

Opinion

The Battalion

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Cost of carelessness

Twenty-nine percent of the applications submitted for voter registration in Brazos County were rejected in 1986 because they were filled out incorrectly. Since it's predicted that Texas will have low voter turnout for the Nov. 4 general election, it's important that everyone who registers does it correctly.

Brazos County Tax Assessor-Collector Gerald "Buddy" Winn says many of the rejected applications are from Texas A&M students. Typical mistakes students make on applications are filling in their parents' address instead of their Brazos County residence and putting the date of application instead of their birth date. Winn says students probably are used to filling out forms the way they would for the University.

Voter apathy is an increasing problem in Texas, and the gubernatorial race has done little to encourage a strong showing at the polls this year. Only 20 to 30 percent of the eligible voters are expected to go to the polls for the upcoming election, and no amount of prodding will transform voter apathy into activity.

It's disturbing that 17,782 out of about 60,000 would-be voters who put forth the effort to register will be denied their voting privilege — many because of sheer carelessness.

Students not only need to register to vote, but also should take the time to fill out the forms properly.

Voting is far too precious a privilege to forfeit in the name of careless haste.

Church-state marriage forges scary offspring

I think Jimmy Carter should run for president again in 1988.

Lewis Grizzard

I'm being serious here.

First of all, he's had six years to contemplate all the things he did wrong when he was president.

If he got back into office, I am certain he would have a much better idea of how to do the job than any of the rookies who would be running against him.

Not only that, but I think Jimmy Carter, who is a "born-again" himself, might be just the person we need to put a halt on all these right-wing religious fruitcakes who forget that this country came to be in the first place because our ancestors got fed up with the church controlling their lives.

Imagine if television evangelist Pat Robertson *did* get elected president.

He could defend anything he might do simply by saying, "God told me to do it."

There are nuthouses full of people who think they have a hotline to heaven. "Why did you kill all those people, Harvey?"

"God told me to do it."

Nothing Jimmy Carter did when he was president impressed me more than what he did recently.

The Ayatollah Falwell, a.k.a., the Reverend Jerry, questioned Carter's Christianity, and Carter told Falwell to "go to hell."

Bravo, Jimbo.

It was about time somebody told that toad Falwell to mind his own business.

Where did Jerry Falwell come from? Why do otherwise sensible people send him millions of dollars? Why is it every time I tune in to "Nightline" this guy is on there pontificating pompously?

Is the nation losing its collective mind? Aren't we intelligent enough to think for ourselves and mold our own beliefs without the Robertsons, Falwells, Swaggarts, et al. taking care of these functions for us?

I was talking to a North Carolina legislator recently. He said, "You wouldn't believe how much power the church has now. The black churches became very powerful during the Civil Rights Movement, and now the white churches are carrying a big stick."

"And there is only one issue on their minds, and I hear about it all the time: 'Are you a fundamental, Bible-believing Christian?'"

