

Opinion

Wanted: Ethics Czar, inquire at White House

Who says this is an issueless campaign? Why, just the other day George Bush came out with an issue: Ethics. He's in favor of them. With characteristic boldness he announced that, if elected, he would appoint a senior counselor whose sole job would be to enforce ethics on his administration.



Donald Kaul

In other words, he's going to appoint an Ethics Czar. What a great idea! I assume the Czar's (or Czarina's) duties would not be limited to policing an ethics code but would include advising those in the administration who come to him (or her) with ethical problems.

I hope I'm not being premature, but I have someone I'd like to recommend for the job. Me.

It is not generally known but I have dabbled in ethics for years. Even as a child, whenever the other fellows chose up sides for a game, they always made me umpire or referee; such was my reputation for fairness. And since I've become a columnist, people often write to me for advice on ethical matters. I generally answer them in private but, to provide a sample of my ethical counseling, I shall present a few examples of my recent ethical correspondence, with the identities of the writers disguised. Like these:

Dear Columnist:

I am a lieutenant colonel in the Marine Corps on temporary assignment to another branch of the government. I enjoy my work, but I have a problem. My daughter needs ballet tights but, things being the way they are in the Corps, I can't afford them. One of my duties, however, is to collect money for a gang of freedom-loving thugs in Central America. Would it be all right to skim enough money from the thug fund to pay for the tights? — All Ears.

Dear Ears:

Absolutely not. I'm sure those freedom-loving thugs have daughters who need dance tights, too. If not daughters, friends. Taking money that does not belong to you is wrong, unless you take it from a fanatical tyrant, preferably one in the Middle East.

Hey Guy:

I'm a 46-year-old temporarily unemployed youth leader who would like to get back into public service. A beautiful, blond actress has invited me on a weekend outing with her and some friends on a yacht in the Bahamas. She has also suggested that she visit me at my Washington apartment some weekend when my wife isn't around. If I accept her invitation, will people misunderstand? — Curious.

Dear Curious:

No.

Dear Sir:

I am a slightly plump lawyer who has spent most of his career in public service. I am getting on in years and am starting to worry about my retirement. A friend who has extensive dealings with the government office I work for has offered to fund a \$40,000-a-year job for my wife. Is this a conflict of interest? — Concerned.

Dear Concerned:

Not at all. Your wife's interests and yours are exactly the same in this matter.

Dear Honorable Columnist:

I am an aspiring author from Texas. My real job is in the government, but I have always dreamed of being James Michener. Last year I signed a book contract that gives me a 55 percent royalty on a collection of my speeches and pithy sayings. What is my next move? — Anxiously awaiting your reply.

Dear Anxiously Awaiting:

Fifty-five percent? Forget about writing; become an agent.



7-21
BEN SARGENT
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Dear Creep:

I am in the baseball game, a manager as a matter of fact. I am a great manager, but I could be even greater if the stupid umpires didn't pick on me all the time. Also sports writers. They write lies about me and make fun of me so that my players laugh at me behind my back. Also fans, who come up to me in bars and start fights so that I get the blame. I ask you, is that fair? — Distaught.

Dear Distaught:

It seems to me that you're suffering

from low self-image. What you need is assertiveness training. Stand up for your rights. Don't let people push you around. You'll find that people will respect you more if you stop trying to be Mr. Nice Guy all of the time.

Brother Columnist:

I am a man of God who has spent his life preaching the word of the Bible. I find, however, that Satan has entered my soul of late and I have an almost uncontrollable urge to look at dirty pictures. I buy girlie magazines and stuff them under my mattress. Then when

nobody's home I take them out and look at pictures of girls with no clothes on. Sometimes I even take my own pictures of naked women with my Instamatic. Tell me, is this wrong? — Tormented.

Dear Tormented:

It certainly is. You can't get a sharp focus or good resolution with an Instamatic. I'd recommend a 35mm reflex camera with a fast film.

There it is, Mr. Bush. I'm staying close to my phone. Call collect.

Mail Call

We must resist temptation to censor

Battalion not pulling readers' legs

EDITOR:

I'm thinking that sometimes for lack of any better material, you *Battalion* people sit around and make up outrageous letters from fictitious readers, just to later be entertained by the ensuing barrage of responses from incensed Aggie-types.

Now I'm convinced. Eric Ritzenbaum cannot exist. No real person could believe sincerely in all of the ragings that cluttered a good portion of the Opinion Page. I kept waiting for the punch line, but no. Could it be? A real-live cave-man?

Please tell me it was a joke. I'm anxiously awaiting to laugh at your somewhat sick sense of humor.

Kayonne Riley '84

Editor's note: The *Battalion* editorial staff has never and will never fabricate any of the letters or guest columns that appear on the opinion page.

Guest columnist is so sophomoric

EDITOR:

Did you intend the guest column of Aug. 11 to parody Brian Frederick's columns? Were Eric Ritzenbaum's excesses intended to provoke thought, to satirize, to amuse? If so, it was neither an effective satire nor an amusing parody.

