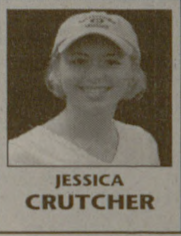


## A life or death situation

### Parents' lack of proper care during birth is equal to child neglect



JESSICA CRUTCHER

and the Verzis' actions crossed that line. If it is illegal to toss one's child in a Dumpster soon after birth or to leave an infant in a hot car until it dies, then it should also be illegal to knowingly and deliberately do less than is necessary to safely give birth to one's child.

Whatever Ms. Cryns did wrong, the parents also did wrong. If anyone must be prosecuted in this unfortunate case,

**Neglecting to give one's child necessary medical treatment should be the most criminal type of child neglect.**

then the Verzis should be charged as accessories or with parental neglect.

The Verzis consistently supported Ms. Cryns during her trial, testifying they knew the risks of having the child at home.

According to *The New York Times*, even other midwives have indicated they do not approve of Cryns' handling of the birth: "Some disapprove of her trying a feet-first birth, called a breech birth, at home to begin with; others say that at the very least, she should have had medical back-up and emergency

supplies like oxygen on hand." In addition, Ms. Cryns was under a cease and desist order from the state of Illinois for practicing without a license.

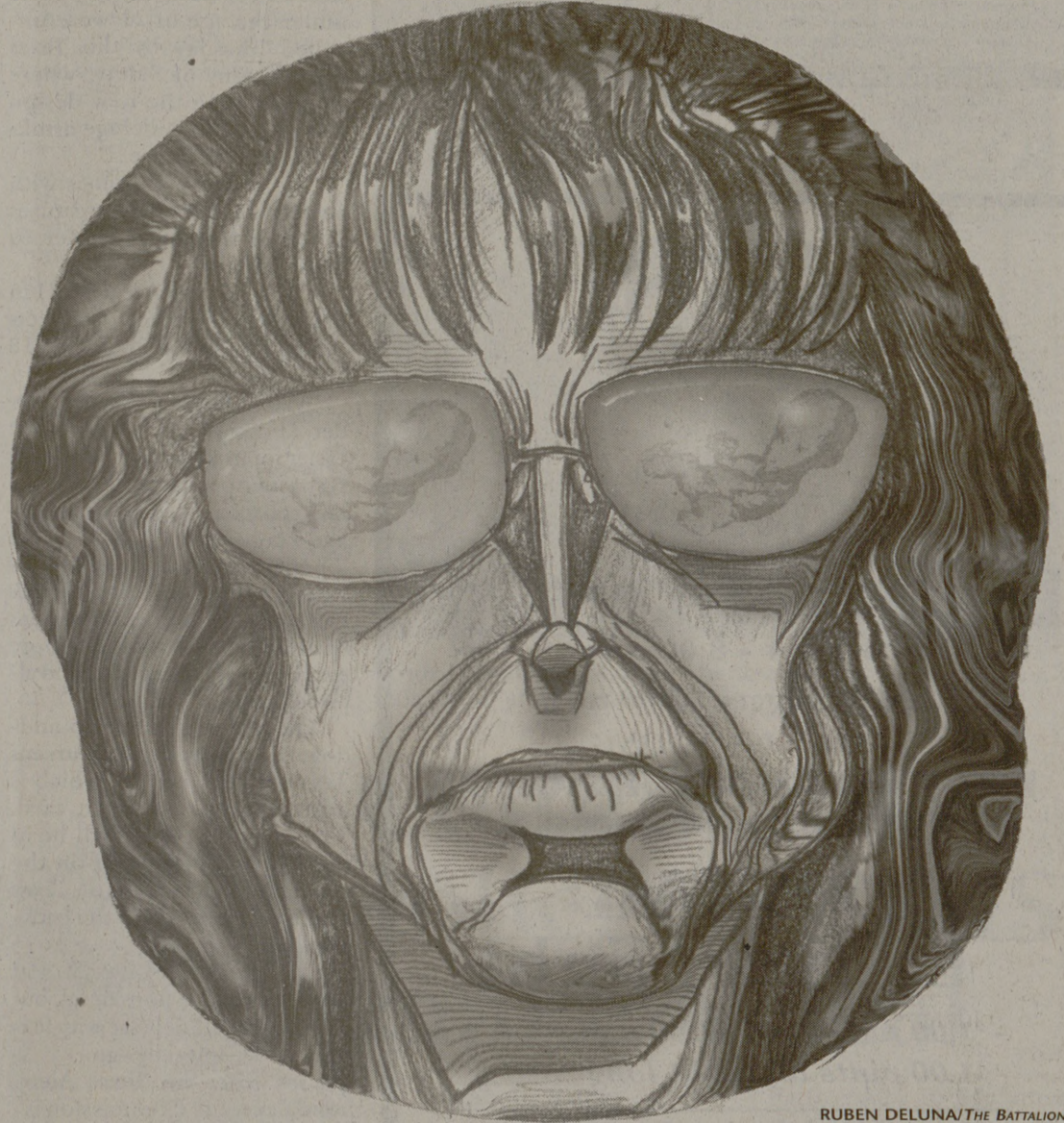
If two people care enough to give birth to a child, they should care enough to do it safely. It is questionable to attempt a breech birth at home; it is inexcusable to take the risks chanced by the Verzis.

