

Opinion

The Battalion

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Got a compass?

Even though the state budget approved Wednesday by the Texas Senate calls for \$3 billion in new taxes, it charts a far better course out of the state's financial troubles than the path Gov. Bill Clements proposes to pave.

The Senate budget allocates more money to education and service agencies than Clements' plan, which at a local level means \$67 million more for Texas A&M. Also, the Senate approved \$9.3 million more for the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station and \$20.8 million more for the agricultural extension service, \$2.1 million more for the Texas Engineering Experiment Station and \$800,000 more for the engineering extension service, as well as \$2.3 million more for the Texas Transportation Institute.

Clements, of course, claims the Senate's budget is "a giant step in the wrong direction," but when it comes to averting fiscal woes, Clements has been anything but a pathfinder. His own budget schemes are destined to trip over their own feet.

Clements said the Senate's \$36.9 billion budget is "nothing more than smoke and mirrors," but a quick reflection on Clements' goals reveals who's throwing the smokescreen. Clements wants a \$2.9 billion tax bill, largely resulting from the tax increases that were put into effect by former Gov. Mark White. He expects to close the remainder of the \$5.8 billion revenue shortfall with budget cuts.

But most state agencies, especially higher education, can't afford to suffer anymore under the fiscal knife. Given the downturn in the state economy and the cuts already levied against Texas colleges and universities, luring — or retaining — quality faculty is becoming impossible. Yet the best capital investment to disperse the monetary trouble facing the state is to sink funds into higher education. Overall, the Senate budget allots \$400 million more to higher education than its Clements counterpart.

The Senate's budget isn't perfect. It does cut \$100,000 more from prison programs than the governor's proposal. It also reduces mental health spending by \$25 million, even though the Senate's budget gives \$150 million more than Clements suggested.

Clements has said he would veto the Senate budget if it gets as far as his desk, but given the support for the plan, a veto will be only a minor deterrent. The Senate's plan is based on common sense, not the pipe-dream the governor insists on clinging to.

Texas must realize that maintaining excellence in higher education is worth paying for, and that it's better to pay for it at the sales counter now.

The Senate's budget is leading the state in the direction of fiscal responsibility, planning for the future and just plain common sense. If Clements thinks that's the wrong direction, perhaps he needs to check his compass.

Children of Holocaust still feel pain

It is the ordinariness that is so striking: A girl at the beach. A girl on roller skates. A girl with her family, with friends, playing with a hoop or, prosaically, just checking her watch. Then, the pictures stop and imagination must suffice. The girl was taken to Auschwitz, transferred to Bergen-Belsen and there she died. Anne Frank was 15.



Richard Cohen

The pictures of Anne Frank, some of them newly discovered, are on exhibit here at the Boston Public Library. Her story, told through her diary, is a familiar one by now — the bourgeois Jewish family that fled Germany for Holland, the hiding in the secret "annex," the betrayal (by whom?), the death of all but her father, Otto, in Nazi extermination camps. And then, ultimately, the publication of the remarkable "The Diary of a Young Girl."

Here, though, the familiar story was given a new context, an effort to coax from it yet more meaning. It was linked to other outrages such as the Armenian genocide, present-day events in Beirut and Central America and, most disturbing, the recent auto-genocide of Cambodia. Arn Chorn spoke to that in the library auditorium.

Chorn, now a student at Brown University, was nine when the Khmer Rouge came to power in Cambodia. He remembers their coming, how as a boy he ran out to greet the "liberators," wondering if they would play with him. They had other things in mind. One of

the soldiers stopped a man driving by on a motorcycle and demanded he turn over the machine. The man refused and was shot on the spot.

"That's the first time I saw the killing," Chorn said. "I ran back into the house and told my mother and sister. They did not believe me."

Neither did much of the world, and, maybe for that reason, the killing continued. Chorn's family was forced to the countryside. They were worked hard and every day there were killings. The family was separated, and Chorn was taken to a Buddhist temple that had been converted to a human abattoir. Three times a day, executions were held — 15, 20 people killed. The crimes of the victims made racism seem sensible, if that's possible. Education, professional status, ability to speak a foreign language — they all warranted a death sentence.

Chorn loved one older sister above all. He described her as beautiful, but starvation took its toll. "She became skinny and ugly like an old woman. She was not pretty anymore." Separated from her, he got word that she had died before she could be executed. The awful news pleased him. Women about to be executed often were raped. Her death had cheated her captors of at least that.

