

OPINION

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.

Watch out for that tree!

EDITOR:

I am writing in reference to the low-hanging trees on the Texas A&M campus. I am 6 feet 2 inches tall, and I am constantly reminded of my height by the trees lining the sidewalks on this campus.

Everyday the trees tap me on the head and say "My, aren't you tall!" I wonder how many other students on this campus are greeted this way by our overly friendly trees?

These trees should be kept content with pruning shears so that the trees do not have to look to the students for companionship. If the situation is not remedied soon, I may resort to carrying a chainsaw on campus and lopping off these overly friendly limbs.

Eric Maxwell
Class of '88

All fired up about breach of traditions

EDITOR:

After receiving a telephone call from someone who had read my article in The Battalion, he asked that I do a follow-up to my story; so here goes:

Stereotyping is a human flaw brought on by the actions of a few that we generalize to the many. Such is the case that I have run into in the MSC. Yes folks, even down here in our beloved Aggieland, we have our two-percenters who are a bad reflection on all of us who strive to be the "good Ag" type. Sometimes these stereotypes tend to reflect their actions more bluntly than the majority. This is why we pick them out more easily.

Some fireman may not hold our tradition as being important. This would be like Aggies walking by a fire truck on display and spitting our best wad on it. It does not interfere with the efficiency of the work force, but it does hurt internally. When people tend to disregard what one feels is sacred, one tends to lose all respect for them.

As for risking one's life in the line of duty, we all have done it. No one is invulnerable to accidents. Even driving a car or walking in the rain poses as much danger as being killed with cyanide, it just occurs at less frequent intervals. Yes, firefighters are faced

with more "direct" danger than most of us in our everyday life, but that does not mean that we are any less or more susceptible to death than they are.

One final note: although the firemen are down here to learn new techniques for stopping fires or saving lives, they do not always spend their time in their room performing difficult analytical solutions which would add to the enrichment of all the other areas of firefighting. We are all human — a new town, new excitement, who can resist? It is just easy to pick out the firemen in a restaurant or bar when they're in town.

I am not attempting to say that we should abolish all fire departments. The need to exchange ideas and techniques (whether verbal, or through books or journals) is just as important to firefighting as to any other discipline. Their line of duty goes unrewarded until they bring a fire under control at a homeowner's residence. Then we appreciate how much something means to us — in time of need.

