

# Democracy should guarantee right to truth

**T**ruth indeed has been the first casualty of the gulf war. Unfortunately, truth is not the only loss humanity will be made to suffer. Will anyone be so bold as to claim our government has disclosed all reasonable information and pictures to which it has access?

How many of us are just too pleased with the announcements that the government is starting its propaganda campaign in Iraq?

That's right. More than a week ago, U.S. military officials admitted a propaganda phase had been entered. Do we realize the propaganda necessary to "win this war" (in truth only the ignorant will declare victors) is far more important on the homefront?

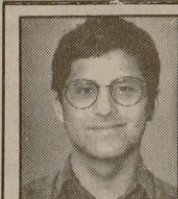
Yes, folks, this still is a democracy. Intellectuals (those whose presence ought to grace our hallowed halls) would more appropriately call our government a liberal democracy ... but none of that profanity here on campus, right?

This liberal democracy guarantees the public a right to know about the activities of its government. That is the basis of rule by the people.

Forget all the hypocrisy of policy and actions, the collective prejudice oppressing the disenfranchised and the documented inaccessibility of public office to the everyman. But, my Lord, when some people say we are not even to be accurately informed as to what our government is doing, there definitely is need for more than concern.

Perhaps Americans do not care if they are misinformed. (Many have proven they are all too willing to be actively uninformed — tuning into "Charles in Charge" whenever possible.)

One cannot help but assume this



**Andy Yung**  
Columnist

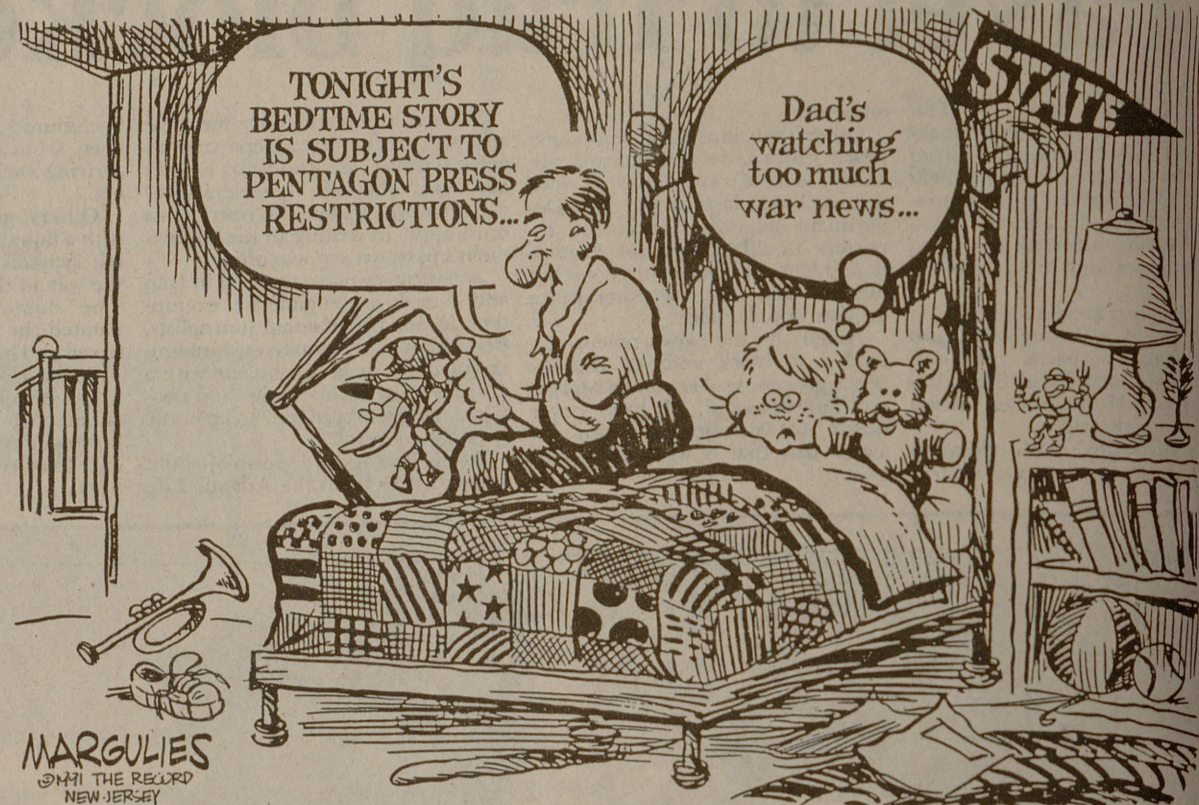
phenomenon is either because we have lost all faith in American government or we are incredibly uneasy about our nation's current actions. We hope the latter is the case, and if so we need to recognize it as such.

