

It's not working

Operation Gatekeeper ineffective, must consider other options

As a nation founded by immigrants seeking a better life that calls itself the "Land of Opportunity," the United States possesses a rich immigrant past. Until 1920, the United States had unrestricted immigration. However, even then, many were fearful and resentful of "foreigners" and doubtful of the United States' ability to absorb them.



JENNIFER LOZANO

Eighty-one years later, the United States has built an iron door to prohibit illegal immigrants from entering the United States under the Operation Gatekeeper campaign, which has resulted in the tragic deaths of many people crossing the border. American lawmakers are stuck with the delicate task of creating immigration policies that reflect and maintain the ideals our nation was founded on.

Until 1994, most immigration concerns were focused on what the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) calls illegal aliens, mostly those slipping across the Mexican border. This is despite the fact that most aliens arrived legally and overstayed their visas.

In October 1994, as a response to rising political pressures, the United States launched high profile campaigns such as Operation Gatekeeper in San Diego. Operation Gatekeeper involved an unprecedented build-up of law enforcement manpower and advanced technology in San Diego County (one of the most frequented entry points) to "deter" illegal aliens. However, the campaign is not working as hoped — it has just relocated the flow of immigration. Therefore, other alternatives to the operation should be considered.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, agents were increased by 140 percent, enforcement was increased by 150 percent and miles of reinforced fences were implemented by 1998. In addition, the use of better lighting, infrared scopes, underground sensors, computers, vehicles and aircraft were either increased or implemented.

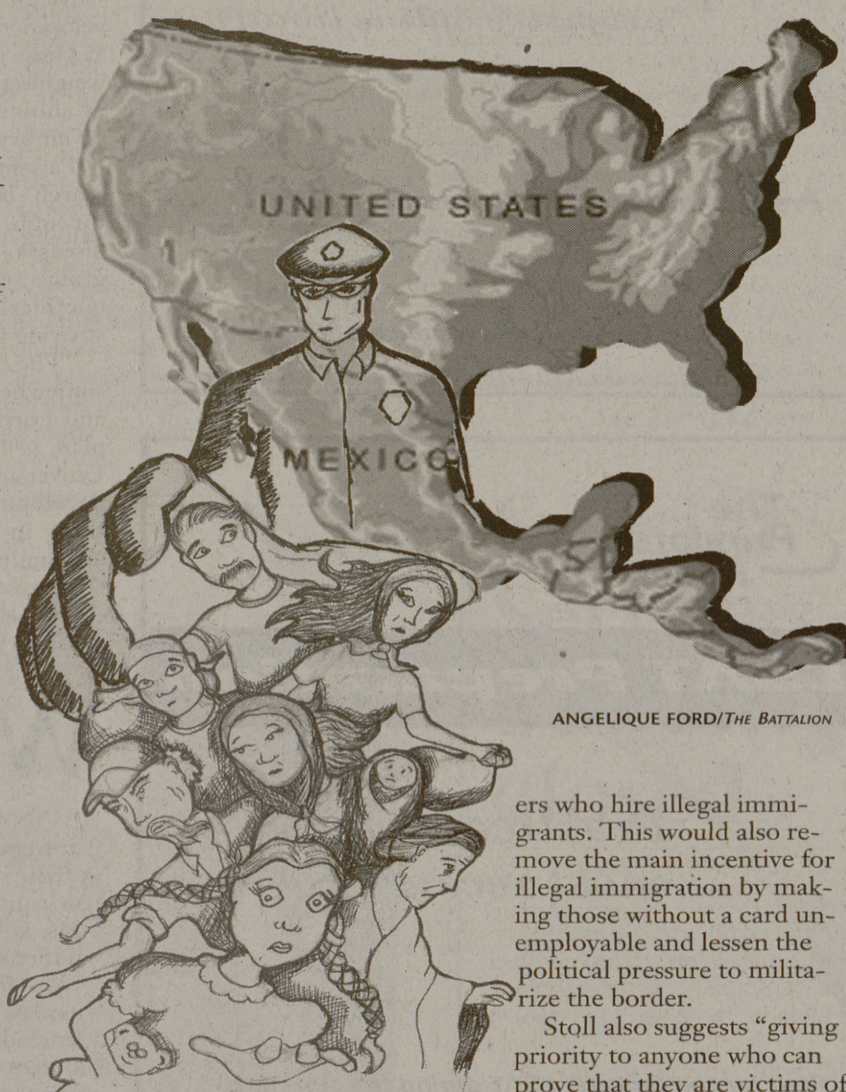
Despite the government's desperate attempts to secure the border, no significant changes have occurred. Instead, there has been a shift in immigration resulting in a dramatic increase in immigrant deaths. While San Diego sector apprehensions of illegal aliens have dropped, the El Centro areas have skyrocketed. In fact, according to the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, the apprehensions in Arizona and Texas have also increased dramatically — 351 percent and 55 percent respectively. In six years, there were 88,001 fewer apprehensions at the California border, but

apprehensions at the entire Southwest border climbed 68 percent.

