

Mail Call

Mysticism not the answer

EDITOR:

I am writing in response to Todd Honeycutt's column of Feb. 9. His nauseating and boring solution to humanity's problems is to revert to a philosophy combining mysticism and ecology. How many times have I heard those emotion-driven, moth-eaten arguments condemning the world, humankind, technology and reason?

First, Mr. Honeycutt tells us that humans have turned to pollution-producing, greedy, materialistic beings; we have reined a once perfect Earth. Let's try telling that to an African malaria victim. Try telling a woman from Bangladesh who walks miles through muddy swampland to get food, that America is fouled with family cars and paved roads. Without machines and technology and a greed for living on this Earth, mere survival is oppressive to the mind and the body.

Second, Mr. Honeycutt tells us that by shutting our eyes tight and moaning like an ascetic from the Dark Ages we can achieve spiritual transcendence.

The Dark Ages were not the only era dominated by mysticism; also note that political tyranny, slavery, and rule by brute force has always accompanied mysticism — from tribal savagery to the Pharaohs of Egypt and the Kings of Europe. As Ayn Rand put it, "When men claim to possess supernatural means of knowledge, no persuasion, communication, or understanding are possible." Mysticism reduces humans to the state of wild animals where disagreements end only in physical violence. If we are to live successfully on Earth we must recognize the supremacy of reason.

So why does Mr. Honeycutt want us to return to meditation, faith in the supernatural, and tribalism? What is the nature of that non-material, non-profit world that Todd can only explain by telling what it is not rather than what it is? Is that other dimension worth denouncing the tremendous virtues of integrity, willpower, reason, and skill necessary to farm the food you eat, provide you with antibiotics, let you fly home for the holidays, and give you a word processor to write your column on?

Kevin Coppes '89

Don't blame progress

EDITOR:

I sincerely hope that Todd Honeycutt can live with himself. After all, he surely must include himself in the human race that he spoke of in his column of Feb. 9.

Every morning he must wake up in his cursed bed that our technology invented for him. And those ecologically detrimental blankets that kept him warm in this freezing cold weather — how awful.

It must be pure torture for him to look around at his possessions, be they many or few, for they are not really needed by one who looks inward for mental self-awareness. But he realizes that he too is a part of this sickening idea of making oneself comfortable, a habit mankind cannot break.

I hope that Mr. Honeycutt remembers a few points.

One, if it were not for a mind-polluting education, he could not have presented his opinion of this world, nor could we have read it.

Two, if it were not for thinking people that were progressive enough to present the world with new ideas for advancement, the printing press that he used to distribute his ideas would not exist.

And three, I could not help but notice Mr. Honeycutt's corrective lenses in his photograph, another result of technological advancement. Without these, he could not clearly see the beauty that still exists in this world.

The point of this is that there are indeed severe problems in this world, but not all progress is bad.

Mr. Honeycutt, this world that we live in is here to stay, and all the lamenting about humankind's self-destruction you can muster will do nothing to save it.

Please realize that our technology is also here to stay and that the only way to correct the numerous ecological and human problems on Earth is to do something about them, not just wish them away back to a primitive and simple time.

Douglas E. Baker '89

Create abortion alternatives

EDITOR:

In response to all the recent letters on the abortion issue, I cannot believe how lacking in common sense people are. Let's look at some basic questions of life.

Did you exist in your mother's womb before you were born? Or did you just "appear" out of thin air?

Obviously, we are who we are in the womb.

Even my five-year-old knows that. So the fact is that through abortion, lives are being eliminated. If I kill my child one second after he or she is born, I will be charged with murder. But if I abort my child before he or she is born, society says it is OK.

The only difference is that in one case you can see the baby with your eyes, and the other one you cannot. Does not seeing make it right? If so, then it must be OK to kill someone if you have a blindfold on!

There is another victim of this holocaust, the pregnant woman. Several of the letters to the editor have said "What about the woman?"

Well, I agree that we need to increase efforts to help women that get pregnant and do not know what to do. We need to brainstorm and find solutions that give them alternatives to killing their babies. There are some organizations doing this and one in our area is the Brazos Valley Crisis Pregnancy Center. They and organizations like them are concerned not only with the babies, but with the women involved.

This is America, the greatest nation in the world. We as a nation have a remarkable history of tremendous accomplishments. We can solve this problem if we wake up and realize what we are doing to ourselves. All we need to do is see the answer to the basic question of life and work together to help all victims of this tragedy.

Fred Wells '81

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

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Highway shootings provide argument for gun control

Remember all of those freeway shootings that took place in California a couple of years ago? Well it seems they're back — not in Los Angeles, but in Detroit.

Detroit police have had 28 highway shootings reported to them since November 1988. In one incident, a man who was sleeping in the passenger seat of a car was shot to death by the driver of another car. Evidently, the motorist who fired the gun was upset because his car had been passed.

