

Opinion

The Battalion

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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.

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Too many drivers

The committee report on the Iran-Contra affair has been released, and it finds no trace of the long-sought "smoking gun" that would indicate President Reagan approved the transfer of funds to the Nicaraguan rebels.

But Reagan does not escape unscathed. The report paints a picture of a foreign policy gone out of control, one where "too many drivers — and never the right ones — steering in too many directions took the Iran initiative down the road to failure." And again: "If the president did not know what his national security advisers were doing, he should have."

Indeed he should have. At the least, Reagan demonstrated negligence and incompetence by allowing advisers to run his foreign policy for him. At his worst, he fostered an atmosphere in which laws apparently were made to be broken.

But the report clearly is written by a committee that wants to bolster Congress' role in foreign policy. To that end, it proposes several solutions, such as requiring the president to notify Congress of any covert operations within 48 hours. Given Congress' notorious inability to keep information from leaking, these recommendations would only serve to hamstring any U.S. covert actions.

The problem, as the committee realized, is a lack of leadership in the White House. But the solution is better leadership, not inflexible regulations. Such regulations won't fix the mess we have in the White House now; they will only punish future presidents for Reagan's follies.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

'Cheating awareness' won't end cheating

This week was Cheating Awareness Week — at least that's what an ad in *The Battalion* told me. This week was generously sponsored by the Student Government Academic Affairs Committee. And, as far as I can understand, the purpose was to make students comfortable with the idea of reporting cheaters.

Doug Driskell
Guest Columnist

How, you may ask, are they going to do that? By running ads in the school newspaper, of course. The first slogan I read pertaining to cheating was, "You can't cheat in the real world . . ." Hogwash! The United States is full of cheaters, and this is why we have cheating at A&M. Cheating is not something that can be resolved in one week. It is going to take a restructuring of morals. Just this year we were exposed to some very famous cheaters. Sen. Joe "I plagiarized" Biden was forced to withdraw from the presidential campaign because of his methods of learning in law school. I wonder how he got that far without getting caught? Apparently, he cheated, and I do think he is living in the real world.

Another example is the chief law enforcement officer of our great nation, Attorney General Edwin "Wedtech" Meese. This man has carefully cheated the average citizen by using his position to gain a profit. Let me define cheating. Cheating is seeking to gain what one could not gain or is unwilling to gain by his ability alone. Or, as Webster put it, "to deprive or influence something valuable by the use of deceit or fraud." Spelled backwards, Ed Meese. The punishment for cheating? Well, that depends on who you are. If you are an influential person and you get caught cheating on your income taxes, (which by the way goes on a lot in the United States — only 80 percent of the citizens pay all of their taxes) you get fined and maybe, just maybe, you go to jail.

And for those of you who think Aggies don't cheat, a management professor recently asked his class how many of them would act on insider information. The response was that 95 percent of these Aggies would not hesitate to use it. Hey, they are just making a buck, right? Wrong. That is cheating, but I won't tell. Just remember the moral given by everyone: You can cheat; just don't get caught.

But we're still talking about the real world here. Now let's enter the world of sports. Many baseball players have been caught cheating recently. For all of you Astros fans, do you remember outfielder Billy Hatcher? He was caught using a corked bat. His punishment? Suspension from playing for 15 days.

I recall sitting in an interview with Jim Palmer. He said cheating has always been with us in baseball — these guys just got caught.

The question now is, why do people cheat? In the case of baseball, it is to win, and winning means money. So, maybe people cheat for money. So, an obvious solution is to get rid of money. Wrong! I mean, students come to college to establish a career which will make them money. I always hear people talking about the jobs they want and how much they pay (some people major in subjects that do not mean big bucks, i.e. philosophers. I am sure there are many other majors like this). So, if college is just a means to gain money, doesn't college itself breed cheating? I don't know; you tell me.

Back to sports, but this time here at A&M. I have had professors tell me detailed stories of how they gave certain sports figures failing grades. Mysteriously, these grades have been changed to passing — or sometimes better — grades. Now, these guys are big sports fans, and I do not think they are making up these stories. Who is really cheating here? The student obviously didn't cheat because he failed. So someone did something along the lines of cheating for him. Is this a problem? Yes. Will it be solved? Not publicly, that's for sure. Enough with sports.

Thursday's quote provided by Student Government was, "The Russians advocate cheating, should we?" Who are they quoting? They did not say the Communists or even the Soviets, but Russians. I hope exchange students don't go over to the Soviet Union and think everyone is a cheater. And I don't recall the Russians advocating cheating. I can picture it now: a big parade in Red Square, thousands of troops marching and, in the background, pictures of all of their leaders wearing buttons that read "Cheater or you will be hanged."

