

OPINION

THE BATTALION

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Opening the casket on abortion

Students should heed setups posted at Rudder Fountain and Academic Plaza



CODY SAIN

In the summer of 1955, a young man named Emmett Till took a trip to Mississippi to visit relatives. His mother warned him of hostility toward blacks in the South, but he failed to heed her warning. In August of that year, Emmett was beaten and shot to death by two white men, and then his body was thrown in a river. His crime was speaking to a white woman in the grocery store.

After the body was recovered, Emmett's mother held an open-casket funeral so everyone could see the heinous crime done to her son. His face and body had been beaten beyond recognition, and he had a bullet hole through his head. This crime and the case that followed are considered by many historians to be a major turning point in the struggle for civil rights.

On Monday and Tuesday of this week, there are setups at Rudder Fountain and Academic Plaza by an organization called Justice for All. These setups show graphic, often difficult to look at pictures of aborted fetuses. A common question asked by passers-by is, "Why do they have to show this?"

At the University of Colorado-Boulder, a black student asked this question. One of the volunteers told him the story of Emmett Till. The next day he returned, asking for help to defend the pro-life movement. When asked about his sudden change of heart, he responded that Justice for All is simply "opening the casket" on abortion.

So, what should be seen once the casket is open? First, one should be able to decide from the pictures if the fetus is indeed an innocent human person. If it is, then the question of how, if ever, it is justifiable to end an innocent human's life must be answered. One must either conclude that there are times when it is OK to end an innocent human life or that abortion is murder and must be stopped.

Second, if abortion is nothing more than a simple medical procedure, then the aftermath should not be a problem to look at. If the panels contained pictures of pulled wisdom teeth or of

women and men with stitches, although it might seem odd and disgusting, one would not object to this as fiercely as he might the Justice for All demonstration.

What is the difference? Having stitches and having teeth pulled are just mere medical procedures, but, as the Justice for All panels show, abortion involves the dismemberment of a human being. Making a trip to the local abortion clinic as being comparable to a trip to the local dentist masks the true reality of abortion; Justice for All's goal is to unmask this illusion and expose this heinous crime.

When the movie "Schindler's List" was released, its producers donated copies of it to high schools around the country. Faculty members acknowledged its importance in helping students understand the realities of the Holocaust. Abortion is today's Holocaust. To truly understand the horror of it all, it must be seen.

Bob Dylan, in "The Death of Emmett Till," wrote: "If you can't speak out against this kind of thing, a crime that's so unjust, your eyes are filled with dead men's dirt, your mind is filled with dust.

Your arms and legs they must be in shackles and chains, and your blood it must refuse to flow, for you let this human race fall down so God-awful low!" These words regarding Till's death ring even clearer when spoken about abortion. The human race has truly reached a new low when it is considered just and a right to kill your own children.

It is true that the Justice for All display might cause unimaginable difficulties and emotional stress both for women in crisis pregnancies and those who have had abortions in the past. There are people on hand who are ready to counsel women in need. However, this does not affect the need for the display. In the case of women in crisis pregnancies, they have the right and a need to see what abortion really is. And finally, for post-abortion women (and men), acceptance is the first step to healing.

Now is the time to see the truth. Now is the time to act. No longer will the caskets of aborted children be closed.

Cody Sain is a junior philosophy major.
Graphic by Ruben DeLuna



MAIL CALL

All eyes are on college athletes' behavior

I am a former student of Texas A&M currently living in Boulder, Colo. While surfing the Web today, I saw a headline which said "Texas A&M players shouted racial slurs" on MSNBC. While I don't know the full story and have absolutely no interest in slandering any student of A&M, I did want to write and voice my concerns over the increasing number of police incidents with A&M athletes.

Currently, the University of Colorado football team is undergoing extreme scrutiny from the media for its involvement in an alleged sex scandal. Because of these allegations, the coach has been suspended, potential recruits signed with other teams, student athletes (in all sports) are embarrassed, parents are embarrassed, donations have decreased and the reputation of the school has been damaged. We do not know and may never know if the allegations are true; all this damage has been done because athletes placed themselves in compromising situations.

The media is watching all college sports right now just waiting for their next story. Student athletes, please remember that you represent the best of A&M both on and off the field. Please don't allow yourselves to become the next big joke.

Alicia Alpenfels
Class of 1991

Chet Edwards the right choice for District 17

For the past 10 years, Congressman Chet Edwards has represented a Central Texas district which was predominantly Republican. For example, Bell County has only one elected Democrat in County government, yet, Chet consistently received 60 percent of the vote in the County. Tom Delay's avowed purpose for redistricting in Texas was to increase the number of Republicans in Congress and "reflect the voting trends in the state." Well, the only way they were able to "get" Chet Edwards was to redistrict him out of our District, not withstanding the voting trends in Central Texas. I can guarantee you that those Republicans and Independents that have voted for him would love to see his return, however we wish him well in his new District.

