

Closing Texas Ave. far from brilliant

By closing Texas Avenue to traffic Sunday afternoon, the cities of Bryan and College Station inconvenienced hundreds of motorists. The road was closed for almost three hours because of the 7th Annual Texas Straight Shot 10K run. Traffic slowed to a complete halt in some places as driverstried to find alternate routes to their destinations.

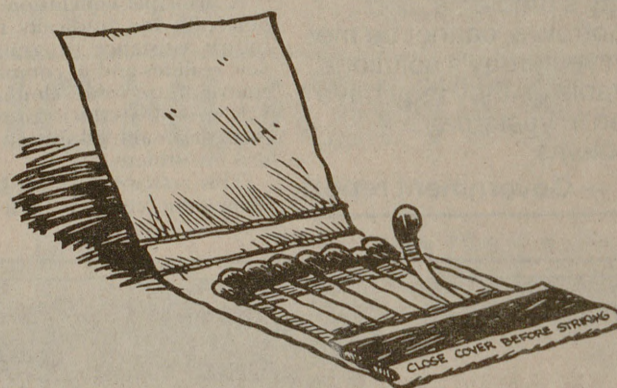
The decision to close a major street for three hours to accommodate some runners can be described in one word: stupid. The officials who made the decision to close Texas Avenue should have known the trouble it would create for drivers.

The 10K run should have been held on some other street — not Texas Avenue. And if the event just had to take place on Texas Avenue, city officials could have done a better job of notifying Bryan-College Station residents that the street would be closed. It also could have been possible to close only a few lanes and leave part of the road open to traffic.

In the future, Bryan and College Station officials should remember that roads were built for vehicles, not runners. Then perhaps people wouldn't have to waste their time sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic while they wait for a road to be opened.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Moslem Fundamentalist BOOK-of-the-MONTH



Featured Selection

MARGULIES
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Spring break just isn't the same these days

Frosty February is quickly coming to a close. For some of you, thoughts are already beginning to turn to spring break. For others, thoughts turned to spring break sometime around September of last year.

Regardless of when your thoughts turned to what, it's time to start thinking about spring break.

That seems like a pleasant proposition to most people. Even a brief respite from the relentless demands of academia is welcome. If you don't agree, then I think you may have been here too long — you're a little overcooked.

On March 13, the entire student body will coalesce into a single-minded mass of fun-starved flesh, capable of uttering only a single phrase: "Let's party!"

And when they say party, they're not referring to a little "get-together." No, they're talking P-A-R-T-Y. No other term could so precisely describe this phenomenon. If I looked up the word "party" in the dictionary, I wouldn't be surprised to find this entry: "see 'spring break.'"

I can envision spending spring break with a few thousand of my closest friends, but when the numbers escalate

into tens of thousands I begin to fear for my life.

Think about it. If you were to die on Padre Island over spring break, how long do you think it would take the authorities to locate your body?

Think about the information on which they'd have to rely. They're looking for someone with dark hair and brown eyes who doesn't appear to be living. Hey, that's unique. It only happens to match the description of half the population on Padre Island during spring break.

They couldn't identify you. And I suspect this has happened to more than one poor fool. They find your body while cleaning up the aftermath, and they bury you in an unmarked grave — "the tomb of the unknown partier." Quite an epitaph.

For five or six years I immersed myself in the beach hysteria. But I have seen the light. North Zulch is probably as adventurous as it's going to get for me this year.

When you go to the beach for spring break, you actually pay good money for a second-degree burn and sand that follows you around for at least six weeks. Good money to publicly humiliate your-



Stephanie Stribling
Columnist

self in front of 20,000 people. Good money to relieve yourself behind a sand dune (or in a port-o-potty that hasn't been serviced in this lifetime).

Gee, where can I sign up?

If you don't want to go to the beach for spring break, you can always take a ski vacation. A ski vacation is the antithesis of a beach vacation, except for one aspect. There is a spirit of competition.

On the beach, competition is for the best body. On the slopes, it's for the best form — and I don't possess either.

In both situations you're being watched — judged, so to speak. Call me weird, but I'd much prefer they watch my form instead of my body. I don't need liposuction or tummy tucks to correct my form.

Skiing is a more dangerous proposition than going to the beach. I suppose it's possible to break your neck on the beach, but chances are slim. If you break your neck on the beach, I'd be willing to bet you were doing something your parents wouldn't have liked.

But there are many different ways to break your body in assorted places when you ski.

My favorite is the infamous ski lift. It's as if skiing isn't difficult enough, so they wanted to add a little sadistic twist. I'm not sure who invented these torturous devices, but they better hope they never meet me in a dark alley.

I have fallen into, out of, and around more ski lifts than I care to recall. The best part is, when you fall, they stop the lift. So as you're peeling yourself off the back side of the chair, you can take comfort in the fact that some 100 people ahead of you are dangling in mid-air and cursing your name.

The most entertaining aspect of ski lifts is getting off of them.

