

# Opinion

## Malltigers continue to thrive despite hostile environment

This past weekend I received quite an education in animal science. I don't usually go to a shopping mall, but I was feeling a little masochistic, so I loaded up the checkbook and went off in search of new pants.



Loren Steffy

Naturally everyone else had the same idea, so the mall was chock-full of slow-moving fat people and kids with runny noses. Shopping under these conditions I refer to as "getting malled."

But in the middle of my bemusement, I came upon a wonderful sight — wildlife. There were big cats in the middle of the mallway! At first they looked like Bengal tigers and African lions, but I soon found this was not the case.

I forced my way through the crowd to where one of the attendants was standing. I asked the man who was putting the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval on one of the cages what kind of creatures these were.

"Malltigers," he replied.

"Malltigers?" I repeated, somewhat confused.

"They're a distant relative of feline family that thrives in shopping centers.

These particular beasts were born in the wilds of Bloomingdale's."

"How can a tiger be born in Bloomingdale's?"

"Well, it's still a bit of a mystery. Scientists have found that the cages go up first. Once they're fully developed, the animals just sort of appear."

"What happens when there gets to be too many for one cage?"

"That's been the biggest problem. We tried redistributing them to other departments at first, but eventually we had to start relocating them in other stores and malls."

"Isn't that cruel, taking them out of their natural habitat?"

"Not at all. Proper mall wildlife management is very humane. Of course, you hear of some freak accidents, like the malled eagles that flew into the ceiling fan in Gimble's, but that's an exception. We have to take care of them. How else would they get fed? Nature planned it all out with the mall offices."

"There sure seem to be a lot of lionesses in that one cage," I said.

"Oh, well Bloomie lions were born in that kind of environment. They're very inactive and they're used to companionship. They wouldn't be happy if there weren't at least eight to a cage."

"What if one of them turns on that little kid who's blasting them with that Rambo Automatic Water Rifle?"

The attendant began to get indignant. "Sir, these are not vicious jungle animals. They have to be prodded, pinched, yelled at, gawked at, made fun of and pelted with small objects in order to survive. It's what Nature intended for them. Look at how docile they are."

He pointed to a child who was having his picture taken with one of the malltiger cubs. While the photographer was reloading, the kid stuck his finger in the cub's eye. The little cat purred.

"See?" the attendant said. "They love it."

"It must hurt," I said.

"All malltiger cubs are born with an inner eyelid that protects their eyes from children's fingers. Nature takes care of her own."

I looked at the adult malltiger stepping over his comrades in the cage. He found a comfortable-looking storelion in the corner and, after fluffing him up a bit, lie down to take a nap.

"I ought to get one for my house," I thought out loud.

"You, sir, are despicable," the attendant retorted. "Taking a malltiger out of its natural environment is cruel. They wouldn't last a day in the wild."

Loren Steffy is a junior journalism major and the Opinion Page 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 intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

### Unprovoked and vindictive

EDITOR:

We are writing in response to Karl Pallmeyer's column of Jan. 28, "The Liberty Federation: new name, same game." We were truly impressed that his article was published in The Batt. We felt that it was courageous, and that it was unprovoked and vindictive. We further felt that his cute little recommendations of possible names (and abbreviations) uncalled for (especially in Falwell's Universal Commie Killers). Since it is profanity necessary to make a point? We guess we should have left it out of one of the founders and writers of Students Helping Libs in Trouble.

While we would not classify ourselves as Falwell Followers, we do believe that men of all walks of life, including preachers and those great defenders of democracy, the journalists ("ha ha"), have a right to have opinions of people and their ideas. However, when expressing their opinions about someone else's ideas in a public forum, people should justify their opinions with reasons why they do not adhere to another's viewpoint, and not resort to personal attacks to try to make their point.

Such attacks are tasteless and fail in their attempt to sway an audience. In his article, he implies that Falwell would like to burn every man known to man (except the Bible) and that he supports fascism and Carthyism, yet he provides no evidence to back up such statements. We all know that Falwell is not the simpleton that Pallmeyer implies, and wouldn't have attracted so many loyal supporters.

We never will understand why some journalists believe that it is for people of all professions except religion to express their political beliefs. One of the intentions of the separation of church and state by government was to keep the U.S. government from officially supporting and bankrolling one religion, not to gag anyone with any religious opinions whatsoever.

However, if Karl feels some sadistic, uncontrollable urge to persecute all religious leaders who dabble in politics, we'll give him a few names of religious leaders who have become involved in politics: Jimmy Carter (he ran for president in 1976 — remember, Karl?), the pope, Jimmy Jackson (he ran for president in 1984 — remember, Karl?), the pope, and Mand Tutu (who won a Nobel Peace Prize), Ghandi and Martin Luther King Jr. (he even has a national holiday in his honor).

In short, if Pallmeyer must criticize someone, he should at least provide some semblance of justification for his views. We would have thought that with all of his worldly experience and knowledge which he has pressed through past columns, he could have at least backed up his thoughts with some evidence, especially when he's been given half of an Opinion Page to do it in.

