

# opinion

## Traditions to blame for loss of UT game

Unfortunately, this year's loss to the University of Texas was nothing new. Texas A&M has lost 63 of the 90 games they have played against UT. By now Aggies ought to be used to losing to, or being outscored by if you prefer, the Longhorns.

By now Aggie fans should be through

dave  
scott

with their moping and pouting and talk of suicide.

So that a week later, it should be safe to attempt to analyze the game, honestly.

But wait, you may not like the analysis. Especially if you are a hardcore, red neck, ever livin', ever lovin', Rock the Good Ag, Aggie fan.

And if you are, I wish you would stop reading right here and now.

If you don't, it may be hazardous to my health.

This column is about to strike at the very heart of Aggieland — its traditions. And not just any traditions. The traditions — The Twelfth Man, its kick-off team and bonfire in all its blazing glory, so to speak.

Those traditions cost A&M the ball game, no matter how you look at it. At least no matter how I look at it.

If you're the kind who likes to point to a specific play, it was Jackie's brainchild, the Twelfth Man kickoff team who blew it. They had managed to pin the 'Horns deep in their own territory only to lift Texas out of the only hole they would be in the entire second half.

Head coach Jackie Sherrill: "The biggest play of the game came when we tackled them (UT) at the 9 and then got called for piling on."

Now to the next tradition, The Twelfth Man itself.

Let's let the Longhorns explain it themselves.

UT head football coach Fred Akers: "A&M had a lot of momentum to start, I was thrilled when we got the field a little quieter."

UT Linebacker Jeff Lieding: "I think that last score of ours (at the end of the half) really took the breath out of them."

The Twelfth Man stopped doing the only thing it is capable of to help the team, make noise and sustain momentum.

Two traditions to blame, one to go.

The entire football season revolves around a single game, heck the fall semester revolves around a single football game, heck an entire University revolves a single football game.

Bonfire, that mass of burning lumber, involves countless hours of man-time (excuse me, person-time), sweat and skirmishes with University officials. And I love it as much as the next Ag. It sure beats what UT and OU fans do in the streets of Dallas the night before their big game.

But I disagree with the meaning of bonfire. It has the sole purpose of symbolizing "our burning desire to beat tu." Why? How about our burning desire to have a winning season? Or a burning desire to have a true "world class university."

What would happen if A&M went 1-10 with a win against UT? Ags would consider the season a success.

"Yeah Fred, the Rice Owls killed us, but did you see what we did to Texas?"

What would happen if we went 10-1?

"Yeah Fred, we lost to Texas, but we're going to the Cotton Bowl."

Therein lies the problem.

A long time ago somebody here came up with the idea that we could minimize the effects of having a losing season. If we could win just one game then we could live with ourselves. It's a cop out.

But now even that scheme has worked against us, we can't handle the pressure.

The new problem which makes the situation worse has something to do with the old cliché "The bigger they are, the harder they fall."

The bigger the expectations, (hopes, dreams, whatever) the harder they fall.

The football team lives with the hype and propaganda of the Texas game all year long.

Every time they hear the Aggie War Hymn they are commanded to "saw varsity's horns off."

Every time they drive by the south end of campus they see "the stack."

And every week they hear about UT moving higher and higher in the rankings.

The pressure must be enough to make grown men weep. Or football players fold in the third quarter.

The A&M-UT game is a balloon. And we inflate it bigger and bigger with bonfire activities. Stretching the balloon until it seems it can't hold any more.

Then the game begins. And an early 13-0 Aggie lead pumps that balloon up even tighter until — POP. With two quick touchdowns before the half, Texas has burst our bubble once again.

Why don't we move bonfire to the beginning of the football season or the start of conference games. Let's get excited about a whole football season and not act like the first ten games are simply a warm-up to the Thanksgiving Day game.



## Socialist ban of plate-smashing leads to questions about the

by Dick West

United Press International WASHINGTON — Like many another product of the free enterprise system, I have long been vaguely discomfited by socialism, without exactly knowing why.

Now, at last, I may have found the reason for my unease.

Reports from Athens tell us the socialist government of Greece has moved to ban plate-smashing in nightclubs.

The socialists are said to regard this time-honored form of critical acclaim as wasteful. And they may be right. But if, after a particularly enjoyable floor show, a patron of the arts can't show his appreciation by breaking a bit of pottery, what's the point of going out in the first place?

One might as well stay home and watch the late show on television. Although in socialist countries, smashing television screens probably is frowned upon, too.

A good nightclub act in Greece, I understand, can inspire as many as 4,000 or 5,000 broken plates in a single evening. In the United States, that would be the equivalent of a standing ovation.

With Dolly Parton on stage, the audience might even shatter a few cups and saucers.

"If people feel like spending their money on breaking plates, why should the government want to stop them?" one Greek nightclub owner was quoted as carping.

Why, indeed! Certainly that type of applause seems more genuine than clapping, stomping and whistling, which don't cost anything.

Imagine a demand for an encore being transmitted by the sound of ceramic shattering. If that doesn't bring a few curtain calls, nothing will.

Be advised, however, the plate-smashing in Greece apparently is not the same as dropping silverware on the floor, as some of my dinner guests are wont to do.

Nor should this manner of expression be used to express displeasure over the food being served in the plates.

