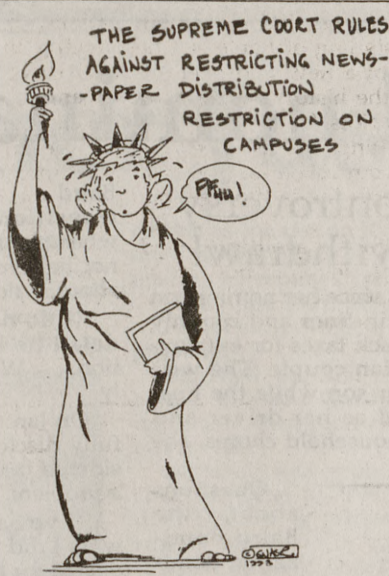


OPINION

The Battalion

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EDITORIALS

Budgetary dilemma

Higher education cannot be cut

Although Texas is staring down the barrel of a projected \$3.2 billion budget shortfall for the current triennium, funding for higher education stands as the last target that can afford to be hit.

While 84 percent of the budget remains fixed due to court orders and federal dictates, the remaining 16 percent, which includes funding for higher education, can be altered in order to plug deficits. Sadly, one of the state's greatest assets, higher education, has emerged as a tasty morsel in the eyes of a legislature hungry to carve up a deficit-free budgetary pie.

Though inequities in elementary and secondary education require increased budgetary consideration, cutting funding to Texas colleges and universities is no solution. By attempting to provide equitable and improved educations to all Texas

students, such cuts also succeed in denying those students other educational opportunities — and denying the state a potential tax base.

College graduates are an integral part of the Texas economy. It is we who will probably obtain the higher-paying jobs and subsequently spend more money. It is we who will start the small businesses and subsequently increase the workforce. It is we who will be paying the taxes of tomorrow — but will not be able to if we have to suck up the cuts of today.

Even if extreme cuts are made in higher education, the budget deficit will not be erased. Though balanced budgets and fiscal responsibility are of paramount importance for Texas and indeed, the nation, Texas cannot afford to drain one of its greatest long-term resources in the face of short-term stop gaps.

Free speech reaffirmed

Anti-solicitation rule struck down

The American college campus remains a forum for free speech, despite recent efforts by a Texas university to hamper such freedom. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that restricting newspaper distribution on college campuses due to advertising is unconstitutional.

In 1989, Southwest Texas State University expanded its anti-solicitation rule to regulate the distribution of all newspapers that contained advertising.

The distribution of such newspapers was confined to subscriptions, vending machines at five campus locations and a single area of campus known as the "free expression area."

University officials say the anti-solicitation rule was enacted to control litter, as well as to regulate commercial speech such as advertising in order to help prevent fraud and deception on campus. Newspapers

with advertising, officials charged, were commercial speech and not free speech.

The Supreme Court ruled, however, that advertisements in newspapers were included in order to finance the publication. Consequently, the court ruled that commercial speech is automatically linked to the newspaper's non-commercial speech, such as editorials and stories of public interest, thereby making the whole paper noncommercial.

This decision stands as a guard against the deterioration of Americans' First Amendment rights of free speech.

The courts have recognized that the freedom to speak often stems from the freedom to finance such speech — because in this age of million-dollar media, where inches can cost thousands and seconds can cost millions, free speech doesn't necessarily mean free publication.

Anti-abortion logic falls short

Roe anniversary sparks questioning of arguments

Today marks the 20th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* — the famous Supreme Court decision conferring abortion rights on women. Marching to the chant, "Abortion is murder," the shrill anti-abortion movement grows evermore strident and at times, violent. The rallying cry of anti-abortionists begs for review.

Is abortion murder? We will find ourselves comparing apples, horse apples and oranges to the accompaniment of flapping arms and mouths if we do not insist upon a consistent definition throughout the discussion. This anti-abortionists have steadfastly refused to do, and for good reason: Assume abortion is murder and the so-called pro-life position collapses under the weight of logical inconsistency.

For instance, if abortion is murder, allowing abortion in the case of rape or incest, as some anti-abortionists allow, allows murder in the case of rape or incest. Allowing abortion to save the life of the mother, as virtually all anti-abortionists allow, is to allow for murder; for remember, abortion is murder. The image of smug "pro-lifers" dubbing one set of abortions "murder" while dubbing their own pro-life abortions as "mere abortion" is loaded with irony. Oddly, it would not be incorrect to call these anti-abortionists "pro-murder" given their own set of assumptions.

Favoritism for the woman over the fetus is notable within the anti-abortion movement. Given a situation in which either the woman or the fetus must perish, most anti-abortionists leave the choice (aha!) to the woman. This choice does not immediately suggest itself if the fetus has full human rights. And aren't anti-abortionists proposing that the brutal murder of an innocent is a choice, not a child?