Here Chorn paused. His voice choked, his eyes welled. In the audience, handkerchiefs came out. Eyes were dabbed. Chests heaved. Chorn continued his story. He was forced to fight the Vietnamese when they invaded Cambodia and, eventually, he was pushed back to the border with Thailand. There, he sought sanctuary and eventually was taken to the United States as one of the first Cambodian orphans.

Chorn spoke close to the Anne Frank photo exhibit. To tour that exhibit is to ask all the usual questions — Why? How? Where was the world? — and then to level the usual indictments. An isolationist America, an anti-Semitic and indifferent State Department, a Europe bent on appeasing Hitler until his appetite could no longer be appeased. It is easy for one generation to condemn another.

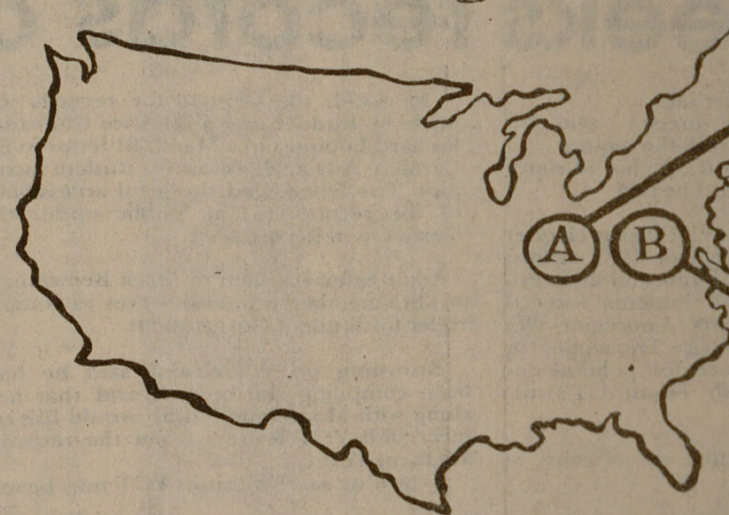
But Chorn condemns our own. The Cambodian holocaust happened, as they say, on our watch. Like Europe after World War I, America after Vietnam looked away. The political right underestimated Hitler. The political left would not believe the news from Cambodia. Evil triumphed in the usual way. Good people did nothing. We were all so busy with our own lives.

Facing history and ourselves, an organization that uses the Holocaust and Holocaust survivors to teach students about the dangers of bigotry held a dinner before the opening of the Anne Frank exhibit. Chorn was there, but did not speak. Other survivors did, though, and alluded to their guilt. They survived when so many — most — did not. One spoke about her difficulty in facing her own history. Another, who had known Anne Frank as a child, simply said, "I had a playmate. Her name was Anna Frank. I survived. She did not."

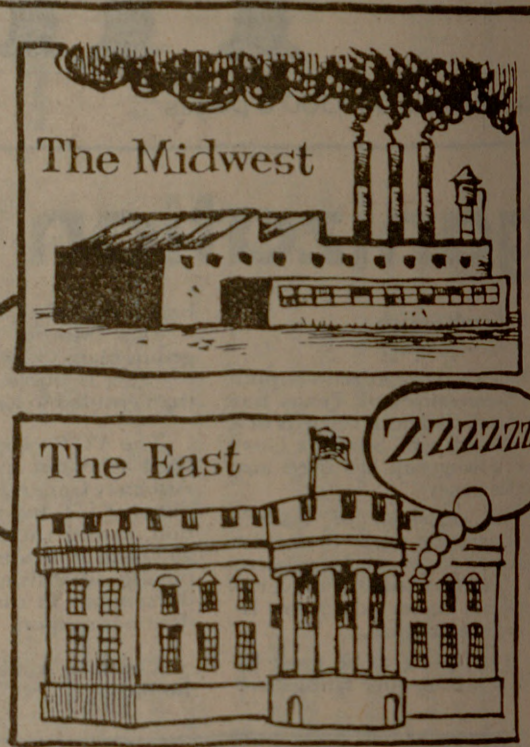
The next day, Chorn struck the same theme. He said he was full of both rage and guilt. "I am terribly angry at the world and my people for letting this happen," he said. For a long time — I felt guilty at being alive." After seeing the Anne Frank exhibit and listening to Chorn, the wonder is that the rest of us do not.

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Q. Where do dangerous emissions linked with acid rain originate?



MARGULIES
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American TV cartoons just ain't what they used to be

One afternoon this week, I went over to my boyfriend Tommy's house. We were sitting on the couch switching the TV channels by remote control and we stopped on the channel playing the cartoon "G.I. Joe." Remember G.I. Joe when you were little? Well, the guys are back and they even have their own TV series.



