

# Battalion columnist tells forum his columns are just his opinion

By Tammy Hedgpeth  
Reporter

Battalion columnist Karl Pallmeyer told a Fountain Forum audience of about 50 Wednesday that his opinion has no effect on *The Battalion* in general.

"What I do is write my opinion," said Pallmeyer, a 1986 Texas A&M journalism graduate. "I have no say over anything that goes into the paper."

Most questions at the Lambda Sigma-sponsored forum centered on Pallmeyer's past columns.

Pallmeyer's column on the quality of campus health care drew heated debate.

Pallmeyer said that female students need gynecological services, which the A.P. Beutel Health Center, at the time the column was written, did not provide. If a student gets injured at bonfire site, he wrote, the health center would treat him. But if a student needs gynecological treatment, it wasn't offered.

Two members of the Corps of Cadets questioned the relationship between bonfire and birth control. Pallmeyer said that although there is no direct relationship between the two, the health center should provide full medical services.

One cadet said Pallmeyer writes columns he knows will upset the Corps.

"Several stories have to shake people to make them read them," Pallmeyer said. "Would you have read it without the word 'bonfire' in it?"

Traditions at Texas A&M also stirred up heat for Pallmeyer.

"Traditions at A&M are part of what makes the school different from other schools," Pallmeyer said. "But I also think that, as at any school, education and knowledge should remain supreme."

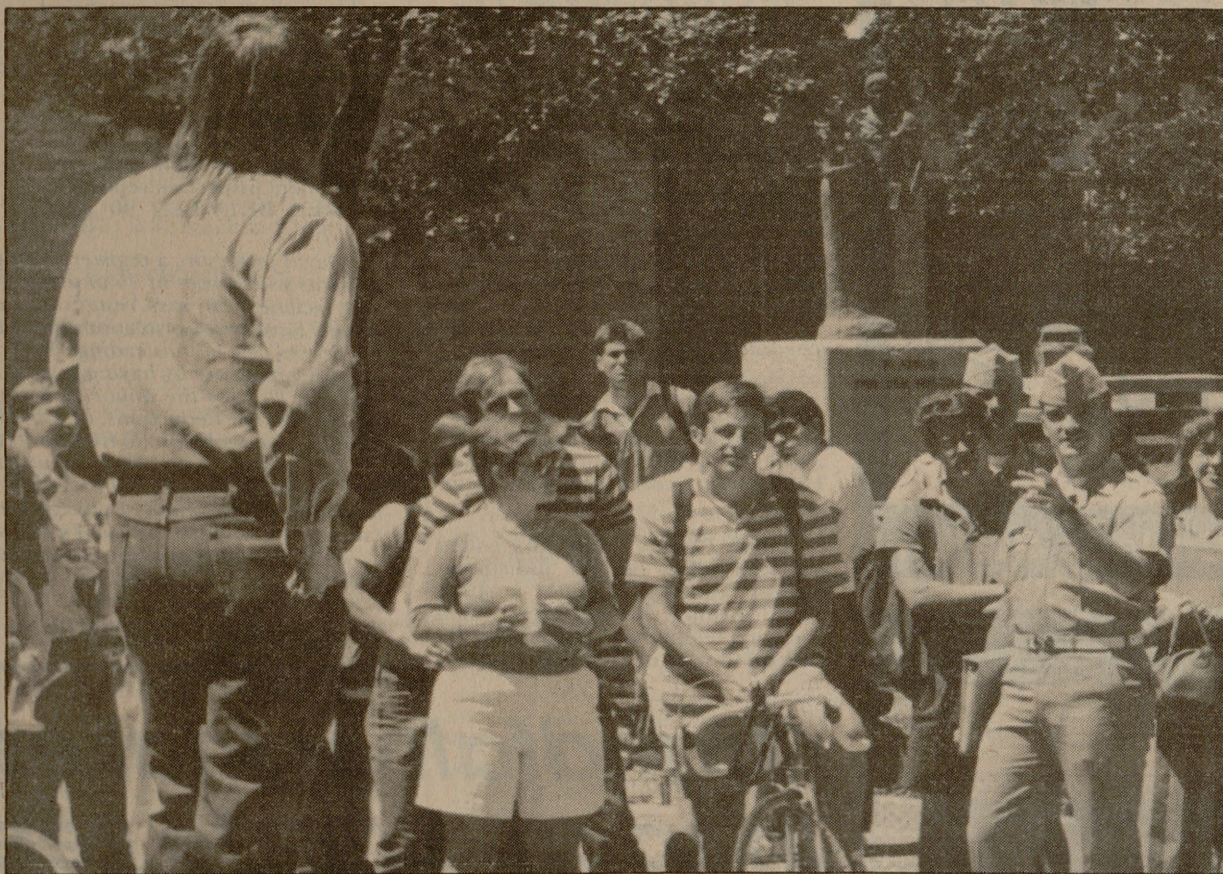


Photo by John Kaspar

A member of the Corps of Cadets member questions *Battalion* columnist Karl Pallmeyer about a column he wrote on health care at A&M. Pallmeyer spoke at Fountain Forum Wednesday.