The refusal to punish women for illegal abortions in any of the legislation passed to restrict abortion is of great consequence. If abortion is murder, then the woman presumably hires an assassin — the abortionist — to kill her fetus for what she perceives as her benefit. Offering little or no sanction against women as the chief beneficiaries and instigators of abortion, anti-abortionists have cunningly slunk away from the great chasm of logic. Instead, abortionists play the fall guy in anti-abortion legislation. Logic or any proper assignment of rights and



MATT DICKERSON
Columnist

responsibilities consistent with anti-abortion assumptions are the first to go overboard in selling anti-abortion legislation.

The belief that there is a moral difference between an ovum and a zygote, or fertilized egg, has implications rarely explored by many commentators.

If zygotes have rights, radical legal consequences follow. Authorities investigate all unexplained deaths to determine whether a murder has occurred. This would require government notification of all miscarriages, even those in which zygotes failed to attach to the uterine wall. Women's activities resulting in miscarriage, for example lifting too much, might constitute negligent homicide. This presents a problem because, for many weeks, most women are not aware of pregnancy, let alone conception. This violates the "ought implies can" rule in ethics, which states that if a person is required to act in such a manner, they must be able to do so.

How could women be held negligent for the death of a zygote they were not aware of, nor could be?

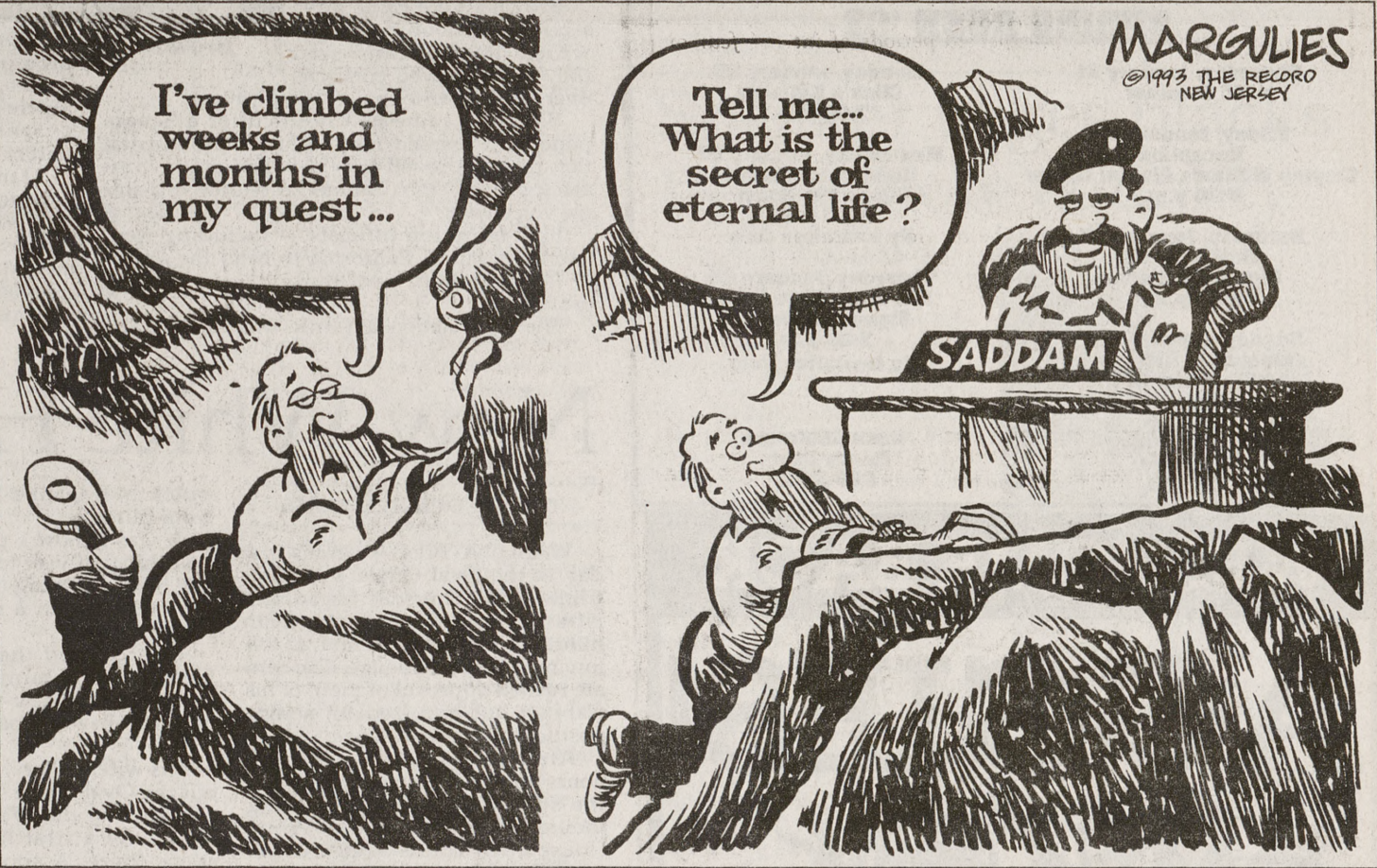
Further, the rights-protecting agency, the government, must be made aware of any new zygotes to protect their "rights," just as the state is now made aware of births. Such a rule would require extensive human rights violations.

