

People aren't born intolerant; they learn it

Children have a fascinating way of looking at the world — a way many adults should learn to imitate.



Melissa Adair

In church a few Sundays ago, the pastor told a story about how children see others and how they like people without regard to race, creed or color. Children seem to look at people for what they are inside. Unlike many adults, children don't seem to be so intolerant.

The story is set during the 60s when desegregation was a hot issue. Many public schools were being forced to admit black children and the public outcry was intense.

A young mother was extremely distraught because she had heard that a black boy would be in her daughter's kindergarten class. She almost kept her daughter home for the first day, but then realized that she couldn't keep the little girl out of school for long and inevitably the girl would have to go to class.

So the girl went to her first day of kindergarten — unsure of herself and probably afraid of it all.

Her mother gave her a little speech about how there would be some children in her class that would be "different" than her and that she shouldn't feel obligated to play with them. The girl nodded as if she understood that

her mother was talking about the black boy. She didn't.

So the girl went off to class with her mother's "words of wisdom."

The mother picked up her daughter that day after school and asked the little girl, "So, how was your first day of school?" "It was OK," the girl said.

Then the mother asked her daughter the question that had been on her mind all day — the question that had haunted her. "Was the black boy in your class?" she asked her daughter.

"Yes he was," the girl said. "And mommy, he was all alone. He didn't have anyone to talk to, and I could tell he was so afraid. And then he came over to my table and sat down next to me. And you know what? We were both so afraid that we just held hands all day long."

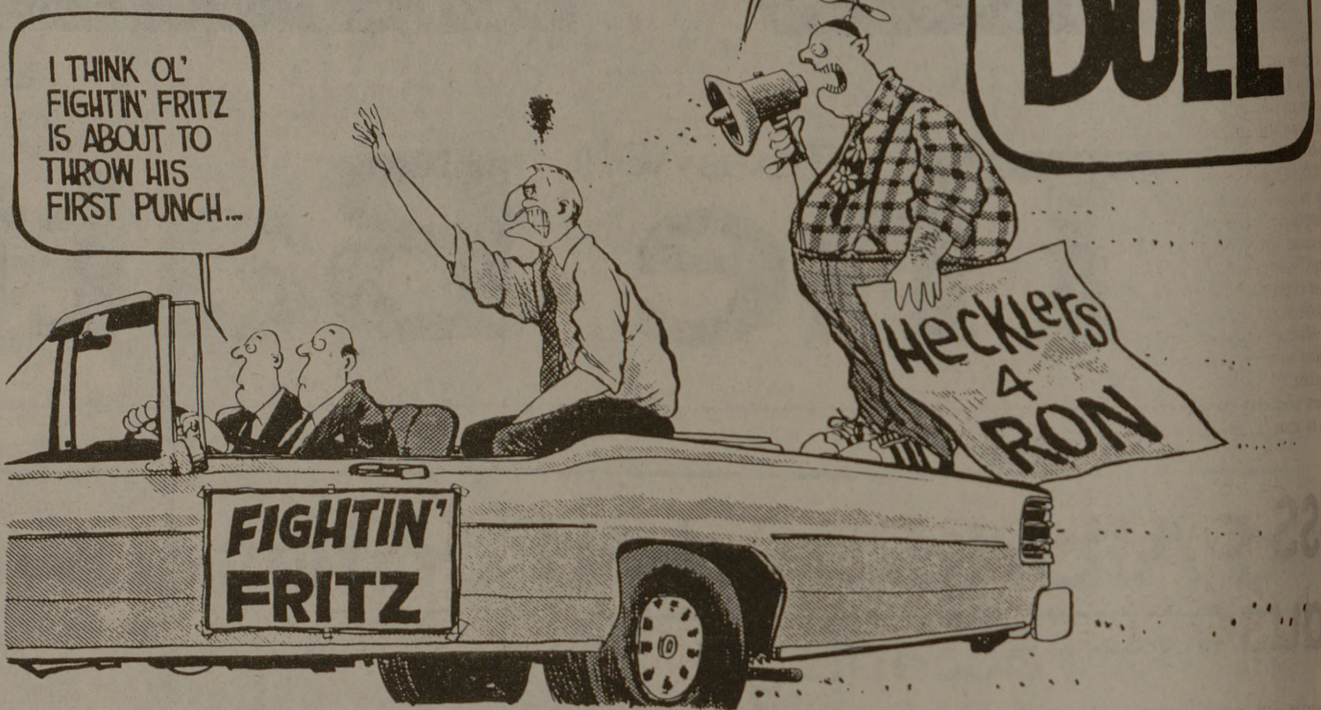
What an indictment on all of us who have winced at sitting next to someone who is different than we are. Why can't we learn from children that we need to look at people without biased stereotypes and prejudices?

Sure, you can't be friends with everyone and there will be people who you can't even get along with. But it is a crime when we don't even give people a chance simply because we have a predisposed attitude about them.

We need to learn from the little girl who held the black boy's hand.

