

Opinion

The Battalion

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Setting standards

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which is envisioned by a delegation of educators and civic leaders, would establish nationwide teaching standards, a vital step toward improving the quality of education in the United States.

This delegation, appointed by the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, has the support of the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, the two largest teacher organizations, and the National Governors Association.

Currently, educational standards and teacher certification requirements vary from state to state. But the new board would create a set of national teaching standards over and above those of the states. Teachers still could be state-certified, but those who also receive the endorsement of the national panel would receive higher salaries — perhaps as high as \$65,000 or more.

The board was a central proposal of the Carnegie report calling for improvement of teachers' status and increased control over what they teach. But educators are not the only ones who will be effected by the new standards. Students also will benefit from higher certification requirements for teachers. It stands to reason that tougher qualifications will weed out all but the most qualified teachers.

The new standards will not only measure what is taught in the classroom but how it is presented. The new assessment methods won't be implemented for three to four years, but the long-term impact of the board is advantageous for both educators and education.

The stricter requirements will help ensure that teachers have learned their lessons before they teach them.

Countdown to success

After a seven-month losing streak, NASA finally got a rocket off the ground without a hitch Friday, and space-agency officials hope this will provide employees with a long-overdue morale boost.

The Delta rocket, carrying a payload of two Strategic Defense Initiative satellites, was a far cry from the glory of a successful space shuttle launch. But we hope it marks the start of a countdown to future successes for the space agency.

Since the Challenger disaster Jan. 28 and the subsequent grounding of the shuttle program, the American space industry has experienced a barrage of failures involving various booster rockets and scientific projects.

The Delta success reminds us of how the space program used to be, and how it *should* be still. Let's hope that NASA can get America's floundering space effort off the ground again.

Caution: misinterpretation ahead

Here is the line the avant-garde is taking on the Sandinistas. It is all laid out in the rolling, witty prose of the suave anti-American Irishman Conor Cruise O'Brien. O'Brien previously served as vice chancellor of the University of Ghana. Before that he was a functionary of the United Nations, active in anti-American activity on all international fronts, taking extracurricular time to defend Alger Hiss and defame Whittaker Chambers. He is back now, taking pretty much the Soviet line on the Sandinistas. In a big piece in *The Atlantic* called "God and Man in Nicaragua," he is telling us what to think about our policy in opposing the Sandinistas. The line is:



William F. Buckley Jr.

intention of becoming a Soviet satellite. In the event that this should happen, why, the blame clearly will be that of Ronald Reagan for supporting the Contra movement.

All clear now? Recent data from Nicaragua document that the standard of living there has fallen to approximately 50 percent of the economic level of life under former President Anastasio Somoza. Why should that be? Well, President Daniel Ortega just has completed a tour of the United States in which he gives the reason for such reversals. Any country that has to fight a civil war backed by the United States obviously has to give first priority to the war for independence. It is not explained why this should have been necessary given that the United States actively supported a) the overthrow of Somoza, and b) the Sandinista government — until it became universally clear that the Sandinista movement had been taken over by Marxist-Leninists.

The Sandinistas proceeded to institute a repressive government impeded only by the great defections of original Sandinistas. These deserted the movement when it became obvious that it was bent not on instituting personal liberty, political democracy and economic progress, but Marxist militarism. It became clear even to economically shortsighted observers that the God of the Poor, under the Sandinistas, was engaged in multiplying poverty. The only economic accomplishment Marxist socialism is capable of is the elimination of the wealthy and the middle class. If God is involved in helping the poor in Nicaragua, there are unmistakable grounds here for religious agnosticism.

1. The Sandinista movement is 100 percent nationalist, anti-imperialist and Christian.

2. The Christianity of the Sandinistas is incorporated in their motto, "El Dios de los Pobres" — the God of the Poor. He is to be distinguished from the regular God of Latin Americans, who is the God of the Rich.

3. When Pope John Paul II visited Nicaragua three years ago, he committed a terrible blunder by publicly castigating Father Ernesto Cardenal, the Sandinistas' minister of culture, while aligning himself with Cardinal Obando y Bravo, the outspoken critic of the Sandinistas.

