

The Battalion Editorial Board

DOUGLAS PILS, Editor in Chief

BRIDGET HARROW, Managing Editor
BRIAN BONEY, Opinion Editor
JASON MORRIS, Night News Editor
MORGAN JUDAY, Night News Editor
MACK HARRISON, City Editor
KARL STOLLEIS, Photo Editor
SCOTT WUDEL, Sports Editor
ROB NEWBERRY, Lifestyles Editor

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

Price of PC

Politically correct dogma binds expression

Political correctness is an ideology which has touched college campuses across the United States, particularly large universities such as Texas A&M. The ideas behind PC have sparked a major controversy between several competing groups. One of the sources of controversy lies in the definition of what PC actually is.

The original idea behind the PC movement was to put an end to harassment and discrimination, especially in the press, in speech and in the classroom. Although this idea fundamentally has good intentions, its effects are more often negative. Unfortunately, PC is often carried to such an extreme that its supporters discriminate against those who have political views different from their own, thus defeating their own purpose.

Students must not be forced to use politically correct words as part of their vocabulary. Doing this allows people to be coerced into incorporating PC into their lives against their own wishes.

Freedom of speech should be given a higher priority than the desires of

certain individuals in society. No political movement should be allowed to infringe on the rights of citizens. Students must take a stand to ensure that the PC movement does not gain enough support to do this.

In its most recent session, the Student Senate passed a "Free Speech" bill as a resolution against the political correctness movement. The resolution included a new clause in the University Rules and Regulations handbook aimed to prevent harassment and intimidation in the classroom based on political views.

This action is an important step in the right direction of protecting and promoting freedom of speech for all students.

With the introduction of the bill, A&M has taken the first step in declaring that the student body should not and will not stand for harassment or discriminatory behavior from any university employee, student organization or individual. But this is not enough. The students must take more action to ensure that PC does not obstruct our basic freedoms of speech and the press.

Murder outrage

Only shocking crimes stir numb society

Until recently, people have been able to settle into comfortable detachment in the face of the constant reality of violent crime. However, every once in a while an incident occurs which can still shake everyone up.

Last week, the story of a bloodied and bruised 1-year-old girl caught the attention of our nation. The child was found clinging to the body of her mother whose throat had been slashed open with a broken bottle and dumped outside a vacant building.

"I feel real sorry for her," said Dr. Erin Endom, a doctor in the emergency room of Texas Children's Hospital. "She's going to have a hard road to go. She spent a whole night in the cold with her mother's dead body."

The child suffered from exposure, bruises and mental trauma.

Unfortunately, it took such an event to elicit actual outrage among the majority of our citizenry.

Even those who regularly work in situations dealing with the abused and injured were moved by the girl's plight.

"I felt a lot of anger," said Houston Fire Department Capt. Roger Lieder.

"Who could've left a little baby out there in the middle of the night like that?"

Our society has become so inundated by the now commonplace news stories of mass murders, bizarre crimes of passion and senseless death that it takes an infant child abandoned alongside her slain mother to anger us profoundly.