Jo Streit

In the episode we watched, the American military men were once again battling their old enemy Cobra. The evil Cobra had invented chewing gum that would control the mind of anyone who chewed it. Cobra's plan was to distribute the gum throughout Asia and eventually take over the world.

Of course, the American forces showed up in fighter jets and destroyed Cobra's headquarters. In a showdown with Cobra, one G.I. Joe jumped on the plane loaded with the cargo of gum and saved the world from the evil scheme. Cobra fell from the plane into a river

and the aircraft burst into flames. If anyone of you sympathize with Cobra, don't worry. He'll be back for the next episode.

Like most quality cartoons, the "G.I. Joe" series leaves the audience with a moral or lesson to be learned. I was expecting a discussion on evil world leaders or countries trying to control the rest of earth's nations. At the very least I expected a discussion on the standard commandment not to take candy from strangers. I wasn't even close.

Instead, we see two girls sitting on the beach, one with a severe sunburn. Suddenly, one of the G.I. Joe heroes rushes in with a bottle of sunscreen and warns the young girl not to lay out without protecting herself against the sun's harmful rays. The young girl quickly puts on a hat and shirt and thanks the G.I. Joe for the helpful safety tip.

Maybe I missed the connection between the moral and the rest of the story. It probably sounds rational and reasonable to everyone else. After all, doesn't nuclear radiation cause sunburn? Maybe the idea is that if you ever travel to a war zone where our military men are engaged in battle with nuclear weapons, you'd better bring a bottle of sunscreen.

Today's cartoons are both similar to and different from cartoons in the past. The most obvious similarity is the use of violence, which goes along with the good vs. evil theme. The most striking difference between the two is how these commonalities are portrayed.

In the past, the struggle between good and evil was showcased as a personal battle between two characters. And as an audience, we never really hated the evil character. For example,

Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd or Wiley Coyote and Roadrunner. I never liked Wiley Coyote even though he wanted to eat Roadrunner, and the same is true of Elmer Fudd. Instead, we laughed at the struggle because we knew nothing would ever happen to Bugs or Roadrunner.

Actually, you almost felt sorry for their opponents. In every episode we watch Wiley Coyote build some contraption he'd ordered from the Acme Co. that he was sure would catch Roadrunner. And every time he'd end up tripping himself or landing at the bottom of the cliff. The same was true of Elmer Fudd, who always went home empty handed at the end of hunting season.

Today, the struggles aren't as fun and the situations aren't as farfetched. Few of us believe that somewhere, Wyoming, Wiley Coyote and Roadrunner really exist. Unfortunately, it's hard to believe that we have military personnel stationed all over the world in an effort to keep one man or one country from trying to take over the world. Stars Wars isn't a new cartoon.

The differences stem from the fact that many of today's children are not aware of the continuing battles and threats of the world they live in. Cartoons may help children understand world situation in an entertaining way. Of course, cartoons aren't just for children. Recently, New York Mayor Koch replaced the cartoon "Danger Mouse" with his own show TV show. The first, Koch's first show failed well soon the public outcry for the return of the cartoon was overwhelming. Not one of the government officials that Koch had on his show could bring in the ratings like "Danger Mouse."

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

Mail Call

The only way

EDITOR:

In response to the April 14 letter by John R. Spessard concerning Christianity, I would like to rectify a serious fallacy.

No one can buy his way to heaven. Jesus Christ died for everyone so that any who have faith in him may have eternal life. Accepting Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour is the only way to heaven; it is an act of faith — nothing else.

Bryan Kelly '90

Welcome to the 20th century

EDITOR:

Howdy Ags! I was blocked from pre-registering (along with many others) due to numerous parking violations. I received most of my tickets after 5 p.m. in parking lots that were for the most part empty, while spending late nights playing with WYLBUR or studying at the library. (Apparently my year-old sticker is no longer valid). Ticketing vehicles after 4 p.m. is almost as ridiculous as Texas A&M being legally forced to officially recognize the GSA Student Services organization. (God knows we tried not to).

So what do I plan to do about it? Well, when the day comes when I am a rich old Ag looking for ways to donate to my alma mater, I'm going to give A&M something it really needs. No, not a bigger and better bell tower, not another building, not even a computer system that isn't down 90 percent of the time. I will donate a new campus police department, one that can find better things to do than terrorize studious, hard-working, diligent, off-campus Aggies who find occasion to visit campus late at night.

James A. (Bud) Thompson '88

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.