

## Tease me, please

## Political humor is necessary for the healing process, should not be lost

After the Sept. 11 attacks on America, the idea of humor, especially political humor, became taboo. Turning on "The Tonight Show" or "The Late Show with David Letterman" after the attacks, it was easy to notice the lack of criticism of the government.

While it is understandable that immediately after the attacks the American public did not want to hear criticism of the government, it is unreasonable to believe that it should continue.

America is not known for buying what the government says at wholesale — there has always been nay-sayers and critics. To not question the government, especially in times such as these, is wrong. There need to be checks on the government and two types of checks are such things as political humor and critiques of actions by the administration.

Humor has also been associated with the healing process. Psychologist Steven M. Sultanoff, in a Fox News article, said that "Humor is therapeutic because it incites laughter and positive biochemical reactions that accompany it."

Yet, after the attacks, the American public could only tolerate silly humor, leaving many comedians in a tough position. Gone were the wise crack about President Bush and things he said. Comedians were left to read and understand what was an appropriate form of humor. But it has been more than a month since the attacks and it is time for the political humor to return.

President Bush has said that America needs to go on with their daily lives, and that includes political humor. One bright spot in the otherwise dim world of political comedy is "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart." The show has returned to its normal mode of poking fun at everything from the president to random people. This move

is welcome to those need of a good laugh — those who do not shy away from government figures.

Another noticeable change after the Sept. 11 attacks is the small amount of criticism of the government by those in mainstream media. While before the attacks it was common to hear criticism of the Bush administration, after the attacks it was unheard of. Now, a month later, Americans need a balanced view of what the government is doing. Americans cannot be expected to take everything at face value. In a column in *The Houston Chronicle*, Tad Bartimus said "critical reporting about the Bush administration's efforts at tightening civil liberties, where exactly the billions of dollars in relief efforts are going and analysis of military operations that some see as endangering our troops abroad," is causing people to become angered by the media.

People may not want to hear criticism of the government, but it is necessary. It is a part of American society to have dissension and disagreement with the government as part of the news. Without the criticism, the media would resemble

those countries where the government controls the news outlets. While it may still be a taboo subject, criticism is a necessary evil.

American people at this time in history are very patriotic and unwilling to listen to critiques of the Bush administration. Yet, the political comedians and the media perform a needed function in the society. Without the ability to poke fun at ourselves and to listen to both sides of a subject, the American public will become closed minded and intolerant. Right now, the public needs to be tolerant and open minded because the war that is being fought does not have a clear enemy. The public needs to be able to accept different view points and these two outlets provide a necessary service.

Brianne Porter is a junior political science major.



BRIANNE PORTER

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JOE PEDEN • THE BATTALION

## Mental illness should be added to health care

There is a new trend in health-care these days. Not only are employers offering standard healthcare coverage for physical illness, but companies are now offering coverage for mental illness as well. Corporate America's slow realization that mental illnesses are as important, if not more important, as physical illnesses, has been a gradual process.

The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that 1 in 5 American adults will develop a mental illness in their lifetime. With mental illness rates this substantial, businesses should not be afraid of adding mental illness to their health insurance packages. By doing so, they show concern for their employees' well being, in addition to understanding that people are not respon-

sible for mental illness any more than they would not be responsible for developing cancer. The American Psychological Association reports that psychological problems are to blame for 60 percent of employee absences. If employers assisted their employees by covering mental healthcare in their insurance packages, employees would miss less work and employers would make more money. Earlier this month, the Mental Health Association of Greater Houston held a news conference in which they announced that three Houston companies, Weingarten Realty Investors, Ocean Energy and *The Houston Chronicle*, would begin offering coverage to employees and their families with mental illnesses. The Mental Health Association of Greater Houston hoped that these companies would set an



example for other businesses still yet undecided on whether or not offering mental health coverage would be beneficial or profitable for their business. "These are not illnesses of choice, nor are they character defects. They are biologically based imbalances in the brain. And predominant health providers should not be our streets or our jails," said Stanford Alexander, chairperson of Weingarten Realty Investors to *The Houston Chronicle*.

It is not only businesses standing up for equality in healthcare insurance coverage, but state governments as well. According to the American Psychiatric Association, Maryland, Minnesota, Maine, New Hampshire and Rhode Island require that insurance packages offer equal coverage for both mental and physical illnesses.

In order for all Americans to be able to receive equal and fair coverage for both mental and physical illnesses, the unreasonable discrimination of those with mental illnesses must end. The stigma surrounding psychological disorders should be disregarded, for mental illness effects 15 to 18 percent of Americans, the majority of disorders being anxiety related. The viewpoint that individuals with mental illness are responsible for their conditions and helpless in them, as well, is a position that has proven false and ridiculous. If people with mental illness have adequate healthcare available, they can be treated for their illness just as they could be with a physical illness. The brain and body interact with each other; one does not lead. Therefore insurance parity should be for both mental and physical illnesses.

