

Opinion

Return to sender

What's recently been missing here on Page Two? You guessed it — Mail Call. It seems as though the flow of irate, opinionated letters has dropped to a daily low of zero.

What's the cause of this infernal lack of correspondence? Who knows. But surely some of you out there have some inclination to write a letter to the editor. You just have to follow a few simple rules: letters shouldn't exceed 300 words in length, and each letter must be signed. Letters must also include the author's classification, address and telephone number. And, as always, the editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but we will make every effort to maintain the author's intent.

So keep those cards and letters coming. Yes, you too can be a published writer.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

What do we fear but change itself?

This is a bizarre but true story. My grandmother (we call her Gimma) was born in 1899 in West Virginia. When she was five, she was the oldest of five children, and her mother did not always have time to keep an eye on her. So Gimma's mother told her to be sure to stay away from two things: rabid dogs and snakes. Whenever Gimma saw a dog she would run away as fast as she could because she thought all dogs were rabid. Gimma had never seen a snake, even though she lived out in the country. She just knew that they were bad. Anytime something bad would happen to her she'd say, "A snake bit me." If she were playing and fell down, she'd run to her mother and say, "A snake bit me!" If someone hurt her feelings she'd cry, "A snake bit me!" If she was confused or frustrated she'd say, "A snake bit me!" Her mother thought this was very funny.



Jill Webb

march and it was a girl's, uh, you know, THAT TIME — they would get hysterical! Our band would be disgraced!

But eventually, we let women march, and, lo and behold, they marched pretty good. In fact, you couldn't even tell the difference. Our school and our band survived. It was the irrational fear something bad would happen that divided the university even more than the women themselves divided it.

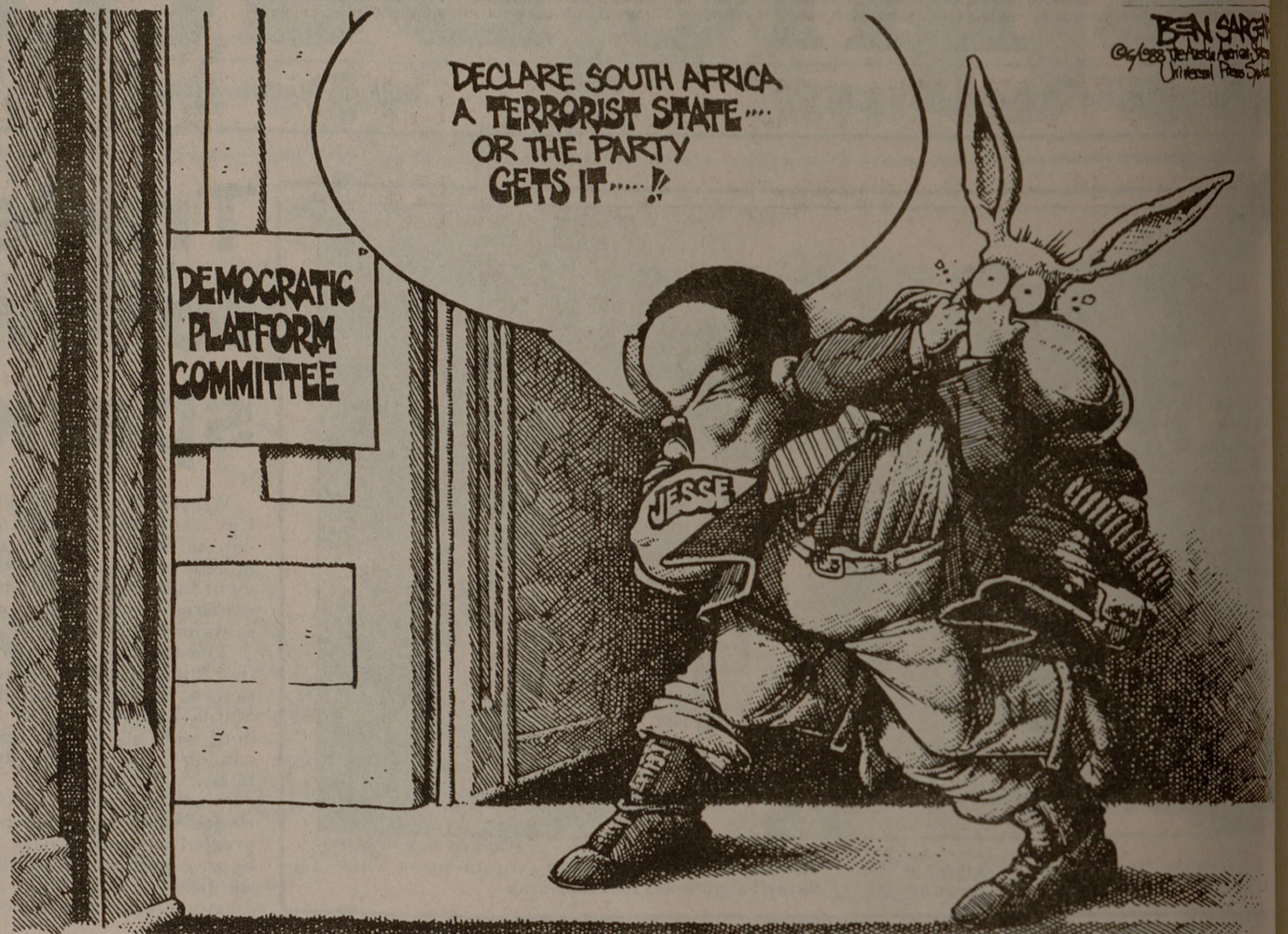
Another example would be this controversy about women working in the perimeter or on the stack of bonfire. This brings up some thoughtful questions. How can we stack naked if women are around? Who will bake the cookies? Can we still say dirty words and be manly men while chopping trees and lifting logs? Will the bonfire burn correctly if women work on it, or will it refuse to light? And if it doesn't burn, can we still beat t.u.?

