

Opinion

NCAA detour policy

Because of a recent policy change, newspapers from NCAA schools cannot directly receive interpretations of rules from the NCAA's national office. Instead these papers must ask the university administration to request information for them. The new policy is the epitome of blatant hypocrisy.

The NCAA is attempting to detour the avenues of freedom of information. A spokeswoman for the NCAA says this policy was implemented because too many reporters from college papers were calling for rule interpretations. She says the new policy will organize and streamline the process. The policy seems more like a convenient way to ignore and sidetrack select newspapers — those located on college campuses and, thus, closest to any violations.

The NCAA had a definite target in mind when it implemented the new policy. This rule doesn't apply to commercial newspapers, high school newspapers or private citizens, only to papers from NCAA schools.

In other words, the NCAA is penalizing college newspapers for trying to do their jobs — keeping the public informed. Would university administrators cooperate with their college newspaper in an attempt to uncover possible NCAA violations by the school's athletic program? The NCAA seems to have forgotten about something called "conflict of interest."

Apparently the only investigations the NCAA wants to see conducted are their own. If the recent outbreak of possible violations by schools is any indication, the NCAA's skills as a super sleuth are grossly deficient.

It seems the NCAA isn't interested in seeing that its own rules are followed, only in protecting the reputation of its member schools and keeping those schools off probation.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Roll out the barrel

When the price of oil was \$33 a barrel, a tribunal of energy experts told me it was my fault.



Art Buchwald

They called me on the carpet and said, "Shame on you. You are consuming too much gasoline and making us hostage to the OPEC nations. If you continue down this slothful path you will dry up the world oil reserves by the year 2000."

"What do you want me to do?" I asked them.

The members of the tribunal looked down sternly and said, "Buy a smaller car. Use it only for essential trips. Stop joy riding. Keep the heat in the house at 68 degrees. Replace oil heaters with coal. Cut out air conditioning. Use mass transportation as often as you can. Drive 55 miles per hour, and have your engine cleaned by Mr. Goodwrench."

"If I do all that will the price of oil go down?"

"No. The price of oil will never go down in your lifetime or ours. All we want you to do is keep it from rising any higher."

"Why will it continue to soar?" I asked one of the wise men.

"Because the OPEC nations will make sure petroleum is always in short supply so they can drive up the price."

"Can anyone break this stranglehold?"

"Not in your time, boychick," he said. "Expect to pay \$50 a barrel and be grateful they will sell it to you. Now get out of here and conserve every cup of oil you can."

I did as I was instructed. I sold the big car and bought a foreign midget. I insulated the house. Instead of gas or oil I burned wood in my stoves. The kids, without any prodding from me, sold their snowmobiles and began riding the bus.

Then for no reason the price of oil dropped — first by a few pennies, then by nickels and dimes and finally by big petro-bucks.

The tribunal of oil wise men called me in. I thought they were going to congratulate me for my conservation. But they were angry.

"You've made fools of us. We predicted the price of oil would go up, but it has gone down."

"I had nothing to do with it."

"Hah! Your conservation methods have caused an oil glut. More oil is being produced than is being sold, and there is anarchy in the marketplace."

"One person can't cause an oil glut."

"Not you alone, but everyone like you who cuts back on consumption. Because of a lot of cheap people, oil may hit \$5 a barrel."

"You told me OPEC would never let that happen."

"They double-crossed each other by drilling more oil than they had agreed to. This forced everyone to open up their spigots and start a price war. The consumer is now in charge."

"Anything wrong with that?"

"The first rule of any business is to never let the consumer be in charge."

