

THE TIDE TURNS

Wright's 'unethical' acts not the same as Tower's

After more than 30 years in the U.S. House of Representatives and after becoming Speaker of the House, Jim Wright has been dealt a firm blow by the House ethics committee.

All 12 members of the committee, six Republicans and six Democrats, voted for a House examination of Speaker Wright's alleged violations of the House ethics code. For the first time in history the speaker of the House has been indicted by his colleagues.

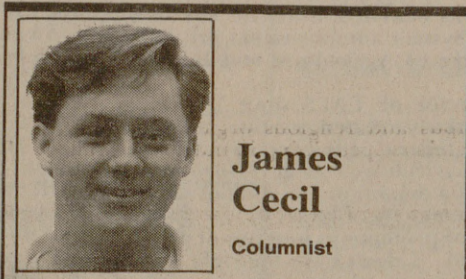
The word *ethics* has been the buzzword around Washington for several months now. But its definition seems to be changing every time it is used.

The Senate confirmation committee voted against John Tower for Defense Secretary because of "ethics charges." But *ethics* used in Tower's case was different from *ethics* in Wright's case.

Tower was criticized for what he chose to do on his own time: drink at cocktail parties, divorce his wife, go out with women and other acts of unpermissible deviance (even though they were tolerated in the '60s when committed by President Kennedy).

Wright has been accused of breaking the rules laid down by the "institution he loves," meaning Congress. The committee recommends that the House consider 69 instances where Wright has broken House rules by hiding excessive income from donations and honorariums. Congressmen already have different rules than the rest of us, like special bank accounts and freedom from the IRS. But even under these special rules, the honorable speaker wasn't able to play fairly.

Jim Wright's ethics violations involved people paying him money so that he would shape laws in their favor, whereas accusations against Tower dealt with his personal life. Clearly, Wright's



behavior is much more serious because of the ramifications of the situation: The leader of our legislative branch, only two heartbeats away from the presidency, is willing to take bribes to change federal laws. He is for sale.

John Tower's problems were the talk of the country, receiving constant attention on television, magazines and cartoons because of the inquiring-minds-want-to-know effect the stories had on the public. But in Wright's situation, our average American will find this whole mess boring. There's just no entertainment value.

Other public officials recently have come under scrutiny because of problems in their private lives. Mayor Marion Barry of Washington, D.C., was victimized by the inquiring-minds-want-to-know effect because of his close association with drug dealers. Mayor Henry Cisneros of San Antonio had his personal life raked over the coals when his mistress held a press conference to announce their affair. These instances are interesting and show a different image of the officials than what the public held before, but what do they say about the work that person does?

The accusations against Speaker Wright have attracted little attention by comparison. The public isn't really concerned with elected officials who violate seemingly obscure rules established by the House of Representatives. Also, unlike the Tower confirmation, the investi-

gation on the speaker has support of Democrats as well as Republicans; it's not a partisan issue.

The Republicans would love to jump up and down, spit in Wright's hair, and laugh at their distinguished colleagues across the aisle, but they know that the Democrats supporting the investigation would then run to their leader's defense. So the Republicans are biting their tongues right now and are quietly enjoying the scenery.

House Democrats are walking softly and watching every word they say to keep from promoting a negative attitude about the speaker's future. This is difficult for them when the ethics committee chairman is a Democratic himself and had to announce his committee's indictment against Wright. A few Democrats are going to support the speaker regardless of the charges and evidence.

Texas Democrat Charles Wilson said that he wants to "start figuring out who's on our side and who's on the other side." He and his followers don't seem too concerned about doing what's right or wrong, they're out for the blind pursuit of keeping Wright in the speaker's chair, for the benefit of the whole country, I'm sure.

Speaker Wright should be given some credit, though. He has seen how Tower was dragged through the mud for weeks on end and has called for a quick end to the investigation into his own affairs. Unfortunately for him, though, the process will take several weeks.

Hopefully the public will see the severity of the accusations against Jim Wright, despite the lack of hype and interest in bedroom affairs that we have seen with other public officials.

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

Mail Call

Graduate employees deserve benefits

EDITOR:

As a former teaching assistant in the English Department, I would like to address Texas A&M graduate employees about an issue of some substance. The Texas Legislature is now considering a bill to authorize insurance benefits for graduate employees who are employed at least 20 hours per week.

Graduate employees at the University of Texas at Austin have been working very hard on this issue for the past eleven months, and we have managed to prod the bill over several hurdles. Along the way we have requested the assistance of your Graduate Student Council, but I regret to inform you that the GSC has been singularly unresponsive. The time to act is now. You deserve the benefits paid to any other hard-working state employee and you need to start saying so.

Greg Moses '81

Rated 'X'

EDITOR:

So, the main reason I am taking time to write this article is because I am appalled with part of my political science curriculum. I am required to read a book for a political science class, and if it were a movie, it would most assuredly be rated "X".

A random sample proved my point. I opened the book 11 times, and each time I noticed a most vulgar profanity — each page!

