Opinion

Digging for the roots of college beer riots

Alcohol horror stories at college campuses abound, the Associated Press reported this weekend. At least one in five college students have a serious drinking problem bordering on alcoholism. Over half of all vandalism on campus is alcohol-related. It goes, almost without mentioning that alcohol-related automobile wrecks — i.e. drunk driving — kill more college-age people than any other cause.

Now, drinking has led to another phenomenon on campus, it has been called the beer riot.

At Illinois State University more than 1,000 students hurled rocks and eggs at the town's city hall. Why? Over a city ordinance passed to curb large parties and excessive drinking.

At Purdue, a crowd of 800 students pelted police with rocks and bottles after a party got out of hand.

At Kansas State, 8,000 students clashed with police after a street party turned into a drunken brawl.

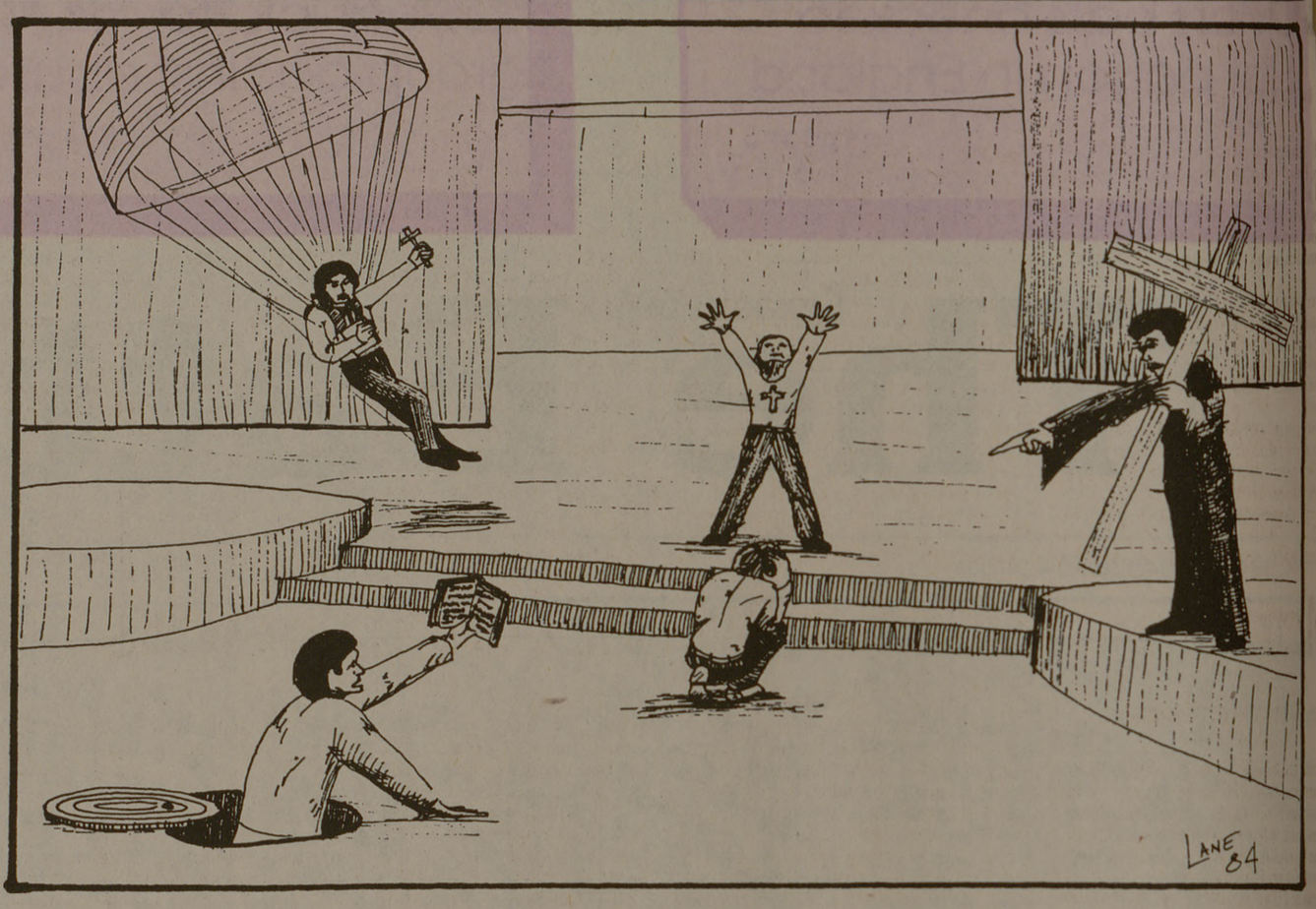
Alcohol awareness programs have been set up at colleges across the country, including Texas A&M. But the widespread drinking problem across the country must be attacked at its roots, not its branches. Awareness is important, but it's more important to determine why such a high incidence of drinking occurs on college campuses.

