

War and ecology conflict in classes

Editor:

The teaching staff at Texas A&M has changed as has some of their attitudes. I would like to show you to what degree. An English class I attend is reading The New Republic which ran an article concerning Vietnamese ecology and American security in South Vietnam.

The journal reported American bulldozers were clearing a large area of jungle cover. The instructor turned from the topic of English and said she felt we were wrong in doing this as we were destroying the land. The entire class felt she was right except me. I said we were over there to fight a war, not beautify the country. No one sided with me.

She then tried her luck with examples to back herself up, one was Napoleon at Waterloo. She said he fought in the area outside town so no one except soldiers would be hurt. Napoleon fought outside the town because that was where Wellington was. Wellington moved outside town because Napoleon moved so slowly.

The students at A&M have changed and so have the teachers. This teacher deserved her students as they both felt ecology comes before American lives, although neither deserve to be at Texas A&M with this attitude.

Chris Outwin

Editor:

In the past few weeks, most of the articles in "Listen Up" have been so heavy, oppressive, and earth-shatteringly controversial (Groffe vs. Students, Students vs. Bonfire, Non-regs vs. CT's, CT's vs. women) that I feel it's in order to complain about something downright down to earth—gophers. Yeh, gophers. For those unfamiliar with what a gopher is, I invite them to take a look at the lawn areas in front of the campus at the southeast corner on Highway 6. Just look for an area that has the appearance of having endured a three-day artillery barrage and you'll have found the spot.

Now don't get me wrong. I don't have a personal grudge against gophers, for they have a place in nature and even have beneficial attributes (i.e., soil aeration) but their place is not lawns or golf courses. (Take a look at the golf course.)

A few months ago, I offered to remove these gophers for the school. This proposal was met with enthusiasm both by the Grounds Maintenance Dept. and the campus golf course personnel. However, the project fizzled and the reasons given were, get this, lack of funds. This makes me wonder why a university that pours untold thousands of dollars into covering the campus with concrete slabs (grounds improve-

ment & land (or cement-scaping) can't spend a few dollars to improve the appearance of the few remaining grassy areas that are left. Possibly this area is also slated for concrete-encrustation in the near future.

Admittedly, this letter is not written totally on altruistic motivation, for I hope it will provoke some action and I can make some money in the process. Meanwhile, the gophers keep on digging and I keep on waiting for someone to take some initiative.

Don Baker

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Editor:

Since everyone is now more ecology conscious, and the colleges wish to have this represented by choosing a more passive, and if possible, endangered species of animal as school mascot.—For example, the University of Texas (always first) has proposed changing their mascot from the deadly, grass-eating Longhorn to the more passive and ecologically beneficial Armadillo—Not far behind is the University of Houston (never last) which has started nominations for their replacement mascot; replacing Shasta the cougar will be Arky the Ardvark—Leading up the rear end (but always progressing forward), We of the McInnis Midnight Skulkers wish to lead the way for a new era in A&M's ever-changing tra-

dition. We feel that the following list of passive animals would better represent the high ideals of the A&M student body. We respectfully submit:

Animal: Anteater, Lick 'em Ags! Gopher, Gopher a touchdown!

Whale, Whale, we lost another one. Do Do Bird, Go Go Do Do's! Whooping Crane, Whoop! (family?) Hipolito Canales, Jr. '71 Mike Kellough, '75 Jerry Levy '73



"Squirt, will you give me your word that you'll never take on another public relations job?"

The War Hymn

This week during pre-registration the Student Senate is running an opinion poll. One of the questions in the poll, which we urge everyone to fill out, deals with the singing of the first verse of the War Hymn.

Currently, the student body sings only the second verse of the song. This is the verse that downgrades the University of Texas.

Now we don't have anything against downgrading the teasips. If anyone deserves it, it is the Armadillos, those perennial Southwest Conference champions—until this year that is. The thing is, we put down the sips all the time, even when we play Arkansas or Tech or even Baylor.

In this sense the term "dumb Aggies" applies. We can just about imagine what the opposing side is thinking as the students sing. "Good bye to who? Did they say Texas University? Who's that?"

To quote from Buck Weirus, executive director of the Former Students Association, "It's silly to talk about beating Texas when we aren't even playing them."

Silly isn't quite the word, stupid is better. On top of that, why publicize the sips when we could be pulling for A&M?

