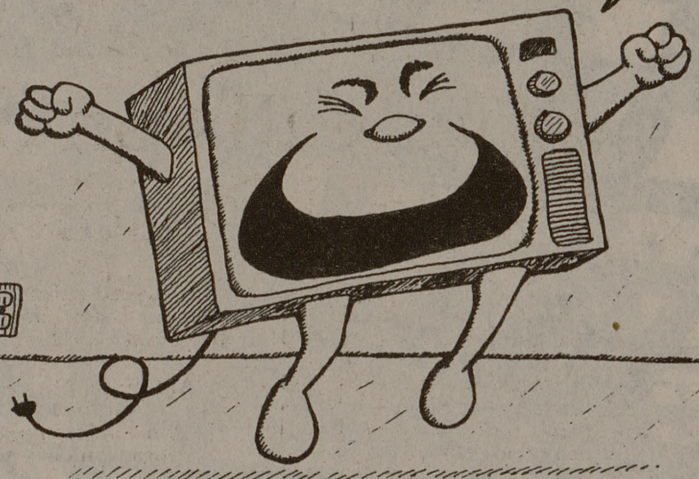


REACTION TO THE NEWS THAT "THE MORTON DOWNEY, JR. SHOW" WILL BE GOING OFF THE AIR SOON...

YAHOO!!!



Exxon has failed to clean up its act

Pam Mooman
Guest Columnist

NEWS FLASH: Exxon has now decided that Alaska can get along fine without its cleanup help four months after one of its oil liners rammied into a reef off the Alaskan coast, ravishing the virginal environment.

While various condemnations and accusations have been hurled at Captain Joseph Hazelwood, perhaps deservedly so, perhaps not, the undeniably talented seaman with an unfortunate fondness for alcohol has not been the sole man on the whipping post. Exxon itself has been harshly criticized for its disorganized and half-hearted attempts to clean up Prince William Sound and restore the spoiled environment to a semblance of what it was before the fateful night of March 24.

Chairman L.G. Rawl, hardly what one would call a master of public relations, has done little to improve Exxon's negative image with an angry public that is demanding answers.

But a recent investigation by *Time* magazine has uncovered subtler and more disturbing charges concerning the company's inconsistency in internal operations.

While many have condemned Exxon for its cleanup efforts, others have jumped to the company's rescue, citing its past record and present market position as proof of Exxon being above reproach. But the fact is that while Exxon forbids drinking on its ships, it nonetheless provides low-alcohol beer for all of its sailors. Even though the infamous Captain Hazelwood had consumed two of the bottles of beer before the collision, the low-alcohol beer was available to him because Exxon itself made it readily available, knowing full well his past history of alcoholism.

Furthermore, the investigation discovered that Exxon has drastically reduced crew size on its operating ships, including the *Valdez*. As a result, seamen were working up to 14 hour shifts.

Exxon claimed that computer technology aboard the ships allowed the ships to safely maintain smaller crews. But this claim will not change the fact that Second Mate Lloyd LeCain, possibly more technically competent to operate the ship than Third Mate Gregory Cousins, was in bed, exhausted and unable to work when the Cousins steered the *Valdez* into the reef.

And now, after investing \$6 million and four months in a seemingly futile cleanup effort, Exxon has announced it is pulling out of Alaska in September, lock, stock and barrel.

Now wait a minute. Isn't there a small problem inherent in Exxon's latest effort at brainstorming? "Why, no," you might say. "Of course there's not a problem."

No, no, of course there's not a problem — if your name is Exxon. Why com-

pound your losses and keep the money down a bottomless pit? Are you are trying to do is clean up the environment — nothing very important pressing. Why worry about the environment at all? If it is nature, then just grow another one, can't it?

On the other hand, if you are state of Alaska, you would most likely be dismayed at Exxon's declaration of independence from further responsibility. This declaration comes after Exxon from Exxon to undo all damage even its power to Prince William Sound.

But there's the key phrase: "without power." While workers may be able to scoop up some of the 11 million gallons of goo choking the Alaskan coast, they can't bring back the thousands of birds, hundreds of otters and the myriad of other plants and animals that have died as a result of the oil spill.

Prince William Sound, despite the advances from optimistic politicians, never be the same — its purity and stillness can never be fully recovered even if Exxon had made legitimate efforts to clean up its massive boo-boo.

Exxon's top management has handled this situation poorly, and Alaska will have to forever pay for Exxon's careless handling of its operations.

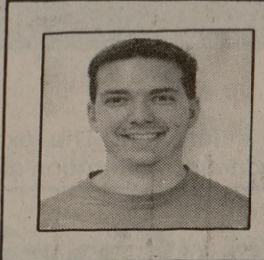
Exxon's past record, while it may be perceived by most people as proof that does not justify abandonment of the state toward Alaska. Perhaps Exxon's management has not yet outgrown its childhood and learned an important lesson in maturity: If you make a mistake, take responsibility for your actions and take care of the problems you have created.

