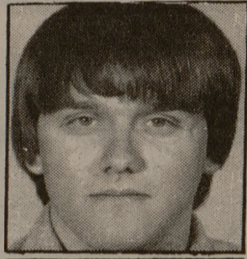


Opinion

Unlimited options for traditional bonfire column

The other day *Battalion* Opinion Page Editor Loren Steffy and I were sitting around discussing the traditional bonfire column. Each year about this time *The Battalion* publishes a column criticizing the way this school goes looney each year over a pile of sticks.



Karl Pallmeyer

Since Steffy wrote the traditional bonfire column last year, it's my turn now.

This is not an easy column to write — there are so many options.

I could write about the great ecological disaster that we perform each year in the name of tradition. Tons of lumber that could be used to build houses, schools, hospitals and churches are collected and torched for no reason other than the fact that it has been done before. That's pretty funny when you see all the signs in the dining halls that say: "Save a tree — take only one napkin."

Occasionally the lumber comes from land that is scheduled for strip mining so that bonfire becomes a monument to the total rape of the land. But I

won't write about the great ecological disaster that we call bonfire. Since Bill Clements has been re-elected governor, exploitation of natural resources will reach an all-time high. Bonfire will look like a festival for the conservation of natural resources compared to the actions of Gov. Bill, so I don't want to use that angle for my column.

I could write about the great danger that bonfire poses to the local community. The College Station Fire Department has to come out in force each year to make sure bonfire doesn't get out of hand. All it would take is a strong wind for a disaster to occur.

If the wind is blowing from the north, bonfire could spread and engulf half of College Station in flames. If the wind is blowing from the west, bonfire could wipe out the University Press. If the wind is blowing from the south, bonfire could destroy Duncan Dining Hall. Considering the complaints I hear about the food at Duncan, that might not be bad.

The worst thing that could happen would be if the wind was blowing from the east. The flames could spread across campus, destroying President Frank Vandiver's house, the Clayton Williams Rich, Old Ag Building, the KAMU TV and radio station and the University Police station. It's possi-

ble that even Kyle Field could burn down thanks to bonfire.

I could write about the great danger bonfire poses to individuals. Broken arms and legs, pulled muscles, blisters, bruises and other serious injuries abound during this time of the year. What do you expect when you let a bunch of Aggies play with sharp objects?

I could write about the Freudian implications of the large, flaming phallic symbol that we call bonfire. Psychologists would have a lot to say about a bunch of people who work for several months just to see the product of their labors go up in smoke.

It's interesting that the phrase "Aggies keep it up 'til midnight" is used in reference to bonfire. According to legend, if the bonfire stays up past midnight, our team will defeat the University of Texas' team. It sounds like some ancient fertility rite has been changed and applied to football.

The Freudian symbolism is so strong that I wouldn't touch it with a 10-foot pole.

I could write about the amount of energy that is wasted each year on bonfire. Hundreds of students miss sleep and class just to wire a bunch of trees together. All of that energy could be rechanneled into more useful projects, such as building

schools, healing the sick, flying to the moon or ring down the Albritton Bell Tower.

Actually, bonfire seems to be a form of the rock moving trick the military likes to pull on enlisted men. Enlisted men are ordered to take rocks at point A and place them at point B. Next day the men are ordered to move the rocks from point B to point A. That keeps them busy a couple of days. Bonfire keeps people busy a couple of months.

I could write about the way hairstyles change during bonfire. Some "men" feel obligated to shave their heads so that their remaining hair resembles a letter of the alphabet. I often have been criticized for the way I wear my hair, but at least it doesn't look like a remedial reading aid for rockers.

There are a lot of options for this year's traditional bonfire column. For the most part, bonfire seems to be a good excuse to get drunk. When do Aggies need an excuse to drink? Can't get plastered without going to so much trouble?

Why don't we come up with a microwave bonfire? It would only take five minutes.

