

Opinion

One for the road

One Texas stereotype, the beer-guzzling driver, is on the road to extinction as the state's "open container" law takes effect. Or so the Legislature hopes.

But while the law's intentions — reducing drunken driving and the havoc it wreaks — are laudable, the Legislature could have done a much better job of going after what has been called Texas' most deadly tradition.

Ross Newby, director of the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, calls the law weak: "By allowing the passenger to drink in the car, it makes it easy for the driver to hand it over."

But in most cases, the driver doesn't need to. It's still legal to carry an alcoholic beverage while driving as long as you don't drink it. Unless a police officer sees the driver take a drink, he can't make an arrest.

All of which serves to make Texas' open container law much like its sodomy law — virtually unenforceable and decidedly useless.

Oop! Ack!

Today marks the *Battalion* debut of something A&M students have been asking for — Bloom County. Opus, Milo, Binkley and the gang will make daily appearances on the opinion page.

Battalion staffers were elated with the new arrival — and promptly celebrated by reading up through the end of September. We hope you enjoy it as much as we have.

A good speech, no dozing off, and now back to you, Dan

What I would like to be just once is the person who comes on television after the president makes a speech and tells you what you probably thought you just heard the president say but apparently didn't.

You know how it goes:

"And now with an analysis of the president's remarks, here is our political expert, Sandra Van Okra."

I listened to President Reagan when he talked about Iranscam and thought what I might say if I had been called upon to analyze his televised speech:

"And now, with an analysis of the president's remarks, here is our political expert, Lewis Grizzard."

"Thank you, Dan. I didn't think the president made a great speech tonight, but it certainly was a good speech."

"He didn't have to excuse himself to go to the restroom a single time, and he didn't doze off, either, which is quite

extraordinary for a man two years older than Arizona.

"I mean, the president has access to the button that would start World War III, and Uncle Barney is only 66 and Aunt Mattie won't leave him in a room alone with the Cuisinart."

"As an aside, Dan, the president was in a good mood before the speech and did his old 'We begin bombing (the Russians) in five minutes' routine again."

"Just before the live broadcast began, the president remarked, 'Wouldn't Sam Donaldson make a great Journalist in Space when NASA flies another Challenger?'"

"That got a great laugh from everybody, except Sam, of course, who stuck out his tongue at the president and sulked during the entire speech."

"But, Dan, I think what may be most important here is not what the president said — which was 'How can you be mad at an ol' buckstopper like me?' — but what the president didn't say."

"He didn't say anything about the Falkland Islands, banana yogurt or the Regis Philbin show. He also didn't say anything about Ollie, but in all fairness he didn't say anything about Kukla or Fran, either."

"Now at one point in his speech, regard to how he felt when he learned of the diverted funds, the president said, 'I was mad as a hornet.'"

"There are a number of reasons I used the term 'hornet.' He was afraid I was mad as a wasp, because I didn't want to offend any minority groups, such as people who watch the Regis Philbin show."

"He also could have said, 'I was as mad as an old wet hen,' but that would have gotten him into hot water with the feminists, not to mention the poultry industry and Dinah Shore."

"The president also could have said, 'I was as mad as a squashed grape,' but he's in enough trouble with the gay community as it is."

"What the Democrats will be saying about the president's speech, of course, is he should have said he was 'mad as a hatter.'"

"All in all, Dan, I think the president accomplished what he wanted to accomplish with tonight's speech, and that was to prove to the nation he could stay up past 9 o'clock."

Sandra Van Okra couldn't have it any better.

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The honest truth about *The Batt*

Today's *Battalion* tells you a lot about the campus and community and what goes on here. It tells you how to survive and even find culture. What it doesn't tell you, up until now, is much about *The Battalion* itself.

I've heard all kinds of enlightening things about *The Batt* since I've been here. Last fall, a guy in one of my classes spent a great deal of time trying to tell me that radical columnist and fanatical two-percenter Karl Pallmeyer really ran the paper.

Karl? Give me a break.

But although you have to have a sense of humor about such myths to work here, it makes you aware that most students know very little about how the paper runs, who runs it, and what they do.

Here, then, is The Truth About *The Batt*:

The Battalion is a student newspaper that is run by students. The editors, reporters, columnists and cartoonists are all full-time students who must balance their jobs with their classes.

The newspaper's business operations, such as advertising and subscriptions, are handled by a professional staff that is separate from the student staff. (This means we don't know the advertising rates, and they don't know if we're sending a photographer to an event.) Texas A&M's director of student publications oversees the whole operation. The student staff, however, has sole responsibility for the content of the news and editorial pages. (This means the editorial at the top of the page represents the opinion of the editorial board. The faculty, administration and Board of Regents don't necessarily agree with us.)

