

'Tradition' shouldn't divide A&M students

When is tradition truly meaningful and when is it just an action — useless and meaningless?

One incident last week seems to make a good point about Aggie tradition and what it should stand for.

Friday a Battalion photographer was sent to the bonfire site to take pictures of the raising of the centerpole.

However, when she arrived she was told by bonfire officials that she couldn't go close to the stack for her pictures and must stand outside a line drawn around the perimeter of the site.

A number of other photographers, male, were allowed to enter the restricted area for their pictures, even though they had no direct connection with the press, were not equipped with safety helmets and seemed to be at the site only for taking pictures.

A bonfire official said women weren't allowed to enter the area because it had traditionally been an area designated as men-only. He said he couldn't explain the tradition, but said it was to be continued.

The photographer was not sent to cover the event on the basis of her sex, but because she was available to cover the event, ability, etc.

The Battalion didn't know it would make any difference.

The Battalion used a picture from a freelancer from a photography class for Monday's newspaper, and bonfire officials have since agreed to allow women to enter the restricted area with a helmet and official escort.

But just because the paper got the pictures it needed that day doesn't negate why this photographer or anyone else at A&M, following the necessary safety precautions and rules, should be barred from participating from an activity as much a part of the university and its past as Aggie Bonfire.

Sharon Mabry, commanding officer of W-1 (one of the two Corps women's units), said that her group is limited to cutting and rolling wire to be used on the stack as their contribution.

But it's not that these students don't want to do more, as Mabry said, it's that they are never really given the chance to do more.

Dorm women generally are allowed only to collect money to pay for bonfire supplies, bake cookies, man the concessions stand and provide company around the perimeter fires, according to RHA president Lynne Andrus.

And off-campus students have just this year been able to work in any numbers on their bonfire because earlier they had no association to join in order to get permission and training.

It's time for another look at Bonfire and what it's all about. Bonfire is not an activity sanctioned for a few but one to unify the entire student body towards a common cause.

Tradition has been a backbone for this university. But tradition for tradition's sake is worthless — especially tradition that approves of splitting the student body itself.

K.T.

Republicans' trip to South, Midwest pays

By CLAY F. RICHARDS
UPI Political Writer

The Republican Party went back to America's heartland — its traditional base — and to the once-solid South of the Democrats in its desperate drive to build strength for 1980.

The trip paid off. In the West and the Northeast, the GOP rebuilding effort netted only three new governorships and two senators.

But in states that were the party's power base in its salad days — Minnesota, South Dakota, Iowa, Kansas, Illinois, Nebraska, Colorado, Ohio, Michigan, Idaho and Wyoming — the dividends were handsome.

And the GOP also made its first significant gains in the South since the Eisenhower years.

Rep. Thad Cochran became the first Republican senator ever elected in Mississippi.

In Tennessee, lawyer Lamar Alexander was heavily outspent by millionaire banker Jake Butcher, a Democrat, in their gubernatorial race. But Alexander won.

Biggest southern gain for the GOP,

however, came in Texas. Oil millionaire William Clements became the state's first Republican governor in 105 years, while Sen. John Tower won re-election after a dirty battle with Democratic Rep. Bob Krueger.

Two of the Senate's most conservative Republicans, Strom Thurmond of South Carolina and Jesse Helms of North Carolina, survived the challenges of young, articulate Democrats.

Politics

The political map of the South still looks very Democratic, of course. Democrats elected two senators in Alabama and one in Georgia, plus governors in Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, Arkansas and Florida.

For their big gains, the Republicans went home to the Midwest.

To Minnesota, for example. Back when Harold Stassen was on the rise, Minnesota was a very Republican state. Then Hubert Humphrey came along in 1944 and the state became a Democratic stronghold for

a generation. That ended on election night as Republicans swept both Senate seats — the ones held only two years ago by Humphrey and Walter Mondale — and the governorship.

This so pleased Stassen, now 71, that he announced he is running for president again.

Not everything went the GOP way in the Midwest.

Veteran Republican Sen. Robert Griffin lost in Michigan to Democrat Carl Levin, for example.

But Republicans won plenty. Some items:

—In Wisconsin, Lee Dreyfus hasn't been a Republican very long, but he was Tuesday when he ousted Gov. Martin Schreiber.

—Kansas' Nancy Landon Kassebaum was 4-years-old when Franklin Roosevelt thumped her father, Alf Landon, in the 1936 presidential election. Tuesday Mrs. Kassebaum was elected to the Senate.

—In Nebraska, Rep. Charles Thone returned the governorship to the GOP, although popular outgoing Gov. J. James Exon captured a Senate seat for the

Democrats.

Another big GOP win came in Iowa where "new right" conservative Roger Jepsen upset liberal Democratic Sen. Dick Clark.

Republicans also fought off some strong challenges in the Midwest. Illinois' Sen. Charles Percy and Ohio's Gov. James Rhodes came from behind to win.

