

# Opinion

## The Battalion

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## What 'compromise'?

Texas House and Senate negotiators are calling the decision to hack 6 percent of Texas A&M's 1987 appropriations a "compromise," but the only thing being compromised by the agreement is higher education and, indirectly, the economic future of the state.

The actual effects of the cuts still are uncertain, but the conference committee's decision, combined with the loss of raises for state employees, means A&M and other Texas colleges and universities will have to trim more fat than their lean budgets can spare — at a time when the state needs increased development of alternative income sources.

Cutting the budget by "only" 6 percent instead of the 13 percent called for last spring by Gov. Mark White or the 7.6 percent offered by A&M at the same time is a slight improvement. Instead of using a machete on higher education, state lawmakers have decided to use a meat cleaver.

Texas' financial future will continue to look grim unless the state finds sources other than the oil and natural gas industries on which to build its economy. Such development requires extensive help from the state's institutions of higher learning.

But with the reductions in state appropriations, colleges and universities will have to deal with the internal ramifications of the present — larger classes, fewer courses, reduced resources — before they can concern themselves with the future of the state.

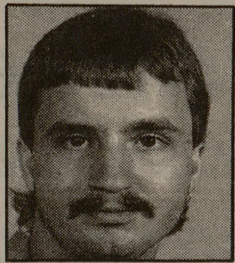
In addition to Texas' floundering economy, the cancellation of promised pay hikes, faculty lured out of state by other schools, increasing insurance rates and the loss of sick leave for faculty who teach less than 12 months combine to make Texas colleges and universities an unpleasant picture not only for residents, but for those outside looking in, too. New faculty is not going to flock to such fallow feeding grounds.

Texas has made a solid commitment to education through the Permanent University Fund and the Permanent School Fund, ensuring that our educational coffers will never run dry. Now that commitment must be taken one step further.

Getting the derailed Texas economy back on track isn't going to be easy. The solution can be summed up with the maxim, "it takes money to make money." If higher education isn't given its share of the "take" now, there may not be anything left to "make" in the future.

## Commando fashion for all-out drug war

As a concerned patriotic citizen of the United States, I fully uphold President Reagan's anti-drug program. Drugs are demoralizing American society, and the scum of the earth that produce, distribute and use these mind-altering substances should face the full wrath of Reagan.



Craig Renfro

Reagan's goals are a drug-free workplace, drug-free schools, treatment for users, expanded international cooperation, stronger law enforcement and increased public awareness.

These are admirable, but they don't get to the root of the problem. If Reagan really wants to get rid of drugs, he must hit where it hurts most — the drug producers.

The producers are primarily Central and South American countries. Peasant farmers, abetted by corrupt politicians, cultivate about 300,000 acres of coca in Peru, Bolivia, Colombia and Ecuador.

The coca leaves are processed with ether, acetone and hydrochloric acid to refine the coca paste into cocaine. Then it's shipped to the United States via re-fueling and transshipping stops in Mexico and the Bahamas.

After many hours of pondering this perilous situation, I came up with a plan to help Reagan rid the country of this certain chemical destruction. Instead of spending billions of dollars on treatment and research, I propose hiring a crack team of mercenaries to kill these drug mongers before they ruin the world.

This may sound a little drastic, but the country could save billions of dollars. I recently read *Soldier of Fortune* magazine and found that for \$1,000 you can rent a hired killer to do away with anyone you want.

For a mere \$100,000 the administration could have 100 assassins trained to terminate with extreme prejudice. Just imagine what a hit team composed of "Rambo," "Commando" and "Gung

Ho" could do to a cocaine processing lab. A few grenade launchers here, an anti-ballistic missile or two there, and pretty soon you would have nothing to worry about.

The hit squad would have to practice for a couple of weeks so that their attacks could be performed with split-second precision. They probably would start off with a 40-minute run to a cadence of "Lean, Green, Fighting Machine" to get them back in boot camp shape.

Of course no boot camp would be complete without matching "I'd Rather Be Killing Drug Pushers" T-shirts. These fine quality shirts would unify the men around the cause, giving them a feeling of self-confidence so high that nothing short of jungle rot would stop them.

However, when it comes time to hit the jungles, the T-shirts would be tossed aside for full combat camouflage. This lightweight, rugged and fully reinforced outfit would allow for a quick kill without the risk of being seen.

For those nighttime excursions no mercenary would be caught dead without a pair of see-in-the-dark binoculars or a commando glow-in-the-dark watch.

