

Cap the Booze

New open-container law is good for A&M students

Recently, the law enforcement agencies of Texas were forced by the federal government to adopt a new open container policy which will help fight drunk driving. This new weapon comes in the form of a law that went into effect on Sept. 1, 2001, in response to a federal ultimatum. It stated that the government would deny road maintenance funding to any state that does not adopt an open-container policy similar to the one mandated in Texas. The new law states that it is now illegal for any occupant of a vehicle to possess an open container in the passenger area of a vehicle. The addition of this new law will greatly reduce drunk driving in the College Station area and will help make the roads more safe for everyone.



TIM DYLL

Many students criticize this new law as too strict, however it asks nothing more than what should be reasonably expected from either the passenger or the driver of a vehicle. The new law, which allowed open containers to be present in the passenger area of a vehicle, was far too lenient to be effective. By taking advantage of this law, any driver who was drinking could simply pass their drink off to a passenger or set it down in a cup holder to avoid penalty. An officer could only issue a ticket if the driver had actually been seen drinking from the open container.

Secondly, the old law allowed passengers to drink while riding in a vehicle, an action that could be potentially very dangerous if the passengers distracted the driver. CAR-POOL, the student run designated driver program also sees drinking passengers as a potential danger and requires that all patrons leave their alcohol at

their place of departure. "Due to safety issues and student regulations, we don't allow alcohol in our cars," said Kent Evans, current chair of CAR-POOL. In effect, this law makes driving safer by eliminating one of the many distractions that a driver faces. Opponents also complain that the law would interfere with the transportation of alcohol from place to place, but in reality, it provides plenty of leeway for those students who are transporting alcohol. Students must understand two things about the new law, first what can be counted as an open container, and second, where an open container can be stored. In order to understand the law's stance on alcohol transportation, it must be understood that any container on which the seal has been broken counts as open. This means that even if the container is resealed with a cap, it still counts as an open container so long as the permanent seal has been broken.

Secondly, it is important to know where an open container can be stored. The legal places for an open container are in the trunk of a car, in the cargo area of an SUV, in the bed of a pickup or in a locked glove box. As long as students follow these guidelines, they should have nothing to fear from the new law.

To further ease student's fears, the local police have stated that they are not out to abuse this law. "We would rather have people become informed about the new law and comply voluntarily than have them find out about it through us issuing lots of tickets. We are trying to educate the public about the new law," said Officer Dan Jones of the CSPD.

Breaking this law results in a class C misdemeanor, however the penalty can be stiff, reaching 285 dollars or more. Instead of fighting the new law, students should embrace it as a good way to make the streets of Bryan/ College Station safer for everyone.

Tim Dyll is a senior electrical engineering major.

EASE ANTHRAX ANXIETY

Public must be informed adequately about anthrax

Over the last couple of weeks, Anthrax has been in the top headlines every day. New cases are continuously emerging. As a result, Americans are becoming frightened, but they seem more frightened of the unknowns of anthrax, rather than of the disease itself. The reason for this is not many people know exactly what anthrax is. The general public should be made aware of these anthrax cases, but there is no need for the hysteria that has overwhelmed many families.

Fear of the unknown is one of the greatest fears possible, for there is no way to handle this except to become educated about the fear. Anthrax is caused by the spore-forming bacterium, *bacillus anthracis*. It is found most commonly in hoofed mammals, such as sheep and cows but also can infect humans. There are three types of human anthrax, the most lethal of the types being inhalation anthrax. The other two types are intestinal anthrax and cutaneous anthrax.

Cutaneous anthrax is the more prevalent type that currently is being contract-

ed throughout the United states. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), "Skin infection begins as a raised itchy bump that resembles an insect bite but, within one to two days, develops into a vesicle and then a painless ulcer, usually one to three cm in diameter, with a characteristic black necrotic (dying) area in the center. Lymph glands in the adjacent area may swell."

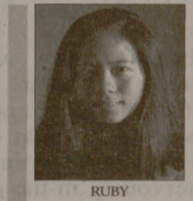
Proper antibiotic treatment is very effective, and death is rare with proper care. It is important to realize that simply touching Anthrax spores will not cause disease. It must be either inhaled or passed through a cut on the skin to become potentially hazardous to one's health.

However, American citizens are frightened, as shown through the purchases being made days after the terrorist attacks. Gas mask sales have soared to the point where most stores are out of stock, and chemical warfare suits have also become a hot commodity. Despite the warnings given by some of the store owners that the suits were collector's items, and there was no guarantee as to the effectiveness of it for biological warfare. Gas masks are worn mainly to prevent various types of gases, smoke and

