



Mail Call

'Quibbling' still necessary

EDITOR:

I am writing in reference to the Feb. 27 editorial concerning Gov. Bill Clements appointing minorities to the boards of regents of Texas A&M and the University of Texas. I disagree with the editorial and propose that Gov. Bill Clements was not in a no-win situation.

Two positions were open on the Texas A&M Board of Regents. Of course, one had to be reserved for the proverbial minority so there would be no more protests. Again, an opportunity to improve the equity of the Board of Regents, by appointing two minorities, is gone.

I do not believe there were no qualified minorities for appointment to either of the boards of regents. I find it easier to believe, given today's subtlety of racism, that Gov. Clements did not even think about appointing any minorities to the boards of regents until protests started.

Lastly, if you say race should not matter, then consider the reaction of white people to an all-black membership of the A&M Board of Regents. I am positive there are enough qualified blacks in Texas to fill every seat. If this were to happen it would be called reverse discrimination.

You say we should stop "quibbling" about race.

When a black man or any other minority can walk through this life without race being a factor, when there is equal opportunity for all, then I will never "quibble" about race.

Charles Henderson '90

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.

Playday was not just a Saturday in the park



James Cecil
Columnist

The last of the contests, the tug-of-war tournament, was getting underway when a sudden disruption agitated the friendly mood of the participants.

I looked around and saw a Bryan police car being followed by a cloud of dust, then another cloud on the other side of the park following two police cars. I saw others in the distance on the road leading to the park. The storm-troopers had invaded.

Uniformed officers jumped out and 06409802swept through the area, stopping at each cluster of cars to ask for everyone's identification. A few plainclothes officers from the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission moved briskly through the crowd and arrested two guys participating in Playday.

I thought, "O.K., they've done their business; they've ruffled the crowd. Now they'll leave and we'll get on with the match."

Silly me. They didn't leave, and we didn't get on with the match.

All 750 of us were instructed to leave the park, a public park by the way, and on our way out we were to pay a \$2 fee. If we did not pay the fee, we would be video taped and taken to court.

The fraternity members and the ADPi girls were cooperative, and we did as we were told, mainly because we didn't know what was going on. Everyone packed in their cars and headed out of the park.

Imagine every car in the fish lot leaving at the same time through one exit. Now add the fact that every car will be stopped by a policeman before it can leave. That's right, it's an ugly sight.

I was lucky. I got in a fraternity brother's car immediately after the announcement and headed for the one road that led to the park exit. I only sat in the car for an hour and a half. Most people were stuck there for over two hours; forced to leave, but sitting in their cars, waiting to pay \$2.

By the time I reached the exit, word had passed from car to car that the police would allow us to pay the fee on Monday without taking us to court. Gee, thanks.

Well, we paid the fee and I drove my friend's car out of the park/penitentiary only to get a speeding ticket a few miles

later. If that wasn't enough, I got a blistering sunburn while I was waiting in the car to pay the \$2.

Later, we found out that we had to pay the fee because of a contractual discrepancy between the park and ADPi. But why were we all forced to leave the park, still a public park, against our will? Why would they want to herd 750 peo-

ple through a bottle-neck all at one time? Why wasn't anything explained to us before we were kicked out?

Since this incident, both the Bryan Police Department and the TABC have been vague about their communication with each other that day and their reasons for raiding Playday in the manner they did. This leads me to believe that

they weren't quite sure what they were doing.

Despite the fun and excitement of the contests at Playday, we all left with a sense of resentment that stemmed from feeling violated and harassed by the arbitrary use of police authority.

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

Khomeini's actions not much different than those of others

So Ayatollah Khomeini has declared that Salman Rushdie must die for his crimes against the religion of Islam and its founder, Mohammed. I have no quarrel with that.

The whole ordeal began with Rushdie writing a book called "The Satanic Verses." In it, the author supposedly makes stabs at Islam and its prophet. The Ayatollah, as well as a great number of other Muslims, finds this to be an abhorrence.

India has banned the book, some Muslims have made bomb threats against anyone taking part in the production and sale of the book, and the Ayatollah has offered a reward for the person who kills Rushdie.

Protecting Islam seems to be a serious cause these days.

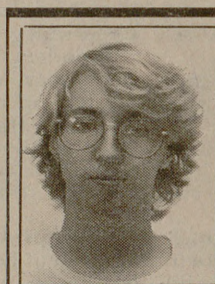
The effects of all of this action seem surprising in the democratic West. Bookstores keep the book behind the shelves, if they keep it at all. Because of numerous bomb threats, publishers have moved their top executives to different buildings for their personal safety.

Protests by Muslims have become more numerous and popular. And Rushdie is fast becoming a wealthy man, even though he may not live long enough to enjoy his wealth.

