

THE BATTALION Editorial Board

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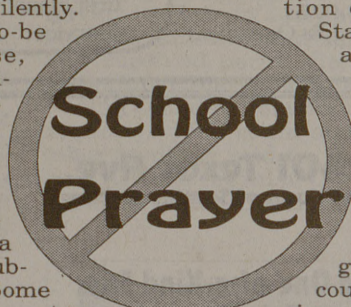
EDITORIAL

PRAYER IN SCHOOL

Separation of Church and State should be upheld

Republicans will be in control of Congress come January, and the issue of prayer in school has come into the spotlight again.

come somewhat of a witch-hunt — with those who choose to pray and those who do not pointing fingers at each other.



The diversity among religions and the number of students who represent it may cause a problem too great for public schools to handle.

There is also an ideal in American institutions that there is a separation of the Church and the State.

Some students may not feel comfortable in participating in such a prayer time, regardless of their religious beliefs.

A more realistic and reasonable solution would be for students to pray before class, whether it is on school grounds or at home.

Furthermore, with our public school systems in such disarray, it seems more practical for legislators to tackle the issue of school finance, rather than spending a lot of hot air debating prayer in school.

Bush should focus on prisons

Inmates must be educated before being released

George W. Bush was elected on a platform that stressed reforming education and educational funding, increasing the power of the private sector and reducing crime.

ERIN HILL Columnist



I've got my fingers crossed. I want to believe him. I've even got a couple of suggestions, at least about the crime issue.

He wants to cut back on crime, along with every other citizen who cares about life, safety and the escalating costs of prisons and other corrective facilities.

Wow. He must have a lot of faith in the prison system. Rehabilitate? Did I hear that correctly?

He said Texas needs a governor to get rid of frivolous lawsuits that clog the courts and start filling the courts with criminals.

"We want people to know they are responsible for their own behavior." He said he will not allow sex offenders, murderers or car thieves out of jail on a probationary sentence because it sends the wrong message to Texas.

"I will show that the risks of crime outweigh the rewards."

It appears he believes that by sending criminals to prison and keeping them there longer than the run of that silly "Lassie" remake, something can be done.

He may just be right. Let's hope so! One little teensy tiny hint — just a thought — sorry if I'm interrupting anything, Governor George, but you ought to make them go to school. University level classes.

How can we pay for such classes, you ask? Well, they're already in place in lots of prisons. For example, Warden Velasquez of the Ramsey Unit II of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice says that multiple programs are offered at his facility, ranging from high school equivalency exams to post-secondary technical training.

The only hitch is getting the prisoners to take the darned things. See, prisoners are required to work a specified number of hours per day (like 5-6). That's it. Maybe a little more when

highway litter gets out of control. Your average prisoner has a lot of free time on his or her hands — time to mill around, watch TV, talk and nap, like some of us.

Too much idle time conditions a person to a non-working lifestyle. (Think of how you act now when your dad asks you help clear the table.) It isn't shocking that some prisoners don't want a job after being released or can't hold a steady one.

Real life skills haven't been practiced in awhile. Real life thinking has been replaced by a prison mentality that could frighten even the most hard among us.

Recidivism (the rate that released prisoners return to prison) is alarming. But not unbelievable. After living in a walled off community that runs very differently from the outside world, kind of like a Biosphere Hell bubble, inmates don't know all ways know how to cut it when they leave.

Inmates who complete college courses, however, have a better chance than the rest. A New Mexico study which came out this year showed a 15 percent recidivism rate for those prisoners who had completed one or more college courses, compared with a 68 % rate for the general population.

A Folsom prison study in the 1980's showed zero recidivism from college graduates compared with 55 percent rate for the general prison population within three years of release from Folsom.

Our prison systems operate like quicksand, sucking prisoners in and trapping them. It's time to treat prison as both punishment and training for life outside of its walls.

Maybe the prisoners who took those classes were more motivated and all that jazz. But it would do the others good to be exposed to the pursuit of intellectual ideas and rational thinking, or even plumbing techniques.

Our prison systems operate like quicksand, sucking prisoners in and trapping them. Too many return too often. And we foot the bill. It's time to treat prison as both punishment and training for life outside of its walls.

George W. Bush — I hope you're listening — just between the two of us, I dare you to try it. I'll check back in a couple of years, okay? Until then I'll keep hoping for the best and offering suggestions.

W. Jason Moore contributed to the research of this column.

Erin Hill is a senior English major

Political system continues to change for the worse. Politicians will not accomplish anything of importance, will only cause more problems

Have you noticed lately how weird the political climate has become? This eerie smile comes over various Republican faces as they stand and tell America how we are all in for a big change.

JOSEF A. ELCHANAN Columnist



they would all get together and ask politicians to sign a contract where they would attempt to reduce the deficit or not seek re-election.

Well, ok, things could be worse. At least the president won't back-off on the issues. For instance Clinton said that he supports school prayer. Hold that, he's changed his mind, he's saying it's wrong to pray in school unless you are the adopted child of a gay soldier in the military.

My point is, these guys are probably not going to do anything that important, except cause some problems.

