

Opinion/Commentary/Letters

Editorial

A call for student parties

Certainly, few students would like to see the Student Government elections at Texas A&M University take on a Corps versus civilian flavor, but some members of the Corps have apparently taken the first steps toward this end.

Last week, *The Quadrangle*, the Corps' newspaper, carried a list of cadets who were running for positions in the 1977-78 student elections. Although the one-page paper carried the sentence, "This is not intended in any way as an endorsement, but to inform," there seemed to be no reason to publish these names other than to encourage cadets to support these candidates.

The Corps leaders at A&M have traditionally urged or pressured students in the Corps to get out and get involved in extracurricular activities such as running for office.

Corps leaders even urge cadets to get out and vote, which, of itself, is laudable and praiseworthy. But to put a list of Corps candidates in the cadets' hands, tell them they should go vote and then check to see who did vote, as reports have indicated did happen, is not praiseworthy.

The Corps has suffered a decline in the number of its members holding influential positions on campus during the last few years, but it has also suffered a corresponding decline in enrollment in its ranks.

The Corps leaders this year apparently decided that the decline in Corps influence must cease and attempted to make a comeback.

And quite a comeback they made. They won outright 26 of the Student Government positions, and the Student Body presidency is still undecided.

Although the Corps comprises approximately seven per cent of the student body, cadets have already won 30 per cent of the positions in the 1977-78 Student Senate. This compares with 17 per cent this year.

One could say that the best people won in each race, and that many of these happen to be cadets. But one gets a strong feeling this was not the case.

The vote of the Corps truthfully cannot be called a bloc vote, because undoubtedly many members of the Corps strayed away from the published list in races where they knew a candidate or knew what he stood for. But in the absence of this knowledge, Corps members could fall back on the list of people with whom they knew they had something in common.

One cannot blame the members of the Corps for relying on the information provided them (if indeed a substantial number did), but one can question the ethical standards of the senior members of the Corps staff and the editor of *The Quadrangle* who decided to proceed with the publication of this information.

Each candidate should stand on his own merits.

The *Battalion* endorsed three members of the Corps in their candidacies for the six executive positions in Student Government. We do not have the axe out for the Corps.

But we believe this adulteration and manipulation of the electoral democratic process is grossly unfair.

We admit that organization is needed to stimulate Student Government, but the basis of such organization should be ideas and issues.

Even though the Corps vote this time resembled a bloc vote, the solution is not to form a permanent civilian bloc or any other bloc.

What Texas A&M University Student Government needs are political parties — parties with identifiable platforms based on issues.

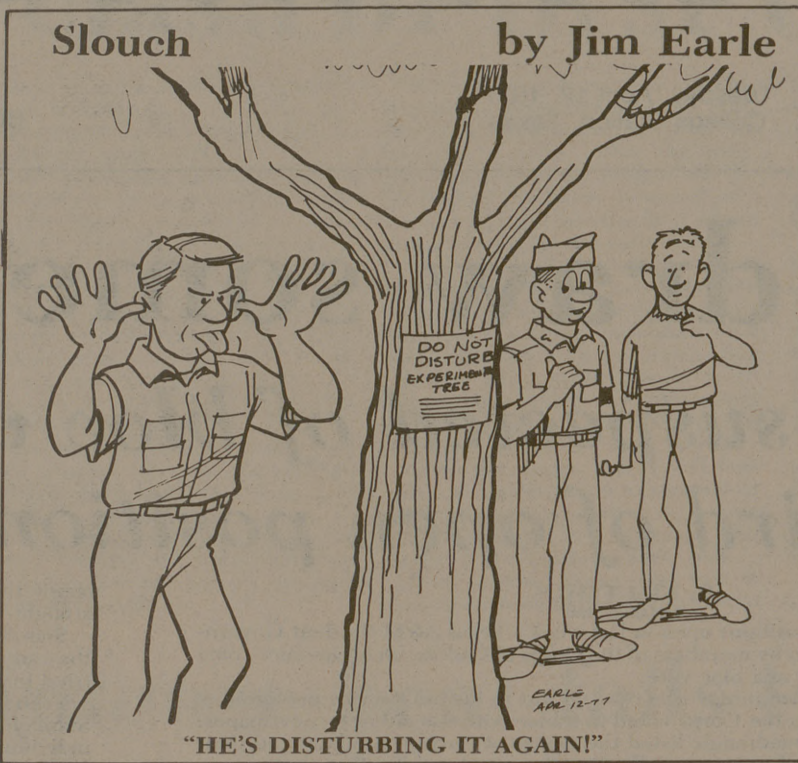
It can be argued that the Corps has every right to consider itself a political party of sorts because of a certain shared lifestyle.

Maybe the outcry against the mass vote of the Corps is a cry of envy of the excellent organization the Corps has exhibited.

After all, one of the features of a political party is its effective organizational structure. But people affiliate with political parties on the basis of shared views on issues. Does the Corps of Cadets qualify as a political party under this guideline?

