

## Editor's reflections on graduating A&M

Oh the joys of being editor. After all the controversy my spring Editorial Board managed to stir up, I thought I would slip out quietly after an uneventful summer and graduate unnoticed.



Rebeca Zimmermann

But no. Just when A&M had reached new levels of boring — bells going up in the bell tower were a major attraction of the summer — controversies erupted. The 5th U.S. Court of Appeals ordered Texas A&M to recognize the Gay Student Services as a student organization, and a student was "molassesed and feathered" by a group of fellow students.

The controversy about the GSS has been a breath of fresh air. Things had been so quiet that apathy — that dread disease that afflicts college students at will — had even set in on me. But the GSS decision — and the disturbing reactions of some students — jarred me out of my apathy.

I've long suspected that narrow-mindedness — or perhaps single-mindedness is a better description — goes hand in hand with the current job orientation of college. Students focus on getting a job and making lots of money rather than discussing world affairs and reading the classics.

The Target 2000 study, commissioned by the Texas A&M Board of Regents to study needs of Texas A&M for the year 2000, also expressed dismay at the lack of intellectual freedom on this campus. Students whose opinions or lifestyles differ from the status quo often are condemned.

The letters we've received about the GSS decision — a question of civil liberties, not sexual preference — illustrate this. (Of course, at an institution that has so few minorities, very few students are aware or worried about civil liberties.)

The judgments and condemnations came immediately, as I expected they would. Bible thumpers never let me down when it comes to writing bigoted letters. If they really want to quote the Bible, a more apt verse would be "Judge not, lest ye be judged."

Letters to the editors frequently are amusing. A common misconception continually surfaces. Several writers have commented that The Battalion Editorial Board doesn't represent student body opinion. They're right. It doesn't, it never has, and it probably never will. Elected student leaders are supposed to represent student body opinion. The obligation of The Battalion Editorial Board is to state opinions on a variety of subjects — the board members' opinions — and to encourage students to look at issues in a new way.

We earn the right to state our opinions because of our hours and years of work at this newspaper.

Students have the opportunity to state their views in letters.

I'm not denigrating people who write letters to the editor. I enjoy receiving letters. Some are rational and quite good, others are extremely entertaining. I received a letter from God telling us that the world was created in four days. (This was during a letter battle concerning creationism.) I received an anonymous letter threatening the student who was a pen pal of Ronald O'Bryan, a.k.a. the Candyman, who was executed in March. I also occasionally receive satirical letters. It's quite amusing to read letters from people who think that writer was serious.

I've enjoyed my time as editor. Editorials about evolution, capital punishment, the bell tower and the GSS decision have made life interesting. Endorsing a student body presidential candidate was enlightening. Seeing conditions at Prairie View A&M was shocking.

Many people have helped make my term as editor enjoyable and bearable. But special thank yous go to:

- Bob Rogers, a journalism professor who always gave me hope in mankind when the bigots were at their best.
- The members of the Spring Battalion Editorial Board, co-instigators of daily editorials: John Wagner, Tracey Taylor, Donn Friedman, Patrice Koranek and Kathy Wiesepape.
- Dean Saito, Peter Rocha, Bill Hughes and John Makely, photographers who always go above and beyond the call of duty.
- Roy Bragg, a Houston Chronicle reporter who helps me put Texas A&M in its proper perspective.
- Pat Wood, who gave me hope about the student leaders at Texas A&M and who always understood the purpose of an Editorial Board (to make people think).
- My parents, Lynn and Carra Zimmermann, who put up with all my late hours at The Battalion and understood the experience was more important than making a 4.0.
- And to someone I've never met: Kristin Parsons, a regular letter writer whose wisdom and open-mindedness always give me courage.

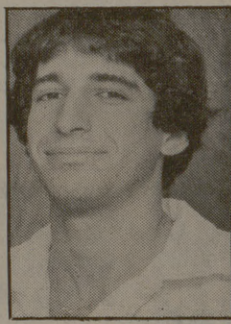
So the letter writers who called me a "Commie, left-wing liberal," among other things, can rest easy. At last, the "bleeding heart liberal secular humanist" who instigated editorials that don't reflect student body opinion is leaving. But there's always someone left behind who will carry on.

(Rebeca Zimmermann has been editor of The Battalion since December and will graduate Saturday.)



## Fins in the eyes of beholders

AMARILLO — Twenty miles south of Amarillo the flat land of the High Plains plummets 1,200 feet, forming Palo Duro Canyon. The canyon "provides the opportunity to view and enjoy one of the nation's most magnificent scenic attractions..." says Amarillo — On the Town magazine. But the scenery of the Panhandle is not limited to such natural splendor.



Donn Friedman

On each end of I-40's East-West run through Amarillo is a man-made spectacle, rising above the plains to celebrate the automobile. Out to the east the man-made spectacle is a group of automobiles as varied as the people of the High Plains. Out to the west the automobiles are all Cadillacs: the Cadillac Ranch, 10 classic cars buried in the prairie nose down, fins up.

The metallic ranch is a work of Texan extremism, but its creators insist it's a work of art.

That's what the Ant Farm, an architectural design group that constructed the site, claimed in a lawsuit filed against the Los Angeles Hard Rock Cafe. The Hard Rock Cafe, you

see, has a finned Cadillac perched at an oblique angle atop a canopy.

The angle of incline is of the utmost importance. In both cases the fins lean at the same angle as the Egyptian pyramids.

The ranch's builders have claimed that the LA restaurant is guilty of "image trespass."

"Artists have enough difficulties coming up with images without being vulnerable to blatant commercial exploitation," an Ant Farm associate told the New York Times in June.

