

# Opinion

## The Battalion

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## Wasted on drugs

It seems that bills are easier to get through Congress these days if they're linked to the "War on Drugs." The latest consequence of this symbiotic nightmare is student financial aid — which can't afford to have Congress and the president picking its pocket in the name of an overblown national crisis.

Just when it looked like the House and Senate wouldn't agree on an extension of the Higher Education Act before Congress adjourned Oct. 3, a resolution was reached that would have made substantially more financial aid available to students, provided that schools certify that they have policies to prevent drug abuse by students.

To add injury to insult, Secretary of Education William J. Bennett last week unveiled a Reagan administration proposal to divert \$100 million from student aid in fiscal 1987 to fund the anti-drug effort.

In a press conference last week Bennett chastised colleges and universities for not heeding his call to send letters to students telling them that no drugs would be tolerated on campuses. Only about a dozen colleges out of 3,200 complied.

Bennett claims that college and university presidents are "ducking" the drug problem. But it's the education secretary who's the quack. Students should not be punished because their schools failed to acknowledge Bennett's simplistic solution to the campus drug crisis.

The funds that Congress and the Reagan administration are toying with in the name of the drug war will deprive many students of their education. The proposal would take \$50 million from the College Work Study program and the same amount from the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant programs. The American Council on Education estimates that 125,000 students will be dropped from the programs.

The conditional arrangement of future financial aid is especially devastating because more students are applying for financial aid now than ever before, according to a recent College Board study. Schools and the federal government have granted more financial aid, but it buys less education, the study found.

What the administration is saying with the proposal is that whether an individual goes to college is unimportant, what matters is that they stay drug-free.

College students shouldn't be forced to pay for the anti-drug effort with their education. Even if it's in the name of the latest national craze, 125,000 minds are terrible things to waste.

## Slaying the dinosaur

The Senate's vote to allow state legislatures to raise the speed limit on rural parts of interstate highways reflects a long-overdue change of attitude toward this archaic and obsolete regulation.

Born in the energy-overconscious Congress of 1974, the law was created to conserve gasoline during the time of the national fuel shortage. Although the law's purpose has been fulfilled, pro-55ers continue to cling to its false benefits.

The law's effectiveness was always questionable. The gasoline saved by driving 55 — about 1 percent — is comparable to a slight increase in tire pressure, hardly the massive savings claimed by the law's supporters.

What little savings the law did yield were reduced even further by motorists who refused to comply. The "double nickel" speed limit has been one of the most widely violated laws since Prohibition.

Besides being largely ignored by motorists and saving only a miniscule amount of gas, the law falls short of other lofty justifications bestowed upon it by well-meaning lawmakers and special interest groups.