Examples of cheating are all around us, but I am not trying to advocate cheating. Maybe breeding suspicion among students will breed better students. I don't think so. I think professors should lay down the law at the beginning of the semester by making the consequences of cheating clear. Money spent by Student Government for advertisements can be used for a more worthy cause.

As a philosophy professor just told me, making people aware of cheating is like putting a deadbolt lock on your door to discourage the amateur thief.

Doug Driskell is a senior journalism major and a staff writer for *The Battalion*.

Life: What a stressful situation

Stress — it's real.

I've heard a lot of talk about it the last couple of weeks. The pressure builds up and attacks. Seniors and undergraduates alike become victims — no one is spared. It's lurking on campus, and at this point in the semester, there's simply no way out.

I can't see it, but I feel it. It's here. Even before I opened my eyes Thursday morning, it was there. Waiting. Lurking. Pounding.

"Get out of bed," it said. "Your history take-home test that you've had for two weeks is due tomorrow and you haven't started reading yet! Your statistics project should be finished before Thanksgiving — that gives you four days! You've got three novels and at least ten short stories on your next English test, not to mention the five-page paper that's due Monday! And don't forget, you're supposed to graduate in three weeks! Do you have a job yet? And, oh, by the way, you're still editor of that paper. You've only got eight hours to write your column, and you haven't even thought of a subject yet! Get going!"

"No," I shouted back. "It's freezing in here, I can't afford to run the heater, my favorite pair of jeans that I wanted to wear today are dirty, I'm tired, I'm hungry, there's nothing in the fridge, I



Sondra Pickard

was up all night trying to finish that history test, I haven't finished two of the novels or any of the short stories, I haven't started the paper. Statistics project? Graduation? Job? Column? Leave me alone!"

Stress — it's real. The sad fact hit me this morning while reading the newspaper.

"Stress cause of hospitalization for 49 students," the headline read. Apparently 49 junior and senior high school students in Massachusetts have been hospitalized in the last three years for the same ailment — stress and stress-related conditions.

I knew it was bad, but I never thought I was in danger of being hospitalized, and I never considered it a form of mental illness. I guess after a while the paranoia builds up and surrounds you. Then, when you absolutely can't take it any more, stress monsters come out of the walls and drag you off to the nearest mental ward.

Stress — it's real. The *Battalion* newsroom is no exception. Stress is everywhere. On every face, at every computer terminal, on every phone.

There's the queen of stress — Photo Editor Tracy "Ya'll, why am I so stressed?" Staton. I'm convinced that Tracy was born stressed, but the last few weeks she's had a permanently dazed look about her. Yesterday at lunch, during one of her less-successful stress fits, Tracy attacked the refried beans on her plate with a fork, saying she wanted "to destroy something." I think it's getting to her.

To my right is John Jarvis, managing editor.

