

Opinion

Budget battle was irresponsible

When the Texas Legislature narrowly approved a record \$5.7 billion tax package Tuesday, it finally realized the obvious — the state needs a lot of money to make up for its loss in oil-related revenue.

Since the first day of the regular session, the powers that be in the state government knew that a tax increase was inevitable, that a massive tax increase was needed to keep the quality of life in Texas from taking one giant step backward.

But despite that, the state's Republicans wailed about the evils of a tax increase and dragged their feet the whole way toward securing the state's future. Even Republican Rep. Richard Smith of Bryan, whose district includes Texas A&M, came down firmly on both sides of the fence by voting against the tax bill yet voting for the budget that the bill would fund. The \$38.3 billion budget includes a hefty 9.4 percent hike in appropriations for the A&M system.

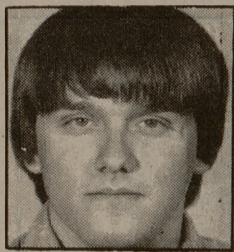
Since the Reagan Revolution of 1980, the Republicans have been calling tax hikes irresponsible. But in the case of the 1988-89 Texas budget, a vote for a tax increase was the responsible decision. House Democrats from conservative districts knew this. Unfortunately, they face a very real threat of not being re-elected because their constituents have swallowed the Republican line that all tax increases are bad.

What's even more unfortunate is that come election time, those who voted for the tax measure will know as the ones responsible for passing the biggest tax increase in any state's history and not as the ones who had the courage to do what was right.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

Suffering from 'La Bamba' brain

Like most people, you have probably heard a song that sticks in your memory, and you can't get rid of it for days. You keep singing or humming the song over and over, driving yourself and everyone around you crazy. I've got that problem now.



Karl Pallmeyer

The song is "La Bamba." Originally it was a Mexican folk song that Ritchie Valens turned into a killer rock 'n' roll song back in 1958. Probably everyone knows the song. It goes something like this (I guess):

"La la la la bamba"
 "La la la la bamba the poor cow say"
 "Norman sold-a my gorilla"
 "Norman's cheese is a-telling"
 "Oh beat the heat"
 "Ya Amoeba Amoeba"
 "Amoeba Amoeba"
 "Poor key say hay"
 "Poor key say hay"
 "Bamba bamba"
 "Bamba bamba"

I don't know Spanish, so I'm not sure what the song means. None of my Spanish-speaking friends know for sure either. I can't blame them or their Spanish teachers since there are a lot of songs in English that no one can figure out.

The best theory about the meaning of "La Bamba" is that it is a Mexican folk dance. The first verse of the song says that if you want to dance the bamba, you have to have three things: grace, energy and a partner. Verse two of the song is

about a sailor trying to pick up a girl to dance with. He says that he's not like most sailors and doesn't want to do anything but dance. If she's a smart girl, she knows he's full of caca la vaca.

The song "La Bamba" has always been one of my favorites, and that's good since I can remember several times when I've got hooked on songs I actually hated. "La Bamba" is on the jukebox at two of my favorite restaurants, and it's on a party tape my roommates and I put together a couple of years ago. It's strange, but whenever that song would turn up on the tape everyone would start dancing and trying to yell Spanish at each other.

The song caught on up at *The Battalion* awhile back when a journalism student named Cindy Bomba used to visit the newsroom. Whenever she would walk into the newsroom, Assistant City Editor Rodney Rather and I would start singing "La Bamba." That's probably why we don't see her around here much anymore.

A couple of weeks ago, I went to see the sneak preview of a movie about the life of Ritchie Valens. The movie is naturally called "La Bamba." Since then I've pulled out my old Valens albums and bought the soundtrack album to the movie and have been playing them constantly.

In the movie all of Valens' music, including "La Bamba," is performed by Los Lobos, a Mexican-American band that makes great music. The Los Lobos version of the song has been released as a single and is shooting up the charts. Now "La Bamba" is on the radio almost every hour.

I threw a party for *The Battalion* staff

the night after I saw "La Bamba" of the highlights of the party was appearance of Jerry and the Battalion rock band comprised of Opinion Editor Jerry Oslin on vocals, former Sports Editor Travis Tingle on percussion, future Managing Editor John Jarvis on bass, and "Waldo" cartoonist Kevin Thomas and me on guitars. After playing several versions of "Louie Louie," "Twist and Shout," "My Generation," "God Save the Queen" and other songs we know all the words to, we decided "La Bamba." Peter Rocha, a photographer from a rival paper, pretended to know the lyrics and grabbed the microphone. I pretended to know the chords so we managed to play a version of the song before the party guests passed out.

