

Brazos Valley on ice

Ice at exposition center would benefit community

Last November, voters in the Brazos County approved an \$18.5-million bond issue to build the Brazos County Exposition Center, which would be used for ice skating and as a host of events and activities. This mention of ice skating prompted many residents and college students, who would otherwise have had little interest in the Expo Center and its agricultural usage, to vote for its approval. Since the bond election, the issue has centered on the capacities in which the Expo Center will serve the Brazos Valley and if in fact ice will be included.

Any way it is considered, having ice in the Expo Center would be a benefit to the Bryan-College Station community. The ice rink would offer a form of recreation for the community and a vital resource to the University and the cities. An Expo Center is most useful when it has the ability to host a variety of events ranging from rodeos, livestock shows, concerts and sporting events.

The officials involved with the planning have been wary about the inclusion of ice in the facility as it is feared ice will interfere with the more rural events that the Center hopes to host. With today's technology and the versatility possible with a facility of this size, there is no reason to exclude ice from the Center as the use and versatility only will be increased by its inclusion.

Dr. Charles Wiggins, a political science professor at A&M and coordinator of the Brazos Valley Ice Coalition, has been rallying support for the ice rink since the bond election and was involved in a project much like this at Iowa State University in the 1970s. This ice rink would provide the entire community, including the University body, with another recreational opportunity as well as allowing for a variety of spectator events," Wiggins said. Wiggins is familiar with this process from his experience at Iowa State, where he spent 20 years teaching, and saw its ice rink prompt the implementation of community ice skating programs and receive tremendous use by the University.

A more obvious beneficiary of an ice rink is the Texas A&M Hockey Club. Currently, the team drives to Belton each week to practice and has no opportunity to host teams from around the state in competition. Its season runs from October to April, and having a local ice rink would greatly benefit it and allow other teams to come to College Station to compete. Paul Schaller, sophomore industrial distribution major and president of TAMU Ice Hockey, sees the need for a rink and realizes that the benefit would reach far beyond the hockey team.

"We definitely need ice in this community. I played high school hockey in Houston and was on one of the first high school teams in the South. Hockey has grown tremendously since then and all ice sports are just getting bigger and bigger," Schaller said.

The Department of Recreational Sports could begin intramural leagues and the University would be able to offer oriented instruction as part of their physical education program. Many students that grew up skating in metroplexes are not able to enjoy this form of recreation any more, and others who have never had the opportunity to skate and may have no interest in the issue at this time would be afforded a recreational opportunity they have never appreciated.

In addition to the City Parks and Recreation having the possibility to host after school programs at the rink and create city hockey leagues, there would be an opportunity for the area high schools to develop hockey programs and begin to compete with other teams in their districts.

There was \$1.5 million offered to start a professional hockey team as part of the Central Professional Hockey League in the Brazos Valley. In addition to the economic impact that a professional hockey team would have in Bryan-College Station, a professional hockey team would provide a much needed boost to the entertainment and sporting scene in the area.

Including an ice hockey rink in the Brazos Valley Expo Center would be a far-reaching move proving itself beneficial to the Bryan-College Station community and the A&M University System, and should be fully backed by each institution. The ice rink has unlimited possibilities and would allow a facility that projects the majority of its special events to be agriculturally centered to receive much more use while providing the versatility that a special event center should.



KELLIN ZIMMER

Kellin Zimmer is a junior English major.



RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

Oregon's Death with Dignity a humane act

U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft recently attempted to remove Oregon's 1997 suicide law, the first in the nation to allow physician-assisted suicide. However, a federal judge blocked the effort after a hearing and issued a temporary restraining order to protect the law during legal challenges, which are sure to come. Ashcroft declared that physicians using federally controlled drugs to assist suicide is not a "legitimate medical purpose," and that all such physicians who are involved should face suspension or revocation of their licenses to prescribe such drugs. This view is highly flawed, and the citizens of Oregon are indeed fortunate to have a judge with enough insight to know what is humane.

Oregon's current Death with Dignity Act allows physicians to provide, but not administer, a lethal pre-

scription to terminally ill adult patients under three conditions.

The first is that two doctors must agree that the patient has less than six months to live. Second, the patient has voluntarily chosen to die, and third, the patient must be found capable of making such a decision. Since the law came into effect in 1997, more than 70 people have sought refuge under the law, to die without excruciating physical pain and unbearable mental torment.

Many people argue that physician-assisted suicide, or euthanasia, is immoral and inhumane and should not be allowed. In truth, it is one of the most humane acts. Physician-assisted suicide is an attempt to understand what it must feel like to live knowing that each day brings nothing but indescribable pain. It means that a physician is to be able to look a person in the eye, a person who's body has been ravished by an illness and plagued with horrors beyond our grasp, and realize that the humane thing is to comply with

their request and allow them to die with some sort of peace and dignity. To deny their pleas and prolong their life is to merely exacerbate the internal anguish and external agony of which we have no comprehension. It is also to deny that we are indeed mortal and that modern medicine can and will fail us.

