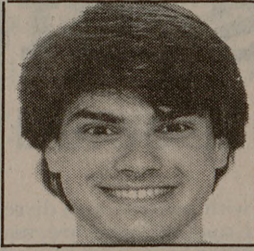


# Opinion

## Describe the weather in one word? HOT

Today: the heat.

So there I was, tired and drawn out, exhausted after a long, tired and drawn out trek across the Great Texas Westland also known as The Space Between Here And My Apartment.



Mark Nair

When I arrived home, the first thing I noticed was the very scary headline on an unnamed newspaper. It said: "GLOBAL WEATHER CALAMITY FORESEEN." Wowza.

But then I started thinking. Could it be true? Could it be that we are facing a GLOBAL WEATHER CALAMITY in the near future? And just what is a GLOBAL WEATHER CALAMITY anyway?

I needed to know. Whenever I see the word "calamity" I get this investigative,

research-type itch. I had to know.

It seems as though the drought in the Midwest (a.k.a. the breadbasket of the world) is a symptom of THE foreseen calamity. It seems as though the abnormally high temperatures sneaking across the country even as you read this are symptoms of THE foreseen calamity. It seems as though the lowering of the Great Mississippi is yet another clandestine symptom of THE foreseen calamity.

It all has something to do with greenhouses, fossil fuels and carbon dioxide.

This is how it works. We, in our zeal to make it to Skaggs in less than two minutes, travel in our small but sturdy automobiles at a rate slightly greater than the speed of light. In the process we pass many, many other automobiles traveling at various other speeds to various other destinations. Now, the last thing on our collective mind is: "Oh, jeez, am I adding to the GLOBAL WEATHER CALAMITY?"

We are. What can you say? Let our pride burst forth.

You see, all that gas we burn whilst on our trip to Skaggs finds its way out of our small but sturdy automobiles in the insidious form of carbon dioxide. This gas travels upward, and in time begins to congregate in the atmosphere, keeping in the heat like a very firm (yet inexpensive) layer of insulation.

And then the world gets hotter and hotter and hotter.

OK, enough of the basics. Anyway, the scientists are now saying that this "greenhouse effect" is responsible for the temperature increases over the past 20 years. They're saying that, as the world gets warmer, the polar ice caps could melt, oceans could rise and we could all be in a mess o' trouble.

As if we weren't in enough trouble already.

It didn't take long for the real danger of a world wide greenhouse to dawn on me. I was sitting in my very own un-air conditioned car, enjoying my very own un-air conditioned radio playing and watching the temperature sign on a

friendly neighborhood bank flash: 100 degrees. 101 degrees. 102 degrees. 103 degrees. Escape while you can. 104 degrees. RUN AWAY, RUN AWAY. 105 degrees.

Then I got nervous. I said aloud to nobody in particular, "You mean, it could get as hot out there as the inside of my very own un-air conditioned auto?"

And for those of you who are not that familiar with my automobile — well, that's hot. I mean, really hot.

Some scientists say that the greenhouse effect is what killed Venus. I don't particularly wish to end up like a roasted Venutian weenie. Give me cool creamed corn anytime.

I remember, in the good old days, watching Frosty the Snowman. And I remember seeing him melting in a forest greenhouse. And I remember thinking, "Stupid snowman. Get what you deserve walking into a greenhouse."

For a kid of about such and such years old, that was a pretty heavy analy-

sis. How applicable it is now, I don't know. Draw your own conclusions on that one.

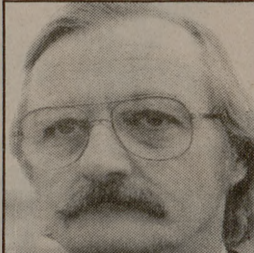
And so, in my heat induced fit of sanity, I've come to the conclusion (the same conclusion by the way the mon, the cranky sinister evildoer was always stymied in his attempt GET Underdog, reached a long ago) we, as the world's stupidest species can influence the weather. The problem is that the weather doesn't really appreciate it that much. From what I've seen, sitting in my own un-air conditioned auto, watching stuck barges in the Mississippi, hearing about corn the size of my thumb in west Texas and seeing columns of black smoke oozing from miles of smokestacks, things can get just a little out of hand.

Ask any farmer in the Midwest to tell you the same thing.

Mark Nair is a graduate student and opinion page editor for The Battalion.

## Sorry, Carl, it doesn't wash

A columnist is in the news, always a bad sign. Columnists are supposed to comment on news, not make it.



Donald Kaul

Carl Rowan, syndicated columnist and a regular on one of those weekend television news analysis shows that make life seem duller than it really is, shot a backyard intruder late one night last week.

A bunch of partying kids had decided to take a 2 a.m. dip in the columnist's Jacuzzi and apparently tried to open some windows, so Rowan called the police. When the cops arrived Rowan, packing a .22 pistol, went out to let them into the yard and was confronted by a shadowy figure lurching toward him.

What happened then is clouded in conflicting testimony, but it ended with Rowan firing the gun and the kid getting hit in the arm. Oh yes; Rowan is black, the young man is white, which may or may not be significant. I tend to think guns are equal opportunity destroyers, blind to race, color and creed.

More relevant to the case is the fact that Rowan is a card-carrying, knee-jerk liberal and an ardent supporter of gun control. Of the unlimited right to own a gun claimed by the National Rifle Association, he has written: "We must reverse this psychology. We can do it by passing a law that says anyone found in possession of a handgun except a legitimate officer of the law goes to jail — period!"

Then he goes and shoots the kid.