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

A guide to comparing 'naked' versus 'nekkid'

As usual, I stand ready to help my country in dealing with any number of complex issues that might confront it.



Lewis Grizzard

Today, I offer my aid to Ed Meese and the other smut busters who are trying to make it safe for us to go into movie theaters and bookstores again without being corrupted by nudity.

That is, in fact, what the anti-porno movement comes down to, isn't it? Whether we, as Americans, have the right to look at photographs and movies of people who do not have their clothes on?

The problem, as I see it, is how the government and churches are going to identify what forms of nudity should be outlawed and what forms should be allowed.

After months of research, which took me to countless bookstores, movies and behind the counters of many convenience stores, I offer the following thoughts:

It should be OK simply to be naked. "Naked" is harmless. It's how you are when you take a shower or are born.

It's when people decide to get "nekkid" that there is trouble. As I have often stated, "naked" means you don't have your clothes on. "Nekkid" means you don't have your clothes on and you're up to something.

Continuing with this, there are many forms of this evil-laden nekkidness, and what I propose to do now is list a few of them as an aid to courageous

Americans like Ed Meese and various television evangelists and book burners who want to make America the place our forefathers wanted it to be when they went around dunking witches and bilking the Indians.

Behold, nekkidness:
NEKKID TRUTH: This is when an individual admits he or she has been up to no good, such as Harvey saying: "Yes, me and Darlene got nekkid in the trailer last night and threw ice water at each other. It was more fun than watching rasslin'."

NEKKID REVERSE: This is when people consider getting nekkid, but change their minds, such as Harvey saying: "Me and Darlene were going to get nekkid last night, but the heat's out in the trailer and it's just too dang cold."

PROFIT MOTIVE NEKKIDNESS: This is when Darlene poses nekkid for an auto-parts calendar and gets 40 bucks, which Harvey uses to tune up his truck.