I have an old-fashioned American solution to put politicians in their place. No, not hanging, though it would work. No, I think suing them would be a good idea.

—Mr. Getmoney, you were a Congressman for two terms and then left to work as a lobbyist for the Japanese subsidiary Buyichi America. Is that correct?

—Yes, it is. —And did you promise in your election to lower crime, reduce the deficit, help American business, help the poor, reduce unemployment, and to help reduce the trade deficit between the US and Japanese.

—Well, kind-off. I mean, I just said it because, well you know.

—No, sir, I do not think we do. You will pay \$2,000,000 to the state for failure to meet your civil obligations.

Now, wouldn't that be great? But really, its all pipedreams, the ravings of a mind not used to the norms of the modern political climate.

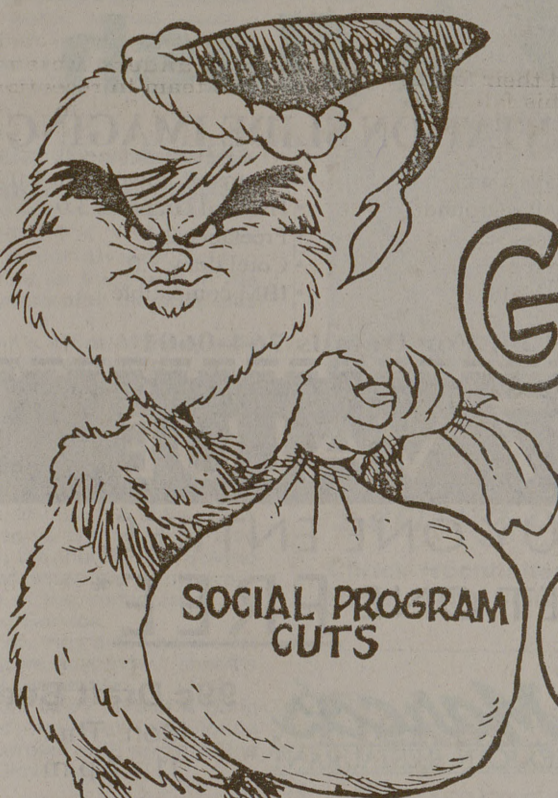
Anyway, to be sure, the political climate in the US has changed considerably.

While the Republicans feel their way to a new role in the Congress and Senate, let us all hope for a few things.

First of all, that Bob Dole won't do anything, because he scares the living hell out of me. Second, let's hope that Newt Gingrich can get a better haircut, or buy a new hairpiece, whatever is needed. Third, for Pete's sake you dumbbutt Democrats, find someone with some stinking ba...I mean guts. Sorry, this politically correct thing gets hard sometimes.

Maybe the only real solution goes kind of like this — what do you call 1000 politicians at the bottom of the Pacific? A good start.

Josef A. Elchanan is a senior business management major



HOW THE GINGRICH STOLE CHRISTMAS

MARGULIES © 1994 THE RECORD NEW JERSEY

(APOLOGIES TO DR. SEUSS)



A&M can do more to promote recycling

I am writing this letter in response to a front page article in the Wednesday, November 16 edition of The Battalion entitled "Student groups work to form campus recycling program."

schedule," why aren't there recycling bins outside of these buildings, particularly by the newspaper stands? If recycling bins were placed outside of the building on the pick-up schedule, reams of newspaper would be saved each day.

Also, how much money does The Battalion make from those advertising supplements? If it is significant, the least they can do is try to get them printed on non-glossy, recyclable paper and provide recycling bins. I cringe every time I throw away my daily paper because there is nowhere else to put it.

Waste is unacceptable, especially at such a remarkable institution of higher education as Texas A&M University.

Jennifer Koons Class of '98

Anti-gay letter reflects hatred, ignorance

This letter is in response to Jason McKemie's letter on November 18th entitled "Homosexuals ruin A&M's moral standards." In a semester where Regents have been convicted of unethical business practices, boosters are banned from football games, and racist incidents have abounded, the LEAST of all things that would degrade our moral standing would be the publication of an article about National Coming Out Week. In fact, the major thing that con-

tributes to our loss of moral standing is people like yourself who try to suppress opinions from being heard, simply because you don't agree with them.

I can't stand hatred and ignorance like yours, but that doesn't mean I'm going to complain about it being printed. If you don't like the subject matter of the article, don't read it. It's as simple as that. If you feel so strongly about your moral convictions, then join the Battalion editorial staff and write about it intelligently. Don't just sit back and spew forth fragmented sentences of hate.

Perhaps you are the one who needs to travel the 97 miles to Austin; I think the exposure to different people would do you some good.

If you had even included a logical argument against homosexuality in your letter, you may actually deserve some consideration, but as it stands now, I think you are the one that doesn't deserve to be printed.

Ryan Hensley Class of '96 Accompanied by 12 signatures

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

Address letters to: The Battalion - Mail Call 013 Reed McDonald Texas A&M University College Station, TX 77843-1111 Fax: (409) 845-2647 E-mail: Batt@tamvm1.tamu.edu

Football

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