Before Texas A&M Student Government elections degenerate into fights between Corps, non-corps, Greeks, minorities, etc., concerned students should work to establish political parties to wage campaigns on the basis of platforms, ideas and issues rather than on such petty differences as these.

—J. N.



Frequency overkill

Editor:
In my lectures on "Technology and Human Values" (Philosophy 205) I argue that the preservation of democratic institutions in an information oriented society such as ours depends, at least in part, on local control of broadcast materials. It would seem that on this basis I should applaud the inauguration of KAMU-FM. Unfortunately, I cannot.

For one thing, KAMU-FM has spread itself from 90.1 to 90.5 on my tuner, thus obliterating KPFT in Houston. Even setting aside the legal implications of such frequency overkill, one is still left to wonder why they chose 90.3 as their broadcast frequency. Why not some non-obstructive frequency? Even after mustering as much generosity as I can, I must still conclude that the Dallas based firm who did the research for KAMU-FM which led to this frequency assignment just failed to do their homework, and that the managers of KAMU-FM are unaware of the market into which they have intruded.

For another thing, KAMU-FM has so far shown very little concern for the community which it purportedly serves. We have gained an "easy listening" station which relies on National Public Radio for its news, and which has virtually no interaction with our community, and it has cost us the loss of access to one of the only true alternative radio voices in our area. We are being forced to accept "lowest common denominator" radio, a type of radio which is at the same time uninteresting and ubiquitous, and we have had to forfeit "first amendment" radio, a type of radio which is rare in any part of our country.

I have spoken with Mr. Zent, the program director and with Mr. Simon, the station manager. Neither exhibited much appreciation of the gravity of the situation.

How can this situation be rem-

edied? I suggest the following strategies:

1) Letters to the Federal Communications Commission may be helpful. I have written to protest both KAMU's frequency assignment and their obliteration of everything between 90.1 and 90.5. Their address is: Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M Street N.W., Washington, D. C. 20554. The name of the current FCC commissioner is Richard E. Wiley.

2) Cable companies in this area might well respond to the suggestion that they reassign the KPFT frequency. This can be done, I am told, for under \$100. I intend to present this suggestion to the cable companies, but it would be helpful to support this request with a stack of letters from subscribers. I will be glad to collect and transmit any suggestions I receive at the following address:

—Dr. Larry Hickman
Department of Philosophy
TAMU
College Station 77843

Candidate loses campaign sign

Editor:
After the Student Body Elections, this weekend I dutifully went out to retrieve my campaign "billboards." When I got to the MSC area, somebody had thoughtlessly removed the 8' x 4' portion of my sign.

It was bad enough to see the CORPS take over the positions of Yell Leaders, Senate, and the Executive Committee. But please don't add insult to injury. Whoever took that sign, I would like to have it back. I have a lot of time and money invested in that sign. Again, please don't give me an even dimmer view of the quality of the Student Body.

—Owen D. Massey

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Gays at Texas A&M

Profile of a lesbian couple

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first part of a four-part series on homosexuals, their lives and their problems. The *Battalion* is aware that the subject is controversial and that almost everyone has strong feelings about it. But *The Battalion* believes that more is to be gained by intelligent discussion than by rumor and invective. We hope that this series will contribute to understanding and enlightenment.

By GLENNA WHITLEY
Battalion Staff

Sharon and Dale describe themselves as a settled couple. They have lived together in Bryan for a year. Like most couples, someday they would like to have children.

But Sharon and Dale are different from most couples. They are lesbians.

Sharon and Dale were discussing their gay lifestyle recently, two days after three other members of the Gay Student Services Organization had filed suit against Texas A&M in a Houston federal district court. The suit alleges that A&M was at fault for not giving official recognition to the gay group.

Sharon, a student at A&M, is working on a doctorate in one of the science departments. Dale works in Bryan. They did not want their names or places of employment revealed.

"No one has threatened me for a long time," Sharon said. But an anonymous woman called the professor Sharon was working for and told him that he might lose his grant money because Sharon was a member of a "subversive" group.

The professor suspected the woman was trying to scare him into firing Sharon, but he did not understand why.

Sharon said that although she's usually very open and honest with the people she works with, her boss did not realize at the time that she was gay.

"I told him it was either someone who was sore because I was involved with Women's Awareness and we were for the ERA, or it was someone who was sore because I was one of the persons who had just founded a gay organization," she said.

"I don't think a majority of the adults particularly give a damn. I know that's true in my department. Their time is too important. They haven't got it to waste on petty bigotry."

The younger students are a different matter she said. "They come from more sheltered backgrounds and are having problems with their own kind of role playing. If you hit them with an exception to a rule they've been taught since they were babies, it really frightens them."

