

## Whatever you say I am

Protests at University of Illinois in response to Eminem performance absurd; forgetting free speech

Eminem is not known for his intellect. He is known for his success in the music industry and his constant battle with critics and other members of society over his inappropriate lyrics.



LUKE  
McMAHANA

forcefully discriminated against or harassed. This was a performance on a public campus and all concert-goers attended on their own will.

Anyone who claims to have been subjected to discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender did so on their own accord.

In response to the criticism he has received from activists, Associate Chancellor Gene Barton said, "In the entertainment business, a presentation is always done that conflicts with some people's thoughts and behavior. I talk about providing diverse entertainment to the campus community and sometimes that entertainment isn't agreeable to other people."

Barton seems to be the only one thinking rationally about the controversy. The fact that the activists have such strong feelings about the inappropriate nature of Eminem's material suggests they have listened to it.

Possibly they listened out of curiosity or perhaps they wanted to be able to better define what is so offensive.

Regardless, there are better ways to counter Eminem's vulgarity than taking on the university.

Publication, boycott, protest and speech are all forms of expression protected under the constitution. Activists could have used any of these venues to get in their two cents.

A public university is a place where cultures are brought together, ideas are shared and diversity promotes knowledge. Surely there are existing courses on topics that might offend some students.

These students, however, realize that these courses are not mandatory and they do not have to subject themselves to them. The case with Eminem is no different.

One does not have to be a fan of Eminem or even know who Eminem is to

be able to see that this dispute is cut and dried. The activists obviously share a set of values very different from those of Eminem. These anti-Eminem students, however, must pick their battles wisely.

By taking on the university, they are in fact advocating an environment in which students would be subjected only to "appropriate" material.

This is an environment quite different from the real world and one that should have no place in a public university where diverse ideas are encouraged.

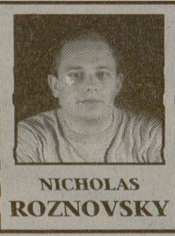
Luke McMahana is a senior industrial distribution major.



ADRIAN CALCANELO/THE BATTALION

## Qualified to bear arms? Like drivers, gun owners should earn license to operate, be held accountable

The issue of gun control divides Americans. From those who advocate complete freedom of individuals to own whatever firearms they choose to those who seek limitations on who can own certain types of guns, it is clear that there is little consensus on the issue.



NICHOLAS  
ROZNOVSKY

Just this month, voters in Colorado and Oregon passed ballot measures to require background checks of firearm purchasers at gun shows.

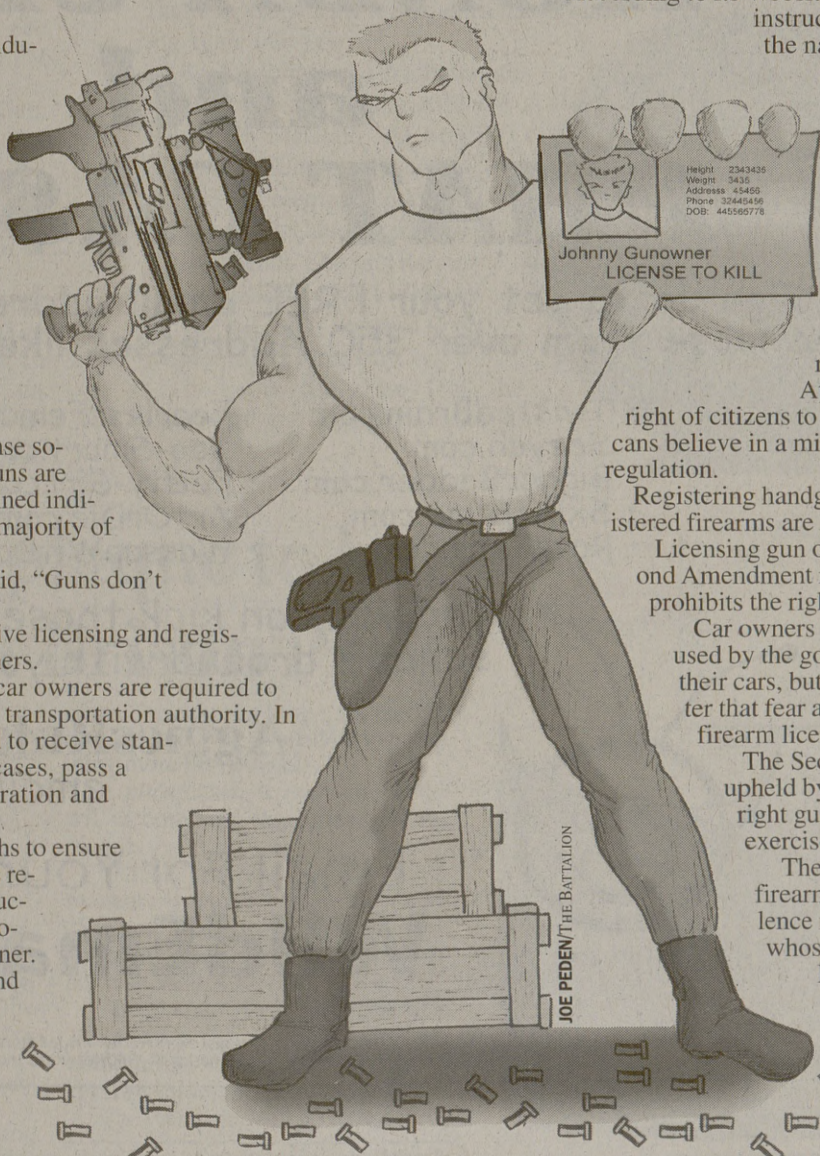
Opposed by gun owners' rights advocates, the measures won by large margins in both states. Nearly three-fourths of Colorado voters voted in favor of the background checks.

