

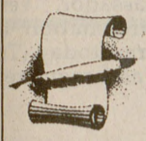
The Battalion Editorial Board

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



Correct reversal

Abortion gag rule falls prey to politics

The Bush administration Friday said that doctors in federally financed family planning clinics may give limited advice on abortions to patients, though nurses and counselors may not.

The decision comes after a rule set forth four years ago that banned abortion counseling in federally-funded family clinics but was never fully enforced because of legal challenges and vague enforcement guidelines.

The Health and Human Services Department issued guidelines to its regional offices Friday noting this important exception to the counseling ban.

Though the new provision may seem like a monumental clearing in abortion politics, pro-choice advocates and Democrats in Congress are not fooled.

"The exemption for doctors is a clever way of making it look like some fundamental change has occurred as a sop to the moderates in the Republican Party," Rep. Les AuCoin, D-Ore, said.

The exemption appears to be a ploy by the Bush administration to straddle the fence on the abortion issue by loosening the restraints on abortion

clinics while assuring the anti-abortion forces that the president still is firmly on their side.

And this is all just in time for the upcoming election.

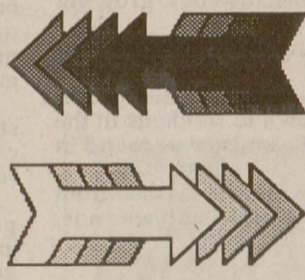
The attempt to place an exemption on doctors has, in fact, done nothing to loosen the restraints on abortion clinics.

In taking a more in-depth view of the whole situation in federally-funded family planning clinics, it is inherently clear that very few of the health care officials that counsel low-income women in these clinics are doctors. Those who counsel are counselors and nurses and by the provisions in this rule.

They are still gagged.

According to the rules, nurses and counselors must wait until the patients ask about abortion, politely tell them that they do not give information about abortion, and refer them to a prenatal or full service clinic that does not do abortions as its primary work.

This rule has done nothing to change anyone's situation and can be looked at as another wasteful pseudo-decision made by election-year candidates.



Women's history

Month offers chance to remember successes

In seven days, Women's History Month draws to an end, so time remains to celebrate the women who have put us where we are today — as individuals, as communities, as nations and as a world.

Celebrate the professors who educate us daily. Celebrate the factory workers who keep this country running 24 hours a day. Celebrate the doctors who ensure our health and well-being. Celebrate the lawyers who defend our liberty and protect our rights. Celebrate the waitress in the all-night diners who serves us with a shining smile. Celebrate the business women who pitch the battles in the skyscrapers and office buildings and still earn only 69 cents for every dollar that their male counterparts make.

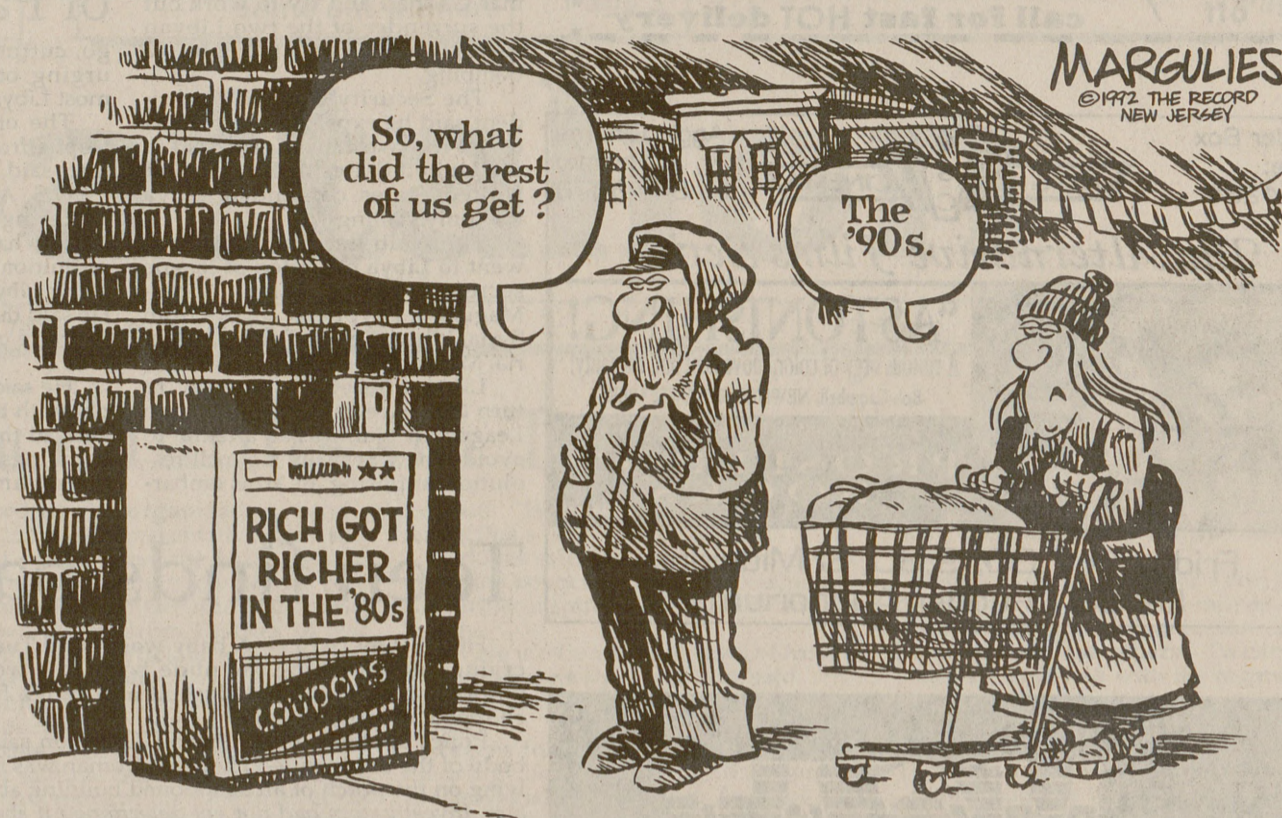
Celebrate the homemakers who log the miles for the Parent-Teacher Associations, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts and the ballet lessons. Celebrate the politicians and the stateswomen who make our nation's laws and represent the people. Celebrate the military women and corps women who have been in the thick of the battles since before the Revolutionary War. Celebrate those courageous women

