

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.

St. Paul law falls under Supreme Court scrutiny

The U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision to review a St. Paul, Minn. law forbidding the display of offensive symbols, such as Nazi swastikas or burning crosses, once again brings into question the extent of First Amendment rights.

Although we do not condone those symbols that represent hatred and violence in our society, the Constitution makes clear that freedom of expression should not be abridged. A restraint such as this is a clear violation of the First Amendment, and upholding a law banning offensive symbols will only cultivate the oppressive society which the law in St. Paul seeks to prevent.

Anything printed, broadcast or displayed has the potential to offend some members of society, be it a swastika, Confederate flag or Catcher In the Rye. Forcing the removal of offensive material does not solve the problem, it only denies its existence.

The Battalion in no way supports or condones the ideas expressed by such symbols, but cannot accept censorship such as the law in St. Paul promotes.

The Battalion Editorial Board

UT bans smoking on campus; maintains tobacco investment

Last week the University of Texas System Board of Regents made a bold move, passing an immediate ban on smoking at all of its 15 campuses, including its open air football stadium. The ban is probably the most comprehensive smoking ban for a system of UT's size, 140,000 students.

Unfortunately, the UT regents only went halfway though, as a 4-4 split killed a measure to require the system to divest its \$70 million in tobacco stocks.

One of the reasons some UT regents voted against divestment appears to be the sharing of invested funds with Texas A&M University, whose regents have voted opposition to divestment.

Unbelievably, A&M and UT regents still need to be reminded of the staggering death toll of tobacco, which Dr. Charles LeMaistre, president of UT's M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, told UT regents is "the most common addicting substance with a strength of addiction greater than heroin."

Despite significant decreases in cigarette consumption in the U.S., well over 400,000 Americans will die prematurely this year from tobacco-induced diseases.

However, this heavy toll is only a smoldering ember in the hellish fires of death which will scorch humanity if the U.S.-based transnational tobacco pushers continue to get their way in Asia and less-



Michael Worsham
Columnist

Jesse Helms, R-N.C., and the Reagan and Bush Administrations.

Dan Quayle told a group of North Carolina Republicans last July rather bluntly that "Tobacco exports should be expanded aggressively because Americans are smoking less."

Reagan and Bush used Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 to force the governments of Thailand, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea to open up their doors to American cigarettes.

The results were startling. Young Thais put Thai cigarettes in Marlboro boxes to gain social prestige. Airtime on Japanese television for cigarette commercials zoomed from 40th to second place.

R.J. Reynolds arranged a concert for teenagers in Taiwan (cancelled due to protests) whose only accepted admission "ticket" was to be five empty packs of Winston.

South Korean anti-smoking leaders told the American Public Health Association in 1988 that far more toxic tar and addictive nicotine was showing up in U.S. cigarettes than in Korean cigarettes.

The Thai and Taiwanese examples are part of the tobacco giants' aggressive and heartless campaigns all over the world to attract children smokers.

A Kenyan physician told the American Cancer Society in January 1990 that in East Africa from 1979 to 1989, the percentage of primary-school children smoking rose from 10 percent to 40 percent.

In May 1990, Dr. Prakrit Vateesatokil, leader of the Thai anti-smoking campaign, displayed a children's kite bearing the Winston logo to a hearing held by Senator Edward Kennedy.

In the U.S., tobacco companies target youths through movie theaters, which are frequented more by teenagers than adults, through on-screen product placement.

R.J. Reynolds pays for slick publications like Moviegoer and Movies USA, which are distributed for free in thousands of theatres, and sometimes contain ads only for cigarettes.

By not divesting, A&M and UT are winking at the tobacco companies, who stand to lose little from a ban effecting older and better educated people in the U.S.

The tobacco companies will continue to reap financial rewards from other countries forced to knuckle under to the warped trading agendas of Republican

U.S. Administrations.

The new UT policy includes programs focusing on primary and secondary schools, and the development of curriculum to enhance the health education teaching abilities of graduates of UT System teacher-preparation programs.

UT Chancellor Hans Mark claims the new policy is sufficient enough, and divestiture is unwarranted, stating "We're using our educational resources to hit tobacco companies where it hurts - in the marketplace."

However, by financing educational resources for anti-smoking efforts with tobacco profits, UT is running contradictory laps around a very deadly circle.

Any A&M regent similarly defending the tobacco portfolio (return on the stock is roughly three times the market average) would also be talking with their foot in their mouth.