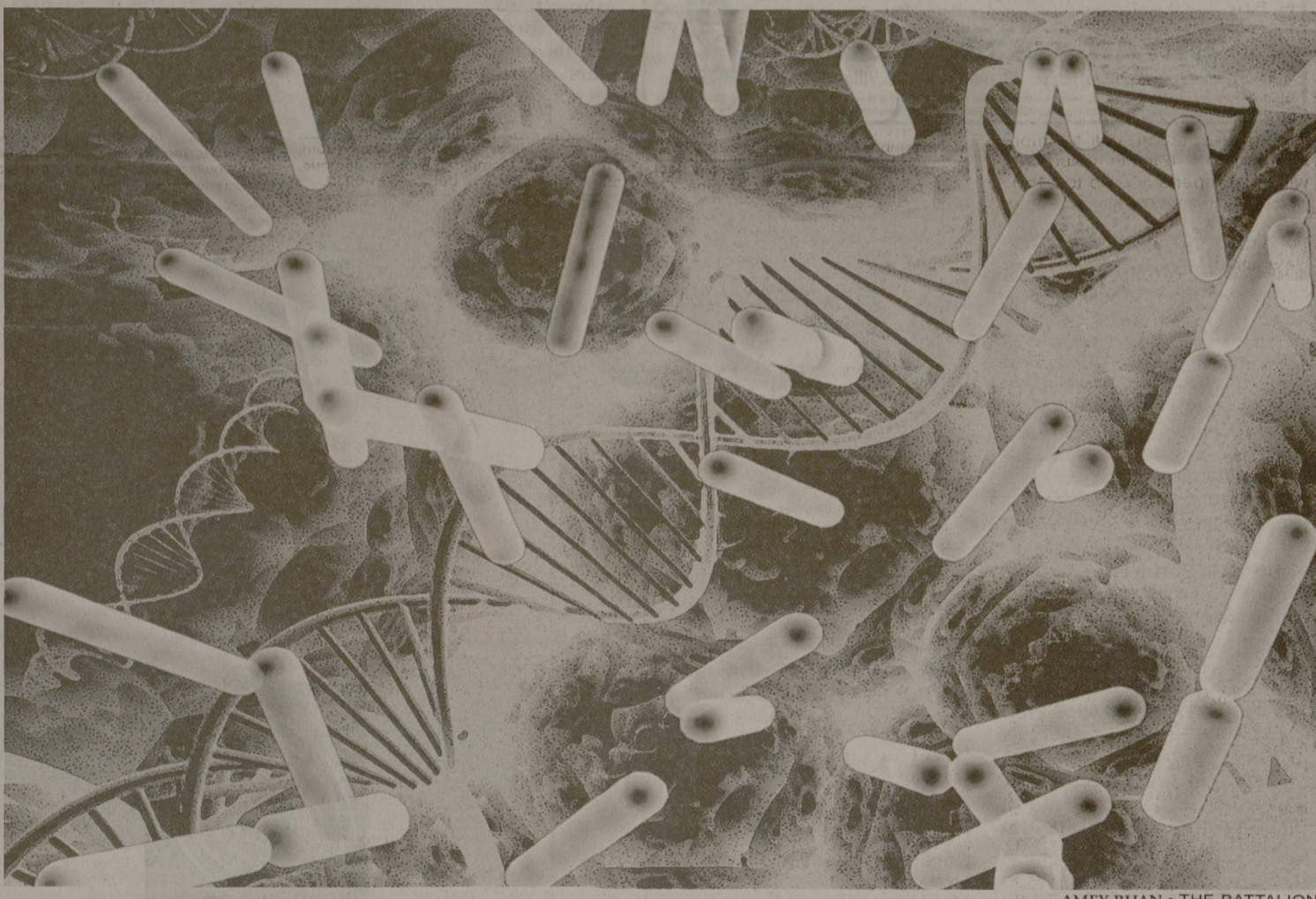
dust. They were not designed with the intent to protect people from contracting potential infectious agents that may be released into the air. In any case, many of these agents are damaging even after mere exposure to the skin, and unless one were to go around suited up daily in a chemical warfare suit, just the presence of a gas mask does not guarantee safety for the owner.

The main idea that Americans now need to come to realize is that while the threat of biological warfare is far more imminent than it ever has been in the history of the world, it must be handled cautiously, and with knowledge and understanding, not with ignorance and hysteria. We must face this potential threat with bravery and courage and exemplify Plato's definition, "Courage is a special kind of knowledge; the knowledge of how to fear what ought to be feared, and how not to fear what ought not to be feared." Becoming informed about the basics of Anthrax is the first step. The unknown lies at the base of every fear. With knowledge and understanding, the fear can be controlled.

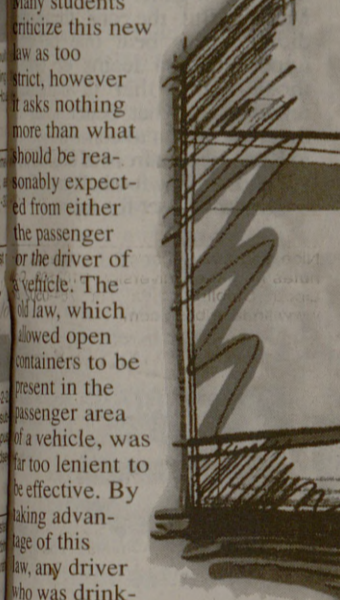
Ruby Lee is a sophomore computer science major.



