

# Opinion

## The Battalion

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## Fundamentally wrong

Seven fundamentalist Christian families successfully have slapped society with a \$50,000 bill to pay for the private education of their children because the families' personal beliefs prohibit them from educating their children in an environment that champions reality.

The families believe their Christian children will be morally corrupted by books teaching evolution, the occult, secular humanism and 13 other anti-religious themes.

Personal beliefs, which are prone to change over time, are a basic right of all individuals. But should society bear the costs of personal preferences?

A Tennessee federal judge says it should. And, following his logic, every individual can demand some compensation for a cause he holds dear but society does not.

Rather than allow their children the opportunity to discern between two opposing viewpoints, the families have chosen to force taxpayers to fund the indoctrination of children into their parents' mindset.

No one is criticizing the fundamentalists' views or denying them their right to hold certain religious beliefs. Making the rest of society pick up the tab for not holding similar beliefs is what we question.

It would be logical — and actually quite fair, according to the Tennessee ruling — that all private education be funded by the state because the personal beliefs of families' of the students in these schools don't agree with public school curriculum. An example would be Moslem children who are forced to sing Christian Christmas carols.

For that matter, there are prisons around the nation full of people who don't agree with society's perception of reality. Should they be monetarily compensated by the state for their individual beliefs?

The worst part about the ruling is that personal beliefs have a tendency to change. If these seven fundamentalist families change their ideology to that of the public school's after their children are educated, will the state get a refund?

Personal beliefs are the right of everyone. They deserve to be pondered, communicated and revised. But they don't deserve to be financed by everybody else.

## Nobody cares much because it's final-exam week at A&M

It's that lame time of year again for college students. The time when nobody cares about anything except final grades and Friday. It's the time of the semester when few people even bother to pick up a *Battalion* and even fewer read it.



Mike Sullivan

I could say just about anything in this column and not get one letter because this is the last issue of the paper for the year. By the time classes start up again next semester, anybody I might have of-

fended this week will have had ample time to work off his frustration in some socially acceptable way — like getting drunk and driving, for instance.

Writing this column is sort of like going into the now-empty room where your most hated class was held all semester and yelling something obscene at the professor. "Eat septic waste, Professor Groinbuster!"

It's fun, but it does little good. The newspaper is in its lame-duck phase, if you will. Some people think it's in this phase all semester, but that's another column.

Most students don't have time to keep up with the world this week because they're busy cramming for exams, poring a semester's worth of notes into a cogitatively tapped-out mind.

If you don't have at least a GPR of 3.0, no self-respecting accounting firm will even look at you. And you can kiss goodbye that account executive job with the big advertising agency if you can't show all A's in your marketing classes.

It's funny how so many people panic and stay up nights during finals week because they suddenly realize it's their last shot at a successful semester, however hopeless it may be.

Finals week, or even dead week for that matter, would be an excellent time to test that Aggie spirit everybody's so proud of around here.

Midnight yell practice should be held for the Cotton Bowl tonight. I bet at least seven people would show up. Whoop.

O.K., that's not fair. Exams are important and it wouldn't be right to force loyal Aggies into making such a revealing compromise. So let's have yell practice Friday night. There are no classes Saturday and what a great way to kick off the holiday season.

But the person who shows up will have to clear the tumbleweeds out of Kyle Field before the festivities can begin.

I can hear the excuses now. "Well, sure, my blood is deep maroon, but it was that color when I was born," Joe Aggie says as he drives away in his maroon car with his maroon-haired girlfriend.

So there's a general lack of "whoops" around campus during finals week, but that's to be expected. And besides, Jackie Sherrill and Kevin Murray might not even be at the Cotton Bowl.

Oh, it's just a rumor, but the Post Southwest Conference reportedly, "Jackie Sherrill headed home to ... coach mater (Alabama)." And of everyone read about the rehashed old allegations against Murray is finals week, and nobody respond to stupid rumors. The wimpy old NCAA would A&M on probation. That's SMU.

Anybody want to buy a ticket?

That's enough nastiness there are some good things about this week. For example, it's easy parking space on campus. And the noise level at night where I live, is almost suburban. There are no blasting stereos, singing or screaming women to call.

But the best thing about this that when it's over, "school's out" as one of my more colorful friends likes to say.

Everyone can go home about classes, grades and the they promised to call over the The approaching four-week session comes in second only to the favorite time of year for students.

If you can convince your parents four weeks isn't enough time for a job, and maybe get them a little dough, Christmas break is the jolliest time of all.

Days can be lounged away re-runs of Gilligan's Island, beer, playing tiddlywinks and day. If you can find a friend, even do a little thumb-wrestling.

Being my last Christmas break sure to savor every moment of this way of life, but I feel sure December graduates.

Dad: "Merry Christmas, find a job."

Son: "In Texas?"

Dad: "Try I-35 North."

Most everyone reading this least one more semester face the great unknown, mind at ease and get back. After all, it's that lame time of no serious student should time reading this column.