who have boldly gone where no man had gone before.

Celebrate Rosa Parks who ignited the civil rights movement. Celebrate Margaret Sanger who strove to educate women about health care and birth control. Celebrate Alice Walker, Mary Shelley, Leslie Marmon Silko and the wonderful women writers who told us their stories — slices of life that few of us will ever see. Celebrate Valentina Tereshkova who was the first woman in space. Celebrate Rosalind Franklin who co-discovered DNA. Celebrate the women who invented the ice cream cone and the still.

And remember the women in our daily lives: the grandmothers who share their stories of days gone by, the sisters who share our lives, the friends who provide us with laughter and share in our tears. Remember your mother, lying on her back in a delivery room listening to the first cry you ever made.

For all of the women who keep this world spinning, we celebrate Women's History Month. The parade of names is long and famous. For all the women who keep this world turning, celebrate yourselves.



Spring break visions

Unexpected sights on trip trigger thoughts of deeper meanings

My spring break took forever to get here and passed with shocking speed. Besides being an especially wonderful experience, it taught me something. Everything, you see, has the capacity to teach. Whether we learn is our option. The lessons covered over my week's escape ranged from life, death and history to Dixieland bands.



Toni Garrard

I, like thousands of my fellow students, spent some time on the beach. There were no drunken festivities or MTV cameras on Neptune Beach, Florida. Few people littered the stretch of coast and a brisk wind made shorts and a sweater preferable to a bikini and sun tan lotion. I loved it.

Walking along the edge of the incoming tide, something struck me about the ocean. Here would be the cleaned spine of some unfortunate fish and there the beautiful colors of a sunrise shell. The bluish-red claw of a crab rushed forward to meet the white simplicity of a sand dollar. Life and death.

Those ocean waters were simply discarding the carnage of nature's ferocity. Bones, fins, claws, bizarre-looking jelly fish were all spit up out of the depths and onto the land next to the thousands of beautiful shells that ran in great strips across the white sand.

The sight stopped me dead as I ran along the surf. There was meaning in this sight. All the glittering, twisting, porous, glassy shells were offered up by the great waters as compensation for what was taken. They were gifts to us—you and me. "I take; therefore, I give," was the message that sprang forth from the tide.

Farther south of Neptune Beach in St. Augustine, there is a great shell-stone castillon that stands proudly on the face of the ocean. It is the closest

thing I have seen in this country to the lonely castles dotting the hillsides of Ireland. The nations of Spain, Great Britain and America all fought at one time or another for the privilege of flying their flags atop the castillon. It takes \$1 to get in today.

Walking through the old rooms of the castillon is both awe-inspiring and terrifying. One may easily imagine a group of restless 18th century soldiers manning their posts as they keep a wary eye on the water's horizon. It was only yesterday that the footsteps heard across the courtyard were ones of purpose and not idle curiosity.

There are dungeons in this place. They are large, dark, damp, smelly rooms with little light and no mercy. Seeing them took some of the grandeur out of history.

Just as they are today, men were cruel to each other then. Someone actually spent part if not the last of their life huddled against that dungeon wall—a dungeon wall only a few feet from the chapel. History may offer the greatest lessons for the future of mankind, but we seldom ever learn.

