

Rockets coach takes leave to treat cancer

By Michael A. Lutz
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOUSTON — Rockets coach Rudy Tomjanovich has what he had to do, for both himself and the team. He is taking an indefinite leave to treat his bladder cancer.

The 54-year-old coach broke the news to his players Wednesday in an emotional team meeting. The Rockets are vying for the final playoff spot in the Western Conference.

"At this critical part of the season, this team, any team needs a coach who has given 100 percent of his thought to helping the team," Tomjanovich said. As much as I love this team, I know my thoughts would be on other things."

Tomjanovich missed the team's recent five-game run and had been expected to join the team for Wednesday night's home game against the Los Angeles Lakers.

Assistant Larry Smith will continue to coach the Rockets during Tomjanovich's absence. When Tomjanovich was asked if he saw any possibility of not returning next season, he said "not in my mind."

Tomjanovich, in his 12th season as head coach, led the Rockets to consecutive NBA titles in 1994 and 1995. He is robotic on the sidelines, and said that would be hard to maintain.

"When I coach, I put everything I have into it," Tomjanovich said. "I come out of games sweating ice packs. With all the adrenalin flowing, that can be good for a healing situation. It doesn't make sense."

Guard Steve Francis said the team meeting was difficult.

"I didn't look at him in the eye," he said. "It was hard to look at him again, it wasn't like he was on his sick bed. Coach is really an emotional guy who is telling you you did something wrong or explaining that you're not feeling well."

Tomjanovich was diagnosed with cancer on his bladder in March 18 with transitional cell carcinoma. Doctors said would be treated with medication.

Team physician Dr. James Muntz said there had been no change in the diagnosis.

The only change in his condition is he's calm, he's optimistic," Muntz said. "One of the issues that came up was that the team should start next week. It became obvious that treatments should come and not juggling something else at night that should have been done at 3 p.m."

Michael Moore, who won best documentary feature for "Bowling for Columbine," was the first to bring in harsh criticism of the war with Iraq as well as President George W. Bush during his acceptance speech. His severe words were met with a mixture of boos and applause. However, the majority of winners avoided the subject altogether, while others made indirect references toward peace.

"I love the guy," he said. "I'm just happy that he's going to be OK. Now this is our job to get wins and get things in our power to do. He wouldn't want it any other way."

The team initially said Tomjanovich would rejoin the team during the West Coast tour, then announced he would miss the entire trip. The Rockets went 2-3 under Smith until his absence on the road.

Tomjanovich had missed a game in 11 seasons as head coach.

Tomjanovich said he got over the bladder infection about a year ago and went for routine check-up testing. One came back negative, but another was positive. That led to the multiple test March 17 that found the abnormal cells. "It's hard to deal with," Tomjanovich said. "When Glen Rice said, 'Why don't you talk about it, and that's what we've got to do. I think we'll react good. Just seeing you have the team a lift, to see you strong.'"

OPINION

THE BATTALION

Page 5B • Thursday, March 27, 2003

A NATION DIVIDED

Extreme protests must stop as they only segment a nation already at war

In diplomacy and international relations, war is seldom the first option. More often than not, there are many steps that leaders go through in the diplomatic process before finally looking to war as an option. When war occurs, it is always with a heavy heart that the task is assigned because it bears so much negativity. Diplomacy has failed, and the time to make a stand has come. Now, America must support its troops.

While thousands of Americans have openly protested military involvement with Iraq, they have done nothing but divide a country already at war. The effect of this on the American public is obvious — America has become a divided nation, with antiwar protesters on one side



ERIN
PIRRUNG

and those in favor of the war on another. The situation has split the country down the middle, forcing those with neutral opinions into uncomfortable situations. Some friendships are strained because people cannot agree on the situation.

In the midst of it all are the troops — the soldiers who may or may not want to be involved in this war. They are the ones who must fight the battles. They are the ones who face the real dangers, who may lose their lives for their country.

