

Freedom to stand or not to stand

Patriotism and freedom of expression sometimes conflict. It happens at Texas A&M. And it's happening in a small community in Massachusetts.

Every morning all of the students at Randolph High School stand during the playing of The Star-Spangled Banner and the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance. All, that is, except Susan Shapiro.

Shapiro, 17, has enraged Randolph townspeople by refusing to stand during the ceremony. She says she loves being an American but that the American flag is just a symbol — a symbol that doesn't mean anything to her.

Since her refusal to stand, Shapiro and her family have received a rash of threatening phone calls and hate mail. Shapiro has been to school only four times in the past three weeks because she says she fears for her safety.

But hidden under the guise of patriotism is prejudice and intolerance.

Constitutionally, Shapiro has just as much right not to stand as her classmates have to stand during the national anthem. And groups at A&M, such as Gay Student Services and Students Working Against Many Problems (SWAMP), have constitutionally protected rights of freedom of speech.

In recent weeks at A&M, people who have spoken in support of such groups as GSS and SWAMP have been threatened, have had their houses and cars vandalized and, in one case, have been physically attacked.

Our national anthem says this is the land of free. And whether we like it or not, that freedom includes freedom of speech, freedom of expression for everyone. Tolerance of others is what this country was founded on, what its constitution is based on.

Anyone who threatens or harms another person in the name of being a good American, a good Aggie, a good anything is kidding himself. That kind of American, Aggie, or whatever, we don't need.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

It's not easy being a man today

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

I LOVE YOU BUT —

Whether we want to admit it or not there are serious emotional problems in the new man-woman relationships.

Peter Gastonernough, a young friend, asked me a very strange question the other day. "Do you think I'm a wimp?"

"I don't believe so. Why do you ask?"

"My girlfriend thinks I am."

"Why does she think that?"

"Because she says I'm indecisive and I don't know what she wants."

"Did you ask her what she wanted?"

"Yes, and she said if I didn't know what she wanted then I must be a wimp."

"You have a problem. Do you have any idea of the way she wants you to behave?"

"I think she wants me to be strong and assertive and masculine."

"Have you tried it?"

"Every time I do, she says I don't treat her as an equal. She maintains the days of pushing women around are over. She wants me to respect her feelings."

"Have you told her you do?"

"Yes, and then she calls me a wimp."

"Are you sure this is the girl for you?"

"We're very much in love, but there is a lot more going on than I bargained for. It's not easy being a man today," he said.

"We're all aware of that. Perhaps you should tell her your feelings and the problems you have satisfying her."

"If I told her my feelings, she would think I was a weak person."

"Well, she already thinks you're a wimp, so you really don't have too much to lose."

"I could lose her respect."

"How did you get in this mess in the first place?"

"I think it had something to do with consciousness raising. When we first met she said I was nothing but a macho jock, and if I didn't change my attitude she'd never see me again. So I made an effort to change. When she wanted to do something, we did it. When I wanted to do something, I left the decision to her. At first she liked the role I was playing, but pretty soon she got ticked off and asked why she had to make all the decisions for both of us."

"That could have been a signal."

Women may pretend they like it, they're much happier when someone makes a decision for them."

"I'm aware of that. But I spoiled. Now when I make a decision, she's mad and says it's only fair that we're partners she should have as much of a say as I do."

"Maybe she said it but didn't mean it."

"I asked her if she really meant what she was saying, and she told me she was tired of always being questioned."

"On the basis of our conversation, seems to enjoy making life miserable for you."

"I don't think so. I believe she's confused as I am. It's not easy being a woman these days."

"We all know that. Why don't you take the bull by the horns and go back to being the macho jock you were before?"

"I don't think she'd stand for it. She's very much into being a liberated woman."

"Which means?"

"Even if she accepted it, her friends would never forgive her."

"There has to be something between macho and wimp," I said. "What happened to the new liberated man?"

"We cry a lot."

Winning really does make fans obnoxious

Two friends of mine talked me into going to Austin last weekend for the game, I really didn't want to go. I had just planned on watching the game at home. Besides, the Aggie football team was going to get killed anyway.



Kevin Inda

Though I had never attended a football game at Memorial Stadium, I've heard numerous stories about how ruthless Texas fans could be.

Walking around Sixth Street, listening to obnoxious Texas fans teasing all the Aggies after a massacre of our football team was not exactly my idea of fun. My friends kept encouraging me to go, so I did. Besides, after attending Oklahoma State University for two years, and enduring remarks from Sooner fans (including my Sooner mother and sister), I felt I could withstand any jokes directed at the school I was attending or its football team.

It didn't take long for me to realize what Texas fans were really like. The stories I'd heard about Texas fans were true.

As my friends and I walked toward the stadium, I heard numerous rude comments directed at people dressed in maroon as well as those uniformed, short-haired fellows. For once, I actually felt sorry for those guys.

Once inside the stadium with all the other Aggies, I felt safe from the persecution of being an Aggie. Safety in numbers I thought.

And then something unexpected happened — the Aggies scored, and kept scoring. The once ruthless Texas fans became somewhat quiet and well-mannered, barring an occasional cup of ice being tossed at the yell leaders.

