

Opinion

A matter of ethics

John Williams, publisher of the Bryan-College Station Eagle was elected president of the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce Tuesday. For a newspaper publisher to actively involve himself with the people or organizations his paper is covering represents a conflict of interest.

Williams probably perceives his election as a means of serving his community, which is an admirable motive. Too often newspapers are accused of removing themselves from community activities and becoming merely social commentators.

Many publishers argue they have a duty to get involved in their communities to protect their investments in their newspapers. Russell G. D'Oench Jr., editor and co-owner of the Middletown, Conn., Press says, "You don't resign from the human race when you join a newspaper." D'Oench sits on several community boards, including an insurance company and a hospital.

But in most cases when editors and publishers wear more than one hat, their newspapers suffer a loss of objectivity. Having the publisher of the local newspaper as president of the chamber of commerce could result in the establishment of "sacred cows" in the editorial policy. With the publisher hobnobbing with local business leaders, reporters may find certain topics are "off-limits."

The editor and publisher of the Flint (Mich.) Journal were members of several community-oriented organizations, including the Flint Chamber of Commerce. One of the paper's feature writers described the paper's functions as resembling "a community newsletter," rather than a newspaper.

According to Wednesday's Eagle, Williams said his priorities will be: "economic development, expansion of tourist and convention business, a dialogue between Texas A&M and the local businesses and a philosophy that the chamber must meet the needs of all businesses of whatever size."

Meeting the needs of all businesses creates a potential conflict for business reporters. It certainly wouldn't help the needs of a business if that business were reported to be engaged in illegal activities. But covering up the story would be unethical.

Eagle editor Bob Rogers said he doesn't see any conflicts arising, but how can he be sure? How can the public be sure it is getting a full and accurate account of the news?

The Battalion Editorial Board



March enlightens students

The purpose of attending a college or university is to become educated. Your professors do their best to make sure you receive a proper education in the classroom. It's up to you to do best to make sure you receive a proper education in the world.



Karl Pallmeyer

During the '60s, college campuses were the scenes for many protests, sit-ins, demonstrations, rallies and marches. During the '60s and early '70s,

many college students were active in letting the world know that they cared about what was happening at their school, their community, their country and their world.

During the late '70s and early '80s, students seemed to be content in concentrating on their studies and social life instead of getting involved with protests and politics. Today many college students are starting to become more active in letting the world know that we care about what happens at our school, our community, our country and our world.

There are many political and social issues that we as college students should be aware of. Many of the issues will affect us in the future. Many of these issues affect us now. One of the most important issues of our time is apartheid.

Apartheid is a political, social and economic system of segregation and discrimination against non-white people of South Africa. Apartheid is enforced by a system of laws that prevent blacks and other non-whites, over 70 percent of the population, in South Africa from enjoying basic civil rights.

Because of apartheid blacks cannot vote or run for office. Because of apartheid blacks are not considered legal citizens of South Africa and are required to carry pass books when traveling from one place to another. Because of apartheid blacks cannot hold meeting or even publicly speak out against the government. Because of apartheid blacks cannot own land and are required to live in certain areas called "homelands." These "homelands" are made up of only 13 percent of the land — the most barren and desolate land in the country. Because of apartheid blacks don't get paid as much as whites while the blacks are vital to the industries of South Africa. Because of apartheid almost 700 people have been killed in the past year alone.

By now most people should know about apartheid. Apartheid and South Africa have been in the news for quite some time now. Unfortunately many still do not know about apartheid.

We at Texas A&M have a special interest in apartheid and South Africa. There are about 300 American corporations that deal with South Africa. Because of these dealings, the South African government has the economic power to subjugate the majority of the population.

The Texas A&M University System

has about \$222 million invested in various banks, corporations and government and agency securities. That amount, approximately \$100 million are invested in corporations, mainly IBM and Eastman Kodak. These companies have dealings with South Africa. Our school's money is being used to perpetuate apartheid.

Across the nation, many schools have asked their schools to cut economic ties with the apartheid South African government. If Texas A&M would divest its holdings, it would be the first school in Texas to do so. The Southwest to make this a reality. That \$2.95 million represents only 1.3 percent of A&M's investments. Losing \$2.95 million wouldn't greatly inconvenience A&M or South Africa, but it would show that our hearts and minds are in the right place.

Today is National Anti-apartheid Day. Today a group of concerned students, Students Against Apartheid, will hold a march to make the community aware of the evils of apartheid. The march will be a peaceful demonstration to show that apartheid is a disgrace and would like to see it brought to an end. The march is intended to show our school, our community, our country and our world that we, as students and as humans, care about what happens in South Africa.