More than a \$1 billion has been spent on Operation Gatekeeper, but illegal immigration has not been prevented. Operation Gatekeeper simply has shifted them to the harsh conditions of the mountains and deserts east of San Diego, and the number of immigrant deaths has increased by 500 percent.

Immigration policy has to address a variety of economic, humanitarian and ethical issues. At the heart of the immigration debate are the rights of immigrants to be with their families, to seek asylum from persecution and to seek a better standard of living versus the rights of native-born citizens to determine who lives, works and benefits from public services in their country. A rising sense of insecurity among many U.S. communities such as El Paso, whose low-wage economy can at least partially be attributed to heavy immigration flows, is just one example of the factors affecting Americans' differing views. However, stricter border controls have proven ineffective and lead only to human rights abuses and victimization of illegal immigrants. With immigration officials considering implementing Operation Gatekeeper in other sectors of Texas and Arizona, Americans should seriously consider immigration policy reform as a means to stopping this unsuccessful and inhumane program.

According to anthropologist David Stoll, the human rights abuses that have occurred as a result of Operation Gatekeeper have "generated a support for a national worker identity card" that could be an effective policy reform idea. The identity card would include a photograph and possibly a fingerprint and would be much harder to duplicate than current forms of documentation. If issued to legal residents, authorized workers and U.S. citizens, the card would allow the much-needed enforcement of sanctions against employ-



ANGELIQUE FORD/THE BATTALION

ers who hire illegal immigrants. This would also remove the main incentive for illegal immigration by making those without a card unemployable and lessen the political pressure to militarize the border.

Stoll also suggests "giving priority to anyone who can prove that they are victims of individual persecution,

changing the current definition of family unification to only include spouses and children, followed closely by a large reduction in job-skills based immigration," which only allows businesses to pay foreigners less than they would pay a current resident. In addition, Stoll believes that policy reform should "restructure provisional work programs to open the U.S. to temporary workers who take jobs that U.S. residents do not want, protect the most vulnerable economic sectors from an influx of low-wage competition, and most importantly "protect the basic human rights of all residents, legal or not."

Jennifer Lozano is a sophomore english major.

Mail Call

Rangers undeserving of excessive criticism

In response to Mark Passwaters, Matt Thigpin and Mike Balhoff's July 11 article.

Whenever I read the sports section, I see a recurring pattern of Astros praising and Rangers bashing.

Mark, Matt and Mike are obviously Astros fans, and that is okay, but College Station is in Texas, not Houston, so let us be fair.

In today's *Battalion*, the Rangers were the "Disappointment of the Year," even though no pre-season polls had the Rangers ranked higher than 20th in the league. And when the Rangers "won" the Lone Star Series (the silver boot is in Arlington, not Houston), we all got to see "Rangers and Astros split series."

We also got to hear about how good the Round Rock Express pitching staff is, what a bright future there is for Houston and how the Rangers are old and grey and have no future. No credit was given to the Rangers at all.

Face it — The Astros were beaten by a bad team. The Rangers were two pitches away from the taking the series five games to one.

Also, two things in defense of A-Rod. First, any team and their fans would love to have him. Second, there is no way that you would turn down \$252 million — no way.

You can call him greedy all you want, but anybody in their right mind, greedy or not, would not turn down money like that. A-Rod makes \$25 million a year because he is the best at his position.

As of October 2000, Shaq demanded a three year extension and is making \$29.46 million a year because he is the best at his position. So who is greedier? *Battalion* sportswriters, I speak for most of my fellow Aggies when I say "This is not Houston."

Craig Titsworth
Class of '01

Art not to blame for sins

(U-WIRE) — There's something to be said for people who stick to their principles. But it's an entirely different game when we ask others to stick to our principles, too.

Case in point: Recently, famed conductor Daniel Barenboim and the Berlin Staskapelle were giving a concert as part of a prestigious music festival in Israel (the Israel Festival, actually ... such a clever name). One of the pieces he was supposed to conduct was to be from Richard Wagner's opera, "Die Walkure."

However, before the concert, many people complained, saying that this piece would offend Holocaust survivors. The piece was removed by concert organizers as a result of the complaints. The reason? The piece was one of Adolf Hitler's favorites. Is it me, or is that perhaps a bit much in the way of trying not to offend anyone? Actually, it's outright censorship, isn't it?

See, I think that attaching Hitler to Wagner and subsequently banning all public performances of his work is a bit silly. Yes, the music of Wagner was used in the past for silly things and was liked and appreciated by silly people. But the music is still amazing. Is it better to continue to connect the Nazis with it, or to return the music to the public realm?

