the Return of Tradition?"

Falwell: "Not bad."

Alpheratz: How about something that's really American, like the Statue of Liberty. That's it! We can call the new group the 'Liberty Union!'"

Falwell: "That's great except for one problem — the Soviets are a Union too."

How about the 'Liberty Confederation?'"

Alpheratz: "Too long, how about the 'Liberty Federation?'"

Falwell: "That's perfect!"

Alpheratz: "Great, I'll have my secretary draw up the necessary papers. Let's have lunch sometime."

Falwell: "Sounds like fun. Goodbye and God bless you, Fred."

Alpheratz: "Goodbye and God bless you, Jerry."
Click!

Rumor has it that Falwell and Alpheratz had lunch together and came up with a couple of good slogans for Falwell and his cult.

One of the best slogans was a paraphrase of a quote by Will Rogers. After meeting and becoming friends with Marcos of the Philippines and Botha of South Africa, Falwell can proudly say:

"I never met a fascist I didn't like." The other slogan, "Bringing America Back," was borrowed from Reagan's 1984 Presidential campaign. I'm sure that Falwell would love to bring America back to the McCarthyism of the 1950s.

Those slogans seem to fit in well with the Moral Majority scheme of things but I think Falwell and Alpheratz missed the boat on the new name for the cult. Instead of the "Liberty Federation," they should call themselves "Jerry's Kids."

When most people hear of Jerry's Kids they think of those poor children who have been crippled by the disease of muscular dystrophy, and of how Jerry Lewis is trying to help them overcome their diseases.

Now when people hear of Jerry's Kids they can think of those poor peo-

ple who have been crippled by the disease of ignorance and how Jerry Falwell is making it worse.

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

The Battalion

USPS 045 360
Member of
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Conference

The Battalion Editorial Board

Michelle Powe, Editor
Kay Mallett, Managing Editor
Loren Steffy, Opinion Page Editor
Jerry Oslin, City Editor
Cathie Anderson, News Editor
Travis Tingle, Sports Editor

The Battalion Staff

Assistant City Editors Kirsten Dietz, Scott Sutherland
Assistant News Editor Brad Whitten
Assistant Sports Editors Ken Surr, Charean Williams

Entertainment Editors
..... Bill Hughes, Tricia Parker
Photo Editor John Makielski
Make-up Editor Richard Williams
Morning Editor Cheryl Burke

Editorial Policy

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.

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.

Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.