

# Opinion

## Education doesn't stop when the chapter ends

Textbooks have children's undivided attention. They are the primary educational resource of public schools, and most students — and even teachers — unquestionably skim their pages, digesting the material regardless of validity or falsehood.



Loren Steffy

For this reason, textbook selection is a tedious process. The goal is to find a text that educates, not indoctrinates. Gary L. Bauer, the undersecretary of the Department of Education, recently told the Association of American Publishers that America's textbooks are failing to accurately inform children about Communism and the nature of communist nations.

Bauer cited one textbook which portrayed the status of Soviet women: "Equality for women in the USSR is a reality . . . They receive equal pay for equal work . . . Men and women are treated equally under Soviet law."

Technically, the book could be perceived as true. But equality in an oppressive society is meaningless. The book fails to put its statement in the context of Soviet society. If a child is not told the whole picture, his knowledge becomes one-sided.

Many textbooks, in their attempt to be objective, steer clear of presenting the truth. A history book should not ig-

nore human rights violations in America just as it should not overlook the human rights situation in the Soviet Union.

Objectivity, however, is not always easy to achieve — especially when the definitions vary drastically from textbook critic to textbook critic.

Phyllis Schlafly, a recipes-over-resumes activist, claims the most despicable area of textbook unobjectiveness is nuclear war. In a recent column, Schlafly was horrified by a book that taught schoolchildren that disarmament is an admirable goal. Schlafly is angered by books that portray the horrors of nuclear war and which claim that the nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union are equal threats to mankind.

The syndicated columnist hides behind *Commentary* magazine — a publication that is itself far from objective. Schlafly and *Commentary* cannot expect textbooks to conform to their limited frames of mind — that's not objectivity. That, too, is indoctrination.

Nuclear arsenals, be they in the United States, the Soviet Union or Tonga, present a danger to the continued existence of man. It's not unobjective for a text to present these dangers, but showing favorable treatment — intentionally or unintentionally — defeats the purpose of an educational tool.

The impact of biased texts would be reduced if children didn't have to depend on them so heavily. Other than textbooks, our children have few sources of information in the classroom — especially such topics as Soviet life.

Few Soviet films are viewed in this country. Almost no Soviet literature is available. Only a handful of magazines can be purchased, and most of these are not available in stores. Soviet music is unheard in this country.

This is a greater danger than biased textbooks. Ronald Reagan can brilliantly articulate attacks against the "Evil Empire" because few Americans know enough about the Soviet Union to contest this description. As long as the USSR remains a nebulous void, the United States is provided with a catch-all villain — a definite black to contrast our white in a world that is neither. The minute we try to understand our enemy, this easily defined white and black becomes a murky gray.

The Soviet Union is supposed to be our greatest enemy. Yet we know dangerously little about the day to day workings of the Soviet system. Almost any military strategist knows that the best way to defeat an enemy is to find your foe's faults and then use these weaknesses against them.

Comparing alternative political theory is the best way to develop confidence in our own. By exposing children to these alternative educational resources, they will make these comparisons themselves instead of having it spoon-fed to them through the pages of a text.

To make such comparisons, children would have to develop critical thinking, which is what education's all about.

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 author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

### Missing jewelry

EDITOR:  
LOST!

Mar. 2 between 3:15 and 3:30 p.m. a blue jewelry case about 8 inches by 10 inches must have fallen in the front drive of the Memorial Student Center as our car was being unloaded.

This case contained five diamond rings, three diamond necklaces, a single strand of pearls, two pair diamond stud earrings, pearl and diamond earrings, a gold sand dollar necklace with a "B" initial with amonds, numerous gold chains and earrings, also some costume jewelry.

Some of these items have a great sentimental value. If anyone found the jewelry or has any information about the jewelry, please contact Maj. Josephine Hoelscher at the University Police Department, 845-2345 or Clara Arterburn at the MSC, 845-8908.

You will be rewarded.

Bob Derrington  
(915) 362-5463

### Pure Jabberwocky

EDITOR:

Being engineering students, we seldom get a chance to read (let alone respond to) articles in *The Battalion*. However, with regard to Glenn Murtha's column on the changes Texas has experienced over the past 20 years, we must speak out.

Murtha has neglected one major change Texas has seen. This change even evidenced in Murtha. Mathematics has radically changed. Little do we realize that in this evolved form of higher mathematics, it is possible to reach percentages in excess of 100 percent. Careful arithmetic, both with and without a calculator, yields the same result — 70 percent Anglos plus 21 percent Mexican Americans, plus 12 percent blacks equals 103 percent. If other minority groups in the state were added in like fashion, the population of Texas might swell to 125 percent.

While the source Murtha used for his data could be at fault, one must question the credibility of a writer who uses obviously flawed statistics to support his opinions. Misinformation is the bane of society. Others might question the sources Murtha employed in forming his opinions on such things as fundamentalism, homosexuality, conservatism, evolution of minorities.

In closing, we must say, "Twas brillig and slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe," which has a clear and convenient meaning to a character in "Alice in Wonderland." Yet, for those of us who desire consistency, it's pure jabberwocky.

