

Opinion

The Battalion

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Cities on the rocks

The Texas attorney general seems determined to maintain the state's haphazard highway safety policies at any cost — including the lives of Texas motorists.

An opinion issued Jan. 16 by the attorney general's office said city ordinances prohibiting drinking while driving undermined the authority of the state's alcoholic beverage code.

But *not* having laws or ordinances against drinking while driving undermines common sense, not to mention social progress.

By claiming that cities with such ordinances have exceeded their authority, the attorney general is prohibiting local governments from fighting an inconsistency in drinking legislation that the state government refuses to acknowledge.

Assistant Attorney General Jennifer Riggs, who issued the opinion, says that if cities want an open container law, they should lobby the Legislature to enact one. In the meantime, which inevitably will be long, all Texas motorists are free to ignore the drinking ordinances and drink and drive, risking their own lives — and worse, the lives of others.

While the Texas Legislature was quick to pass a mandatory seat belt law and raise the drinking age to 21, it has never found enough political justification for passing open container legislation. Perhaps state legislators find the drive home each evening too long to wait for a cocktail.

City ordinances were the last chance to curb Texas' highway policies that are consistent only in their inconsistency.

But take heart in the laws that the state has for your protection, Texas drivers. Drivers must be 21 years old or older and wearing a seat belt before this state will allow them to chug their brew behind the wheel.

Farmers Write!

Marchers violated personal rights

At the considerable risk of being labeled a prejudiced, racial bigot, I write this column offering my interpretation of recent developments in Forsyth County, Georgia.

Byron Schlomach

As for what I have seen in the news media, there was no reason for the first march to have taken place. Was there some historic or contemporary reason for its occurrence besides Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday? If not, there was no good reason for it. Apparently, many people living in Forsyth County are what I call "white trash" and I would not want to count many of them as my friends. But Forsyth County is their home and as long as they hurt no one passing through or moving in, they have a right to their privacy.

Both marches seem to have been direct violations of those people's privacy. Busing marchers into a county known for its racist attitude was not marching for civil rights if the people of Forsyth were guilty of nothing but holding an opinion spawned by ignorance.

Such a march was nothing but a theatrical baiting tactic, and, as such, it was wrong, just as it was wrong for the Forsyth fools to rant and rave and throw things. The first march was almost as racially motivated as the people running around in bedsheets.

Much has been said of the resemblance of the second march to the civil rights marches of the 1960s. I fail to see much resemblance except for the colors involved. Marches of old had participants who were mostly indigenous to the area in which they marched, and they protested actions. The marchers in the 1960s were usually outnumbered and law officials opposed them with deadly force, but the marchers won because their motive was pure and their cause was just.

The second Forsyth march's participants were bused in, and they outnumbered their opposition by at least 10 to one. Law enforcers surrounded the marchers and were well-armed, but the arms were not meant for the marchers. The motivations of the leaders of this march were about as impure as Bryan-College Station water. The marchers were misled to believe they were opposing established tyranny once again. However, the reason Jesse Jackson and Gary Hart were there was not to right a wrong, nor was it to bring peace. Strife was what they sought — and to their

great joy, they found it.

Regretfully, the march ended its glorious advance to the poetic, often confusing strains of Jesse Jackson rhetoric and Gary Hart drum-beating. However, the march was truly glorious because the tables were turned. Though we must guard against return, the cruelties of the past have been firmly denounced by most leaders and laymen. The message the political leaders of the march wanted to communicate was that racial discrimination is still all-pervasive and that suffering specifically because of it is still widespread. The march itself, in evidence, says just the opposite. One must be aware that much of the rhetoric on civil rights today serves only to fuel racial tensions brought on by attitudes among all races. While much of the physical and verbal evidence of racism has disappeared, the rhetoric is still at high pitch. The results have been that blacks wear their feelings on their shoulders, and whites, myself included, are simply sick and tired of "civil rights leaders" shooting off their mouths for what are really attempts at personal gain, as opposed to truly fighting for justice and freedom.

Of late, the worst instances of racially motivated hatred and violence have been in the North where liberal Democrats are regularly elected to office, and that is why no mass marches have been staged there. It's much easier to pick on a small rural county in Georgia than on large cities with liberal voters in the North.