Like all newspapers, *The Battalion* is intended to inform an audience — Texas A&M students, faculty and administration. As with all papers, we are limited in our coverage by the size of the paper as well as our resources, staff and budget. We try to concentrate our coverage on campus events, but like all newspapers, we have to make decisions on what stories our audience wants or needs.

Unlike most newspapers, *The Batt* is also a training ground for student journalists in A&M's Department of Journalism. Students in intermediate reporting, editing and photojournalism classes are assigned work for the paper as part of their laboratory courses.

Journalism students, of course, make more mistakes than real-world journalists, just like engineering students make more mistakes than real-world engineers. The difference is that when you flunk an engineering midterm, you're the only one who knows you flunked. When you mess up in a news story, the entire *Battalion* readership sees it.

And you don't have to be a journalism student to work for *The Battalion*. Staff positions, which are filled in December and May, are open to all students. Current *Battalion* staffers include, among others, history, political science and math majors as well as journalism students.

So you don't want to be a *Battalion* staffer but you still want input? The What's Up listing, the opinion page and *At Ease's* attention!! page are forums for the University community.

What's Up will list non-profit meetings and activities for area groups. Forms are available in the *Battalion* office, Room 216 of the Reed McDonald building, and listings must be submitted three business days before you want them to run.

Letters to the editor should be short (300 words or fewer) and must include your name, classification, address and telephone number. Letters that don't follow these guidelines don't appear in the paper.

If 300 words isn't enough, you may want to write a guest column. These should be about three typewritten pages long. Like letters to the editor, they will be edited for grammar, style and length. You can bring them by the *Battalion* office or mail them to us.

Questions? Columns and story ideas dancing in your heads? Call us. We'll be glad to hear from you.

Sue Krenek is a senior journalism major and the opinion page editor for *The Battalion*.



"The plane left late... the stewardess was surly... and now they've got us four across!"

Mail Call

More than meets the eye

EDITOR:

After reading the articles in the August 13 and 14 issues of *The Battalion*, I felt you should let your readers see the other side of the story. I did not grow up on a ranch or farm and was not involved with the agricultural industry until 1981, when I bought a ranch and invested in the cattle business.

In the past five years, I have devoted full time to the raising, breeding and slaughter of cattle. I have been in many slaughter plants and looked at many carcasses. I have never experienced what Carmen Mason, the student cited in the article, claims to exist in the slaughter business. I have found the slaughter plants to operate in an efficient and clean manner.

Now comes the best part of the story. Not only do we have meat from cattle, but many essential byproducts are used by the public. Every time a steer walks up to the killing floor, thousands of people live. The foam used for emergency aircraft landings and medicines for thickening and thinning the blood are all byproducts from cattle. Even vegetarians who detest the thought of red meat consumption might be surprised to learn that many of the everyday essentials that they depend on are byproducts of

the red meat industry. A 1,000-pound steer, for example, yields an estimated 432 pounds of beef. The remains are used in cosmetics, clothing and pharmaceutical products. The hair from the hide is used in making insulation and rug pads. Fine hair is used in manufacturing artists' brushes. The best-known is the leather that is used for luggage, clothing, upholstery and much more. Bone, hooves and hooves contribute to making buttons, bone china, piano keys, glues, toothbrushes and violin strings. Some edible byproducts include ice cream, gelatin, gum, candy and marshmallows. Fats are used in oil, shortening, industrial oils, lubricants, cosmetics and soaps.

Blood is used in cancer research. The intestines are used for medical sutures. The brains are used for cancer research, cholesterol and vitamin D-3. Your readers should also be aware that it takes 26 cattle to provide enough insulin to keep one insulin diabetic alive for one year.

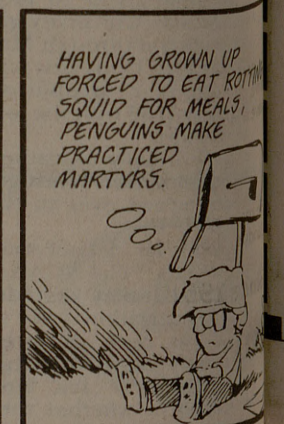
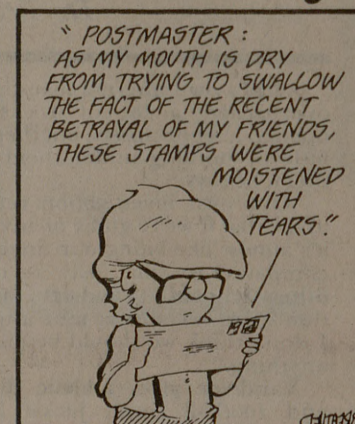
So you see the rest of the story is "The Stairway to Heaven" — the animals' contribution to mankind.

Judith Turlington

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial board reserves the right to edit letters for style and 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.

BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed



The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

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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. 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*, 216 Reed McDonald, 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*, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.