Is it a lack of morality? Is it a lack of strength? Is it a lack of purpose? Do college-age people today just tend to drink more than their parents?

Or could it be, that universities have lost sight of their purpose. That universities are no longer places to learn, to gain knowlege, but instead just places to begin competition for the job market.

As the pressures of the end of the semester approach, of final projects and final papers and final exams, don't be overwhelmed by the grading system and hit the bottle. Instead, remember the purpose of a university: a place to pursue knowledge. Maybe some of your professors will too.

The Battalion Editorial Board



Guess who's coming to dinner

Inmates visit Texas A&M

Daryl Davidson

I was surprised to see an old friend of mine the other day. I know that's not too unusual.

He was one of two speakers to address my journalism class. That's not too unusual, either.

What was unusual is that my friend is currently serving time in the Ferguson Unit of the Texas Department of Corrections.

It's not unusual that the Ferguson Unit has inmates. But to actually know one of them, to me, is a new experience. To be honest, it's an uncomfortable experience.

We were all seated when the inmates and two guards walked into the room. They were seated in the front of the room. As I glanced at the inmates, one of them looked strangely familiar. Not having seen my friend in three or four years, I couldn't be sure it was him. Besides, I've never been reunited with a friend while he was wearing a white prison uniform. That's not the normal situation in which to reacquaint yourself with someone.

As we made eye contact, he looked away.

Again our eyes met.

Immediately, as he lowered his head, I was certain he had recognized me. Not quite knowing what to do, I nervously looked away.

I knew it was inevitable that we acknowledge each other's presence. The next time he looked at me, he mouthed the words, "I'm sorry."

Again, he lowered his head.

At that moment, I experienced perhaps the most peculiar thing I've ever felt. I remembered our tour of the Ferguson Unit last week and the way of life that we were exposed to on that trip.

To think that a friend of mine was actually living that life — I honestly felt guilty for having the freedom to sit in that classroom and listen to him tell of his life behind bars.

I realize, just as he expressed to our class, that he has "earned" his place in the prison system through bad decisions he's made in his life.

Still, I couldn't help but feel sorry for him. You never want to see your friends in a bad situation. And, needless to say, prison is a very bad situation.

As my friend answered the questions of our class, I became more comfortable and relaxed. I was very excited to find out that he is expecting to be released any day.

My view of prison inmates was drastically changed that day. Granted, a lot of them may be hardened criminals. But a lot of them may be people, just like you and me, who have simply made some mistakes along the way.

I felt much better about my friend's situation after hearing him talk to our class. We even talked a little after the session. I felt real good about being able to chat about things like home and family.

However, as I left him that day, the reality of our circumstances again hit me. I could walk out the door to freely go about my way. My friend could not.

Daryl Davidson is a senior journalism major.

Artrain in local area for short whistle stop

Marcy Basile

Trains. The word sends shivers down my spine since the two accidents earlier this semester.

I discovered it by accident. While traveling down Welborn on my way to the Hall of Fame, I noticed a train parked along the side of the road. Hoping that no one had been killed again, rubbernecking I discovered the Artrain.

Now, this is no ordinary train. Plastered along the sides of each car is an art gallery name. Standing alongside the train are police. No mundane train would recieve such attention.

This was the train I had heard about almost a month ago. A month is a long time to ponder over seeing an art exhibit. Nonetheless, I couldn't wait to board the Artrain.

Parked at the intersection of Welborn Road and F and B Road (between University and Villa Maria), the Artrain seems out of place, surrounded by shurbs, flags and canopied areas. Believe me, it's just what Bryan/College Station needed.

Being from Houston, I'm no stranger to art museums. Yearly fieldtrips to Houston's Fine Arts Museum made the place seem like home. Somehow though, Artrain trancends typical art museums. Maybe I liked the Artrain because I went on my own — not because Mrs. Teacher said it would benefit me on the next test. Perhaps it was the novelty of the idea behind the train that attracted my attention.