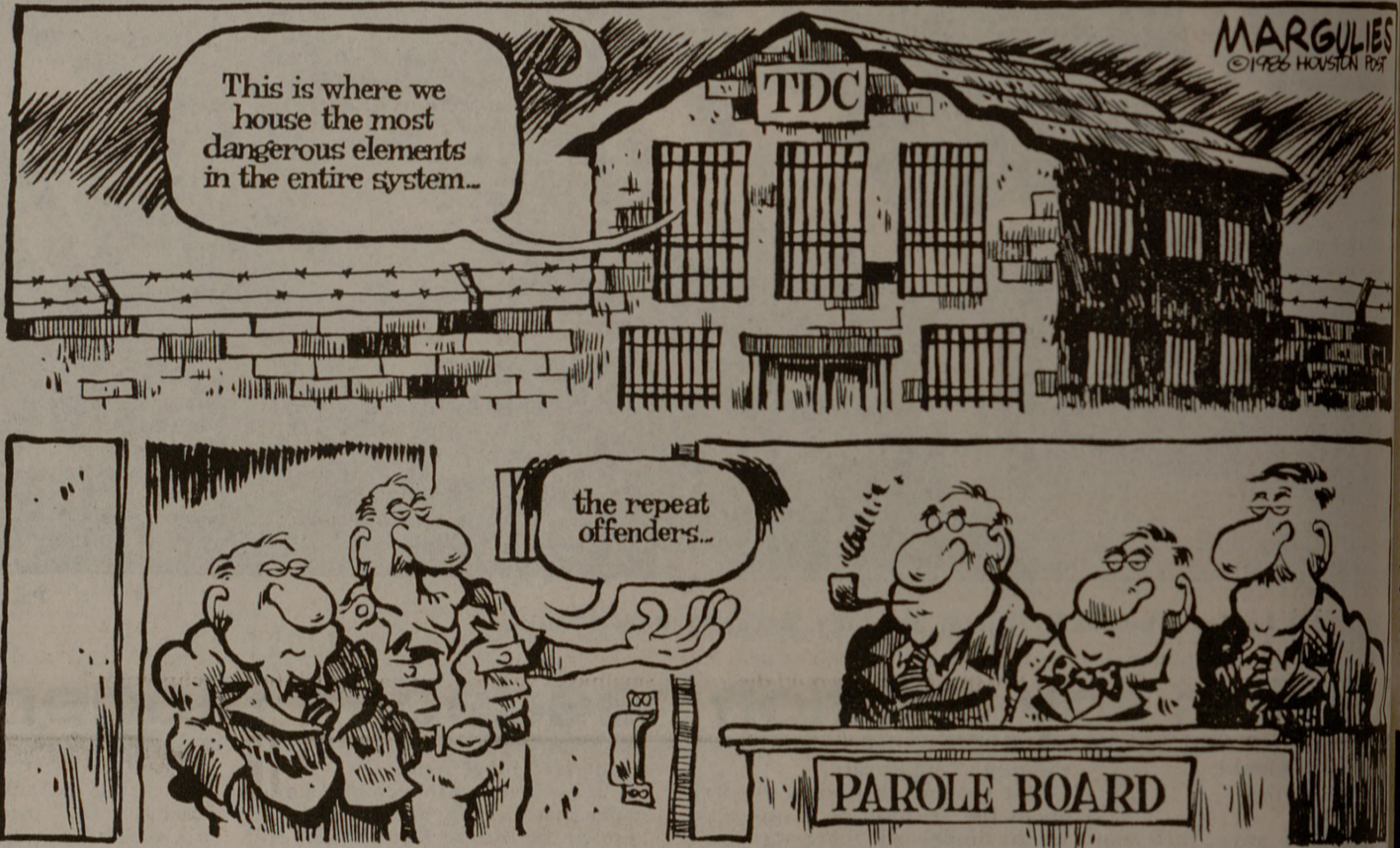
PROFIT MOTIVE NEKKIDNESS PART II: Harvey gets his video camera and makes a tape of Darlene changing a tire on his truck in nothing but her underpants and charges his buddies down at the shop a dollar each to watch it.

BUTT NEKKIDNESS: This is when a person shows his or her hindparts, like the time Harvey mooned all the ladies at Darlene's Tupperware party.

BUTT NEKKIDNESS PART II: This is when you show your hindparts with your clothes still on, which Harvey did the time he got drunk at the Moose Club dinner dance and threw up on Darlene's new dress.

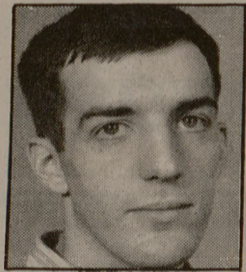
If you need a clearer example of this, simply listen to Ed Meese the next time he makes a public statement.

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Only American intervention can stop suffering abroad

Dith Pran spoke at Rudder Theater this week, thanks to the effort of MSC Great Issues. Pran, made famous by the portrayal of his life story in the movie, "The Killing Fields," discussed the recent history of his native Cambodia. He considers himself an irony of the continuing war, where the middle class, educated people and officials in the defunct Lon Nol government were singled out for termination in the Killing Fields.



Mark Ude

Cambodia tried unsuccessfully to maintain its neutrality during the Vietnam conflict. It was unable to prevent the Vietnamese from infiltrating the nation. Cambodia, in granting the North Vietnamese the use of its border for supplies, was replaced by the pro-American Lon Nol government. The Khmer Rouge, under the command of Pol Pot, replaced the regime after the American withdrawal.

Dith Pran, like the majority of Buddhists in the country, thought that there would be no more fighting because killing is against the morality of their religion. Unfortunately, the Khmer Rouge is composed primarily of rural, nonreligious people who do not adhere to such moral restrictions. After the takeover by Pol Pot, all the urbanites were evacuated to different villages where they worked in virtual death camps, performing manual labor 14 to 16 hours a day for minimal nourishment.

