

OPINION

# Firefighters worth inconvenience

The fireman attending the training school at Texas A&M are getting a bum rap. They've been the object of columns, letters to the editor and countless verbal attacks, mostly centering around their lack of respect for Aggie traditions.

Most of these firemen are not Aggies. They are here to benefit from the training program offered by the University. It's unreasonable to expect them to learn a century's worth of tradition in a week or two. Even if they did, by the time they memorized our sacred traditions, it would be time for them to leave.

It is unreasonable to expect them to care about our traditions. These men are not linked to A&M in the same manner as students.

This does not mean the fireman should be granted a license to rape, pillage and plunder the students and establishments of Aggieland, but it does mean that Aggies must learn to be more tolerant of these visitors. These people normally provide a vital function to society.

The program lasts a total of three weeks. The education these fire fighters receive could save many lives. When a house is burning, any expertise a fireman can bring to his job is needed. Having your life saved later by a A&M-trained fireman is worth a few weeks of inconvenience.

Grin and bear it, Ags.

The Battalion Editorial Board

# Mail Call

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.

## Back off The Batt

**EDITOR:**  
Contrary to the view expressed in Bryan McMurry's letter of July 12, you do not owe an apology to your readers for running the GSS picture on page 1 of your July 2 issue. Quite the contrary, you are to be commended for doing your job: covering the news.

Mr. McMurry writes that he is "quite sure there are other 'news' pictures" your readers "would be more interested in." Come on Mr. McMurry, The GSS issue has probably generated more controversy at A&M than the decision to allow women to enroll here did in the 1960s. For at least the immediate future, anything the GSS does will be controversial and, therefore, newsworthy.

Mr. McMurry argues the banner shown in the picture (the message on the banner reads, "The Fighting Texas Aggie Gay Marching Band, Gay Student Services") constitutes "a slap in the face to the entire CORPS..."

But if the picture or story had never been printed, how could Mr. McMurry (or anyone else who didn't attend the recent gay parade in Houston) have learned of this alleged insult to A&M? If The Batt stopped covering such controversial events, wouldn't unscrupulous individuals, knowing their activities would go unreported, thereby enjoy some degree of freedom in really insulting A&M? After all, how can one sue an individual or organization for libel if one is completely ignorant of the libelous act?

The ideal role of the press in our society is to act as an impartial medium where news is collected, organized and then reported to the people so that the people can decide for themselves matters of public concern.

By printing the picture in question, The Battalion performed its ideal role to the fullest.

(By the way, before anyone decides to put me on a blacklist or burn a cross in my front yard, I am not gay!)

Richard Braastad  
Class of '83

## Keep them away

**EDITOR:**  
Let's keep the firemen away until they learn to respect our traditions at Texas A&M. Over the last four years at A&M, I have kindly reminded people wearing hats in the MSC to remove them. This has never caused a problem for them; no hairpieces falling off, no massive tension headache, etc. Well, I have been entering the same kind of approach with firemen, who come to A&M for their week of partying and seeing how much they can do (or get away with) while their wives are not around. I have found the results are not as successful.

It is not only tradition breaking in the MSC, but they also have a tendency to stand on the memorial grass. This causes me to wonder if firemen can read of if they are just thick-headed. In light of this new view of firemen, if I was in a burning building and had a choice between getting consumed alive by flames or help from the firemen, I would be stumped.

There is a positive side Aggies, there are some good firemen who observe our traditions and participate like true Ags.

Too bad the action of a few spoil the reflection of the many.

Richard Lee  
Engineering

## Whatever happened to Aggie ethics?

**EDITOR:**  
While hunting for textbooks at the campus bookstore, I came across an interesting issue concerning the ethics of Texas A&M. For sale on the shelf was a book (Managing Behavior in Organizations; McGraw-Hill publishers; by Schlesinger, Eccles and Gabarro) that had been stamped with the words NOT FOR SALE by the publisher. When I asked one of the senior personnel at the bookstore why this book was for sale when it was obvious that the publisher intended it not to be, I was told that this was a common practice and that it also allows the students to purchase books at a reduced price. The phrase "filthy lucre" passed through my mind and became associated with what I was hearing.

