

## Extreme views provoke debate, showcase ideas



Todd Stone

Why does The Battalion print extreme commentary on the opinion page?

This is one of the most common questions I am asked as editor of The Battalion.

Certainly, it's easy to remember the outrageous ideas we read. It's the outrageous that often makes things interesting in our lives, but I often remind readers that there are a variety of points of view expressed on this page.

The oped page has been accused of being too liberal or too conservative on the same issue.

I believe the page has successfully presented all kinds of viewpoints - moderate, liberal, conservative and others that cannot be labeled.

I must admit it surprises me that many characterize our page as "extreme." Between our five columnists, contributions from myself and Opinion Editor Mack Harrison, editorials (viewpoints of The Battalion), guest columns and Mail Call, the opinion page is certainly diverse. But, I believe it is less extreme than most college newspapers.

This does not mean everyone should agree with what they read in this section. I disagree with some opinion on the page almost every day.

Still, I believe the spirit of the section is based on commentary and debate. If we only published views everyone agreed upon, we wouldn't have an opinion page. There would be nothing to print.

And this seems to be what you, the reader, wants. Some people have told me they only read the opinion page and throw the rest of the paper away. Others claim they read the page when they want to get angry or outraged. Indeed, it seems most of you love to hate extreme points of

view. Most of our letters and guest columns are written in response to unusual perspectives. It seems the mainstream issues, such as AIDS, Super Collider and Earth Summit, don't produce the same number of responses.

For example, The Battalion published an editorial in June about the University's failure to promote awareness of a rape near campus - a serious crime and an important issue. Surprisingly, we received just two letters about the editorial - but we got seven in response to a humor column entitled, "It Sucks To Be You."

I don't want to suggest that responses in Mail Call accurately reflect the viewpoints around campus, and I can appreciate complaints about a humor column that fails to amuse. Still, I was surprised we received so little response about the rape issue.

Nevertheless, one issue that seems to be in the news every day stirs quite a debate on the opinion page: abortion. Every semester there is a period of time where most of the letters and guest columns respond to one or two columns on abortion. It's certainly a volatile issue that focuses extraordinary passions on religion, life and freedom.

In part, I think that's what this section is for - a release or exchange of passions and beliefs. Each view will offend some and be supported by others.

But is the opinion page too extreme? Extreme? At times. Too extreme? No. This section does address mainstream issues.

Of course, that is just my opinion, which I hope the reader will discuss and debate, because that is what the opinion page is all about.

*Stone is a graduate student in business administration and editor in chief of The Battalion.*

## Found: The Ultimate Sorority Babe



Anthony C. LoBaido

"Does the word 'duh' mean anything to you?"

- "Buffy the Vampire Slayer"

Oh - my - God! Kappa Kappa Gamma, happy that I am ama ama! This past Saturday night, I met three most... (No way! Way!) unreal blonde sorority babe

from Hell. She makes me feel kinda funny. Her name is not Stacey... not Ramsey... not Michelle... but Devaney, which she of course pronounces "Dev-knee."

Anatomy of My Sorority Dream Girl: **Purse:** A Dooney of course. Contains: Makeup counter from Macy's, portable butane curling iron, the pill - in monogrammed pill case, lighted compact mirror, Le: Press-On-Nails, (two packs), stun gun (rapists you know), portable bow rack, hot pink frosted lip gloss, Bubble Yum (pink), Daddy's AmEx card (gold).

**Great quote:** While observing a man wearing a T-shirt with the word, "MA-CHO" written across the front: "Mach zero? That's not very fast."

**Even Greater Quote:** "Kelsey uses that store-bought shampoo. Ugh! Like it works. That's only for people who can't afford to chop up fresh vegetables in The Juicer. Ugh! (Also uses the term "Th-uh" - a chipmunk-like noise used to voice feelings of disgust. Dev practices "Th-uh" daily by removing peanut butter sandwich residue from roof of her mouth.)"

**Still Greater Quote:** "I baby-sat my three-year-old niece - had to... my mother has a will with movable names. My niece Natasha... cute, I know. Well she starts running around the living room with her hands held up like claws

saying, 'I'm a monster from the pond.' Like she's from the pond. There isn't even a pond within five miles of the neighborhood. She is a little monster though. No doubt."

**Transportation:** The Beamer. Course.

**Fashion Advisor:** "She lives in L.A. one mile from Rodeo Drive. Johnny drives by every morning...not Depp, Carson, you butt-wipe."