These questions are silly and trivial, but they are the kind of arguments some people use to halt any kind of change. They don't stop to think whether the change will be good or bad or how it will affect our image. Their mind is set in fear on the idea that all change is bad. They are afraid that A&M is fragile, like porcelain, and change will crack and chip away everything that they love about the school they feel is so special. Fear takes away the ability to think reasonably, and when people can't be reasonable they look to other things, like tradition or prejudice, to keep their fear under control.

Fear makes people do strange things. It makes people think throwing dirt on a woman because she is too close to a big pile of wood makes sense. Because they were afraid of facing the wrong of their own bigotry, some people tried to vandalize and destroy an anti-apartheid shack. Fear puts blinders on people letting them only see the stereotype, and it is easier to make fun of, harm or kill a stereotype than a human being.

As long as our traditions are examined for their true worth they are an asset to A&M. But when people turn to them to comfort their fear of change, our traditions become a liability. Then traditions are not something that makes our school special, they are an excuse to act irresponsibly. We do not have to be afraid of change. A&M is not porcelain; it is an institution. Without change there can be no improvement. We can be cautious, frugal and wary, but as responsible, caring people, we cannot afford to be afraid.

Jill Webb is a senior secondary education major and columnist for The Battalion.



All the things we give to you and you stab us in the back

Nobody likes an ingrate. You do something nice for someone and they turn around and stab you in the back.

That's why I am declaring a personal war on the state of Florida and have asked my fellow Chicagoans to join in.



Mike Royko

Consider how nice Chicagoans and others from Illinois have been to the Sunshine State.

Last year, 1.2 million Illinoisans flew to Florida. Only New York sent more visitors. Another 700,000 Illinoisans drove there.

That's almost 2,000,000 residents of Illinois pouring into Florida, spending more than a billion dollars in restaurants, gas stations, car rentals, motels, hotels, condos, gold courses, tennis clubs, bars and supermarkets.

And that doesn't include those who buy condos and other vacation homes, increasing the wealth of the Florida developers and contributing tax dollars to that state.

So Illinois accounts for about 6 percent of all the tourist dollars that pour into Florida. Since tourism is Florida's biggest industry, we're not talking about walking-around money.

There's more. It turns out that Chicagoans are orange juice freaks. The average Chicagoan drinks 10 percent more orange juice than other Americans.

