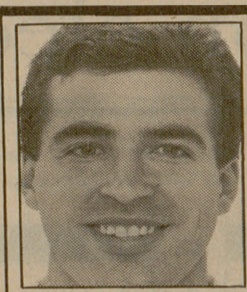


Tougher penalties only way to soften criminal behavior

Mail Call

Not long ago, a mayor of an Arizona town made a rather controversial statement concerning punishment for drug users.



Dean Sueltenfuss Columnist

This increase in punishment need not be complicated — it can be quite simple.

Although the mayor's idea may be a bit extreme, he's on the right track. As a nation we need to start imposing harsher penalties on those who break the law.

Actually, there are a number of ways to significantly decrease the amount of crime in this country — emphasizing morals and good conduct in schools, increasing the role of law enforcement and providing more funding for rehabilitation of criminals.

The first thing that could be done is to abolish parole. For those who are unfamiliar with parole, the process goes something like this: After convicted criminals have served part of their prison term (if they have to serve one), they go before a parole board.

When a person breaks a law, he must be punished in such a way that discourages him from ever breaking the law again.

Advocates of parole will put forward the argument that parole is necessary to prevent prison overcrowding.

Most people — and most criminals, for that matter — weigh the costs and benefits of performing a particular action before they proceed further.

And that is the fundamental problem with our criminal justice system as it is today. The minor penalties that our government imposes upon the few criminals who get convicted are simply not enough of a deterrent to prevent crime.

Another thing that could be done is to make prison conditions worse for repeat offenders — that's right, worse. After all, prisons are not supposed to be fun.

Special prisons could be created for repeat offenders of major crimes (rape, murder, armed robbery, etc.)

From this example alone, it is clear that we have to be tougher on criminals. If the punishment for crime goes up, so will the expected costs of breaking the law.

Special prisons could be created for repeat offenders of major crimes (rape, murder, armed robbery, etc.) These prisons could be nothing more than walled areas into which food and water is dropped on a regular basis.

laws as they see fit. It should not be difficult to imagine how terrible such a place would be — a walled-in area full of murderers, drug pushers and bank robbers who are free to do anything they wish except escape.

First-time offenders would not be placed in such facilities, but in corrective institutions where rehabilitation would be stressed.

An increase in the use of capital punishment would also bring about a decrease in crime. Criminals who have already been convicted of two major offenses (and thus have served their time in the punitive facility and have been released) could be mandatorily executed upon conviction for a third serious offense.

If the simple steps that have been outlined above were to be followed by our government, crime in this country would decrease substantially.

They would have to consider that, if convicted and sentenced, they would not be paroled — their entire sentence would have to be served.

The only question that remains is why we don't start cracking down on criminals. The answer that presents itself is that this country's leaders are not putting enough emphasis on reducing crime.

Lately, however, it's been awfully, awfully quiet.

Dean Sueltenfuss is a junior journalism major and columnist for The Battalion.

Women will be force in Church

Bravo! I was very pleased to read Anthony Wilson's article in the Oct. 10 issue on women in the priesthood.

The Vatican's refusal to permit the ordination of women in the Catholic Church is truly sexist. If the pope continues to deny women in the church the privilege, he is eventually going to threaten the membership in the Catholic Church in the United States.

As far as I can see, we will continue to do so in the near future. In this regard, where women are more and more becoming a force to reckon with in the business world, as well as in the church, the American women are not going around and wait for the pope to approve of their ordination.

I will say, however, that even when a church ordains women, the cessation of sexism does not necessarily follow.

My mother is a priest in the Anglican church. She will still, at times, run situations in which she is not regarded as equal in abilities to the male priest in church. This is unfortunate.

However, just as women have slowly worked their way in to the work force, are women slowly working their way into the upper level offices within the hierarchy of the Anglican church.

Elizabeth Merriam '91

That Morton — what a cutup!

In regard to Dean Sueltenfuss' Oct. 6 column concerning "The Morton Downey Jr. Show," granted the show is not for everyone. It is not for those who desire deep intellectual stimulation, but for those who desire unique entertainment deviation from the mindless drivel that is network television.

Maybe it's Morton's genuine conservative values that Dean dislikes? I may enjoy the show for Morton's ability to get people to say what they really think, not what they think they should say. And besides, it's HILARIOUS!

Jason Druebert '92

Texan insulted by stereotype

I found Suna Purser's Oct. 11 column highly insulting. Please, Suna, give us "good ole boys" and girls a little credit. By the way, depicted a "typical" Texan's speech, you'd think we were all illiterate.