A bizarre development involving one of these cancer kings, Philip Morris, was reported two weeks ago in the San Francisco Chronicle.

Philip Morris supports the political campaigns of Jesse Helms, well-known for speaking out aggressively against homosexuality.

Pressured by a boycott from homosexual rights groups angry over this support, Philip Morris announced a specific program to donate money (\$3 million is speculated) to homosexual rights advocacy groups.

Now consider the position this puts the A&M UT regents in. By keeping the tobacco stocks, the systems they represent will profit from companies responsible in whole or part for the annual death of over 400,000 Americans and 2.5 million people worldwide, and ultimately up to one tenth of the entire world's population.

In addition to these preventable deaths, the systems will be in bed, so to speak, with a company which financially supports homosexual rights groups, a position a giant step ahead of the recently reworded A&M policy which simply prohibits discrimination against homosexuals.

This situation ought to get Aggies from all political stripes to demand A&M's divestment. The A&M regents ought to listen. The 4-4 UT vote suggests that a little push for divestment from A&M is all that's needed to rid both educational systems completely of these dirty dealers of death.

If this does not convince the A&M regents to divest, then maybe the calling to make A&M "World Class" will be. Harvard University, first class by any standards, has divested.

Well, A&M regents, show us your stripes.

Michael Worsham is a graduate student in environmental engineering.



developed nations. The Seventh World Conference on Tobacco and Health held in Perth Australia in April 1989 issued an astounding report. It predicted: "Without large reductions in early smoking (starts) or smoking persistence, there will be over ten million deaths per year during the second quarter (2025-2049) of the next century."

This would mean that over 200 million of today's children and teenagers will be killed by tobacco, as will a comparable number of today's adults. These numbers equate to nearly one-tenth of the world's population dying - 500 million babies, children, and adults.

This gloomy prediction is the direct result of persistent lobbying by U.S. tobacco companies, as well as its high-placed political supporters, U.S. Senator

Veteran defends Operation Desert Storm

This letter is in reply to the column by Michael Worsham that appeared in the June 4th Battalion. Mike, in this column you accused President Bush and Gen. Schwarzkopf of deceiving the American people about the Gulf War. As a recently returned veteran of that war, I cannot let your comments and gross misrepresentation of the facts go unanswered.

I was deployed to Saudi Arabia in October of 90 and returned in April of this year. During my deployment, I served as an Army Ammunition Warrant Officer and was never more than 30 miles from the front, so I believe that I can speak with some authority about what went on there.

Mike, you implied that the U.S. started the war, set fire to the oil wells and caused the oil spill. You seem to forget that Iraq invaded Kuwait and Hussein announced his policy of environmental terrorism far in advance of the start of the war. As for the oil wells, I certainly tell you that very few, if any, were hit by our bombs. I was on the Kuwait border when the bombing started. When the ground offensive began, I moved 300 miles west to a position on the Iraqi border. During that time, there was no smoke in the day or glow at night in the direction of Kuwait. There were some isolated fires, but nothing compared to what you could see once the ground war began - even from 300 miles away. In any case, if we did start the fires, our smart bombs must have been much smarter than I ever imagined. We must have used bombs that can hit without leaving a crater, strap an explosive charge to the well head and then dispense and bury anti-personnel mines around the well. Oh yes, they can also make a map of the mine locations and give that to the senior Iraqi engineer in the area. As an ammunition technician, I have never seen any of these bombs, but if you know where I can find some I'd like to see one.

You then stated, probably correctly, that a Landsat photo showed no tanks on the Saudi border on Aug. 2. I didn't have time to check, but I'm sure the resolution

John C. McCoy
Reader's Opinion

of the Landsat is not as clear as the KH series the military uses. Also, the Iraqis are superb at desert camouflage. If it weren't for infrared imaging and powerful radars, which I don't think the Landsat has, we wouldn't have found many of their positions. Even so, we were surprised at the number of bunker complexes we never saw until the war began. In any case, the pictures we showed to King Fahad were sufficient to convince him he needed help to defend Saudi Arabia.

Then you took aim at the Patriot missile and smart bombs saying they didn't work. Didn't you do any research at all before you wrote this column? The Patriot has a very small warhead designed to shoot down planes, but it was found that its guidance system could intercept slow missiles like the Scud. Since the Scud are quite large, the Patriots normally hit the fuel tanks and knock off the warhead, which is equipped with a PD (point detonating) fuse and will explode when it hits the ground. Since Saudi Arabia is mostly empty desert, it is quite sufficient to hit the Scud far enough away from its target so the warhead falls short.

