

Howdy tradition not dead yet

"Howdy."
Some people say the Howdy tradition is dead at Texas A&M. Once upon a time you couldn't walk across the Texas A&M campus without being bombarded by Howdy-tossing-cadets. Now, they say, you can walk from end to end of the campus without hearing a single "Howdy."

Though the Howdy tradition seems to have faltered in recent years, in this final day of Howdy Week we come not to bury the tradition but to praise it.

It's uplifting to walk across a campus where you don't have to duck your head and hide your eyes lest you be suspected of insidious intentions. In big cities — and on many other college campuses — making eye contact with a passerby is interpreted as an attack. It's part of the game Hemingway called, "Cutting a cad."

At Texas A&M making eye contact is an invitation to conversation and/or friendship. It's an attitude that will hopefully forever flourish on the Texas A&M campus. The word may be awkward, and the tradition itself a bit silly, but the friendliness it promotes is an asset to this campus.

If only the rest of the world would take the example from the few.

Bar owners must share responsibility for alcohol abuse

Soon Happy Hours may be a thing of the past. Though cheap drinks and goodtimes seem like a good idea, Happy Hours encourage excessive drinking — and that leads to more accidents, the president of Southwest Insurance Information systems says.

"When bars offer increased amounts of liquor at reduced prices, they're encouraging people to drink faster and then get in their cars and drive home," he says.

Michigan, New Jersey and Ohio already have statutes prohibiting such encouragement of drinking sprees. The Texas Legislature should put one into force soon. But Happy Hours surely aren't the only cause — or the major cause of Drunk Driving.

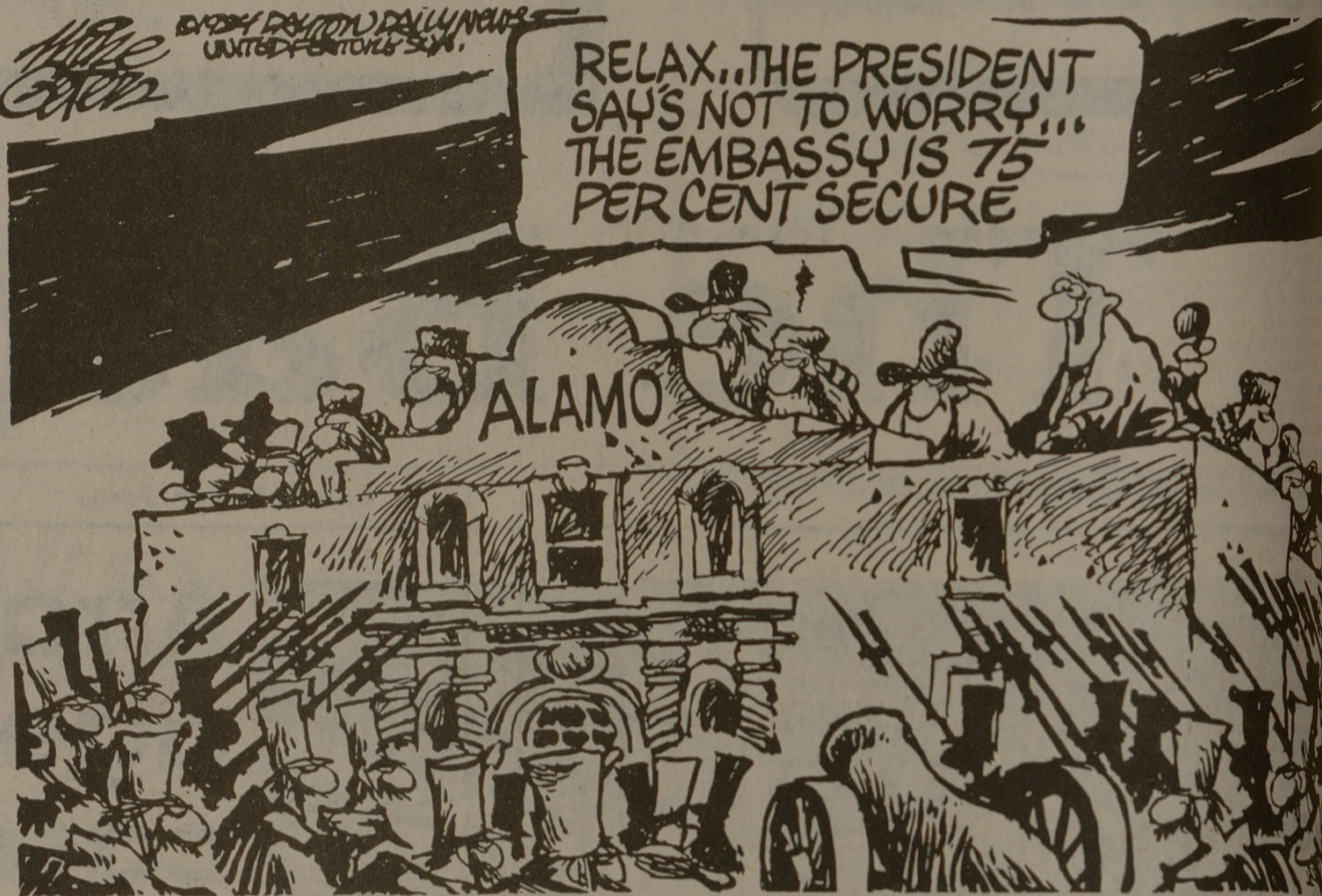
Teaching responsibility, not banning discount drinks, is the solution to the problem of drunk drivers, the manager of Gilley's in Houston says.

