

OPINION

Mail Call

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Message of special Aggie unraveled

EDITOR:

I am writing to you because I was having trouble understanding why things turned out as they did. Although I really tried to figure it out on my own, it has taken until now, almost two months later, to see what a very special Aggie was showing me. I thought it needed to be shared with someone.

Joseph Walker Swinney was a good friend of mine as he was to others here. It was Joe and another officer (and Aggie grad) from my National Guard unit that insisted on the night we had off from Annual Training last summer we come to College Station where I got my first tour of the campus at 2:30 a.m.

It was Joe that proudly and without mistake or hesitation of name introduced me to practically everyone we ran into on campus the next day. And it was Joe who quietly walked me onto Kyle Field's 50-yard line and told me I was standing in the center of the universe.

Joe was killed in a two-jeep accident during Annual Training at Ft. Hood this summer, as all of his friends know. There were many people at his funeral in Dallas, memorial services by fellow members of the Corps at Ft. Riley, Kansas and Quantico, Virginia. Two memorial services were held at Ft. Hood, one by his unit and one by mine, as he was a member of our unit until he transferred. And there were many who could not attend that wished to.

I had to question "Why?" and were it not for the strength of his family I would not understand what I am supposed to get from this. All of us paid what respect we could because we understood his feelings for ourselves and everything around him. We can tell you stories that are only bits and pieces of his dedication to it all.

He did not simply come here to earn a degree, to get a job and then to grow old in front of the weekend reruns on television. The only way to explain what he did was that he came here and loved this school as his father before him. ("Love" is the closest I can come to explain what feelings he held here because emotions can't bring the words. By themselves they're simply not enough.) Somewhere through the tears, his mother and I figured that he couldn't have cared more, couldn't have done or

felt more for this school and those who touched his life than he did.

To tell you the truth it hurts to realize I won't see him this Fall because it's just so hard to imagine him not being here. And to those who don't know yet or can't feel what this place is all about, I say to you a body knows limits, but a heart, a mind, and a spirit do not know boundaries or restraints.

That's what I think he would want me to see. I told someone the other day I didn't know what all of the hooplah about A&M was, and I hope if she is reading this she knows I was wrong.

Being a transfer student last spring semester, I have yet to attend an Aggie football game or Midnight Yell Practice. But I have seen what this place means with unbridled conviction. A heart I still hear beating, a mind I know still thinks of tomorrows, and the spirit I hear rustling the very tree branches I walk under reminds me.

Mike Pryor

EDITOR'S NOTE: This letter originally appeared in *The Battalion* in August. We reprint it at the request of Traci Partridge, who wanted Aggies to remember Joe at Silver Taps tonight.

'Un-run' fun undone

EDITOR:

On the night of Wednesday, September 4, the men of Crocker Hall participated in one of their traditional publicity runs through the girls dorms. These "Un-runs" have long been known for their originality and popularity with the ladies.

On Wednesday night, however, Crocker Hall was not the only dorm to do an "Un-run." After Crocker left the dorms, a few guys from Moore Hall also ran through the girls' dorms. The object of Moore Hall's run was not publicity or entertainment but rather obscenity.

These guys ran through the girls' dorms doing vulgar chants and yells and even resorted to "mooning" the girls!

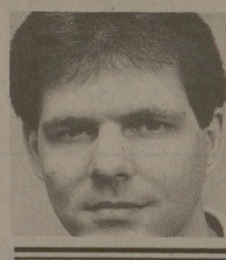
On behalf of Crocker Hall I would like to apologize to all the ladies on campus for the rude and tasteless behavior of our neighbors in Moore Hall, and I hope that nothing like this ever happens again. Thank you.

Rob Farrell
President, Crocker Hall



Liberal arts 'pud' major for A&M

Several weeks ago, while I was in Indiana visiting friends and checking out the master's program in political science at Indiana University, my fiance asked: "What's the pud major at Texas A&M?"



John Hallett

"Pud major?" I said. "Yeah," she responded. "You know, the major that's the easiest to get a degree in."

"I never really thought about it, but a lot of the people at A&M consider liberal arts majors second-class citizens," I replied. "I don't think that's true at all, but most liberal arts students just don't get any respect."

I paused for a moment and then continued: "I've had encounters with engineering students who were determined to make me feel like a walking compendium of semi-useless information. I guess the problem results from the fact that A&M stands for Agricultural and Mechanical."

"As you know our ag program is very big and the engineering college is one of the largest in the nation... also the College of Business has grown in the last 10 years. But unfortunately, most of these programs put little emphasis on courses outside a student's major. A&M doesn't have a core curriculum so a lot of students just don't get much exposure to courses in liberal arts."

Then I explained to Elaine some of the things that make A&M different from other universities — things that have slowed change. I told her about the history of the Corps (as best I could), traditions and the special "esprit de corps" that, supposedly, is

shared by all students at A&M, not just the Corps of Cadets. And I told her about prejudices — beginning with early prejudices against women and blacks, to recent controversies over women in the band and recognition of Gay Student Services.