Republican Govs. Jim Thompson of Illinois and William Milliken of Michigan were easy winners, however — and Thompson's win established him as a potential frontrunner for the 1980 GOP presidential nomination.

Although the Republicans did not do well overall in the Northeast, they did out the Democrats from one power base especially important in presidential election years: The statehouse in populous Pennsylvania, won by Richard Thornburgh in a major upset of Democrat Peter Flaherty.

The GOP also stunned New Hampshire's Thomas McIntyre, a liberal Democrat, who was upset by Gordon Humphrey, a 38-year-old former airline pilot and New Right candidate.

Soviet's view of truth a culture shock

By DOUG GRAHAM

Something was unnerving about it. It was the Cold War all over again when it came time to interview Melor Sturua, bureau chief of Izvestia, a Soviet newspaper. It was a case of severe culture shock.

It was eerie. Knowledge of Russian history, current events, and basic communist philosophy is useless when operating from the American point of view.

The interview seemed to be more an examination of the Russian system rather than of a man. Trying to get inside information on the system was hopeless. There was no future in it.

Commentary

Why the aggressive questions? It could have been to get some inside information on the Soviet system. Or maybe it was missionary zeal to convert a "commie" or catch him in a lie.

Fat chance. Sturua handled everything. One time he mentioned that the West was responsible for World War II when it appeared Hitler.

Then why did Russia divide Poland with Germany which helped free the Nazis to conquer France? His reply was that Russia needed to buy time to prepare for the war, which seemed fair enough.



But when Sturua was asked how the massacre of the entire Polish officer corps helped Russia buy time, he replied in the following fashion:

"That is the biggest lie ever spread about Russia."

Now the massacre is documented fact, but when he denied it, the shock was complete.

It would be like saying, "This apple is red" only to have him reply, "No, it's green."

The whole interview was like that — everything I'd learned to be facts was dismissed by the Soviet. It was hard to accept that he actually believed what he was telling me. Which is probably the same thing he was thinking as he left. How can that young man be so deluded?

It seems the Soviets feel that society is of primary importance. If it flourishes, then everything else will. Thus everything must be subordinated to help society.

In the United States we think that society owes something to the individual and

that certain things are more basic than social harmony: things like truth, freedom, and human rights.

But in Russia ideals along with human life are subordinate to the social good. That is why a Soviet official has no qualms about falsehoods when "truth" would harm social harmony. The question is not the truth of an alleged fact, but the consequences society may face because of it.

Thus Melor probably felt no uneasiness when he said the Russian police never rough up dissidents. "Police never beats nobody," he said.

Why would he tell the truth when it could cost him his job and more importantly damage his cause? The good of the people outweighs the puny complaints of a few malcontents.

Communist philosophy divides truth into two categories: social and absolute, he said. How can naive American truth stand against that social truth?

Sturua did not appear to be sinister; you could tell he loves his family and country. Yet, he is working for the eradication of capitalism. To him it is probably like killing vermin that block human progress. He doesn't have the Hitler desire to conquer the world just for domination's sake. It's just that with that ideology and some rationalizing he'll be able to white-wash massacres, slaughters, imprisonments, and beatings to further the progress of man.

Honest to God. And that's what is scary.

Letters to the Editor

Q-drop meeting needs students' side

Editor: Recently, several rumors have been heard that pertain to the changing of the Q-drop rule. Please allow me to straighten a few things out.

It has been proposed to the University Rules and Regulations Committee that the Q-drop rule be changed. This proposal will be brought up for the first time in that committee's meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 14 (today), at 1:30 p.m. in the Heaton Hall Conference Room.

The rule presently reads, "A student may drop a course during the first 12 class days of a semester or first 4 class days of a summer term with no record. Following these periods, with the approval of the dean of the student's college, a student may drop a course through the fifth class day following the reporting of mid-semester grades to the registrar or the end of the third week of a summer term. The symbol of Q shall be given to indicate a drop without penalty. A student who drops a course after the Q-drop deadline will receive a grade of F unless unusual circumstances exist as determined by his dean."

The proposal suggests that this rule be changed to read, "A student may drop a course during the first 12 class days of a semester or first 4 class days of a summer term with no record."

The reasoning according to this proposal

is "that 12 contact hours with the instructor and the course content should be sufficient to allow a student to determine that he has enrolled in an incorrect course or a course for which he has not had the required prerequisites."

I hope that this clears up any rumors that have developed. I also urge that students voice their opinions on this subject whether in favor of or in opposition to this change. It is a change that directly affects the students. I think that the University Rules and Regulations Committee should have the students' input before they decide upon the change.

— Cheri Leavitt, '80

Ags courteous

Editor: Last Monday I drove my niece onto the A&M campus in order that she might see it firsthand, and obtain the necessary forms for attending in the fall of '79.

