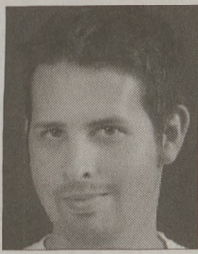


## Cold medicine crackdown

Requiring prescriptions for cold medication restricts consumer's rights

Nobel-prize winning economist Milton Friedman once said "the government solution to a problem is usually as bad as the problem." If anyone doubts this sentiment, consider this: Last year an Oklahoma state trooper was shot and killed by a man cooking up a batch of methamphetamine on the roadside. As a response, state governments all across the country want to make buying over-the-counter drugs for colds a hassle.



MIKE WALTERS

The connection between this shooter and cold medicine involves the production of methamphetamine, known commonly as speed, which is made from pseudoephedrine, which is found in cold medicine and is used to produce the illegal drug.

The production of speed is considered a problem in many states. The seller permit for a gas station in Phoenix was revoked when officials believed they were collaborating with speed producers. This station sold \$500,000 worth of cold medicine last year.

In order to crack down on this activity, Oklahoma and Arizona have enacted restrictive laws. They classified cold medicine as a controlled substance that can only be sold in a pharmacy, and are requiring customers to show photo identification and sign for the purchase. The procedure is similar to the process of buying bullets. Perhaps lawmakers feel that they can ease the pain of a tragedy by doing something that might avoid the death of other police officers.

Regardless of any benefits such legislation may bring, such actions constitute an unacceptable violation of Americans rights.

Make no mistake — murderers must be brought to justice. But while it's the government's job to deal with murderers, the government is not our parent, no matter how many adults act like they still need one.

As Ludwig von Mises wrote after Prohibition, "Once the principle is admitted that it is the duty of government to protect the individual against his own foolishness, no serious objections can be advanced against further encroachments." If the government uses the excuse, "it's for your own good," and Americans accept this as a reasonable cause for taking away their liberties, then why stop at drugs? Why not appoint a special police force to make sure we're not all eating too much fast food or getting enough exercise?

While these questions are laughable, the sad truth of the matter is that there isn't a difference between stopping someone from taking speed and stopping them from becoming obese. Both present health risks — the irony is that obesity has caused far more deaths, yet no one is willing to have DEA agents posted at every Taco Bell.

The government is established to protect individuals from harming one another and America was never intended to protect someone from himself. In the Declaration of Independence, Americans cried out in one loud voice that they believed all men had the right to the pursuit of happiness. One man's pursuit may not be another's, and the government has no authority to interfere unless

it hinders someone else's rights. The saying "your rights end where my rights begin," is appropriate, and in the case of drug production and consumption, no violation takes place.

Though many cry about how it's not right to let another man suffer from drug use, writing laws to deter him from suffering commits a greater harm by stripping away the freedom of a nation.

Patrick Henry asked "Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?" The answer that gave birth to our nation, and all the luxury and prosperity we enjoy today was that nothing is worth the price of slavery and the loss of freedom. It is the principle that sent Americans



to their deaths on battlefields at home and abroad, and to argue against their choice of liberty over death is an insult to every patriot who died for the cause of freedom.

Drugs can ruin a man's life, and while it can be an ugly problem if one becomes consumed with their abuse, rejecting any legislation that attempts to save a man from himself is the only choice that remains true to the principles of the American freedom that was paid for by our brave soldiers.

Texas is now considering this cold-medicine legislation, and though it seems like a small hassle for consumers, the principle

behind it is wrong. If citizens wish to hold sacred the things that these men died for, they must insist that lawmakers refuse this legislation. Though turning down this act won't reverse the war on drugs, we should do everything in our power to change what we can, when we can. We must write our representatives and encourage them to do just that.

Mike Walters is a senior psychology major.  
Graphic by Rylie Deyoe

## Readers say article unfairly characterized Islam

In response to Nicholas Davis' June 30 column "Intolerance is the Answer"

### Editor's Note:

While Mr. Davis has the right to express his own opinion, it is not the intent of Davis, The Battalion or its editors to insult or unfairly label the religion of Islam or the Muslim community locally or internationally.

Unfortunately The Battalion has a history of insensitivity towards minority groups on campus. The article written by Nicholas Davis titled "Intolerance is the answer" is obviously asking for violence. This is not the first time The Battalion has published an article against Muslims and Islam, but this time it has gone too far. This is not just an attack against Muslims, it is against all minority groups. I was just wondering where this fits in the 2020 vision of Texas A&M. As far as I know President Gates is trying to promote tolerance and diversity, NOT INTOLERANCE. The world is more beautiful with peace and tolerance.

Homayra Moghadasian

As a practicing and devout Muslim, I am very disturbed by the June 30 article entitled "Intolerance is the Answer." This article denounces Islam as an inherently violent religion and all Muslims as terrorists or extremists. Although disturbed, I am not at all shocked by this. It saddens me deeply that at A&M, a world-class institution of higher learning, students remain so ignorant about other cultures and social groups. I am sure many other students feel as I do. I do not think it is enough just to apologize. I believe that if this sort of narrow-minded thinking is to come to an end at TAMU students should take time to investigate world issues on their own. We should critically evaluate those issues regarding other social groups and make a sincere attempt to understand them. Peace will never be attained through ignorance, but only through tolerance and understanding of each other. We need to remember this.