It's easy to accept those "video game" images of exploding military targets that American military leaders are so evidently delighted to bring to the public. But if only those films were mere video games.

No, my friends, real people's existences are being wiped out time and time again before our eyes. And the government masters that media spin so that we forget that and are instead enthusiastic to see these "successes."

We now are targeting the Iraqi National Guard. Why do you think we aren't showing the crosshairs that inevitably are being placed upon individual soldiers? The reason is that we want to be detached ... it lets us avoid feeling responsible. In other words, we cannot stand the moral consequences, the utter shock to our consciences that accompanies our tacit support for this dubious, bloody assault.

One might say, "All right, we do in fact need to shed this conception of war as sanitary and clean and start evaluating the raw facts ... but what of the young? Will this not scar their lives forever?" Yes! No child should have to live in a world of wars, but this is reality and a violent reality sanctioned



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by our revered President.

Newscasts in the past often have shown the bloody human destruction of terrorism. We regretfully agree that this is legitimate footage for it reflects reality and can be a lesson on the evils of hate (then again, so can the recent newscast on which a smiling marine said, "If we see any of those bastards ..." and then shook his M-16).

It is important to counsel our children about the terrible nature of this and all wars. But, hey people, let's not forget the Iraqi children who see this carnage in person, who live the hell that so easily could be stopped. It's heartbreaking. No, let's get some perspective.

When are we going to face our moral imperatives? When will we finally at least demand access to the truth? When will the government stop hiding behind the strawman of national security?

I know there are legitimate national security interests that are sensitive. But how do these apply, for example, to the U.S. government's prohibition of the press showing the flag-draped coffins of our honored servicemen and women?

We cannot hold our officials responsible for their actions if we are not told what they are doing. Tomorrow is too late. If I want to evaluate my position on the war, by

denying me access to the relevant truth you make me a fool.

Next year is too late. I want to know what you have done before I choose whether to re-elect you. If the government is able to cover all its mistakes and unpopular decisions in the veil of national security interests ... then someone's interests are being served — those of the government.

If we are not afforded access to reality, how else are we to hold our officials accountable for their actions? How else are we going to be able to live with ourselves?

*Andy Yung is a junior political science major.*

## EDITORIALS

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

### Step in the right direction

We applaud Gov. Ann Richards' recent appointments to the Texas A&M University and University of Texas systems' boards of regents.

Of the six appointees — three at A&M, three at UT — only one has been a regent before. The other five include A&M's first black female regent, Alison Leland, and UT's first black regent, the Rev. Zan Holmes Jr.

Members of this new group of regents, with their diverse backgrounds, bring fresh perspectives and insights to both systems.

But both boards could use more diversity — diversity only a student can bring. We believe the governor and the Legislature should support one of the two legislative bills which propose adding a non-voting, student regent to each system board.

Whether student members are allowed to vote, they certainly would give the boards, including A&M's, better knowledge of student concerns.

The addition of women and blacks to the state's largest educational institutions is a step in the right direction. The addition of students should be the next one.

*The Battalion Editorial Board*

## Am I my brother's keeper? Government money ignores needs

**A**m I my brother's keeper? That's probably the oldest question in man's recorded history. This question is so pervasive that entire books have been written on the subject.

Our society offers us contradictory advice in dealing with this issue. On one hand, we vocalize support for the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Yet, our symbols of success are not associated with altruism, but with personal acquisition. This is perhaps best captured in the statement, "God helps those who help themselves."

