

Slouch By Jim Earle

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
SLOUCH 1953-1981



3600 CARTOONS LATER

Debate turns into free-for-all

With controversial issues, you expect a heated debate. Last night's debate wasn't even lukewarm.

The issues supported by the Moral Majority (anti-abortion, anti-homosexuality and pro-morality) should have provided plenty of material for debate. Instead, Fred Mason, for the Moral Majority in Texas, and John B. Duncan, with the American Civil Liberties Union, flopped. It's becoming this year's trend in debates.

Rather than debating the issues, each man gave a pre-packaged promotional spiel for his organization.

However, I was treated to a circus: Roman style.

Mason and Duncan were like gladiators pleading for the audience's approval so they wouldn't be slaughtered. Duncan was quite theatrical with his stories on the recent sniper incident. When he wandered back to the debate topic, he sensationalized the "danger" to citizens if certain Moral Majority programs were to become law.

Even though I'm against the reinstatement of voluntary prayer in the public schools, I can't seriously believe it would lead to a "Church of the United States" with the president as head, as Duncan warned.



Nancy Weatherley

Also, I don't feel the Moral Majority's presence in America is going to lead to a bloody religious revolution in the vein of Khomeini's revolution.

However, I may be wrong because Mason never refuted any of Duncan's claims. He talked a lot on the Moral Majority's right to air their views, but if he mentioned any issues at all, they were vague. It was as though Mason was scared someone (Jerry Falwell, perhaps?) was looking over his shoulder.

Some of the audience must have agreed it wasn't a good debate, because when they weren't practicing their yell-practice sounds, they were shouting one-liners at

Duncan and Mason.

At one point I thought the circus would stop. A "former Ag" approached the microphone and publicly chastised the audience for their behavior. Others, like myself, who had paid our 50 cents to see a serious debate, decided to join the circus just once and cheered the man.

Perhaps the audience should have been debating the speakers. Quite a few questions asked at the end of the program dealing with the Moral Majority's stand on abortion were more to the point and relevant than had been debated earlier.

Even with such straight-forward questions as "What is the Moral Majority's position on abortion if the pregnancy was caused by rape or incest?" Mason managed to reply without giving a straight answer.

He said statistics on that happening were so low we shouldn't concern ourselves with it. That's too bad for the girl asking the question; it happened to her.

In the end, it was Duncan who received the sought-after "thumbs-up" sign of approval. But it wasn't due to any great debating skills; most of the audience arrived with their opinions already formed.

Bonfire debate: is the spirit misguided?

Let the burning desire never die

Editor:

I am writing in response to the letters by Mrs. Carter and Dr. Carter. I feel that bonfire is a worthwhile project for both the civilian students, and the Corps. It is a project that promotes unity in the student body. In regard to the size, I will admit that when my father went here, it was not as big as it is today. I would not go so far as to say that it was a pile of scrap wood, and it only took a few weekends to build. My father had to go out and carry logs that were as tall or taller than 50 feet. It also took more than just a few weekends to build. This was back in 1956, so that was no more than 25 years ago. I would like to know how you know so much about bonfire, as you have not been here more than a few years ago. To the response that it is a waste of wood is utter nonsense. The trees that are cut for bonfire would have been bulldozed down and burned to clear the land. There have only been two people who have died since the beginning of this tradition. I do feel sorry about these unfortunate circumstances.

But do you really want to stop the tradition of bonfire for this? If you want to, then why not stop the tradition of Christmas since so many people have been killed in accidents while going home. You are entitled to your opinion and I respect it. I feel that I speak for quite a few when I say I hope we always have a bonfire, and that that burning desire that unites the student body NEVER EXPIRES.

Charles Miksch '85
Company C-1

Editor's note: This letter was accompanied by 80 other signatures.

Bonfire is Aggie art masterpiece

Editor:

Both Dr. and Mrs. Carter asked some very good questions regarding the bonfire. I feel compelled to give what I think are the best answers.

First of all, thousands of Aggies give of their time freely to needy causes, on both an organized and on a personal level. Two

good examples are the Corps' March to the Brazos for the March of Dimes and a girl I know who visits the elderly on a regular basis. I don't think that cutting firewood for the needy could even compare to the good works done by the students here year round. Especially since most poor folks don't have fireplaces or wood stoves. This school is full of compassionate caring people who really don't care to be mentioned by Paul Harvey or Johnny Carson. That is what Aggie Spirit is all about.

Secondly, as far as the danger is concerned, I will grant that the bonfire is much too close to too many houses, and I think it should be moved to a safer place. However, the work involved is not nearly as dangerous as driving down Texas Avenue at 5 p.m. I spent four years (74-78) working at the cutting site and on the stack and I speak from experience. We are never totally safe at anytime but that shouldn't stop us from living.