R. Alan Moore '87  
Stephen N. Mitchell '87  
Norman Yee '87

### A bit of imbalance?

EDITOR:

I am a graduate student in Educational Technology, and I was previously on the staff of a small college newspaper while doing my undergraduate studies.

I have submitted two letters over the past three months which, for reasons unknown, have not been printed in *The Battalion*. The letters were written in direct response to columns and, although they were lengthy, were not libelous in any way. I spent a fair amount of time doing research on the topics of my letters, and I felt that they were reasonably intelligent and well thought out; unlike many of the letters which I see printed on your editorial page.

It is to my understanding that many other students here at Texas A&M have had the same problem with their letters not being printed. What is the reason for this? I was not informed as to why my letters were not acceptable, although I did provide a return address and telephone number.

This is a campus of 35,000 students yet only about a dozen letters a week appear on the editorial page, with the majority of the space being dedicated to *Battalion* staff and Art Buchwald. There seems to be a bit of an imbalance here. If you are not receiving enough letters, then please inform the students. The *Battalion* is state funded, and the opinions printed in it should not be restricted to a small, elite group of journalism majors and syndicated columnists.

In my opinion, the ideas of the columnists, (some of which I actually agree with), could easily be put across in about one third of the space. I think that by now, the majority of students here at A&M have acquired substantial knowledge of their wittiness and their writing abilities. Why not leave room for other ideas and opinions? If the students really want to read Art Buchwald and look at nationally syndicated cartoons, they can always refer to the *Houston Post*.

Steven Lucas  
Graduate Assistant, EDTC

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Battalion* is not state funded. Our funding is generated from our own advertising. The columnists who appear on this page are paid to express their views. It also should be noted that *The Battalion* functions as a training ground for journalism students, however elite they may be. Letters are not run for a variety of reasons, but all are read before the decision to run or not run is reached. Letters stand a much better chance of being run if they conform to our letters policy, listed in this column each day. If they exceed the word limit, as this one did, they must be cut, as this one was.

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## Shaping Imelda's new image

Almost every public relations firm in America is after the Imelda Marcos account. Myron Steakknife told me why. "Mrs. Marcos has a distorted image in the U.S., but fortunately she has enough money to change it. I'm making a presentation next week. What do you think of it?"



Art Buchwald

Myron opened a large folder. "The way I see it, Imelda owns half of all the real estate in New York, and Leona Helmsley owns the other half. I want Imelda to move to New York and personally advertise her real estate properties in the same manner that Leona does hers.

"I see Imelda in a full-page photo stretched over the top of a piano saying, 'Leona is wild about Harry and I'm wild about Ferdinand. If you really want to have a ball come to the Golden Casa for a lovers weekend. We feature free breakfast, free ice, free movies and free elections.'

"I have another based on Mrs. Helmsley's ad in *New York Magazine*. It shows Leona standing in the dining room of her Palace Hotel saying, 'It's the only palace in the world where the Queen stands guard.'

Steakknife said, "We'd show Imelda singing into a microphone on the balcony of her hotel. The copy would read, 'Leona Helmsley has no idea what it takes to guard a palace. Would you believe even a company of crack troops and a dozen tanks isn't enough?'"

"Why the ads?"

"I want the public to think of Mrs. Marcos as an astute businesswoman instead of someone who keeps shoving pesos in her Calvin Klein jeans. The fastest way to do this is through advertising. I also have a brokerage firm interested in signing up Imelda for a commercial. She would stand in front of the plane she arrived on from the Philippines and say, 'Hello, I'm Imelda Marcos and my husband and I made money the old-fashioned way — we smuggled it out of the country in a trunk. If you expect to be overthrown soon, call me at this toll-free number, and for a fee I'll advise how to keep your loot with the blessing of President Reagan.'

I said, "You think that will help Imelda's image?"

"It can't hurt it. I want to persuade the country Imelda was not one of these dictator's wives who spent all her time in Paris buying clothes with her country's Fresh Air Funds. I'm going to show that there were a lot worse spendthrifts kicked out of their countries this year."

"You're not talking about Mrs. Duvalier?"

"Let's just say I'm talking about anyone who knows anything about voodoo economics."

Steakknife said if Imelda doesn't want to go head-to-head with Leona Helmsley or do brokerage commercials, she could venture into the jewelry business. "She has enough diamonds to light up the Statue of Liberty for a week," he said.

"That's a lot of diamonds."

"Just because a person is a head of state's wife doesn't mean she can't own a few nice things."

"Your entire presentation seems to be built around getting Mrs. Marcos a job."

"Every woman has to fulfill herself," he said. "Since Imelda owns shopping centers, art treasures, stocks and chests full of gold bullion, she doesn't have to lift a finger for the rest of her life. But when you've been married to someone like Marcos you have to keep occupied in your spare time. There is just so much polo Imelda can play with Ferdinand."

"This is a pretty good presentation," I told him. "Do you think Madame Marcos will go for it?"

"I don't see why not. If she doesn't want to do it I have a book contract for her to sign. A publisher wants her to write 'Hawaii on \$750 Million a Day.'

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

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### 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.

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