The genocide continued for about four years, with Cambodians killing Cambodians, until the Vietnamese invaded. For this, Pran is grateful. But while he appreciates the liberation from the Chinese-backed Khmer Rouge, Pran and other Cambodians do not like having to live under foreign occupation. Instead of desiring more military aid to push back the Soviet-supported Hanoi

government, he would much rather the American government mediate and negotiate between China and the Soviet Union. This lack of superpower mediation is what caused the Vietnam conflict to linger as long as it has.

Refugee camps on the Thai-Cambodian border are in miserable condition, and they are in desperate need of American aid. But such aid is doubtful, especially in times when everyone wants a piece of the pie, and the voters want to be first in line for the biggest piece.

The strife in Cambodia has not ended. While Moscow is attempting to improve relations with the People's Republic of China, Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia is proving to be a stumbling block. The Chinese will not improve their relations until Vietnam pulls out and allows the Khmer Rouge to regain power. But the geographic and military advantage of Vietnam, including Camh Ran Bay, prevents any hasty decision.

Above all, the entire story sounded remarkably like the moral out of George Orwell's "Animal Farm." With the total obliteration of religion, family and educated citizens, all that remained was misery and despair. The good life was assumed by the Khmer Rouge, using the foreign medicine, "abandoned" housing and decent food. All that was given to the revolutionaries was the watery soup and "new" medicine, which allegedly cured any earthly pain or disease. The

ingredients, derived from tree roots, bark, could either be swallowed or injected with rusty syringes, whether the patient had typhoid or malaria.

As seen in the movie, children were used to fill the ranks of the lower-level ership corps. Pran remarked that it was because the children lacked proper moral upbringing, both in religion and the difference between right and wrong. The Khmer Rouge used this its advantage, giving an evil twist to already torturous environment, adding to the humility and simple compassion of the populace.

Pran mentioned suffering around the world identical to the sufferings in Cambodia. He listed Afghanistan, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Africa. The presence of direct American involvement allows this suffering to go on. For America has left Southeast Asia, suffering has not. "The Killing Fields," though providing America with a story of war-torn Cambodia, is, at the least, Stalin once said, a statistic. Almost 3 million people have died, but the number still does not influence world opinion enough something to be done. When our concern is how much of our paycheck will remain after new taxes come into effect, I doubt that another million deaths will be anything but a statistic, either.

Mark Ude is a senior geography major and a columnist for *The Battalion*.

Mail Call

Disillusioned with Reagan

EDITOR:

Ronald Reagan has done it again. The Iranian arms deal is the last straw for me. I am thoroughly disillusioned and angered with our leader. Until now, President Reagan has managed to sing and dance his way around his administration's many "bloopers, bleeps and blunders," emerging relatively unscathed from most of them. I wanted to believe him. I like him. Now however, he is holding more than \$150 million of Iranian arms deals — and has no one to pass those bucks to. Oh, he tried, but it's hard to sing and dance impressively with both hands stuck in the cookie jar. You just look silly.

Apparently Reagan and his administration have been operating on two principles: 1) What the American people don't know won't hurt them, and 2) The ends justify the means, be they disinformation, bypassing Constitutional assurances of checks and balances or covert and illegal activities, among others.

Several questions now beg to be asked. On how many other occasions have Americans been kept in the dark or lied to? How long will it continue? How long will we let it continue? Hopefully, the Reagan administration will see the folly in persisting with their catch-me-if-you-can style government.

I want to believe in Reagan and support his administration, but it will take some drastic policy changes, and even then I probably will take everything the administration says with a grain of salt.

Jim Pool

Hit and run

EDITOR:

Would the person who ran into my white Ford Fiesta please give me a call at 696-7249? The car was parallel parked on Houston Street between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Tuesday. I would appreciate it if his or her insurance company could handle the damages.

John Reysa '89

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 classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

The Battalion

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