At times, certain situations require dramatic, even violent, measures. To protect what you hold to be truthful and loving, you have to take drastic action. To some followers of Islam, this seems to be such a crisis, and they must do everything possible to keep the faith, to hold themselves up in the eyes of the world.

History offers many examples of using strong measures to combat a perceived enemy.

Galileo Galilei, back in the 17th century, became convinced that the Earth



Todd Honeycutt
Columnist

moved around the sun. While this seems to be a given to you and me, back then most of the people believed that the Earth was stationary with the universe revolving around it.

This was the view taken by the Catholic Church. They perceived Galileo to be a threat to the Church, and put him on trial. Galileo had the choice of renouncing the truth as he knew it or being executed. As he was a man who valued life, he discredited his findings.

And the Puritans of New England had to turn to extreme measures as well to protect what they held close to their hearts. Back in the late 1600's they found themselves with a bunch of witches. Witches, as was well known, were the angels of Satan and the gatekeepers of hell.

So the Puritans took it upon themselves to rid the Earth of these monstrosities. To let them live would have been to give Satan free reign in this land of holiness and dim the light emitted by the City on the Hill. The witches were burned.

And let's not forget the thousands of heretics who were disposed of for various thoughts and views, including Savonarola, a high member of a religious order who was hung in the late 1400s for heresy.

Now, to turn from religion, let us look at the United States of America.

In Vietnam, shortly after the end of World War II, Ho Chi Minh asked America for help in beginning a nation for the people of Vietnam. We refused, as he was a supposed communist, and he began to fight against the French. When the French had to get out, we stepped in.

We were going to show those God-hating commies who was right and which ideology was supreme. We felt threatened. We went in to smite them and make Vietnam a democratic country. But we failed, not because our hearts weren't in the right place but because the government wouldn't let us win.

And now we are ready and willing to send more soldiers to battle for the same cause in Nicaragua.

Even today, we are still censoring and banning books. Recently in Shreveport, Louisiana, "Huckleberry Finn" has been banned — just for the use of the word "nigger."

At A&M, students feel the same kind of threat. Someone mentions the negative attributes of bonfire, suggesting that it be moved or even eliminated, and a furor is created. Someone states the corps consists of a bunch of empty-headed peons who should be thrown off campus, and people take offense instantly. Racism is brought into focus and is violently denied. And anyone suggesting change is branded with a scarlet "A."

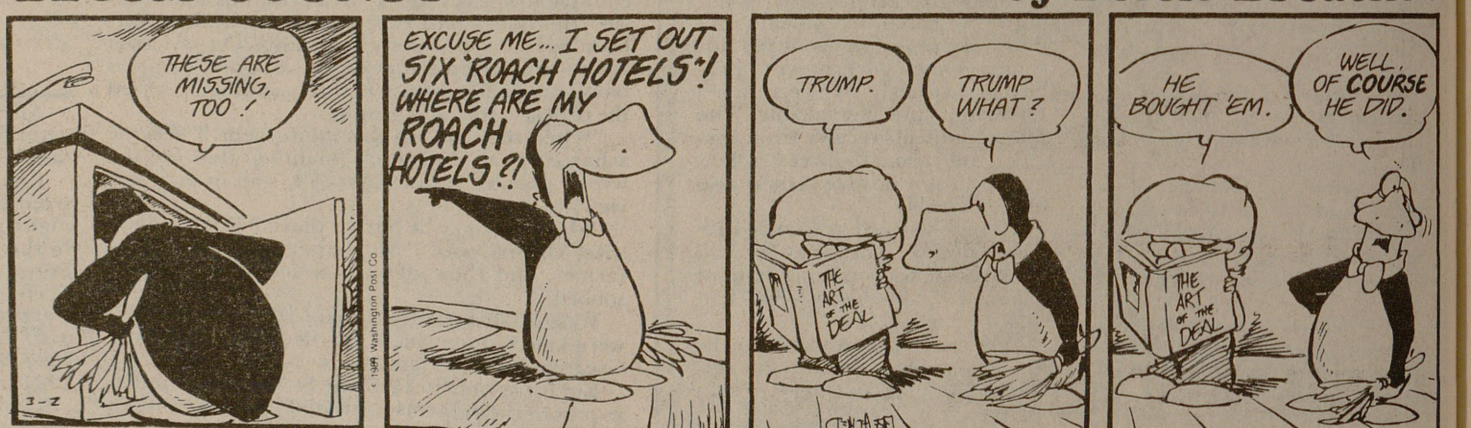
And a popular slogan aimed at anyone who is perceived to be a threatening voice is, "Highway 6 runs both ways."

No, there's nothing wrong with the Ayatollah. He's just taking action against what he believes might harm Islam. The only thing wrong with him is that he's not us.

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

BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed



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