

# Opinion

## Visiting classes lessens tension, increases learning

Senioritis has definitely worked its way through me, and I am about as burned out on school as one can possibly be. I have only three more days before I leave the undergraduate world of the ivory tower and go into the real working world to push papers.



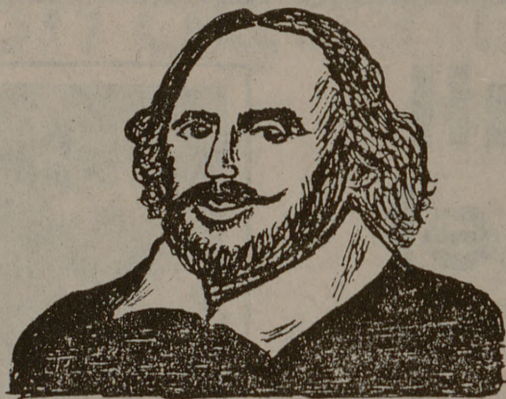
Mark Ude

And yet, there is still hope for the enlightened and cultured mind, for a flicker of yearning for the classics still remains.

While my record of attendance in Fundamentals of Ecology is running about once a week, I find myself regu-

larly attending my friend's Shakespeare class in the Blocker building. This could be because my ecology class starts at 9 a.m., and the English literature course meets at 2 p.m. I also have found the basic ecology course extremely boring, and the lecture is most definitely surpassed by a discussion of Shakespeare. My guest appearance also builds up my fan club, which, after the Iranian arms sales column, could use all the help it can get. But my showing up also increases the number attending the class and provides the minimum needed to avoid a quiz over the current play being reviewed.

I already had received "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare" in the mail, originally published in two volumes, for a low \$9.95, with illustrations included. This was another landmark in my continuous crusade for culture and the finer points of education. It was also



affordable, a high priority in the realm of limited paychecks. Unfortunately, there were no footnotes to speak of in the book, and other than what my high school English teacher had mentioned on "Hamlet" and "Macbeth" way back when, it was difficult to fully appreciate

and understand the numerous plays.

So I had high expectations when just last month I was hauled into the class to prevent another nasty quiz from being given. I could attend at my leisure and get a decent understanding of Shakespeare's best works. The current play was the rendition of "Measure for Measure." The impromptu attendance made it well worth it, and I only regret that I did not attend earlier in such an unorthodox manner.

For a moment, I wondered whether I was a fool for rushing in where angels fear to tread. I could just as easily be working, or more importantly, in the sack. In fact, I considered it a mistake that I didn't sign up for this class instead of studying the competition among various populations for resources in a given area that leads to an absolute species supremacy within a certain niche.

But the other advantage of attending a class for kicks and grins is not to worry about being tested over it. It is the ultimate advantage, learning one's leisure. I'm not quite sure, but I think it lessens the tension while being the learning environment.

"Hamlet" followed "Measure for Measure," and I blissfully ignored examination that certainly would have ruined any Thanksgiving holiday.

"Macbeth" is the new subject of discussion, but I am now at a disadvantage. All my profs are determined to do the last test before finals this week, leaving a shortage of time. But being in this fine institution, I would think that I have experienced some of the liberal arts classes.

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

## Mail Call

### Knee-jerk liberalism

EDITOR:

It comes as no surprise that, to get an intelligent and objective discussion of the State Republican Executive Committee's English language resolution, *The Battalion* had to turn to a guest columnist (Bravo! Marco Roberts). In fact, it seems that *The Battalion* does not understand the difference between making English the official language and a law banning the use of other languages (such as the law in Quebec that prohibits conducting business in any language other than French). *The Battalion* rarely exhibits any understanding of the issues beyond the surface and generally gives a predictable, knee-jerk liberal and partisan Democratic response.

In a recent editorial condemning President Reagan's dealings with Iran, *The Battalion* claimed the Reagan administration had admitted to conducting a "disinformation" campaign. In fact, the administration neither admitted to conducting such a campaign, nor did it conduct a disinformation campaign per se. The president's National Security adviser simply used the word, incorrectly, in reference to the Navy's attempt to cloak its movements and intentions following the raid on Libya.

Hypocrisy is alive and well on a campus where this kind of consistently biased editorial stance goes unchallenged by the faculty while the Faculty Senate is investigating MSC Political Forum for one event that got out of hand.

Tom Key

*Editor's Note: One more time, everybody. Opinions are supposed to be based, that's why they're opinions. The disinformation campaign in question took the form of false news releases about unrest in Libya's government, designed to destabilize Moammar Gadhafi's rule. If fabricating information and releasing it to the public isn't disinformation, what is? Our "biased" editorial stance goes unchallenged by the faculty because the faculty cannot control the editorial policies of The Battalion.*

### Where's the dog?

EDITOR:

This letter is directed to the girl who, on the night of bonfire, asked to borrow a blanket from me to carry a hurt cocker spaniel to the vet for treatment.