Lastly, the purpose of the bonfire. Bonfire is a form of self expression, our masterpiece, if you will. It is a symbol of the things this University stands for, and involves a concerted, dedicated effort by those who are involved. If the bonfire is waste of time and wood, then Frederick Remington should have spent his time using bronze to make doorknobs instead of statues. The

bonfire is a work of art, and a magnificent one, at that.

Matthew N. Belden '78

Student's advisor raises questions

Editor:

Oh magnificent Bonfire!
You pre-eminent tradition.
You are the rallying symbol to all faithful Aggies.

Your value is uncountable,
Your cost trivial —
Only a forest,
A thousand gradepoints,
Danger to nearby residents,
And now — a human life.
Would any faithful member of the A&M community
Who respects all that is good in Aggie traditions
Question the merits of you,
Tradition of all traditions?
Maybe just me.

C. Richard Shumway
Advisor to the late Wiley K. Jopling

Flag divides, not unites students

Editor:

Why is there a confederate flag on the bonfire stack? I know some people at the school that think the flag represents the "Rebel Spirit" and "Good Bull." This would be fine if it was a University flag or something else. To me and other people on this campus, it stands for many things including racism and the institution of slavery.

If some people want to, they can put a confederate or Nazi flag in their room or their car; that's fine. When they put it in something that is supposed to represent school spirit for a football game, they offend and alienate a portion of the student body. The purpose of bonfire is to unify the students in a common cause.

I do not understand the infatuation with using the confederate flag to stand for "Rebel Spirit," but please refrain from doing when you are not just representing yourself.

Glenn Gardner '81

Editor's note: This letter was accompanied by 11 other signatures.

It's your turn

12th Man should back coach as well as team

Editor:

Pot smoking appalling

Editor:

Recently I have witnessed a number of students smoking pot on campus. They were seen both in dorm rooms, as well as walking to class. Frankly, I was appalled. I couldn't believe Texas A&M students would do something like that. I hope the users realize what they are doing to their bodies and the University's reputation.

Texas A&M University regulations state: "You may not manufacture, possess, have under your control, sell, transmit, or use any illegal narcotic, stimulant, or hallucinogenic drug on campus." The Bible tells us not to harm our bodies. U.S. law prohibits the use of pot. They have a point. Using grass has physiological effects on the body, such as altering sense of time and reasoning, altering perception of spatial relations, affecting short-term memory, male testosterone levels, and causing disorientation, headaches, nausea, depression and the like. It may well enhance one's activities, but for the risks involved enhancement is not a sufficient reason to use the drug. Ags are known for being good, law-abiding citizens. It's a shame that a few want to lower our prestige.

Elizabeth Mitchell
Plantation Oaks

Check the restrooms

Editor:

Have you been to the library here on campus and couldn't find a book that you

needed? Several times this has happened to me. But I always check the restroom before I give up on finding it.

It is really bad when a group of mature people don't know how to put books where they belong or at least on the shelves designated for books to be reshelved.

Coming from a small town with a small library I appreciate the number of resources available to me in our library here at A&M. I think others would too if they realized how bad other universities had it with a closed library where you have to ask at the front desk for books instead of being able to browse through the library.

So if you go to the library, and can't find a book be sure to check the restroom before you quit looking.

Todd Harris
P.O. Box 9123

Down with junk food

Editor:

I am tired of Coke and chips for breakfast, but that is all I can find in the vending machines around campus; junk food is abundant, but nutritional food is scarce.

Many students like me depend on vending machines for breakfast because they don't have time to prepare a breakfast at home or money to eat in Sbis.

Haven't studies shown that students do better work when they eat nutritional foods? If we can choose from a million varieties of sodas, chips, and candy bars, why can't we also choose from foods with vitamins and protein?

The machines wouldn't have to be filled only with nutritional goods, but they could

contain some — like orange juice — offering the health conscious student a real choice.

Junk food eaters have it made; while others like me are left feeling worn out and unable to cope because they don't get proper nutrition. Why should the health conscious student be left out when junk food eaters are in hog heaven?

Elizabeth Everett '81

Preregistration

Editor:

This is my first semester to attend Texas A&M University, and after hearing all of the rumors about the horrors or preregistration, I was dreading the task ahead of me. The long lines, hassles with departmental secretaries and waiting I had heard about did not fit into my schedule at all.

I went to my department last week and the head of the department sat down with me and answered all of my questions. He then gave me a copy of registration information which explained the exact procedure for preregistration. Still, I was dreading the process.

Today when I picked up my card packet and entered the registration area I was quickly and efficiently ushered through the entire process. Since the University is so large, I had expected the procedure to be confusing. I would like to commend the University on this effective and uncomplex way of registering for the following semester. With such a competent system, it makes sense that the University would use the procedure for summer classes also.

Jennifer Bedgood
Krueger Hall

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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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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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Donn Friedman
Sports Editor, 1981-82 AggieLand