

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION

OCTOBER 29, 1985

Slouch By Jim Earle



"When is somebody going to do something about these bicyclers?"

'Pumpkin' ritual defies reason

After a "secret ritual," one man, guarded by torch-bearing comrades, runs through the night as the enemy, armed with sticks, closes in trying to bash in his head.

Another man who has survived this journey describes it as something "like the middle of a riot with arms and legs and people everywhere — kind of frightening... something to look back on — like a war story."

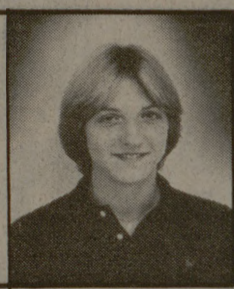
At best, this sounds like the plot to a B-grade horror flick; at worst is sounds like a pseudo-sadistic fraternity stunt. In reality, it is a fine example of "Good Bull," a tradition that is planned, condoned and carried on each year by the Corps of Cadets at Halloween.

When this assault on reason takes place tonight, it will be the twentieth run of the "Great Pumpkin," the October madness that affects Company C-2 and the Aggie Band.

If it weren't so disgusting, I'd laugh. The explanation of the tradition defies reason. But who said these things have to be reasonable?

The object of the Great Pumpkin Run is for freshmen Band members to try and break a pumpkin head worn by a junior cadet as he runs across the quad. In a story about this "tradition," Band Commander

Angelique Copeland



James Hughes said they had not decided what the freshmen will use to smash the pumpkin, but that dangerous weapons such as broomsticks will be avoided "as much as possible." What does "as much as possible" mean? At least axe handles have been banned. Small comfort.

Hughes admits that there have been problems in the past with the "situation getting out of hand," but that no one has ever been "seriously injured." Yet.

Are we waiting for someone to have his head broken instead of the pumpkin, or to have an eye poked out in a melee of waving sticks, or to have someone set afire from the torches or just be trampled during the night dash across the quad before some sane person puts a stop to this mess?

No one knows how the tradition started. Who cares? I want to know why it is allowed to continue. Give me one good reason it should continue. Don't tell me about "Good Bull," the joys of tradition, "A&M love it or leave it," and then bring that asinine statement about Highway 6.

Just point out what possible "purpose" is served by a group of men trying to bash a pumpkin-headed cadet while torch-carrying chums try and protect him for the honor of then smearing the pumpkin all over the opposition's dorm (which sounds suspiciously like vandalism anyway).

Can you imagine what would happen if any other group of students ran into a dorm and smeared pumpkin all over the place? If this is their idea of the spirit of fraternal fun and rivalry, might I suggest they try having a tug-of-war.

If you feel that I've overblown or dramatized the Halloween ritual that will take place tonight, go and see it for yourself. Be careful, Company C-2 Commander Jerry Smith has already said that while observers are welcome, "they should stay on the way for their own safety."

I rest my case.

It's your turn

Debator's qualifications questioned

Editor:

While listening in frustration to the ERA debate Tuesday evening I found myself with one question: Why was Katherine Brady there?

As a proponent of ERA, I listened with growing dismay to Ms. Brady as she attacked Ms. Schlafly on her motives, bringing up such issues as child abuse, rape, incest, and abortion where they had NO PLACE. She failed to refute any of Ms. Schlafly's statements or to counter her rebuttals. In reading the provided background material on Ms. Brady, I saw no mention of research on the ERA or of any expertise in the field. If I did not have prior knowledge on the issue I sincerely doubt I could have come out of Rudder Theater with any conviction other than that espoused by Phyllis Schlafly.

How was Katherine Brady chosen to speak on this subject? Were her qualifications examined before she was asked to debate Tuesday? Was she a replacement for someone else or perhaps a poor second choice? I was hoping to hear both sides of a very important, emotional issue but instead I saw a heavily weighted speech on what problems the ERA might bring to our society. I hope that the MSC Political Forum will reply to this letter and re-examine its policies regarding speaker qualifications.

Holly Haines '82

Statistics high

Editor:

After reading the Gays plea for support in The Battalion (Thursday, October 22), I felt totally ill. In fact, I was insulted by the Gay Organization's collective statement, "You need us, we need you." I do not need

that organization's services and do not like being accused as so.

I would really just like to know where did the Gay Student Service Organization get its statistic of one lesbian and gay for every 10 Ags?

I believe what gays and lesbians do is their business as long as they stay to themselves. But isn't this figure one in ten a little high???

Kathy Hartzheim '85

Brotherly love

Editor:

I applaud Kenny Ray's letter in Tuesday's Battalion in which he spoke out against Gays. It must take a great amount of courage to bare your insecurities and personal vendettas to an entire campus. Since violence is such an American way to solve personal problems, I hope Kenny gets to "beat the hell out" any and all of the Gays he wants. Because he definitely has a problem; and this appears to be the only way in which he and his "Old Army" buds can deal with folks who take stands that are incongruous to their "conservative rightwing" beliefs. I'm not homosexual, so I know I'm safe for awhile. I just hope that after Kenny, et al are through "destroying" or "beating the hell out" GSSO and Gays, that they don't decide to start hating (if they haven't already), heterosexual males who like punk rock, basketball and existentialist philosophy... and who can't relate to "Old Army Tradition." In the meantime, I wish Ken and his friends the best of luck in their

relentless search for new definitions of the word Brotherhood.

