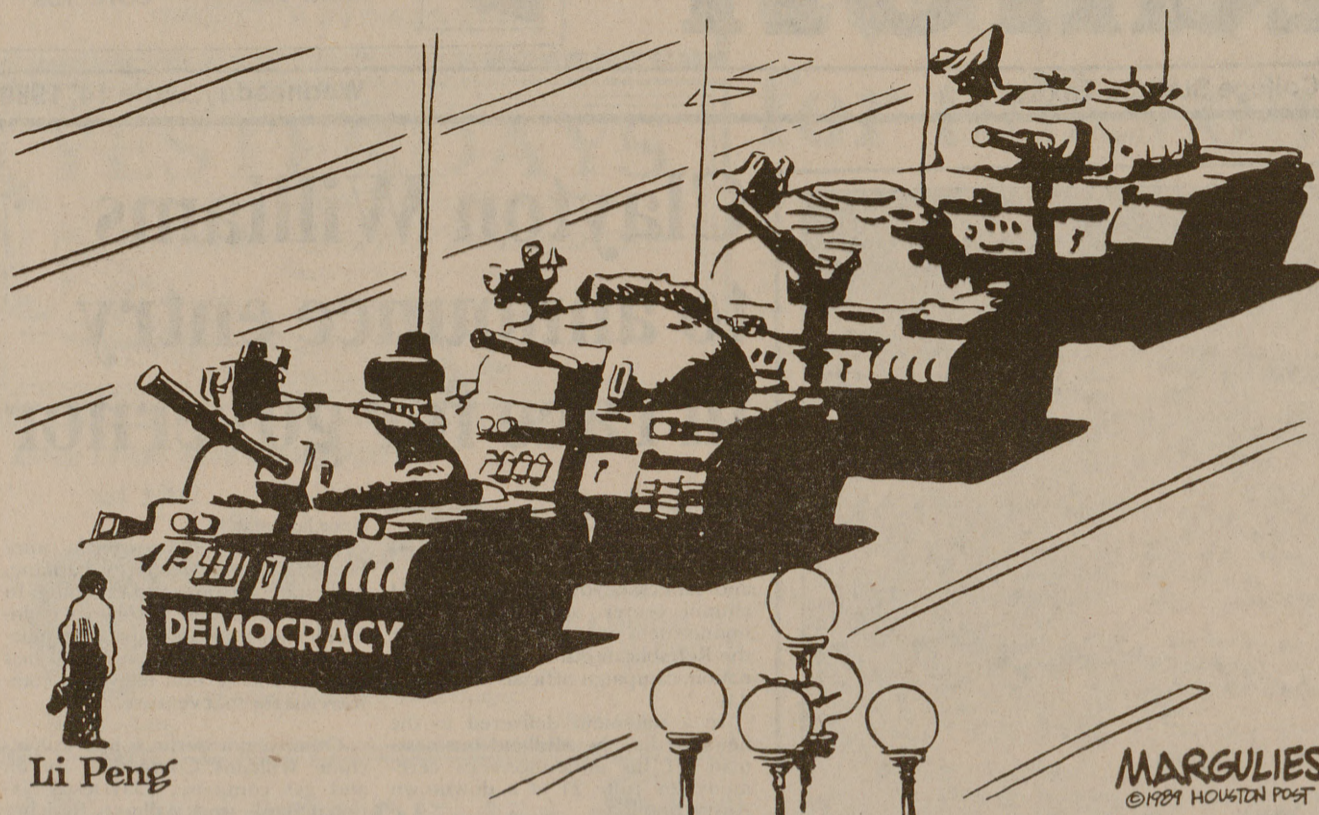


OPINION

Wednesday, June 14, 1989



Mail Call

Advertisement in poor taste

EDITOR:

I was very surprised last Friday to find an ad for a memorial service for Khomeini . . . or should I say "His Holiness." Well, as Troyce Wilson said in his letter in Tuesday's paper, why don't we hold a memorial service for the leader of the Matamoros cult and advertise it in *The Battalion*? He was considered holy by some. But His Holiness was different, right? The Matamoros cult murdered people in the name of its religion. Well, how about the million who died in the Gulf War in the name of Islam? There was also state-sponsored terrorism (such as hostage-taking and blowing up planes like Pan Am). The list goes on.