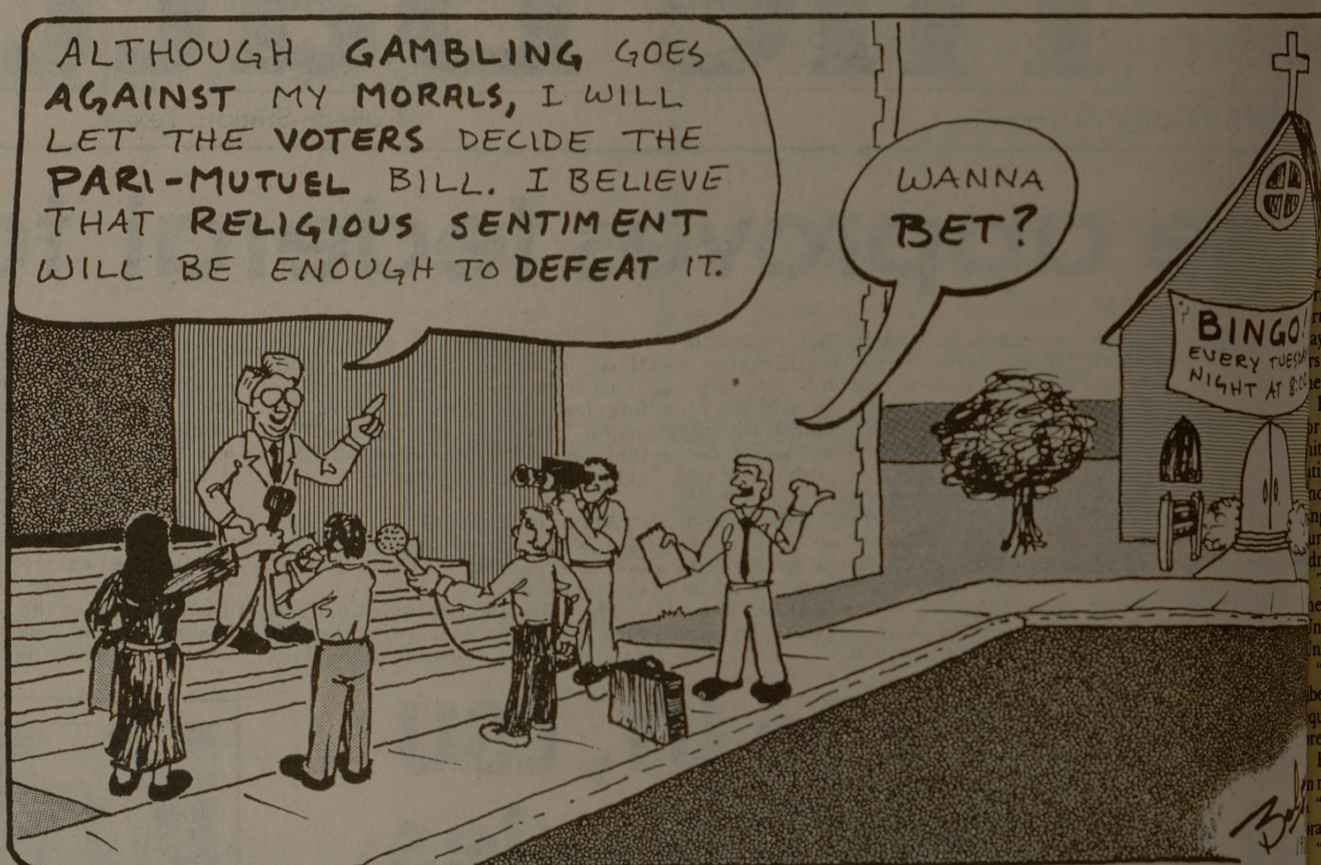
Highway safety, an alleged side effect of the mandatory speed limit, is as uncertain as the fuel savings. Interstate highways were designed with a 70 mph speed limit in mind. Recent studies have found that cars traveling together at sharply different speeds causes more highway deaths than all cars traveling at speeds in excess of 55 mph.

Claims that the law reduces traffic deaths are inconclusive. Sen. William Proxmire, D-Wis., says that increasing the speed limit is the equivalent of "signing the death warrants of 500 men, women and children."

But traffic deaths were declining before the mandatory 55 mph limit was imposed. The battle against drunken drivers and mandatory seat belt laws has done more to reduce traffic deaths than a lower speed limit.

Differences between the House and Senate still must be resolved before the increased speed limit can go into effect. The House could be a major hurdle for the bill, considering it voted 198-218 against a similar measure Aug. 8.

The Senate should be commended for its initiative. The 55 mph speed limit is a dinosaur from the '70s that desperately needs to be slain. The House should join forces with the Senate in taking up the sword.



## Klan's candidate views Texas history selectively

A funny thing happened to me when I got to work last Friday.

On top of my desk, I found a campaign brochure, which said, "Elect Charles Lee Governor in '86."

Along with the brochure was a letter to the editor from Lee himself, the grand dragon of the White Camelia order of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and a write-in candidate for governor.

OK, so that's not so funny.

But if you'll take a look at my photo, you'll notice that I don't have to wait 'til summer to get a glowing tan. No, the real beauty of my bronze is that it stays with me all year long.

My sick sense of humor was shared by my staff. Above the picture of the grand gubernatorial candidate, someone had scrawled, "For Cathie, I know I can count on your support."

After a chuckle, I raked this literature into one of my desk drawers, closed it and rushed off to the weekly critique session for the paper. On a less hectic day earlier this week, I rediscovered and read the brochure.