Eventually, I left the ocean for the more hectic reality of New Orleans. Here is a city that has the allure of both old-time grandeur and present day "slime" to use the word of an established New Orleans resident.

Just outside all the glitter and decadence, there is a fascinating place called Metairie Cemetery. It is a bit more subdued than the French Quarter and much more grand. You see, New Orleans is just below sea level, and the dead must be buried aboveground—usually in mausoleums.

This particular cemetery is the most famous of its kinds and for good reason. There are acres of marble and granite mausoleums that rise up to the sky in almost every form of architecture known to this world. Giant pillars support statues ranging from the Virgin Mary to Athena. Everywhere there are angels whose eyes watch the movement below.

I have never encountered in one

place such absolute grace of architecture in so fine a collection.

All this leads me to a question for which I simply can find no answer. Is all of it in celebration or in defiance of death?

I feel quite sure that those encased behind the granite tombs are not currently enjoying the greatness of their homes. Yet, I know that the expense, the effort, the thought that went into the construction of those mausoleums is not wasted. Even if they were built for vanity, something higher is the result. It is the only cemetery I have ever been in that not only demanded respect of me but joy. There is a dance between life and death that I have never seen better illustrated than in that place.

Of course, there are other things in New Orleans than cemeteries. The French Quarter is pretty dang neat. Forget Bourbon Street. Have you watched the people there?

After four hours of doing the basic tourist thing (something I always try to avoid), I thought I had taken in every aspect of its culture. Then a sound caught my ear from somewhere down the street. Tuba, trumpet and drum blended together in a sound that until then I had only heard in films, a Dixieland band! Unless you have seen one in living color, you have missed one of the greatest aspects of the joy in music.

Old, jolly-faced black men were swinging their bodies in rhythm with the music. The bandleader was dressed in a worn, somber looking suit with an upturned top hat in hand; dollar bills peaked over the top.

Best of all were the elderly men and women who trailed along immediately behind the band. Their eyes were half closed, hands upturned and waving back and forth, hips rocking side to side, a smile across their face. Forget about the dance of life and death in this case. Here was solely the dance of life. I loved it.

Garrard is a sophomore speech communications major

Mail Call

Man must solve his own problems

Regarding Tanya William's article on March 13 stating that only God can solve man's problems. I would have to disagree. Only man can solve man's problems. He cannot leave it to others to pick up after him or expect anyone to do so. Man, by his own act, creates his own problems, and it is up to him to solve it.

The main fallacy in your article, Tanya, is the belief that some higher order is looking after us and that that same "father figure" will take care of us when we go astray. We cannot expect or hope for divine intervention. Even Martin Luther King Jr., whom you quoted, recognized such. Rather than wait for God to solve the evils of racism, he went out and actively participated to end it. His work in civil rights was a clear, resounding message that he wan't going to wait for change. He was going to make it. In his lifetime, he rigorously sought to expose the injustices in our

society, to open the eyes of the establishment. He knew that before there could be a change in civil rights for greater equality among men, there had to be a change in civil rights for greater equality among men, there had to be a change in their hearts or all the laws in the world would not have mattered. Martin Luther King Jr. was not one to accept the status quo, and neither should you.

Tanya, if you don't like something about our society today, do something about it. Don't fall into the trap that what you do won't make a difference. It does. It affects us in ways no one can fully comprehend. All of life is a web interconnected. What affects one affects us all. (Pardon to whomever I am quoting. I know not your name.) Break the chains that bind you, you are not helpless. No one is. Everybody can effect change.

We have to grow up, we are not children. As adults we have responsibilities and must accept the consequences of our actions. All the ills in our society are man made, and so are the solutions.

This article is not a call to arms. It is a redemption of faith, a return to the belief that one person can make a difference. Open your mind,

see the truth within. We can change the world and make it better. Before that can happen though, we must recognize our ability to do so. I leave you with that thought, peace.

Trung-tin Q. Nguyen.
Class of '95

Return baseballs to Darlings

There seem to be two major epidemics running rampant through Olsen Field these days. The first is the paper airplane problem that has spread at an alarming rate. This has already been addressed, so I won't get into this one. But the other disease contaminating the sacred halls of Olsen is one that took much longer to strengthen. I am talking about the problem of giving foul balls back to the Diamond Darlings.

It not only looks bad when the announcer has to ask the fans not to throw things on the field but also when he had to "remind" the fans two to three (and sometimes four) times a game to

"please return the foul balls to the Diamond Darlings. Thank you." C'mon Ags, there's a baseball game going on. How about giving the balls back to the Darlings so they can carry on with their other responsibilities and everyone can go back to enjoying another Aggie baseball game.

Mark W. Leddy
Class of '92

Have an opinion? Express it!

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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.