

No-win situation

Gov. Bill Clements has been criticized because of his two appointments to the A&M Board of Regents. Critics are upset that one of the nominees is not black; Bryan-College Station officials wanted a local person on the Board.

The governor seems to be in a no-win situation. His appointment of three white men to the University of Texas Board of Regents came under fire for its lack of representation of minority group members. The uproar led one nominee to withdraw his name, making way for the appointment of Mario Ramirez, a Hispanic.

Clements appointed Ross Margraves Jr. of Houston and Raul Fernandez of San Antonio to the A&M Board, but now he is under fire for not appointing a black person.

No appointment is going to please everyone. We should stop quibbling about race and look at the new appointments for what they can offer the University.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Mail Call

No condoms on campus

EDITOR:

The arguments in Becky Weisenfels' column of Feb. 17 and its headline, "Health center must provide condoms for A&M students," are without merit.

Is the editor's real concern for students' health or for students' sexual convenience? There is a world of difference between the University providing professional medical care, especially to dorm students, and getting into the sexual products business.

If any poor young Ags with limited transportation don't have the strength to walk across University Drive to get a 50-cent condom, it is doubtful they have the energy to have sex.

Your column suggests that the University is obligated to provide on campus whatever students need for safe sex. What's next? Should the University provide free clean rooms at the MSC so students don't have to find transportation to an apartment or motel room? How ridiculous.

The aggressive A&M program of giving students the information they need to make their own decisions is exactly the proper course for the institution to take.

Students must know that the only really effective way to avoid AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases is abstinence from sexual promiscuity — not the use of condoms. By the way, the same fact applies to accidental and inconvenient pregnancies. Abstinence is the only safe, effective way to avoid them.

Rodger Lewis '76

Racism doing well

EDITOR:

Dean Sueltenfuss needs to wake up and smell the roses.

First off, his statement that "racism is close to being eradicated in the United States" is very far from the truth.

Indeed the opportunities for minorities have greatly increased, but prejudice still remains ingrained in the hearts of many Americans.

All you have to do is bring up, in a class here at A&M, the issue of Hispanics becoming the dominant race in Texas' near future. Then listen to everyone's reaction.

The reason I am able to attend A&M and devote my time to my studies is largely due to the President's Achievement Award, a minority scholarship.

I am a proud second generation Aggie and third generation Texan. Given the opportunity, minorities will make great contributions to America's future.

Irene Santoscoy '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.



Cuban bass are too expensive

Some readers may have seen a recent photo in the newspapers showing a fisherman proudly holding a huge bass.

What a bass it was. About 20 pounds, only a couple of pounds short of the world record.

But it's also a no-good, godless commie bass. Actually, I doubt if the fish knows much about God or communism, but it was caught in a communist lake in communist Cuba.

And that means the fisherman, to use the words of our current commander in chief, is in deep doo-doo.

The fisherman, a professional guide named Dan Snow, has been indicted for fishing in Cuba.

By going there to catch fish, and taking avid fisherman with him, he violated the law that forbids all but certain select Americans from visiting Cuba.

If convicted, he could be sentenced to 100 years in prison and fined \$500,000. (That's an expensive lunger bass. It comes to five years and \$25,000 a pound.)

The feds nailed Snow only recently, although he's been going fishing in Cuba since 1977, when then-President Jimmy Carter eased travel restrictions to that country.

Why does Snow fish in Cuba? Because it's a bassin' man's paradise. It has more than 800 lakes, teeming with big ol' hawks. (This is the way a real bassin' man talks.)

They're big because bass grow larger in warm climates, where they can feed all year. And they're plentiful because Cubans are indifferent to bass fishing.

Mike Royko
Columnist

So after Carter eased the old restrictions, almost 1,000 Americans a year started going there to fish.

But in 1982, President Ronald Reagan decided this was unpatriotic. He didn't want Americans spending money in Cuba on food, lodging, rum drinks and bait, because it would help a godless, commie economy.

And he ordered that only government officials, journalists, scholars and Cuban exiles could go to Cuba. No fisherman or anyone else who would put a nickel in Castro's pocket.

However, Snow, a sharp Texan, thought he spotted a loophole in Reagan's order. He said he was doing scientific research by bringing back Cuban bass to be bred with our bass, so our bass might get bigger. This, he said, made him a scholar.

But the feds figure he was just telling a fish story. They believe his main reason for going there was to make a profit by organizing fishing charters.

So the government has come down on Snow with both big feet, presumably to make an example of him and let others know that they are watching.

Although I don't condone law-breaking, I find this case confusing.

Every year many thousands of Americans visit the Soviet Union, some as tourists, some as businessmen. And they spend large sums to eat godless, communist borsch.

Thousands of Americans also visit China, where they spend vast sums on godless, communist egg rolls.

Thousands of others visit Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland and other commie countries, spending big money on godless, communist pierogi and other godless, communist dishes can't pronounce or spell.

