

Opinion

The Battalion

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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.

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No choice

The National Federation for Decency already has succeeded in taking away one of your privileges. You can no longer walk into a 7-Eleven store and buy an adult magazine.

7-Eleven doesn't sell the magazines anymore because the federation, a group claiming a social conscience above and beyond that of the average American, protested their sale. And the convenience-store chain heeded the complaints.

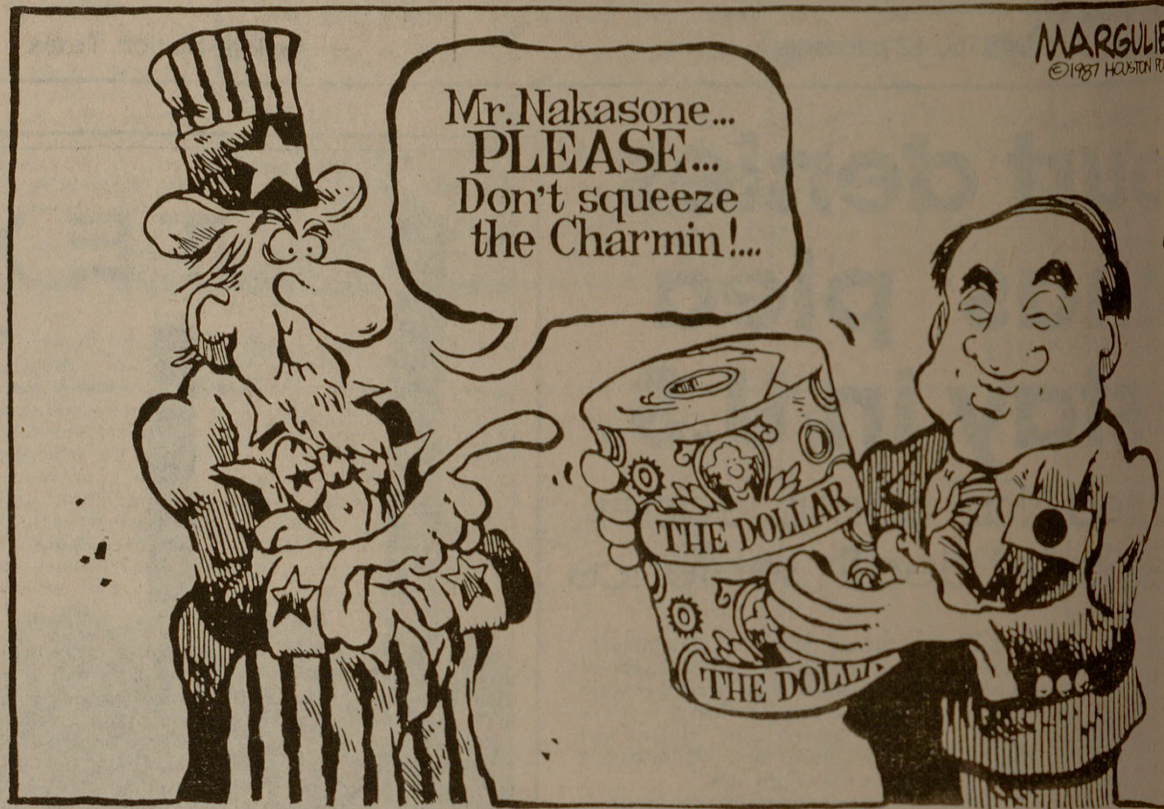
The group is at it again. Saturday, NFD picketed 1,400 U.S. Holiday Inn Motels because the organization says the hotel chain shows pornographic (R-rated) movies.

The movies must be paid for at the hotel's main desk, preventing children from watching them — movies children can watch on their own home cable stations. But the federation still objects. Apparently the NFD won't be satisfied until hotel guests have no choice but to watch movies with no nudity and no profanity.

The protests were organized by Rev. Donald Wildman, head of the NFD, after the Missionary Baptist churches canceled their reservations at the Biloxi Holiday Inn where their national convention was to be held. The group canceled because it objected to the availability of R-rated movies at the hotel.