Exxon has not clearly done either of these things and is seated right now in that big safety zone we call "a gray area" and sounds like it is saying important things, but in reality Exxon is indifferent in its actions and unintelligent throughout its speeches.

While Joseph Hazelwood may be the most convenient of beings — the scapegoat — for Exxon, the problems that led to the tragic *Valdez* accident go far beyond an allegedly drunken captain's judgment. They reach all the way back to Exxon's very own top officers and their twisted philosophy of how to operate and run a company.

Pam Mooman is a senior journalism major. As with all columns, opinions expressed by Guest Columnists are necessarily those of The Battalion. Persons interested in submitting guest columns should contact the Opinion Editor at 845-3314.

New license plates no friends of mine



Damon Arhos
Columnist

Texans have always taken heat from people in other states for having such big egos. We have always been proud and rugged individuals, continually striving for the betterment of our state's reputation nationally as well as abroad. The people of Texas are individualistic and proud of it. Almost every Texan is proud to be a member of the Lone Star State.

But LBJ would turn over in his grave if he knew that the three-member Texas Highway Commission has plans to change our state's motto to "The Friendship State" on future license plates. The new red, white and blue design would include the Texas flag, the name of the state and the new motto across the bottom. Our stylish black-on-white license plates will become a thing of the past if the commission has its way.

This isn't the first time our friendly Highway Commission has tried to deface our state's license plates. In 1985, we almost became "The Wildflower State" but were saved from that awful fate because of angry citizen protests. (Thank goodness for angry citizens.) Can you imagine a giant bouquet of flowers right in the middle of your license plate?

And now the commission wants to make Texans "friendly." We already are friendly, or at least most of us are. I suppose they want us to start paying attention to those "drive friendly" signs that

line Texas' highways. Next thing you know they will want to put a big smiley face in the middle of our plates.

What is the purpose of a license plate anyway? It was my impression that a license plate is a method of vehicle identification. If there is ever a robbery or a hit-and-run accident, the license plate number of the vehicle in question is the first thing a policeman will ask for. But the Texas Highway Commission has decided to play Picasso with our plates, and eventually we may not even be able to read them. So if you get robbed or have a collision with a Texan's vehicle that leaves the scene of the crime, just tell the policeman that whoever it was, they sure were friendly.

Even many politicians have come out against the changing of our plates. Ann Richards, our current state Treasurer and a Democratic gubernatorial candidate, said Tuesday that the proposed "friendly" slogan is "wimpy" and that the "Lone Star slogan" has served Texans

well. Senator Carlos Truan of Corpus Christi said Monday in a letter to Robert Dedman, the commission chairman, that no other action by any state agency has stirred up so much negative feedback. Dedman has conveniently been out of the country since the controversy began.

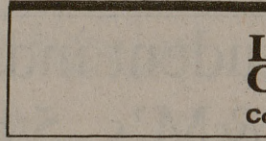
Texans should not allow a commission composed of three individuals to decide the design and motto of our state's license plates. The current design of our license plates is simple and attractive. If any slogan at all should be added to our plates it should definitely be "The Lone Star State," a motto all Texans can be proud of.

Hopefully, public outcry against the new project will be enough to stop the commission's endeavor, just as it did when the "Wildflower State" proposal was defeated. "The Friendship State" motto is definitely wimpy and works against the spirit of individuality and character that most Texans have worked to promote. And as Ann Richards said, we Texans have an image that "we're great, we're wonderful, and we think we are." And the "friendship" motto just isn't appropriate.

And I have only one message for the Texas Highway Commission: don't mess with Texas' license plates.

Damon Arhos is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.

Name your child after me, please



Lewis Grizzard
Columnist

I don't have any children. There are many reasons why not, one being I'm afraid if I had a son, he would come home one day wearing an earring and I would have to strangle him.

But that's not what this is about. This is about the fact that a number of my over-40 friends suddenly are having babies and, with no children of my own in sight, I have tried to convince each of them to name their newborns after me.

I think it would be a wonderful gesture of kindness and friendship.

At least two of these new dads have already turned me down. They both had girls.

"What kind of name is Lewisanna?" one said to me.

"It's a fine name," I said. "It's a very American name, too."

My suggestion to the other friend, who also had a baby daughter, was to name her Leweeze.

"It's even misspelled," he said. "I can't name my child a misspelled word."

"Look," I said, "the clock is ticking on me here. I'm not going to say there's no chance whatsoever I'll ever have any children of my own, but just in case I don't, I would like to at least have one named after me."