Whatever it was, it worked.

Artrain has been around since 1971. The Michigan Council for the Arts had been looking for a way to take art to the people and to stimulate community art development. Thus, Artrain.

For awhile Artrain traveled in Michigan, exposing art to communities it visited. Eventually, word got out that Michigan had this great art museum on wheels. Other states invited the Artrain to tour their towns and cities. Everywhere Artrain went, it was a success.

Here are a few facts about Artrain:

- Artrain has made over 250 community visits in 25 states
- Texas was the 25th state to invite Artrain to visit.
- Artrain has exhibited works of art as old as 2,500 years and as valuable as $250,000.
- Even though it is a train, Artrain is wheelchair accessible with electric wheelchair ramps at each door.

Five railroad cars comprise Artrain. These cars are filled with works of art from all over the nation, with one car reserved for resident Artrain and community artists to show off their work.

Each car houses a different theme of artwork. Upon entering the train, you are treated to a seven-minute film on the history of Artrain. From there, the group travels single-file through the interior of the train, viewing the works of art at your leisure.

One car of Artrain was devoted to Texas artists. This was my favorite car — even though the Remington sculpture was housed in a different car. The Texas car boasted one unusual painting where the characters followed you with their eyes as you traveled through the car. Talk about spooky.

Artrain, which is free, will be here through Tuesday. If you get a chance, go through the exhibits. You won't regret it.

Marcy Basile is a sports writer for The Battalion.

LETTERS:

Bums congratulates A&M volleyball team

EDITOR:

The Dunn Hall bleacher bums would like to congratulate the A&M women's volleyball team for the great success they have accomplished this year. It has been our pleasure to yell for a team with such a winning desire, and even though the bums have added their special touch of support, it is the girls and the coaches that deserve all the credit. So look out UCLA, the Ags are knocking on the door for a trip to the final four.

Matt Powell, '85
David L. Reck, '84

Lane should watch 700 Club not attack CBN

EDITOR:

A note to M. Lane:

Sorry to see that you missed last nights (11-14-84) broadcast of the 700 club on CBN. Pat made an appeal for funds to help the poor. He said, "Every penny donated to help the poor through this appeal will be used for that purpose, all operating and administration costs will be paid by CBN."

With regard to the starving in Ethopia, any relief group (Interfaith, Catholic Relief, World Vision, etc.) must spend some money on administration and educating people here about the situation so as to solicit donations, seems networks newpapers, magazines, etc. don't want to donate their time!

As far as CBN's other programming, its net result is encouraging Christians (and non-Christians toward Christ) and generating revenue that enables them to further their ministries.

Saving a life is of utmost importance, but so is after saving that life to bring it to a realization of having the choice of accepting Jesus Christ as savior. It is the deepest desire of many Christians that the resources necessary for both of these goals to be realized for all mankind were available.

Bucky Lee Turk, Jr.
Class of '83

A&M to be conference volleyball champs in '85

EDITOR:

How 'bout that women's volleyball team? I only wish that I could be there to see them take the SWC crown in 1985!

Tomas Rokicki
Class of '85

Silver Taps gives lasting memories

EDITOR:

What is Silver Taps? No one can truly say unless the name of one of your friends is embedded beneath the glass which rests at the base of the flagpole. Many questions were aroused in my mind; why do we pay tribute to these who have died? Am I coming because I have to? What good does this do? These and many more questions were asked time and time again in my mind. I still came up with the same answer: A blank.

The rounds that were fired at the last Silver Taps struck hard within me. The shots fired this time seemed appropriate. They seemed to mourn the Aggies' deaths. And when the bugles began to play the special "Silver Taps," it bore through to my heart.

It finally sank in. Then new questions arose in my mind; would they do this for me? Would I be remembered if I died?

The time honored tradition no longer seemed a tradition, but an ode. An ode in love and honor, and memory to those Aggies who were faithful in service and stature to the foundations of A&M.

The second day of October in the year of our lord, one thousand nine hundred and eighty-four will be a lasting impression in my heart, not just another long day. For this Aggie spirit was truly inspired within another student, corpsman and individual. This person will always be an Aggie, while yet being a Tennessean.

Fish Grindstaff
Class of '88

The Battalion
USPS 045 360
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In memoriam
Bill Robinson, 1962-1984, Editor

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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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