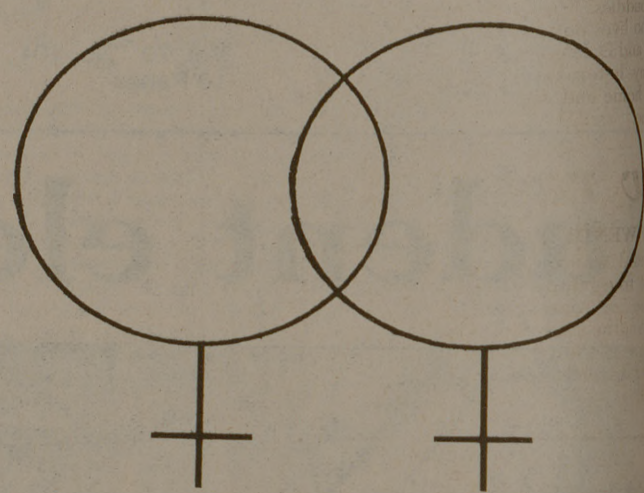
Sharon said that a lot of the repercussions of the suit, like anonymous phone calls to the three plaintiffs, and the sign on Hart Hall saying "Beat the Hell out of the GSSO, is pure fright."

"They don't know what we're about," she said. She stressed that many of the gay people were scared by some of the repercussions.

"The talk I've heard and that my friends pass on to me is very violent. Kill this, cut that. It's frightening."

Sharon and Dale described their home life as quiet though. Both are adamantly against defining themselves in terms of stereotypical roles. Neither physically fits the category of "bull dyke" — a term used by gays to describe an extremely masculine lesbian. In their relationship, one is not feminine and submissive, and the other is not domineering and masculine.

Sharon said that in her readings about homosexuality, she found that many gay people in the past have



tried to pattern their lives after heterosexual roles — the "man" as breadwinner and the "woman" as homemaker.

She said the women's liberation movement has changed gays' as well as heterosexuals' attitudes about heavily stereotyped roles in relationships.

"I pass for straight fairly easily because I don't look stereotypic," Sharon said, "and that's fine until you get to a point where you want to share with people around you stories and anecdotes about the people you love, which in my case is Dale. It keeps you in a corner because you can't share with other people as freely as they can without explaining yourself, or switching pronouns, or behaving like an undercover agent!" she said.

Sharon has never lived in the women's dorms at A&M. She lived on campus during her undergraduate years at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Did she have any problems there related to her lesbianism?

"No, I hadn't really come out at that point. I didn't know about myself." The year after she left the university, a lesbian organization was formed on campus.

"But I wouldn't have known enough to join. I didn't come out until I was 26. I'm 30 now."

"Generally speaking," Sharon explained, "it (coming out) means being aware of your orientation. You can define yourself as gay though, and not want to think about it, or not be comfortable with it. But coming out is when you know yourself and you're comfortable with it." Sharon said that coming out for her entailed a lot of reading about homosexuality.

Dale was born and raised in Bryan.

"I really enjoyed dating guys and I loved my husband. When I first came out during an affair with a woman, I never hesitated to tell him. He handled it very well," Dale said.

She added that if another man had been involved, he probably would have reacted differently. A woman however, was not a direct sexual threat. They divorced after Dale realized she was totally lesbian.

"It's awful difficult to estimate how many gays are in Bryan-College Station. It's far less than many of the reports show. I would say with the University here..."

Sharon interrupted, "It's about 4,000 at the University alone." Dale nodded in agreement. But neither woman had any statistics to verify that number.

"Of course, the University will attract them, because of the same-sex groups on campus. There's the athletic teams and the Corps, for example. Same-sex groups, whether they're military or whatever, always attract more," Sharon said.

A book called "The Homosexual Matrix" by C.A. Tripp, Ph.D. firms this theory.

"It's not purely sexual by means. People, even before they are aware of themselves as being aware of that they enjoy the company of the same sex. Then they will attempt to be as them. It's for emotional support because they feel more at ease."

Sharon and Dale agreed that problem for lesbians is finding other.

"I went about it by joining groups to meet other gay women," Sharon said. "I really never had courage to go cruising in my town. The thought of a bar grossed me out."

She said she met some people through the Dallas chapter of Daughters of Bilitus, which was the first national organization for lesbians.

Bilitus was a Greek poetess who lived on the island of Lesbos, which is why lesbians get their name.

"I went out there saying, 'you are out there. I just want to talk. I don't want to go to bed.' And sure enough, there were a lot of people who just wanted to talk."

Sharon and Dale know other lesbians that live on campus in women's dorms.

"Generally they keep to themselves. They may play sports or be around women," Sharon said. She added that the influx of women onto various athletic teams showed that they are finding friendship and support.

"They are finding gay women proud of being gay. I see straight women on the teams become more comfortable being around women," Sharon said.

Do most of the women have stable romantic relationships? "At this point, most of them are undergraduates. I think we're two oldest in the group," Sharon said.

"That's a terrible thing to say," Dale protested.

"Well, they're at the point..."

(See "Profile" Page 3)

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