If restaurant customers got into the habit of hurling tasteless entrees across the table, it might result in some improvement in the cuisine. However, punching out the waiter or cook will get your point across quite nicely, thank you.

Plate-smashing and socialism being incompatible, a political scientist is entitled to wonder where that system of government might strike next.

Should Greek leaders be unable to break the crockery-breaking tradition, will they then

decree that all restaurants in the country only Tupperware?

And what of the custom of throwing into the fireplace after drinking a

Plastic glasses undoubtedly would have a better chance of surviving that sort of treatment. But wouldn't sipping champagne from breakable goblets detract from the occasion?

Purely from a governmental standpoint, socialism perhaps has something to recommend it. But when any regime begins to care society of its color, and others some of the fun out of life, it may be time to bring back the Tories.

## Letter: Volleyball over-played

Editor: Now that the 1983 women's varsity volleyball season is over, there are some comments I would like to make about this season.

The publicity that the 1983 team received is very ironic. The volleyball team finished just above 50 percent and received a good amount of publicity that has been lacking in past years. After almost every game this year, a person had no problem in finding out how the team fared. The local radio and television stations, the Bryan Eagle and The Battalion had something to say about how they played, its opponent and if it won or lost.

It seems from the publicity that the team had a chance to tie Texas for first place in the Southwest Conference before playing them in its final home game. But Texas was too much for the team and they finished second.

Coach Terry Condon said that the fans made the team a little nervous at the beginning of the match, and that might

have affected the way the team played. Well coach, if the team would have been 100 percent mentally prepared, they would not have noticed if there were fans or 2,400.

Also the publicity seemed to me a point that second place in the SWC is pretty good, but this makes the team in a row that A&M has finished second. Also, if a person was to rate the team on the SWC on their ability to play volleyball on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the best), Texas would rate approximately as a 9, Texas A&M as a 7, and the rest of the conference as a 6, and the rest of the conference playing volleyball that might get into the Texas 5A high school state championship volleyball team. This is how competitive the SWC is.

Last year's team was more highly publicized than this year's team but received a much smaller amount of publicity than this year's. They deserved it more.

Charles Pietsch

## Recorded voices can be persuasive whenever they put their minds to it

by Art Buchwald

One of my last columns dealt with subliminal voices. This one deals with liminal ones. We are now entering the age of recorded messages. I didn't realize how pervasive it was until I had to fly to Atlanta the other day. After I deplaned, I took a long walk and then a long escalator ride into the bowels of the earth, and waited for a two-car train to take me several stops to another long escalator which would bring me back up to the crust to claim my baggage.

### Slouch

by Jim Earle



"Want a money-saving hint? Wait'll after Christmas; they're much cheaper then."

The train pulled in and a voice said, "This is the B Station. Please enter and go to the rear of the train."

This was a reasonable request, but as I followed the mob trying to board, my carry-on bag got caught and I held the door so I wouldn't be dragged along the train. The voice said, and I swear I am not making this up, "Someone is holding the door and preventing the rest of you from moving."

"I can't help it," I shouted. "My strap is caught."

The voice sounded angrier. "Someone is holding the door. The train cannot start."

I finally broke the strap and squeezed on the train. Everyone was staring at me. I tried to smile. "It wasn't my fault," I said defensively. A dozen hostile eyes were on me. The voice said, "Please do not stand near the door as we approach Station A."

"I'm not standing near the door," I shouted at the loudspeaker. "Does anyone see me standing near the door?" The other passengers looked away in disgust.

By the time I got to Station A I was in a cold sweat trying to figure out how to get off the train by not standing near the door. I made it to the platform just as the doors closed behind me.

Then I went to rent a car. It was a new sedan and when I started it up a voice came out of the dashboard and said, "Your safety belt is not fastened." I could have sworn it was the same voice who bawled me out on the train. I quickly fastened the safety belt. The voice repeated itself, "Your safety belt is not fastened."

The voice repeated, "Your safety belt is not fastened."

After being told two more times I called over the rental attendant. "This car keeps telling me my safety belt isn't fastened."

"Don't pay any attention to it," he said. "It's been telling our customers that for three days."

I drove to my hotel. By the time I got there I was smashing my fist against the dashboard.

I checked into one of those huge glass greenhouses with the elevators on the outside of the building. As soon as I got in the voice said, "There is no smoking on the elevator. Press the button just once. This elevator does not go to the roof garden. If you wish to go to the roof garden take the elevators on the other side of the lobby."

"I don't want to go to the roof garden, and I'm not smoking," I yelled. A couple took one look at me and got off.

I finally got to my room and locked the door. The first thing I did was search it for loudspeakers. If they were there they were carefully hidden. Then I called down for room service. A recorded voice answered, "All lines for room service are busy now. Please hold on until someone is available to take your order." I slammed the phone down.

Then I turned on the TV set. It was the same voice. "In case of fire follow these instructions carefully." I turned off the set.

There was nothing left but to go to sleep. I left a wakeup call for 7 a.m.

"Thank you," I said. "What's the weather like outside?"

The voice said, "It is 7 a.m."

"Look, is it cold or raining or snowing or what?"

"It is 7 a.m."

"Hello. This is a guest in room 1209. Is anybody there? This is a guest in room 1209. Is anybody there?"

The voice said once more, "It is 7 a.m.," and then there was a click and dead silence. There was nobody there.

**The Battalion**

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