I finally resigned myself to the fact that I am not capable of exiting the chair without mowing down at least ten innocent bystanders. In fact, I've made a little game out of it. There is most as-

surely more than one way to run over people on skis. I've devoted myself to exploring every angle. I assault their head-on, I hook their skis and I plow through their legs. I have even grabbed some in places few people are allowed to grab.

I am a skier's worst nightmare.

It gets even better when I hit the slopes. Of course, I never wrap myself around trees when I'm alone. The only time I manage to do that is when I'm with a group of people skiing by school, trying to show off my form. The blond, blue-eyed ski instructor, generally ends with an invitation to join the group for a nominal fee.

Whether you party on the slopes of Breckenridge or the beaches of Cancun, face it — spring break can be deadly.

I consider myself lucky to have lived through as many as I have. I understand the law of probability, and I'm about to press my luck. I'll leave it to the rest of you to carry on the tradition.

If anybody wants to know where I'm spending my spring break, just drop by North Zulch . . .

Stephanie Stribling is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.

Building a kind, gentle nation

There was a brief item in the paper the other day about a man being sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole.

He hadn't killed or harmed anyone. But he had been convicted of armed robbery three times since 1981.

Because armed robbery is a Class X felony, the most serious crime under Illinois law, he's a three-time loser. And the penalty can be life.

To my surprise, I received two letters from readers about this story. Both thought the punishment had been too severe.

I had two reactions to the letters. First, it is nice that there are kind, compassionate people in our society. Maybe we will become a kinder, gentler nation.

My second reaction was to tell my assistant: "Call these kind, compassionate ladies and ask if a stranger has ever aimed a loaded gun at their heads."

One lady answered the question. "Thank God, no. I have never been a victim of any crime. I've been fortunate."

The other woman said: "No." You've never been robbed? "No." Any crime? "No."

I wasn't surprised. In fact, I would have been amazed if that had not been their answer.

If either of them had ever looked down the barrel of a gun, held by someone who appeared ready to use it, they wouldn't have written those letters. Nor would they have thought that Reginald Robinson, 38, the gunman, was getting a bum deal.

In his younger days, Mr. Robinson

stole without using a gun, so he usually got probation or a few months in jail. But when he was 25, he decided a gun made the job easier. So he was caught and did a stretch in prison.

By 1981, he was out and was convicted of his first shoe store robbery. The same year, he was convicted of another shoe store robbery. He was paroled in 1987. By then, you would think he would have figured out that pumping gas, digging ditches, almost anything was a better way to make a living. No, that same year, after being paroled, he knocked over still another shoe store.

There's a difference between crimes. Shoplifting, picking pockets or stealing a car don't get people killed. That's why judges don't send perpetrators of these crimes away for life.

But Mr. Robinson has clearly demonstrated that when he walks out of prison, it is just a matter of time before he sticks a gun in his belt and walks into a store and points it at someone. If he's allowed to do that often enough, one of these days there will be a loud noise and some poor soul will be lying there with his life draining out of a hole in his body.

So Mr. Robinson is now where he belongs and where he should remain the rest of his days. Hey, he gets three squares a day and a place to sleep. He watches TV, has a library, free medical care, and can pump iron and play on the prison softball team. That's more than many old people enjoy in a retirement home.

Believe me, with Mr. Robinson tucked safely in a cell, we are one tiny step closer to being a kinder and gentler nation.

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Mail Call

Guns don't kill people

EDITOR:
I am writing in response to Dean Sueltenfuss' Feb. 13 column concerning gun control.

First of all I'd like to say that guns don't kill people, people kill people. Once a person gets that deranged thought in their head, they'll kill by whatever means possible.

Isn't baseball season in progress? You know it would be a crying shame to tell those Aggie sluggers that they couldn't use bats anymore because they are believed to kill people. That's right, people have been killed with bats and clubs, too.

If one person or many people benefit from a certain act and no one suffers, then it is a benefit to society. Otherwise, if a few people benefit and many suffer from the act, then it is a waste to society.

For example, a man decides to use his lawnmower to trim his hedges and he cuts his finger off. You can't stop production of lawnmowers or even ban them for this one incident, because the rest of society would suffer. That's exactly what we have with gun control.

A gun in your house is like national defense; you don't use it much but you sleep better at night knowing it's there.

I realize that the cost of acquiring information is rather high, but in regard to your article, it wouldn't hurt for you to do a little research.

Ben Freeman III '90

Abortion debate continues

EDITOR:
I'm writing in response to Richard Bohannon's letter on Feb. 17. There is obviously some misunderstanding about what pro-choice is all about.

Pro-choice is *not* pro-abortion. Pro-choice is the desire that all individuals consciously make their own decision on abortion based on their own beliefs. The individual has two important decisions to make:

1. Is the fertilized egg a separate entity?
2. Is the person willing to live with the consequences of their decision?

If "no" is the answer to either of these questions, then an abortion is not the proper course of action. The only response that a pro-lifer should have against abortions is through education of the public, not through legislative action. It reminds me of a bumper sticker I once saw. It said "Against Abortion? Don't have one!"

John Welch '92

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.

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