"People should think about everything instead of why we shouldn't walk on the grass," he said. "The problem with this school is that too much emphasis is placed on traditions."

"I think traditions are fine, as such, but they need to be put into

perspective. That's something we're poorly lacking here."

Some members of Lambda Sigma said they may not agree with his articles, but they understand Pallmeyer's side.

John Mitchell, a junior marketing

major from El Paso, did not understand Pallmeyer's side.

"I think he's biased," Mitchell said. "*The Battalion* represents only a small part of the University. It doesn't need to sell; it's free. Pallmeyer doesn't shake people like he thinks."

## 1987-88 Student Senate meeting opens with goals for next year

By Christi Daugherty  
Staff Writer

Mason Hogan, Texas A&M student body president-elect, opened the first meeting of the 1987-88 Student Senate Wednesday evening and then led the session, which consisted mainly of introductions and job explanations.

Committee chairmen outlined the goals of each committee for the new senators.

Tom Black, Academic Affairs chairman, said his committee would continue to fight the senior finals issue. He predicted the proposed final plan would be put into effect once and then quickly tabled.

"We'll be there with advice after the first attempt falls on its face," Black assured the senators.

Kevin Buchman was introduced as the new student liaison to College Station city government.

Buchman, who was a freshman senator during the spring semester, replaces Mike Hachtman as liaison. Hachtman served in that position for more than two years.

"I really enjoy Senate meetings, and I know how important student representation is in local government," Buchman said. He said his main job is representing the students in local government.

He said he will attend Council meetings with Hachtman this semester to get a feel for the job, and take over completely in the fall.

Guy Diedrich spoke for the Finance Committee and vowed the group would fight legislation cur-

rently pending in Austin which he felt would "... drastically alter student service fee amounts, and dictate in detail how the fees would be allocated."

Currently, the Student Finance Committee makes the initial decisions about student service fee amounts and disbursements. But Diedrich said the legislation would take away the students' voice in the process.

The Committee will work on the issue next fall, he said.

Hogan announced that the executive structure of student government will be slightly altered again next fall by eliminating the position of administrative vice president. Instead, he said, there will be two executive vice presidents, with applications due Friday.

## Placid Oil gets OK for drilling

DALLAS (AP) — Placid Oil Co. officials are preparing to drill in the Gulf of Mexico after a judge's ruling clearing the way for the Green Canyon energy exploration project, a Hunt brothers spokesman said Wednesday.

"Things are moving ahead in preparation of all the steps that really are required at this point to get their project back onstream," said Keith Burton.

He said the drilling vessel is about 40 percent complete, and work started Wednesday to put the equipment together for drilling.

A \$31 million financing plan for the project was approved late Tuesday by U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Harold C. Abramson.

Lamar Hunt, Nelson Bunker Hunt and William Herbert Hunt, along with Placid Oil, sought approval for the financing plan to continue developing the deep-water oil-production project they claim would extract 73 million equivalent barrels of oil from the Gulf of Mexico.

However, creditor banks of the Hunts opposed the plan. Attorneys for the banks, which are seeking to collect more than \$773 million in debts from Placid in the bankruptcy proceedings, argued that the project is not economically viable.

Abramson Tuesday night approved the \$31 million financing plan that allowed development of the Green Canyon project off the Louisiana coast.

## Lawyers: Pregnant inmate should be freed

BROWNSVILLE (AP) — Attorneys for Stacey Lynn Merkt said Wednesday they have asked a federal judge to release the pregnant sanctuary worker because of fears she could lose the baby if she remains imprisoned.

Merkt's attorney, Lisa Brodyaga, said the U.S. attorney who prosecuted the former volunteer has agreed she should be released from a federal correctional center where she had been sentenced to 179 days.

"Her pregnancy has become more and more troublesome," Brodyaga said. "Rather than wait until she loses the baby, everyone agrees she should be at least moved and hopefully set free."

U.S. District Judge Filemon Vela, who sentenced Merkt on a conviction of conspiring to transport illegal aliens, must hear the petition filed Tuesday.

Merkt, named a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International after entering prison in January, is due to give birth before her sentence is up at the end of July, Brodyaga said.

A doctor who examined Merkt recommended very strongly she be released and suggested a community service program, she said.

Brodyaga said she hopes Merkt can be set free, or at least be put in a community service program or sentenced to a halfway house.

Merkt's husband, John Blatz, said recently that his wife was malnourished when she entered prison, due in part to a miscarriage suffered just before she got pregnant, and because of stress and tension.

In prison, she has not gained weight properly and has suffered from "morning, noon and night sickness," said Blatz, who like Brodyaga is an attorney for Proyecto Libertad, an organization that helps refugees from Central America.

Merkt was convicted on 1984 charges alleging she conspired to transport five Salvadoran illegal aliens from San Benito to McAllen, and putting them on a bus for Houston.

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