Prosecutors said that Cryns took too long to respond during the actual birthing process, not showing concern until 40 minutes after the baby's foot, and nothing else, appeared.

In addition, Cryns was accused of waiting too long — 12 minutes after the baby was born — to call 911. This was an obvious mistake on Cryns' part. However, what about the parents? Mr. Verzi was present, taping the birth. At some point in time, one would think he would have called the hospital himself.

A child died that might not have if it had been given proper medical care. Neglecting to give one's child necessary medical treatment should be the most criminal type of child neglect. This neglect did not cause the child mental anguish or minor physical problems — it denied an infant of any sort of life at all.

Jessica Crutcher is a junior journalism major.

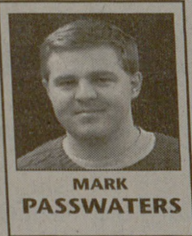


RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

Illinois judge recently denied a misadventure in the death of an infant she was helping deliver. The jury acquitted her of manslaughter charges, but deadlocked while debating involuntary manslaughter charges. Cryns is a lay midwife and is licensed in Illinois, which licenses certified nurse midwives. She was charged with reckless disregard of the boy, because he was in a feet-first (breech) position coming out of the womb, which usually warrants a trip to the hospital. It is unfortunate that the child died, but any blame for the death of the child should be found solely with Ms. Cryns — it should also be found with the parents, Louis and Heather Verzi. The Verzis were aware of the risks they were taking by attempting to give birth to a breech baby at home. They signed an informed consent agreement taking responsibility for any consequences. There is a fine line between parental rights and negligence,

## It's our decision

### Europe should stop criticizing death penalty



MARK PASSWATERS

President Bush is off on his first trip to Europe, and European leaders are gleefully wheeling out their soapboxes so they can rant and rave at the new American leader. Some of their concerns are logical, others are absurd.

The most ridiculous is their outrage at the execution of Timothy McVeigh. Bush would be perfectly within his bounds to ask the Europeans to understand the American judicial system and end their rancor.

Western Europe contains nations that have allowed genocide, actively supported terrorist groups and have felt the violence of terrorist activities. Now, these same countries have the audacity to condemn the United States for carrying out the sentence imposed on terrorist McVeigh.

If the roles were reversed, Europeans would be screaming about the "imperialist interventionist capitalist (insert your '-ist' here) Americans." America should simply and politely ask them to mind their own business.

After all, Oklahoma City is not in the middle of France. No Germans were among the 149 adults that were killed. None of the 19 babies that had their lives snuffed out were Irish. They did not feel the pain and suffering these people — all Americans — felt at the hands of another American.

Instead of sympathizing with those who need compassion, many Europeans and their leaders have instead supported a man who never showed any remorse about his crime. The President of the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly demanded the American observer to that body be expelled after the execution of McVeigh, which he called "sad, pathetic and wrong". Spanish leftists protested Bush's trip to Spain, claiming he was a "mass murderer" for leading a nation that has legalized capital punishment.

According to a Fox News/Opinion Dynamics poll taken the day of McVeigh's execution, 68 percent of Americans support capital punishment — only 22 percent do not. This, to many Western Europeans, makes us barbarians.

But what of the past?

*The Washington Post* noted that Spain is "a country still haunted by thousands of summary executions carried out during the 36-year dictatorship of Generalissimo Francisco Franco," and no report needs to acknowledge the humiliation felt by Germany and Italy over the acts of their two fascist dictators.

This nation, however, does not execute their political prisoners for the score; it follows a set of laws set forth in our Constitution. It is wrong for Europeans to attempt to deflect their guilt onto the actions of another sovereign state.

Still, people try. During a Fox News interview, Irish journalist Carol Coleman condemned McVeigh's execution, claiming "there are other ways to deal with it. Civilized countries should move beyond the death penalty."

The irony here is deep. Ms. Coleman comes from a country whose population has supported a terrorist organization, the Irish Republican Army, which has slaughtered Catholic and Protestant alike in Northern Ireland and England for 85 years, but feels perfectly justified to criticize Americans for following through on a sentence imposed on the ultimate terrorist?

Fox responded by showing pictures of the mangled corpses and bloodied survivors from the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. "Fox apparently wasn't editorializing against Coleman, but it was an effective rebuttal nevertheless," *The Washington Post* said.

Timothy McVeigh was put to death by a government led by George W. Bush. The sentence was imposed under Bill Clinton under guidelines initially started by Ronald Reagan. The American justice system demanded McVeigh meet his end, and he did. If Europeans do not like it, that is their prerogative.

In Oklahoma City, a note was painted onto the wall of an adjoining building by a rescue crew on April 19, 1995. It told the bomber — later known to be McVeigh — that they would be caught, because "the victims cry for it, justice calls for it, and God demands it!" If God demanded McVeigh's death, we will never know. Justice called for his execution, and it has been carried out.

Mark Passwaters is a senior electrical engineering major.

