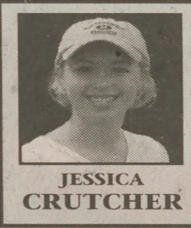


THE BATTALION

No ambiguity

Decision is needed on Ten Commandments case

The display of the Ten Commandments in schools, courtrooms and other public places has long been a point of disagreement between religious rights groups and advocates of the separation of church and state. Therefore, it is surprising that the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear a case deciding



JESSICA CRUTCHER

of the case is disappointing. The justices have turned down similar cases in the past, leaving lower courts divided and no wiser than before. It is time for the high court to decide whether the display of the Ten Commandments on public property is a violation of the separation of church and state, or "a historical and cultural monument that reflects one of the earliest codes of human conduct," as the Elkhart City Council argued.

Initially, one might think that by turning away the case, the Supreme Court was upholding the lower court's ruling. However, in 1996, the court declined a constitutional challenge to a similar monument in a park near the Colorado state capital, according to *The New York Times*. In this case, the monument was allowed to stay. Conflicting decisions will continue to be made, and thousands of court hours wasted, until the Supreme Court sets federal guidelines.

Church and state separatists have gained short-term ground with this decision, but have not won a long-term victory, as some people seem to believe.

"Today's announcement should help bring the religious rights Ten Commandments crusade to a screeching halt," said Rev. Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, in a *New York Times* interview. However, although the decision might have slowed the crusade in Elkhart, it will have little affect on the thousands of other towns in America. Until an all-encompassing ruling is made, the ACLU might as well resign itself to countless lawsuits in small religious towns across the nation.

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Conflicting decisions will continue to be made, and thousands of court hours wasted, until the Supreme Court sets federal guidelines.

whether the display of the Ten Commandments on public property violates the principle of separation of church and state. The case was based on the placement of a granite marker, bearing the commandments, that stands on the lawn of an Elkhart, Ind. city office building.

Two residents, aided by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), sued to have the marker removed. The lower court ruled the marker does violate the constitutional separation of church and state. Since the Supreme Court refused to hear city officials' appeal, the ruling will stand, and the marker will be removed.

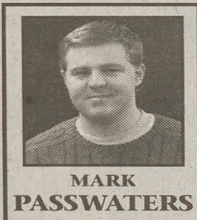
The Supreme Court's decline



ANGELIQUE FORD/THE BATTALION

Arafat should renounce terrorist attacks or suffer

Over the weekend, a Palestinian suicide bomber attacked a disco in Tel Aviv, killing 19 civilians and injuring dozens more. Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, in a rare moment of courage, condemned the attack and called for a unilateral Palestinian cease-fire in the ongoing slaughter between Israelis and Palestinians.



MARK PASSWATERS

Many people believe that Arafat took this stance because the Israelis were about to invade Palestinian controlled areas and arrest Arafat and his allies. If Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Prime Minister, and the Israelis were indeed contemplating such action, they would be entitled to take it. For the past several years, the blame for much of the death and destruction in Israel could be equally distributed between the two nations. Credit for the carnage of recent

months belongs exclusively to Arafat, and the world should not be surprised if the Israelis respond in force.

Palestinians are attempting to claim that Sharon and his hard-line stances are to blame for the killing. Unfortunately for them, the timeline of events does not aid their argument. The increase in terrorism emanating from Palestinian controlled territory was one of the reasons Ehud Barak lost to Sharon in the last election.

Repeatedly, Arafat has said one thing and done another. After this latest attack, Arafat said, "We will now exert our utmost efforts to stop the bloodshed of our people and the Israeli people and do all that is needed to achieve an immediate and unconditional ... cease-fire."

The Israelis did not appear to be impressed by such rhetoric. A member of Sharon's cabinet said "Quite frankly, we are tired and sick of hearing these things from [Arafat]."

While the Israelis have often left themselves open to criticism for their lack of restraint and

tendency towards violence against the Palestinians, they should be commended in this case. With some exceptions, the Israelis under both Barak and Sharon have held their fire against an increasing number of terrorist acts.

Arafat was the head of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) when it was universally accepted as a terrorist organization. He became a statesman only after he and the Israelis were willing to talk reasonably about peace. Since peace has not come entirely on Arafat's terms, old PLO methods have been used as a form of political blackmail.