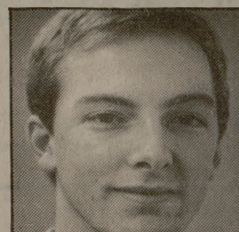
I'm sure you're thinking I contradicted myself somewhat concerning my attitude toward the march in Forsyth County. Well, I did. I have contradictory feelings about it. The march was contradictory in itself. At the same time, it was a march against racist tyrannies and represented great victories over them, while it was also a march that could easily lead to the re-fueling of the dying embers of racial hatred left in the hearts of people of all races. Let us hope that these embers are not fanned and hence, do not turn to flame, consuming us in needless strife.

Byron Schlomach is an economics graduate student.

Columns submitted for *Farmers Write* should be between 700 and 850 words. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit for grammar, style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each column must be signed and must include the major, classification, address and telephone number of the writer. Only the author's name, major and classification will be printed.

Abolishment of Corps is key to A&M's growth

Although Texas A&M's Corps of Cadets once served a noble purpose, it's no longer a necessary element of this University, and, because it will continue to create a distorted image of A&M in the future — limiting A&M's recognition for academics — the Corps should be abolished.



Mike Sullivan

Before you dismiss this idea completely, allow me to conduct a brief session of word association. When I say "Harvard University" what comes to mind? I think of Harvard MBAs. How about University of California, Berkeley? Outstanding liberal arts program. Johns Hopkins University? Superior medical school. University of Michigan? Prestigious engineering program. Texas A&M? Corps of Cadets.

I always have associated A&M with the Corps. I'm not originally from Texas, and, until I moved here, I thought A&M was a military academy, like West Point. Many of my out-of-state friends still don't understand that roughly 95 percent of the students at this University have absolutely nothing to do with the Corps.

Still, the image of A&M — a University with an enrollment of more than 36,500 — is determined by 2,000 Corps members.

And that's fine, unless, as has been a popular goal these last few years, A&M wants to achieve the status of a world university — successfully dealing with the problems of the world through research and education and being recognized by the world for its contributions.

Don't misunderstand me to say that military organizations have no place in institutions where higher education is the primary purpose. The United States should and does have a vested interest in the education of tomorrow's military leaders. And through programs such as Reserve Officer Training Corps and military academies like Annapolis Naval Academy and West Point, the United States can educate and train its military leaders.

But A&M's Corps is not simply an ROTC program, nor is it a military academy. It's a two-year ROTC program within a four year Corps program. All Corps members participate in ROTC their first two years at A&M. After their sophomore year, they either sign contracts to be commissioned by the military after graduation and continue in the ROTC program, or as is the path of most cadets, they do not choose to continue their military careers, and they become drill and ceremony cadets, serving only A&M — with no ties to the military. Unfortunately, this unique program fosters misconceptions about A&M. And those misconceptions can only hurt this University in the long run.

If A&M is to gain any significant ground in the pursuit of a reputation for superior academics and genuine contributions to mankind, it cannot afford to be recognized first as a military — or militarily affiliated — university.

A&M's dedication to research and its reputation for excellence in research and education are quickly disregarded by a public exposed to state and national headlines telling of cadets who chase cheerleaders with sabers, cadets who died in hazing practices, cadets who beat up women and fights that cadets are involved in.

And even if the Corps never generated sensational headlines, it still would dominate A&M's image. A perfect example is the highly-respected Fightin' Texas Aggie Band. If the all-cadet band truly is nationally famous, it contributes to the misconception about this University — that it's an all-military institution.

But the problem is not whether the Corps is perceived by the masses as good or bad. The trouble is that the masses perceive A&M as the Corps. And that misunderstanding will keep A&M from distinguishing itself as a world academic institution. After all, a university's reputation is a crucial recruiting factor.

Some say the Corps and the tradition it represents at A&M is precisely what encourages many students to attend A&M. Unfortunately, that's an absurd criteria to base four or more years of

higher learning on, and it's not what attracts students who are interested in quality education. Attending a university simply because one of your parents did is tantamount to not pursuing college education at all simply because your parents didn't.

And some say A&M can become nationally known, if not world recognized, as a militarily-affiliated university and a world university. I challenge you to name just one university with a readily recognizable split personality. World universities want one reputation — an academic one.

For the second time in its history, A&M has a major decision to make about its image. The first time was when the University decided it was best long-term interest to make the enlistment optional. It was the first necessary step for growth, and it was now it's time for the second step.

If A&M decides to do nothing, the Corps continues as is, the University never will aspire to its lofty goal. Contrary, if the University takes the logical step in growth by recognizing the Corps as an outdated concept, it dispels misconceptions about A&M and fulfills it, this institution of higher learning may one day aspire to the status of world university.

I like A&M, and I hope this University chooses to grow.

Mike Sullivan is a senior journalist and the Opinion Page editor of The Battalion.