Liberal arts suffers in other ways, I added. Because of the emphasis placed on science and engineering at A&M, many students believe that where both are offered, the Bachelor of Science degree is better than a Bachelor of Arts. The very word art brings to mind connotations of femininity at a University where masculinity is defended to the death.

"You can get a B.S. in any of the liberal arts programs?" Elaine asked, astounded.

"In some of them."

"But why would anybody want a B.S. in political science or journalism?"

"Well, for one thing a B.S. degree has no foreign language requirement and a lot of people would rather avoid taking a language," I said. "Others believe that the B.S. offers better exposure to computer science and business."

"But don't people there know that graduate schools want students to have foreign languages?" asked Elaine.

"I don't think so. None of my advisers explained advantages of either degree to me. Fortunately I went the B.A. route and I'm glad I did."

"But another friend isn't so lucky. I asked him if he knew that most schools require a foreign language. He said he wasn't worried (he's following a B.S. degree plan), he wanted to stay at A&M. He was surprised when I told him A&M has a foreign language requirement for the Master of Arts degree in political science."

"It seems to me that places an extra burden on grad students," Elaine said. "They could have easily taken a language as an undergraduate. Just imag-

ine what it would be like for someone who decides they want to go to a school like the University of California at Berkeley where some grad programs require two languages. I sure wouldn't want to try it," she said.

"Neither would I," I said. Elaine couldn't understand why anyone would attend a school that doesn't adequately prepare its students for the future.

"I'm glad I didn't go there (A&M)," she said.

"But many students are proud of A&M," I replied. Not only do students come to A&M for engineering, agriculture and business, they come to join the Corps or because it has become the family tradition, I explained.

Unfortunately, student "legacies" are likely to suffer the most. They come because of the Corps or to follow in their father's footsteps, without a particular goal in mind other than getting their senior boots or graduating. Those in for the biggest shock are the followers—the ones who go into engineering because everyone else is doing it. And when they realize that they either don't like it or can't do it, they look for another major and many times it's liberal arts.

"And that's why," I told Elaine, "many students look down at us — because they think liberal arts is easy."

"So I guess students down there think Ronald Reagan, JFK and Woodrow Wilson are a bunch of puds," she said.

"Why's that?" I asked.

"Reagan majored in sociology and JFK studied political science as an undergraduate," Elaine answered. "And Woodrow Wilson was editor of his college newspaper."

John Hallett is a senior political science major, a columnist and News Editor for *The Battalion*.

With 'big stick' comes bigger responsibility

Apartheid. The name is synonymous with the South African policy of racial segregation and discrimination which wrinkles the nose like a foul-smelling odor. World attention, focused earlier this year on flight 847 and Ethiopia, has turned to the turmoil in South Africa. It fills our television screens nightly with images of riots, harsh police actions and that government's hard line. And with each passing day it becomes clearer that the United States is in a no-win situation.

Michael Crawford
Guest Columnist

The white South African government, unwilling to relinquish control to the black majority, is becoming increasingly squeezed by internal dissension and other countries' outrage. Government-supported police brutality and institutionalized racial discrimination far exceeds what occurred in the American South, and it is dwarfed only by the atrocities of dictators like Hitler.

The vortex of the storm grows with each new riot, and South Africa appears to be running out of its most precious commodity — time.

As other Western governments moved closer to establishing economic sanctions against South Africa, the Reagan administration stuck to its guns on a policy of "constructive engagement" — a policy which had produced no tangible results. The United States was left to walk softly and hide its big stick.

Why should we care about what happens in a country located on the tip of another continent thousands of miles away?

Because 500 American companies have branches or holdings in a country which has just frozen foreign investments, preventing the flight of capital.

Because the United States is dependent on South African minerals, crucial to producing the strong, light-weight materials used in our defense industry.

Because at least 650 people, mostly blacks, have died in riots there during the past 18 months.

And mostly because the entire concept of apartheid should be repugnant to a nation founded on "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

What can and should be done by the U.S. government to peacefully bring this practice to an end? As South Africa's largest trading partner, America's stick is large, our responsibility that much greater.

Economic jitters have already damaged South Africa's economy. The rand has plunged to half of its 1984 value,

gold reserves are down, and the finance minister is bouncing around the globe trying to refinance his country's debts.

The United States placed sanctions on South Africa Monday. They will further damage that country's weakened economy. Economic pressure will result in political pressure on a government which has already sworn not to abandon its hard-line course. And white South Africans' anger will punish the most vulnerable, least guilty group — the blacks.

The United States could have continued trading with South Africa, making certain that American companies would have been nationalized once the blacks came to power. Blacks' resentment and anger at American inaction would have equalled that of the Iranians' after the fall of the Shah. And the world's most powerful nation would have been seen as supporting brutality and discrimination.

Whatever further action, or inaction,

the furor on Capital Hill produces, South Africa will continue to be ripped apart. History suggests that a government not supported by its people cannot survive long. When that happens, apartheid will be gone and its passing will have done far more than wrinkle our noses.

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