What the heck is going on here?

There are always going to be crackpots out there, so one or two isolated incidents probably aren't anything to worry about. But there have been almost 30 of these incidents reported in one city in the past few months. Even if some of the reports aren't valid (police suspect that only half of them actually happened), there are still too many to classify as mere accidents.

What kind of people would do such things? I'm not a psychologist, but if I had to guess, I'd say that these people must be very frustrated and very unhappy with their lives. Does shooting someone sound like something a mentally balanced individual would do?

Sure, I can see it now. A husband and wife are driving to their home in the suburbs after a day of work in the city. The husband (an accountant) is telling his wife (an interior designer) how his day went. It's rush hour and the freeway is congested with traffic. After getting farther into the suburbs, the traffic starts to clear out. The husband and



Dean Sueltenfuss
Opinion Page Editor

wife are talking about their plans for the weekend.

Husband: "I was thinking we might drive over and see what Bif and Suzy Talbert are doing this weekend. How does that sound to you dear?"

Wife: "Oh, that sounds just wonderful. We haven't seen them in ages."

Husband: "Yeah, remember the last time we — Hey! Did that guy just pass us on the right? He did, didn't he? Why, that s.o.b.!"

Wife: "The nerve of that guy! Who does he think he is?"

Husband: "OK dear, hand me the 12 gauge. We're going to teach this jerk a lesson he'll never forget." (Then they pull up next to the offending driver and blow his brains out.)

Wife: "That'll show him."

That scenario is pretty tough to believe. Is simple frustration the root cause of these shootings? Driving in heavy traffic can be quite frustrating, but frustration alone hardly seems to be a plausible answer.

I don't know what the cause of all this is, but one thing seems clear to me. Nor-

mal, sane people would not perpetrate such acts of indiscriminate violence. The people who are responsible for unprompted shootings such as the ones occurring in Detroit have emotional problems that need to be treated.

And they certainly don't need to be carrying guns.

As one police inspector said, "If people weren't carrying guns in cars, this wouldn't be happening."

I don't consider myself to be a gun control advocate. In fact I own several guns and I enjoy hunting. But the shootings in Detroit (and many other recent shootings around the country) demonstrate the need for some sort of nation-wide gun control laws. This could simply be a law that requires a waiting period and a background check before someone is allowed to buy a gun. This way, if a person is a convicted felon or has a history of mental instability, they can be denied a gun.

If you disagree with me on this point, I ask you to take a long, hard look at what happened in California two years ago and what is happening in Detroit right now. I'm not saying that competent, stable individuals should be denied the right to own guns. I'm simply saying that we need to keep firearms out of the hands of people who aren't able to use them wisely.

Maybe you'll believe me when you're driving down the highway, and someone pulls up beside you and points a gun at your head.

Dean Sueltenfuss is a junior journalism major and opinion page editor for The Battalion.

Loyal Ag gets lesson in success

I know that people are getting tired of hearing about Ollie North, but there is a valuable lesson to be learned from him. If you watch carefully and take good notes, you too can: wear a really spiffy uniform, have a gorgeous blonde secretary named Bambi, be on television a lot, shred classified government documents to your heart's content, receive thousands of dollars worth of gifts from arms dealers, flagrantly lie to Congress, and just generally ignore the Constitution whenever you see fit.

OK, I can see that you still don't believe that it can work for you, but believe me — it really works.

You see, I got a job with the Texas A&M athletic department over the summer. I was hired to wash towels in the basement. One day the telephone rang and I was the only one in the room.

When I answered, a voice on the other end said that he had connections with the National Collegiate Athletic Association and could get them off our backs. Being a loyal Aggie, my first priority was to get the department out of the hot water that it was in, so I listened.

The caller then admitted to being a teasp who's father was on the board of the NCAA. He said that if I helped him, he could get A&M out of its dilemma. I knew I could get into trouble, but he sounded so sincere.

Alan Lehman

Guest Columnist

The catch was that Texas needed some good arms and I had to sell them a couple of our reserve quarterbacks. No problem — we had too many of them anyway. So I walked into The Coach's office and asked for his approval. He said OK (well, actually he was sleeping, but he didn't say no).

So I sent the QBs to t.u. and made a quick profit of \$100,000. I had my secretary, Miss Goodbody, put the money in a special account.

But soon the Board of Regents came down on me. They asked what I was doing selling arms to our enemies and then diverting cash into controversial projects.

So I did the logical thing — I had Miss Goodbody shred all the evidence.

It didn't work. They were still after me. In fact, they put me on trial.

When the scandal broke, the major television stations, KAMU, Channel 3 and MTV all carried my trial live. Public opinion of me was dreadful. I knew I was in big trouble.