"If they think happy hour is the problem, then the police need to crack down on the clubs that are serving drunks, not on the guys who have a couple of drinks on the way home," he says. "The club is responsible for making sure a person doesn't get drunk whether they give the alcohol away, give him one drink, or two-for-one."

That's right, the club must share responsibility for the drunks they put out on the road. In Liberty, Missouri, a tavern paid a \$42,500 settlement to a family who's son was killed by one tavern patron. The patron's drunk driving robbed their son of his life.

It's time the people who profit from excessive drinking — the club owners — share the costs and burdens caused by alcohol abuse.

— The Battalion Editorial Board



In support of Gay rights and an all-male Texas Aggie Band

One of the problems — and joys — of writing a weekly current events column is that it requires thought. It's easy enough to say, "Oh, I can't support that," or "Yeah, that's great." It's another thing altogether to support knee-jerk reactions with reason, or at least superficially sound rhetoric.



Robert McGlohon

This is compounded, in my case at least, by a lack of experience, and it's aggravated by the sure knowledge that half of what I write will be misunderstood.

I hit that wall this week when I learned that 1) gays may soon be allowed to organize on campus and 2) the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band may soon be forced to admit women.

There went my knee: "Great, it's about time (on the issue of gay rights)." And "Are they out of their minds? (on the issue of women in the Band)."

The question of whether gays should be allowed to organize was easy. The administration's arguments have been absurd. In fact, I'm pretty sure they realize this, but are "giving it the old college try" to keep our money-laden alumni happy.

The question of women in the Band was another matter. How could I look myself in the mirror after being so two-

faced as to support gay rights but ignore the rights of women?

Lo and behold, my knee started talking to me — my right knee.

"Why is it," it asked, "that women are forever clamoring for equal rights while insisting on differential treatment? Why is it that women are admitted to the Corps, but given different grooming and fitness standards? Why not shave their heads and make'em do push ups on their toes?"

"Why is it," my knee insisted "that women may have their own choir, but the Band can't restrict its membership? Why is it that athletes can be sexist, but musicians can't?"

And so on and so on.

"Could it be," my knee finally concluded "that women and men are equal but different, much in the same way apples and oranges are equal but different? Is this a case where you simply don't want to mix your fruit?"

I told my knee to shut up then, because I could hear first hints of "Highway 6 runs both ways." I then stood back and examined those kneeish arguments.

Not one of them stood the scrutiny. There's not one logical, rational reason women shouldn't be admitted to the Band.

It is true that men and women are equal. It is also true that men and women are different. This is why an all-woman choir is acceptable; the voices of men and women differ, and there's

something to be gained in single-choirs. This is also the reason an all-male marching band is not acceptable; there are no inherent differences warrant it.

This is also the reason for the different grooming standards for male and female cadets. Whereas a shaved head is a mark of distinction for male cadets, it would be an outlandish humiliation for most females.

Still, something will be lost if women are finally admitted to the Band. We will gain something more valuable in the process, but that doesn't stop from mourning the loss.

Bob McGlohon is a weekly Battalion columnist. His column appears on Fridays.

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