Mike Head  
Mike Neben  
Clay Paulos

### 'Lady' not derogatory

EDITOR:

After reading Sheila J. Cloudt's letter of Feb. 6, I really have to wonder just what type of "woman" Ms. Cloudt is. In her letter she states that "lady" is a word which implies a "lifestyle" — a way of passively existing. It isn't a complimentary adjective.

Concerning her statement of a "lady" just "passively existing," I think of no better example to contradict that than our own first lady, Nancy Reagan is a "lady" in every sense of the word, and she is constantly on the go. Traveling the countryside to speak out on school-age drug abuse, working with the Humane Society and helping further the causes of the Carter Seals are just a few ways in which this "lady" passively exists.

As far as "lady" being a derogative adjective, according to Webster's few of the definitions given for "lady" are as follows:

- 1) a woman of high social standing
- 2) a woman who is polite, refined and well-mannered
- 3) the title of respect given to a marchioness, countess or baroness, the daughter of a duke, marquis or earl, or to the wife of a baronet, knight or lord.

Seeing as I am neither a person of high social position or of royalty, I feel safe in assuming that when someone refers to me as a "lady," they are, more than likely, referring to me as a woman who is polite, refined and well-mannered, and I can in no way consider that as anything but a compliment. (Does a male being a "gentleman" make him any less a man? Quite the contrary I believe Cloudt).

My parents brought me up to be a woman of the '80s. They told me that I can be anything that I want to be and achieve any goal I set for myself if I persevere. But, they also taught me that in striving to reach my goals and achievements I should always act like a lady, and I can't help but believe that being a "lady" can only help me to attain all that I am striving for. I also can't help but believe that there are many more "ladies" out there who feel just as I do.

Pamela R. Pieratt

### Gramm-Rudman and the shuttle

EDITOR:

The Challenger died on Jan. 28, taking with it seven crew members wasn't the first space disaster, nor will it be the last — unless, that is, the media has its way.

The TV stations in particular. They covered the shuttle explosion, the exclusion of all else — until well into the night; over 12 hours of live video coverage of an event about which nothing was really known until they say that's going a bit to the extreme.

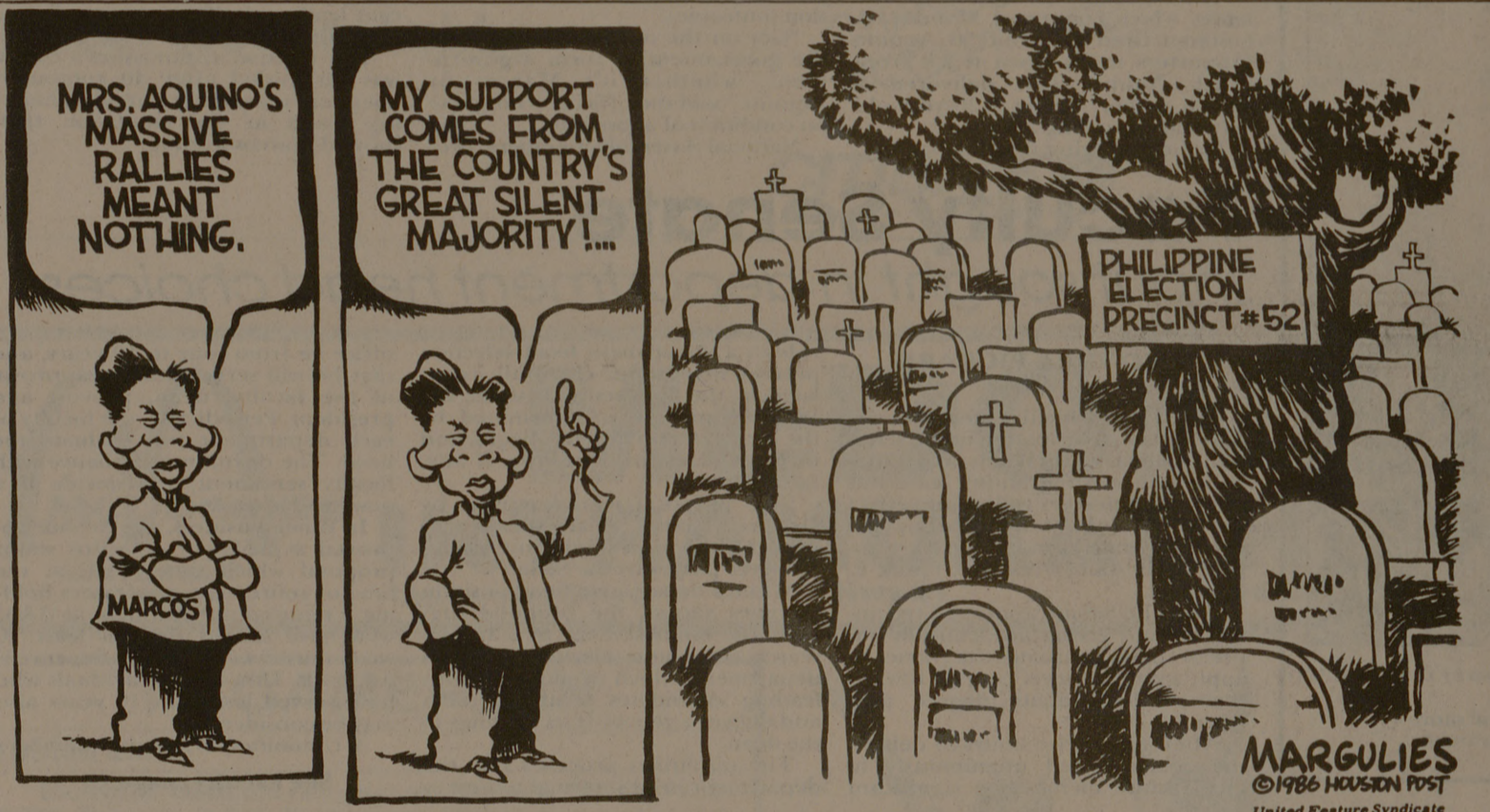
Such extensive coverage is liable to make the Challenger crash a Hindenberg kind of memorial to space travel, as that blimp was the end of a dirigible flight. Indeed, such a regrettable end may also have been accomplished.