Then I noticed something rather funny. The friends of mine who told me Texas fans were ruthless, had themselves become ruthless. I was just as guilty as anyone. I enjoyed seeing the Aggies destroy the Longhorns, and I let the people who wore burnt orange know it.

As the game progressed, the Aggie football team built up a bigger and bigger lead, and the Aggie fans felt more confident. This confidence led to more and more attacks directed toward the Longhorn team and fans, (obscenities and ice-throwing included).

The final score read Texas 12-A&M 37. It was now time for Aggie fans to launch their assault on Austin — primarily Sixth Street.

As I left the stadium I couldn't help notice the frenzy the Aggie fans were in. They were like wild animals at feeding time, waiting for the right moment to pounce on their prey — Longhorn fans.

The little old men and women dressed from head-to-toe in maroon that I was so used to seeing leave Kyle Field quiet and reserved, were glowing with vigor and ribbing the Longhorn fans about their defeat and trip to the Freedom Bowl.

Once in the Sixth Street area, it seemed as if Aggies had captured Austin and were refusing to give it up.

During one of my numerous trips to the bar in a downtown beer garden, a person with an Aggie jacket gave me a go-to-hell look and said, "Texas sucks!" After I gave that person a close-up look at my senior ring, I replied, "They sure do!"

All the ruthless things I heard and saw Texas fans do, applied equally as well to the Aggie fans.

So, next year when the Aggie football team plays Texas for the Southwest Conference Championship and a trip to the Cotton Bowl, and gets waxed, don't complain about how obnoxious Texas fans are — I know I won't.

Athletic excellence leads to obnoxiousness — at least for fans in the state of Texas.

Kevin Inda is a weekly columnist for The Battalion.



LETTERS:

Move Vandiver closer to belltower

EDITOR:

If President Vandiver wants to ring the belltower on a Monday night/Tuesday morning of dead week in celebration of the Aggie victory, why doesn't he move into the Northside dorms so he can hear it better? Is he trying to keep people from sleeping so that they will miss class on Tuesday? Why doesn't he just declare a holiday, anyway? I'm very happy that the Ags won; you don't know the ribbing I've been taking from my Dad. But really, is cannon fire truly necessary during dead week? We all anticipate the possibility of being blown away - without having ominous foreshadowings invading our dreams.

Wendy Motooka
Class of '86

Takes less than luck to beat A&M

EDITOR:

To all you dumb Aggies:

Why are you so excited about finally winning one game? We beat TCU, and worse than you did. Yeah, we lost to Baylor, but so did you. We've had some bad luck was all, but that always changes when we play you farmers. It doesn't take luck to beat A&M. You guys always beat yourselves and we just clean up the mess you leave behind.

It doesn't take much effort to beat a bunch of pansies. At least we're going to a bowl game, AGAIN. You guys are stuck in the TOILET BOWL, again.

What an Aggie joke your million-dollar coach is!!! I'll bet there won't be 100 of you guys in Austin Saturday night. Chickens!

Hook 'em, Horns!

Ray Western
Chicago, Ill.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This letter was post-marked before the A&M-Texas game. For those who missed it: A&M beat Texas 37-12.

Phalangists not fighting for peace in Lebanon

EDITOR:

An article, "Lebanese still fighting for democracy", appeared in the Nov. 21 issue of Battalion signed by three people claiming to represent the Lebanese people. Not only do they not represent the suffering people of Lebanon, the group they owe allegiance to is responsible for much misery and bloodshed in Lebanon. They are the infamous, dreaded Phalangists. Yes, the same forces who committed the massacre of Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in 1982, the same forces who cooperated with Israeli invaders to dismantle and devastate Lebanon. And now they talk about democracy for that shattered country under brutal Israeli occupation (which we don't hear much about in the media anymore). The Phalangists are a minority who have ruled Lebanon for long enough. How can a ruling minority talk about democracy? It's like the South African regime - with its racist Apartheid system - lecturing about the virtues of democracy and justice! They are the very obstacle to the realization of these

goals. Peace and democracy will come to Lebanon only when the aggressors and the people, who for long have been oppressed and deprived, take control of the affairs of their own country.

Iftexhar Hussain, '85
accompanied by 3 signatures

Other vocal groups have talent, too

EDITOR:

In response to Katherine P. Hurt's view of the Vocal Music Program Christmas concert, the fact is plain: clear that Hurt does not have the musical background to efficiently critique a choral performance. She is apparently ignorant of the fact that there are many types of music besides the traditional Christmas carols. The VMP successfully succeeded in expanding the repertoire to include not only the traditional favorites but also selections for more varied tastes in music. Simply because we preferred the Aggiezorns' cute rendition of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" does not mean that the rest of the program was lacking in talent. To criticize a masterpiece of the caliber of Puccini's "Gloria from Messa di Gloria" as a magnificent accomplishment by Century Singers. In a similar manner the Women's Chorus did an excellent job on the lullaby, "The Coventry Carol." We love the Singing Cadets as much as anyone else; however, we don't think this opinion prevent us from acknowledging the talent of the other vocal groups at Texas A&M.

Lynn Allen, '87
Ruth Ann Looper, '87

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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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