And these aren't your everyday, run-of-the-mill curse words. These are serious perversions, and my instructor tells me that I have to buy and read this trash? Honestly, I consider it a violation of myself and desecration of my religion to be compelled to read this rubbish.

I was told it was chosen to graphically point out the atrocities of war. This excuse does not hold for me. Consider what would happen if a professor made his/her class purchase a Bible to prove the extremes of love and Christian department. I need not probe the ramification of the example.

A shocking cry would go all over A&M and our paper would be inundated with protest letters.

So here is mine. I don't feel I should have to read a book which prostitutes principles absolutely opposed to my belief as a Christian.

Christopher Henderson '91

Happiness is difficult to find

EDITOR:

Todd Honeycutt's column on doughnuts and happiness was an interesting, thought-provoking article. I often think about the nature of happiness, only with my "analytical" mind, I chose a mathematical model rather than an edible one.

I use the amount of happiness as the y-axis and time, past or future, as the x-axis. This way, I can produce a curve depending on how happy I've been and how much I have to look forward to. The interesting thing is that I can never really rate the present! When I think about it, all I can really say is that my thoughts of the past and future are either happy or sad.

I think Todd is right about separating pleasure and happiness, because I can say, "Yes, I'm having a 'pleasurable' time, right now, at this very point in time" I'm not sure if this is because I'm always on the go or if it's something else. But I can't say, "Yes, I'm happy right now." I can only say, "Gosh, wasn't that fun last night," or "I can't wait until tomorrow!"

I also agree that satisfaction is not happiness. When I'm most happy is when I'm between satisfaction and disappointment. Here, I always have a goal, and yet I'm not suffering any sort of personal defeat. When you're satisfied, all you can really do is say, "Gosh, wasn't that neat," plop on the couch and watch *Geraldo*.

Chris Anderson '89

Babbling idiot

EDITOR:

The other day I asked myself if I was happy, but somehow I got the feeling that my answer would not be good enough for Todd Honeycutt. So I posed three questions:

1. What is a "cake doughnut" and how does it differ from the standard doughnut?
2. How did Mr. Honeycutt make it this far in life by being a babbling idiot?
3. Why does *The Battalion* print this kind of dribble on the Opinion page? I mean, if it was on the Babbling Idiot page I probably would not mind a bit...

But before I go on let me check to make sure that I'm not beating around the bush or violating any journalistic norms such as using understandable sentences or having a point.

This is not the first utterly ridiculous vignette that I have read by Mr. Honeycutt. But it is the first one to jump from doughnuts to suicide to birds landing on my head to children to doughnuts again. I guess this is art. Admittedly though, I have no objective criticism of the April 13 work except that no one that I know has gotten anything out of it except a good laugh.

And of *The Battalion* staff, I ask: Don't you want to be a respectable newspaper? Don't you want to be read for reasons other than because your paper is free? Sometimes I get the feeling that you print columns on the opinion page just to stimulate a response. Gee, I guess it worked. Boy do I feel duped.

Greg Christopher '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.

The Battalion

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.

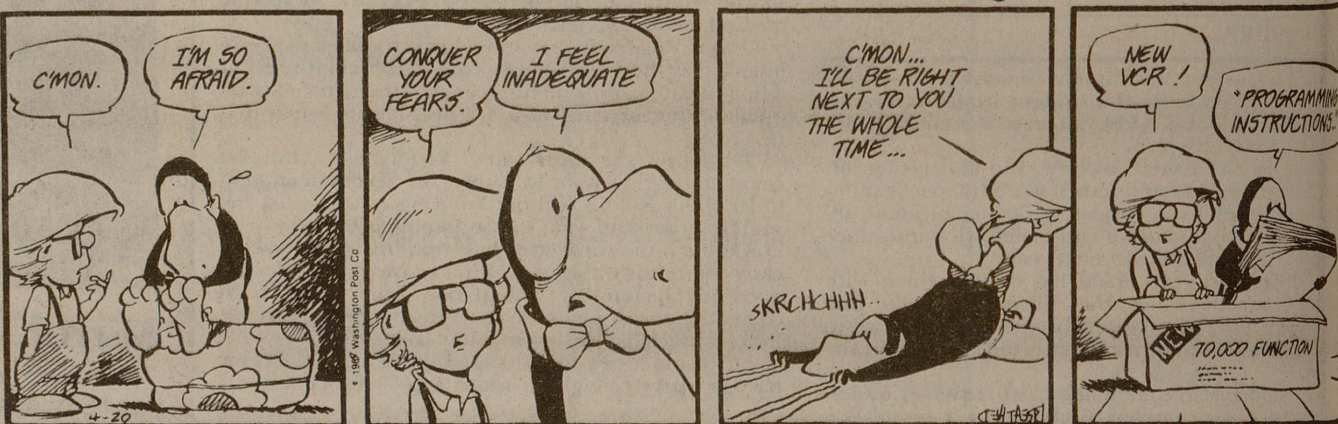
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