Richard M. Lee
Class of '85

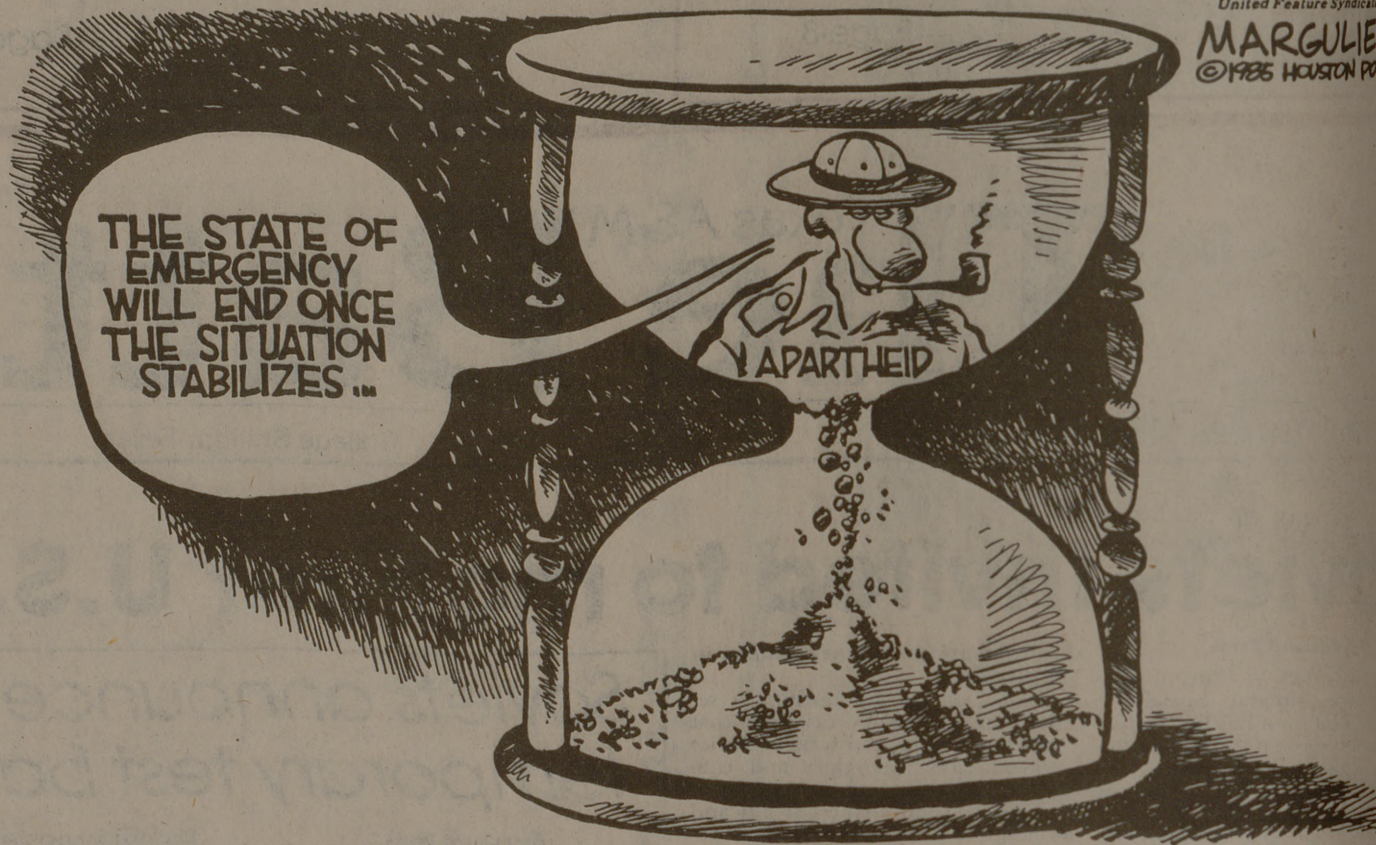
Peace offering

EDITOR:

Seriously folks, now that the mudslinging and name calling is done, on behalf of all the firefighters that responded to Mr. Richard Lee's letter in your July 24th issue, I would like to congratulate you on your objectivity and thank you for the opportunity to respond.

There were fire departments long before there were Aggies, so we are not oblivious to tradition. There are very deep-rooted traditions in the fire service. If Mr. Lee was curious to ask about these traditions, I feel certain that most firefighters would probably take a few minutes to enlighten him as to the nature of these traditions. It seems that if Mr. Lee and others that share his feelings would take a few minutes to do likewise, it would create a more positive atmosphere and they might make the campus easier to look forward to coming to.

Lets all get together and talk with each other instead of about each other. We have as much to offer as anybody!
Tommy Tomlinson
Huntsville



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The difference is dollar signs in a treasure hunter's eyes

Indiana Jones said his heroic actions in the movie "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" were motivated by a desire for fortune and glory. This same desire was shared by the millions of viewers who flocked to the theaters to see the whip-wielding tough guy do his stuff.



Loren Steffy

Indiana Jones has the ability to draw out our childhood desires to be a hero. A little rough-and-tumble adventurer lies buried in all of us. So does the thrill of finding hidden treasures.

Some people, such as Mel Fisher, turn this desire into a career. Fisher is the treasure hunter who is "excavating" the Atocha, a Spanish vessel which sank off of Key West carrying an estimated \$400 million in valuables. Like Dr. Jones, Fisher is motivated by fortune and glory.

Ironically, Fisher and Jones both make claims to archaeology. Jones is mostly a swashbuckling hero, with strong-treasure hunter tendencies thrown in. For a few brief moments in "Raiders of the Lost Ark" he imitates a college professor, but what he is teaching seems to be anthropology, not ar-

chaeology. Fisher isn't a swashbuckler, and he sure isn't a scholar, but he and Jones do share the role of treasure hunter.

Sure, Fisher is interested in the past, just like an archaeologist. But an archaeologist is concerned with the knowledge that can be gained from studying relics of the past. A treasure hunter is primarily concerned with money that can be gained from relics from the past.

Archaeologists devote their lives to studying the past in hope that the knowledge of ancient civilizations will benefit present society. They don't get fortune, and any glory they receive is short-lived and quickly forgotten by the society they're trying to help.

Treasure hunters, however, devote their lives to themselves. They exploit the past to benefit their own well-being. Treasure hunters get all the fortune, or at least what's left after their investors and the IRS get their fortune. To top it off, they get weeks worth of front-page glory.