Of course, the Missionary Baptist churches have the right to demonstrate its disapproval by canceling reservations, and the NFD can expostulate their opinion publicly.

But if the federation once again encounters little or no resistance from an American public easily censored by a moral dictatorship, we will lose yet another choice. How many more choices can we afford to lose?



For some, it just doesn't add up

Nervously, I entered the room and sat down on one of the folding chairs arranged in a circle in the center of the room. I thought I'd try to keep a low profile since this was the first time I had attended one of these meetings.



Loren Steffy

I know — I have known since about

the seventh grade — that I have a problem. In the past I tried to ignore it, but I've realized you can't hide from your troubles forever. It was time to face the truth — I am mathematically illiterate.

Actually, my numerical disorders are limited mostly to higher math. I know enough about how numbers operate to balance my checkbook, make change and, before I graduated, figure out what I needed to make on a final to pass a class.

I don't like numbers much, but I like letters that masquerade as numbers even less. When I add $x + y + z$, I get the title of an obscure movie that Three Dog Night did the soundtrack for.

I find Greek letters that pretend to be numbers even more disturbing. If letters are going to deceive you, they ought to do it in English.

But when I got a job as a business reporter, I realized that my fear of math could inhibit my career. So I joined Mathematical Illiterates Anonymous — MIA for short. As I've said, my problems lie in higher math, so for me, MIA means Missing in Algebra.

The meeting began. A man named Frank Smith started the session. "Hi, I'm Frank, and I'm mathematically illiterate."

"Hi, Frank," everyone responded. "I used to think I could live with my problem. I took a dead-end job with few numerical responsibilities. I fudged on a tax return here, an invoice there. But then the firm I worked for installed computers, and everything was coded with identification numbers. I couldn't even remember who I was, let alone what I was supposed to do. First I lost my job, then my family and finally my self-respect, all because I lacked society's lust for math."

Everyone clapped. I was overwhelmed by Frank's story and when it was time for someone else to take the seat in the center of the circle, I found myself standing up. So much for the low profile.

"I'm Loren. And I'm . . . m-m-mathematically illiterate." I felt much better after getting that out. "Hi, Loren."

"I didn't recognize my problem 'til my senior year in high school. I seriously considered abandoning algebra because I had to have Algebra II in. I muddled through, and even managed to squeak through Math III at Texas A&M. But I refused to take anything higher, and I didn't need to graduate. Even the statistics class I rarely used actual numbers."

My fellow MIAs were very convincing, and after the hour-long meeting, I felt much better. I realized that with proper determination, I could overcome my problem.

MIA helps millions nationwide who are deprived of number sense. In course, a non-profit organization — could keep track of the books? In you don't have to pay anything since many of the members can't appreciate the value of money.

Once upon a time in Aggieland . . .

Those terrible college criminals — Oct. 3, 1928

Hazing, of course, is a barbarous custom. Especially if one happens to be the hazer. Six sophomores at A. & M. have been suspended because they exercised the time-honored right of sophomores to chastise freshmen.

The two victims applied for permission to leave college, giving as their reason the fact that they had been hazed. Whereupon an investigation was started.

Perhaps the college authorities, in view of the facts and in view of the

regulations against hazing, could do nothing save suspend the hazers. They had done nothing more outrageous than participate in a boyish prank. Nobody was hurt; maybe a couple of them were helped, for there are cases wherein hazing has had an extremely salutary effect upon the hazee.

But colleges are becoming careful. Boyish spirits must be held sternly in check. Hazing must be rigorously prohibited — that is, when the hazers are

unlucky enough to get caught.

In this particular case, we can't refrain from speculating upon the respective characters of the hazers and the hazees. Six boys winked at a college regulation; two boys "squealed," and asked to be allowed to quit so uncouth an institution. If you had to hire one of the six boys or one of the two boys, which would you select?