But just when things were getting desperate, some "very influential"

friends of the athletic department realized that I was actually just trying to help, so they bought me a very slick lawyer. He advised me to wear my best mutton to every hearing and bought a special pair of contacts for me that gave me eyes that perfect "innocent patriotic puppy" look.

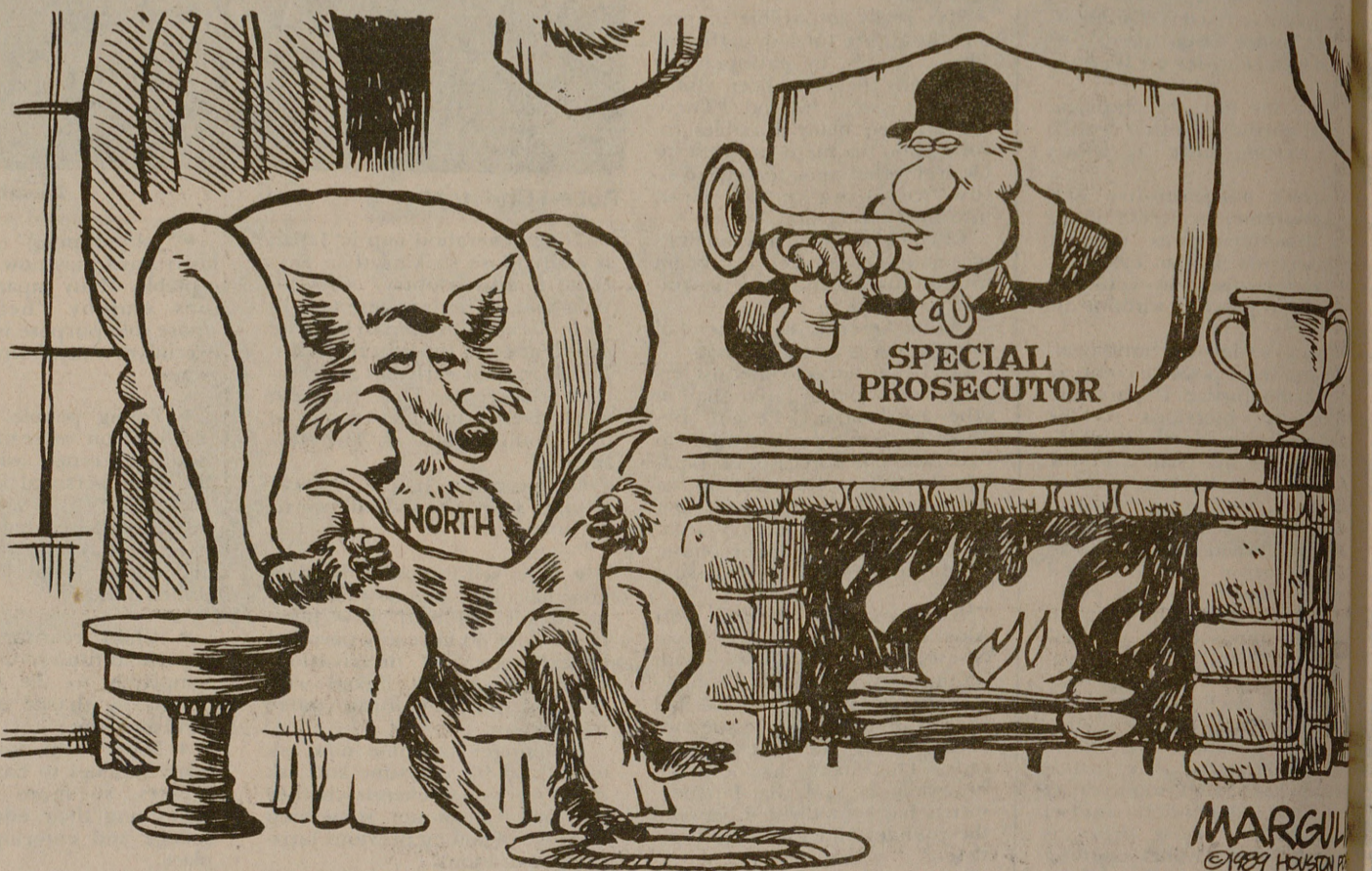
I knew things would work out for the best when I saw the patriotic speech that he wrote for me. We practiced it for hours. Whenever I got stuck during testimony, I just made it up as I went along. It worked. My performance on television really got through to the Aggies across the state.

The next day, the Board of Regents was flooded with letters praising my courage and Aggie Spirit. Since most of the Regents would be up for re-election soon, they all decided to postpone their case until after the elections.

The break has been nice. I've had time to write a best-selling book, make a shameful amount of cash from speaking engagements, and just generally enjoy my new-found fame.

Now my trial is starting up again, but I'm not afraid. I did what I did because I thought I was doing what was best for the University.

Alan Lehman is a junior journalism major and a guest columnist for The Battalion.



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