

Monday • October 27, 1997

Death-defying antics

Dr. Jack Kevorkian abuses individuality with assisted-suicide practices



CHRIS HUFFINES
columnist

is it right for Kevorkian to blatantly and specifically defy a law passed specifically to stop him from helping people take their own lives? The answer would have to be "no." Kevorkian raised the issue of doctor-assisted suicide, and then the state legislature slapped him down. A petition drive was started, but it did not really get anywhere.

The people of Michigan have told Kevorkian that he (or anyone else) cannot help people take their own lives, no matter how much pain or suffering or any other justification that can be produced.

Instead of bowing to the will of the people, Kevorkian got up on his high, pale horse and began racking up a corpse total that would make any terrorist group proud.

Of course, every attack lawyer from Mackinaw to Muskegon licked their chops and began plotting their own personal ticket to fame.

Unfortunately, not one change has stuck, and now the DAs are even negotiating for a good way to get rid of the bodies quickly.

Dr. Death has won because the people of Michigan do not have the courage to really pass a law outlawing assisted suicide, leaving their parents and grandparents to slowly waste away in unendurable agony, behind a faceless door in some

nursing home.

They also do not have the stomach to mark a ballot that would possibly send voiceless ranks of the old and defenseless on to a death that is personally convenient for the young and vocal.

All of this throws civil disobedience into a new light. Even back in the days of racism and slavery, there was no middle ground.

For Martin Luther King and Gandhi, there was strong support and strong opposition.

Not only were they fighting for something, they were fighting against something. Without police dogs and fire hoses in the streets of Birmingham, or tanks and billy clubs in the streets of Calcutta, there would not have been the moral clout that has brought about change.

Today, in Michigan, there is no moral struggle, just one man tallying bodies, fulfilling his personal vision.

Until the people of America realize that the greatest threat to their freedom is apathy, single men and small interest groups will slowly take their freedoms and their lives.

Democracy was founded on discussion and conflict, not the lack of character that defines America today. Dr. Death has another victim.

Chris Huffines is a sophomore speech communications major.



QUATRO OAKLEY/THE BATTALION

New weather surge, time change give students reason to slack off



JAMES FRANCIS
opinion editor

Once again, the fall season has forced people to turn their clocks an hour back in the tradition of daylight savings time. Students can now blame their "getting to class on time" troubles on trying to adjust to a week with a new time schedule.

It always seems that the fall season is a time when students forget that classes are going on, so they take "extended" coffee breaks at local coffee shops, smoke cigarettes right outside the building they are supposed to have class in and huddle in groups, discussing how great the weather feels. But students should realize that although the month of October is coming to a quick end, school is far from over.

This is the time of the semester when students' professors begin to notice the "new" students who have begun to attend class. These are the students who registered for the class, paid their tuition and fees, but forgot that "MWF 12:45-2 p.m." meant the time frame in which they were to attend Math 142, not take a trip to the mall and window shop with cafe mocha in hand.

But amidst all the excuses that can be concocted for the time change, students should embrace this "extra hour," and form a new lease on college living. An extra hour gives students more time to sleep and regain all their lost energy from late-night studying (or late-night goofing off at parties).

With the time change, students now can wake

up at a decent hour and have time for breakfast, morning cartoons (although television does not the brain) and possibly read a book that has not been assigned as a required reading.

Daylight savings time also is the time of season when the day seems to get brighter and nighttime comes sooner. Although students might see this as a sign to start the trek over to Northgate earlier in the day, they must not allow themselves to become disillusioned by the sky's transformation.

The day starting earlier should be a sign for students to begin their day of work and classes sooner. In this way, daylight savings time almost forces students to work faster (this is a good thing by the way — procrastination is an entity all students should avoid).

Do not let the weather and this time change alter daily schedules. Instead, make an attempt to take the rest of this semester head on. Go up to a professor, give him or her a big hug and explain that the time has come to take charge of academia. At home, break out the hot chocolate and blankets, but instead of turning into a vegetable for Must-See TV, spread out the books and get to know the classes that money has been spent on.

Although the old saying used to remember time changes is "Spring forward, Fall back," students should use this time to revitalize study habits, increase class attendance and forego weekday-bar hopping. Bundle up students; the weather is making its winter entrance, the midsemester chaos is about to make its presence known and "the times, they are a'changin'."