I think the latter is the best thing to do. Why get stuck on the negative? That's what some of us are trying to do here in the United States, at least.

The other evening, while watching fireworks at Coors Field in Denver, I was surprised to hear "Dixie" played as one of the patriotic, "Hey we should love our country" songs that folks were listening to as they celebrated our nation's birthday by blowing stuff up. I can vividly remember people telling me that "Dixie" was one of those tunes that was forever linked with slavery, and that it would never be played without someone being offended.

I guess the folks at Coors Field risked it, anyway. And not one person has complained to the news media, the Rockies, or anyone else, as far as I know. Good for us, America. We seem to be moving on.

I'm never going to try to argue that a person doesn't have the right to be offended by something that he or she sees, hears, smells, touches, tastes or whatever. But that person does not have the right to prevent me from having that sensation.

I imagine that people can do one of two things when they see or hear something that was linked to an unfortunate and tragic moment in the past — remember and appreciate the art, anyway, or become fixated on the horrible things done with the work. I prefer to remember and enjoy.

See, Wagner isn't the man who spread evil and hatred all over Europe in the middle of the last century. That was a different man. Hitler's to blame for that.

Hey, Hitler also really enjoyed painting, so shouldn't we ban all public displays of oil paintings? Eliminate all attempts to grow handlebar moustaches?

Refuse to allow people to wear khaki? (Hitler did wear khaki, you know.)

I'm never going to try to argue that a person doesn't have the right to be offended by something that he or she see, hears, smells, touches, tastes, or whatever.

But that person does not have the right to prevent me from having that sensation. Nor does that individual have the power to control my response to the stimulus. That's not how it works.

Yeah, Wagner's music has come to symbolize some evil intents and actions due to its nationalistic feel and the way in which it was favored by a bunch of idiots in silly outfits. But it's still very beautiful and those who wish to hear his work should have every right to. And those that don't should have every right to not listen, as well.

That's how freedom works — free to do or not to do as one chooses. There's a happy ending (or so I think) to the story of this one particular censorship story. At the end of the concert, Barenboim asked the audience if they wanted to hear the Wagner piece. The crowd did, and responded with loud cheers, while a few folks groaned and booed. The group played the work, responding to attempted censorship in the best way that they knew how. Seems the censors lost this battle. Where will they turn up next?

Bud Hunt
Rocky Mountain Collegian
Colorado State U.

SEV
AND THE RURAL
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Recent trips to local restaurants have made me extremely nauseous. No it wasn't the food or the margaritas that did me in, it was the lovebirds. Couples should be allowed to eat in public, but the grotesque public displays of affection that go on around town should be accompanied by fines. At a school where freshmen are let out of their cages for the first time and people are getting engaged everyday, where should the line be drawn on letting the world know you are in love (or lust)?



JEFF KEMPF

"I think that it is cute to see couples holding hands and stuff, but the Hoover maneuver in public really is not. This town is not as bad as some places, though. I was in the lazy river at Splashtown, and my boyfriend and I saw a girl with her hand obviously in a region no one should be at a family place. You don't tend to see that here.

Although, I remember when I was single, it bothered me more than it does now. It was not jealousy, and I would say 'get a room,' but now it is more cute and not that big of a deal to me."

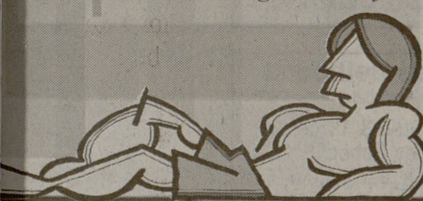
— Kristi Ross, senior education major

Well maybe people in love are cute. I will give them that, but swapping food at a restaurant while sitting on the same side of the booth is unacceptable. Not to mention that this type of practice is not food safe. The last thing I want to see when I am trying to eat a Wet Burrito from Casa Olé is a couple taking one bite of food, kissing and repeating.

But perhaps the worst Aggeland making-out rural legend I have ever heard happened at Fowler Hall. The story is simple. When the dreamy boyfriend left his girl without kissing her goodbye, she decided to call out his name from the heights of the dorm and spit so that he may catch her love in his mouth and remember her love for always. Sounds unreal, right? Wrong. I heard it from an eyewitness. What is it with this obsession for letting everyone know when you are in love? Buying an ad in a college newspaper is probably the most acceptable public display of affection I can think of and possibly the most flattering.

So I might be a bit harsh on those who have truly found each other, but how about the complete strangers bumping and grinding while swapping spit on the local dance floors? I honestly do not believe that is what people pay a cover to see at such establishments. If a couple wants to hook up, get to know each other by talking first. Do not show the world how attracted you are to a person by giving them their yearly physical to the tune of "Southern Hospitality."

— Jeff Kempf is a senior management major



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