So I ask: If Americans are permitted to spend money in communist countries to eat godless, commie borsch, egg rolls and pierogi, why can't an American spend money to catch a godless, commie fish?

I don't visit communist countries since I feel nervous anywhere you can be arrested without being able to call your lawyer and a bondsman.

But if I had to make a choice, I much prefer going to Cuba, with its fine beaches and bass fishing, than to Moscow, which is as cold as Chicago, without our fine saloons.

And if they are going to go after Mr. Snow, they could be less harsh. A century in prison and a \$500,000 fine is kind of stiff just for doing what thousands of American businessmen, including many conservatives, do regularly — trade with communists.

Why, we don't even impose that kind of punishment on those who sold weapons to the crazy ayatollah.

The prosecutors should take another look at Mr. Snow, then throw him back. He's really not a keeper.

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We can't allow terrorism to hold us hostage

"Sucks and stones will break my bones but words will never hurt me."

A childhood taunt that doesn't seem to hold true when those words are written and published. Ask Salman Rushdie.

Perhaps you've heard of him? Rushdie, an Indian-born British citizen, wrote "The Satanic Verses," a fictional tale that may cost him his life.

The story opens with two Indian actors falling from a plane that was just exploded by terrorists over the English Channel. The actors have an animated discussion on the way down, and they land safely only to have more problems develop. Throughout the book, Rushdie talks about his childhood and early adulthood in Britain along with other aspects of his life. He also retells legends

about the prophet Mohammed, phrasing them as the dreams of men whose sanity is questionable.

The book won a literary award, but some Muslims did not take to the book. They considered it blasphemous for its portrayal of Mohammed's wives as "prostitutes" and its suggestion that Mohammed, rather than Allah, wrote the Koran.

Scattered riots and protests began to surface in places like South Africa and India. The book was banned in countries to avoid secular violence.

A mass protest was staged in front of the American cultural center in Islamabad, the Pakistan capital. Six people were killed and many more injured.

Rushdie apologized for the distress

the book caused the Muslims after Iranian President Ali Khamenei lead him to believe that such an apology could lead to a pardon, but it didn't.

Instead, on Feb. 14 Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini denied the chance of a reprieve for Rushdie, offering exoneration to any Muslim who killed the author or anyone else involved in the book's publication. What a Valentine's gift.

Two Iranian religious leaders eventually put a \$5.2 million bounty on Rushdie's head. Rushdie, under the protection of Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist squad, went into hiding.

British airlines began receiving bomb threats. This week, European governments recalled their ambassadors and chief diplomats from Iran to protest the call for Rushdie's death.

Now the terrorism and anger is spreading to the United States.

Not only is it ridiculous for Khomeini to call for the death of another country's citizen, but his terrorism is reaching directly into our lives, censoring what we read.

Sales of "The Satanic Verses" increased sharply after the riots began. About 100,000 books were printed worldwide with another U.S. printing planned. But distribution is being hampered by "intellectual terrorism."

Waldenbooks ordered the removal of the book from its shelves after receiving threats, and the next day B. Dalton and Barnes & Noble did the same.



Becky Weisenfels
Editor

"We have never before pulled a book off our shelves," the chief executive officer of B. Dalton, Leonard Riggio, said. "It is regrettable that a foreign government has been able to hold hostage our most sacred First Amendment principle. Nevertheless, the safety of our employees and patrons must take precedence."

If this type of terrorism works, what is going to happen when a pro-life group decides it doesn't like a book on abortion and makes a bomb threat? Will the bookstores take that book off the shelves, too? The reactions of the bookstores are opening a whole new field of options for those opposed to some literature. The government ought to take a tougher stand against such terrorism in the United States.

President Bush recently said that bookstores should have "protection of the law if they decide to go ahead and sell a book of this nature."

These stores should not only have protection of the law; they should receive encouragement and help if they wish to carry the books.

I realize that the booksellers have a lot at stake — their stores and patrons are being threatened. But I also believe that we as a nation should feel our freedom is just as threatened.

I am not saying we should all put our lives on the line, but increased security and a stand for harsh punishment of these terrorists might help.

People are making threats and through those threats, are deciding what we will and will not be allowed to read. I understand the book is offensive for many Muslims, but I am offended by the actions of those who wish to keep the public from reading it.

A similar controversy happened last year with the release of a movie that many considered blasphemous.

When "The Last Temptation of Christ" hit the theaters last year, many Americans were offended. They showed up to protest the movie, but the movie *did* run — only one national theater chain refused to show it.

The point is that there is a civil way to handle material that a segment of the population considers offensive — we allow for that in our society. We should not allow for bomb threats that lead to censorship.

If people are offended by "The Satanic Verses," they can choose to protest, just as we should be able to choose whether we want to read the book or not.

Becky Weisenfels is a senior journalism major and editor of The Battalion.

The Battalion

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