While looking for a parking place in front of Rudder Hall, we had a flat tire. The policeman, who was in charge of the parking lot immediately across from Rudder, had me drive into the lot where he changed the tire for me. We then proceeded, on foot, onto the campus, looking for various buildings.

The students greeted us at every turn with hellos and offered us help in locating the building we were looking for.

I just wanted to thank the student body and the personnel on the A&M campus for their friendliness and concern. They certainly made our morning an enjoyable one and their attitude is worth commending.

— Mrs. R.L. Billings
Houston

Corps not all bad

Editor: Two weeks ago I wrote a letter that appeared in the Batt about the rude behavior of one C.T. Since that time I have had many members of the Corps (not just one or two, but a bunch) who have made a special effort to express their concern and regrets that the incident happened.

Gentlemen, thank you!

— Ellen King, '79

Senate needs help

Editor: Dear members of the Texas A&M student body: In recent weeks, your student senate has suffered many losses internally. For

whatever reason they had, your student senate has lost many members. Several positions remain open to this date. If you have a little spare time and would be willing to devote this time to helping your fellow Aggies, then please apply for these vacancies.

To apply, simply stop by the Student Government office in Room 216-C of the Memorial Student Center and fill out an application for the position for which you are qualified. You will then be contacted for a short interview; if selected and approved by the Senate, you will be appointed as the new senator.

All it requires is a little time, a willingness to work, a desire to help your fellow Aggies and a 2.25 overall GPA. You are needed to represent your fellow Aggies as an Aggie deserves to be represented.

The following positions remain open:
— Graduate, College of Liberal Arts
— Senior, College of Education
— Off Campus Undergraduate
— Corps, Sophomore
— Sophomore, College of Engineering
— Moody College

Thank you.

— Johnny Lane, '79
Speaker of the Senate

Texas A&M's tuition lower

Texas residents attending Texas A&M University pay an average \$403 a semester — one-half of the national average for tuition and required fees, the sixteenth lowest reported by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. The total cost for undergraduate tuition, fees and on-campus living rose 7.8 percent nationally and 9.1 percent at Texas A&M, due to increases in room and board fees. The fall semester summary from the association showed the average tuition and fees nationally for in-state undergraduates is 2.6 percent higher than those reported a year ago.

STATE

FBI man implicates Cullen Davis

Prosecutors weaving together the events that led to the murder-for-hire arrest of T. Cullen Davis have finally brought a witness to the stand who says he photographed the industrialist talking with the man who was to help carry out the alleged murder of Davis's divorcee judge. FBI photographer George Ridgley was the first witness to place Davis and government informant David McCrory together in a restaurant parking lot where the alleged plot to kill District Judge Joe Eidson was discussed. His testimony is scheduled to resume at 9 a.m. today in Houston.

NATION

Indian occupation ends

Eight persons who began an occupation of the Navajo tribal offices in Window Rock, Ariz., were moved from the building shortly before noon Monday by tribal police, officials said. A spokesman from the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Gallup, N.M., said it was not immediately known whether the persons occupying the building left peacefully or were forced out. The FBI said several persons apparently were taken hostage briefly during the incident, but were released without harm. The FBI said the persons who staged the takeover were armed, apparently with guns.

AT&T must give up documents

The Supreme Court Monday refused to block an order requiring American Telephone and Telegraph Corp. to give the government copies of 2.5 million documents AT&T turned over to two firms pressing antitrust suits against the giant communications company. The government wants the documents to help it prepare a massive antitrust case it launched against AT&T in 1974.

WORLD

Vietnam accused of genocide

Cambodia Monday accused Vietnam of attempting genocide against Cambodians by launching poison gas attacks along their entire common border. Vietnam, which earlier denied use of toxic gas, said the Chinese-backed Phnom Penh regime was doomed to fall, and claimed new inroads by rebels inside Cambodia.

Police raid guerrilla hideouts

Police raids on two urban guerrilla hideouts in Naples, Italy, and the weekend capture of a suspected major terrorist indicate authorities are close to cracking the Red Brigades band that killed former Premier Aldo Moro, sources said Monday. Police officials would not say what was found in the two hideouts discovered in Naples Sunday.

Mediators fail in Nicaragua

Mediators attempting to prevent a resumption of Nicaragua's civil war have returned from Managua to their countries for consultations. Mediators from the United States, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic returned to their capitals Sunday, temporarily suspending talks with the government of President Anastasio Somoza. High-ranking sources said the mediation effort was near failure because of inflexible stands by both Somoza and his political foes.

WEATHER

Overcast skies, partly cloudy and mild temperatures are the weather outlook for today. High today 80 and a low of 60 tomorrow morning. Winds will be South Easterly at 10-15 mph and a 20% chance of rainfall turning to a 40% chance on Wednesday.

THE BATTALION

LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words and are subject to being cut to that length or less if longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit such letters and does not guarantee to publish any letter. Each letter must be signed, show the address of the writer and list a telephone number for verification.

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