Unfortunately, that is not the case in Israel so the Patriot was not nearly as effective. I had quite a few friends in Dhahranan who were very thankful the Patriot was there. As for the smart bombs, I'd like to know where you got your information for the failure rate. I think you're quoting the mission failure rate overall, including those missions that had to turn around due to weather and mechanical failures.

You also made several comments about the present situation in Kuwait

and Iraq. You conveniently forget that 40,000 civilians disappeared from Kuwait during the occupation, along with most of the infrastructure. You also seem to ignore the conduct of the Iraqi soldiers during the occupation.

Now, it's payback time as far as the Kuwaitis are concerned. Would you do any less if you were in their shoes? In this same light, you accuse the United States of not allowing humanitarian aid to get through to Iraq, so you want to lift all sanctions. Don't you know that the sanctions will allow aid, but only under Red Cross or Red Crescent supervision, which the Iraqi government has refused to allow?

Don't you realize that Hussein would set about re-arming as soon as possible if the sanctions were lifted? He would then be free, once again, to act with the same brutality he has already demonstrated against his own people as well as his neighbors.

You then ask that the United States lead the effort to put out the oil well fires. Aren't you aware that the vast majority of the world's oil field fire fighting equipment is already deployed there and the fires are being put out? Mike, you need to read the papers you're so good at quoting.

In closing, it is obvious to me that you have a lot to learn about the world we live in. You cannot pick and choose to only believe or accept those ideas that you agree with, nor can you take isolated "facts" out of context and tout them as the whole story.

The Middle East is one of the most complicated areas in the world and our involvement there is one of the most difficult foreign policy affairs in our history. In the future, I hope you take the time to look at all points and develop an objective view of the world. By the way, if people like you supported nuclear power we wouldn't need to depend on foreign oil or fight wars to protect it.

John C. McCoy is a senior.

It's my statement on harassment and discrimination, and it will say what I want it to, because I'm the president. It's mine, all mine.

Is this thing full yet?

JUNGO BARNES

MAIL CALL

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers and welcomes all letters to the editor. Please include name, classification, address and phone number on all letters. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for style and length. Because of limited space, shorter letters have a better chance of appearing. There is, however, no guarantee letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

World Class defined improperly

EDITOR:

This letter is in reply to Tim Truesdale's recent article regarding Texas A&M's "World Class Status".

In his article, Mr. Truesdale suggests that the notion of World Class Status lacks a clear definition and tends to be a vulnerable topic of anyone or group critical of A&M's various policies.

Truesdale continued to imply in a somewhat confused manner that such persons or organizations are equating a perfect university with "World Class Status". A perfect university according to Truesdale being one free of every "racist" and one definitely with "toilet paper" in the sixth floor library restrooms. Truesdale closed his article with the suggestion that what those critics of A&M's status want is a truly "liberal" institution, whatever that might imply?

With this in mind, three very important factors need to be pointed out in regard to Truesdale's commentary.

First and foremost, it is Texas A&M that presents to this nation and the world as a "World Class Institution," not necessarily the persons or organizations within it. Surely this is a fact evident to anyone that has chosen to attend this University and one clearly reflected in the pamphlets and rhetoric A&M provides the public.

Second, within the realm of institutions of "higher education," the goal is hopefully that of offering resources and faculty of the highest quality in order to more fully emancipate both the human mind and spirit. This however necessitates an accepting attitude regarding personal and professional ideological diversity both among the faculty and the student body they will instruct. I feel it is also safe to state that universities who purport themselves of "World Class Status" recognize this goal and responsibility but I do not imply that all pursue it. It also should be stated that diversity among faculty and students is another thing that Texas A&M states that it is proud of and encourages.

Finally it is not clear why Mr. Truesdale wants to equate what I would like to label "open mindedness" with his somewhat ambiguous use of the term "liberal." The use of this term I have come to realize is evidently another one of the traditions at A&M and proves to be a handy way of not addressing a problem.

In closing, I encourage Truesdale not to conclude that the scarcity of a concise definition or model or what a "World Class Status" is by no means suggests that it lacks any measure. To do so would be similar to concluding that if one can't give a simple definition of what racism is then no such thing exists.

Mark George
Graduate Student