

## Bringing new meaning to 'race for the gold'

### Tales of payoffs to the International Olympic Committee brings shame upon the Games

After years of careful planning and persistent lobbying, the city of Dallas is confident in its bid for the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a modern city.

With the most comprehensive bid of all the prospective cities, Dallas is the clear front runner.

However, the night before the International Olympic Committee (IOC) convenes to vote on the site for the Games of the 27th Olympiad, a dark horse candidate makes a last minute coup, meeting with a large number of committee members behind closed doors.

The next morning, the victor is announced to the world, "And the winner of the 2008 Summer Olympic Games is ... Abu Dhabi!"

Don't laugh just yet. With the recent admissions of bribery made by officials in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Sydney, Australia, the IOC has made it painfully obvious it can be bought off for the right price. All a city needs is deep pockets and heavy dose of hypocrisy.

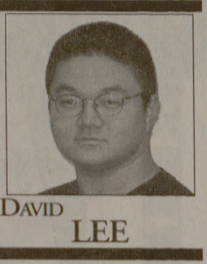
Fueled by the personal greed of the IOC, many well-regarded cities have been forced into violating the ideals of fair play and unity that the Olympic Movement embodies. Ironically, these are the same ideals that the IOC is entrusted with protecting and upholding.

As reported by the *Sydney Morning Herald* last month, the president of the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) admitted he had offered \$35,000 in bribes to the national Olympic committees of both Kenya and Uganda the night before the IOC was set to vote on the site for the 2000 Summer Olympic Games.

In exchange for these "donations," the Ugandan and Kenyan committee members voted for Sydney. These two votes proved to be crucial as Sydney defeated its competitor Beijing, China, by only two votes.

Sadly, this last minute payoff by the IOC was the winning bid in a payoff war between Sydney and Beijing as Chinese officials were charged with making similar offers to the Ugandan and Kenyan committees.

The Toronto Organizing Committee,



DAVID LEE

which lost the 1996 Summer Olympic Games to Atlanta, recalled many occasions when IOC members approached their bid committee for bribes and payoffs in exchange for votes.

Hard set against violating regulations, the Toronto Organizing Committee pleaded with the IOC to investigate these corrupt members for fear that these corrupt votes could very well sway who the winner was going to be.

However, these pleas hit a wall of silence as the IOC claimed that there was "not enough evidence" in charging these members.

Both of these situations reflect the rampant corruption that has festered itself within the IOC, an organization that is entrusted with overseeing the only event that brings together the entire world in peace and celebration.

It is saddening to see a few individuals within the IOC let their personal greed direct how and where this revered event will take place.

The legacy of these wrongdoings is far-reaching. The 2000 Summer Olympic Games in Sydney and the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City will have a cloud of shame and doubt hanging overhead.

As fraudulent as their bids may be, it is too late to start the process over again and reselect cities for the Games. The only option remaining is to have the IOC do a serious self-examination of its members in order to prevent such outrage in the future.

While the vast majority of committee members are fair and impartial in their evaluation of prospective cities, even the most minuscule bit of corruption can decide where the next Games will be held as Sydney's last minute payoff illustrates.

Hopefully, the pending investigations initiated by the IOC and the U.S. Justice Department looking into the Salt Lake City incident will succeed in breaking the wall of silence that has hidden this corruption from the public for years.

Until then, the IOC might as well bypass the formality of voting on future sites for the Olympics and simply award it to the city with the most bribe money.

An auction at Sotheby's would suffice quite nicely.

David Lee is a sophomore general studies major.



MARK MCPHERSON/THE BATTALION

#### MAIL CALL

#### Students upset by coverage of Vail's death

At a time when family and friends mourn the loss of a loved one, we are appalled that *The Battalion* found it necessary to print such a tasteless article in Tuesday's [Feb. 2] paper.

We do not think it is asking much to show a fellow "Ag" the respect and privacy that he and his family are entitled to in a campus publication that has no obligations to sell issues, is it necessary to print articles about the personal lives of students and faculty? These articles serve no function but to entertain their readers at the expense of another's misfortune.

In regards to the statement given by Dr. Dennis Reardon that "It (alcohol) destroys one's sense of judgment, inhibition and balance." We can not believe that you, sir, found it imperative to mock Vail's death by the inclusion of a pun in your statement.

In our opinion, you owe a formal apology to the family and loved ones of Vail, as well as to the student body of Texas A&M University. The next time you think that it is pertinent to give a witty statement: Remember—"you say it best when you say nothing at all!"

Our sincerest regards go out to the family, friends and loved ones of Mr. Barry Joseph Vail II.

J.S. Hancock  
Class of '00

K.D. Holsinger  
Class of '00

that your son or sibling's death was made into a tabloid story.

I am very angered by the way this tragedy was handled and hope that in the future more passion and understanding will be shown.

Mike Gerecke  
Class of '02

#### Death penalty wrong, socially irresponsible

In response to Brandon Mullen's Feb. 4 opinion column.

I have often wondered about which side of the issue is right concerning the death penalty, but after reading Mullen's column I feel my mind is made up.