The background checks are aimed at reducing the number of firearms sold to convicted felons and people who are mentally unstable.

Unfortunately, crimes committed with guns often involve people who have never served time in prison or who have not been certified as being mentally unstable.

Background checks may help reduce the number of firearms possessed by irresponsible individuals, but they will not eliminate them entirely.

It is harder to get to drive a car in 47 states than it is to own an instrument whose express purpose is to injure or kill.



Americans are allowed to own guns without any sort of licensing or guarantee of safety training.

It is harder to drive a car in 47 states than it is to own an instrument whose express purpose is to injure or kill.

In Texas, only citizens who choose to carry concealed firearms are required to have a license. In fact, state law allows those convicted of a felony involving an act of violence to possess a firearm as long as they keep it at home. Texans who keep their guns at home can do so without any training or licensing whatsoever.

The Second Amendment calls for "a well-regulated militia." Allowing millions of citizens to own and use guns without any formal training does not constitute a well-regulated militia; it constitutes a total lack of regulation whatsoever.

Even opponents of gun control are advocates of gun safety training.

The National Rifle Association (NRA), the largest and most influential gun rights group in the nation, has several programs designed to teach gun owners and users how to use firearms in a safe and responsible manner.

According to its Website, the NRA has more than 38,000 certified instructors teaching gun safety classes around the nation. Since 1988, the group has also sponsored the Eddie Eagle GunSafe program to educate children about gun safety.

In June, a Scripps Howard poll of Texas adults found that three-fourths of the respondents favored registration of all handguns in the state, a figure consistent with similar surveys conducted in other states.

A poll of high school students released in August by Hamilton College found that 96 percent favored handgun registration.

At the same time, 81 percent supported the right of citizens to own firearms, showing that young Americans believe in a mixture of personal freedom and government regulation.

Registering handguns is the first step. Making sure those registered firearms are used safely is the next step.

Licensing gun owners would no more infringe upon Second Amendment rights than licensing of automobile drivers prohibits the right to travel freely.

Car owners do not fear they are on a list that will be used by the government to single them out and seize their cars, but pro-gun lobbyists have been quick to foster that fear among the American public concerning firearm licensing.

The Second Amendment has been consistently upheld by courts across the country. Like any other right guaranteed by the Constitution, it should be exercised in a responsible manner.

The registration of guns and licensing of firearm owners may not end the problem of violence in the nation, but it is a common sense step whose time has come.

It is time state governments make owning a gun as big a responsibility as driving a car.

Nicholas Roznovsky is a senior political science major.

### Bull Board

**Good Bull** — Texas A&M students are used to seeing the lights on campus turned off for Silver Taps, but on Monday when the power went out in a number of on-campus buildings, students and staffers were caught off guard. However, one group shined without lights — A&M's Department of Food Service.

As the thousands of students who have meal plans already know, being denied even an on-campus meal can be hell when there are only 30 minutes before the next class.

Hungry students in the Commons Lobby did not have to go without as the Food Service employ-

ees improvised, despite adverse conditions, to continue to serve the day's lunch.

In the Commons Dining Hall, workers moved the serving line near the cafeteria windows and served whatever food they could prepare without electricity.

A cold turkey sandwich is no match for chicken tenders, but considering the circumstances, any lunch at all was something to be thankful of.

Watching the employees run around in the dark to serve hundreds of students was impressive and greatly appreciated.

— Eric Dickens

### Mail Call

**Fan in support of coach Slocum**

I think it is time head football coach R.C. Slocum got a little respect from the student body.

He is constantly criticized by the student body for being too conservative and a loser in the "big" games.

But let's be honest here — if he calls a pass play, which falls incomplete, he is criticized for not running the ball.

If a running play is chosen, which falls short, he is criticized because he did not call a passing play. It seems that he just cannot appease the majority of football-guru students here.

The fact is that a coach with an average of nine wins per season is doing something right, and I am tired of hearing otherwise.

I for one, tip my hat to Slocum

and look forward to seeing him back next season. Gig' Em!

Ryan Rosborough  
Class '02

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