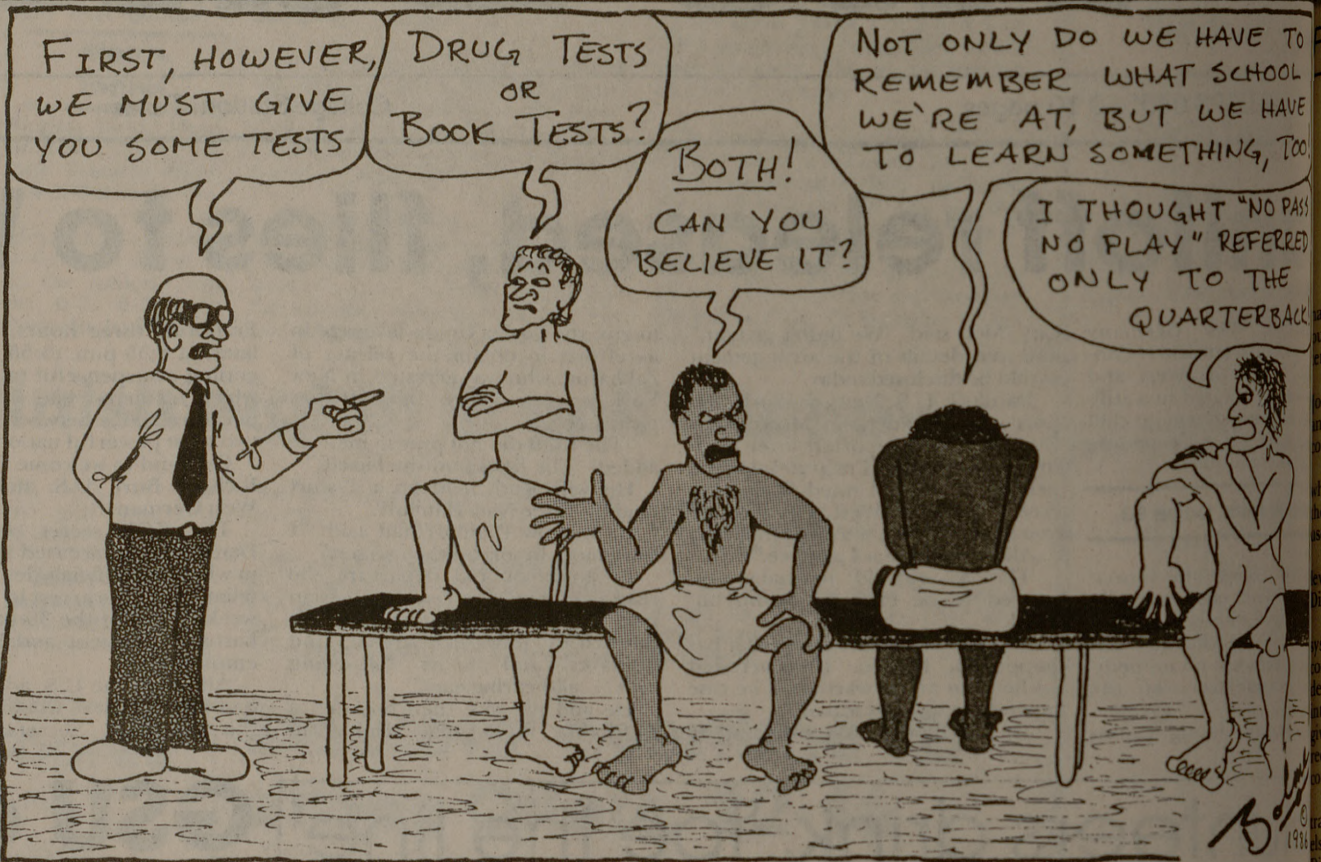
"They will accept only two answers. 'Yes,' I stay in office. 'No,' and I'm out."

Jimmy Carter would know how to deal with these people and the threat they pose to the rest of the population, which understands the marriage of church and state inevitably forges dangerous offspring.

To be certain, Carter is a church man, but he is a rational believer, and God knows we need more of his kind.

To borrow a phrase, "Run, Jimmy, run." The wild-eyed Falwellian fundamentalist fanatics are gaining on us.

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Reagan's dream weapons won't stop terrorist onslaught

President Reagan never has appreciated his Strategic Defense Initiative project being dubbed "Star Wars," after the popular science fiction movie, but the analogy is more accurate than perhaps even Reagan realizes.



Loren Steffy

In the film, the evil empire's Death Star could destroy an entire planet but was unable to defend itself against the gnat-like attack of the rebel fighters. The space station meant considerable power for the empire in the future, but it couldn't protect itself from the present.

The U.S. war machine faces a similar fate. It has the Goliath-like strength to obliterate entire nations, yet it is unable to handle the seemingly incessant attacks from a hoarde of terroristic Davids.

The president's much-vaunted SDI is useless against hit-and-run bombers and hijackers. Reagan's second most-powerful weapon, his diplomatic tongue, is equally ineffective. While the president is pouring money into futuristic weapons systems and slinging rhetoric, the most dangerous threat to national stability remains unchecked.

Presidents generally have had little luck with anti-terrorism policies. Jimmy Carter's failure to rescue the Iranian hostages cost him a second term. Reagan, too, has had few successes, but he hides this well. The hijacking of TWA Flight 847 was not resolved by a respectable flexing of American military muscle.

But terrorism presents a dilemma that few countries can deal with effectively. Not many terrorists comprehend diplomacy — they are fluent only in violence.

But retaliating at their level, while perhaps providing a momentary release of frustration, is ineffective and demoralizing to the nation. The U.S. bombing raid on Libya has not curtailed terrorist activities, and the same goes for Israel's eye-for-an-eye seige on Tunisia

in hopes of stopping the Palestine Liberation Organization. The PLO, despite a change of venue, still is going strong.

Inaction, of course, is not the answer, either. It is idleness by the Reagan administration that led to the current plight of the "forgotten seven" hostages in Beirut. Some are now dead, a few were released at the hostage takers' — not America's — whim.

