

The Battalion Editorial Board

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The following opinions are a consensus of The Battalion opinion staff and senior editors.



Artistic welfare

Stop NEA grants to individuals

The recent firing of the director of the National Endowment for the Arts brings up the question of exactly what purpose this organization serves.

Many Americans argue that they do not want their tax money subsidizing artists whose work they do not even appreciate. Likewise, artists protest that taking away funding for their work is a form of censorship.

The federal government should most certainly allow grants for such things as museums, ballet companies, symphonies and the like. These are organizations providing a public service on a large scale.

The individual artist does not fit the same description as a museum or ballet company, and not providing funding for any one artist is no more a form of censorship than not awarding a federal grant to a Battalion columnist for writing a column.

Instead of worrying about the funding of these individuals, the NEA should be more concerned with making the arts more available to people.

Much of the money now allocated

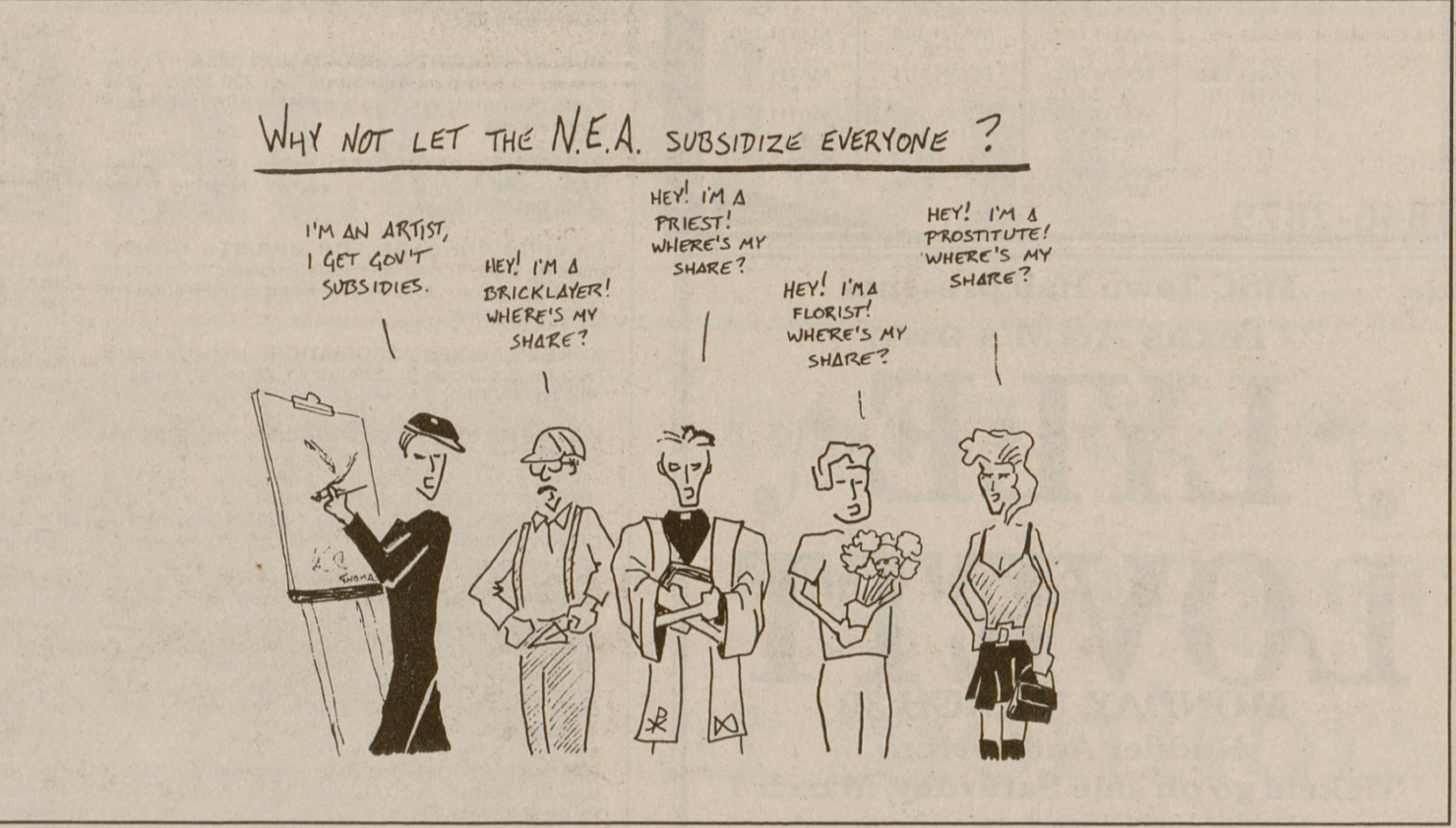
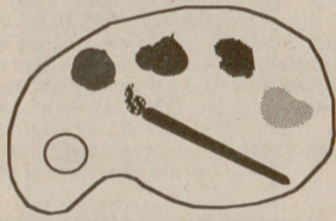
to museums, symphonies, etc., helps keep ticket prices down. This is as it should be.