For some strange reason, few seem to remember that evening's performance, but "La Bamba" has on everybody's mind. It's bad when person is stuck on a song, but "La Bamba" is contagious. Someone will start singing the song and soon the of the newsroom will chime in with few verses. It's getting ridiculous. I'm being blamed for the "La Bamba" disease. My co-workers are about to throw me out the window.

This week I'm trying to get "La Bamba" out of my system. Maybe putting it down on paper, I can exorcise the "La Bamba" demon. Aside from this column, you'll find a review of the "La Bamba" movie and soundtrack album at *Ease*.

Maybe next week I'll find another song.

Karl Pallmeyer is a journalism graduate and a columnist for *The Battalion*.

A person's name is nobody's business

A man walked up to me at a public gathering recently and asked if he could discuss a problem.



Lewis Grizzard

"Please continue," I said.

"All my life," he began, "I've had the nickname 'Bubba.'"

"I'm not sure how I got it but it's what my parents, brothers and sisters, teachers, and friends have always called me.

"My real name is 'Tom,' but very few people know that," he went on.

"And the problem?" I asked.

"I can't be specific here," he said, "but I took a job with a national firm, and my boss says I can't use the name Bubba anymore.

"He said it's bad for business to have somebody named Bubba calling on customers. He says Bubba sounds redneck and juvenile, and he has insisted I now go by Tom.

"I hate Tom, I'm Bubba. What should I do?"

I must admit this was the first time I had heard of someone being forced to change their name by management for business purposes.

Should a company, or a company executive, have the right to ask such a thing of an employee.

Let's consider this in depth:

The name Bubba does conjure an initial reaction that there might be a pickup truck involved somewhere, one with muddy tires, a Confederate flag decal on the back window and a bumper

sticker that says, "I'll give up my gun when they pry my cold, dead finger off the trigger."

On the other hand, Bubba certainly could be a term of endearment, a little sister's pronunciation of the word "brother," for instance. And Bubba even has its place in modern literature and culture.

Pat Conroy's "Bear" called all the cadets an endearing "Bubba" in Conroy's brilliant, "The Lords of Discipline."

There is also Bubba Smith, the former football player who now bites open beer cans in television commercials.

But would anybody have a problem doing business with a man named Bubba?

I can only speak for myself, but I think I could deal with a Bubba and probably have more in common with him than with a man named Raoul or Tripp.

I would go to a bank to take out a loan from a Bubba, and I'd even have a Bubba for a lawyer. I figure the jury could warm up to a man with a name like that.

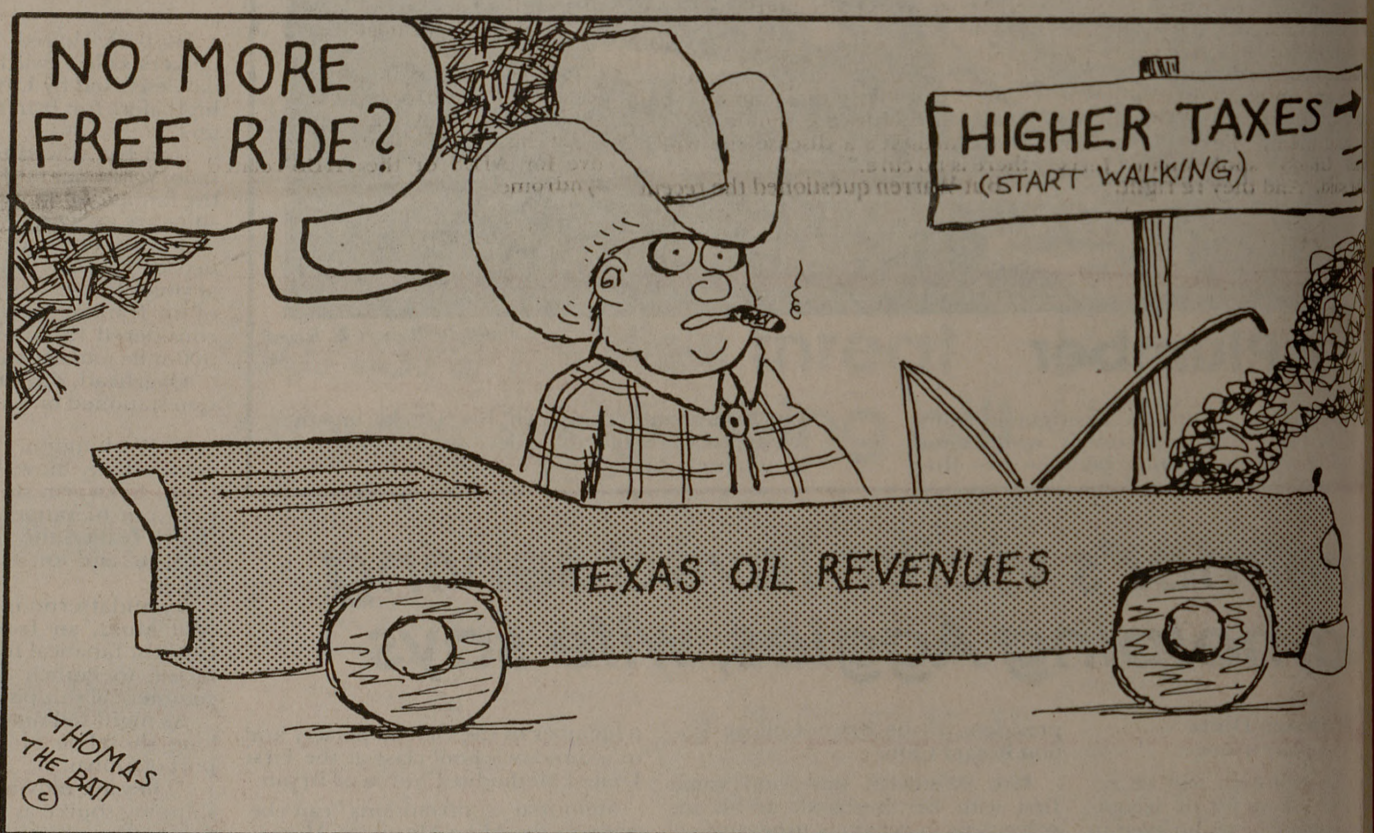
Plus, I think that somewhere in the Constitution it probably says an American has the right to have just about any name he or she pleases. Otherwise, Liberace would have been in big trouble. And what would happen to poor Fennis Dembo, the Wyoming basketball player?