Perhaps Khomeini was too old to rule a country and religion. Take the Salmon Rushdie incident. If my 86-year-old grandfather heard that someone had written insults about Jesus Christ, he too would be screaming, "Kill him! Kill him!" The world is a better place to live in now that Khomeini is gone. What I cannot understand is why *The Battalion* staff allowed a memorial service to be advertised in the paper. Think next time! You might accidentally advertise a memorial service for Ted Bundy.

Alan Wakim '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. Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words.

Television turn downs not revealed to public

The three major television networks have announced their new fall lineups, and what lineups they are.

There'll be some more juicy crime shows where your kids can learn how dope dealers operate, and, of course, there will be more sitcoms on the hilarity scale, I presume, of those we have known and loved in the past—like "Diff'rent Strokes" and "Eight Is Enough" (neither of which, in case you're wondering, dealt with sex), and the one with the funny puppet from outer space who looks like Howdy Doody on his way to the rehab center.

But what the networks never tell us are the ideas for the shows they turn down. Each network gets hundreds each year. I even wrote an idea for a television show myself. And it was turned down.

Actually, I stole the idea from my stepbrother, radio star and author Ludlow Porch, who envisioned a sitcom based around a funeral home where a lot of funny stuff would happen, like dead bodies getting lost, and slipping embalming fluid into the boss's coffee cup.

Ludlow called the show "Leave it to the Bereaver."

Said the guy at ABC in Hollywood, "This is the worst idea for a sitcom I've ever heard. Get out of my office."

Frankly, I thought the idea I stole from Ludlow was dynamite. Mr. Hollywood never let me get to the part where a guy shows up at the funeral home to review the remains of his recently departed mother-in-law.

Lewis Grizzard

Columnist

He peers into the casket and suddenly begins to sob uncontrollably.

"You rotten louse," says his wife. "You never had one nice word to say about mother in the 30 years we've been married, so don't pretend you're grieving because she's dead."

"I'm not grieving because she's dead," her husband replies. "I just thought there for a second I saw her move."

Great stuff.

At any rate, because I have so many contacts at the networks, I was able to obtain a list of some of the program ideas that were turned down this year.

Imagine how bad something must be to be turned down by the networks, but these didn't make it:

"Thelma": An obvious ripoff of the hit show "Roseanne."

Only here, the people were even more ordinary than the people on "Roseanne," who were so ordinary you want to wring their ordinary necks.

Thelma was to be even fatter and slobbier than Roseanne, and her husband, Eugene, was to be so ordinary that in the first episode, he has a generic vasectomy.

"The Boxcar Willie Show": The idea was for Boxcar Willie to host a variety show featuring other mediocre musi-

cians like the guy who tries to sell records of where he plays a pan flute on Ted Turner's cable station; an appearance of Dolly Parton's sister, Polly, who can sing a lick, but that's the only thing she has in common with her sister, and a man who can yodel through his ear.

"Eightysomething": Real-life dramas featuring residents of a nursing home in Sylacauga, Ala. Lots of prune jokes.

"Mr. Edwina": Same as before, but this time the horse is a transsexual.

"Slimestory": Nighttime version of daytime's "Geraldo" with a weekly lineup of topics dealing with sex, perversion, devil worship, animal husbandry and the real lowdown on John Tower.

To have been hosted by Rock Hudson's former lover.

"Sixty Seconds": Andy Rooney wanted his own show.

But wait until next year, all you who failed. The networks will be even more desperate by then.

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Nuclear energy program needs public support

Believe it or not, it has been 10 years since the Three Mile Island blunder. I was only 10 years old at the time, but I remember the madness it created, as I'm sure most of us do. And if Three Mile Island's overrated accident didn't steam us enough, the Chernobyl mishap probably did.

Chernobyl was a hot item for months. The no-nuke loudmouths, who took the Chernobyl accident as the "I told you so" they so desperately were in search of, apparently didn't care that the Soviet reactor was nothing like its American counterparts in design or safety. Our unsupportive public has put the nuclear power program in a precarious position. America's near dead nuclear program may soon be resurrected.