At the time of the incident, I had no idea who the dog belonged to and did not think to find out where the girl was taking it.

A few minutes after she left, I heard a distinct whistle outside. I went out and had to break the news to a neighbor that I had seen his dog get run over. He's quite concerned about the whereabouts of his dog and would appreciate it if the girl could tell him (or call me at 696-5792).

Bill Morris

### Best food on campus?

EDITOR:

I went down to have breakfast at the Commons' cafeteria at 10:20 a.m. The posted time for closing is 10:45 a.m., but all the food had been put away except for the breakfast cereal. All the milk was sour. I have three things to say.

1) I have never eaten at Wayne's Mobile Kitchen, but I would bet anything that Wayne serves the best food on campus.

2) If the Food Services Department didn't serve lousy food, or if everyone didn't know that it serves lousy food or if everyone wasn't sick of lousy food, Food Services might have been invited to serve bonfire.

3) Food Services should worry less about protecting its on-campus monopoly and more about being able to take care of the business it's got.

Neal McDonald '90

### Don't abuse the name

EDITOR:

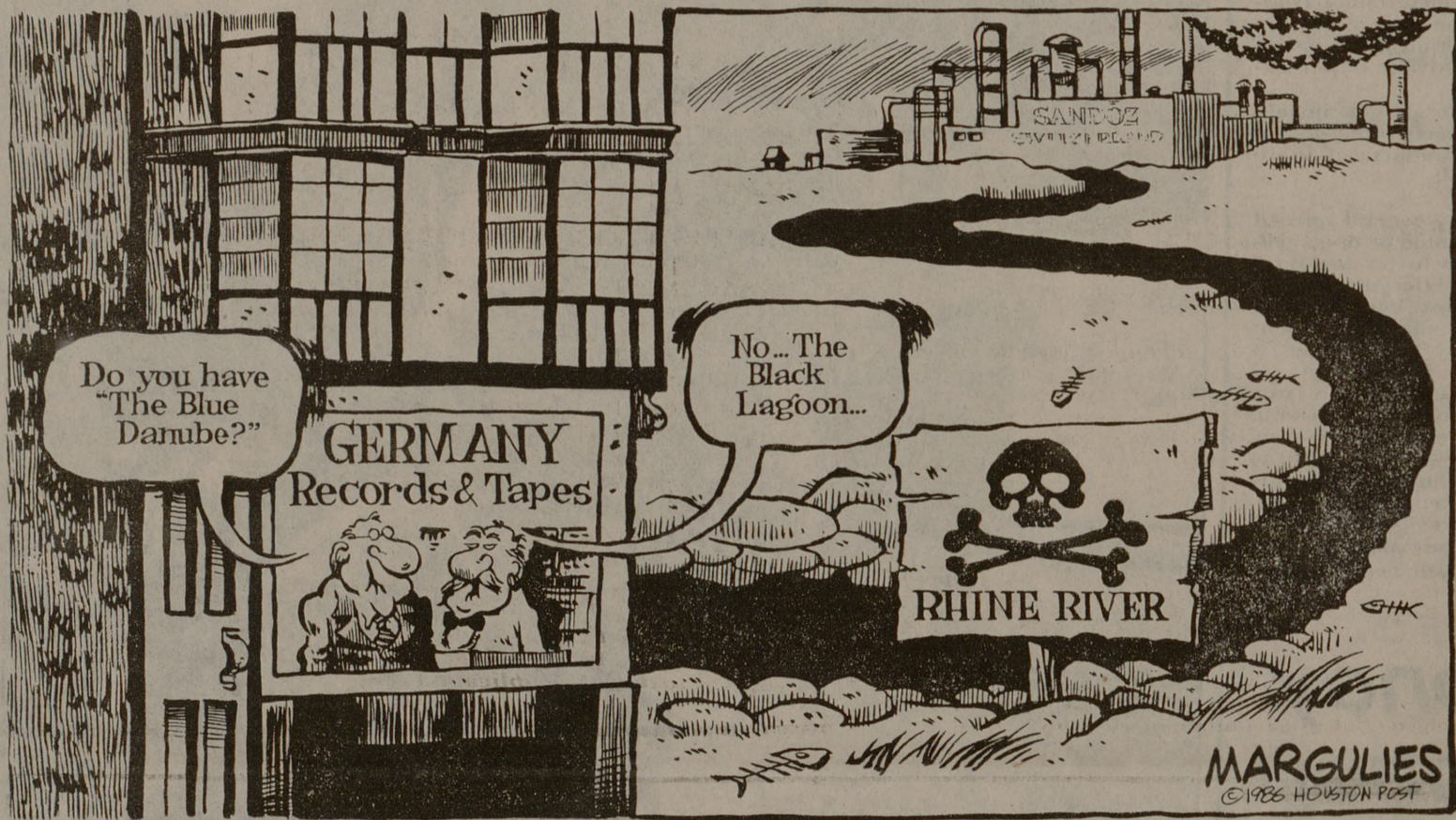
I witnessed the entire bonfire incident as reported in the Nov. 21 *Battalion*. The account is fairly close to what happened except Weaver failed to mention her liberal use of foul language before, during and after the incident. Also, after she was thrown out she nearly beat up five guys trying to get back in. Yes, somebody did come to help her. Myself and a buddy from Davis-Gary ran over to help, but by the time we got there, she was more than holding her own. I think Weaver and Bob Grube, the reporter of the story, were wrong to only mention Davis-Gary's name when pointing fingers. The two pots mentioned were borrowed. Anyone who has worked on bonfire knows how much we share. I was the closest Davis-Gary member and I was at least 30 feet away.