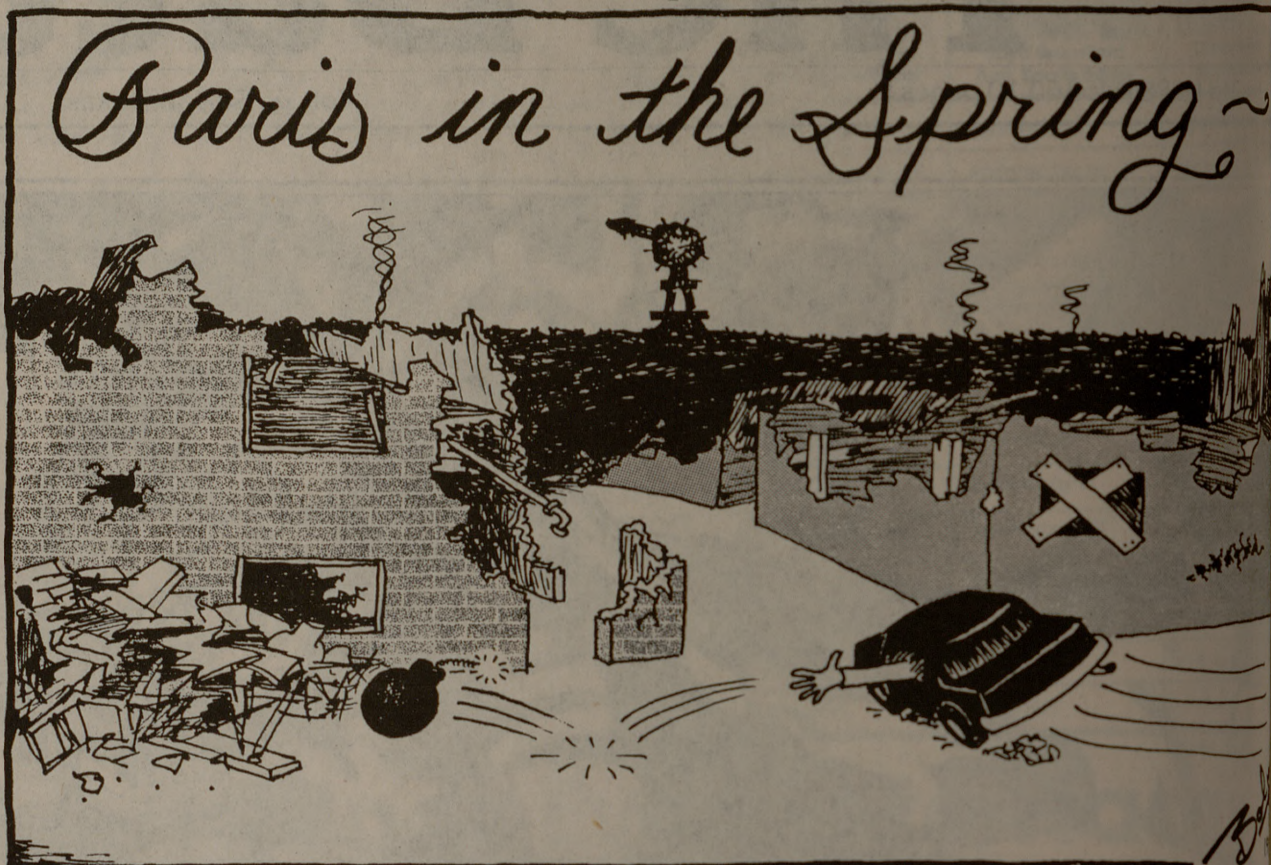
Another must for the chic mercenary is the survival knife complete with small fishing harpoon, can and bottle opener, compass, morse code list, matches and signal mirror.

If the patriotic urge to support this armed force strikes you then fear not. Just because you can't tote a submachine gun or hurl a grenade 50 yards doesn't mean that you can't make a tax deductible donation to help end this drug menace.

Through the efforts of these brave, valiant men the nation would be saved from this terrible scourge, and federal workers would not have their civil rights violated by taking drug tests because there would be no drugs. The country could return to a period of normality resembling the 1950s.

I wonder if Reagan ever reads *Soldier of Fortune*...

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



## Rehnquist not a 'mensch'

Maybe the supreme gift of Yiddish to the English language is the word "mensch." Its literal meaning, as in German from whence it came, is "person." But in Yiddish it reaches for the essence of that person — his character. A "mensch" is someone to emulate, a person of consequence whose character is both rare and undisputed. The question that faced the U. S. Senate last week can best be stated in Yiddish: Is William Rehnquist a "mensch?"



Richard Cohen

He certainly ought to be. As chief justice, he will not only be the leader of the high court but will come to personify justice itself. By his words and actions, he will tell the aggrieved whether American justice will grant them a fair, impartial hearing or whether the system will — in some way that they can sense — be closed to them.

There are abundant reasons to question William Rehnquist's character, and the restrictive covenants barring the sale of two of his homes to blacks or Jews is one of them. The covenants were legally meaningless, but they remain troubling because they go to the heart of the question about Rehnquist: What sort of man is he? What do the covenants say about his sensitivity — about his willingness to tolerate in his own deeds artifacts of anti-Semitism and racism? Is this the sort of man we want to be the nation's supreme judicial officer?