Not all of them are weathered marines who have spent years in training. Many are reserve members, some signing up so the government would help pay for their college education, others trying to escape civilian life. These soldiers have spouses, children and families. Yet they are serving their country because it is their duty and because they believe in fighting for their country. They are risking their lives for America, and somehow that has gotten lost in the debate.

The men and women fighting for America overseas deserve every ounce of support and respect that we can give them. It is time to come together as a nation to support the armed forces. Remaining a nation divided will only hurt the war effort.

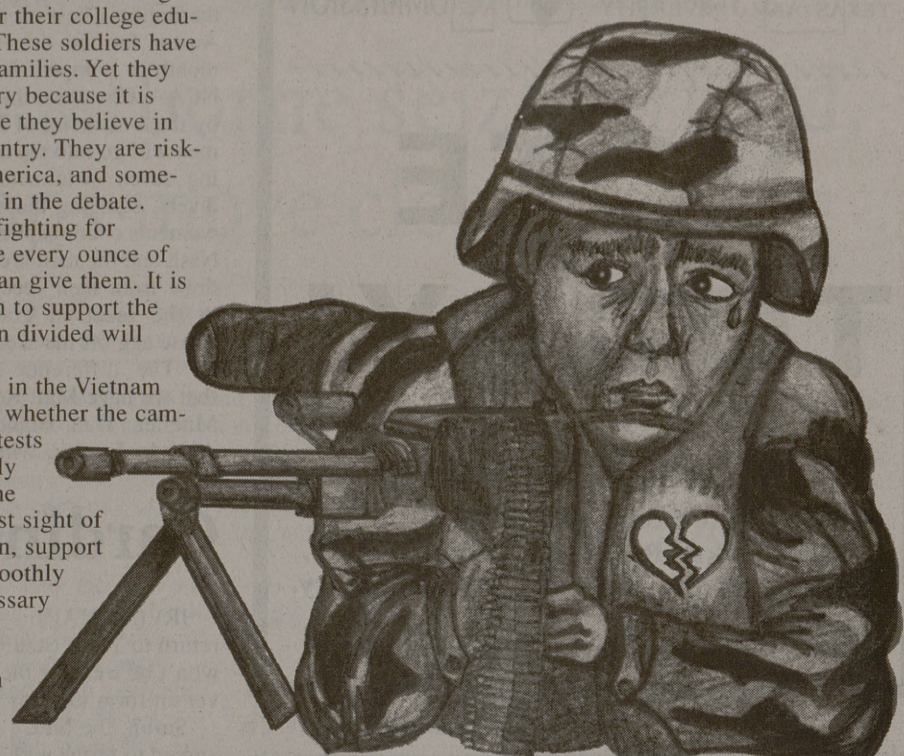
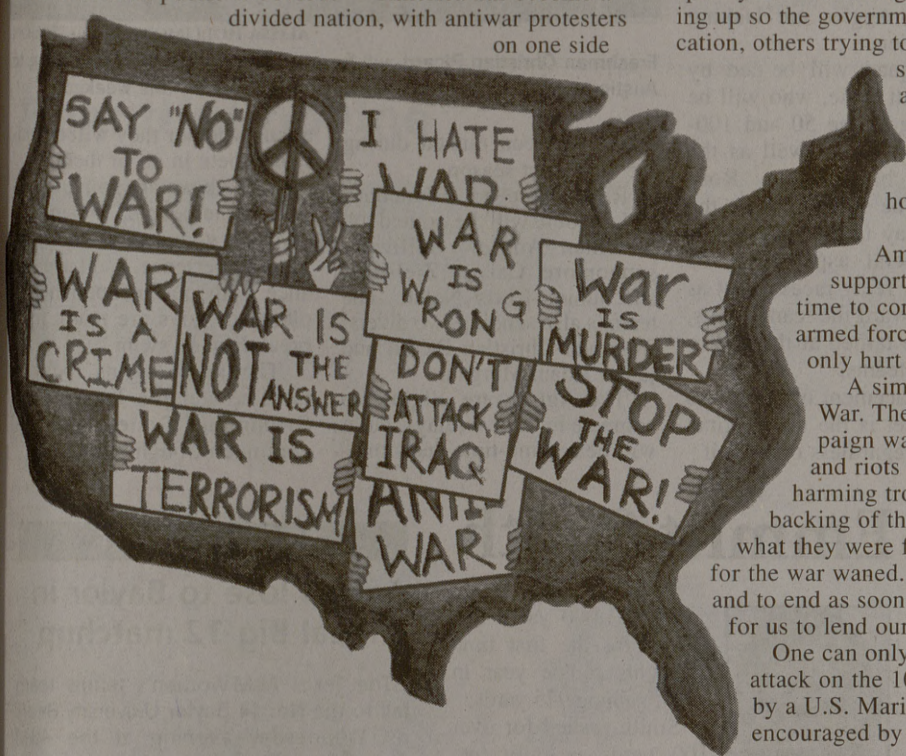
A similar situation occurred in the Vietnam War. The nation was split over whether the campaign was truly necessary. Protests and riots were common, possibly harming troop morale. Without the backing of the nation, the troops lost sight of what they were fighting for and, in turn, support for the war waned. For this war to go smoothly and to end as soon as possible, it is necessary for us to lend our support.