**Diamond Darlings:** "I pick up bats and sometimes get to hold the balls. The coaches signal to me but the players think they're signaling to them. I pick up bats and everybody cheers."

**Dream Men:** Jose Canseco. Ozzie Canseco. Kirk Gibson. Mel Gibson. Any boy whose father owns a beer and/or BMW distributorship.

**Nicknames:** "Dev-il." "Bookie Bear."

**Sorority Affiliation:** "Like my dad finally made enough money this year to pay my dues. So what if they live in a cardboard box behind Bennisan's."

**Global Awareness:** "Like there's people starving in Waco, ya know."

**On Australia:** "Cuddly-wuddly kangaroo land. They also have those cute bears there, but not the panda ones."

**On South Africa:** "Winnie Mandela. Whut - a - bitch! Nelson didn't mind being in prison all those years. He was just glad to be out of the house."

**On Jesus:** "Like, if He's supposed to be this forgiving person, He'll have His chance with me."

**Philosophies:** "Screw the budget, I've got (my daddy's) Mastercard."

**Pets:** Leaves her puppy chained out on the balcony in August heat. On ASP-CA surveillance list.

**On Paying A&M Out of State Tuition Fees:** "I'm the human debit."

**Closet:** "Imelda Marcos, move over."

**On World War II:** "What was Hitler's first name?"

**Favorite Movies:** Sixteen Candles. Can't Buy Me Love. Buffy The Vampire Slayer. 90210. ("I know it's not a movie,

but I like to pretend it is.")

**Aerobics:** Teal-blue body suit. Walkman playing "Roxy Music" tape.

**Typical Day:** Go home. Sleep till 11 a.m. Lunch at Bennigan's. Bring doggie-bag to family in dumpster. Lay out/tanning salon. Order pizza. Ninety-minute makeup session. Successfully complete two pool shots at Carney's/The Tap/The Chicken while drinking three pitchers of Coors Lite. Sex with fraternity dude and/or stray dog. Wonder if there's a difference. Dreamless, incoherent sleep. Wake up. Go home.

**Sex:** "I'm good. Very good."

**On AIDS:** Too terrified to go to Quack Shack for HIV test.

**Vanity:** "I'm so vain, I scream out my own name during sex. Dev. Oh - my - God, I am sooooo goodood!"

**Future:** "Like I care." "Total meltdown."

**On Love:** "Like it exists."

**Favorite Color:** Pink.

**Hit list:** "Skippy" on Family Ties. "Kill the weenie - now."

**Childhood Frights:** Watching neighbor's German Shepherd "do it" with mommy's Pekinese. Parents' door being locked on Friday nights, (from the inside) while the theme from Love Boat creeps out under the door. Kissing grandma on her facial mole with the protruding two-inch hair.

**Favorite Characters on Love Boat:** Isaac - controls distribution of alcohol. Gopher - subservient male. Doc - can prescribe valium. Julie - knows where "Promenade Deck" is. The Captain - knows how to get to Puerto Villarta.

**Hair color:** Ms. Loreal #3, "Winter Wheat."

She's one of a million. I mean one in a million. My dream. Sorority. Girl. Oh - my - God!

*LoBaido is a doctoral student in educational technology and a columnist for The Battalion and really into blond sorority babes. Way.*

## Mail Call

### Liberal trash

I would like to thank the Battalion for printing the letter from Mr. Elwell. A letter this racist, hate-filled and close-minded, from someone who is obviously as left-wing liberal as a person can be, does a great service for level-headed, patriotic Americans everywhere.

The letter vividly brings to light the differences between those people with conservative family values and those people who are obviously disturbed and have nothing to do but divide, tear down, and yes, even kill.

To the other "smug honky asses" I say keep up the good work (obeying the law, working, raising families) and hold firm to your "traditional-American-family-value" beliefs. Liberal radical trash such as that espoused by Mr. Elwell only serves to strengthen our resolve to continue to do what we know is right.

Wade Wynn '91

### Already corrupt

Kenneth Elwell's column may have lacked facts, support, and cogent arguments, but he powerfully made the point, by example, that minorities are getting shafted by our "rigged system" (his vagueness). Obviously, the Man refuses to teach Kenneth argumentative writing, logic or that it's silly to base conclusions on any premises you want. The Man has him believing that it's alright to stereotype, generalize, and to divide and alienate groups of people.

It appears to me that the Man has already corrupted Kenneth, like millions before him. This is unfortunate, because it leaves intelligent people with justified anger ranting unconvincingly. Don't be a victim, brother! If you think the Cartel's a fiction, wait for the history of Jarro!