The Cadillac Ranch was created to be seen in the media; few people have seen it in person, he said.

As I drove west of Amarillo on I-40, I joined the elite group that has experienced the ranch in person.

Truck drivers, tourists and fellow travelers were stopped on the service road in front of the shrine. A young truck driver, his T-shirt sleeves expanding at his biceps, climbed out of the cab of his truck. He handed a 35-mm camera to his older companion and posed beside the barbed-wire fence; each of the 10 Cadillacs shimmered in the background as the 8 a.m. sun bounced off their metallic surfaces.

The young trucker climbed back into his cab and returned to the concrete trail that runs from California to North Carolina.

With the plethora of historical markers across the state of Texas and a Texas tourist bureau just 20 minutes east on I-40, you'd think the Cadillac Ranch would rate a plaque if not a state park. But it doesn't.

No plaque explains its value to the history of the region, no restroom stand ready for the masses. There's not even one of those cracked concrete picnic tables with ants permanently stationed at food-level.

Like an unknown soldier's grave, it stands unmarked.

Is the Cadillac Ranch a work of art that needs to be protected or just a media spectacle built so that airplane pilots could have a reason to point out Amarillo as they fly over the Panhandle.

What about that other group of autos on the eastern boundary of Amarillo's stretch of I-40.

There, the cars glisten in the sun, neatly arranged in a rectangle, stacked many times higher than the Cadillac Ranch. They too stand as a symbol of America's dependence on automobiles.

To the west is the Cadillac Ranch, a work of art to its creators. To the east is the B&P Salvage Yard, a work of art to its creators?

(Donn Friedman is a senior journalism major and The Battalion's roving columnist covering the High Plains of Texas this summer.)

## Letters:

### Sinners neglect Biblical lessons

Editor: First, let me say that I am not singling out the homosexuals by any means, but I am speaking to anyone who is "knowingly" involved in a practice that is against the will of God as defined throughout the Bible. I am referring to a wide range of people — from those who habitually tell white

lies to those who lead a life of crime. In other words, I address those who sin and don't do anything about it. The degree of the sin is not the question here; what is important, however, is the decision to turn away (or not turn away) from that sin.

Unfortunately, man is not repenting of his sins and is consequently digging his own eternal grave (Romans 1:32). He has gotten so proud and self-willed that he thinks he doesn't need God and can live by his own set of standards (II Timothy 3:1-5). What

is overlooked, and sadly so, is the Truth — the importance of knowing Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior in bridging the gap between sin and God. Unless this relationship is established, we will end up like Satan, who was cast out of heaven for his desire to be self-righteous.

Man is turning further and further away from this basic Truth. He rationalizes his actions and asks that others respect him for doing so. Well, you may say, lead your own life according to your so-called "will of God" but let

others live their own lives. I'm sorry but I cannot be a neutral Christian. I cannot sit back and watch while I see eyes that are so blinded to what God has in store for each and every one of us. Of course I sin too, we all do. But by the mercy of Jesus who died on the cross so we might have everlasting life, I am free; free from sin that once enslaved me.

I write to you today, not to start a debate, but only to present to you what I feel is the most important Truth of all.

Lisa C. LaRocca

### Homosexuals defying God

Editor: Dear Mr. Miller, in reference to your letter in the Battalion on Aug. 3, I would like to ask you how you could possibly refer to love in the gay community as "God-given." Leviticus 18:22 states, "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination." Leviticus 18:29 continues by saying, "for whoever shall do any of these abominations, the persons that do them shall be cut off from among their people."

But let me guess your next response. You are going to claim yourself as a linguist who went all the way back to the Holy Land and found that everyone in this great nation is interpreting the Bible wrong, except of course, the gay community. I'm sorry Mr. Miller, but it's no good, denying the word of God will only bring you greater turmoil.

(Romans 1:26-30) "For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions... men committing shameful acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error..."

So Mr. Miller, as you can see, love among gays in the gay community is certainly not "God-given!" Although God's love is with all of us, in the forgiveness of our sins, we must not construe God's love to fit our desires.

Andrea McCollum '84  
(This letter was accompanied by 111 signatures)

### Readers disgusted by GSS ordeal

Editor: WHOOP for Steve Thomas! Steve, by the way your article differs from The Battalion Editorial Board, it is obvious that you stand alone. We have good news for you Steve, you are not alone. We feel as disgusted about the whole ordeal as you do.

The editorial reaffirms our beliefs that The Battalion, as a whole, does not represent the student body in the way it should. We would like to know who makes up The Battalion Editorial Board. What is the matter with you? Are you too ashamed to put your name(s) on the article? Better yet, do you have something to hide?

It amazes us that someone would actually want to have an organization that deals with sexual choice. We don't see any heterosexual organizations expressly for heterosexuals. What two consenting adults do behind closed doors is their own business, no one

else's! Why do you have to force it down our throats?

We agree with Steve, just because other schools, such as t.u. have a gay organization doesn't mean we have to form one also. If the editorial board at t.u. jumped off a bridge, Steve, would The Battalion Editorial Board do it also? (Not a bad idea.)

Steve, hang in there. We're pulling for you.

Lee Thompson '84  
Scott Boone '86  
(This letter was accompanied by 46 signatures.)

(Editor's note: The purpose of The Battalion Editorial Board is not to agree with a majority of students but to comment on subjects often neglected by that majority. The names of all editorial board members appear in the staff box every day — just eight inches below the editorial on the day in question.)

### The Battalion

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The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the Editorial Board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

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

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#### Letters Policy

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. 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 be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods. Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester, \$33.25 per school year and \$35 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

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