

OPINION

Cemetery visit not intended to honor

President Reagan continues to receive ridicule for his planned visit to the Bitburg cemetery in West Germany which has graves of 2,000 soldiers and 49 Waffen SS officers. Many alternatives have been suggested, but Reagan can do little without offending someone involved.

By visiting the cemetery, Reagan is not condoning the actions of the SS or trying to lessen the plight of the Jews. He is trying to make a statement to the German people.

Reagan said Monday the purpose of his visit is not to honor anyone, but merely to demonstrate the great reconciliation which has taken place.

"All of those in that cemetery have long since met the supreme judge of right and wrong, and whatever punishment or justice has been rendered by one who was above us all," Reagan said.

As Reagan pointed out, media coverage of the Bitburg controversy has gotten out of hand. Visiting the cemetery does not make a statement in favor of Nazism, but continued harping by the adversaries of the trip has led Reagan to be portrayed as a Nazi sympathizer and anti-Semitic.

Obviously, Reagan was not trying to offend the Jewish community with his actions. At most, attending a cemetery where SS officers are buried was an oversight on Reagan's part.

While the heinous crimes of the Nazis must never be forgotten, an innocent and overblown mistake by a United States president can be.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Phase One complete; time for the real world

Right now, at this very moment, several thousand graduating seniors are loafing around apartments, dorms and home-towns. Pay attention those of you who belong to this happy, gloating crew. This column's for you.

Marcy Basile

Four years ago our main concern was Senior Prom. Some dwelled on the idea of showing off new outrageously expensive dresses while others hid the pain of rejection behind seemingly haughty facades. How irrelevant such feelings seem now.

Now we preen for interviews; no one's opinions matter more than a prospective employer's. Parading around campus in suits — men with (heaven forbid!) perfectly knotted ties and women in navy patent leather pumps. We've come a long way from frilly dresses and baby blue tuxedos.

As freshmen we played. We were high school hotshots with a lot of growing up to do. My best friend and I vowed never to settle for "C"s and to never, ever go out with non-regs. Chemistry 101 tests produced record-breaking pizza consumption. We epitomized naive freshmen.

Thirty college hours and two semesters of hard-earned wisdom accompanied us into our sophomore years. No longer the "fish" on campus, we pranced and cavorted — delighting in the thought of humiliating the lower class among us.

Later in the year the Academic Building was captured — a prisoner behind chicken wire. Word spread that for some insane reason a cow-manure mixture was scheduled to be sprayed on the building to speed the aging process. (Personally, I think the students were being punished for some collective indignity upon the school's reputation.) Phase I of the Academic Building renovation had begun.

Junior year. The year we were no longer handed green parking stickers. No more Fish Lot for us. Mr. Albritton's

Tower joined our illustrious ranks that year. We screamed. The nerve of the man to donate so much money just for a place to hang his name. (Thank you, Mr. Albritton for those wonderful bells.)

So here we are at the end of the beginning.

When we entered, we were lonely, scared and completely lost. Campus maps and the Dixie Chicken were our best friends. Now we have our class rings and the Dixie Chicken (some things are too good to change).

Of the four years, the last has been my favorite. After three majors and more than my share of "discussions with the dean," I finally found my niche at A&M.

The Battalion has become my home. Even though I didn't write for The Batt, I got to know most of the people involved with its production. Some of them I will never forget — some I will choose to forget. All have left their mark on me and my ideals. I may not have agreed with the politics of all the editors I have known, but I respected their decisions regardless of the repercussions. These people made me laugh and they made me cry. But above all, they made me feel welcome.

These four years have taught me more than how to tell acids from bases, the inner workings of a pig and the finer points of newspaper column writing. No, I also learned no difference separates C.T.s from non-regs (short hair no longer excites me), gays and straights can co-exist on the A&M campus despite all the regents' money and the Albritton Tower is worth more to me than the money it cost.

I learned about life — the pain and joy associated with living. I learned that college is the beginning of a lifetime. I'm 21, not yet settled into the adult phase of my life.

But I do know Phase I is complete. Time for Phase II to commence.

Marcy Basile is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.

LETTERS:

Bryan residents thank fraternity

EDITOR:

Several months ago, our family publicly took to task a neighborhood fraternity house for a number of unneighborly acts, as well as the Bryan Police for what we felt was a lack of response to some of these incidents.

Now it is only fair to thank members of that same fraternity for helping my

family as witnesses in a small claims case involving damage done to our vehicle by a young man who fled the scene and was chased down by Ned Plum and Cody Smith of the Kappa Alpha house.

It would have been very easy for these young men to not want to get involved with someone else's problem, especially since a number of episodes — none of which involved these two — had strained relations between the KAs and some nearby residents.

