

Opinion

A&M supporters deserve thanks

We would like to recognize some major contributors whose donations are helping send the Aggie Band, Parson's Mounted Cavalry and the Ross Volunteers to George Bush's inauguration.

Association of Former Students —\$30,000
 Development Office and Foundation —\$30,000
 Federation of A&M Mothers Clubs —\$4,095
The Battalion Editorial Board

Mail Call

It's not wrong to share beliefs

EDITOR:

In the Jan. 17 edition of *The Battalion* Hope Warren wrote a letter that addressed her concerns about religion in the classrooms here at Texas A&M University.

I'd like to try to answer her question, "Why do professors feel the need to share their religious beliefs...?"

Hope, people who are in love with someone else always want to talk about the object of their affection. In like manner, when someone is in love with Jesus Christ, that person wants to tell others about the One who died for their sins.

When Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, He proved His love for us.

I do wish that this letter sheds some light on Hope's questions. I think that she raised a legitimate concern, I only hope that this response is an adequate answer.

Murray E. Moore '84

God and people are inseparable

EDITOR:

I was not there on Hope's first day back to class, so I do not claim to know every detail. As I understand it, though, on the first day of class, professors usually introduce themselves to the class — where they got their undergraduate degree, graduate degree, etc.

This information is intended to give the class an idea of the professor's background and how they think Christianity affects people. This is not only our wish, but dictated by our God through the Bible: "... in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 4:11)

So while you can take the person out of the church, you cannot take the God out of the person.

Floyd Osborne '90

P.E. can last a lifetime

EDITOR:

As a senior, Stephanie, perhaps you have forgotten how it is to be 18 or 19 years old. Let me remind you.

At this age, many of us are still not mature enough to make all of our own decisions now that we live without parents breathing down our necks. We don't all just absolutely adore studying but we do it so we can make the grades to earn our degrees. Without exercise, of course, most of us would still earn our degrees. But I, like most of us here at Texas A&M University, have found the learning experiences of college to involve more than just making the grade.

My weight training coach summed up the idea behind mandatory physical education beautifully. He said that the idea of the course was to offer a taste of this sort of activity so that we may better find an exercise regimen that we can stick with for a lifetime. By offering more specialized classes than we may have had in high school (such as racquetball, aerobic running and weight training) we get at least one more chance to find that one kind of exercise we enjoy best.

I may not remember much from my calculus course in ten years, but I predict that I will still be receiving the benefits of continued exercise up to that point and beyond.

Jana Marie Stanley '92

P.E. helps create 'total person'

EDITOR:

As a physical education major, one of the first lessons learned is that you will always be defending your profession. Many people question the requirement of physical education in our school systems, be it elementary school, junior high, high school or college.

However, these people fail to recognize that physical education is an essential part in the development of the total person; it's not just physical but mental as well. A sound body does equal a sound mind. It is not just a theory, but a validated fact. A stimulated body results in the stimulation of the mind.

The importance of physical education ranges from teaching basic motor skills (running, jumping, throwing, etc.) in the elementary schools, to the lifetime recreational activities in college (golfing, angling, archery, etc.) These activities offer not only physical rewards, but mental rewards as well.

At Texas A&M University we are blessed with administrators who truly are a godsend. They recognize that physical education is a vital part in the development of each and every individual and that it should be funded as such. Physical education is a discipline of its own, the same as English, math, science, etc. The administration also realizes that the United States is far behind the European countries in terms of physical education.

The "American" way is toward a more sedentary life style — a.k.a. couch potatoes! Here at Texas A&M we have the opportunity to improve our fitness in one of the best physical education departments in the nation.

The physical education department produces quality professionals. The Aggie Alliance, the physical education majors society, was recently voted as the best society of its kind in the nation.

We as physical educators are proud of our chosen profession and are prepared to justify our discipline when challenged by the uninformed!

Jay Janczak '89

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

(USPS 045 360)

Member of
 Texas Press Association
 Southwest Journalism Conference

The Battalion Editorial Board

Becky Weisenfels, Editor
 Leslie Guy, Managing Editor
 Dean Sueltenfuss, Opinion Page Editor
 Anthony Wilson, City Editor
 Scot Walker, Wire Editor
 Drew Leder, News Editor
 Doug Walker, Sports Editor
 Jay Janner, Art Director
 Mary-Lynne Rice, Entertainment Editor

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.

Few winners in Libyan fiasco

While you were packing, unpacking, writing checks to the University, and standing in long lines, you may have missed the latest international drama. I'm referring to the recent U.S.-Libyan-West German episode.