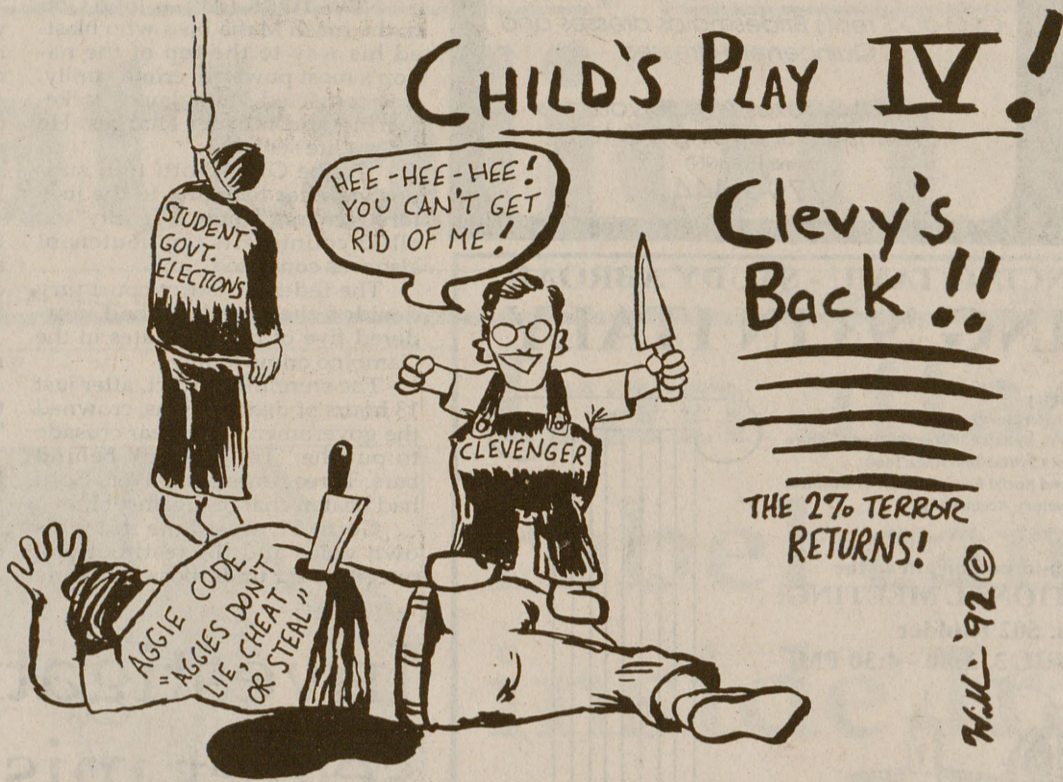
Movies, television shows and even children's cartoons are now so saturated with violence that our society as a whole has become desensitized to the loss of human life.

We seem to have lost touch with the reality that a murder victim is more than just another statistic. The report of a murder always means that someone has lost a mother, father, sister, brother or friend.

Homicide is a crime that extends beyond the one lost life and into the lives of everyone who cared about the victim.

Perhaps, this tragedy will serve as an alarm for our elected officials, calling them to take real action against crime.

Only then can something good come of something so thoroughly bad.



Crimes of ignorance

Unreasoning hatred is truth behind false and misleading labels

A gay banker is beaten and stabbed to death as he leaves a Montrose-area nightclub. A Vietnamese boy dies after a beating by skinheads. A black Houston Marine is slain after his alleged attackers were heard saying they wanted to '(expletive) with some niggers'.

That passage, taken from a Houston newspaper, was featured in an article about hate crimes, crimes that have become more frequent and widespread in both Houston and the nation everyday.

The increase of hate crimes in the last year has been blamed on everything from the nation's economic problems to a lack of moral leadership or the break-up of the family to racial tensions. But unfortunately, people have failed to realize that these hate crimes are just that, "hate" crimes, caused by nothing more than hate.

The Houston Police Department and other law enforcement agencies have now found it necessary to define hate crimes as a criminal offense committed against a person or property in which the crime is motivated by the offender's bias. The bias can be against a certain race, religion, ethnic or national origin, or even a person's sexual preference. But in argument against their

seemingly simple definition, I propose another definition for them to look up: hate.

Webster's Dictionary simply defines hate as "to dislike greatly; to have a great or extreme aversion to; to detest"; a very simple and to the point definition that also defines all of the crimes listed earlier.

Granted, yes, race and ethnicity might have roles in some of the hate crimes committed, it is important to realize that hate is hate, and the fact that law enforcement agencies want to place names and definitions on crimes is not going to change anything. To mock a slogan whose product name escapes me at this time, "Hate by any other name is all the same."

I think it is important to point out here that I am in no way showing any bias to any racial group or encouraging any sexual orientation. Instead, I am pointing out that by wasting time trying to label hate and base it on a specific reason, our society as a whole is only allowing more hate to grow and raise its ugly head even more frequently.

To focus more on excuses given by police and others labeling these "hate" crimes again I say race and ethnicity play roles in such senseless crimes, for many in this country have yet to get past the same ignorant values and views held in the '60s by groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. I can say ignorant because alleged needless attacks on certain races by people that claim to be Christians can be nothing but hate driven by ignorance.

If I'm not mistaken, I John 4:20 does say "If a man says, I love God,

and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

It's hard for me to accept any "hate" crime. Those facilitated by race prejudice are believable, but not understood nor accepted. But those "hate" crimes said to be based on the economy are all but sensible to me. Those that hide under such excuses provided by labels placed by our society and enforcement agencies can be fueled by nothing but fear and cowardice.