Imran Khan

I was shocked when I read the article by Nicholas Davis. It shows insensitivity and a lack of understanding about other religions and cultures. This kind of article may spread hatred toward minorities or international students over

the campus, especially Muslims. Hence, it is very conflicting with A&M's vision 2020 program which is about creating a welcoming environment for all Aggies.

I know that this is not the first time The Battalion has published this kind of article or cartoon. Three years ago, a similar opinion (a cartoon) was published that showed a disrespect toward minorities (at that time it was the African Americans). The editor needs to be more sensitive in reviewing opinions before it is published and increase his or her awareness and understanding toward other cultures and religions.

I as a Muslim and the vast majority of Muslims are peaceful citizens of this society, not like what Mr. Davis portrays in his article, nor are we all extremists. Many Muslim students make up part of the Aggie family. We feel offended by this article. This kind of article may emerge due to fear of Islam rhetoric. In fact, anti-Muslim hate crimes have increased 121 percent in 2003. However, this reason cannot justify this kind of article to be published in a respectful institution of higher learning such as A&M.

Kun Marhadi  
Class of 2000

This article is a clear and unfair attack upon Muslims. The statement "Truthfully, the Islamic religion is not a peaceful one" is seriously offensive and untrue. The most serious error of Mr. Davis is that he bases his opinion upon a weak amount of research (a Web site forum as stated in the article.) Then, after establishing his misinformed beliefs, he goes on to publish them as though they were fact. In the end Mr. Davis' article expresses his malice towards the Muslim community, and suggests threatening a large group of innocent people.

Omar Pacha  
Class of 2006

In my six years here, I have had many interactions with Muslim students and have developed numerous friendships with persons of Middle Eastern decent and the Muslim faith.

I have often been humbled by the gentleness and generosity of these persons. Rather than respond to hate-speech and discrimination with anger and resentment, I have heard repeatedly from these students that they consider it to be their shame that they have failed to educate their Ameri-

can brothers and sisters regarding the true nature of Islam and the Muslim people. I only wish that I could demonstrate such a mature and peaceful response to hatred.

I am a tremendous supporter of free speech, but I believe that this freedom requires responsibility. The Battalion fails to exercise such responsibility when it publishes opinion pieces that stereotype and misrepresent an entire segment of the Aggie community in such a way that it creates an unsafe environment for those students.

Carla Cheatham  
Graduate Student

Honestly, I am not such a person who likes to read newspapers, including The Battalion. However, I have received many e-mails from Muslim friends who felt that the article was in fact offensive toward Islam and Muslims at Texas A&M. I then read the article and I was shocked by the way the writer jumped to the conclusion that "Truthfully, the Islamic religion is not a peaceful one." I also felt bad about the points, which are mostly false, mentioned about my country of Saudi Arabia.

Because I am Muslim and Saudi, I was so curious about what is going on in my country. I was also eager to listen to a non-biased voice from Texas A&M clarifying what's really going on back there from credible sources. I have to say that the majority of Saudis and Muslims are peaceful and don't admit such terror activities, including Johnson's incident. Moreover, I haven't heard about a reputable and respectful religious scholar admitting such things. In my opinion, such types of articles will not help clarifying the truth. Instead, it would make the vision foggier and less obvious.

The outstanding fact is that Islam forbids such behaviors by all means. Fanatic people exist in any culture. But that fact doesn't allow someone to blame the culture itself or the religion itself because of the actions of few people.

Abdulaziz Al-Saadi  
Graduate Student

As a Muslim wife and mother, I always felt lucky because my husband was accepted here at A&M and not anywhere else. Since September 2001, Muslims in U.S. cities and towns were harassed and threatened more than anytime before. This was largely due to an Islam-phobia wave that

was triggered by many irresponsible media channels. The Bryan-College Station area was always an exception. The community was helpful and understanding to the simple fact that you cannot blame 1.3 billion people for what a group of hundreds of them do. I was always grateful because there was no serious reason to worry from walking in the streets while wearing my Hijab. It's sad to say, however, that you at The Battalion are working on destroying this bright image by participating in that irresponsible anti-Islam wave. I really do not understand what makes a newspaper like The Battalion adopt such opinions. The article was full of faulty information. The article wages a wave of aggressive emotions towards all the Muslims regardless of their locations or true points of view and encourages the readers to follow its example. Can you imagine what would happen to us if several A&M students adopted what was mentioned in your article?

I hope that you cooperate with the Muslim community in order to serve the values of truth and professionalism that any acclaimed newspaper would respect and serve. I don't see any reason why The Battalion should be an exception.

Wisam Khashoggi  
Muslim member of the B-CS community

First of all I am an Aggie, Muslim and from Saudi Arabia. I was shocked when I read the news about the engineer Paul Johnson. This is not Islam, and it did not fall within Islam's parameters of acceptable behavior.

Mr. Davis did not bother to research and read in hundreds of Web sites that authentic Islam stands against terrorist behaviors. Also, he did not bother to search and see what the reaction of Muslims, especially Muslims in Saudi Arabia were!

I want Mr. Davis to be fair and read more about Islam to have the right picture about it. Islam is a peaceful religion. Articles like these will create a dangerous environment of hate toward Muslims.

Ali Al-Meshari

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters should 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: 015 Reed McDonald, 1111 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Fax: (979) 845-2647 E-mail: mailcall@thebattalion.net