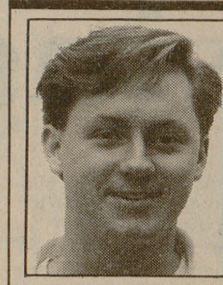
You may remember the statements made by White House officials in December about a chemical weapons plant in Rabta, Libya. This created somewhat of a furor in the international community because of a post-World War I ban on the use of chemical weapons in combat. About twenty countries in the world still produce chemicals that could be made into weapons (including the United States and the Soviet Union), but all countries have agreed not to use them as weapons.

Of course Libya, specifically Moammar Gadhafi, vehemently denied that the Rabta plant was producing anything but pharmaceuticals. International concern dwindled slightly.

The White House statement went on to say that West Germany had helped construct this plant, and it asked that the West German government investigate suspected companies. West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl responded sharply by saying that he found it intolerable for anyone to accuse the West Germans without giving them a chance to see the proof. The United States showed them proof, but West German officials were unconvinced that there was a weapons plant, and they rejected any U.S. assertions that West German firms had engaged in illegal activity by helping construct it. This was another blow to the Reagan administration's story. International attention soon focused on the credibility of U.S. intelligence information.

But of course it doesn't end there. The British government spoke up to say that they had independently obtained information about chemical weapons production in Gadhafi's "pharmaceutical plant." The French came out and said that the evidence was inconclusive and more was needed. The U.S. State Department said U.S. intelligence analysts were "quite comfortable" with their evidence that the Rabta plant is for chemical weapons production.

Then came the U.S.-Libyan dogfight over the Mediterranean where two Libyan warplanes were shot down by two U.S. Navy jets. Gadhafi moved quickly to blame U.S. terrorism for the incident calling it "premeditated aggression" and "murder in cold blood." Libyan television reported that 14 U.S. jets ambushed unarmed Libyan planes. Gadhafi claimed that the Libyan jets were on



James Cecil
 Columnist

a routine reconnaissance flight when they were shot down by the U.S. jets at a distance of more than thirty miles, thus showing premeditation.

The United States immediately gave an account of the dogfight and said that the Libyan jets moved aggressively and intentionally in a hostile manner towards the U.S. jets. Unfortunately for Col. Gadhafi, the actual details of the event were recorded by onboard audio/video equipment and U.S. Navy radar.

These recordings showed the position of the four jets during the dogfight, and the maneuvers of the U.S. jets attempting to avoid contact with the oncoming Libyans. Pictures from the video show the Libyan jets to be fully armed and only four miles away, contradicting Gadhafi's story.

But the U.S. maneuvers in the clash were questioned by a highly respected combat aviation expert and former British air force fighter pilot. After intensely studying the video, he concluded that the Libyan jets were not acting with hostile intent. He went on, and contradicted himself, to say that "the U.S. jets should have retreated." He did not explain why the jets should have "retreated" if the Libyans were not moving offensively, nor did he consider the fact that the clash took place over international waters where Libya has no more right than the United States to act offensively.

Regardless of the specifics of the incident, the United States appeared in the world news media as a bully. Gadhafi wanted to make the most of this, so he decided to prove that the Rabta plant was not producing chemical weapons. Over 200 foreign journalists were invited to take a tour of the "pharmaceutical plant." The reporters were taken by bus from Tripoli to Rabta, then to the plant grounds. This "tour" ended up being nothing more than a complete farce.

The buses whirled through the plant grounds at night, in the dark, and did not stop once. But the journalists did see unusually heavy defensive weapons around the plant, and the traditional anti-American protest. Several of the

protestors found a moment when they weren't under the watch of the military and revealed to reporters that this protest was ordered by Gadhafi's police. The reporters also noticed that the Libyan officials guiding the tour were more nervous than usual on the job. They also found the extraordinarily high security to be unusual and suspicious.

After the "tour" the journalists were informed that they were being expelled from Libya and were leaving that night on specially chartered planes. Later, the Libyan officials changed their minds and allowed them to stay the night and leave on regular scheduled flights the morning.

Last week the United States produced evidence of an emergency phone call via satellite, from the Libyan plant to West German company asking for assistance in dealing with a chemical spill. Thus, the Rabta plant is definitely producing chemical weapons, and with help from West German firms. Recent more evidence came to light when West German shipping firms said that they had been hired by the suspected companies to send chemicals with weapons potential to Libya. To make all the more interesting in a diplomatic sense, this controversy was evolving just days before a 140-nation conference in Paris on controlling chemical weapons.

Now that all this information has been verified and is out in the open, how did the respective countries come out of it? Col. Gadhafi didn't surprise anybody with his obscene lies, so he didn't really lose anything. He just reaffirmed the world's assessment of his shady character. The West German government ended up with egg on its face after reacting defensively and denying the U.S. request for investigation of West German firms only to find out later that these firms were indeed heavily involved with the chemical plant. The United States could have handled the situation better had it been a little more direct in dealing with West Germany and its other allies. Also, Dan Howard, Pentagon spokesman, gets a diplomatic black mark for calling the Libyan ambassador to the United Nations a liar during a press conference. The man may well be a liar, but it's irresponsible for someone in Mr. Howard's position to publicly state it.