Recently, two more Americans were captured in Lebanon. The administration either can play out its policy and refuse to negotiate or bomb known terrorist hideouts, neither of which will get the hostages released.

International cooperation has had the most success in combating terrorism, but even that has its pitfalls — even so-called allies have trouble getting along.

The Italians' shoddy attempt to prosecute the Achille Lauro hijackers showed that legal retribution against terrorism was a relative, and not cooperative, action. Terrorist ringleader Abul Abbas, courtesy of the Italian government, is sheltering safely in the Arab

World, thumbing his nose at Reagan's "get tough" policies.

Even the president's quadrupling the funding for military special forces, such as the Green Berets and the SEALs, and his plan, adopted in 1985, to revamp the Navy by 1991 at a cost of \$1 trillion, hasn't ebbed the growing terrorist tide.

A recent Pentagon study found that the United States is ill-equipped to deal with "low-intensity conflicts" — terrorism and guerrilla warfare. "Short of war, we have no strategy . . . to address the challenges of political violence," the study said.

The disunity the Pentagon found within our own military extends to that of our allies. The Free World's inability to deal consistently with terrorism enables the perpetrators to play one country against another.

France will pay a terrorist's ransom and now it is experiencing the bomb blasts of those who want an additional piece of the pie. Italy, too, will talk at terrorist tongue, refusing to cut off diplomatic ties with Libya.

Americans, because of U.S. ties to Israel and the overall Goliath-ness of U.S. military prowess, are juicy targets for terrorists. Until we can establish grounds for consistent anti-terrorism operation, we can expect frequent attacks from the bomb-laden slings of these would-be Third World Davids.

Reagan may get his Star Wars, but like the Death Star, his dream weapons will provide no protection from the terrorist attacks of the present.

Loren Steffy is a senior journalism major and the Opinion Page editor of The Battalion.



Mail Call

Missing plates

EDITOR:

Monday afternoon I went to my car in the parking lot behind Moses, Davis-Gary and Moore halls and discovered that someone had stolen my license plate. I don't believe it was stolen to use on another vehicle — bright green license plates from Vermont are just too noticeable. I believe my license plate was stolen for use as a wall ornament. You see, I happen to have (had) plates that say "GIGEM."

As fun as personal license plates may be, they are also essential operating equipment for cars (try driving without them), and stealing them is not a college prank, it is theft — a crime. Without a license plate my car is useless.

I am amazed that an Aggie would stoop so low as to steal the license plate from anyone's car, let alone another Aggie's.

I wish I could convince myself that someone else had done this, but who could want something that said "GIGEM" besides an Aggie?

While I realize that one bad Ag does not spoil the whole University, he or she does reflect badly on all of us. I do not want to be associated with people like this, and I don't think anyone else does, either.

If anyone has any information about this, I would appreciate them contacting the University Police Department. If they don't want the police involved, they can contact me directly,

anonymously if they prefer. I just want my license plate back and my faith in Aggies restored.

Jean Ricciardello '87

No more maroon and white?

EDITOR:

When did Texas A&M change its mascot and colors? Apparently, we now represent ourselves with teddy bears, hearts, Mickey Mouse, rainbows, and of course — the Corona Beach Club. Our colors now range anywhere from hot pink to baby blue.

What happened to Old Sarge, the A&M seal and Reveille? What's wrong with good old maroon and white — do they not bring out everyone's best features?

I walk into the bookstores and am surrounded by fluorescent T-shirts that have one of these new designs on the top and Texas A&M printed somewhere down at the bottom. One of the saddest things is to see the cadets — supposedly the backbone of Aggie tradition — pushing this hype.

I realize that these are the trendy things to wear, that teddy bears are cute and Coronas are good, but not when they're used to represent A&M! It's up to you and me — the student body — to keep our traditions alive, but this is definitely not the way to do it!

Diane Alexander '87

Act of compassion

EDITOR:

Out of concern for the health of our children, the public supports medical tests and mandatory vaccinations for such crippling diseases as tuberculosis, polio and mumps.

Yet when the concern is the use of crippling drugs in our schools, we hear The Battalion Editorial Board echo the complaints of the American Civil Liberties Union that mandatory testing violates constitutionally guaranteed freedoms (Wednesday's *Battalion*).

But the addicted child is not free. Nor do minors have full legal status. Isn't it in the best interest of a community to look after the welfare of its children by exercising its prerogatives?

In the same way we regard testing for various diseases, testing for drugs in our public schools (followed by counseling when necessary) is a demonstration not of power, which we might fear, but of compassion, for which we ought to be thankful.

Paul Koch

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