In Chet Edwards you will find an honest man, moderate in his views, extremely effective in representing his district in Washington, and the recipient of many recognitions from very conservative groups who tell like it is and disdain the use of childish labels. He is a true friend of education, and will always be a friend of the Army. For those of you who can see beyond the partisan blinders many zealots use, you should see the synergy between Texas A&M, its engineering programs, the Medical School, and the military.

As mayor of the City of Killeen, he was always available, and without his support, we would have never succeeded in converting Fort Hood's Robert Gray Army Airfield into a Joint Use Airport, which will benefit the entire Central Texas Area. All Veterans here appreciate his recent and extraordinary efforts to obtain land and financing for the 1st Texas Veterans Cemetery just south of Killeen. I am proud to say that during my three terms as mayor, whenever I called Chet in Washington, I always got through to him, even speaking with him on the floor of the House while sessions were being conducted.

Veterans in Central Texas appreciate and support Chet. District 17 has an excellent opportunity to elect an experienced, dedicated, well qualified, influential legislator in the next elections. Too bad I can't use my RV Lot 100 Address at TAMU to Register and vote for Chet, however I will be there for him with a "Vote Chet Edwards" sign this fall.

Raúl G. Villaronga
Class of 1959
COL, US Army (Retired)

Society cannot ignore the consequences of cloning

Negative uses of technology must be banned

What started as a trickle has now become a flood. The boundaries between medicine and science fiction are quickly disappearing and the "attack of the clones" is literally beginning. America, as the world leader in scientific thought, now has no choice but to address the potential consequences of human cloning, something that in the past had only existed in the realm of Star Wars movies. While concerns on both sides of this hotly-contested issue come from justifiable points of view, the issue itself is not simply black or white. Society must examine all the possible uses of cloning technology, both positive and negative, before writing it off entirely or embracing it completely.

Technological advances are in fact "neither good nor bad," according to technology historian Melvin Kranzberg's article entitled "Laws of Technology." Instead, he asserts, the nature of the technology is determined by those who use it and the ways in which they implement it.

Nowhere in modern technology does this law apply more than in the realm of cloning. Many in the government, including the president, see the future of cloning technology delving into the dominion of science fiction and are pushing for total bans on the use of human embryonic tissue in research. Others point to the possible disease-altering information that could potentially come from stem-cell research and demand that we move forward with our efforts. While an innovation such as cloning may seem novel and beneficial toward mankind's health, society must examine the far-reaching effects on culture and life as a whole before offering their blessing, or as Kranzberg puts it, "examine the immediate and long-range implications of technological advancement."

The touted medical benefits of cloning do seem to boast significant improvement over fighting disease and preventative techniques in practice today. Using stem cells, the cells in embryos that have the potential to become any type of cell, scientists may be able to re-grow specialized cells or even entire organs, according to www.humancloning.org. The Web site claims that with the ability to re-grow cells we could potentially generate new livers, kidneys or hearts to replace those damaged by disease. Furthermore, stem cells could be used to make new spinal cord cells for those with paralyzing injuries or even new skin for victims of severe burns. The site also claims, without supporting evidence, that "conditions such as Alzheimer's disease,



JOSH LANGSTON

Parkinson's disease, diabetes, heart failure, degenerative joint disease and other problems may be made curable if human cloning and its technology are not banned."

While these claims are made with the usual arrogant certainty that accompanies scientific work, there are also many drawbacks, both moral and scientific, to cloning technology. First, and most importantly, the technology described above could fall into the wrong hands. The advancements in human cloning that have already developed have led to talk of the "designer baby" in which a checklist of qualities could easily turn into the ideal offspring. Furthermore, a company named Clonaid, the self-proclaimed world leader in human cloning, is striving to develop cloning for the purpose of "scientifically creating eternal life" according to its Web site. Even the uniting of the DNA of homosexual couples into a viable offspring has been discussed. These frightening aims are truly seeking to take humans in the direction of "A Brave New World," in which genetic engineering is the norm and babies are made on conveyor belts. The potential emotional, cultural and economic ramifications of using technology in this manner are unthinkable and must be opposed.

Kranzberg asks a serious question in his examination of the evolution of technology, which is "once a threshold is crossed, can one turn back?" The answer is no, which means that humankind stands at a pivotal fork in the road in the course of human history. The debates on cloning currently raging will set precedents for the level of interference that people have with their environment for the foreseeable future. The use of human cloning in medicine may ultimately be decided by the cultural, largely religious, answer to the question "should we play God?" At the same time, however, the international community must pass laws to protect against the potential negative use of the technology. As the jury remains out on the fate of human cloning, there may be one final piece of wisdom to consider. Ninety-year-old Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, and Texas A&M professor Norman Borlaug recently noted, "You can search all your life for perfection in biology, and you just won't find it. You've got to take what you've got and make the best of it."

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Josh Langston is a senior biology major.