### Mail Call

#### Bryan should make haste in fixing un-repaired road

College Main is probably the road with the most pedestrians in Bryan-College Station. The City of College Station has done an excellent job of accommodating pedestrians, cyclists and motorcycles by providing sidewalks and bike lanes.

But on the Bryan side of the city sign, the road crumbles. It is full of pot holes and the edge of the road is a ditch, no curb. These road conditions cause motorists to swerve dangerously around the pot holes.

This, combined with careless

drivers, proved fatal Monday night in an accident involving pedestrians. I walk and bike this road daily and have often feared for my life at the hands of other motorists.

If the City of Bryan cares about its citizens, it will fix College Main Street to the standards of the City of College Station. This road should be heavily patrolled as well. The speed limit is 25 mph and is rarely heeded.

Because most of the people in the area are renters, we are easily ignored. As a citizen of Bryan and a pedestrian on College Main, I charge the city to enforce the speed limit, to accommodate pedestrian and bike traffic and to repair the road surface.

There is no reason that we

should let Bryan ignore this dangerous situation.

Ginny Chilton  
Battalion Subscriber

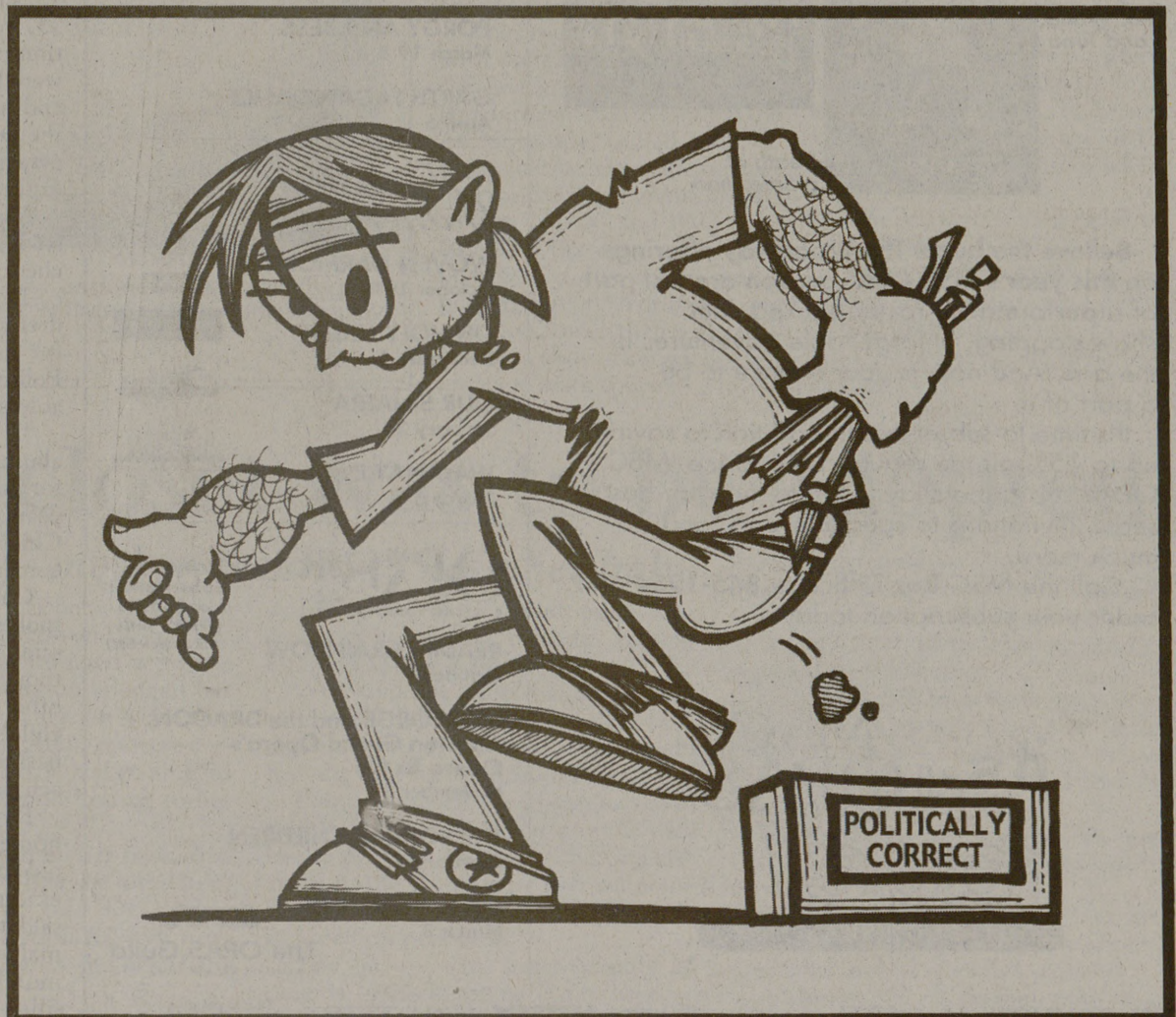
The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

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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### CARTOON OF THE DAY



THE UN-CARTOONIST ©