

# Opinion

## The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

Member of  
Texas Press Association  
Southwest Journalism Conference

### The Battalion Editorial Board

Loren Steffy, Editor  
Marybeth Rohsner, Managing Editor  
Mike Sullivan, Opinion Page Editor  
Jens Koepke, City Editor  
Jeanne Isenberg, Sue Krenek, News Editors  
Homer Jacobs, Sports Editor  
Tom Ownbey, Photo Editor

### Editorial Policy

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.  
Opinions expressed in *The Battalion* are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.  
The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.  
The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods.  
Mail subscriptions are \$17.44 per semester, \$34.62 per school year and \$36.44 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.  
Our address: The Battalion, Department of Journalism, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-4111.  
Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Battalion*, Department of Journalism, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.

# P-e-r-m-a-n-e-n-t

Gov. Bill Clements is considering siphoning off crucial capital gains from the Permanent University Fund to help combat the projected state budget deficit. But in his zealous attempt to fix Texas' economic troubles, Clements has ignored a key aspect of the PUF — it's supposed to be permanent.

Clements is mulling over the possibility of redirecting capital gains from regular sales of investment stocks and securities by the Permanent University Fund to other state funds.

The state's "gain" would then be used for some of the problem budget areas — excluding higher education, of course. But the purpose of the PUF is to create money-generating investments as a source of revenue for Texas A&M and the University of Texas. By depleting these funds, Clements is advocating a threat to higher education over less popular budget-crisis solutions such as a tax increase.

Undoubtedly, much of the newly appropriated money would go toward financing the construction of badly needed state prisons. But locking up more criminals in newly built prisons means locking more students out of state universities. In essence, higher education will suffer for crimes along with the criminals.

Clements plan to tap higher education funding is nothing more than a proposal at this point. But waving the succulent monies of the PUF under the Legislature's nose and asking permission to dig in is dangerous.

Money needs to be appropriated to remedy the prison crisis, but draining higher education's lifeblood isn't a feasible solution. When PUF money is used for things other than higher education, it's logical that higher education and all involved with higher education will suffer. Cuts in valuable programs, faculty and staff, and ultimately student pocketbooks, will pay for state problems.

More dangerous than the actual loss to Texas higher education is the precedent such a measure would set. The capital in the PUF was designed to be untouchable, to ensure that no matter how bad the economy got, Texas would have a financial base for higher education. Texas cannot afford to dip into this vital holding any time it is faced with a financial crisis. Without money to preserve the quality of Texas education, future budgetary havoc only can increase.

Texas has been striving for greater quality in education. Progress has been made, but much remains to be done. Cutting funding now only will impair educational integrity later.

Why doesn't the state government do what's really needed to cover the deficit and either institute a state income tax or raise taxes in general? It may not be popular, and it may not get anyone re-elected, but it will solve the budget problem better than anything else proposed so far.

Either way, the PUF shouldn't be part of a Clements' budgetary quick fix. The PUF vital flow of revenue to A&M and UT was never designed to be drained or tapped into to fund other programs. That's why it's called permanent.

# Security is never answering phones

The computer terminal I write on has a row of eight little lights on the side, most of which I ignore. One bulb, though, lights frequently. It says "Message Waiting" and I always answer it with alacrity. This is because I had a tough time in high school.



Richard Cohen

Please understand. Most of these messages are not for me. They are sent to everyone in the computer system to announce something like the deadline for United Way contributions. These messages are electronic junkmail. Nevertheless, I notice that most of my colleagues hit the "Call Message" key as the "Message Waiting" button lights up, just the way I do.

But I have also noticed that some of my colleagues pay no attention at all to the "Message Waiting" light. They just continue writing or talking and then, in their own good time, call for the message. I have gone around the newsroom mentally making a list of these people. I hate them one and all.

I hate them because I think they are among the most secure people on Earth. I think they are the same people who can let a phone ring. They are the ones who know, because it has been their experience, that the caller will call back. They know that they will always be wanted. They know all this because they were popular in high school, which is, Sigmund Freud's emphasis on infancy notwithstanding, the crucial formative period in life. Everything after high school is, well, more high school.

It is because of high school, because of a social-sexual life that was only infrequently social and never sexual, that I must answer a phone or (the high-tech variation) my "Call Message" button. Who knows? It could be an invitation to a party. It could be a compliment for something I wrote.

Or it could be a message from Linda — wonderful Linda with the long, dark hair who could play the guitar and knew the lyrics to salacious folk songs. That Linda! The Linda of my youth who never called, or, if she did, I was out. (There were no answering machines then, folks.)

In fact, to digress for a moment, I wonder what the contemporary versions of the high-school Richard Cohen do now. I, at least, never knew whether the call I was yearning for came while I was out. I could imagine it had. I could imagine the look on Linda's beautiful face. The smile as she dialed. Her anticipation as the phone rang. The look of disappointment when there was no answer. The grimace as she realized I was out with someone else. How could she know I was taking out the garbage?

Anyway, I had no answering machine, so I just stayed close to the phone, sometimes just staring at it. I tried to will it to ring. "Okay, by the time I count to 10, Linda will call. One, two, three..." Nothing. (What do Simon and Garfunkel know about the sounds of silence?) Later, I even got an answering service on a trial basis, but that was worse than not getting any calls at all. It got so I could not face the message operator and her "Still no messages, Mr. Cohen," refrain. Things were so bad I took to leaving messages for myself, a mental illness that has yet to be categorized.

