

Opinion

A closed mind is open to a wild imagination

Why are some people so opposed to change?

The people who are so against change usually go to extreme lengths to convince others of their position. They will predict inevitable doom if something they oppose comes to be.



Glenn Murtha

britton Bell Tower? I thought any controversy arising from the situation was ridiculous. I just didn't buy the argument that moving the memorial was disrespectful to the Aggies who lost their lives in World War I. It wasn't like it was being moved to the Soviet Union or New York. It was only moved a few feet. To tell the truth, I never knew it existed until it was moved.

If anything, the memorial was moved out of respect for these Aggies. They're noticed now more than ever before. Now the memorial is located on a nice concrete landing with benches instead of in a patch of weeds. Tell me that doesn't show more respect for those Aggies.

How about letting women participate in the band and other Corps activities? This came to a head last year. It's hard to believe, but someone actually argued that allowing women to join the band would somehow weaken our nation's defenses.

Weaken our nation's defenses? Who-

ever thought up this line gets my vote for "Dork of the Year." Now everytime that I see the band march, I imagine an impending Soviet attack on Kyle Field.

What else have these doomsayers predicted? Oh yes, the Gay Student Services case. The GSS filed for recognition in 1976 and the University said no. So the group filed a lawsuit which eventually reached the Supreme Court last year. The Supreme Court let a lower court decision stand, requiring the GSS be recognized.

Why wouldn't the University recognize the GSS? Lawyers for the University argued that allowing the group to meet on campus would result in, to paraphrase, mass orgies or something. Mass orgies? I'll have to admit that they had a valid point. Most of the meetings I attend in Rudder Tower usually begin with an icebreaker orgy. Rudder just seems to have that effect on people. I love Rudder Tower.

What about this year? The Texas A&M Debate Club is sponsoring a de-

bate forum this week on whether a bar should exist in the Memorial Student Center. Someone stated in a letter to *The Battalion* last semester that it might be nice to have a bar in the MSC.

Naturally someone had to write in opposition to this proposal. Pretty soon a lot of people were claiming that a bar would be disrespectful to Ags who had lost their lives in America's wars and to whom the student center was dedicated. I'll have to concede that they have a good point. If they put in a bar, what would be next? A bowling alley? Video games? A beauty salon?

Have you noticed some of the newer, more liberal groups on campus this year — NOW (National Organization of Women), Greenpeace, TAMU Civil Liberties Union (related to the American Civil Liberties Union)? I'm just curious about how the doomsayers must have reacted to these new groups. Some possible arguments against them could include:

- NOW — Allowing an organization

like NOW to exist on campus promote hostility between the resulting in an all-gay A&M.

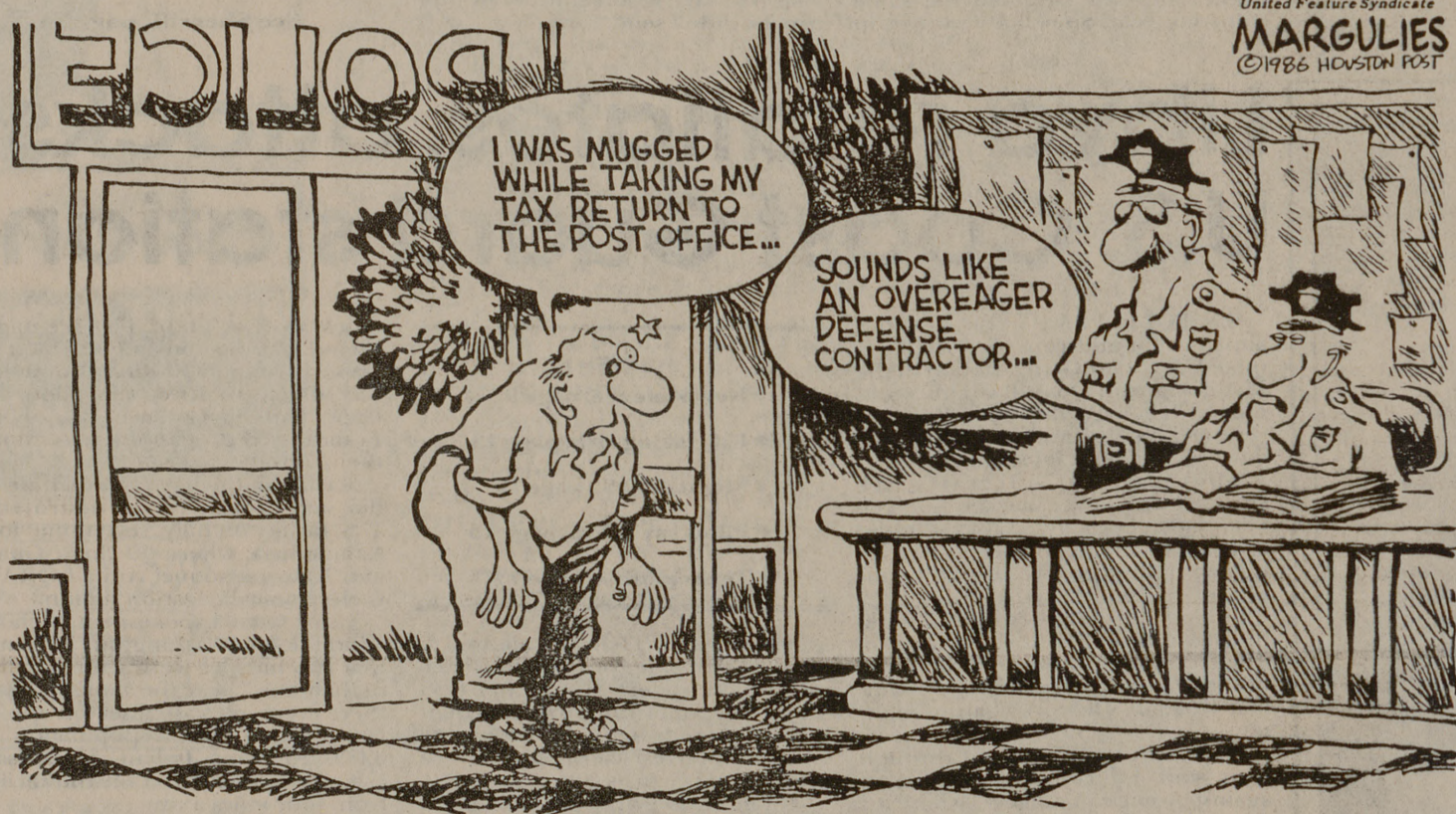
• Greenpeace — An anti-nuclear organization such as Greenpeace promote tension between A&M and the Soviet Union resulting in the nuclear destruction of the University. • TAMU Civil Liberties Union — TAMUCLU is solely a haven for communists and communist sympathizers. Its existence on campus could lead to a communist takeover of A&M. • NOW — The National Organization of Women (the Domino Effect) would quail any Aggie resistance with its gay KGB agents (since we had turned gay because of NOW) with the nation's defenses (women in the band), Mikhail Gorbachev could then assume office.