The concerns regarding physician-assisted suicide range from conflicts

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with religious beliefs to the idea that if legalized, there will be rampant, random killings of the elderly and disabled. The latter already has been taken into careful consideration during

the development of the law, and it is clear that all requests will be handled carefully and thoroughly investigated before any decisions are made. The people using religion as the basis for not supporting physician-assisted suicide believe it is playing God or disobeying the Bible. This belief is rather hypocritical. If it is intervening as God, then surely curing cancer is also a gross intervention, as are Cesarean sections. These actions are not taking lives, but we take lives everyday in alleviating pain in animals. Many beloved household pets are euthanized, out of respect and love. Understandably, pets are not humans, but they still have a life. And we respect their lives enough to not force them to live in pain. Why do 49 states allow us to watch our loved ones suffer in conditions that we would not even consider letting animals face?

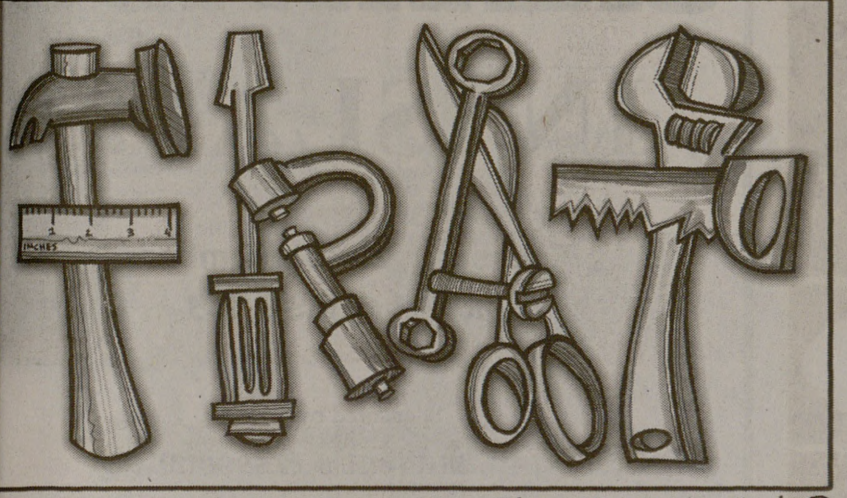
Others argue that this is not the function of doctors; that the position of a doctor is to save human lives, not to take them. Doctors try to cure

diseases, disease meaning exactly that, dis-ease. Their function is to cure discomfort and put the patient at ease. Sometimes, this is impossible, and other measures must be taken to not force cruel measures on fellow human beings.

The 1997 law in Oregon is an important step forward in securing peace and dignity for those who are forced to such extreme actions for various reasons, all equally unpleasant. Ashcroft's decision could be highly detrimental to people all over the United States, not just resident of Oregon, as many states currently are considering laws resembling Oregon's. Not only should the law remain in effect now, but it should do so despite Ashcroft's arguments. Making it illegal will not stop this, instead, it will force euthanasia to become a covert operation, proving to be more dangerous and not reaching those in need.

Ruby Lee is a sophomore computer science major.

CARTOON OF THE DAY



THE UN-CARTOONIST ©

Leave announcements off A&M's Neo mail

While I am a supporter of the Neo University email system, and well aware of the need to distribute important University announcements, I am concerned about many of the emails that are being sent via the NEO system.

Some announcements, such as Game Day Parking Oct. 24, Unauthorized use of Aggie Cards Oct. 18, and registration schedules Oct. 4 have been important, and provided students with information that was timely and necessary.

However, several emails that have been sent via the system such as "Free concert on Friday!" Oct. 4, ESPN Networks and TAMU Oct. 1, the Iowa State Game Bash Oct. 24, and most recently the Aggie Volleyball Postseason Nov. 27 classify as irrelevant at best. Personally, I am not inter-

MAIL CALL

ested in advertisements for ESPN, or propaganda from the Athletic Department and Association of former students. Is there no other place that these announcements can be made? Perhaps *The Battalion* would be a good place, or posters around campus like every student organization advertises. Clearly, if no one comes to the volleyball games, then most people aren't interested in the fact that the volleyball team is playing. Those who are interested probably already know about it. I find no need to send 30,000 people an email to tell them that ESPN is airing a show that probably is not worth watching anyway.

Whoever is in charge of these mass mailings should consider more carefully what they send out. Neo should be reserved for official, important University announcements. If you are going to announce volleyball games, why not email everyone and tell them that the swimming and diving championships are going to be here. What about the

Texas BEST Robotics Competition? Why not publicize that? Perhaps a blood drive merits informing everyone on the University.

University officials will no doubt revert to the often used argument of "If it's not important, just delete it and go on." This argument has been used by many spam companies with little success. It fails to realize that mass emails can interfere with legitimate use. On top of that, most mass emails are sent to subscribers. Unfortunately, AGGIESPAMT comes to every student's inbox, regardless of whether or not we have asked for it.

Since I receive approximately 50 emails a day, many of them University related, I do not need additional mail from the University that does not pertain to me. Either Neo mass mailings should be more restricted, or students should be given an option as to whether or not we receive them.

Jeff Wischkaemper Class of 2002