Although nuclear power plants generate one-fifth of the nation's energy, the last plant built was ordered 15 years ago. I grew up about 30 miles from the South Texas Nuclear Project, near Bay City, and I have watched it develop at a snail's pace for virtually all my life.

This slow development is spawned by controversy and negative public opinions, which seem to constantly shroud nuclear energy. For America's nuclear program to be successful, its image must change.

Many people view the nuclear program as unsafe because of the barrage of rhetoric coming from the nuclear protestors. A large and quite outspoken group of people, most of whom are uninformed of the facts about nuclear safety, see this energy source as inherently bad. The nuclear program in this country would be much more beneficial and efficient even if we had general apathy for nuclear energy instead of the loud, no-nuke factions.

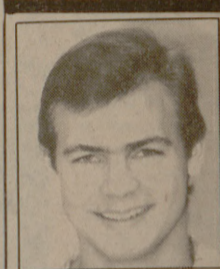
New environmental factors have singled out nuclear plants as the cleanest, sources of large-scale energy, and new developments have made nuclear power even more safe.

Many new energy-related problems have entered the scene since America's nuclear program was initiated. Global warming may be the most important of these. Most of us are familiar with the greenhouse effect, which explains the warming problem by pinning the blame of our steamy planet on massive carbon dioxide emissions. Conventional, or non-nuclear, power plants are major contributors to the carbon dioxide build-up which has the potential to drastically affect our already beleaguered earth.

Since non-nuclear energy sources such as coal or other fossil fuel-burning plants spew vast quantities of sulfur dioxide and other oxides of nitrogen, they are also heavily responsible for acid rain.

The nuclear method, in which atoms are split-generating heat to make steam, produces no atmospheric pollutants. This cleanliness and a rapidly growing demand for electricity must point towards an increase in power derived from nuclear energy.

This increase cannot occur solely by default. Not only must the public see



Matt McBurnett
Columnist

that non-nuclear sources of energy are harmful to the environment, they must also be convinced that nuclear plants are safe and efficient.

Last week, Rep. Henry Waxman, the House Energy and Commerce Environment subcommittee listed a Neches petroleum plant as posing one-in-ten chance of causing cancer. Thirty other chemical or petroleum plants in Texas, among 205 throughout the nation, were listed in the report, having at least a one-in-1,000 cancer risk. To counterpoint the safety of nuclear plants, there's a nuclear reactor not far from where you live. In fact, the nuclear reactor I speak of is on our Texas A&M campus.

The most feared nuclear accident, overheating the fissioning uranium, is a point where it melts and releases radioactive gas, such as in Chernobyl. The Chernobyl accident forced America to take a second look at its nuclear program and to develop new technologies corresponding to its research. Recently developed designs are safer, cheaper and smaller than the old ones. All of the new designs employ "passive" safety features which rely more on natural forces such as gravity and convection.

One logical change in design proposed by Westinghouse and General Electric is the use of gravity as a replacement for the complex network of diesel engines used as water pumps in case of loss of coolant. Water would be released from huge tanks and simply flow downward to cool the overheating reactor.

General Atomics of San Diego is developing a small encapsulated utility reactor which would be built underground and use helium gas rather than water as a cooling medium. According to Vice Chairman Linden Blue, even if the helium leaked out, the fuel pellets would not get hotter than 2,000 degrees, which is far below the 3,600 degree point needed for meltdown. This means that there can be no Chernobyl-style meltdown-- a hypothetical situation where fuel melts into a fiery glob and burns its way to that half-communist Asian country.

America needs nuclear energy to solve the ever-increasing population problem. We are on the brink of some important revisions in our nuclear energy program. If we can master the supposed tabletop fusion, the possibilities are limitless. For any of this to occur, we need a supportive public. In the case of nuclear energy, though, an informed person is usually a supportive one.

Matt McBurnett is a junior electrical engineering major and a columnist for *The Battalion*.

BAKER,
BUTT OUT!

BAKER,
SHUT UP!



"We've found the basis for a Mideast agreement..."

The Battalion

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