Ge, how the imagination wild when the mind is so free to change.

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

These people exist even at Texas A&M. At our University, which has changed so dramatically in the last 15 years, one would think that Aggies would be used to change and stop resisting it. But not so.

Let's examine some events leading to change in the past few years and the manner in which some Ags reacted to them. Let's start with the World War I Memorial. Remember the letters to *The Battalion* protesting the movement of the memorial to make way for the Al-



United Feature Syndicate MARGULIES ©1986 HOUSTON POST

Customers to blame for insurance crisis

More and more, a youth misspent (for low pay at that) as an insurance adjuster is turning out to have had some value. So when it comes to the current insurance crisis (a special segment on NBC, a cover of *Time*), Cohen of Claims, as I once billed myself, knows who is at fault. It's you.



Richard Cohen

You wouldn't get that impression from what you're reading and certainly not from the mail I get. There, in press releases and studies so massive I have saved their reading for my retirement, the insurance industry and trial lawyers are slugging it out. The former blames the latter for suing at the drop of a hat or, worse, a scalpel. And the latter blames the former for hiking rates to compensate for bad investments — back when insurance industry prospects were, like interest rates, sky high.

For most of us, a fight between the insurance industry and lawyers is the domestic equivalent of the Iraq-Iran war: May it simply continue. But in this particular war, the casualties are close to home. Bus lines have ceased operating because they cannot get liability insurance. The tram from New York's Roosevelt Island to Manhattan ceased operating when the premium was raised from \$800,000 a year to nearly \$9 million. Some cities have had to close their parks and playgrounds because they either could not get — or could not afford — liability insurance.

These examples, though, are in the nuisance category compared to the effect the insurance crisis has had on physicians and, as a consequence, on the poor. In some places, clinics have had to shut down. The poor have been sent away, some of them, surely, to die. The country now faces the ultimate irony: A poor person might not be able to get medical attention. But should he get it — and should something go wrong — he could almost certainly get a lawyer to sue.

Cohen of Claims saw this coming a long time ago. Back then, I knew a vast industry existed in which the raw materials consisted of phony or marginal claims. This industry included lawyers who, because of contingency fees guaranteeing them as much as one-half

the award, were willing to take any case — and get a payment any time just for filing a claim. It included physicians who could, like tune tellers, divine whiplash injuries running their hands over X-rays. And, finally, it included the insurance companies themselves. It was cheaper to settle a claim than to litigate. This, in turn, encouraged lawyers to even more claims.

But all these doctors and all the lawyers had to have patients or clients other words, they had to have a case that saw the negligence suit as a make a buck — as yet another payment. Back when Cohen of Claims closing files at a pace that has yet to be matched, everyone in the industry knew that there was a difference between urban and rural areas. In urban areas, an accident was almost to produce a suit — everything but the cost of a new bumper for the car was for pain and suffering. In rural areas that was rarely the case. There, parties were likely to know one another. A handshake and a check usually settled a claim.