In one year, we consume about 31 million gallons of orange juice, about 75 percent from Florida. We spend about \$80 million on Florida oranges. Add another \$10 million for grapefruit juice.

Obviously, we're good customers for Florida, an important part of their economy.

We even import a considerable quantity of their cocaine, although Florida tourist officials don't provide precise

figures on snorting and sniffing. But it runs into the millions of dollars.

And what does Florida do to show its gratitude for all the money we pour into their state?

The lousy ingrates are trying to steal one of our baseball teams.

St. Petersburg, an overgrown hick town, has been waving millions of dollars and the prospect of a new stadium at the Chicago White Sox owners, trying to seduce them into abandoning their natural home.

Being your typical money-grubbing, greedy franchise owners, these two hustlers are ready to pack up and move.

I can't blame the franchise owners. It is their nature to be loyal only to their own bottom lines. That's how they got to be rich in the first place, by leeching the best deals they could get.

But I do blame Florida. Not just the mayor of St. Petersburg, but those in the state legislature who are willing to chip in millions of dollars to finance a stadium, the bait with which they hope to hook the Sox.

So I think it's time for Chicagoans, especially White Sox fans, to stop passively waiting for their baseball team to be stolen from them.

It's time to fight back.

The Chicago Tribune, where I work, has already taken a first step by encouraging a symbolic protest by Chicagoans.

It recently said: "St. Petersburg Wants Chicago's White Sox! So... let's send them some."

"It urged people to dig into a drawer, pull out a white sock, and mail it to Mayor Rober Ulrich of St. Petersburg. Within days, he will be buried under old sweat socks."

But more can and should be done. Chicago must hit Florida where it hurts — in their bottom line.

So I've called upon Chicagoans, and any others who might be sympathetic to this cause: If you are planning a vacation in Florida, why not consider going somewhere else?

"California, for example. That state

has never tried to steal our baseball teams. If anything, California has been kind enough to accept some of our more nutty citizens as residents.

You also can find good beaches. Georgia's coast and along the Carolina. Or on the Red Neck Riviera in Mississippi.

Now, let me speak to the children of Chicago. Did you know that in Florida they have big mean alligators? And you know that every year these alligators eat sweet little puppy dogs and kitty-cats? Yes, they do. They dash off their ponds and gobble up the sweet little pets.

So tell your mommy and daddy you don't want them to take vacation where mean alligators gobble up puppies and kitties.

For those who have never been to Florida, but are thinking about it, word of caution. Don't be deceived by those commercials showing beautiful beaches. Sure the beaches are nice, but the commercials don't show the little bugs that infest the beaches and will surely chew on your ankles.

Believe me, there are bugs all over that state. Big ones, little ones, they're always trying to take a bite out of your hide or trying to fly up your nose.

And snakes. Ech! You go walking the rough, looking for a lost golf ball, and you never know when you are going to confront some terrible, ferocious snake.

So take a vacation somewhere else. This is a big, grand nation, with wonderful places to visit. Why help enrich a bunch of team-snatching ingrates?

As for orange juice, try to buy stuff from California. It's just as good, your store doesn't stock it, demand they do. Or you might consider drinking less juice and taking a vitamin pill instead.

Finally, if you want to send the message, tear this column out, stuff it into an envelope, and send it to the Governor's Office, Tallahassee, Florida.

You might want to enclose a note saying: "Dear Florida Gov: Steal Chicago's team and you've seen the last of my money. By the way, I hope a snake bit you."

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The Battalion

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.

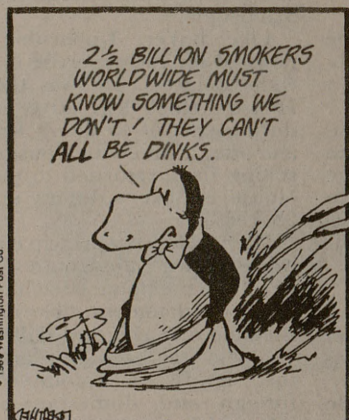
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BLOOM COUNTY



by Berke Breathed

THE ANTI-SMOKING FORCES ARE K&B FINN