And by the way, it's articles such as yours that keep the stereotype of Texan strong in other states.

Would you believe that a person can be born in Texas and grow up to be perfectly normal, open-minded, intelligent, literate individual? No, probably since you seem to believe so strongly in the power of hypocrisy.

After all, you demonstrated for us exactly what you blamed Texans of doing. You bad-mouthed us for our bias, while doing the same thing yourself.

Did you REALLY think that native Texans would read your article, submit it, see the light, and say, "YEAH! SHE'S EXACTLY RIGHT!"?

Give me a break. Ba tha way, therr arrr 49 uther states an' 120 uther countries too chooz frum!

Kellie R. Garrett '92

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and include classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

Baby years the beginning of the end of life as you know it

The conversation started out so innocently.

A friend and I were talking about the impending arrival of his sister's baby. He was talking about the things he would do with his nephew-to-come (He's already decided it's going to be a boy). Then he said the dreaded phrase.

"I want babies."

So another soul was lost to baby-days — he finally hit that fateful age when "I want babes" changes to "I want babies." That age when The Waltons becomes actual entertainment and you identify more with Ward and June than with Wally and the Beave.

We're talking about babies — those little things that cry, feel squishy, cry, spit up, cry, wet themselves and cry. Don't get me wrong — I would not mind having children one day. But right now I still have things to live for.

Marriage is one thing, but after you have children, things really change.

You have to quit wearing trendy clothes and shop exclusively by catalog (or buy from one of those shopper channels on TV). You can only wear clothes in combinations of brown, black or blue (and only in polyester or any other stretch fabric that looks tacky). Your hair has to be cut in one of the preferred mother-father styles.

And what about cars? Cars have to match your clothes — brown, black or blue. Station wagons are the preferred parental mode of transportation. They have to have vinyl seats for easy clean up when the little critters make a mess. That means that after you have kids, you're doomed to have car seats that burn the back of your legs for the rest of your life.

You can try to get plush car seats — my mom did. And I got bubble gum all over the back of them (dark blue seats with white blobs).

And let's talk about vacations. Like to party? Like to have fun? Forget it.



Becky Weisenfels Managing Editor

When you have kids, you have to take vacations like the Brady Bunch. Ever notice how the Brady Bunch always went on educational vacations? That's what you have to do. And no, you cannot pass Fort Lauderdale off as educational (oh, honey, the kids can learn how to do tequila shots).

Instead, your family visits national forests (spend the day observing pine needles) or goes camping (portable potties and mix-'n'-eat food).

And after you have kids, you can't eat normal food. If it isn't advertised by

some cartoon character or doesn't come with a plastic prize, then they don't want it (then again, that doesn't sound too bad).

Want to watch TV? You get a choice — Sesame Street, Mr. Roger's Neighborhood or the Electric Company. After one week of watching dancing numbers and a big yellow bird that talks, you'll start losing it.

Music? After kids, something happens to your music sensibilities. Maybe it comes from listening to one-too-many replays of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," but you begin to think of Lawrence Welk as high entertainment. Wayne Newton becomes the guru of tunetown. And Liberace -let's talk ecstasy for the ol' eardrums.

You start to enjoy neighborhood fish fries and guys named Ed who sell insurance. You call the mailman by name and buy dishtowels for fun. You watch cooking shows and actually write down the recipes (a true sign of deterioration).

You have to relearn everything you ever learned at scout camp that you thought you never learned because now you're a MOTHER (or FATHER). This means how to put up a tent, how to cook stew and how to go to the bathroom in the woods.

You have to chauffer kids to the pool and to the swimming pool. You have to watch "Snoopy Come Home" 20,000 times. Tonka toys will be everywhere and Lincoln Logs will cover the carpet.

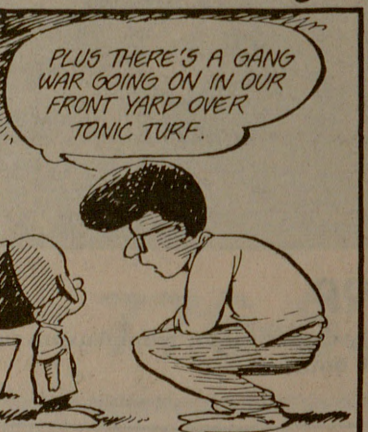
But despite knowing that kids cause a pain in the patoot, the day will come when we'll need the tax breaks that there goes the neighborhood.

Becky Weisenfels is a senior journalism major, managing editor and columnist for The Battalion.

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