One can only wonder if the recent attack on the 101st Airborne Division by a U.S. Marine was partially encouraged by the protesting. If

America is divided at home, how can the troops be expected to ignore the antiwar sentiment?

This protesting benefits no one. It is time America gathered its strength and applauded its troops, because they are fighting for what this nation stands for. Spirit is what separates America from other countries. This nation must defend the troops who are doing the dirty work for all of us. We as Americans have to remember that.

Erin Pirrung is a junior English and psychology major. Graphic by Becky Maiden.



Attempts at patriotism were a facade

Celebrities at Academy Awards did little to mask criticism of war

The absence of the red carpet for the March 23 broadcast of the Academy Awards did little besides postpone the entourage of fashion critics who traditionally evaluate celebrity outfits before the ceremonies begin. The Academy also removed the bleachers near the red carpet normally set aside for curious fans in the Academy's attempts to "scale down" the event due to the "seriousness of the world situation," according to a press release available at www.oscar.com. However, these mundane and half-hearted attempts to show respect for armed forces were merely a facade, articulated best by host Steve Martin, who sarcastically said, "You probably noticed there was no fancy red carpet tonight. That'll send them a message."



SARA
FOLEY

The message most of them seemed to be trying to communicate, however, was one of objection to war and an urgency for peace, which is no surprise due to the many actors and actresses who have been rather outspoken in objecting to the war with Iraq. Although organizers of the Academy Awards urged the participants not to turn the ceremony into a protest for peace, the night did have its surprises.

Michael Moore, who won best documentary feature for "Bowling for Columbine," was the first to bring in harsh criticism of the war with Iraq as well as President George W. Bush

during his acceptance speech. His severe words were met with a mixture of boos and applause. However, the majority of winners avoided the subject altogether, while others made indirect references toward peace.

"...these mundane and half-hearted attempts to show respect for armed forces were merely a facade, articulated best by host Steve Martin, who sarcastically said, 'You probably noticed there was no fancy red carpet tonight. That'll send them a message.'"

Additional attempts were made with the Iraqi conflict in mind. Many of the celebrities present at the awards chose to subdue their normal glitzy attire, several of the women opting for subtle black dresses, according to foxnews.com.

However, should the self-indulgent actors and actresses genuinely care about the military conflict currently going on in Iraq, or even the necessity for peace, the mere change of a col-

orful sparkly dress to a black sparkly dress, both likely costing more than the salary of a soldier who is overseas fighting, might not seem like enough to them.