Despite what some senators say, this is

not a question having to do with ideology or with a specific school of legal thought, such as strict constructionism. There is no better way to understand that distinction than to compare Rehnquist to the man who nominated him — President Reagan. In Reagan, the American people feel they have a man of fairness, one whose ideology is pronounced but so, too, is his lack of animus. Agree or disagree with the president, it's difficult to argue that he is a petty man, irrevocably anchored in a cold and inhospitable mentality. Ronald Reagan would have been appalled by a restrictive covenant and would not have failed to have it expunged. His character is manifest.

Not so Rehnquist. His failure to deal with the odious covenants are not isolated episodes, but part of a pattern. For instance, he helped challenge the voting qualifications of Arizona blacks and Hispanics. He was entitled to do so. But even if he did not personally harass potential voters, as witnesses allege, what sort of man would become involved in an effort to deny the ballot to any American citizen? There is an unspoken contempt in Rehnquist's activities, an unvoiced reproach to those among the poor and the marginally literate who would seek to exercise their franchise.

The same holds for women. Rehnquist's position on the Equal Rights Amendment, set out in a memo to the Nixon White House, is now as moot as the ERA itself and, besides, a common and — as it turned out — prevailing point of view. But in that same memo, Rehnquist waxed Victorian: Women, by virtue of their sex, are not quite the equal of men and, in marriage, clearly subordinate.

Rehnquist wrote that if a husband "decides to move from Boston to Chicago to take a different job, the wife is legally obligated to accompany him." In most families, this would be a matter for discussion, not fiat, the notion that a wife is not chattel but a free agent maybe with a job and preferences of her own.

The case against Rehnquist is one of law or ideology, but of fairness, perception and, ultimately, of character. More often than anyone would like, an account of events has been dictated by others and his legal ethics have been challenged by scholars whose denials are unquestioned. His failures expunge the Arizona poll watcher, his quarrel with women as furniture — they all speak a man whose antipathies are as severe as the ideology that justifies it.

The importance of the Supreme Court is unquestioned and so should be the character of its chief justice. You could not reasonably argue that Rehnquist is a rogue. But partisan dukes are put down, and could you say that he is the sort of man evoked by the word "mensch?"

For many Americans, especially those who need the courts most, Rehnquist's record and demeanor suggest someone whose legal issues aside, will be inhospitable to them and their grievances — would not be, in a symbolic sense, the chief justice. To them, the covenants it all. In seeking justice from the Rehnquist court, minorities and women are not apply.

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## Mail Call

### Keep up the good sports

EDITOR:

I am writing this letter in response to some Louisiana State University fans my friends and I came upon after we were outscored at the football game last weekend in Baton Rouge. As we were walking out of the stadium to my car, some Tiger fans were loudly chanting, "Go to hell Aggies, go to hell. Stupid, stupid Aggies, you should never have come here in the first place."

Try as we might, my friends and I did not have much luck keeping our mouths closed after about five minutes of this verbal abuse.

These fans were showing extremely poor sportsmanship. Of all the football games, I can honestly say that Aggies in both victory and in defeat are never that publicly obnoxious.

Nearly all of us Ags are guilty of saying rude, distasteful things among ourselves about our opponents, whoever they may be. But the worst I have ever heard in public from a bragging Aggie is a hiss or a "whoop."

Hearing those LSU Tigers being so obnoxious made me realize the importance of being part of a university whose fans show good, clean sportsmanship. Ags — let's keep it that way.

Missy Palmer '89

### Excesses and excuses

EDITOR:

Last night, while studying in the Sterling C. Evans Library, I started to think about the recent budget problems at Texas A&M. I was in one of the arctic regions of the third floor, wondering where I was going to come up with \$90 to pay my last utility bill, when I decided to find out how much it costs to keep the library at sub-zero temperatures.

I couldn't find a building by building breakdown of the utility costs at A&M, but I did discover that last year this school paid more than \$36 million for utilities alone.

That's right, \$30,000,000 — about 10,000 dollars per student. I couldn't believe it.

Finally I sunk in. It's more important to keep the library in a deep freeze than it is to show fiscal restraint, cut maybe \$10 million or \$20 million out of the utilities budget and spend that money on sensible things, such as teaching assistants and professors.

Let's face it, my tuition for the spring, summer and fall combined came to \$1,184. Subtract \$1,000 dollars for utilities, and that leaves \$184 for my education.

I don't see any "budget crisis" at this school. All I see are massive excesses and even bigger excuses. What I do see are concerned people working together to cut the budget where it won't affect the quality of education at A&M.

Donald R. Anderson '87

### Wake up

EDITOR:

Wake up to the beautiful truth that there is a God and we are not him. Stop considering life to come from yourself, for if that were true, you would have life and would not be trying to find it. Stop living on momentary thrills or the feeling that you can make yourself into somebody, because these things lead to death.

God showed his love to the world by sending his son, Jesus. Jesus, in obedience to God, revealed this love to us. While we were going our own way, he died for us so that we would no longer live for ourselves but for the one who loved us. Jesus broke the power that sin has over us. Cling to, trust in and rely on Jesus and you can have eternal life.

Remember, Jesus is the lord of lords and the king of kings, and when you rebel against the king you will be punished.

John Austin

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