Donald Trump and Mother Teresa possibly best symbolize the respective extremes. Both undoubtedly are folk heroes. However, I would venture to guess that Trump's advice on success has been more widely read than Mother Teresa's books on how to succeed in life.

In light of this dichotomy, how does our contemporary society deal with the opening question, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The good news is that many, if not most, of us would respond in the affirmative. The bad news is that we have created an inanimate object to take care of the responsibility for us.

Most of us are downright cowardly when it comes to dealing with anyone who is "different." That is, anyone who looks poor, retarded, old, or in



**Tim Truesdale**  
Columnist

need of human touch.

So, we give money to government programs to take care of what we consider the "untouchable" caste, or class.

But it seems that these programs have bottomless stomachs. It's no wonder that they grow beyond human scale until they start looking like monsters; both to recipients and to those who feed the monster alike.

The welfare system has grown out of control in this country. I, for one, say we starve the monster and take back his responsibility. After all, the only reason we keep him alive is that we are scared to death of actually having contact with people who are different from us.

If you are a coward, I have a suggestion and a challenge for you. This Saturday, KAMU is sponsoring a telethon for people just like you. From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, you can go



by Post Oak Mall or call 845-KAMU to find where your skills can be put to use. More than 20 worthy organizations will be represented.

The more we sit back and let Uncle Sam take care of our brother, the more money hungry he becomes. If you dislike big government, you have an opportunity Saturday to put your money where your mouth is. I challenge you to!  
*Tim Truesdale is a graduate student in urban planning.*

### The Battalion

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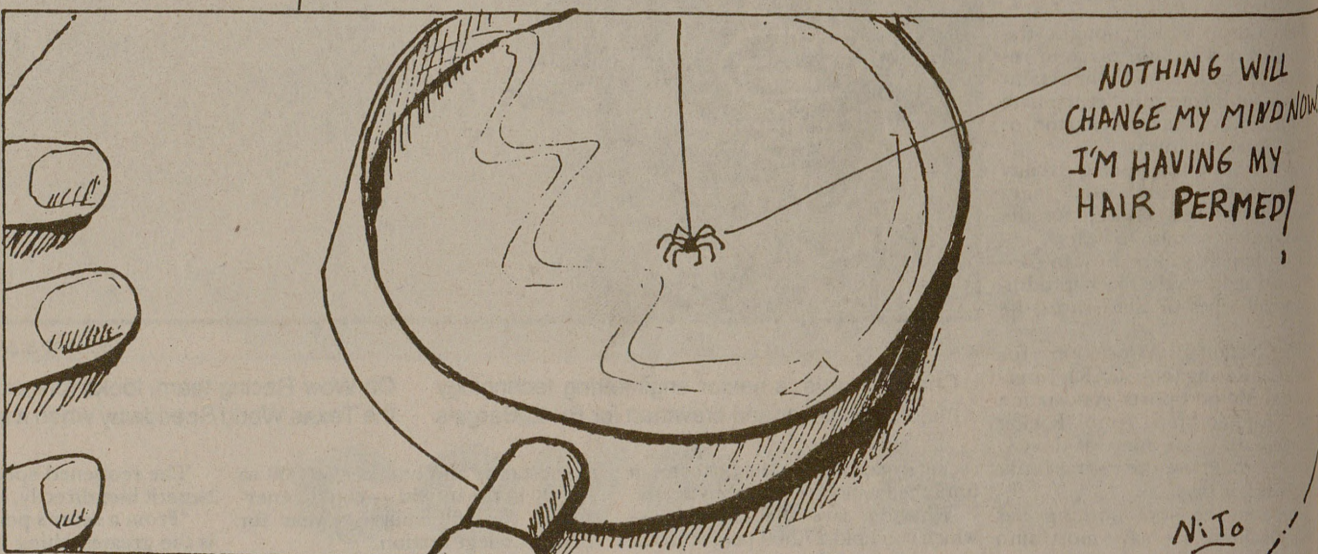
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