

Cadets vital part of A&M past, future

"Disband the Corps," the Daily Texan proclaimed on its Editorial page Sept. 6. A short-sighted solution to an all-encompassing problem.

Though less than 10 percent of the student body belongs to the Corps of Cadets, the Corps is the most visible element of our school. The Corps serves as the keeper of tradition and history; it is the military past of this small land grant College turned gigantic university.

Relying on the version of the story the Daily Texan seems to believe, it's a bit easier to see how that editorial could advise such a solution. (See the Daily Texan editorial reproduced below.)

Did the University of Texas have a reporter or spy on the scene at the incident? Their story varies considerably from the official version — the most reliable version available now.

The Daily Texan says: hazing, though officially outlawed, continues unabated. "Cadets are brutally paddled, feces and other foul substances are thrown in cadets' quarters, heads are submerged in urine-filled toilets: degradation of people — young people continues," the editorial says. Incidents such as these do occur in the Corps.

But they also occur in fraternities, sororities and other fraternal organizations.

It's a shame that the first thing people think when they hear of this tragedy is that it's the sole responsibility of the Corps of Cadets.

As long as people try to isolate incidents to individual campuses rather than admitting that physical and psychological hazing exist to some degree everywhere, incidents such as Goodrich's death will continue to occur. People need to look at these incidents in areas away from their homes and learn from the mistakes of others.

Investigations into the death of Cadet Goodrich are needed to help prevent future incidents such as these from happening. Investigations conducted by individuals outside of the University should be started, looking not only into the incidents that lead to Goodrich's death, but also into hazing and other unacceptable activities of other groups. Currently four investigations are being conducted — all by organizations within the University System.

Death also occurs in other organization-related activities. Remember the young woman whose charred body was found in the rubble of a University of Texas fraternity house that burned last spring?

Yes, the dignity and sanctity of every human life — including those of A&M students, must be preserved. But one death does not destroy over 100 years of tradition and service to our country. One death is the cause for grief — and should lead to the correction of abuses throughout society — not the abolishment of an institution.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Daily Texan editorial

Hazing at Texas A&M
reprinted from the Daily Texan

In the past, they've swung sabres menacingly at SMU cheerleaders, knocked down a mascot of the Rice football team, stolen — inexplicably — a 400-pound hunk of granite from UT's Memorial Stadium and participated in behavior unbecoming of even a juvenile delinquent. But if some of Texas A&M's Corps of Cadets' past acts were no more than childish pranks, this time things have gone too far — a student has died as a result of cadets' adolescent behavior. Even if it was an accident, it is time to reform, or perhaps abolish, the Corps.

At 2:30 a.m. Thursday, 20-year-old Bruce Goodrich was awakened by three upperclassmen and ordered to begin a series of "motivational exercises," including calisthenics and a long run. He collapsed once during the run and asked his "superiors" if he could stop. They ordered him to continue. He collapsed again, was taken to a hospital emergency room and died later that day.

What is almost as outrageous as the way Goodrich died is the Texas A&M cadet commander's reaction to the tragedy. Instead of taking firm steps to end the continued humiliation of cadets at A&M, Commander Rollins tried to deny that Goodrich was a victim of hazing. Instead, he called the harassment a "motivational run" which he said did not fall within the category of hazing. Some motivational run.

Of course, there are positive qualities surrounding the Corps. The fact that college students are being trained to defend our country is good for the United States and for students. But the problem at A&M is that hazing has been officially outlawed for a number of years now, yet continues unabated. Cadets are brutally paddled, feces and other foul substances are thrown in cadets' quarters, heads are submerged in urine-filled toilets: degradation of people — young people — continues. On a lesser note, instances of the cadets' silly behavior emerge at several football games every season.

Abolishing such a venerated institution might be too radical an option now. But unless officials can end such hazing once and for all, it might be the only course to take. The dignity and sanctity of every human life, including those of A&M students, must be preserved.

— Dave Elliot

A smile makes the day

Beware of Monday blues

A child waved to me today,

Now, that may not seem like a big deal to you, but under the circumstances — the kind of day that I had had and the frame of mind that I was in — to me it was a big deal.

Even though it was Monday, it had the potential to be a good day. I didn't wake up late for class, and after a week of getting used to the idea, I finally had accepted the idea of having my first class of the week across the tracks in the Horticulture Forestry Sciences Building. (Being a brand, spanking new building it's not surprising if you haven't heard of it — even the intracampus shuttle bus driver didn't know where it was.)

So, sitting in my first class of the week after dutifully waking up in time and having trucked across campus, I was feeling quite proud of myself. Not only that, but I actually had bought the lecture supplement that the instructor "STRONGLY RECOMMENDED" buying, and was looking forward to my first day of being prepared for this class.

Surely I deserved a pat on the back. My bubble soon burst, however, when mid-way through the lecture I noticed that the diagrams in my lecture supplement somehow did not look the same as those that the instructor was explaining on the over-head projector. I thought at first that the instructor's diagrams were different because he simply had gone



Shelley Hoekstra

into more detail than the supplement had.

Wrong-o.

A flash of brilliance prompted me to glance at my neighbor's book ... only to discover that I had at least four pages of diagrams missing from my book.

As a result of not having those four pages, I had labeled an entire stem anatomy of a monocot in primary growth as a herbaceous dicot in primary growth. (If this sounds confusing to you, think of how I felt.)

I fumed all the way back across the tracks. What good is a lecture SUPPLEMENT with missing pages?