Bill Rankin  
Graduate Student

### No more slurs

After reading your Wednesday's edition, I found it most offensive that your sports writer Mr. Michael Plumer referred to the Japanese volleyball team as "Japs" after the U.S. lost a match to Japan as a result of a protest in the on-going Barcelona Olympics.

Honestly speaking, as a native Chinese, my fellow countrymen had long had sour feelings towards the Japanese for the war crimes they committed during World War II, but we stopped calling them by that name in public a long time ago. Such a racial slur simply has no place in today's civilized society, not in Aggeland, anyway. In addition, there is nothing immoral or unsportsmanlike about the protest. The U.S., or anybody else for that matter, would have done the same thing against Japan, and the outcome would probably be the same no matter who filed the protest against whom.

Mr. Plumer should learn to be a bigger fan - and a bigger man - than that. He should stop calling the opponents names every time his favorite team loses a match.

Tim Chang '91  
Grad Student

### 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 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 a letter will appear. Letters may be brought to The Battalion at 013 Reed McDonald, sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111 or faxed to 845-2647.

## Copying software same as stealing

"Thou shalt not steal."

- Exodus 20:15.

The world is full of thieves. I'm sure you've run into one today. He may have been tough looking and shifty, the very essence of the popular stereotype. Or he may have been clean-cut. Or, if you own a computer, he may have been you.

How can this be? After all, you paid for everything: the monitor, CPU, printer, etc. Nothing stolen there! And what a handy toy it is! Nothing better for term papers, physics labs, engineering projects, or a game or two. Why, with the right software, it can do anything.

With the right software. How innocuous the phrase, but how explosive the reality. What do you need to complete the previously mentioned tasks? A word processor, a spreadsheet, some utilities, and don't forget those games. High quality, too! All the latest releases. And where did you get these?

Perhaps you bought them at a store. Or through the mail? But let's face it. College students are poor, and software is expensive. So where did it come from? I see, you have a nice friend who let you copy it. Christian charity in action, except for one small problem, insignificant really. It is not his to give.

Stealing software is a sanitized form of theft. There is no need to break into a

store. No one to be held at gunpoint. No risk of high-speed chases by the police. In fact, there is really no risk at all. All it takes is a couple of keystrokes and a couple of minutes. So safe. So simple. So wrong.

Or maybe it's not wrong? I've heard every argument imaginable about this, but the people who make them all fall into two categories. People in category number one claim it isn't stealing. People in category number two don't really care because they think stealing is fine as long as they don't get caught.

You claim you didn't steal anything? True, you haven't grabbed anything material. You just took someone else's work without paying for it. I call this stealing. If neither one of us bothers you, the laws of this country call this stealing. But at least you still have enough of a conscience to know stealing is wrong. Members of category number two are more sophisticated.

"Anything that isn't nailed down is mine," a colleague of mine once said. "And anything I can pry loose isn't nailed down," he added with a flourish. No moral ambiguity here. Right or wrong? Who cares. Personal gain over all, as long as I'm the beneficiary. You don't have to be a genius to see how destructive this attitude is to society. Trust evaporates very quickly in this sort of climate.

I'm sure at this point to get the same sort of whining driven madly famous by promiscuous AIDS activists. "You can't really expect us to buy our software." After all, we can't afford it." And my fa-

vorite, "It may be all right for you, but don't push your morality on us." The first statement reeks of despair. I can't change! It's hopeless! This from the same people who glorify change for change's sake in the political arena. The last statement is simply unbelievable. All law is an imposition of someone's morality on society. Think about it.

If you are using stolen software there are only two courses of action available. The first is to buy whatever it is you're using. The second is to erase the stuff. I can hear the screams of pain already. "I can't afford to buy it, and I can't get along without it!" Really? You managed to afford your computer, and you were able to survive for all those years before you bought it.

I realize this is going to be a sacrifice, but which is easier: to suffer a little now, or to try and explain to our Lord at your judgement that it wasn't stealing, and besides, you were just about to pay for it anyway? I'd rather do the former. How about you?

I'm certain some of you have been disturbed by this. Possibly you're even thinking about taking action. Do it now! You're amazing powers of rationalization will start to throttle this idea immediately. Don't let them kill it. As for me, well, I've noticed the aforementioned colleague in a nice car. It really is a very nice car. And there's not a nail in sight.

*Kopp is a graduate student in industrial engineering.*

## THE REPUBLICAN OLYMPICS - WE'RE NOT SEEING THE FOSBURY FLOP...