Melissa Adair is an assistant city editor for *The Battalion*.

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Misconceptions hurt Student Senate

Over my three years at A&M I have been often surprised at the range of misconceptions held by members of the student body about the Student Senate. From students I have met, I have learned that, among other things, the Senate is a social "club," it brings concerts to campus, and it is headed by the class officers. To those of us involved with the Senate, it is obvious that we need to communicate more effectively in order to let you, the students, know what the Senate is and how you can use it to your advantage.

The Student Senate is the sole organization responsible for presenting the student's views on university policies and issues to the administration. Senators are elected by you each spring to represent a given constituency: either a living area or an academic college. All major senate research and project work is done in our five legislative committees (Academic Affairs, External Affairs, Finance, Rules and Regulations, and Student Services) that are headed by legislative vice-presidents also elected by the students.

An issue is addressed by the Senate in the following man-

ner: A bill is introduced into the Senate for a first reading and it is assigned to a legislative committee for research. After research is completed — anywhere from two weeks to months later — the bill is either killed in the committee, brought before the Senate for a vote. Student opinion on a bill is not always clear. Important legislation is often passed or rejected by a narrow margin. It is therefore essential that senators listen to their constituents and monitor their reactions to the current events taking place on campus.

I have purposely limited this editorial to the strict definition of what the Senate is and how it functions. There is more crucial information that you as a constituent of the Student Senate need to be aware of: What are we doing to increase contact with the students? What issues are currently being researched? How do we function with regards to the Faculty Senate? The list goes on. I will be addressing these questions as well as others at Wednesday's Sully Symposium (11:50 a.m., Lawrence Sullivan Ross' statue). Lambda Sigma Iota providing an excellent service through these symposia, and I hope I have whet your appetite to find out more about your Student Senate.

Diane Baumbach
Speaker of the Student Senate

Reader's Forum
Reader's Forum
Reader's Forum

LETTERS:

Don't blame god for homosexual love

EDITOR:

In response to Glenn Murtha's "God made us what we are" (referring to homosexuality): We came into this world as sinners. That is not to say that God makes us sinners and that sinning is acceptable to God. Rather, it was man's decision to sin that broke our fellowship with God. But God gave us a way to change that condition through his plan of salvation. We may behave one way, but don't blame God for it, rather thank God that He provided a way to change that.

David Swanson
Class of '87

President Vandiver says register, vote

EDITOR:

Voting in an election in the United States is both a right and a privilege. It is your right under our Constitution; but as many in other parts of the world can tell you, voting in a meaningful election is a privilege that few enjoy.

Many Americans will tell you that a single vote is not significant, but nothing could be farther from the truth. Many elections have turned on just one ballot; and collectively, the sum of each individual vote determines the course of our country and history.

Of course, if you do not register, you

cannot exercise this right and privilege. It takes but a moment to register, and registration forms are now available in the Personnel Department of the YMCA Building. They will also be available at the Visitor Information Center in Rudder Tower, the Memorial Student Center hotel desk, and the Admissions and Records Office. I urge you to take the time to register to vote and when Election Day comes, to cast your ballot.

Sincerely,
Frank E. Vandiver

These women don't want to join the band

EDITOR:

We really don't know what the fuss is

all about. The ruling in the Zentgraf case merely stated that the university was to encourage women to join these organizations, but if none want to... We'll tell you what, our four names will start the list of those who respectfully decline this generous offer.

Dalane Perkins, '85
Deborah Hood, '85
Diana Erickson, '85
Deanna Finger, '85

Not all Ags display integrity, respect

EDITOR:

In response to Mr. Ogdens letter on Tuesday, October 2, about leaving calculators in the computer center —

you're lucky. I left my HP 41c in room 110A of the Doherty Building Wednesday, September 5, 1984.

My name and phone number were on the calculator where it could easily be seen, but I doubt, if after this period of time I'll ever see the calculator again. You, Mr. Ogden, as General Manager, apparently could afford a new calculator. I, on the other hand, being a student, will have to sacrifice a month's rent on an apartment to buy a new one.

No, Mr. Ogden, I am not criticizing you for your good fortune. What I am saying is do not be deceived that all Ags have "the integrity and respect for others property."

Wayne P. Bankert
College Station

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Meanwhile, back at the Mondale-Reagan debate format negotiations...

ROBERT REDFORD WILL PROVIDE A VOICE-OVER WHENEVER MONDALE TALKS...

THE NAME "JIMMY CARTER" MAY NOT BE USED...

REAGAN MAY APPEAR ONLY IN SILHOUETTE WITH HIS VOICE ELECTRONICALLY ALTERED...

THE PRESIDENT MUST HAVE AN AMERICAN FLAG BEHIND HIM AS WELL AS DRAPED AROUND HIS SHOULDERS...

MONDALE MAY NOT USE WORDS THAT ARE CONFUSING...

THE DEBATE SHOULD BE FILMED IN CINEMASCOPE AND SHOWN IN MOVIE THEATERS INSTEAD OF TV...



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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.

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.

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