What's worse, the glory of the treasure hunter overshadows the archaeologist. During the rare moments of recognition an archaeologist does receive, someone inevitably comes up and says, "Hey, did you find lots of gold and stuff like that guy in Florida? How much is it worth? Betcha got a big house full of all the

gold and stuff from other sunken treasure you found, huh?"

In years of living around archaeologists, the only "worth" I ever heard spoken of was knowledge. The only "priceless treasures" were discoveries of ancient techniques. Something as simple as a shard of glass or a splinter of wood that revealed the way a past civilization manufactured the product is enough "booty" to send an archaeologist into hysterics.

Archaeologists spend years studying each coin or tooth or rusty nail. They don't lay claims to their finds. The "treasure" is usually turned over to a museum for the benefit of all. The findings are catalogued and articles are published so that the knowledge can be available for others who need it. Archaeologists don't get to keep the artifacts they find. They wouldn't dream of employing Fisher's "finders keepers" rule.

Meanwhile, Mel Fisher is hauling his sunken treasure out of the ocean, continually estimating the value of what one of his divers called "the mother lode." Fisher can hire all the people he wants to masquerade as archaeologists, and make all the scientific charades he can think of, but he can't hide the dollar signs in his eyes.

Loren Steffy is a junior journalism major and the Opinion Page Editor for The Battalion.

The 'personals' touch to finding romance

Companionship is a basic human need. Over the years mankind has developed many methods of satisfying that need.



Karl Pallmeyer

A long time ago male-female relationships were arranged by parents. If you were a young man, your father would make a deal with some young girl's father so that the two of you could be brought together. The wealth of the two fathers was often more important than what their children felt for each other. Sometimes your father could trade livestock for your mate, a good wife could be worth 40 head of cattle.

Some people who were looking for companionship would go to a matchmaker. The matchmaker would bring together two people with similar characteristics. The matchmaker was considered to be very wise in matters of love but, curiously, was rarely married.

These customs were once practiced throughout the world. In some places they still are.

But this is America, and American

dating customs are a little different. During the early years of our nation, Americans did use traditional methods of mate-getting. But as the times change so do people. During the war years of the 1940s a great new pick-up line was developed. Those men who were about to go fight the Axis could almost be sure to find some companionship, if only for the evening, with the line: "I just got my orders to go overseas and I might not make it back..."

During the 1950s a new mate market opened up: colleges. Many women started to go to colleges during the 1950s and many men were glad. It was about this time that colleges started offering MRS degrees. To this day, colleges are one of the best places to find companionship.

But these are the 1980s and many new matchmaking methods have been developed or discovered. Computer dating services, single's bars, health clubs, astrologers and inventive new pick-up lines have been used by many with varied results. There is another method of finding companionship that, although not new, is being used in the Bryan-College Station area: the want ads.

If you were to pick up a "Quik Quarter," the local want ads paper, and turn to the "Personals" section you might see an ad that went something like this:

Divorced white Christian female, attractive, fun-loving, 33, 5'4". Enjoys sports, movies, travel, quiet evenings, music. Looking for Christian man, 30-55. Like tall men, 5'10" and over. Must have hostage insurance in case of kidnapping.

Or:

Single, attractive white male, 21, A&M student, 6'2", 190 lbs., into bodybuilding, outdoors and working with animals. Seeking trim attractive female, 18-22, interested in both building a relationship and healthy body together. Photo please.

Or:

Divorced white male, born in 1925. I like to collect coins and rocks. I would like to correspond with a lady who likes to do the same.

Or:

Attractive white full-figured lady, 64 lonely, looking for a real nice man that is lonely and looking to form relationship, 55-64. Photo please.

There are many such ads in the "Quik Quarter." Males and females, ages 19 to 65, are looking for somebody.

They have various interests including gardening, movies, fishing, beach music, sports, ranching, reading, attending financial and business seminars, walking, nature, bodybuilding, dancing, guitar playing, stamp collecting and horses, and are looking for someone to share these interests. These people either don't have the time to use other methods of date getting or have used these methods unsuccessfully and are using the want ads as a final resort.

I usually don't have the time to hang out at single's bars, I am too lazy to work out at a health club, I don't know how to run a computer, I don't believe in astrology, my inventive pick-up lines are countered with the ultimate college excuse of "Not tonight I have to study," I am not about to be sent over seas, I don't trust matchmakers and my father doesn't have 40 head of cattle. So here goes:

Attractive male, 21, A&M student, 5'10", 175 lbs. Interested in music, film, history, literature and politics. Have great sense of humor. Looking for somebody.

Karl Pallmeyer is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.

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