RUBY LEE



AMEY BHAN • THE BATTALION



CHAD MALLAM • THE BATTALION

Cartoon of the Day was inappropriate

In response to Oct. 23 Cartoon of the Day:

I want to let you know that as part of the Aggie family, and as a muslim woman, I was very offended with the cartoon that you had in *The Battalion* on Oct. 23. It showed a picture of a woman wearing the hijabi (head covering) and a shirtless man wearing a turban and having a stick of dynamite in his pants, I assume was some 'kamikaze' stunt. I do not see any humor in that. It is an insult to every muslim.

First of all, muslims do not go to bars, because drinking alcohol is prohibited in Islam. Secondly there is not a single teaching in Islam that says we support terrorism (suicide is also prohibited in our religion of peace).

In this cartoon you are implicitly saying that terrorism equals Islam whether you mean it or

not. I considered this inappropriate and unacceptable.

I expect that *The Battalion* will take responsible action regarding this matter and I would suggest for your crew, to show more professionalism and do a background check before you display in public before you make your own conclusion about the subject, especially when you are dealing with sensitive issues such as this. Your so-called humor could have a horrendous effect on someone else's life.

These days muslim women wear head covers as a part of their faith and we do not feel as safe as we did before the terrible attacks on September 11. There have been a number of horrible backlashes toward muslims throughout the nation since the attacks.

I do not think your cartoon helps alleviate this problem, and it could certainly distort people's view of Islam, which is already portrayed poorly by the media today. This comic you have is a good example.

MAIL CALL

Dini Sunardi
Graduate Student

Muslim student misguided

In response to Tauhid Albar's mail call on Oct. 24:

I take offense to Mr. Albar's letter. I would like to explain to him that American women are not the decadent sinners he seems to think. We are simply free to live our lives as we wish, to dress how we choose, to go where we want, and yes be a little decadent at times. We are not ignorant or infidels for sitting at a bar or leaving the house without our heads covered or a permission slip from our fathers or husbands. I suppose that is a slap in the face to you or your God but mine thinks that it's just fine.

Liz Hudson
Class of 2001

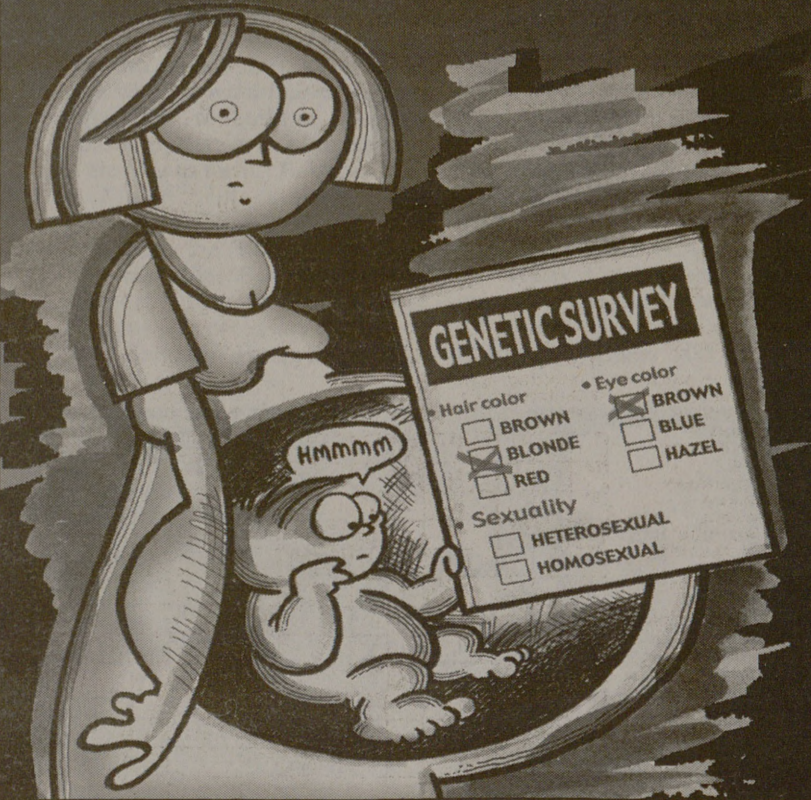
I find it interesting that one

person has taken it upon himself to represent the entire muslim community. I can honestly say that I do not usually agree with the Uncartoonist's opinions but he is entitled to have those opinions, no matter how uninformed they might be. We have something in this country called the Constitution that gives even wannabe journalists a chance to express their opinions.

The muslim community is already having a hard time with PR due to the recent terrorist attacks by a small group of people who have also taken it upon themselves to represent the entire muslim community. It does not bode well with anyone when one person who does not represent all muslims sends veiled threats to *The Battalion* about "slapping someone in the face." If you want people to respect you and your culture, do your part to not give people the impression that you are all violent people.

Justin Lee
Class of 2003

CARTOON OF THE DAY



THE UNCARTOONIST ©