After thinking about his main points, that the death penalty is cost effective and that it would discourage criminals, I realize that there was little to counter these, and I would like to take them one step further.

First, to maximize this cost effectiveness, I think that far more criminals should be put to death. Just think about such societies as 1700's London, 1500's Spain, medieval Europe and ancient civilizations when the majority of crimes were punished by death. Crime became all but non-existent in those places!

I think that a sad trend in the history of the world has been that as civilizations become more civilized and more enlightened, the death penalty seems to be used less and less.

I think the perpetrators of this trend are those disillusioned thinkers who mindlessly chant "Stop the problems that cause the crime," and that to truly reach a Utopian society, we must return the death penalty to its earlier prominence.

Secondly, I think that to discourage criminals there should be far more use of the so-called "cruel and unusual punishment."

This may at first seem a bit strange, but since we already have the death penalty, and nothing is more cruel or unusual than forcefully removing a person's soul from their body, we may as well go ahead and implement some of those other torture methods of olden days to really give criminals something to talk about.

I hope that you will take these ideas to heart, ignore what the "visionaries" and "Christians" may say, and together we can truly build a Utopia right here in America.

Michael Mattair  
Class of '02

This letter is directed toward my fellow Christians. Any other readers could justify they do not follow the teachings or hold belief in the saving power of our Lord Jesus and therefore refute my argument towards pro-life.

2000 years ago when our savior walked the earth, he preached profound messages, partly through parables, to guide human life to following the will of God throughout future generations.

Jesus taught us, in confusion, to love and forgive unconditionally.

Please don't try to twist this clear and profound message into one that fits your own persuasions; in that end, you are molding our loving God's ultimate will into your own personal will. How does this fit our modern lives?

Respect life before birth, after birth, and yes even after sin.

In more clear examples, shun abortion, forgive those who have taken the life of their own unborn children, and respectfully reform your trespassers through life without parole, carefully avoiding the degradation and condemnation of life through a revengeful death penalty.

How are we to evangelize and work towards building God's kingdom on earth through a loving and contrite heart without daily considering the question: "What would Jesus do?"

Carson Weber  
Class of '01

## A&M students should not oppose tuition increase

For many college students across America, the worst time of year is when the tuition bill arrives.



CHRISTINA BARROWS

Here at Texas A&M, the worried whispers and angry curses of students can be heard around campus because of the recent proposal for a tuition increase.

But is the proposed \$4 increase in University Authorized Tuition (UAT) really worth a protest? Aggies should look at the whole picture and consider what a sweet deal it is to attend this University.

The additional funds will be used to increase the salaries of faculty and staff, improve the libraries and upgrade classroom technology. Aggies take great pride in their University and should be very pleased officials are working towards improving their quality of education.

After all, students are here to learn. There is no doubt competitive Aggies want to be the smartest in the job market and to accomplish this, the most qualified professors and the most advanced equipment is greatly desired.

A&M continues to pay faculty members considerably less than most Big 12 universities, including the University of Texas. According to the Office of Institutional Studies and Planning, a Texas A&M professor earns an annual salary of \$73,400 compared to \$82,400 at U.T. Chances are, a professor would not have a hard time choosing between the two schools — and the salaries.

It is absolutely imperative to show professors they are valued at this university and evidence proves A&M's professors are worth the possible three percent salary increase.

More than 80 percent of A&M's faculty members have doctoral degrees. Just a few of the honors they have received include six members of the National Academy of Sciences and 15 members of the National Academy of Engineering. If A&M wants to continue having excellent professors then it is necessary to have competitive salaries.

In the Feb. 3, 1999 issue of the *New York Times*, the average cost for a year (30 hours) was given for ivy league, private and public universities based on tuition, required fees and room and board. If anyone wishes to attend an Ivy League university, the average cost would be \$30,887.

A private, four-year university costs the college student an average of \$20,273. Finally, the average four year public school costs \$7,773. How much does it cost the average Aggie for tuition, required fees and room and board? Only \$7,403!

The proposed \$4 increase in UAT is expected to cost the average student \$50 a semester.

A&M would still be \$250 cheaper than the national average for a four-year public school. Although countless other costs pile on top of Aggies such as books, parking and entertainment, rest assured that an increase in tuition is little to be concerned about.

A&M's campus has numerous computer rooms, a new library annex and excellent classroom technology.

Texas A&M has an excellent reputation and ranks among the top three institutions nationally in undergraduate enrollment in agriculture, business administration and architecture. As one of the leaders in teaching, research and public service, Aggies are truly blessed to attend a school that is constantly striving for improvement at such a small cost to students.

A&M is an amazing place. Remember what an incredibly low tuition price is paid when passing a "Big 12 Champions" sign or playing frisbee in Research Park.

Remember how fortunate Aggies are to read a book written by their professor or see a nationally acclaimed play in Rudder Auditorium.

Maybe Aggies can pay the proposed tuition increase by eating a few more packages of ramen noodles per semester. It is a small sacrifice to pay in an effort to continue A&M's history of excellence and future of improvement.

Christina Barrows is a sophomore English major.

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:

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