Chris Caperton
1008 Habbington

Roommates are 'safe'

Editor:

Some Aggies were alarmed with the statistics presented by GSSO. I've read letters in this section of people that said they would be more careful about whom they share their room with, other didn't believe the percentage of gay students on this campus was as stated. In fact, GSSO probably didn't include professors, TA's secretaries, and so forth. They're here, too.

However, I'd rather say something about whom you share your room with instead of adding more numbers (in favor of gays, of course!). I, myself, have had problems finding a roommate. Most people seem to be afraid of sharing a room with a gay. Let me tell you something. I won't sleep with a guy unless we both want it. This is not a unilateral decision. Also I won't shout out loud whom I slept with.

Right now I've been looking for a roommate. Eventhough I'm a discreet graduate student, when someone calls me and asks about the place, I describe everything. I also say that I'm gay or bisexual to be precise. The reason for doing so is because I don't want any horrified face when I bring someone home. All I want is respect and no gossips. Let's respect each other's preferences and lives.

This is pure discrimination, I'm sure. My friends — including girls — love me. We party together and we really get along well.

Ed L.

P.O. Box 66

No sense of humor

Editor:

As one of five other people who signed Doug Spence's letter of Oct. 27, I feel must reply to Mr. MacCarthy's reply in the Battalion of Oct. 28. Mr. Spence is not writing this because he is cringing under a desk in mortification at MacCarthy's scathing comments. I would like Jim to point out where, in our letter, we claimed "the style of any critics of the Soviet Union (whew — what a sentence!)." He certainly has a flair for the dramatic. In point of our letter was intended as humor. That HUMOR, Mr. MacCarthy. Spell it out. It was not intended as an indictment of Aggie land in general, but as a satire of the extreme opinions recently rampaging across the editorial page of The Battalion. Actually, Mr. MacCarthy's letter, not our letter, did serve to illustrate a basic fact: "Gays," at least those like him, have no sense of humor.

Rick Olson

323 Zach

Devotion to traditions not unique

Editor:

It has become increasingly popular, to say the least, to be critical of Texas A&M and the things that Texas A&M stands for. The recent letters that have appeared in The Battalion are a good example. It seems that everyone has a gripe, and that Texas A&M and Aggie traditions are being held responsible for things that can and do happen on campuses all across our country.

You say that several members of the Corps were hazing younger Aggies working on Bonfire, and that Aggie traditions are to blame? I say you take a trip to any university with a strong Greek system, and go to any fraternity house on any weekend. I suspect

Reader's Forum

that you will see hazings far worse than quads and so-called "good bull." Ask any mom or dad who has had their son killed by some stupid fraternity prank.

You say that students at Texas A&M have no individuality, and that you cannot express your opinion without fear of ridicule. You want to say that you do not agree with Texas A&M's traditions concerning football, and that you are not into bonfire, yell leaders and the like? I say you go to the University of Arkansas and write into their paper saying that those little hog hats are stupid, and see how well you can express your individuality there.

You say that girls at Texas A&M "salivate" over members of the Corps, and I say go to Baylor and watch the sorority chicks go crazy over the guys in their Izod sweaters and khaki pants.

You say to me that your grades have suffered while working on Bonfire, and I say go to any college in the U.S. and see thousands of students giving of their time to hundreds of school-related activities.

And lastly, you tell me that you do not want to be an Aggie, because you do not want to participate in the things that Aggies

do. You tell me that you want to stay here and receive an education, however, and don't want the rest of us to leave you alone or call you two-percenter because you don't participate. And yet you will stand up and ridicule those of us who do with letters to the editor, all the time laughing at the things that we love and cherish so much. You tell me all this, and I'll tell you to get far away from me as possible.

I hope that the meaning of my letters comes across. I am trying to show that the problems and complaints that have been aired here for the last two weeks are not unique to Texas A&M, nor are they Texas A&M's fault. Do not expect to be able to criticize Texas A&M openly without others taking offense. You are poking fun at institutions and traditions that many of us have grown up with and love very dearly. I do not believe in the saying, "Highway 6 runs both ways," but I do think that criticizing Texas A&M is not the way to solve your problems. I wish that I could understand how someone could be exposed to the magic that is Texas A&M, and still not feel anything for the school, but I can't. I guess that I will just have to pride myself on the fact that I do feel something, and leave it at that. You may not understand, but I'll keep on saying "Howdy," saying Varsity's horns off, going to Silver Taps, and loving the old Maroon and White. I wish that you would, too.

John Wagner '81
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THE BATTALION

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

Questions or comments concerning any editorial matter should be directed to the editor.

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Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed, show the address and phone number of the writer.

Columns and guest editorials are also welcome, and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

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the small society

by Brickman



Warped

SPECIAL NOTE: THIS WEEK'S STRIPS WERE ALL WRITTEN BEFORE LAST WEEKEND. THE TIMING IS ACCIDENTAL. THEY DO NOT REFER TO ANY SPECIFIC INCIDENT.