Women would be required to report all pregnancies to the government, and not only would women be required to incubate zygotes, but would also be required to allow zygote implantation in the uterus. The anti-abortion position implies not only a tyrannical state of affairs, but the impossible. While these examples may appear outlandish, it should be emphasized that this exercise is simply the logical implication of conferring full rights on zygotes, treating them just like anyone else.

The anti-abortion position presents a number of problems. It is rarely consistent and appears to be a seedbed for the police state. At best, it is a misshapen tool; at worst, a vehicle for the repression of women. And anti-abortionists are not simply insisting that the clock be turned back, as abortion has rarely been treated as murder, not even in the 19th century.

Anti-abortionists are espousing a radical legal revolution the implications of which threaten women's liberty as never before. Women have fought too long and too hard to secure the right to control their own bodies for us to allow that to happen.

Dickerson is a sophomore economics major.



COLLEGE STATION, TX
JAN. 22
1993
MAIL CALL

No-fly zone prompts flighty response

After the Gulf War, I was expecting a trial for Saddam Hussein like the war crimes trials that occurred after World War II.

I envisioned Bush sending in the CIA to abduct Hussein, at which time they would return with a donkey.

"But sir, you told us to get the jackass." The CIA would be sent back time and again until they finally got Hussein, during which time they would manage to bring back enough animals to open an Iraqi zoo.

But instead of this far more interesting prospect, Bush announced the no-fly zone. Although not as intriguing, I have no real problems with this no-fly zone. I do, however, have some questions:

1. How high does the no-fly zone extend? Are Iraqi satellites allowed over the no-fly zone?
 2. Does Iraq have any satellites?
 3. If Iraq were to suddenly inherit land below the 32nd parallel, like the ultra-rebellious nation of Qatar, would it also be under the no-fly zone?
 4. Would anyone care?
- If a layman such as myself grapples with these questions, I can only imagine what Saddam Hussein, the military genius who invaded Kuwait armed only with pez dispensers, must go through.
- Saddam: "Do you think they would shoot down our satellites if they flew over the no-fly zone?"
- His advisors: "We have no satellites, O honorable, greatest, manliest of all creatures."
- Saddam: "Why don't we build one and send it up, just to test those American pigs?"
- His advisors: "But sire, because of the

economic embargo, we cannot even make pez."

Saddam: "You fools, I don't want to make pez. I want to build a satellite. . . By the way, what does a satellite do?"

His advisors: "It sends you all those porno movies."

Saddam: "Then we must have one — for national security reasons, that is."

One thing that confuses me is how long the no-fly zone is going to be enforced. I'm not trying to be mean to Hussein, but even if we get him to pinky-swear not to bomb, I'm not sure if he'll be restrained by the consequences. One option is to declare the no-fly zone a nation.

Then they could send an ambassador to the United Nations to plead for help. The UN would promptly respond by translating the plea into every language known to man, thereby letting the world know that "the nation of the no-fly zone" sounds strange in every nation, not just English.

Although this seems like an open-and-shut case, there are many touchy things to consider:

1. Will the "nation of the no-fly zone" have an official bird? If it does, will the bird have to be flightless?
2. If a citizen of this nation were suddenly to win an airplane from Ed McMahon, would that person have to

take delivery, or could he just have McMahon sell it and send him the money?

3. Is McMahon trustworthy enough to be given control over that kind of cash?

With these kinds of complex questions, it is no wonder we are involved in such a quagmire.

John Prashant
Class of '94

Free trade agreement no good for America

We keep hearing how great the ill-conceived North American Free Trade Agreement will be for the United States, but for the life of me, I don't grasp by what contorted logic one arrives at this conclusion.

First it would seem misnamed — probably so done deliberately to deceive the gullible — for, just how free would the document containing 1,700 pages make it? If it is to make trade free, why go to 12 pounds of print on paper to encumber it? This certainly would not make it free to anyone intending to trade who didn't have a battery of lawyers to direct compliance.

Here in our beloved country, we are

already overloaded with a bloated bureaucracy. Then this NAFTA "secretariat" comes along, which would have at least eight permanent committees, some of which would have the authority to create new subcommittees at will — a whole new government.

One thing for certain, this would cut away some of our national sovereignty! Call me an isolationist or whatever, but at least call me an American!

If we don't look after our own best interests, then who will. Our country became great by minding its own business.

Fletcher Sims, Jr.
Canyon, Texas

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