Also, there are many private foundations that need help in funding. The NEA's leadership make sure they have to funds necessary to keep less-mainstream artists from floundering. But the foundations should have the final decision on what art is funded.

The existing panel that wields ultimate control of NEA funding consists of artists and those who have a place in the art world. It is very probable that in response to the cries of angry citizens who do not approve of the art their tax money is funding, our government will replace the existing panel with politicians who feel they can adequately represent the people.

Having the same politicians who balance our budget in such a position would do nothing to alleviate the controversy at hand.

The NEA should not be disbanded, but it should refrain from the subsidizing of individuals. No other alternative will completely satisfy the problem at hand.



Gig voter apathy

If students want candidates to vote for, they first have to vote

Howdy, Ags! I've gotta little story for ya! (Whoop!) Well, Ags, back in 'Ol Army days Roc and Rochelle fell asleep in a boat while at Mardi Gras. (Whoop!) When they woke up, they were on a deserted, uncharted island (Whoop!) And they were ALL alone, Army! (Whoop!) Well, pretty soon they got rescued. (Whoop!) But instead of leaving, they set up their own country, called Agland. (Whoop!) It was a democracy, Ags, everyone could vote! (Whoop!) People came from around the world to live there.

Before you knew it, people became citizens and everyone voted! (Whoop!) Everything was going great, Army! Then, after a while, the new wore off and people stopped voting, in Agland. (Hiss!) Not even half the people bothered to vote, they were just too darn busy. (Hiss!) The country started having some problems and everyone blamed President Roc. (Hiss!)

Then along came the election year. Roc was up against some bad bull people, Ags! (Hiss!). They were T. Sip, B. Toad, S. Pony and R. Owl (Hiss! Bad Bull!). That's right, Army, BAD BULL is right!

And they were all complaining about how bad things were and wanted President Roc to know about it. So a lot of people decided not to vote for him, that way he'd do a better job. (Hiss!) After all, they figured everyone else would vote for him. (Hiss!)

And guess what, Army, since only about forty percent of the people voted, and just about all of them thought like that, President Roc lost! (Hiss!) Even worse, Agland was now run by President T. Sip! (Hiss! Bad bull!)

Then you know what happened, Ags? (What?) Everyone started complaining. And I mean everyone, even those who didn't vote. No one could believe that T. Sip had been elected. He was a racist, inbreed, space cadet, reactionary JERK! (Hiss!)

Agland went to hell in a handbasket faster than a greased pig! (Hiss!)

Now everyone wanted Roc back, but they were stuck with dang-old T. Sip for four years. Four hard years, Army. (Hiss!) Things got really bad, Ags. Too bad to say in polite company! (Hiss!)

But, everyone learned their lesson and the next election came around. This time, everyone found out about the people running, and everyone—I mean everyone—voted! (Whoop!) And guess what, Army? (What?) Agland had President Roc again and everything got better and better! (Whoop!)

safety of our homes. But we do not care enough to get up, research the candidates, and go vote.

If you do not have the gumption to go and vote, you really do not have any business complaining about anything. You had your chance to voice your opinion when it matters most, you blew it, so do not waste my time with your armchair commentary.

Perhaps the scariest thing this time around is the I'm-mad-at-George-so-I'm-gonna-vote-for-someone-else-to-make-a-point mentality. Oh, sure, it's not a new thing. But it is made all the more poignant by who Bush's competition is in the primary— Pat Buchanan and David Duke. One is a racist slime with Adolf Hitler underroos, but which is which? You can't tell the professional racist from the hobbyist without a degree in fine print reading. If you are planning on voting for one of them on the basis of telling G.H.W. Bush you are upset with him, you had better be prepared to have one of them win.

My argumentation and composition class taught me to always have an "urge to action" at the end of a paper. Well, here is mine: This weekend, use an hour or two of the time you were planning on using at the Chicken or sleeping or playing football to find out where each of the candidates in both parties stand on various issues. Even our library has that kind of stuff. Find a candidate with whom you most agree. Then, on Tuesday, go to the MSC or wherever your voting precinct is, and vote in that candidates' primary.

I close in the manner which I started. Beat the ever-livin', ever-lovin', Fightin' Texas Aggie Band (Whoop!), Fightin' Texas Aggie 12th Man (Whoop), Fightin' Texas Aggie Battalion (Whoop), Fightin' Texas Aggie Class of '92 HELL outta voter apathy!