However, they were willing to get in-

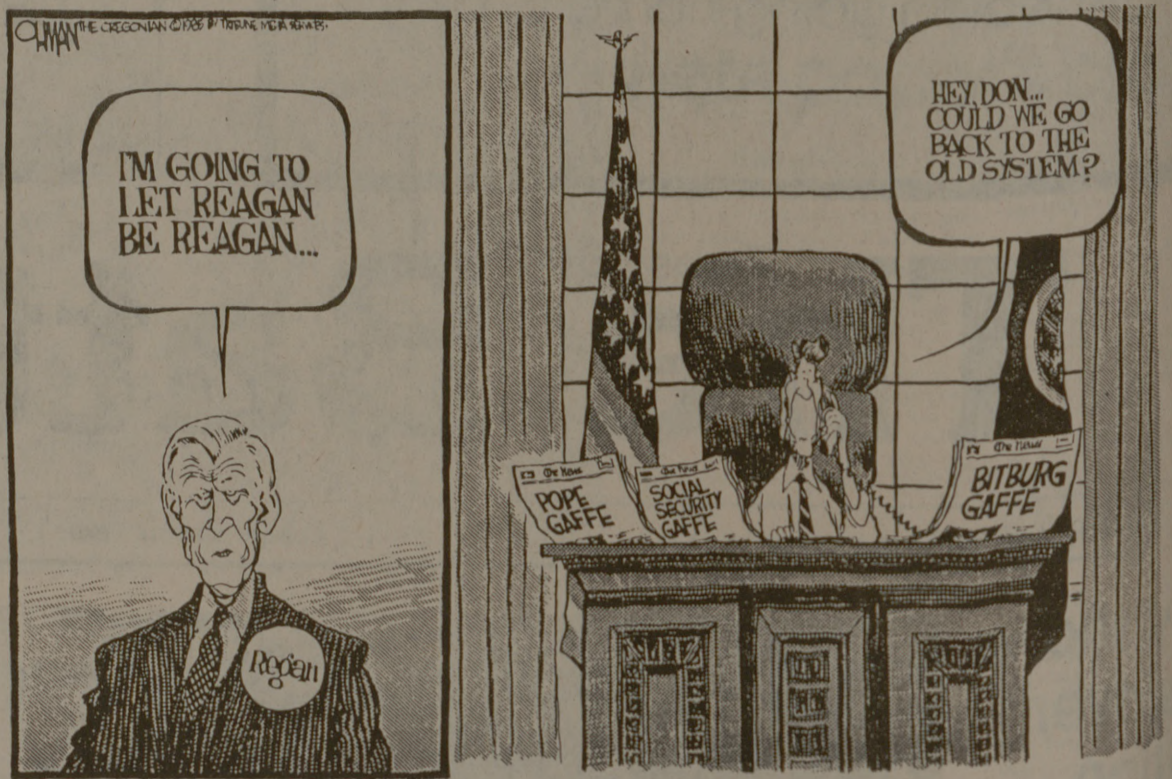
involved, even to the point of accompanying us to the courtroom, and our family wishes to express its gratitude. We also understand that the fraternity expelled a number of high-spirited members responsible for irritating incidents, and that active members are involved in a number of community service projects.

We would like the members of KA to know that we are glad to see this move toward a better relationship with those who live down the block. It's not just

good fences that make good neighbors, but also this kind of mutual responsibility.

We also would like to recognize the Bryan Police Department's increased responsiveness, and we encourage all Bryan residents to take an interest in our police department as well as asking city council members to find funding for the department on a level that would assure all Bryan neighborhoods the security of routine patrols.

Ed and Mary Walraven



Ag majors are people, too

I have a bad habit of listening to other people's conversations. The other day I was eavesdropping on a couple of co-eds. They were probably future bank presidents or fashion editors, but on that particular afternoon they were just happy-go-lucky college girls chattering about men, parties and new clothes.

Lorie Woodward

I'd heard it all before so I was only listening with one ear when Ms. A stood up, ran her perfectly-manicured fingers through her perfectly-coiffed curls and announced, "Well hon, I've got to run. I've got class in Kleberg."

A look of horror crept across Ms. B's face; she clutched her Gucci as if to ward off to evil spirits and said, "You p-o-o-r darling — you actually have to associate with those dumb goat-roping ag majors."

Dumb goat roping ag majors—that phrase really burned itself into my brain. One reason it got my attention is because prejudice of any kind disturbs me, but that particular prejudice hit a little too close to home. You see, I'm a dumb goat-roper as is my father and his father before him.

Agriculture in Thomas Jefferson's time was a noble profession, but agriculture in Ronald Reagan's time is a career reserved for "dumb goat-ropers."

I guess I can see where the dumb part of the stereotype comes from. It's easy to sit in a bustling office with its ringing phones and crumpled Wall Street Journals and romanticize about the simplicity of life on the farm. Nothing for a person to do all day but mindless chores like chopping weeds and milking cows.

Today's agriculturists do chop weeds

and they do milk cows, but they do it with expensive, high-tech equipment. Running machinery that might cost over \$200,000 is far from being a mindless task. A farmer has to keep the wolf away from the door as well as the banker, the fertilizer man, the feed store owner, the equipment salesman and Uncle Sam.

Agriculturists can't afford to be dumb. All the dumb farmers I know are unemployed. To stay in business in today's world, farmers and ranchers have to have a working knowledge of accounting, finance, marketing, genetics and nutrition not to mention physiology, pathology, applied physics, organic chemistry, tax law and rural sociology.

Now I'll be the first to admit that agriculturists usually aren't patrons of the arts, but that doesn't mean that farmers and ranchers can't appreciate beauty. My father has never marvelled at Michelangelo, hummed Beethoven or quoted Shakespeare, but he has taught me to appreciate things like a dew-covered spider web glistening in the morning sun, the perfection of a newborn calf and the smell of freshly plowed earth.

My dad's tastes are simple and his priorities straightforward. He says that loving your family and loving your work are right on up there with loving God. He also says that having food on your table is more important than having Calvin Kleins on your buns, Rolexes on your wrist or Porsches in your garage.

I have a feeling a lot of modern agriculturists adhere to these old-fashioned notions. Having to depend on Nature for a living makes people see life in simple terms.

Now that I think about it, agriculturists do seem simple in the context of today's world. But they shouldn't be

shunned, because all the technology in the world can't save one starving baby of a "dumb goat-roper" doesn't plant his seeds.

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photographic classes within the Department of Communications.

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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 include the address and telephone number of the writer.

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