This is it. The semester I've been waiting for — my last one. This is my semester to share with everyone the fact that I'm graduating in May. It's my turn to politely ask, "Have you seen my ring?" as I shove it in the person's face. This is my semester to be the smug senior who asked, "What about graduating seniors?" when the professor talked about the final during the first week of class.

But, believe it or not, there is a drawback. There is one thing I hate about graduating. The one inevitable question I hear from parents, friends, relatives and enemies in response to all my gloating about graduating in four years. "Do you have a job yet?"

"A JOB?" I gasp in horror. "You mean I'm already supposed to have a job lined up?"

That's impossible. I might be graduating in May, but I still don't have the slightest idea what I want to do to earn a living. When I started here as a freshman, everyone told me I would have plenty of time to decide what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. They lied. Four years go by quickly.

And that's not even the worst of it. The real question is, "Am I qualified to do anything?" I've often wondered what

it that this University has prepared me for? I know the correct answer is to be the boss, but I'm not convinced the marketplace has an opening for me yet.

I've always enjoyed looking through the want ads, especially the job listings. I like to see what types of jobs are available and pick those that I might be able to apply for and get. Unfortunately, I don't find many. I couldn't even apply for a job as a secretary because my typing is horrible. All journalism students have to take a typing test and an English test before they are allowed to take any reporting classes. I passed my English test with no problem, but I failed the typing test three times. It's a terrible realization to believe the only job you're qualified for is the G&S Cough Study because you've been sick all week. Of course, a person can't make a living testing experimental cough syrup. Maybe I can get a job in Brenham testing experimental Blue Bell ice cream.

I feel like Allie from the TV show "Kate & Allie." In this week's episode, Allie graduated from college with a degree in art history and couldn't find a job. She finally found a position selling rock art posters, but was fired after she insulted one of the customers. Now Allie's working in a movie theater selling tickets, but she has high hopes for advancement.

This episode was far from encouraging. I hope I have more to look forward to after graduation than a job in Dillard's china department. Does anyone really ever shop in there?

Now I know there are some of you



Jo Streit

out there who are saying, "Well, don't you go to the placement center. Let me remind you that I'm a journalism major, not an engineering or business major. I agree the placement center does help a lot of students find jobs, but it doesn't help many journalism majors."

Another advantage that engineering and business majors have is that companies actively recruit graduating students in those majors from this University. Every time I look in *The Battalion* there's another huge ad begging engineering, computer science and business majors to bid for an interview with a certain company. I have yet to see an ad begging me, a journalism student, to apply for a job with a top 10 company or even with a bottom 10 company.

Of course, my own department does help graduating seniors find jobs. We even have our own job board. As yesterday, I counted nine job listings and three part-time jobs available to students. That's not very encouraging considering our department has roughly 535 students, out of whom more than 50 have applied for a degree check in hopes of graduating in May.

Despite the odds, I haven't given up. After all, this is my semester. I keep believing this will be the magic semester when everything will fall into place. Maybe I'll have a vision in my Sociology of Sport class that will show me exactly what I'll be doing in four months. My luck, I'll probably miss class one day and the vision will go to somebody else.

Jo Streit is a senior journalism major and a columnist for *The Battalion*.

GENTLEMEN, WE ARE FAST APPROACHING A CRISIS!  
THE NUMBERS ARE JUST NOT ADDING UP! I BELIEVE  
THAT TEXAS WILL BE FORCED TO RESORT TO A LOTTERY!

A LOTTERY TO HELP BALANCE THE STATE BUDGET?

NO... A LOTTERY FOR EARLY RELEASE OF TDC INMATES!



KARL SPENCE  
1987

# A&M grad with no place to go

## Mail Call

### Not surprised

EDITOR:

I've just finished reading Mike Sullivan's column concerning the Corps. First of all, I would like to ask Sullivan how it is that, at a university of A&M's size, a small group such as the Corps can determine the reputation of the school? Do you mean to inform me that the 34,500 other students here can't do anything to compete with the Corps? If this University is to truly be "world-class" (whatever that is), it seems to me that 95 percent of the student population should be able to handle it.

I also would like to ask Sullivan just how many cadets choose to be commissioned? It probably will surprise him. (Do research before you write, Sullivan.)

The Corps has many valuable things to offer students, not only here, but afterward.

If A&M's image is indeed a military one, I believe we have all the resources necessary to change it. Why haven't we? Maybe Sullivan and the 34,499 others figure that out.

Michael G. McLean '86

Editor's note: Nowhere in the column was the term "world-class" used. The column did refer to A&M's goal of attaining status as "world" university, and, in context, the term "world university" was defined. The writer was accurate in stating that more cadets do not get commissions than do.

### An open mind?

EDITOR:

While I am not sure exactly where I stand on the issue of abolishing the Corps of Cadets, I am sure of one thing: a young aspiring journalism major by the name of Mike Sullivan took a stand on an issue in which he believed. For this, he should receive, if not commendation, at least some respect and open-mindedness.

In his column, Sullivan made some very interesting points to which I — I'm sure many other students — was ignorant.

Apparently, the A&M Corps of Cadets and the ROTC program are two separate entities.

We, the students, must ask ourselves this question: after graduation, do we want to be seen as having attended a militarily-oriented institution (as is A&M's reputation abroad), or do we wish to be known as graduates who have completed a rigorous course of study at an up-and-coming university?

Edward Abdelnour '88

Copyright 1986, Washington Post Writers Group

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include classification, address and telephone number of the writer.