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THE BATTALION **Editorial Board**

Belinda Blancarte, Editor in chief Mark Evans, Managing editor Jay Robbins, Opinion editor Jenny Magee, Assistant opinion editor Editorials appearing in The Battalion re-flect the views of the editorial board. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of oth-er Battalion staff members, the Texas A&M student body, regents, administration, faculty or staff.

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Contact the opinion editor for information on submitting guest columns.

FDITORIAL

able un BILLIONS AND BILLIONS

World population growth demands attention

The dramatic increase in world poplation will have staggering effects on conomic development and mainteance of environmental resources in he near future. Urgent action is needed to help stabilize the populaion, and the leaders at the recent popir came as AID lation conference have tried to put a terly debated wh olan into action.

nment allows Statistics reveal that the world's current population is 5.7 billion and is expected to grow by 90 million a year ccess to promi stem has not se - a size comparable to that of the whole country of Mexico. It is estimated that by the year 2050, the world's population will reach 10 to 12 billion if said Gregg Gons w York-based Iv on Group. "Wed ata for people to no efforts are made to control it. Somebeing protect, thing must be done to help stabilize sponded Dr. The global population before money and re-Los Angeles. "The sources have completely diminished.

The main controversy has surroundery day ... and red the issues of family planning and out data?"

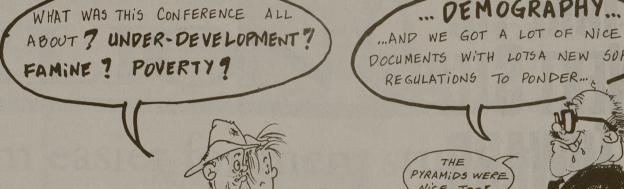
fertility management, as ways to help curb the population crisis. While the cess for saquinar Vatican argues that these terms supmmissioner Da port pro-abortion, they are really try-

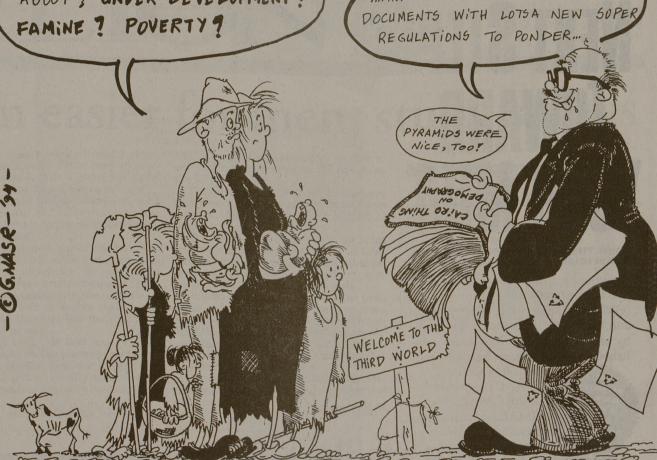
ing to educate and promote better health care.

The aim of the conference is not to promote abortion, but to encourage family planning, improved health care and education for sexually active teens.

While it is important to respect the religions of the Vatican and other religions that support anti-abortion, there must be efforts to help control the population problem. Not only are natural resources depleting, but money is also a factor. Currently, it costs \$17 billion for basic health care for women and children, family planning and AIDS prevention. By the year 2015, the expected amount is \$22 billion.

There is a need to look into the population problem and make attempts to control it. Without some effort, the population will continue to grow while money and resources continue to dwindle. The recent U.N. conference is a starting point and will perhaps draw more attention to this continuous





A call might make the difference Law of man must remain

then it does to Counseling services offer to broad experiment Counseling services offer help to prevent suicides der FDA's expand gram, fewer patie

erimental drug. Thad been meaning to call him for several tot have enoughd weeks. In fact it was on my "to do" list for on my "to do" list for d an FDA heard July 5, 1994. I was even Ve need your help thinking of him then, the deciding where when my mom walked in the room. I was

rying to remember his ephone number so I

acquire could call as soon as I got home. My mother burst into the

Columnist

oom and said, "Erin, I am so sorry."

I had no idea of what she was talking about.
"Didn't you hear about Tim?"

No, I hadn't.

