

Opinion

Just say uh oh

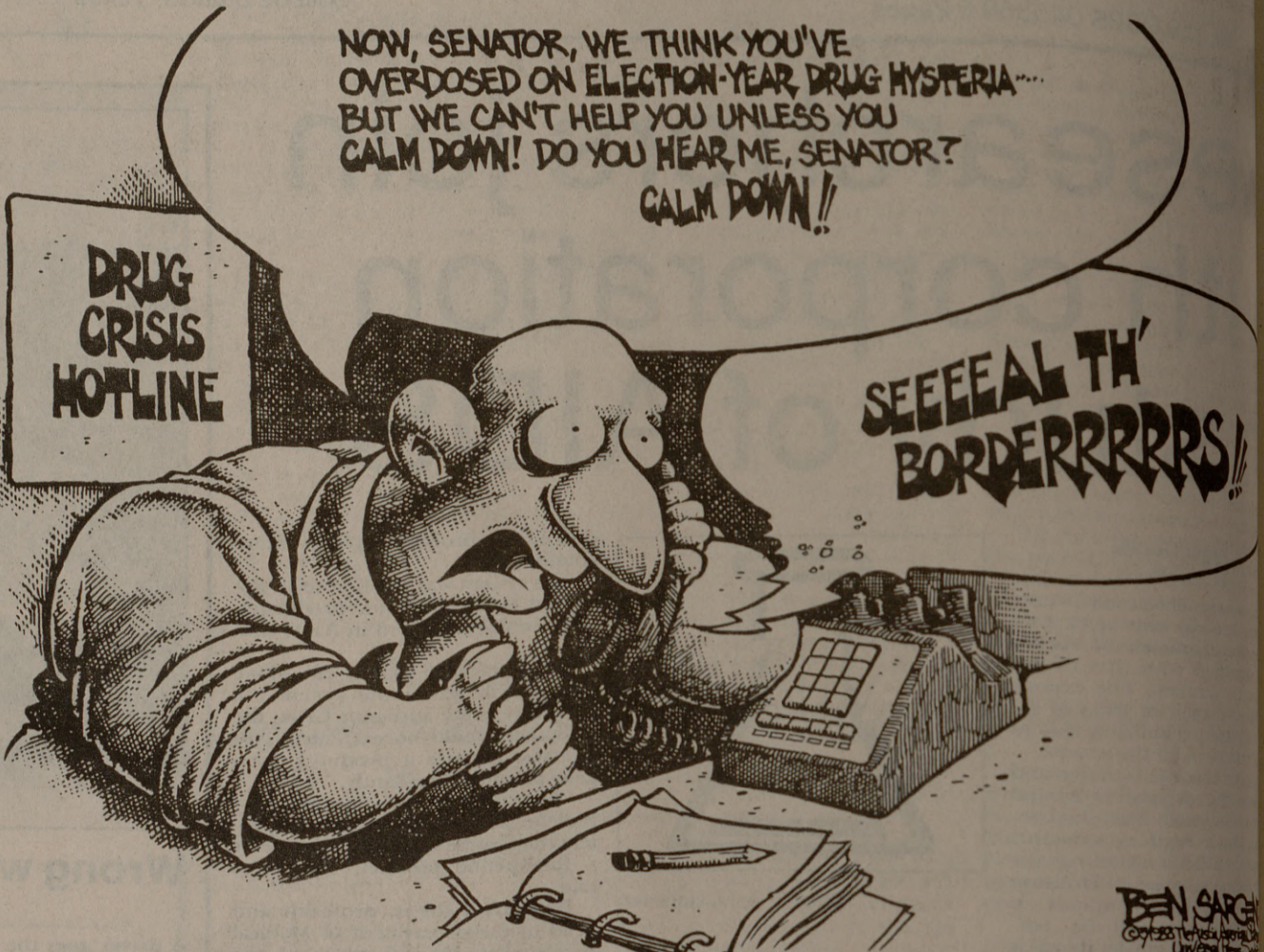
The Reagan administration is now starting to bring out what it considers its big guns in its war on drugs via its new and improved "zero tolerance" policy. The administration's current policy allows law enforcement officials to seize cars and boats in which they find any amount of drugs — any amount. Hence the name "zero tolerance."

Now, the administration is discussing expanding the program to include loss of driver's licenses, public housing and student loans as punishment for convicted drug users. And the National Drug Policy Board — chaired by that paragon of virtue, Attorney General Edwin Meese — is considering withholding federal funds to colleges that don't abide by the "get tough" policy.

And that's all fine and good if we want to ignore the root of our drug problem.

Zero tolerance is just another method for the administration to flex its overdeveloped yet ineffective muscles. Punishing drug users and/or drug possessors might have a small effect on the drug problem — namely scaring some individuals into giving up their life of crime — but the overall problem remains. The drugs keep coming, and people keep taking them. Negative reinforcement, however shocking and seemingly potent, will not stop the drug problem in the United States. Focusing policy on college students, those who live in public housing or even those with driver's licenses, will not make the problem go away.

The Battalion Editorial Board



Job hunting in the summer can be a bummer

I, like many of my fellow college students, have recently been placed in the unfortunate position of having to seek summer employment. I find this task to be not only tiring but also very taxing on one's self-esteem.



Barbara Jones

It can be very hard on one's ego when, after 4 long and hard years of college, a restaurant manager can have the audacity to tell you he cannot hire you to carry plates of food to and from a kitchen.

In the past my parents preferred that I not work during the school year in order for me to fully focus my attention and time on my academics. Now this idea is great in theory, but free time only allowed me more hours to stalk the

mall, frequent my favorite nightspot and spend money in every conceivable fashion. As they say "Idle hands are the devils workshop." Then after a particularly financially disastrous month this spring, my parents radically changed their ways.