Ironically, in an era that professes return to the ideals of common sense, the current crisis in liability insurance is the opposite — atomized and, its handmaidens, alienated, the stranger. We sue the other as if we are disconnected. The implications of the suit — higher premiums and the social cost. James awards in the same way. Every involved feels disconnected from the sequences of their action, as if it's no stake in, or responsibility for, a common good.

Now we are feeling the consequences. Civil lawsuits have mushroomed to million-dollar verdicts, once rare, now almost commonplace. (The 401 judgments of a million dollars or more in 1984.) Doctors can't get insurance and blame trial lawyers. Trial lawyers blame the insurance companies.

Cohen of Claims knows the point. For years both sides were fighting while elements among them personal injury into a growth industry second only to drugs in profitability. But just as with drugs, there has to be more than a market. There has to be consumer with and maybe mostly, at fault. That's what said at the beginning, is you.

Richard Cohen is a columnist for *Washington Post Writers Group*.

Mail Call

Just another 'first'

EDITOR:

In his review of Jean-Michel Jarre's "Rendez-Vous," Karl Pallmeyer states that "Last Rendez-Vous: Ron's Piece" would have been of great historical significance if not for the shuttle tragedy.

Even if "Ron's Piece" had been played and recorded aboard the Challenger, it would have been only one in an endless list of space "firsts."

The loss of the shuttle — and everything connected with it — will be remembered long after most of these "firsts" have been forgotten.

"Ron's Piece" could become for the space program what "Silver Taps" is for Aggeland.

Kevin McLeod Bailey

The untold story

EDITOR:

I would like to comment on Glen Murtha's column in the April 9 *The Battalion*. I think that Murtha did a terrific job of avoiding the real issue of concern to most people. He admits to having done "little" research on the issue of homosexuality, and it is more than obvious that his research was just that — little.

Once you wade through Murtha's statements, he seems to indicate that homosexuality is a willful sexual-orientation choice made by individuals. This is true, but the issue is if we as a society accept or condone individuals that make this choice. If there is no absolute moral standard, then we should be hard pressed to condemn, say, pedophiles (people who are sexually attracted to children) or people who enjoy sex with animals because they could just as easily argue that our moral reservations toward their sexual orientation are just our opinion.

Then we could have organizations on campus such as PSO (Pedophiles Service Organization) designed to help pedophiles improve their technique etc. or SFB (Students for Bestiality) arranging "Barn Dances" so students can get together with their prospective sex partners. There is an absolute moral standard, the Bible. Therefore, we can accurately and justifiably say, "Sure every individual can choose, but we as a society will not condone individuals making the wrong choice." Much in the same way we put individuals in jail who choose to be thieves.

Murtha failed to research, largely because he only investigated immoralist sources, significant facts such as

homosexuals also have one of the highest suicide rates in the world. Homosexual "marriages" have a 99 percent divorce rate and that a very high percentage of homosexuals have to undergo intensive psychiatric treatment as a result of their "gay" lifestyle.

Finally, the most significant fact that Murtha overlooked is the thousands of homosexuals who have been delivered from the bondage of their depraved lifestyle by asking Jesus Christ into their lives to forgive them and to heal them.

Mike Foadre '87

Blind, deaf men

EDITOR:

The comments from the secretary of the Board of Regents published Friday in *The Battalion* are a slap in the face to Texas A&M students. They lack conscience, logic and humanity when viewed from this perspective.

Secretary Bill Presnal explains that the board acts purely for financial gain and does not make statements on the morality of its investments. This should not be the case.

Acting in such a "money-rules-my-life" manner, we could expect them to invest in a country of the likes of Nazi Germany. In addition, they could invest in prostitution and gambling (both legal in Nevada) — if they haven't already — and make some serious cash. Then, the next step would be to lobby for the legalization of marijuana and cocaine so that they could sell it to schoolchildren. Talk about pulling in a chunk of change . . .

These are obviously not things that a majority of Aggies would support and, therefore, the board, whether it has many morals of its own or not, should heed the students' wishes. Unfortunately, it seems that they could not care less about 35,000 students' wishes. It seems that they could not care less what 35,000 tuition-paying individuals think.

Nowhere is this more obvious than in the fact that the board denied Students Against Apartheid's request to even discuss the issue. They wouldn't even talk to them. That's the real tragedy. It seems we are being led by blind men and we've just discovered they are deaf also.

Randy Trosper

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.

The Battalion
(USPS 045 360)
Member of
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Conference
The Battalion Editorial Board

Editor:
Managing Editor:
Opinion Page Editor:
City Editor:
News Editor:
Sports Editor:

Editorial Policy
The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and the State of Texas. Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the Editorial Board or the author and do not necessarily represent those of the 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. The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday periods. Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester, \$33.25 per school year and \$35 per full year. Advertising rates are available upon 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. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.