The crash had several positive aspects, though. Vice President Bush and Sen. John Glenn got some good exposure when they rushed down to Florida to bask unshamedly in front of the TV cameras. And President Reagan — always the expert user of catastrophe — got his own moment before history; an enviable prelude to his State of the Union address when all are sure to be quite attentive and expectant. . . . Politics, the science of thriving on disaster, is hot in this election year.

Again, on the positive side, maybe the American people will finally realize that space travel is really a risky and dangerous business; maybe they will recognize that it is not the kind of thing to overly publicize by such attractive all-American teachers aloft. Maybe we will look upon space as a Michener kind of adventure fit for the flashy media hype as it accompanied the shuttle program from the beginning, but as responsible people who recognize that challenge must be met cautiously.

Maybe we will realize that the pressures on NASA to be a completely financially independent operation has placed so much pressure on that organization to succeed. Stress is the biggest cause of accidents. Hence, NASA is not to blame, but the nation as a whole; the government especially being so demanding of NASA while the government itself cowers under the looming prospect of making the operation of the government financially liable via the Gramm-Rudman bill.

William H. Clark, II



## Christa McAuliffe's legacy

A few weeks ago I wrote a piece about schoolteachers going into space. I speculated as to what kinds of candidates my own teachers at PS 35 would have made if they had applied for the trip. It was a light piece because, like most Americans, I never dreamed anything could happen to the flight of the shuttle Challenger.



Art Buchwald

During the last numbing week, as I watched the television screen, I got to

thinking about teachers. Although Christa McAuliffe wasn't a professional astronaut, she did leave behind a wonderful legacy.

Consider this.

For the past 15 or 20 years, America's teachers could not have been held in lower esteem. They were underpaid, underrated and blamed for anything that went wrong with our schools.

It appeared the only time we saw teachers on TV was when they were on strike or arrested for child abuse. The perception was that teachers were people who taught because they couldn't make it in the real world.

Except for covering vandalism and crime in schools, the media ignored what was going on in the classroom. And with reason: if teachers were teaching, and students were learning, it wasn't news — that is until the destruction of Challenger.

Suddenly our schools received more attention than they have ever been given before. Seven brave people died that morning, but it was the death of a schoolteacher that made our children cry.

When the TV cameras entered the nation's classrooms to record their grief, we saw principals and teachers fighting back their own tears as they tried to comfort the students.

The cameras not only focused on teachers but also panned to the agonized faces of the students. They showed teacher to pupil and pupil to teacher — and in that moment of sadness we witnessed the educational process at its best.

When these pictures came into our homes we were reminded of something we tend to take for granted: the role teachers quietly play in the lives of children.

The lesson was not just for grown-ups. You had the feeling that the students had gained a new respect for teachers as well.

It went something like this. "Christa was a teacher, and Christa died in space, but it could have been anybody's teacher — including mine."

So what was Christa McAuliffe's legacy?

When Sputnik went up and we realized the Russians were ahead there was a great clamor to educate American children and make our schools second to none. Then after the successes of our own space program, the clamor died down. Education was dropped as our No. 1 priority.

At least it was until last week. After that one horrifying moment in Florida, things changed again. The parent-teacher-pupil bond that had been fraying for a generation seemed to be joined again.

Christa McAuliffe's gift to us is not in the skies but here on earth. From everything you can read, she was a teacher before she went up and she intended to be a teacher when she returned. In death her legacy is to give her fellow professionals new dignity and honor. Thanks to Christa, each one of them can say with pride, "I'm a teacher too."

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

#### The Battalion

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

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