James Francis is a junior English major.



MAIL CALL

Liberal belief system judges United Nations

In response to Donny Ferguson's Oct. 24 "Fighting for the wrong cause" column:

In reading Ferguson's column, it is apparent that he skipped his History 106 class too often. Hitler, Mussolini and World War II came about precisely because America refused to participate in the League of Nations. The United Nations was formed to prevent the repeat of world wars.

Ferguson claims that it is immoral to fight under the banner of

the United Nations, but did he forget that the Korean War and Desert Storm were both fought under U.N. directives?

I guess in Ferguson's world, the brave men and women who risked their lives in these wars are immoral, but Michael New is a saint for cowardly disobeying a direct order and refusing to follow the command of his American superiors.

The U.N. promotes an array of stupid policies, but when it comes to military efforts sponsored by the U.N., it is America that provides the manpower and the leadership.

As for Ferguson's attacks on Republican Congressman Kevin Brady, he could not have been more wrong. Brady has been consistently voting against U.N. sponsored efforts to increase world abortions and promote anti-American multiculturalism.

Ferguson's claim is that Brady is a liberal for voting against this kooky bill to abdicate America's role as the leader of the free world.

With the Cold War over, it is

important to guard against taking steps that will lead us into war again.

If we follow the beliefs of libertarian crackpots such as Ron Paul, Gene Fontenot, Andre Dean and Donny Ferguson, and pull the United States out of the U.N., we might all be forced to put on a military uniform and fight another war.

*Glenn Janik
Class of '99*

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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

Campus Mail: 1111
Fax: (409) 845-2647
E-mail: Batt@tamv1.tamu.edu

For more details on letter policy, please call 845-3313 and direct your question to the opinion editor.

Exam recycling dismisses idea of using old tests as study guides



ROBBY RAY
columnist

It is test time again, and studious Aggies are looking desperately for every possible advantage they can find. These efforts can include studying the textbook and lecture notes or even (gasp) visiting the professor to ask questions.

There also is one other highly useful method — looking at tests from previous semesters. Inexplicably, this practice is often forbidden by professors as being a violation of the University's policy against cheating. This robs students of a perfectly legitimate opportunity to study, and it also shows the laziness of many professors.

Old tests can be a valuable tool for students in which they can learn the habits of the professor giving the test.

The usual method is not trying to memorize the actual questions, which can often be more difficult than actually learning the material.

The use of old tests is to give students an idea of the types of questions that the professor is

likely to ask.

This can be especially important when the exam covers five weeks of lectures and several hundred pages of readings in multiple textbooks. The potential for little, nit-picky questions is almost infinite.

For example, is a particular professor more likely to ask for small details such as names, dates and such, or will the test cover broad concepts with an emphasis on analysis and understanding? This is information that is extremely valuable and is often not given by the professors, even if they realize what their tendencies are.

Looking at old tests is only unfair and cheating if the student does not intend to actually learn the material. Students are bombarded with so much information each semester that learning it all is humanly impossible.

Part of the college experience is learning to manage time wisely and work with multiple deadlines. One excellent way to accomplish this is to learn the most efficient way to study for a given class.

In the intense, high-stress college environment, students should take every opportunity to make the phrase "study smarter, not harder" a way of life.

Ironically, there is no college at Texas A&M that prohibits professors from making

tests available to students. Several departments maintain files of old tests and quizzes and encourage students to utilize them.

Additional files of tests are available through the Corps of Cadets and at the Reference Desk of the Sterling C. Evans library. These resources are available to all students.

Why then, do some professors refuse to allow students access to their old tests? The obvious answer is that they recycle them and use the same ones semester after semester, thus saving themselves the trouble of creating new tests.

This is an inexcusable situation and it shows the misguided and misplaced priorities of the few professors who do this.

In all fairness to the professors, it is possible that pressure from above, the so-called "publish or perish" mentality, is infecting professors and forcing them to take such shortcuts.

But if a student has to deal with several hundred pages of reading per week, two 14-page term papers, three group projects and working 20 or more hours per week, it seems only fair that a professor should not have too much of a problem writing three or four tests per semester.

Robby Ray is a senior speech communications major.

MIKE LUKOVICH
ATLANTA CONSTITUTION 097