Sullivan is a senior English major



Michael Quinn Sullivan

Remember Kuwait

U.S. has interest in democracy there

With the recent first anniversary celebration commemorating the end of the Gulf War, America's attention has once again been shifted to Kuwait.

The Kuwaiti government and its leaders are now making use of the freedom by holding elections for the first time since the country's parliament was suspended in 1968.

At a National Day rally held last week in Kuwait, the crown prince assured thousands of Kuwaitis that communication among the monarchy and the Kuwaiti government could solve the country's problems.

He said that the monarchy opposes a "democracy that destroys."

It is the responsibility of other countries that have interests in Kuwait, such as the United States, to make sure the Kuwaiti monarch fulfills his pledge. If they do not, they will have thrown away one of the reasons they fought to liberate the

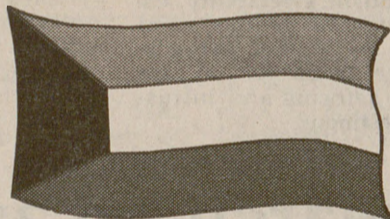
emirate one year ago.

Before the emirate can gain full appreciation of its freedom and develop a cooperative government, a properly elected government must be reinstated. The publicizing of the elections will improve the global standing of the country.

The publicizing of democratic elections should be taken more seriously by other nations and by leaders around the world. The Bush administration should take a supportive and vocal role in supporting the national elections in Kuwait.

It owes it to our troops who fought in the war to liberate Kuwait.

It is important that Bush support the country in their democratic reforms to show other nations that not only does Kuwait have strong support behind them, but also that it is attempting to regain its status in the world.



Mail Call

Gays sometimes must use violence

The recent editorial on gay protest (Feb. 28) raises some valid concerns about the actions of ACT UP and Queer Nation. They are indeed loud, crass, disruptive, disrespectful, destructive and sometimes violent, and they make many moderate gays and lesbians cringe over the negative attention that they draw to our community. However, you cannot expect a blanket condemnation of ACT UP and Queer Nation from us, because this is not the simple and obvious moral choice that you represent in your editorial.

For example, you mentioned that ACT UP and Queer Nation plan acts of civil-disobedience at the Republican Convention in Houston. However, you did not explain that they are conducting this action because the administrations of Ronald Reagan and George Bush have not responded promptly and adequately to the AIDS crisis and need constant prodding to tackle this crisis. The case of the

Food and Drug Administration illustrates this problem well. In the early days of the epidemic, AIDS activist, doctors, scientists, and pharmaceutical companies were urging the FDA to revise its protocols on the testing and availability of new and experimental drugs for the treatment of AIDS. However, the FDA bureaucracy was slow to react, and people with Human Immunodeficiency Virus and AIDS-related diseases were access to drugs which may have prolonged or improved the quality of their life, or at the least contributed towards research to find such drugs. ACT UP helped raise public awareness of this problem by engaging in highly media-visible acts of civil disobedience, which I remind you is a traditional form of protests in this country. No one was killed in these actions, although a few heads (gay and lesbian ones) were busted and some government offices were disrupted and trashed during die-ins (ACT UP's version of a sit-in), but the resultant public attention and pressure forced the FDA to listen and respond to the moderate AIDS activists and their professional allies. Today, we have revised FDA regulations which allow for faster testing and approval of new drugs to fight AIDS (and other diseases such as cancer), more liberal and

inclusive definitions of HIV, greater access to clinical trials of experimental drugs and therapies and the like.

So you see, ACT UP and Queer Nation pose a complex moral problem for gays (and straights, since they address issues that affect them), because they require us to weigh their tactics and public image against their purposes and motivation. This problem has been argued in the gay and lesbian community for a long time, and we are split over it. Some gays and lesbian people prefer to work peacefully through legislatures, courts, schools, business, and institutions to advance the cause of gay and lesbian civil rights, and they deplore the radical and confrontational approach of ACT UP and Queer Nation as obnoxious and detrimental to that cause. However, there are also some gays and lesbians who feel that there may be times when it is necessary to engage in civil disobedience to catch the attention of a recalcitrant government, or to fight for your beliefs and freedoms, and they say "right on!" to our more radical brothers and sisters.

Jim Mazullo
Faculty Adviser,
Gay & Lesbian Student Services

Have an opinion? Express it!

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers.

All letters are welcome. Letters must be signed and must include classification, address and a daytime phone number for verification purposes. They should be 250 words or less. Anonymous letters will not be published.

The Battalion reserves the right to edit all letters for length, style and accuracy. There is no guarantee the letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 013 Reed McDonald, sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111 or can be faxed to 845-2647.