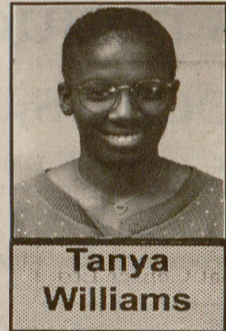
I feel that there is no way someone can base their economic problems on any certain race or person, but rather the attitude of resentment should be aimed toward our government or the individual; himself or herself. I think it is an attempt to forge problems of an individual onto someone else which is not acceptable.

The culprits of these crimes would probably like to do nothing more than attack the government in a violent manner, but because that will automatically result in a major prison sentence, they would rather attack someone whose death can be easily looked over by law enforcement as it most often is.

It is time for society to stop allowing people to hide behind such labels and excuses and start teaching and educating these ignorant criminals about the sensitivities and preferences of all people.

Hopefully, by this enlightenment, such labels and excuses for these "hate" crimes can be demolished.

Williams is a sophomore journalism major



Tanya Williams

Mail Call

Pain of rape lingers a lifetime

Brian Boney's tribute to Cindy truly touches and saddens the heart. As anyone who has a close relationship with a rape victim, Brian felt a smattering of the indescribable pain Cindy will have to deal with the rest of her life. As a victim of rape myself, I cringed as I read and recognized the all-too-familiar scenario of date rape and the all-too-familiar emotional disaster that follows.

I am the one woman in the three who will at one time be a victim of a sexual assault. I am the one woman in 10 who reported the crime and pressed charges. That was in October of 1990. The case has yet to go to trial.

When the court date finally arrives and my assailant stands as the jury reads the verdict, chances are, we'll hear a resounding not guilty. Even if by some miracle, he is confronted with a charge of guilty, the stiffest sentence he faces for this second-degree felony is a 10-year probation term. He won't go to jail and he won't have to suffer the consequences for an action — a crime — he chose to commit.

Cindy knows who suffers the consequences, I know who suffers the consequences... every rape victim knows. We see his face every day, etched in our minds. We hear our tortured "no's" and his pathetic "you wanted it." We smell the sweat and the fear. We taste the bile in the back of our throats. We feel the penetration, the helplessness, the horrible press of his body. These are things we re-experience every day. I could go

on and on.

Do we ever really feel clean again? Is there a night we don't wake up screaming? Is there a man anywhere who is not now a suspect? I remember so well. He looked so nice, so charming; the clean-cut preppie young man you'd bring home to mom.

So many times the emotional baggage we carry becomes too much to bear. It makes us old and tired and not quite whole. There's a part of me that was murdered on that night; part of me that lays there, broken on the lawn and will never get up. The rest of me is many times too tired to fight the system and the people who treat the crime with the ignorance and apathy it doesn't deserve.

I want to make people really see and understand the sad realities of rape. I'm sure Brian Boney had some notion.

It can happen to you, your girlfriend, your sister or your best friend. She is not just a statistic. Learn the facts and listen to your heart.

Stephanie Steiner
Class of '92

Batt endorsement deserves praise

I would like to applaud The Battalion's stance on candidate endorsement. From their stance in

the letter printed the same day, Cody Don Burke and Dahna Hall of the Academic Affairs Committee obviously don't understand the purpose of candidate endorsements by the media.

Endorsements are a holdover from earlier days of the media when many readers were largely illiterate and, in practice, unable to research their own educated opinions. But, their neighbors would be more than happy to gossip about who the local paper felt they should vote for. By and large, they did.

Now, the practice is continued as an addition to the mass of information available on candidates. The more we know about someone, the more we want to know about them. Editorial boards present a group opinion of the assessment of a candidate whom they have interviewed at length. They generally interview any candidate who asks for them to hear his position.

How efficient would it be for every person in America to interview at length each and every candidate for each and every election they are eligible to participate in?

I personally, to my own chagrin, don't have enough time to vote in all the elections I can participate in, let alone form educated opinions on all the candidates.

Of course, no one is going to run straight to the polls and vote for some random candidate just because some journalist says the guy would do a bang-up job. I would, however, add the paper's endorsement to my own bank of knowledge about that candidate.

J.A. Folker
Class of '91

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.