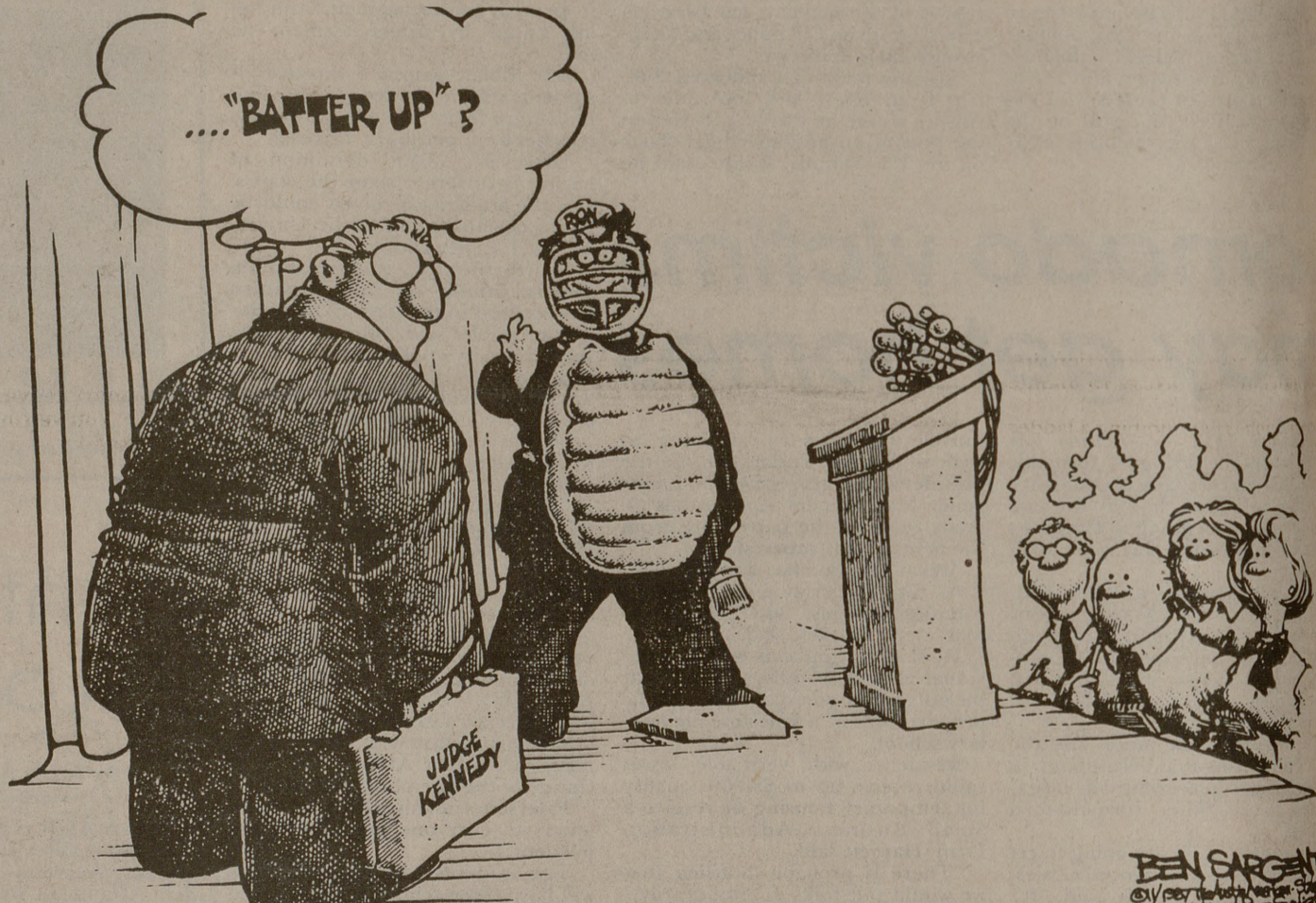
"I'm flagging a class. I can't find a job. I've got to send out resumes. Where will I live next semester? What will I do?" John is stressed.

Then there's Rodney "I'm never stressed" Rather, city editor. But it was definitely stress that came over his face Thursday morning as he prepared himself to explain to yet another stressed someone why we couldn't run a particular article in the paper. It was a sad sight, seeing Rodney stressed. Just for kicks, I reminded him that he hadn't started his take-home history test that's due today either, and that he's also graduating in three weeks but doesn't have a job.

Stress — it's real. But it's so much easier when you're not alone.

Stress has caught up with Opinion Page Editor Sue Krenek, too. She was getting by just fine until the 3.5 billion letters to the editor about bonfire came in the mail. We tried to calm her, but no avail. In an uncontrollable frenzy Sue haphazardly published all of the letters in one day, taking up two whole pages in the paper. She's calmed down a bit since then, but she also has the same take-home history test due today that Rodney and I do. She hasn't started either.

Sue's stressed. But at least now she doesn't have to worry about my column not coming in. *Sondra Pickard is a senior journalism major and editor of The Battalion.*



Mail Call

Save the elephants

EDITOR:

On Nov. 24, the seniors will once again gather around the statue of Sully at noon to begin Elephant Walk. This year we have a few favors to ask of Aggies.

Elephant Walk is intended to be the seniors' day. It is a time of reflection for the seniors, an opportunity to gather with good friends, and a way to show their support for a victory over t.u. Over the past 10 years, this tradition has been jeopardized. Junior-senior interaction — has caused several problems, including major injuries and the trashing of our campus.

In a concerted effort to preserve the Elephant Walk tradition, a group of student leaders and students, juniors and seniors alike, have made the decision to highly discourage junior involvement in Elephant Walk this year. Not only will this keep unnecessary injuries from occurring, but it will also preserve the tradition for future classes who may not get to enjoy it if the problems continue.

We would like to call upon our fellow juniors and

seniors to help out. If you are a senior and you are approached during Elephant Walk by another student, please try to discourage the interaction and continue walking. Juniors are encouraged to participate in activities that have been planned for them on the day of Elephant Walk. There will be a pull-out yell practice headed by the junior yell leaders at 1:00 p.m. at the statue of Sully. Immediately following yell practice, the Class of '89 will have pictures taken with the live elephants out at bonfire site.

With all this in mind, let us all help to get Elephant Walk back to a senior activity and preserve the tradition. Your support and cooperation will be greatly appreciated. Beat the hell outta t.u.!!!

Andrea R. Beshara
president, Class of '88
Denise Arledge
president, Class of '89

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 author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed