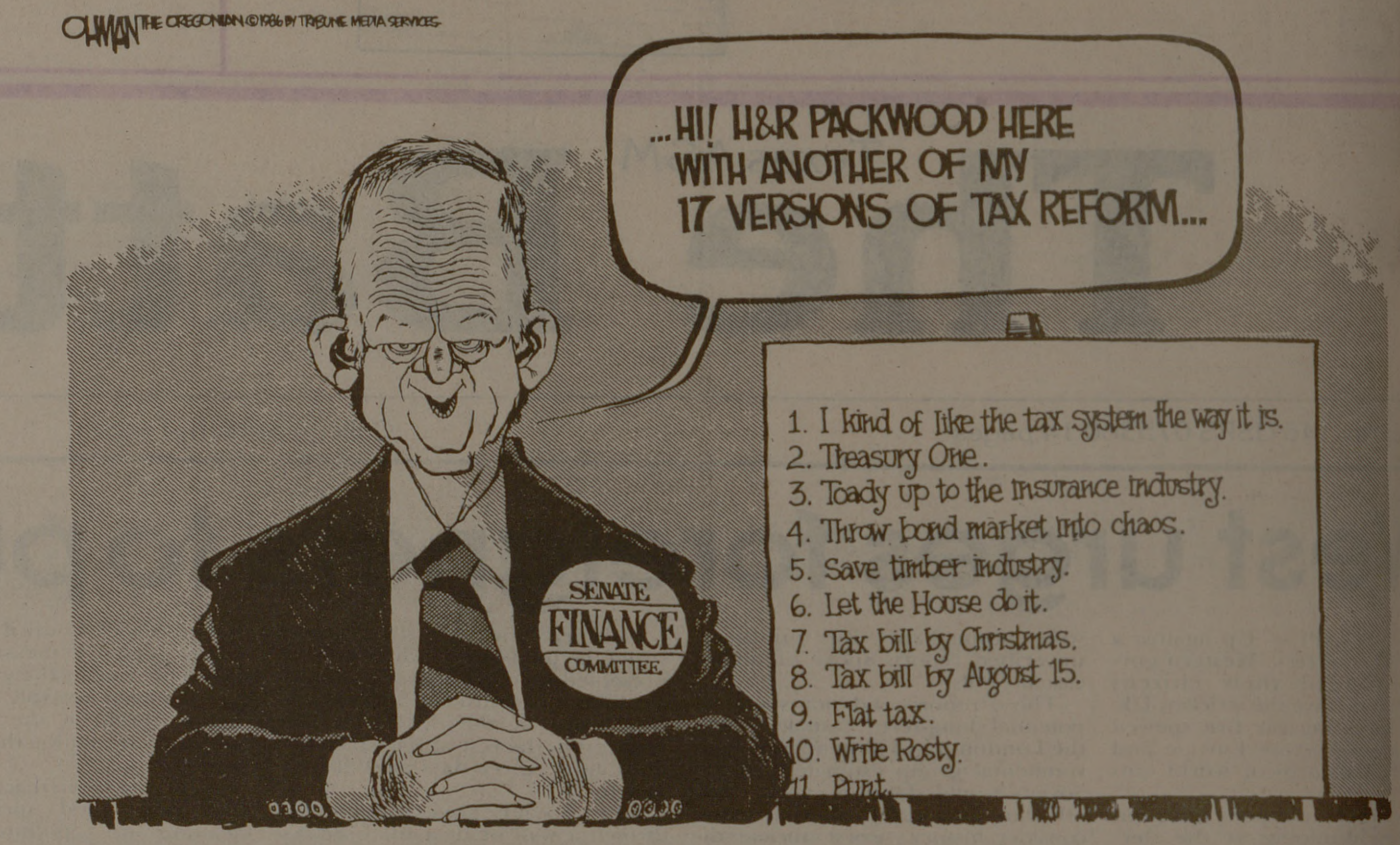
"So tell me, wise ones, how do I make the oil nations well?"

"Double your consumption of lighter fluid. Buy a diesel motorboat. Give each one of your kids a Porsche. Use heating oil to barbeque your steaks. Replace your electric lights with gas ones. Take an Exxon executive to lunch. Can you do it?"

"I guess so. But I sort of enjoy paying 70 cents a gallon for gasoline. It hasn't shaken me up as much as I thought it would."

"Don't think of yourself. Think of all the banks that have made loans to the petroleum industry. Remember, every time the price of oil drops 50 cents a barrel, a bank executive gets sick to his stomach."

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



Desire to exploit deformities man's most disgusting trait

It's amazing how low some directors will go in the process of making a movie. The makers of "Aurora Encounter" have reached a new high in lowness.



Karl Palmmeier

"Aurora Encounter" is an extremely low-budget film based on a supposedly true (that is if you believe in UFOs, the Bermuda Triangle and Elvis Presley's ghost) story of an alien spaceship that crashed into a windmill near Aurora, Texas in 1897. According to the legend, a small, human-like creature was found near the wreckage and was buried in an unmarked grave in an Aurora cemetery. (If the citizens of Aurora had a sense of humor, the tombstone might have read: "Not from around here.") In the movie, the alien meets and befriends some of the children of Aurora but eventually is gunned down by a xenophobic Texas Ranger.

The star of "Aurora Encounter" is Mickey Hays, a 13-year-old boy from Longview. Hays suffers from progeria, a rare and fatal disease that causes him to look like an old man. Hays is bald, arthritic, weighs only 35 pounds and is only 3 feet 9 inches tall. Due to Hays' strange looks and to the fact the makers of "Aurora Encounter" couldn't afford much money for makeup, he was given the role of the alien.