4. The Sandinistas have absolutely no

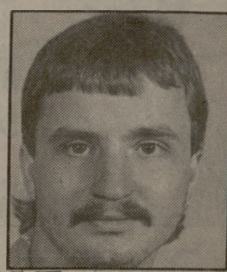


CORNERSTONES OF LIBYAN POLICY

- * NON-ALIGNED NATIONS (EXCEPT CUBA & NICARAGUA) ARE U.S. IMPERIALIST PUPPETS
- * LIBYA IS BESEIGED (BY AMERICAN TOURISTS IN EUROPE & MEXICO)
- * TOLERANCE & UNDERSTANDING OF U.S. IMPERIALIST DOGMAS
- * KEY U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL MUST DIE (I.E., WOMEN AND SMALL BABIES)
- * PEACE THROUGH TERROR
- * LIBYANS MUST BE WILLING TO SACRIFICE EVERYTHING BUT GADHAFI'S PRECIOUS SKIN

Numerous vehicles, bad habits create Aggie traffic monster

The ever-increasing number of mopeds, bicycles, motorcycles, cars and people on campus has created a traffic monster that exceeds my most horrific hallucinations.



Craig Renfro

Anyone who has tried to maneuver Ross Street at the noon hour, or any time immediately before or after classes knows what I'm talking about. It's almost impossible to cross because of a solid wall of human flesh.

These pedestrians have only one thing in mind — crossing the street no matter what. They don't take into consideration that traffic is backed up for miles because they have more important things to do.

Most pedestrians don't even use common sense when attempting to cross the street. They dart out in the middle of the road regardless of what motor vehicle might be bearing down on them, and then expect the driver to slam on the brakes because they have the right-of-way.

I fully understand that pedestrians do have the right-of-way, but when it comes to enforcing my rights or being crushed to smithereens by one ton of metal cruising at 30 mph, I think my rights could take a temporary back seat.

I often wonder how many Texas A&M students are killed while away from College Station because they walk out in front of cars. Surely this has happened to some unfortunate soul. Imagine the grief the parents felt after spending thousands of dollars on their child's education.

People who stop in the middle of the sidewalk to talk also bother me. The most flagrant violators are members of the Corps of Cadets. They are always "whipping out," as it is called when an underclassman sees some upperclassman and has to run up and give his name, rank and serial number.

This Geneva Convention-type greeting has more than once caused me to alter my course of travel, lest I trample one of these military youths.

The Memorial Student Center is another place where large crowds of people manage to take up half the hallway. Just once I would like to get on a loud-speaker and tell them to get out of the way or else. I just hope they would oblige, because the "or else" could be drastic.

However, this is enough harping on pedestrians. There are other flagrant violators of traffic rules — namely bicycles and mopeds. These blazing idiots roam about the campus at speeds of 15-20 mph zipping in and out of people and often times narrowly avoiding the big crash. Some of these people must have a deathwish the size of Alaska because many times they are the same people who cause these near catastrophes.

More than once during my stay at fine University a brisk breeze blew up the back of my shirt after these two-wheeled maniacs flew on the sidewalk. I could feel their tires as the hair on my leg sucked into the spokes. Fortunately these experiences occurred so far from my situation was.

Just once I thought about something cruel and totally unchristian of my otherwise cheerful kick one of those bikers right off his frame and send them tumbling down the sidewalk. However, I don't think I stoop to such animalistic behavior, least not without the influence of mind-boggling substances, because I have seen what happens when I meets concrete.

It is not a pretty sight. Shredded, the bike is mangled, blood trickles from the kneecaps, making it difficult to walk the next day to mention making ugly scars that increase your chances of getting a date.

This is probably enough of this ranting and raving because no matter how many people will continue to act like this and play "Frogger" with their lives.

Of course, I don't include any of these traffic abominations cause I drive a motorcycle.

Craig Renfro is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.

Mail Call

A healthy tradition

EDITOR:

I write in reply to Mark Ude's column, "A&M traditions are more than outdated customs." Ude, in his conclusion, states: "The major traditional events which mark the school year still remain because they have more tradition holding them up." Indeed, the bases upon which rest the major traditions at A&M consist of more than tradition itself, but Ude fails to mention, if not recognize, a point of relevant significance. One can defend tradition, if not deleterious, on the grounds of tradition alone.

Each generation cannot solve anew all the world's problems, nor can each, by itself, reach that high attainment called civilization — an attainment higher than, in the words of Edmond Burke, "the gross animal existence of temporary and perishable nature." Traditions, even when they have no profound or sublime bases, are of great worth because they help us remember these things. They provide a means of coherence between generations past, present, and future. They encourage us to look at the institutions and ways of those who preceded us and determine whether we should maintain, modify, eradicate or even restore them, for the benefit of both the present and the future. (Civilization, note, is a partnership that includes future generations).

A&M places upon tradition a heavy emphasis. Though some traditions adhered to in the past no longer exist, others have continued for generations. Certain others are but a few years old. While some traditions here boast noble origins, a reason we in fact have so many traditions at A&M is that those who came before us recognized the positive role of tradition. Heed the wisdom of those old A&M, who know that a tradition of tradition is a healthy tradition indeed.

Andrew H. Pendleton
History
Class of '88

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.