

Opinion

The Battalion

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A real drag

Some people enjoy bringing their work home with them. But like it or not, Chicago-based USG Acoustical Products is now requiring its employees to abide by company policy even in the privacy of their own homes.

About 2,000 USG employees at nine plants, including one in Corsicana, have been told by the company that if they don't surrender their right to smoke in the privacy of their own homes, they will have to give up their privilege to work for the company.

Not only does USG's no-smoking policy ignore employee's right to privacy, if it goes unchallenged it could set a dangerous precedent of employer control outside the workplace.

USG says its new "quit-smoking-or-quit" policy, which won't apply at the corporate headquarters in Chicago, has been adopted in hopes of cutting down on health problems of its employees and health-related absences from work. It's unclear, however, whether the company's concern is for the health of its employees or the efficiency of its operations.

The company obviously hasn't considered the impact on the physical and mental health of the employees who are fired as a result of the new policy. It's given employees who smoke one week to quit.

But if the company's concern for the health of its employees is genuine, its tactics are genuinely stupid.

By dictating personal values, the company is infringing on the basic rights of its employees — telling them what they can and can't do with their lives on their own time. The company's desire to increase its productivity should not override employees' basic rights.

Employees, though they may be a valuable resource, are not commodities over which the company has absolute control. No-smoking ordinances in the work place are one thing, but extending them to the home is quite another.

While we don't condone smoking, people do have a right to their bad habits, as long as they are legal. USG's new policy does more than force workers to take care of themselves, it could unleash stricter employer controls in the future.

If USG successfully implements its new smoking policy, a threatening precedent will be set. The very people who favor this sort of "health" policy may themselves be haunted by it in the future when companies begin dictating policy concerning other personal rights as religion, sexual relations, political affiliation and a host of other areas that are now — and we hope always will be — left to individual preference.

Some things aren't worth getting hysterical about

The only resolution I've made for 1987 is to stop worrying about all the little things that drive me crazy.

I can handle the big stuff. So what if the president has no idea what the people in charge of our national security are doing. He'd probably just get in the way if he did.

College athletes taking steroids? If the Boz wants to turn green and look like the Incredible Hulk, fine.

I can even deal with second-hand smoke, as long as it's not coming from the roof of my house.

But that annoying, nagging everyday stuff, that's what boils me.

You know what I hate? I hate those little plastic strings that hold tags on new clothes — the ones with the t-shaped ends to keep the tags fastened.

Ever try to get one of those things out of a pair of tennis socks? It can't be done without an acetylene torch, which I never have with me when I'm about to play tennis.

But I have resolved to endure them in 1987. I hate cute messages on telephone records, too. Why do people think they have to be funny?

"Hi, this is Arnold. Heard the one about the guy who walks up to a man standing by a dog?"

"Does your dog bite?" he asked the man, who replies 'No.' So the guy reaches down to pet the dog and the dog takes two of his fingers clean off.

"I thought you said your dog doesn't bite," the first guy said. And the other guy answers, "That's not my dog."

"Thought you'd like that one. Now at the tone, please leave your, etc. etc."

I don't have time for silly jokes when



Lewis Grizzard

I try to reach somebody on the phone, but I'm going to try to handle them in 1987 and stop leaving messages that say: "This is Carl Megenfuss at the IRS. Call me immediately, or else."

I'm not going to get mad anymore when television newscasters joke with one another and make "happy talk."

I'm going to learn to handle it when I switch through the channels with my remote control device and discover "The Newlywed Game" is still on the air and nobody has shot Bob Eubanks.

I'm not going to have a stroke when I expressly tell the pizza place, "No anchovies," and 30 minutes later the pizza arrives covered with those god-awful little hairy things, whatever they are.

I'm not going to become livid with rage anymore when I'm playing behind a woman on the golf course and she

continues to attempt to hit the ball after a dozen would-be strokes.

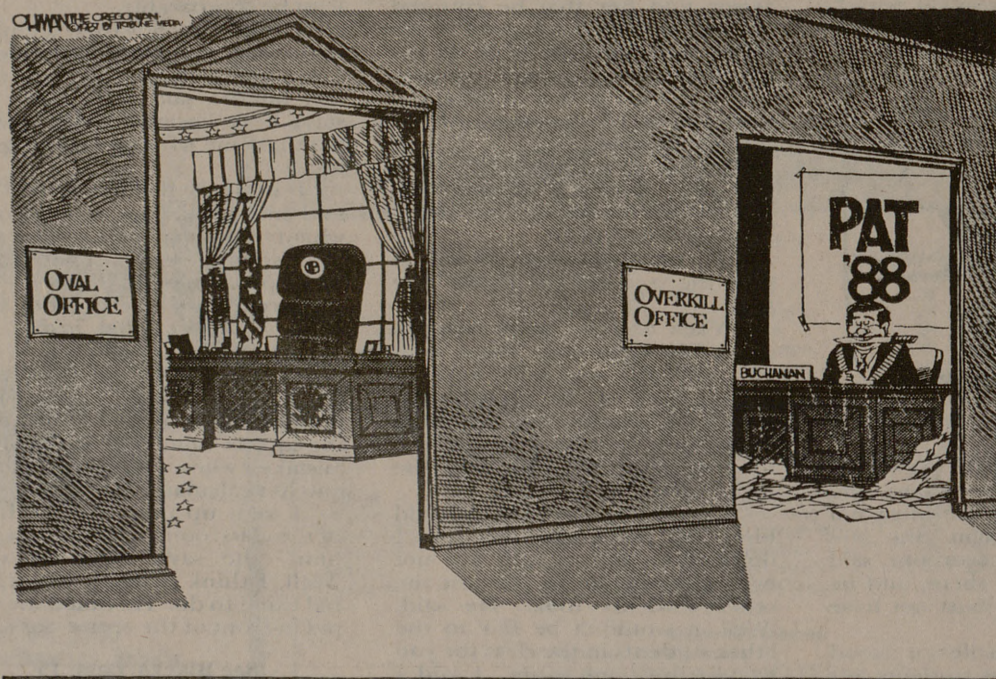
I am going to handle it when I drive through a McDonald's and order a hamburger and some 14-year-old asks, "Would you like french fries with that?" I simply will say, "No," not "If I'd wanted the bleeping fries I would have asked for them, pimple-face."

