

The Battalion OPINION

Tuesday, February 6, 1990

Opinion Page Editor

Ellen Hobbs

8453

Mail Call

Metcalf v. Crow feud over

EDITOR:

The feud between John David Crow and Shelby Metcalf has finally ended. In typical A&M fashion, the last battle between these two classy individuals was a messy one. Both parties were to blame. Crow should have kept his mouth shut during the NCAA Convention in Dallas. However, Metcalf fueled the fire by attempting to win public support with his emotional news conference following the Arkansas game. His comments only antagonized his boss, John David Crow.

I truly believe Crow would have waited until the end of the season before firing Metcalf if the dirt-seeking media was not dragged into the situation. The resulting negative press left Crow no choice but to act quickly. One only has to look to the Houston Oilers to see what can happen to a team when the issue is allowed to linger.

Despite my support of Crow's decision, I am saddened by the realization that the Shelby Metcalf era has come to an end. For 27 years this campus was graced by the presence of the "Dean of the Southwest Conference." He will always be a proud symbol of Texas A&M University.

However, we must look to the future. I am sure John David Crow will work hard to find the right coach who can recruit the top players in the country. (Please, not another Jackie Sherill.) Also, a new basketball facility is mandatory. I think the construction of the Shelby Metcalf Coliseum would be a nice gesture on the part of Crow.

Finally, the basketball program desperately needs increased fan support. At G. Rollie White Coliseum, it appears that less people attend a game than are in line for football tickets. Come on Aggies! With our spirit and tradition we should have the most intimidating home court in the country. This would be our first step toward gaining the exposure of a national powerhouse.

In closing, I would just like to wish Shelby Metcalf success in his future endeavors. He gave his life to Texas A&M and that should not be forgotten. Thanks, Shelby.

Jeff Reina '93

Want a scholarship? Apply!

EDITOR:

Mr. Babin, so what if you graduated in the top 20 percent of your class of 600? So what if your family is struggling financially? I graduated in the top 8 percent of my class of 860 at a predominately white high school. The minorities at my school amounted to 1.5 percent of the entire school. Most of the students (if not all) at Texas A&M graduated in the top 20 percent of their classes or they would not be here.

Furthermore, whose parents are not financially struggling? I, along with other minorities and whites on scholarship, work. Last semester I worked two jobs and still maintained my scholarship and academic standing. There are many minorities who are not on scholarship.

You have no basis to say that scholarships were given to people below you in ranking or less deserving. In ranking, I ranked above you and worked hard for my scholarship. I have many minority friends who have non-minority based scholarships. So, they too ranked above you and are more deserving.

Evidently you are not more deserving and you are bitter. If you and your sister are so deserving, then you must prove yourself just as we minorities must do. There are many scholarships, loans and grants available if you would look and apply for them. Nothing is or will be given to you on a silver platter if you don't ask for it or apply.

If you would like to be a minority and receive a scholarship, you should first try being admitted to Prairie View A&M University, Texas Southern University, Howard University or any predominately black institution. Then, if you are accepted, you can apply for minority scholarships too.

Risa R. Smith '91

A&M needs coliseum, not library

EDITOR:

We have heard so much talk about the Bush library. The Board of Regents is trying anything and everything to get the president to locate his library here at Texas A&M University. This includes naming a street after him — what an honor.

Now, let us think about something A&M needs a little more than another library: an events coliseum. An all-events center, similar to the Summit in Houston, is badly needed. Rudder Theater does not hold enough and G. Rollie White is a little out of date. So why don't we expand and build a new all purpose events center? Well, the regents first objection will be that there aren't sufficient funds. Hey, why don't we allocate some of the parking ticket revenue toward the new coliseum? Everyone knows that the new parking garage was paid for entirely by that revenue alone.

Also, there is always some wealthy alumni who would make a hefty contribution just to see his name on the side of the coliseum. The regents will also say that there is no land for the location of this coliseum. Well, that's the neat part of this plan. What about the land put aside for the Bush library? Since we will not be trying to have it here anymore, that land will surely be free for the taking.

Finally, the regents will complain about the lost revenue from tourism that the presidential library would have brought in. Well, if we don't get the library, then we will have lost the tourism already. Also, if the right "Big Name" performers and some of the SWC basketball are brought here, then the coliseum would bring in a lot more revenue than the library would. All I have to say is what better way for the regents to bring in a big name basketball coach than to offer him a bigger and better coliseum complex.

Terence M. Krolczyk '91
accompanied by 13 signatures

Have an opinion? Express it!

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. All letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald, or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

Member of
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Conference

The Battalion Editorial Board

Scot Walker, Editor
Monique Threadgill,
Managing Editor
Ellen Hobbs, Opinion Page Editor
Melissa Naumann, City Editor
Cindy McMillian, Lisa Robertson,
News Editors
Richard Tijerina, Sports Editor
Fredrick D. Joe, Art Director
Mary-Lynne Rice, Lifestyles Editor

Editorial Policy

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

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.

Cruel, unusual death penalty should be ended, not debated



Damon
Arhos
Asst. Opinion
Page Editor

Capital punishment is an issue that is the subject of many heated debates. And while I usually "lean towards the right" on issues ranging from economic policy to abortion, capital punishment shoves me in the opposite direction.

On July 2, 1976, the United States Supreme Court reinstated capital punishment in Gregg v. Georgia and four other cases announced that day. On this day, the government took it upon itself to take the lives of many human beings, the very action for which the convicted capital offender is punished.