I told the man to tell his boss he'd see him in court if he gave him any more trouble about being called Bubba.

For the record, I also asked, "What's your boss's name?"

"Melvin," he said. "But around the office we call him 'Stinky.'"

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A few tips for incoming freshmen

So now you are a college student. Straight out of All-America High School. You have the world by the tail.

No date is too obscure. No poem is too deep. No quadratic equation is too insoluble. I know. I was a freshman once.

Welcome to real life.

No, actually college is a preparation for real life and becoming a real person. You see, there are three kinds of people in this world: little people, college people and real people. You are now the second of these.

When I was but a lad, fresh from high school and ready to embark upon the next part of my fantastic voyage through life, my father made a strange statement to me. He said the next four years were going to be the best of my life.

Well, he was right, but he did not know why. No non-student knows why. Only true collegians can understand. Because the full glories of college life cannot be appreciated without the observance of traditions.

Not Aggie traditions, at least not necessarily. Most of you have had Fish Camp or family for that. I mean college traditions.

And for lack of a better candidate, your humble narrator will assist you in your pursuit of acceptance by telling

you about a few of them. Hey, I've been here three years, and I've almost got it. Maybe I can save you some time.

Tradition #1: Lines. Particularly for freshmen, line-standing becomes an art form by the end of the first two weeks of the semester. The police station, drop-add and Kyle Field are established fields of battle in this age-old sport.

For maximum efficiency, remember the three laws of lines: The line you are in will move slowest; if you change lines, the line you were in will move faster; if you stand in one place long enough, you will make a line.

Tradition #2: Skipping class. It took me a while to get used to this one, but it was worth the wait.

This is the one parents find most difficult to understand. They think, why pay big bucks for classes, only to skip every one in which the professor does not take attendance? Silly parents, no concept of reality.

My roommate for the first two years of my college experience had this one down to an art. While taking Economics 203 and 204, he went to class a total of 11 times. Including tests. Including finals. He made a B and a C. Slimeball.

Tradition #3: Parking. You freshmen with cars will get either a green or a red parking sticker. That means you may park in, respectively, green or red parking lots.

If you park elsewhere, you will be ticketed. Period. Not "if you get caught" or "if it's for too long." Campus police

are remarkably efficient in this area especially considering the efficiency of the University Police waiting room.

Tradition #1: Lines).
 Tradition #4: Changing majors. I've done it twice myself. The record is into the double-digits.

Why is major-changing such an inseparable part of Joe College Student's career? Nobody really knows. It probably is because college changes a person's perspective on life. These long dreams of a career as a doctor, lawyer frequently fade into oblivion when a person starts finding out what will take to pursue that career.

My brother, who last year enrolled a freshman at a huge but insignificant junior college in downtown Austin for his entire life dreamed of being a veterinarian. College biology is all his scope of reality.

I had no idea at all of becoming a journalist when I first came here for biology major.

Two years later, I was in search of liberal arts school which offered a bachelor of science degree. A B.S. required so I would not have to take more Spanish. Journalism happened. It fit the bill. Nice way to determine a career, wouldn't you say?

But that's the way college can affect you. No matter what you put into it, matter what you try to take out of it will not be the same when you leave.

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The Battalion

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