Now that Arafat is a statesman, he must understand that his fate is inexorably linked to the Israelis. There must be a concrete peace, or at least steps in that direction. The struggling Palestinian economy will not receive the help it desperately needs from Europe or the United States if Arafat continues to wink at terrorists operating from his territory.

The world has urged the Israelis to exercise

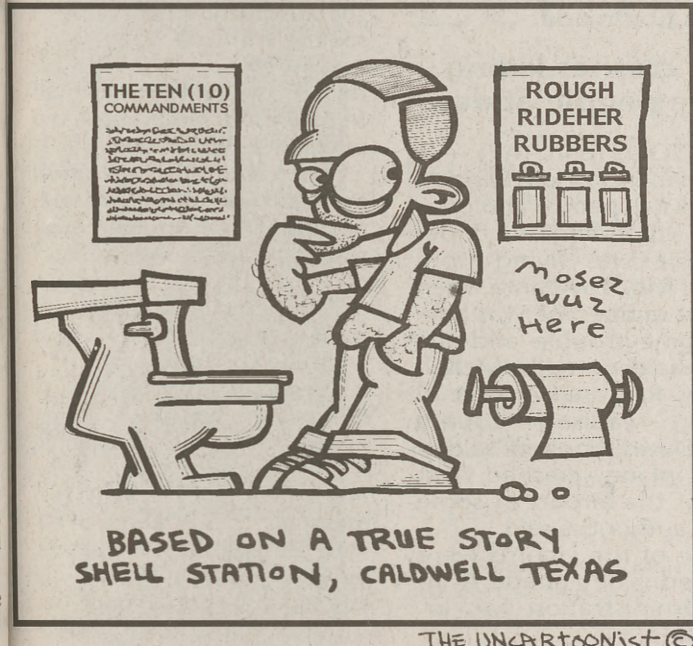
still more restraint in dealing with the Palestinians. So far, this message has been heeded, as Israeli Transportation Minister told CNN, "No, we are not going to retaliate right now."

If the Israelis did, it would not be difficult to see why. They have trusted Arafat and his cronies to control terrorists and to work towards a peaceful solution to their conflict. Instead, he has repeatedly thrown up roadblocks and subtly encouraged the cowardly killings of Israeli civilians, which in turn has cost the lives of his own people.

Arafat must understand that he needs the Israelis as much as they need him. If he does not work with them, his usefulness to them is at an end, and they are in a position to do something about it. Arafat may have heard that talk is cheap, but if this his only answer to terrorism, the Israelis might exact a far greater toll.

Mark Passwaters is a senior electrical engineering major.

CARTOON OF THE DAY



Movies made for profit, not historical accuracy

In response to Mark Passwaters' May 30 column.

In 1962, Toho Pictures released two versions of King Kong versus Godzilla. While both versions ended somewhat ambiguously, Japanese audiences saw a version suggesting that Godzilla had triumphed over the mighty Kong, while Americans were treated to a version that suggested the opposite result. The endings were a conscious concession to marketing realities facing the film's distributors.

When Mark Passwaters suggests that the editing of *Pearl Harbor* for Japanese and German audiences is a result of political correctness, he is wrong on almost every count.

First, he traces the etymology of 'political correctness' to the Bolsheviks, suggest-

Mail Call

ing an ominous connection that is nonexistent, as the term actually emerged as a joking reference to zealotry among the academic left, not as a paean to Lenin.

Second, he suggests that the ending of *Pearl Harbor* has been radically altered, but never says how. That is because his claim is untrue. The only changes made have been the deletion of the Beckinsdale speech and the removal of a comment by Alec Baldwin that civilians should be targeted in kamikaze style attacks on Japan.

Passwaters is correct in citing the litany of atrocities committed during the war, but fails to cite the film's ignorance of perhaps its greatest atrocity.

Very real evidence suggests that President Roosevelt knew about the attack on Pearl Harbor before it happened and allowed it to occur so that Americans would support United States entry into WWII.

Never once does the Disney release mention that fact, which does more to effect the movie's historical accuracy than

the deletion of a scene featuring a fictional character and another that would turn off a significant portion of the international audience.

Marketing is marketing, and the movie industry has always placed profit above accuracy. Was Kong's victory over Godzilla political correctness run amok?

Nick Rangel
Graduate Student

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 014 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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