"He killed himself yesterday."
I felt weak. And then shocked. I started crying and lidn't stop for three days. Though members of my DRK (AP) - Ne extended family had passed away, this was the closest that

I had been to death. It hurt. My friends and I struggled to make sense of the whole thing. We wondered how long had he been thinking about ip of NBC may all three broads killing himself. We had known he was sad. He talked about is problems freely but we hadn't realized how much worse

bably have est I had seen Tim over buyers," said Christmas vacation, and Gerbrandt of while he looked too thin, he still possessed his had become in the four years since graduation. increases the usual dry sense of a series of humor. I thought

pen, almost verything was fine. In fact, things had been cide only changes your location.

published rep looking up for Tim in the nidentified some months before his death. I didn't know then that suicides often ccur within a 3 month "improvement" period when things are getting better. Those close to the person may falsely believe the

trisis has passed or that none exists, as we did.

I still think about Tim's death. I sit in class and remember that he's gone. I look through old yearbooks, remembering everything we had done together. I remembered how talented he was.

ith GE to acquir stake in NBC, And independent. In my room at night I picture his face and the network's the way he smiled. He was a dear friend. I know that I won't be V stations, accord over this for a long time.

Then I think of those even closer to him. His family was devastated by it, of course. At the wake his father was explaining the various pictures of Tim that were on display. As he remembered their times together he began to cry and said poignantly, "He was a wonderful, sweet boy."

He was indeed. Did he have any idea of the number of the many people who cared deeply about him?

Did he know how he would tear apart the world of his family and loved ones

How could life have become so unbearable to someone we

So many questions remain. The one thing can see clearly is that suicide isn't the answer to problems. Nothing will ever be the same for Tim's family and friends. When people take their lives, they kill a part of those who love them.

We aren't immune from the problem here at Texas A&M. Last year there was 1 "successful" suicide, 29 attempts, 24 threats and 5 other related situations. Dr. Kerry Hope, Associate Director of the Student Counseling Center, said that they are used to dealing with 2 to 4 suicide situations and week at the center. each week at the center.

Despite these alarming figures, this rate is better than at

Texas A&M's rate is lower than those at other campuses, said Dr. Hope, "Probably because students here are usually pretty good about asking for help."

There is a strong commitment to helping students; in fact, the counseling center is starting up a crisis helpline and needs interested students to come by Henderson Hall and apply. These students will be trained to deal with suicide attempts and other emergencies so that there will be even more listening ears for those who are despairing.

No matter how desperate you feel, no matter how lonely you are, taking your own life is not the way out. It only changes your location. And thinking about suicide doesn't No matter how desperate you feel, no

> that you are having trouble coping. That is nothing to be ashamed of.
> There are people to contact if you find

mean you are mentally ill. It means

yourself thinking about taking your own life. The Student Counseling Service telephone number is 845-4427 during the weekdays, and 845-1557 after 5 p.m. and on weekends. There are counselors available, 24 hours a day, if necessary.

Someone cares. And if you have any fears about those close to you, act on them. Try to discover a way to help. Some signs of distress are giving away personal possessions, withdrawal from usual

interaction and undue anxiety.
Out of every 10 people who have killed themselves, eight have given definite warnings of their suicidal tendencies. Don't put off that telephone call until it is too late.

Erin Hill is a senior English major

separate from law of God

New Year's celebration leads to concerns about dangers of faith, importance of religious freedom

It was Monday when I got in my car to leave for home. I was looking forward to seeing my family. I normally never go home during the school ear, even though my parents live in Plano. However, today was different: it would be Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and with my mother having to leave town for a family emergency, I wanted to be with my dad and sister for support over a normally joyous holiday.

After getting into town at about 5:30 p.m., I quickly showered, dressed and headed to my godparents house in Richardson, where I spent the evening enjoying roasted chicken and some of the best kugel in the world.

The next morning, my family went to pray at a small synagogue run by Israeli immigrants, where I met many of my dad's friends who spoke Hebrew mixed with bits of English. While I could not understand everything they said (my Hebrew is pretty poor), I could not help but enjoy the feeling of being with a group of Jews practicing my faith. Being Conservative Jews, we had no organ or choir, no news cameras or any other fancy extras, just each other, the Torah (the Five Books of Moses) and the New Year.

That evening, before coming back to school, I watched television - a rare treat for someone who has no cable. There, Ted Koppel, from "Nightline," invited a Catholic bishop and Vice President Al Gore to discuss the recent UN population talks in Cairo. The bishop talked on and on about moral values and how the United States cannot allow abortions because they are evil, according to the church. At the beginning of the conference, Saudi Arabia, among other Muslim countries, pulled out, saying that it did not believe that population control is morally right, according to Is-

lam. "The 700 Club" blasted the conference as leading to baby murder and immorality. I have always loved being a

Jew and believed in certain tenants of my faith that might seem backward to modern people. While I would definitely not vote for someone who is an outright anti-Semite, my rabbis told me long ago that Jews were not the only good people on earth; that we should be thankful we live in a free country that allows us to be who we are while living among those who are different from us. Some people do not feel this way.