Leigh Henderson is a junior psychology major.

## No God leads his followers to die

In response to Tim Dyll's Oct. 31 column:

I understand that as an opinion writer, you have little space to get

your point across. I also understand that opinion writers should be able to do that. That said, I read Dyll's article as written.

I take great offense to Dyll's assertion that "Many Muslims ... look forward to the supposed reward that they will receive upon death in Jihad." Many? Half of my

family is Islamic and I do not think that "many" of them are looking forward to death in Jihad. Perhaps Tim should have spoken to some Muslims before he did such a brilliant job of explaining "Islamic terrorism" by quoting the Bible.

I understand that bin Laden and other fundamentalists claim that they are working in the name of Allah but I do not think that they are, I do not think that many people believe that any God would lead people to such horrendous actions. So though they say they are in a Holy War, we, as the United States, are not.

These fundamentalists, these "Islamic terrorists," are not only attacking Christianity or any other religion, they are attacking humanity. Let me restate: they are not in a religious war for they have no religious adversary. Therefore, we can not use explanations from any religious book, whether it be the Koran, the Bible or the Torah to explain their actions.

Audrey Momanaee Class of 2002

## Coalition for Life is effective

In response to J.J. Trevino's Oct. 30 column:

I am writing regarding J.J. Trevino's article, which responded to the advertisement placed by the Coalition for Life. My first observation concerned Trevino's claim that the advertisement was "laced with inaccurate information and misguided facts." I would like to assert that the author failed to produce any supporting evidence for his claims in contradiction to the statements made by the Coalition in their advertisement. This comes as no surprise however, considering that the facts the Coalition presented are supported by twenty-six references and sources including the Rev. Bishop Yanta of Amarillo. Trevino's sole claim in an attempt to dispute the information was that "as anyone from Corpus Christi knows, there is an abortion clinic downtown."

Yet, the author failed to name that abortion clinic or provide

proof of its existence! Upon my own investigation of the matter, there are in fact no abortion clinics in Corpus Christi. I invite all to consult the Corpus Christi phonebook. There you will find only a sole physician (Eduardo Aquino) who advertises abortions, but as the Coalition's advertisement stated, no "abortion clinics" exist.

Finally, on the topic of whether Stand-and-Pray is effective. I respond in the affirmative. Over the many hours that I have been a participant in this form of prayerful protest, I have seen women change their minds. One woman even told me personally that she decided to leave and "keep her baby" while I was out there. You be your own judge on whether it's effective; I am convinced that it is.

Brandon Posvar Class of 2002

## The Uncartoonist has humor

So the Uncartoonist's cartoon was a blatant sex joke. So what? I, for one, found the cartoon to be rather

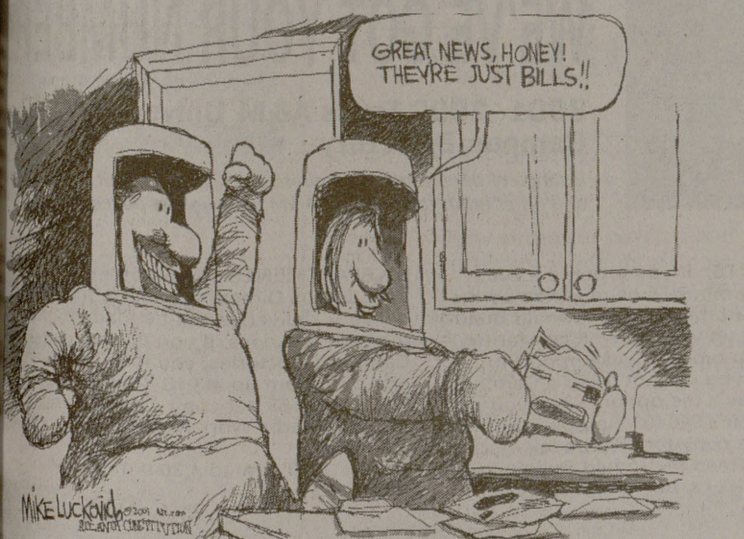
amusing actually, if a bit crass.

*The Battalion* is not a national newspaper with an obscenely large audience and a massive spectrum of readers. It is a college newspaper, intended for college students, specifically Aggies, and is aimed at such. Anyone who's spent any time around college students, or a college dorm for that matter, knows that sex jokes are not exactly taboo among the 18-28 crowd. Some jokes are even downright funny.

But what if a child had read it? In that unlikely event, there is a possible outcome: The child reads and does not get it, and upon not getting the joke will get bored with the cartoon and move on to other things and promptly forget about it!

The Uncartoonist takes so much crap for his cartoons it's unbelievable. If everyone would quit trying to be offended all of the time, they might actually find some of his work pretty good.

Christian Walters Class of 2004



MIKE LUCKOCK