I'm not going to pull my phone out of the wall anymore when I get computerized calls, lose control when somebody steals my Sunday paper, or sulk and go into the fetal position when the water pressure in the shower is lousy in the hotel room for which I am paying \$150 a day.

That's me in 1987. Mr. Calm.

Women. Why don't they have their own damn golf courses.

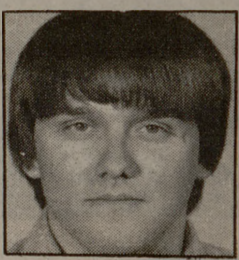
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KARL SPENCE THE BATTALION

Not everyone likes King

Monday was the day set aside to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Although King's real birthday was Friday, an official holiday was held Monday in King's name. It seems to be the mark of a great man to have his birthday celebrated on a day other than the one he was born.



Karl Palmeyer

Monday also was Robert E. Lee's actual birthday. It's ironic that the holiday to honor a man who fought for equal rights for blacks falls on the birthdate of a man who fought for the right to keep blacks enslaved. But when you consider recent developments across the country, it's not surprising that the two events have clashed.

Banks, government offices and public schools were allowed to close Monday.

Some people were not too happy about being asked to honor King's memory. On several occasions, I heard people say they refused to take a holiday on King's birthday. I never realized racism was so strong that people don't want to miss a day of work because the day honors a black man who tried to make things better for blacks and whites as well.

Despite all King tried to do, racism is alive and well in America.

Recently, the news has been filled with several violent incidents traceable to racism. In Howard Beach, New York, a black man was killed when he was chased out onto a highway by a group of white men armed with baseball bats. There have been other such incidents in Howard Beach during the last few years. At the University of Massachusetts at Amherst there was a race riot after the last game of the World Series.

Just last week, a "Walk for Brotherhood" was met with hatred and violence as the marchers — both black and white — passed through Forsyth County, Georgia. There are no blacks living in Forsyth County because most of the whites in that county belong to the Ku Klux Klan. Another march through the county is planned this weekend. The marchers, a black division of the Guardian Angels, the American Civil Liberties Union, state police and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation are preparing for the reception the Klan has promised.

Racism is on the rise in the United States. There have been other incidents like the ones in Howard Beach, Amherst and Forsyth County reported in the papers and on television. And there probably have been a lot of other incidents that haven't received so much attention. Aside from incidents of violence, racism rears its ugly head in other ways.

Our country's failure to do anything

to end apartheid in South Africa from racism. The government we should not impose economic sanctions on South Africa because it make the country ripe for a takeover. Large corporations withings in South Africa claim we should impose economic sanctions on Africa because our country needs goods South Africa supplies. One said — usually as an afterthought the blacks in South Africa just ready to govern themselves. Such attitude doesn't make for good policy.

One of the reasons racism is so popular again is the current economic situation and of unemployment. When it comes astronomical amount of the debt, some people would prefer minorities on than the government. Just to spend more non-profitable like Star Wars over-inflated budget. When it to the loss of jobs people would blame minorities firmative action programs than their competence in workplace.

Racist attitudes damaging to see. When a person see through color viewing a problem cause of that will remain hidden problem can be the true cause is ignored in readily available scapegoat.

King said he had a dream — of a time when all men would gether as brothers — a dream when a man would be judged on ter and not color. Many people in King's dream, but many more. The world needs to wake up to make King's dream a reality. Only way the world can survive.

Karl Palmeyer is a journalist uate and a columnist for The Bat

Mail Call

Thanks to all

EDITOR:

I would like to thank the student body for attending Campus Crusade Christ's lecture series featuring Josh McDowell.

I would like to personally thank Jay Muller for emceeing, Marty Holler for leading yells, and Hans Meinardus, Steve Peck, Brent Boyd, Mark Moser and Paul Williams of the Ross Volunteers for escorting Josh. Thanks also David Funk, the corps chaplain and Clay Pennington, a wing chaplain for being Josh's drivers.

Lastly, thanks to the cadets who made up the saber arch that greeted at the airport: Steve Thomson, Mark Clark, David Preston, John Blasingame, Nathan Watson and Alan Talbert.

Josh really felt welcomed to our University and because of that, he has grown to appreciate the spirit and unity we have in Aggieland.

Michael Cooper 87
Lecture Series Coordinator

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit 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.