I was disappointed when Davis-Gary's name was mentioned when we weren't even involved, but when *The Battalion* let Kevin Thomas attack Davis-Gary with insinuations that "we are gay" and "we hate women," that's too far.

Davis-Gary is the most active dorm on campus. We work long hours on bonfire, far longer than many other dorms combined. We don't want our name and our association with bonfire to be wrongfully abused.

David Tully  
Davis-Gary Social Chairman

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.



## No Watergate comparisons

Reagan's arms deal to Iran a scandal in its own terms

Years ago, the *Washington Post* published a false and, by now, notorious story about an 8-year-old heroin addict. Before the story was proven to be a phony, it was depressing on many counts, one of them being the realization that a certain standard had been set. From then on, it would take a 7-year-old addict to shock the public. Anyone older simply would not do.



Richard Cohen

The same mentality applies to political scandals. The current one involving the diversion of millions of dollars to the Nicaraguan Contras from Iranian arms sales is being compared to Watergate — either as an exercise in nostalgia or a nightmare revisited, depending on your politics. Whatever else it may be, though, it is a comparison that may only trivialize what already has been revealed. The Tinker to Evers to Chance exchange of arms for hostages for Contra cash stinks on its own terms.

Some distinctions have to be made. The foremost is that Watergate was a unique historical episode. Never before was a president forced from office and, with luck, never again will that happen. The reasons for that are inherent in the Watergate scandal itself. At its center was Richard Nixon — a politician of

consummate shiftiness whose integrity was never above question. Not so Ronald Reagan. Here, in contrast, is a warm, personable man who is liked even by persons who disagree with both his politics and his policies. Nixon should have been so lucky.

Second, Watergate was a crass political crime. It started as a burglary and descended to obstruction of justice. In the end, there may well be obstruction of justice on Contragate, but its genesis — while mind-numbingly dumb — had nothing to do with gaining a partisan advantage.

If Reagan is taken at his word, he was attempting to establish a relationship with Iran. At worst, he was bargaining for hostages. Either way, neither is a totally indefensible objective — although the means to that end may well be repugnant. Even the funding of the Contras strikes many Americans as a lofty goal, although, once again, one attained by questionable means.

The problem with comparing the present scandal to that juicy one of bygone days is that it may ultimately make it seem insignificant. It is nothing of the sort. In the first place, the transfer of funds may well have been illegal and the breaking of laws, especially by the government, is a serious matter. In that regard, there are the usual suspects to round up — including high officials like White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan, CIA Director William Casey and the president himself. They — and that

includes the president — can choose between seeming to be incompetent or corrupt. For the moment, they are all playing dumb.

What is perhaps most worrisome about the Iran scandal is how, in blockbuster terms, it exemplifies the tendency of the president to distrust the good sense of the people who put him in power. Knowing that Americans did not quite share his alarm about Sandinista Nicaragua, Reagan indulged in propagandistic bombast. He called the Contras "freedom fighters" and likened them to our founding fathers. He extolled the Contras' (non-existent) commitment to democracy. He yelled wolf about Russian arms shipments to Nicaragua, including fighter planes that never materialized and falsely characterized the Sandinistas as hostile to religion, neglecting the presence of priests on the ruling junta.

The Iranian caper is the logical extension of such a policy. Secret, politically unethical and maybe illegal as well, it did by stealth what the American people, through its representatives in Congress, would not permit. Here is an administration saying not only that it knew better, but that it would, as a result, do what it wanted to do. The wisdom that is supposed to reside in the electorate and that is — wise or not — always binding on its leaders, was ignored.

The Iran caper represents not just policy run amok, but contempt for the rules and conventions of democracy. It's absurd that the same officials who either knew or condoned illegality are now in charge of their own investigation.

In the end, none of this may amount to Watergate — neither in character nor consequence — but it doesn't have to. The secret and possibly illegal funding of war, no matter how lofty the motive, is a serious breach of the contract the president made with the American people and need not be compared to anything else. It needs only be what it is: a scandal in its own terms.

### The Battalion

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