Had their concern been genuine, whether it be supporting sentiments for peace or support of the troops, they might have seen the irony in parading into ceremony, wearing thousands of dollars worth of clothes and jewelry, solely to elevate themselves.

Perhaps the acting community can learn something from colleagues Will Smith, Angelina Jolie and director Peter Jackson, who all withdrew their participation from the ceremony due to its triviality during a time of international conflict. However, most of the acting community continue to boldly express their disapproval for the war and will go on pushing for peace without pausing to be grateful for the freedoms that they exercise and the lives of luxury they lead.

The irony of the country's most admired and wealthiest opposing a war that enables them to keep that role has been lost on the majority of them. Luckily for them, and for all that disagree with war in Iraq, their opposition will not halt the protection of those freedoms.

Sara Foley is a sophomore journalism major.

MAIL CALL

ACLU for conservatives and liberals alike

In response to a March 26 mail call:

When Texaminer and the ACLU joined forces to fight the violation of the free speech rights of candidates for student government, I thought I found a cause that both liberals and conservatives could champion. However, as Mr. Nicholas Rangel implies in his recent mail call, it is hypocritical for conservatives to enlist the assistance of a usually liberal organization in order to bring to light an issue that should transcend ideological labels.

I do not appreciate it when the SGA, which supposedly represents students, takes it upon itself to trample over the Constitution. Additionally, it has known for a year that many of the election regulations are grossly unconstitutional.

While I do not support everything that the American Civil Liberties Union does, it is the premiere organization in America today when it comes to defending First Amendment Rights. This is why we contacted the ACLU.

As a purported communications scholar, Mr. Rangel should know better than to hide behind intellectually bankrupt arguments with rhetorical labels such as "far right wing." While Texaminer is a proudly conservative publication, we will stand up for the First Amendment and work with others who do so.

Mark McCaig
Editor, Texaminer
Class of 2005

Mr. Rangel seems to misunderstand the entire point of my actions. Political orientation means nothing to me; the issue is the fact that a student organization that is not recognized wants to say that it considers me the best candidate for SBP.

I do not necessarily endorse, agree, or even like the Texaminer's views; what is important is that a group of Aggies said "we want you for SBP," at which point I said "Sure!"

It is not my place to judge the opinions or stance of a group. I am applying for a position where I will likely be dealing with groups I may not agree with or may not like.

Does that make their opinions any less valid? Does that mean I should just dismiss their views and dismiss them as people? Right wing, left wing, Republican, Democrat — none of this is important. All that I care about is how we can make Aggieland stronger.

Anyone who wants to endorse or speak up in my favor is welcome to, not by virtue of his or her views, but by virtue of being Aggies.

For your future reference, I am a political moderate; among other things, I am going into the military but am also a card-carrying member of the ACLU.

Political polarization is the greatest scourge within our country; let's try to leave this at the gates of Aggieland and not be so angry!

Ed "El Ramos" Brown
SBP Candidate
Class of 2003

Conoley's diversity initiatives flawed

In response to a March 26 front page story:

Jane Conoley opposes the diversity she says she encourages by demanding that others conform to her views. A cherished member of my extended family is homosexual, and although I bitterly disagree with his lifestyle, I still love him very much and would hate to see him harmed.

Consensus on diversity is an oxymoron. Perhaps we should compromise and accept that gays are human and should be treated like everyone else, not singled out for persecution or celebration. There is little I can do to change the decisions of gays whether I agree with them or not, so why should I, or anyone in the College of Education, for that matter, have to say, "Yes, I believe homosexuality is a beautiful thing and should be celebrated." Such a demand is nothing short of hubris on the part of Jane Conoley and those who support her.

Lars A. Doucet
Class of 2006

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 200 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 also may be mailed to: 014 Reed McDonald, MS 1111, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Fax: (979) 845-2647 Email: mailcall@thebatt.com. Attachments are not accepted.