"I feel that the leadership of both parties have compromised to minority interest to the point that they can no longer represent white Texans fully," Lee said in his flier. "I myself was born and raised in Texas and have always had a deep appreciation for our state's history and reputation, in fact, that is what has prompted me to seek the governor's office."

It seems strange that anyone who appreciates the reputation and history of Texas could forget the importance of Mexican rebels who stood beside their Anglo counterparts in the fight for the state's independence. And the pride

that Texans boast of probably is derived from the quiet self-assurance of these people.

Lee, however, says "these minorities have nothing in common with our (white Texans) culture. In fact, they wish to destroy our culture and replace it with their own."

The grand dragon has missed not only the Mayflower but also the Nina, the Pinta, the Santa Maria and more. The United States is a nation of varied races who came together by choice, accident, collusion or force, yet this country has survived, not because of the superiority of one race but because of the work of all races. Somehow the groups have managed to intermix, thus inventing such innovative art forms as jazz, while simultaneously retaining their distinctness.

But to Lee, such distinct differences are blemishes or impurities in Texas' culture.

Lee says, "Our history is being replaced by non-white history, which will bring down and eventually destroy our white Christian civilization."

Hmmm, I wonder if anyone told Christ his birth record was mixed up.

"I am also concerned about our children's safety because they are suffering at the hands of minorities in our public schools," Lee says. "They are being abused and in many cases non-whites are trying to force themselves on young white girls through threats of violence. Educational standards have also been lowered in our public schools so that minorities can pass equally with whites."

Well, after reading all this, I stopped laughing. People possessed by such paranoia should not be a cause of laughter because they are breeders of witch hunts, holocausts and even wars.

Lee says some people have asked him, "Can we win this election despite the anti-white and anti-Klan feelings of the media and the fact that they will do little to publicize your candidacy?"



Cathie Anderson



"In reply all I can say is, 'Don't let the media lead you to believe that this is the only ones that can predict the come of this election.'"

Indeed, Americans should be cautioned of this, not just in this election.

At the end, Lee says, "The white built this state, fought and died, we must remain masters of our own destinies here in the State of Texas. member the Klan's motto, 'God and Country.'"

Yet, Mr. Lee, other races also built, fought and died for this state. Don't tread on us.

Cathie Anderson is a senior journalism major and editor for The Battalion.

## Mail Call

### Dim outlook

EDITOR:

If I am an average student at Texas A&M, then I have three unpaid parking tickets. This business of collecting tickets has become a favorite pastime of Aggies. We have all heard and read about our friends who left their car to run to their room on the first floor of the dorm and came out to find the University Police placing a new addition to the collection on the windshield.

Well, have I got a story for you. Last night, on my way to the freshman parking lot, I drove down dark Agronomy Road. Because of the darkness, I used my high beams. When I reached the intersection at University Drive, I had to wait for the imaginary traffic to pass by before the light turned green. As you can guess, with no other cars around I didn't dim the headlights as I proceeded on toward the parking lot. I reached the stop sign at Kleberg Animal and Food Science Center and noticed multicolored flashing lights coming from behind me — it was the dreaded Campus Police. Yes, you guessed it, at 12:40 a.m. I received a ticket for not dimming my headlights in the fish lot.

Well, now I must pay a fine and appear before the justice of the peace. I guess that will take two or three hours of prime study time.

Now that you've heard my story, try to top it. But a

word of advice: Don't drive, don't park and don't bring your car, bike or motorcycle to A&M. And when all this is gone, maybe they will give tickets if your shoes need to be resoled or your socks have holes in them.

Patricia Lee Evans '89

### In memory

EDITOR:

To those friends of Melvin Andy Anderson who don't know yet, Andy was killed in a car accident Wednesday.

We will all miss his smiling face at the Memorial Student Center post office. I remember many times when he cheered me up with a positive word or two. He never had a negative thought or word. He was the kind of dependable friend we all cherish.

I would like to say, for all of his friends, that we were happy to have had a friend like him for the time we had. His bright, smiling face will not die in our memory.

Carol Czyz '88

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The 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 typed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.