Mike Sullivan is a senior major and the Opinion Page Editor of *The Battalion*.

## Breaking the law to help kill commies is OK by Ron

For today's lesson in illogic and hypocrisy, let us turn to the writings, ramblings and rantings of Patrick J. Buchanan, who shared the White House bunker with Richard M. Nixon and now occupies the same place under his latest true love, Ronald Reagan. Bunker Buchanan, with, he claims, the permission of the president, says if Lt. Col. Oliver North broke the law, it was for a good cause.



Richard Cohen

For this exercise in rationalization, Buchanan assembles quite a case. In a *Washington Post* essay, the White House communications director compared North to abolitionists who "ran escaped slaves up the Underground Railroad;" to Franklin Roosevelt who, before the war, "secretly ordered American destroyers to hunt down German submarines"; to Col. Billy Mitchell who was court-martialed for insubordination and to "Americans who ran guns to Palestine." Missing from this list is any mention of Martin Luther King, Jr.

But it was King whom Buchanan criticized even in death for — get this — breaking the law. In a 1969 memo to President Nixon, Buchanan warned the president against visiting King's widow, Coretta, on the first anniversary of the civil-rights leader's assassination. How could Nixon "possibly argue as a moral leader against the doctrine of civil disobedience when he pays public homage to its foremost practitioner of our time?" Buchanan asked.

It can be assumed Buchanan has penned no similar memo to Reagan regarding North. Instead — like the president — Bunker Buchanan has lauded him as a hero even after Reagan characterized North's diversion of funds from Iranian arms sales to the Nicaraguan Contras as an impropriety and North

assumed a defensive position in congressional hearings behind the Fifth Amendment.

The difference between North and King, it seems, is that one broke laws for a cause that Buchanan (not to mention Reagan) opposed, while North's possible criminality served the cause of anti-communism.

But there are other differences and they are telling. With the exception of Roosevelt, none of the examples Buchanan cited were instances of the government breaking the law. King, for one, was a private citizen whose law-breaking was both public and symbolic and for which he expected — and received — penalties. He was jailed, harassed and, in the end, murdered.

Americans who ran guns to Palestine during the Israeli war of independence also were private citizens. And so were the abolitionists. At least one of them, Elijah Lovejoy, was killed by a mob, and others were beaten senseless. As for Billy Mitchell, one wonders how he got on Buchanan's list. His public insubordination — he accused his military superiors of "incompetency, criminal negligence and almost treasonable administration of the national defense" — was certainly a mouthful, but hardly a criminal act.

None of these historic shoes — including Roosevelt's skirting of the Neutrality Act — fit North. If we are to believe the Swiss-cheesy report of Attorney General Edwin Meese III, North took it on his own to violate Congress' ban against lethal aid to the Nicaraguan Contras. He did so, we are told, with a wink and nod from National Security Director Adm. John M. Poindexter, and supposedly without the permission or knowledge of the president.

What is Buchanan's standard when it comes to law-breaking? Is it permissible if the object is to kill commies but not to bring justice to black Americans? Is it OK if you are white and splendidly be-medaled, but not if you are black and a civilian? Is it fine and dandy if you hap-

pen to be a high government official who has taken an oath to the Constitution, but not if you are a mere private citizen who cannot hide behind the veil of national security? Is it permissible if you do it in secret, with stealth and lies, but not if you do it out in the open, before the police who will arrest you, the mob that would kill you, the press that reports your every move and the FBI which bugs your motel room?

These are good questions to put to Buchanan but even better to pose to the president. He is the one, Buchanan says, who has — again probably with a wink and nod — given permission for this great speak-out — the essay, speeches and network-TV interviews. He is the one who has allowed Buchanan, a White House aide, to argue that a government official can decide for himself — in the manner of North — which laws to break and which to uphold. We can only assume that Reagan has given his communications director permission to make this case because he agrees with it. Or hasn't he been informed?

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## Mail Call

### Condoms for kids?

EDITOR:

Dr. Kenneth Matthews is an asset to this community. His pitch for sex education in the schools is a fact in the Houston area.

The January issue of *Ms.* magazine carries an ad for "Mentor Condoms." This type of advertising should be available in all print matter.

Elza Gardner Tax

### Good tunes on way

EDITOR:

In response to the letter in Dec. 10 Mail Call by Russ Newsome, referring to the sound quality of KANM, 99.9 FM, I would like to say, someone does care. I am a disc jockey at KANM. The "ragged, fuzzy and distorted" sound of KANM is

due mostly to the GTE phone company. KANM's signal is present, transmitted to McCaw cable via two telephone lines we rent from GTE on a monthly basis.

Plans are in the working to microwave the signal to SMU. This requires a license from the FCC and about \$4,500 in equipment. KANM's budget has almost enough to cover the license and applications for the license are on the way. This improvement will put KANM's sound quality on par with MTV and The Movie Channel's stereo broadcasts.

Thank you for your concern and the compliments of our personnel and their alternative musical tastes.

Steven M. Krebs

D.J. and assistant engineer of KANM

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