Well, you can imagine the fun the gun nuts have had with Rowan's apparent hypocrisy. The director of the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action said:

"Obviously, those words were written in the safety and security of Rowan's professional environment where intruders don't come in the night and one's ideology isn't numbed by fear. When fear did come calling, Carl Rowan threw his philosophy out the window and the adrenaline of self-preservation began to flow."

Rowan's response is that he's received more than a few death threats and that "as long as authorities leave this society awash in drugs and guns, I will protect my family."

Which is what conservative columnist Pat Buchanan would say too.

I was surprised and a little envious to learn that Rowan gets death threats, however. Most of us who write newspa-

per columns have to hone our sense of self-importance with an occasional crank letter written on lined paper. (Why would anyone want to commit so monumentally vacuous an act as kill a columnist anyway? It would be like assassinating a vice president.)

Ironically, Rowan's defense makes the case for the gun lobby. "I am for gun control, but I am not for unilateral gun control . . ." he said after the incident. That's pretty much the NRA position, that "if you outlaw handguns only outlaws will have them."

That's not a position totally without merit. You don't keep things out of the hands of criminals simply by declaring them illegal. That's what makes them criminals. If Rowan really believes a man (or woman) can only "protect his or her family" with a gun, he should be out there arguing against stringent gun controls.

The incident itself, however, makes the case for gun control, which is this: Most of us are equipped neither by temperament nor training to defend ourselves with a handgun. On a dark night, in a situation that inspires fear, we cannot differentiate between burglars, rapists, Jacuzzi poachers, pizza couriers, Irish setters and spouses. While it is theoretically possible to protect oneself from the bad guys with a gun, on average guns do more harm than good.

That was certainly true in Rowan's case. Had he been unarmed he would have stayed in the house, the police would have found their own way into the yard and the intruder would have been collected.

Instead Rowan almost killed a kid whose main crime was adolescent foolishness. Rowan can count himself fortunate that the gun he had, given to him by his son, was a .22-caliber pistol, the munitions equivalent of a placebo. You have to be a hit man to do any serious damage with it on purpose.

One suspects the son, a former FBI agent, gave his old man the relatively innocuous weapon to make him feel more secure, a feeling that turned out to be false. Rowan is additionally lucky that a cop didn't round the corner, see a black man holding a gun on a white kid and shoot the one he thought looked most guilty.

Sorry, Carl, your excuse doesn't wash. You either think handguns are a good idea or you don't; you can't have it both ways. Whatever the risks to not having a gun around the house, they are minor compared to the risks of having one.

If you don't believe that, you belong in the NRA.

Copyright 1988, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

The Toronto Economic Summit pledged assistance to the poorest of the poor... Lands which can no longer feed themselves...

Iowa, Nebraska, The Dakotas, Illinois, Oklahoma Texas... FARM DROUGHT

MARGULIES OPRES HOUSTON POST NEWS

### Mail Call

Enough is enough

EDITOR:

I have to respond to the continuing "fat chicks" theme you have going in *The Battalion* this summer. Have you even considered the damaging thoughts you are helping to promote by printing these horribly derogatory letters about girls who may or may not have any control over the size of their bodies?

Last Spring *The Battalion* printed an article about the newly emerging evidence that some obese people really don't have to inougle in Twinkies and Dolly Madisons in order to remain large. Their metabolisms, not their eating habits, control their size. Then there are the girls like me who have suffered from society's opinions about fat women enough to become victims of the eating disorders that plague America's young female population.

One young man's letter, printed in the Friday, June 24 issue of your paper, talked about the millions of dollars

which aid the U.S. economy through the sale of junk food items. Have you considered the vast millions of dollars which are spent each year for the psychiatric treatment of Anorexia and Bulimia or the thousands spent by terrified frightened young women on laxatives or ipecac in order to purge themselves of the guilt they feel about eating (well, talking about eating anything here, not just Twinkies)?

So, the next time you see a "fat chick" walking around campus, you might think twice about how she got that way and about what she might go through as a result of being blessed with a slow metabolism. And, the next time you see one of your beloved thin girls around campus, think also about what a nightmare she just might be living in order to keep all of you happy.

Diane O'Keefe '88

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 the author's name, address and telephone number of the writer.

### BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed

THE SHORT THEORETICAL PHYSICIST OLIVER W. JONES STRUGGLES TO FIND "THE GRAND UNIFICATION" ... A THEORY LINKING RELATIVITY AND QUANTUM MECHANICS. IT IS THE KEY TO THE MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE.

SIR... ANY DISCOVERIES TO REPORT YET?

DISCOVERIES?

SEVEN SIXES IN A CIRCLE LOOK LIKE A PANDELION.

### BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed

OPUS... LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT "THE GRAND UNIFICATION THEORY"...

WHEN FINALLY DISCOVERED BY ME, IT WILL UNIFY ALL THE DISPARATE ELEMENTS OF EXISTENTIAL PHYSICS.

WE'LL KNOW HOW AND WHY THE UNIVERSE, GALAXIES, STARS, EARTH... EVEN TIME... BEGAN...

WE'LL EVEN KNOW THE ORIGINS OF MAN HIMSELF.

WHERE'S NORAH'S FIT INTO THIS?

### The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

Member of Texas Press Association Southwest Journalism Conference

#### The Battalion Editorial Board

Richard Williams, Editor  
Sue Krenek, Managing Editor  
Mark Nair, Opinion Page Editor  
Curtis Culberson, City Editor  
Becky Weisenfels, Editor  
Cindy Milton, News Editor  
Anthony Wilson, Sports Editor  
Jay Janner, Art Director

#### Editorial Policy

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, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. 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.