Now that the smoke is settling, we don't really see any clear winners. The only victory may be for the international movement banning chemical weapons.

James Cecil is a senior economics major and a columnist for *The Battalion*.

Government neglects duties

The degree to which U.S. citizens blindly accept the government strikes me as insane.

This is by no means a startling revelation. The Inquisition lasted for many years, as did the reign of the Roman Caesars, the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages, and, in our century, Adolf Hitler and Communist Russia.

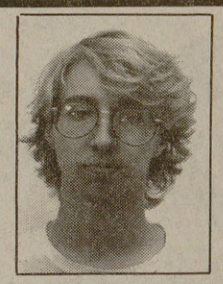
We begin our tale with the election of George Bush. For those of you who have not kept up with current affairs over the holidays, Bush will be inaugurated Friday. The inauguration will be the most elaborate and expensive one ever. Over \$25 million is being spent — a ridiculous amount for an inauguration.

Bush is known for being an ambassador to China, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and vice president under Ronald Reagan. In any of these positions, no one can recall anything significant which he has accomplished. Bush was elected by a landslide margin of only a few percentage points in the popular vote over Michael Dukakis, giving Bush a "mandate" to rule.

It is interesting to note that only 48 percent of the eligible voters in the United States actually voted. Can a nation actually be ruled according to the people's wishes if the leader only receives a quarter of the population's vote? Why are we being led by politicians who do not have even a majority of the people backing them?

The 52 percent who did not vote did so for two reasons. The first is apathy. Some do not care to engage themselves with politics. It would be a waste of time. One's vote does not really count, does it? Besides, it does not matter who is elected; things will remain the same. Nothing ever changes.

Anger is the second reason. Some people are dissatisfied with the present government. There is no choice. Third parties are almost taboo in the news media and on the ballot. The Democratic and Republican parties differ only on small technicalities, acting more like college fraternities than leaders and innovators of a nation. The problems of the people are only increasing, and the gov-



Todd Honeycutt
 Columnist

ernment is doing little to help.

Next, we have the U.S. Congress in all of their splendor and grandeur. Their salaries are automatically increased to adjust with inflation and other costs without them ever having to vote for it. They do, of course, have the option of voting against it. Only the greedy would install a system as such as we have.

The American people, meanwhile, suffer. Not really all of the people suffer — just the poor and the middle class, who cannot obtain higher pay as easily as Congress. Minimum wage has remained at the same level for a number of years. Inflation has most definitely increased during that time, as has the cost of living. But members of Congress, in their wisdom and fairness, haven't found it in their hearts to increase the minimum wage.

Members of Congress also can accept money from political action committees, or PACs. Though the purpose for their creation may have been noble — to present to the government the views of minority special interest groups — today they give financial contributions to members of Congress who support the PACs particular interests. Some PACs give upwards of \$10,000 to members of Congress. The largest PAC is the National Rifle Association, created to keep gun control laws to a minimum. They carry more power than many people give them credit for. Democracy? No.

The federal deficit, an important issue of the 1988 election (if any important issues ever existed), continues to increase with no sign of slowing down. Reagan's 1986 tax reform will add \$91 billion to the deficit. In Reagan's new budget proposal, defense funds have

not been cut, but social programs will receive less funding than they previously have. Despite promises by Bush taxes will also probably increase.

Civil rights have been infringed upon during the last few years. The right to bear arms, placed in the Bill of Rights so that the people could have the means to revolt if revolution was needed, is constantly being threatened. The young are taxed, but not all have the right to vote. Those that do have the right to vote and the responsibility to protect our freedom by joining the armed forces do not have the right to drink alcoholic beverages. This right has been restricted because of the federal government's intervention into the rights of the states. The most blatant example of the restriction of rights is seen in Congress' new drug bill. The right to privacy, the right against unreasonable search and seizure, the right of a warrant requiring probable cause as well as a description of that to be seized and where it is to be found, and the rights against excessive fines and inhumane punishment are all violated.

Let me remind you of the preamble of the Constitution: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessing of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

Our government has failed in keeping in to the ideals of the Constitution. And we are responsible. The citizen — the common American in his complexity and chosen ignorance — is the reason behind the government's failure as has happened many times during the course of history.

I hereby announce, with sorrow and resentment, the untimely death of the noblest of all documents, our Constitution. We have let it die.

Todd Honeycutt is a sophomore psychology major and a columnist for *The Battalion*.