I could see the concern come over my friend's faces when I put a little guilt on them.

"Lewzandria?"

"Now that sounds interesting," said my friend.

"Are you out of your mind?" said his wife.

I was running out of time and ideas for names. I got desperate.

"Lewalsindra. She might grow up to be a basketball player."

"No."

Now I was past desperate.

"Grizzinda?"

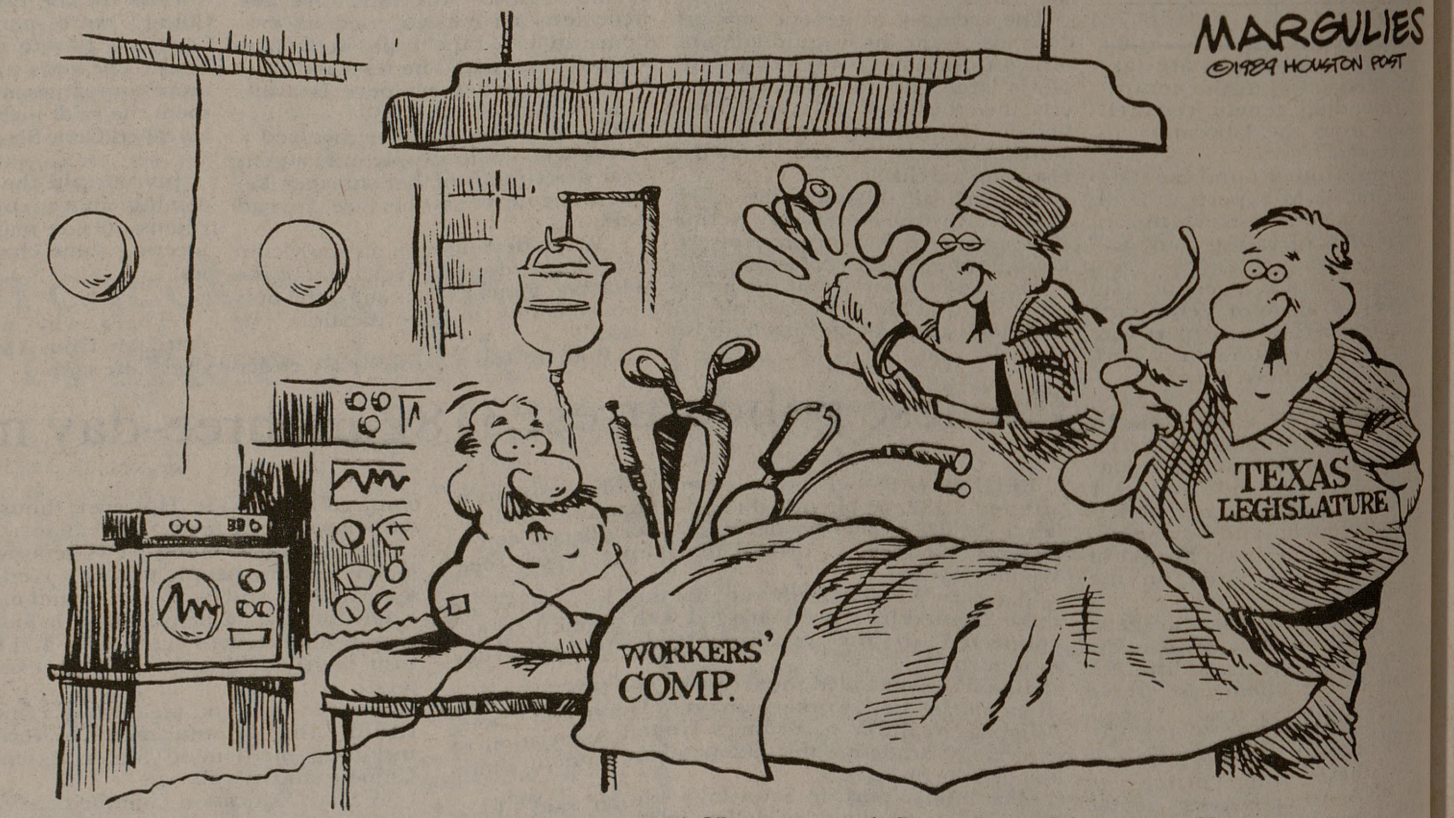
They both laughed uncontrollably.

Anybody out there with a new baby daughter? "Grizzinthia" is such a lovely name, don't you think?

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.
The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods.
Mail subscriptions are \$17.44 per semester, \$34.62 per school year and \$36.44 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.
Our address: *The Battalion*, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111.
Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Battalion*, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.



"Please hold our places till we get back, OK?..."