The words to the first verse go like this:
 "All hail! to dear old Texas A&M.
 Rally around maroon and white;
 Good luck to the dear old Texas Aggies,
 They are the boys who show the fight.
 That good old Aggie spirit thrills us
 And makes us yell and yell and yell;
 So let's fight for dear old Texas A&M.
 We're going to beat you all to
 Chig-ga-roo-gar-em!
 Chig-ga-roo-gar-em!
 Rough! Tough!
 Real stuff; Texas A&M."

It makes a bit more sense than singing about Texas. Vote for singing the first verse.

Speak out

The Student Senate and the Great Issues Committee have come up with another Soap Box Forum this year. It will be held Thursday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the review stand on the drill field.

These Soap Box Forums, which sometimes are effective and sometimes aren't, are a good way to hear what the students have to say about certain things.

A good bet would be to expect Bonfire, voter registration, athletic fees and the laundry to be discussed. All of these are issues that students are concerned about.

Go to these things and listen and, if you have anything to say, speak. Utilize your right to the freedom of speech—and who knows, maybe you'll get in a good argument.

The Battalion

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the student writers only. The Battalion is a non-tax-supported, non-profit, self-supporting educational enterprise edited and operated by students as a university and community newspaper.

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Poisoning: predator cure-all

The poisoning of predators on an indiscriminate basis has evolved as a cure-all to the livestock industry, primarily the sheep men. Control, mostly by spreading highly toxic poisons in easily accessible areas, has been perpetuated, despite objections, because this practice is thought of as an important management tool by the livestock industry.

In the case of the cattle industry, some progressive cattlemen have recognized the worth of predatory animals as a control agent over herbivorous animals which compete with cattle for grass. In fact, partly because of many cattlemen's practices, the U. S. Department of the Interior stated that "on rangelands occupied only by cattle there is little justification for general coyote control, and should be undertaken only in areas where losses are based on irrefutable evidence."

However, wool-growers continue to border on fanaticism in regard to predator control, and they incessantly bemoan their financial losses purported to predation. They are, in the words of one Montana state senator, "... the best organized livestock group of all." He should know, for after he introduced a bill which called for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service merely to follow its own rules in regard to poisoning practices, the wool-growers successfully organized a campaign against the bill, and his next election campaign. Sixteen years of public elective service had ended for him.

Why are the wool-growers so intently adhering to predator control? Financially, the wool industry is in serious trouble. Synthetics, imports and the rising cost of labor are all important factors to the decline of the U.S. wool industry. In the last 30 years, the number of sheep in the country has decreased 40 million. Now only 16 million sheep are raised per year.

Yet, although the wool-growers provide less than half of our annual wool needs, they are the principal recipients of predator control programs, are paid a federal subsidy, and are allowed to graze their stock on public lands at 10 per cent of the cost of grazing on private lands. In 1971 over

\$65 million were paid in subsidies to wool-growers.

Wool-growers do lose many of their sheep each year to weather, starvation, disease, abandonment and predation. However, predation is the only entity that can actually be seen and engaged by man. Since predator control programs have developed, it has become convenient for many livestock growers to attribute most dead animals to predation, and to ask for more federal protection, with the hope that an intensive control program will aid in getting more livestock to market. A coyote will feed on carrion; however, because the sheepman discovers only a partially devoured carcass, the coyote is considered guilty of actually killing the sheep. As Jack Olsen noted in his article, "The Poisoning of the West," "Every year the reported stock losses rise, the Wildlife Services budget climbs proportionally and the population of larger animals sinks to a new low."

If Jack Olsen is right, then even a moron could see that a decline in predators would mean a decrease, not an increase in the number of sheep lost to predators. Thus, given the mass distribution of poisons, and the near-extinction of many species of

predators, there is an inconsistency in the figures turned in by wool growers.

To confuse matters even further, the Division of Wildlife Services states that the federal control program reduces predation to the sheep industry by 60 per cent. How did the DWS arrive at such figures? Incredulously enough, they are based on the judgment of the wool-growers! That such judgment is highly subjective is emphasized by the case of the red fox. Before the red fox was listed as a predator in Wyoming, no one mentioned it as a factor in predation. Yet when it was placed on a questionnaire sent out to ranchers, whammo, 800 lambs were lost to the red fox.

Even with such obvious inaccuracies, the reported loss of sheep to predators in 1970 was submitted as 33,680, out of 2,095,000 sheep grazed on public lands. This was only 1.68 per cent of the entire sheep population grazed on public lands. It seems odd that our vast wilderness strongholds should be subject to mass poisoning when losses, even as subjective as they are, already minimal.

Tomorrow: Why the federal government continues to maintain the status quo.

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