— Taken from "The Corpus Christi Caller"

Bad English usage here — Oct. 4, 1958

The English being used by the students at A. & M. is getting so faulty that it is noticeable by the faculty, outsiders, and even among the students themselves. It is a common occurrence to hear bad usage in classes, in the mess hall, at the gym, and at any other place where students are gathered.

It is not wholly the freshmen who are making bad usage of their grammar; in fact, it is practically altogether the upperclassmen. Surely the atmosphere prevailing around and on the campus is not intended to cause bad grammar. But all our misused words

are probably done unconsciously, but not so unconsciously that we cannot correct our faults.

The fact that students are using bad English, not only in their conversations, but in their class papers and reports has been brought to the attention of the faculty, which is working to correct our blunders.

It is not the slang and Aggie "cussing" which is bringing so much attention. A letter written recently to an employer by an A. & M. student dismayed the employer to such an extent that he sent a letter to the faculty con-

cerning the form in which the letter was written.

Just being a graduate of A. & M. will not get the graduate a job. The English used when he is trying to convince the employer of his capability will be one of the deciding factors in the graduate's getting employment.

Once upon a time in Aggieland features old columns and editorials printed in The Battalion. The material in the feature is selected by the Opinion Page Editor and is not edited for style.

Mail Call

Christian vomit

EDITOR:

I would like to express my most sincere thanks to Bryan Kelly for enlightening me (April 17 letter) in regard to the Christian formula for obtaining immortality.

When you refer to Jesus, I am assuming you are talking about the fictional character in the best-selling book of fairy tales known as the Bible, and whose mere name causes all good Christians to drool and slobber over themselves (similar to Pavlov's dog).

If I understand you (and the Bible) correctly, I will achieve immortality if I submit myself to your monarch Mr. J. Christ, and if I choose not to, I will be damned. It seems that bribery and blackmail are the foundations of Christianity. According to your formula, one can kill, rob, maim and torture and still receive eternal life (like your fellow Christian Adolf Hitler) while a non-Christian who leads a "good" life goes to hell. According to your formula, every child who dies at birth or who dies before being sufficiently brainwashed will burn in the Christian hell. According to your formula, all members of the Jewish "faith" are condemned (Christianity should have more respect toward its parent). According to your formula, approximately 4 billion people per generation are damned by your most merciful, loving God.

People tell me I must have faith. Shall I derive my faith from

the Judeo-Christian "Mein Kampf?" On one page it advocates the extermination of homosexuals (Lev. 20:13) while saying "thou shalt not kill" on another. Is there any reasonable person who believes the Bible's ridiculous and cruel stories? Is there anyone criminal enough to follow the teachings of the Old Testament or insane enough to follow the teachings of the New?

So my dear, Kelly, you can take your Christian vomit and shove it down someone else's throat.

John Spessard
President of the Atheist, Agnostic, and Freethinker Society

Good point

EDITOR:

This letter is in response to Karl Pallmeyer's column "Creating the Ultimate Textbook." Pallmeyer raises a valid point: America was created so a person could choose to believe in whatever he desires, and that one belief should not take precedence over another. This should be true whether one believes in Christianity or believes that the world was created by a race of hyperintelligent mice, and that the answer to the Ultimate Question is 42. Too many Christian people assume their religion is supreme and try to incorporate it where it does not belong — scientific textbooks and

classrooms for example. Pallmeyer's column points this out in a subtle and intelligent manner.

Alex Maloy '90

Tough luck

EDITOR:

As I sit at my desk looking over my agenda for the rest of the semester, my roommate, a graduating senior, boasts of all the fun and frolic she will enjoy during dead week while I, a junior, will be slaving over my books. It is a well-known and much-debated fact that we — the class of 1988 — will have to take finals as seniors. I would like to know why? What ruling or legislation led to this? Why was this a decision Vandiver felt so strongly about? Are other universities having to adhere to this same idiotic decision? Why is the class of 1988 singled out as the first class to be burdened with this new unnecessary policy? We have to take finals for the next four years of college! This policy will cause irreversible damage to the long awaited traditional events experienced only by the senior graduating class of A&M!

Audrey Henderson '88

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