Texas A&M prides itself on its long history of traditions. It was founded on principles such as honor and integrity. We claim to be an institution that is of the highest caliber. Why do we stoop to larceny? The textbook I saw for sale is a clear example of this. Neither the publisher nor the authors appear to have received any revenue from the sale of this book and have clearly stated that the sale of this particular item was unauthorized by them.

Has A&M become common, base, and unethical? Have we sold our honor and integrity for profit as others have done for centuries? I would be interested in finding out the official justifications involved in this questionable act by the University and whether this is truly a common practice.

John Fraedrich  
Graduate Assistant

Q. WHEN WILL STATUE OF LIBERTY RECONSTRUCTION BE FINISHED?



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# Up in arms over imported Japanese automobiles

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

As part of the celebration of the end of World War II, Mr. Buchwald has reached into his memory bag.

It seems like only yesterday that we signed a peace treaty with the Japanese aboard the battleship Missouri, and told them they would never be allowed to make arms again.

"What should we do instead?" a defeated Japanese admiral asked.

"Why don't you make automobiles?" one of General MacArthur's advisers suggested.

"Ah so. But Americans make automobiles. How can a poor defeated country like Japan hope to compete with your wonderful cars?"

"Well, of course you can't compete in the United States because Americans would never buy a Japanese automobile after what you did to Pearl Harbor. But perhaps you could make something that could be sold in Southeast Asia and other markets where people don't care about quality."

"Ah so. How do you build an automobile?"

"It sounds hard, but I'm sure you people can get the hang of it. Here's a book with the instructions. You see, you put the engine up here and then seats here, and wrap a body around it, paint it a nice color, and you have yourself a car."

"Can I keep the book?"

"Why not? Now that you are a poor defeated country we have no secrets."

"You are kind, sir."

A year later, the first Japanese car came off a jerry-built assembly line. The Japanese admiral, who was now in charge of Tojo Motors, showed it to the American aide.

The ex-admiral bowed. "Forgive us for this unworthy thing we call an automobile, but we do not have much to work with."

The aide slapped the ex-admiral on the back. "Don't apologize. You did right well with what you had available. I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll bring some of our boys over from Detroit, and they'll give you a list of things you'll need to build a decent vehicle. We'll also send some of your designers and engineers over to the United States so they can get the hang of American know-how."

"Ah so? You would do that for a poor little struggling Japanese automobile company?"

"Why not? It isn't as if you're ever going to be able to sell any of those rickshaws in the States."

Several years later, the MacArthur aide, who was now working for a large New York bank, bumped into the ex-admiral in the Waldorf Astoria. "What brings you to New York?" he asked jovially.

"I am arranging dealerships all over America for our four-cylinder Kamikaze 3x2. It gets 24 miles to the gallon and has front-wheel drive, disc brakes, and a rear defrosting window. Here is a photo of it."

The American looked at it and shook his head. "You're wasting your time, Admiral. Americans will never buy a small car, particularly one with front-wheel drive."

"Ah so, but we only hope to take one percent of the market among the teenagers and college students."

"It won't work. We have a love affair in this country with gas guzzlers and big fenders. As a friend, I'm telling you to save your money, and try to sell your product to the Third World. They will drive anything they can get their hands on."

The ex-admiral bowed and said, "Perhaps you are right. But as long as I am here maybe I will find someone who is interested."

It was 1981, and both the American ex-aid and the Japanese ex-admiral had aged considerably. When the American walked into the luxurious offices of the ex-admiral, the Japanese stood up slowly and bowed.

"Ah so. And what brings you to Tokyo, my good friend?"

"I've been sent by the President of the United States," the American said. "He knows we go way back, and felt I should bring his message personally."

"What message?"

"He wants you to stop making many damn Japanese cars."

"But if we can't make cars, what can we make?"

"He wants you to start making arms. But we don't know how to make arms."

"The President told me to give you this."

"What is it?"

"A book of instructions."



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