If the sentiments expressed were the serious opinions of the columnist, Mr. Ritzenbaum succeeded in proving himself to be as sophomoric in his social outlook as he is in his student classification.

Tom Knowles

Bush not Texan enough for us

EDITOR:

It is imperative that George Bush not be elected the next President of the United States.

He showed his true colors during his 1964 race against Senator Ralph Yarborough. Bush was "against the Civil Rights Act of 1964, opposed the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, against admitting China to the U.N., and against Medicare." (Rolling Stone, 3-20-88) More recently when explaining his support for Reagan's veto of the Civil Rights Restoration Act, which had overwhelming bipartisan support, Bush said, "I'm not going to start doing that now which I haven't done for seven and a half years." (Louisville Courier Journal, 3-22-88)

Why will Mr. Bush not win in his adopted "home state" of Texas?

1) As self-described "co-pilot" of the Reagan administration, Bush has not asserted himself on behalf of Texas during our difficult times. For our energy industry he has offered no policy leadership; for our farmers, no agriculture policy. For Texas, Bush talks a gusher, but delivers a dry hole.

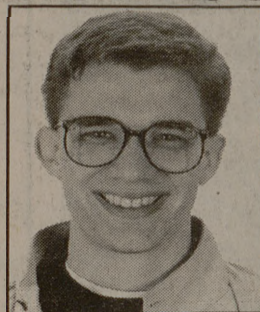
2) Mr. Bush shows no real leadership ability (Bob Dole on George Bush: "I don't think he's made a decision in seven years.") and Texas want strong leaders. While clutching his resume which includes CIA director and ambassador to China, Bush tells us he didn't know about Panama, Iran-Contra, Pentagate, and so on. Was he involved in any decisions?

Bush simply doesn't come across as a Texas-type leader.

Dr. Robert Weingrod Sandor, Dept. of Chemistry

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.

The *Battalion* has recently been bombarded with a huge mound of letters (summer-time translation: four postcards) concerning Martin Scorsese's film "The Last Temptation of Christ."



Anthony Wilson

The mail is split about whether the film which portrays Jesus having sex in a dream sequence should be shown in Bryan-College Station theaters. That's probably a moot point at best since the movie is only playing in nine cities in the United States and Canada and should reach the Brazos Valley about the time "The Absolute Final Temptation of Christ" (in which Christ fights Rocky Balboa and kills Jason) is released.

But it's still hard to imagine that in our supposedly modern, sophisticated, hip society that we can be worked into a tizzy by a piece of art.

First of all, the religious leaders who have raised this large scale stink have made a huge mistake in doing so.

They're tactics seemed destined to backfire. Because of the attention, people who normally wouldn't have paid \$5 to see the picture will now flock to it.

I understand ministers feeling compelled to speak against something they believe is wrong. But if they had wanted to keep people from seeing the film, their best bet would have been to downplay the movie's significance.

But the most important issue now is that of censorship. Some religious and government leaders have called for government intervention to ban the showing of such an "offensive" film. This blatantly conflicts with one of the cornerstones of our democratic society — freedom of expression.

Excuse this corny metaphor, but censorship can be compared to a snowball sitting on a mountaintop. Once it's rolling, it gets bigger and bigger.

For example, the language in "Huckleberry Finn" could offend blacks, so we better burn all copies of it. Singer Marvin Gaye's soulful rendition of "Sexual Healing" is chock full of risky language and images, so let's melt all those albums. Disney classics "Bambi" and "Dumbo" portray acts of cruelty against

animals, so those scenes should be cut.

In addition to being like a snowball, censorship is also similar to a hula-hoop. It becomes a quickly outdated item.

Our language is clearly an ever-changing one. For instance, when Little Richard sang about how much Miss Mobb liked to ball, he meant dancing. When Prince uses the term now, it has a much different connotation.

Freedom of expression assures everyone equality — from novelists to painters to Satan-worshipping rock musicians. Everyone from Kurt Vonnegut to the Beatles to Geraldo Rivera has produced works under the protection of the First Amendment. I admit, when I see Geraldo's talk show, even I wonder whether that's good or bad.

But, I would rather have the choice to explore any idea that interests me. That's how our society grows — by stimulation from fresh ideas.

And for those who would rather not explore different venues, that's fine. It's a personal choice that everyone should make for himself. But not for others.

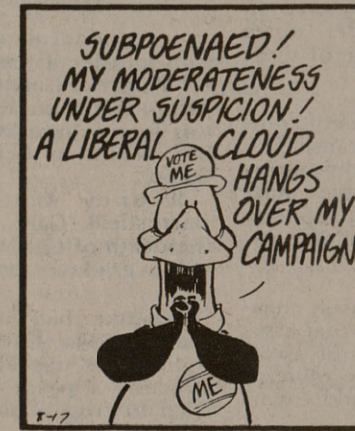
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BLOOM COUNTY



by Berke Breathed

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The Battalion

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