Exploitation of a physical deformity is one of man's sickest traits. For some strange reason people love to see ugliness. For over a hundred years circuses have featured freak shows. John "The

Elephant Man" Merrick is one of the best known freaks who was exploited by an English circus owner.

That great American businessman, P.T. Barnum, got his start by displaying the Siamese twins Chang and Eng. Barnum's circus was famous for the wide variety of freaks he had collected from around the world.

Movies also have had their freak shows. In 1932, Tod Browning, director of the original "Dracula," made "Freaks." "Freaks" was a horror movie that took place at a circus and dealt with the lives of the freaks working there. The stars of "Freaks" were actually a group of unfortunate people with physical deformities: midgets, mongoloids and Siamese twins. A horror movie is somewhat like a roller coaster — you feel that you are in danger, but the danger is not real. A horror movie is fun only when you realize that the monster is not real.

In 1950, Harry C. Fraser made "Chained for Life." The movie starred Siamese twins Daisy and Violet Hilton. In the movie, one of the sisters commits a murder and both must face the executioner. Fraser exploited the Hilton sisters in a later movie with the graphic title: "Torn by the Knife."

Midgets have often been a subject for exploitation in films. When Jed Duell's "The Terror of Tiny Town" came out in 1938, it was billed as the first "all midget, musical western." Fortunately it was the last. The classic "The Wizard of Oz" featured quite a few midgets but, unlike many other films, it wasn't intended to make fun of them. Maybe moviemakers will learn to pick on people of their size.

When I heard of Hays and his role in

"Aurora Encounter," I was reminded of the story of Rondo Hatton. Hatton was voted most handsome man his senior year in high school, was exposed to poison gas when he was a soldier during World War I. Exposure to the gas made Hatton susceptible to a disease known as acromegaly. Acromegaly causes a normal enlargement of the hands, feet, and face. Hatton suffered great physical pain and became an outcast in his hometown. He moved to California in 1924 that the dry climate would help his condition and to look for a job. The only he could find was as a monster in movies.

Hatton was billed as the "Ugliest in Pictures." He made a series of movies about "The Creeper," a psychopath who killed any woman who refused his advances because of his horrible face. The disease took its toll and Hatton died in 1946, shortly after making his last movie, "The Brute Man." It is that Hays has said he feels that his career is in the movies.

Although movies like "Freaks," "Chained for Life," "The Terror of Tiny Town" and "The Brute Man" are not often seen by the public, they have a large cult following. There are many movies, purchased only in the pornography book stores, that are these movies seem tame in comparison. To this day there are still circuses that show.

Why are we willing to watch these movies? Why are we willing to money to go to the circus freak show? Why do we want to see the ugliness of others? Is it because we don't look at the ugliness in ourselves?

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

Mail Call

Giving Christianity a bad name

EDITOR:
I am writing in response to a number of letters attacking gay students at Texas A&M, especially the letter from Mike Foarde on Tuesday, that have been published in *The Battalion*.

These letters were usually written from the viewpoint of a moral Christian speaking against what he or she perceives as the evil of homosexuality. The one thing all these letters had in common is a message of intolerance toward the rights of other people to live their life as they see fit.

It is a shame that such messages have been associated with the Christian name. Where is the understanding, compassion and willingness to forgive sin (this is assuming that homosexuality is a sin) that was Christ's message? Do the words "love thy neighbor" have no meaning?

It seems sad that so many people feel obligated to take their personal prejudices, coach them in the language of religious self-righteousness and besmirch the good name of Christianity by expressing such hostile, hate-filled thoughts in a manner that all A&M students must be exposed to them.

Steven P. Owen

A question of rights

EDITOR:
In Wednesday's *Battalion*, Mike Foarde stated accurately that the Declaration of Independence states that "Our inalienable rights were endowed by our creator." He goes on to assert that when certain people

violate the statutes of that creator, they forfeit those rights. I have one question: How can someone forfeit an INALIENABLE right?

Joe Knight '87

Special thanks

EDITOR:
Our sincere thanks go to all the volunteers who gave generously of their time and effort to make the Special Olympics a success.

The help of the large number of Aggies who were big hearted enough to contribute two days of their time was especially heart-warming.

We deeply appreciate it.

A.B. and Barbara Wooten

Plea for justice

EDITOR:
I just recently had my bike stolen from the Aston bike lot. It was new — purchased over the break between semesters to replace a bike stolen during the fall semester.

"Aggies don't lie, cheat or steal nor do they tolerate those who do." This tradition inspires me a little today. If you stole my bike(s), show some mercy and return it or them.

Bill Streidl '89

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. Editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length but 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.

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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.
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