"We're not mad at you, Barbie, we just think you are financially out-of-control, and we think it would be a good idea for you to find a job."

These words hit me pretty hard, but knowing fully the extent of the trouble I was in, I swallowed hard and simply replied, "Right."

So off I embarked on the adventure of job-hunting. Now don't get me wrong, I am not one of those spoiled little brats who has never worked a day in her perfectly manicured life. I'm an old pro at this having done everything from retail to waiting tables. I even suffered the humiliation of having to work at a local fast-food restaurant during

high school — every teenager's nightmare. Having to wear stretch polyester at that very crucial stage of development can be harmful to even the most well-adjusted of teenagers.

So off I went to find a high paying job in the Bryan-College Station area that would only require 15-20 hours of my time per week. Easy, right? Wrong. There is nothing more depressing than dressing up for the potential interview: putting on makeup and doing your hair, only to get there and find that your hair has fallen and your makeup has completely melted off your face in the sweltering heat and is now running down the front of your shirt.

When you arrive at the place of potential employment you try not to look too eager. Yet regardless of how cool you try to act these people can spot a job applicant 60 miles away. "You need an application?" they ask before you even have a chance to speak. One little piece of advice for when you go to fill out a

job application; be sure and bring a writing utensil of some sort. I really don't think it speaks well of you when you show up at a place to fill out an application without the one essential item you would need to complete this relatively simple task. Of course the applications themselves can be long and tedious and can lead to a pretty severe headache if you fill out too many in one day. So pace yourself. Look for jobs one day then take the next day off and relax by the pool. It works for me.

Another suggestion for those of you that may find yourself in this most dreaded position is to make sure there is a job opening. I believe it is a law that places of employment must allow you to fill out an application whether there is actually a job or not. So before you suffer through the tedious application process, corner an unsuspecting employee and find out the "real scoop." After all, time is money and few college students I know can spare much of that.

My last suggestion is to beware of the person in charge says that he will keep your application on file and you if a position opens up. This is just a nice way of saying "Hit the Jack," which is exactly what you should promptly do.

Chances are these kinds of things happen to all of us, so my suggestion all you fellow job-seekers is to forge young soldiers. Remember, they are one losing out if they do not hire you.

So far I have not found that perfect job. Perfect jobs, like perfect men, are very hard to come by but definitely worth looking for. Oh, and by the way, anyone knows or hears about a high paying, part-time, low physical type job that doesn't involve nudging anything illegal or otherwise immoral please contact me. I'll be by the pool.

Barbara Jones is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.

Ah, yes, the good old official-looking-letter trick

When Jim Pell saw the envelope in his mailbox, he felt a flutter in his stomach. The envelope looked official, like something from the government.



Mike Royko

And he knew that it could not be good news. It never is. It's always something like, "You made a mistake in your tax return," or "You are going to be audited" or "You failed to fill out the proper form."

When he opened the envelope, his fears were realized. Out fluttered an official-looking form with boxes to be filled in.

He looked at the top and it was even worse than he thought. It was going to cost him money. The form said, "Print Legibly. Enclose check or money order payable to Federal Record Service Corp."

"The first thing I thought when I saw that was what did I do wrong, and how much is it going to cost me?"

Then he looked at the letter that came with the form. Across the top were big black letters saying: "Federal Record Service Corp., Birth Records Division," with a Washington, D.C., address.

And beneath that it said, in equally big black letters:

"Important Notice:

"New federal legislation requires that all dependents reaching age 5 by the end of the tax year must be listed by Social Security number on your 1987 income tax return.

"Records indicate that your newborn child may not have been registered with the Social Security Administration. It is important that your child be issued a Social Security card."

The letter went on to say that if Mr. Pell filled out the form and sent \$10,

they would process the form and get his child the necessary ID number.

"Then I read it again slowly," he said. "And I realized there was nothing official about it. These were just some private operators looking for somebody gullible."

Exactly. It's the old official-looking-letter trick, which has become popular among all kinds of mail-order hustlers.

They operate on the theory that if you send official-looking letters to enough people, a percentage of them will be dumb enough to send you money.

In this case, the hustlers who call themselves the Federal Record Service Corp., in Washington, D.C., were being truthful. But only up to a point.

It is true that the tax laws require that a taxpayer who claims a child 5 years or older has to list the child's Social Security number.

Among other reasons, it prevents divorced parents from claiming the same child.

But what the letter didn't say is that you don't have to pay something like the Federal Record Service Corp. to get you the number.

A Social Security official said: "The problem people have with them is that unless they read the fine print, they're liable to believe that they're connected with the government or that you have to go through them to get a Social Security card."

"They don't. All they have to do is call the local Social Security office and ask them to mail the forms, or they can go directly to the office. And it doesn't cost them anything."

"These companies just act as middlemen, using the authorization form they send people. Some of them charge as much as \$40 for a service people can get free."

Is it legal? Undoubtable, yes.

But if enough people overlook buried disclaimer and are intimidated by the letter's official appearance, scam can be profitable.

My guess is that it's run by some meatball who used to sell used cars and he brought a personal computer to do desk-top publishing.

So if you get a letter from this one, don't panic. But don't throw it away either.

See, there's an envelope that comes with their material. And if you send the envelope back, they have to pay postage. So throw away everything else, but seal the envelope and drop it in a mailbox. At least you'll cost them cents.

And, if the mood strikes you, feel free to enclose an obscene note. It would be appropriate.

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The Battalion

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