Concerned students should meet at the College Station City Hall at 8 p.m.

The group will march along University Avenue to University Drive, down University to the North post office then march to Rudder Fountain. At Rudder Fountain a rally will be held to make people aware of the horror practice known as apartheid.

Apartheid is evil. We should do our best to put an end to it.

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

Female band members can be a vital asset — if we let them

"Now forming at the north end of Kyle Field, the nationally famous all-male Fightin' Texas Aggie Band."

Rebecca Adair
Guest Columnist

No, it was never announced that way, and it never will be. Nor will fans awaiting another perfect performance by the Pulse of Aggieland, hear any references made to the women in the band — except from everyone around them.

Like missing the forest for the trees, many are missing an exciting performance because they are too busy trying to pick out the female cadets. What a waste.

Many people, especially the Texas Aggie Band Association, were terrified that women would ruin the organization. Apparently, they were wrong.

The band is unique. It earned this description by being all-male, military, continually marching on the field, doing computer-rejected drills and having a style all its own.

Thanks to a January court ruling, the band lost one of its unique features. Some say putting women in the band is just one more step on the road to being like everyone else.

These steadfast fighters say their reasons for wanting the band to remain all-male are valid. Many former band members say the band is only as awesome as it is because of its unity: the same unity destined for doom when women break the ranks.

To the members of the band, unity means they eat, party, sleep, study, date, sweat, play, work, drill, and generally grow up together for four years. The band operates as a unit, not four separate outfits. They're all in it together, 24 hours a day, and women just can't be a part of it. There just isn't the same camaraderie among males and females.

True, women can't live in the dorm with men. Yet.

However, the first female Corps staff member lives in the same dorm as the rest of Corps staff, with a bathroom adapted to her needs.

The band women are inspected and instructed by men, march with men, wear their hair above the collar, wear pants on the drill field, observe the same rules and regulations, take the same verbal abuse as all freshmen and feel the same pride in what they do and the organization they belong to.

The women in the band say they all are eager to earn their senior boots.

They all are motivated to maintain the exacting standard set by their predecessors.

However, some say this standard is slacking because of the women, and the standards of any military organization become lax when exceptions are made for women.

The truth here lies with the fact that exceptions must not be made for women. They must endure the same hardships to feel the same sense of accomplishment.

The question of "can they physically endure the same things as men?" should be a moot point.

Biologically, women are not always equal to men in physical strength. But it also has been reported that more men visit psychiatrists. So there is no certainty as to who is more stable emotionally.



However, musical ability, marching precision, discipline, respect and sharpness in military demeanor are not foreign to women because of their gender.

One of the women in the band is reported to be asthmatic. When doing the voluntary pushups in the grass after a mistake on the drill field, she faces a problem others don't have. But asthma is not limited to females. Any exception made for a male with the physically limiting disease also should be made for her. No more, no less.

It sounds simple. But in the face of a

court order, the band's upperclassmen have a dilemma. If they treat the women as they treat other freshmen, someone might yell 'hazing' when things get rough.

On the other hand, if they go out of their way to be easy on the women, the purpose is lost. Until the women are accepted and the issue quiets down, it may not be possible for women to be treated the same. But it must happen eventually if the band is to be unified.

A look at halftime will show that the band's performances still are breathtaking. Maybe the problem women are said to create lies within.

Should the fabric that makes up such a tight organization be torn just to accommodate women? Or should the band use the strengths brought by women as a way to patch up some holes?

To accomplish this, women who join must have a desire to contribute to the organization they join, or the band's resentment will be justified. The military, the Corps, the band and A&M itself are founded on principles of unity, cooperation and contribution. No one, male or female, should join a group hoping to gain only personally.

Legally, the band has no choice but to move on and maintain or recapture the spirit of a unified and perfection-driven marching military band, symbolized by the unity cake cut at the end of each drilling season.

The band will destroy itself if it refuses to live with the court ruling. If those involved work with the change, they can handle it as well as they handled a drop in membership, reorganization of outfits, 'hazing' charges and others.

The band has a chance to make the best of female membership. They face a possible increase in numbers which could bring them back to marching 300 at a game. This hasn't been done since 1981.

If the band can accept the women as contributors, not 'rabble rousers,' maybe the rest of the world can accept it, too. Then people will be able to enjoy a flawless performance and quit looking for the women.

This doesn't mean the band should lie down and play dead, nor does it mean stand and fight. It means take what is there to work with and make it the best.

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