After sitting through four classes in a row, I still wasn't feeling any better. The fact that I had gone to bed at 2:30 a.m. the night before had taken its toll by the third lecture. I found it physically impossible to pay attention, and for some strange reason my notes weren't making a whole lot of sense. (Remind me to get the notes I missed from somebody.)

Classes finally over, I worked my way to Reed McDonald. Things surely would be better there.

Wrong again.

The Battalion at 2 p.m. is havok.

The mail on my desk resembled a small mountain (all of it boring, all of it dry, dry, dry reading). Staff reporters were impossible to find after a late-breaking story came across city desk. Budget meeting was late. The telephone rang approximately every ten seconds. At one point I picked up the phone and answered it. Now, this is not unusual, it's part of my job, but when it hasn't even rung yet ... that's unusual.

Anyway, by the time I left the office my head was spinning, and the headache I had could only be comparable to

the one I had after this one part that's another story.

My day was not over, as I still had the task of going to the grocery store for me. I would have blown it for the fact that my body requires nutritional substance to function, hunger pains in my stomach were me blatant hints that it was never.

It was when, finally, after what have been the yuckiest — not the just the yuckiest — day of my life something happened to MAKE a difference. I was sitting in my fiancée's car successfully trying to cross a busy section when it happened.

Hot and miserable, I practically hanging out the side of the truck to get some air (my fiancée does believe in air conditioning if it's under 60 degrees) when a small blue car with a little boy in it.

He caught my eye and smiled at first ... then he waved.

Now, this little boy doesn't even know me, and he successfully made me realize that I had had such a yucky day, more, this little boy has no idea what made me feel.

Thank-you little boy in the blue car. Thank-you wherever and whenever you are.

Maybe someday I can pass on the wave and the smile, and give someone with the yuckies a little sunshine.

Shelley Hoekstra is The Battalion's city editor.

LETTERS

Cadet death still newsworthy

EDITOR: Bruce who? Does anyone out there remember Goodrich? Do you editors remember him? They do in Houston.

The headline in Friday's Houston Chronicle reads: "Limits put on A&M Corps physical training." The headlines in Friday's Battalion read "Degree only policy eliminated this year."

I am glad I read the Chronicle because at least it informs me on what is happening here at Texas A&M. Last Friday I learned of Goodrich's death from the Chronicle, again in a front-page article. The Battalion, as well as "The People In Charge" at A&M called what happened at 2:30 a.m. Aug. 30, tradition and motivational exercise. Gee, so that's what it is! The Chronicle calls it, and has been calling it in articles all week, a "corps hazing ritual." As one letter to the editor in the Chronicle so aptly put it, if a fraternity had done this with the same results, it would have been shut down. And criminal charges would be in the works the next day.

Stonewall this affair, Col. Burton. Stonewall this affair, The Battalion. Stonewall this affair, Aggies.

Forget it. It didn't really happen. Bruce Goodrich's death showed that something, I'm not sure exactly what, is wrong here. But we don't want to be told that something can be wrong with some of our hallowed traditions. Rest easy people, we can forget the whole affair. We don't have to deal with it.

Because the newspapers and televisions of the rest of the nation remember it for us.

Do you think we can convince the Goodrich family to forget it as easily as we can?

Scott Swearingen

EDITOR'S NOTE: The stories that appeared in Friday's Houston papers were essentially the same as the story that appeared 24 hours earlier on the front page of The Battalion.

Parent says Corps lacks supervision

EDITOR: As a parent with two children presently attending A&M, one having just entered the Corps, I am as alarmed as I am grieved for the cadet whose life was so mindlessly wasted. My alarm comes from a false parental assumption that

the conduct of campus activities — whether in civilian dorms, classrooms, the athletic field or on the campus — be properly supervised by adults. Teenagers playing "crap out" with other teenagers at 2 a.m. does not speak of maturity, adulthood or supervision. My false assumption of proper supervision has caused me to support my son's intent to vacate the Corps.

Permit this grieved parent — who still has his Aggie son and daughter — these suggestions:

1. A thorough physical for every cadet before the first push-up is initiated — not now required.

2. A formal written statement from the University and the Corps presented to each cadet advising him of his rights — not done now.

• No abusive physical games or exercises at unusual hours.

• Duty to refuse any physical rigors not attended by responsible university personnel or not attended by a minimum of five or 10 classmates.

The statement should be strong enough to advise cadets of their duty to the integrity of the Corps to report violations.

3. A simple formal procedure to register complaints which must be answered by the Commandant and University President.

The university has an obligation to "read their Rights" to incoming cadets; to advise them that departure from Corps standards is punishable and must be reported. As guilty as those three upperclassmen were, they are innocent: they learned what they did from their Corps environment. The University failed to advise incoming corpsmen — my son included — what indignities they are protected from. Frankly, the administrations omissions in this case suggest a liability which, if satisfied through the courts, will serve no one well.

The Corps has lost my son, the University has lost much National respect and the Goodrich family has lost the most. We all now look to the University to demonstrate that as the seat of intellect and considered judgement, no such omission will ever again occur.

Roger A. Heller
Aggie Parent

Library not to blame for broken copiers

EDITOR: The University Library is aware of the continuing problems with the coin-operated photocopiers in the Evans Li-

brary. However, the Library is responsible for the copiers. The copiers are operated by the University Printing Center. Whenever complaints are received about the machines, they are referred to the Printing Center. If you experience a problem, you should refer to the Copy Center on the first floor of the Evans Library. They service the copiers and handle all refunds.

Irene B. Hoadley
Director, University Library

The Battalion

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The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M at College Station. Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of 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 within the Department of Communications. United Press International is entitled exclusively for reproduction of all news dispatches credited to the Battalion.

Letters Policy

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for length and content, and 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.

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