Since the capital offender has been convicted, then he is guilty "beyond a shadow of a doubt," right? Have improvements in the criminal justice system and the many levels of appellate review available to capital defendants ensured that innocent people are not executed? An intensive study of the death penalty by Michael Radelet and Hugo Adam Bedau, experts in the study of capital punishment, researched cases of factual innocence which led to erroneous conviction. They discovered compelling evidence that since 1900, as many as 23 innocent people could have been executed, and 21 other cases in which a defendant (who was later exonerated) came within 72 hours of his death. Are we sure that everyone who sits in that chair or takes that injection has committed the crime they have been convicted of?

Most Americans who support the death penalty seem to like the idea of punishing those people who commit violent crimes. Their attitudes toward capital punishment are, at best, a symbol of this desire. There is nothing wrong with this desire. But for a society which places so much emphasis on the value of the individual and his life to advocate death as a form of punishment is purely hypocritical.

Much of the debate about capital punishment is over whether or not it is actually "cruel and unusual" Constitutionally. Where is the dividing line between punishment and torture?

Inmates on death row are submitted to what amounts to a "living death." In his book, "Condemned to Die," Robert Johnson says that inmates on death row are confined to stark, empty cells, isolated from any other human beings. There is, according to Johnson, massive deprivation of the medical,

Life imprisonment should be mandatory for all convicted capital offenders. And I don't mean spending 20 years in jail and then getting out on good behavior. Life imprisonment should mean life imprisonment without parole. Capital offenders should spend the rest of their lives repaying their debt to society, thinking about their crime.

psychological and spiritual needs that are basic to human existence.

And the executions themselves, are they "cruel and unusual?" Although authorities have attempted to modernize the execution process, there have been several accounts of prisoners suffering intense and prolonged pain. Amnesty International reported the following three in 1987: (1) a 1983 gassing in Mississippi during which the prisoner had convulsions for eight minutes and struck his head repeatedly on the pole behind him; (2) a 1983 electrocution in Alabama during which the prisoner died after 14 minutes and three charges of 1900 volts, the second

of which caused smoke and flame to erupt from his left temple and leg; (3) a 1984 lethal injection in Texas during which the prisoner moved and screamed in pain for at least 15 minutes.

But don't these murderers deserve this type of punishment for all the harm that they have done? What about the victim? Don't they deserve some retribution?

I am not refuting the fact that those people convicted of a capital offense should be punished. They should be punished to the fullest extent of the law. Where I draw the line is life imprisonment. Life imprisonment should be mandatory for all convicted capital offenders. And I don't mean spending 20 years in jail and then getting out on good behavior. Life imprisonment should mean life imprisonment without parole. Capital offenders should spend the rest of their lives repaying their debt to society, thinking about their crime.

In his book, Johnson offers a quote from Byron Eshleman, former death row chaplain for San Quentin Prison.

"Only the ritual of an execution makes it possible to endure. Without it, the condemned could not give the expected measure of cooperation and etiquette of dying. Without it, we must preside at their deaths could face the morning of each new execution day.

"Nor could you.
"No matter how you think you feel about capital punishment, no matter how you imagine you would face the legal giving or taking of life, you will meet the reality of it by holding tight to the crutch of ritual."

Damon Arhos is a senior journalism major.

Abortion fighting could end if compromise was accepted

Jesse
Spears
Reader's Opinion

In the past couple of weeks there have been an abundance of letters discussing an issue that is much more controversial than it should be: abortion.

Abortion is not a very pretty word. (This seems fitting considering the action.) There have been numerous letters both for and against it. We have read all about the issue from all points of view except one: the practical, scientific point of view.

I realize that some people believe that life begins at conception and that all abortions are murder. Some people believe that women should have complete control over their bodies and should be allowed to have abortions at any time during their pregnancy. I believe that the truth lies somewhere between these two views and if everyone would look at the facts, maybe we could reach a compromise.

I am not a biology student or a medical student, but I do read a lot. Last semester I read an article by Joan Beck of the Chicago Tribune which brought up a point that no one else has bothered to raise. I'm not sure why it has been ignored, but my guess is that it points out some problems with the beliefs of both the pro-life and pro-choice groups — so neither side wants to bring up the subject.

In the article, Beck stated a medical fact that a fetus develops both a heartbeat and brainwaves somewhere around the eighth week of pregnancy. Since these are the two main indicators that are used to determine when a person is dead, it seems like a reasonable and practical way to determine when life begins in a fetus. If the fetus has a heartbeat and brainwaves, (which are as easy to detect in a fetus as in a person), then it should be considered alive. If it does not have them then it is not alive.

I would like to point out that the fetus is made up of living tissue from the moment it is fertilized, but it is not alive in the same sense that a newborn baby is alive (or even a seven-month-old fetus). It can't think, and it certainly can't feel anything until it develops a nervous system (also around eight weeks). It is alive like your liver is alive (except that your liver probably has more sensation).

My suggestion: Allow complete access

to abortions for any woman as long as the fetus does not have both a heartbeat and brainwaves. If the fetus has brainwaves and a heartbeat, consider it alive. This would give the pregnant woman eight weeks to determine if she is pregnant and decide whether not to keep the baby. (Actually she would really have somewhere between four to seven weeks after missing a period to take a pregnancy test and make her decision.)

I hope that any person that is going to engage in sexual intercourse will be intelligent enough to use some form of birth control. However, no contraceptive is 100 percent effective in preventing unwanted pregnancy, and have no problem (morally, ethically, any other way) with a woman having an abortion after a contraceptive has failed. In a perfect world, no one should have to have an abortion, but we don't live in a perfect world, we live in the real world.

In the real world, people have sex. In the real world, women get pregnant.

In the real world, people have different opinions.

In the real world, intelligent people make compromises.

Jesse Spears is a graduate student in electrical engineering.

Adventures In Cartooning