Many religious organizations have geared themselves to try to defy the Constitutional guarantees that ensure separation of church and state. These groups offend and threaten every American, especially those who are in the minority. Some of these groups demand so-called "moments of silence" or outright prayer in classrooms. Some want to force teachers to explain the backward and illogical ideas of creationism while ignoring evolution theory. Some religious groups ask professors to speak about their religious ideas in classrooms, while supposedly teaching engineering or physics. Some reli-



gions try to outlaw freedoms like expression and gender equality while forcing their opinions into law by using weak-minded politicians - people who cannot see the inherent dangers of these supposedly kind and moral people. These dangers have become more and more obvious as of late.

Many activities occur within the confines of the United States that I find personally immoral. Fortunately, I do not have to agree with these activities. As long as people are not harming anyone but themselves, I have no legal outlet for my disagreement with them. If someone wants to have an abortion or be a homosexual or pray to some deity in a way I find personally offensive, that is their right. I practice a religion that is misunderstood and frankly of no consequence to most people. The important factor is that I be allowed to do so.

This country was not founded on religion, and those who say so lie and tarnish the names of those who sacrificed their lives for it. Men like Thomas Jefferson, a deist – one who believes in God but has no religion – guaranteed for future generations their right to choose a moral path, or not to have one at all, as long as the rights of people around them were unaffected. If people want to share their religion with oth-

This country was not founded on religion, and those who say so lie and tarnish the names of those who sacrificed their lives for it.

Broadcast Sys All-U Night incident betrays 'Aggie spirit'

Many organizations on campus brag bout how much Aggie spirit they f a Turner big have and about how much more they thing is going put out for traditions. One example is the rivalry between the Corps of will have to f Cadets and the on-campus residence cations bill we halls. I would like to question the concept of "being an Ag" and what it means to certain organizations.

lematic wheth We are all supposed to be Aggies into broadce here, meaning that we treat each other as fellow Aggies. On Monday night right before All-University Night, I saw a perfect example of how misconstrued some of these concepts are. A ophomore female cadet in the Corps of Cadets was walking past a group of

way to Kyle Field. They were all on their way to the event. When the cadet began to pass the group, many of the guys began taunting and harassing her, some even jumping in her face. When another male junior cadet in the Corps jumped in between saying, "Aggies do not insult other Aggies," they tried to pick a fight with him. Luckily, he and the female cadet were able to leave without any physical violence. The sad thing is that one of the students from the resident hall was wearing the yellow hat that bonfire crew chiefs wear, meaning that this was an upperclassman, supposedly an example for the many fish that were huddled there. The crew chief, who supposedly should be so full of Aggie spirit was the main one taunting her.
If this is what they think Aggie

matter how lonely you are, taking

your own life is not the way out. Sui-

Spirit is about or that they are "good Ags," they are wrong. If they cannot be mature enough or caring enough about this University to follow the Aggie code of "Soldier, Statesman and Knightly Gentleman," then they do not deserve the right to call themselves Aggies or brag about their "Aggie Spir-

students from a residence hall on her it." If this is the way they want to act, we do not need these kind of people at our University, especially with A&M under the scrutiny it is already under now. These so called "Ags" need to head back on Highway 6 and go to Austin. They are not needed here.

We are all Ags, whether we live offcampus, in a residence hall or in a Corps dorm. We should treat each other as fellow Aggies and keep this University the great place it is now. And to the members of that Southside Hall, I think you all owe the two cadets, as well as the rest of the University, a huge apology.

> Clint McCommon Class of '95

The Battalion er The Battalion en-courages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and in-clude the author's name, class, and phone number. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy.

style, and accuracy.

The Battalion - Mail Call 013 Reed McDonald Texas A&M University College Station, TX 77843-1111

Fax: 409/845-2647 Ratt@tamym1.tamu.edu ers, their best recourse is one I discovered from my Corps training. In leadership classes, it was explained that there were 11 principles of leadership. From these, the most important was not "beat people in to submission" or "advertise what a wonderful leader you are." Instead, the basic principle was very simple: "Set the Example."

If you want to promote goodness or a particular religion, don't try to legislate it. Instead, take the time to be a good person. Use the money given to organizations like Right to Life, television evangelism, church advertising and movements to allow prayer in school to feed and clothe people, to sponsor education programs that will make people want to think and work.

Setting this example – rather than trying to change people's minds with a sledgehammer – should be a religious person's goal

> Josef A. Elchanan is a senior business management major