

Opinion

On student values, A&M beats UT hands down

A featured article in the May issue of *Texas Monthly* attempts to answer the question of which school — Texas A&M or the University of Texas — is better.



Cynthia Gay

Since when did *Texas Monthly*, headquartered in Austin, think it could objectively evaluate this Texas Cold War that continually drives both universities? Since when did this scandal-seeking magazine think it could grade us beyond the gridiron to the classroom environment?

But the question of academic superiority must be answered, *Texas Monthly* says, because this is the post-oil era in which Texas A&M and the University of Texas will chart Texas' future like Spindletop dictated its past. Education is the key to diversifying our economy, the magazine says. Consequently, these two universities, letting loose more than 170,000 graduates between now and the year 2000, will decide the state's fate.

Both the Aggies and the other guys flunked *Texas Monthly's* admission requirements. The magazine claims A&M is too easy to get into — if Berkeley and Princeton can be tougher, why can't we? It points out that provisional basic courses in the summer before the freshman year make admissions essentially open-ended.

If our enrollment was more limited, *Texas Monthly* says, our schools' names would be sweetened with more prestige and we'd produce a higher quality student — one who's waited in shorter lines and received more professional attention. It sounds simple enough, but we can't ignore that our size is our strength. We learn to think on a grander, more diverse scale, and we're forced to find ourselves among the nameless mass of students.

We give every high school senior a fresh start and force them to face the challenge of staying in school. We're churning out our Texas-size share of state leaders, and incidentally, we're graduating a higher percentage of our entering freshmen than any university in the state.

Texas Monthly then looked into the

foundation of our college existence with its graded sections on faculty, teaching and curriculum. UT received a B plus, C and C minus, respectively, while we pulled in a C, C plus and an Incomplete.

Essentially this amounts to its conclusions that UT has a more nationally acclaimed faculty, but UT's professors steer clear of students, opting to devote themselves to research. Whereas A&M's profs place a higher value on undergraduates. We also try to catch UT in quality graduate instruction.

If you are bothered by that Incomplete we received on curriculum, *Texas Monthly* says don't be. We're likely to triumph over the Orangemen with the broader, more liberal arts-oriented core curriculum that's in the works right now. *Texas Monthly* thinks UT is too big (48,000) and too bureaucratic to comparably widen its required course load, and it pats us on the back with an overall C minus compared to a C for UT.

The magazine claims it's a surprise A&M finally is getting its act together. The conclusion is that the more liberal arts-oriented we become, and the more

like UT we become, the better we'll ultimately be.

As a liberal arts double major myself, I beg to differ. Sure my beliefs have been questioned, my values re-examined, and my mental gears have discovered they can think about the purpose of life, death and mankind on any given day. I'm solidly behind this core curriculum because every person needs to exercise some of the same mental shifts to live in this world.

However, A&M's muscle can never lie in its curriculum, but in the values we as students bring to classes for debate and a firmer foundation. We're not showing glimmers of greatness because, as *Texas Monthly* noted, we've tenured a professor who doesn't believe in God and marriage. We're already great because we have students who seek God's will and know truth lies in his word.

Universities historically have been the breeding ground for evil and irrational thinking as much as they have fostered brilliant and rational ideas. Just as Oxford and Cambridge housed Soviet agents in the 1930s and the University of Havana allowed the Communist

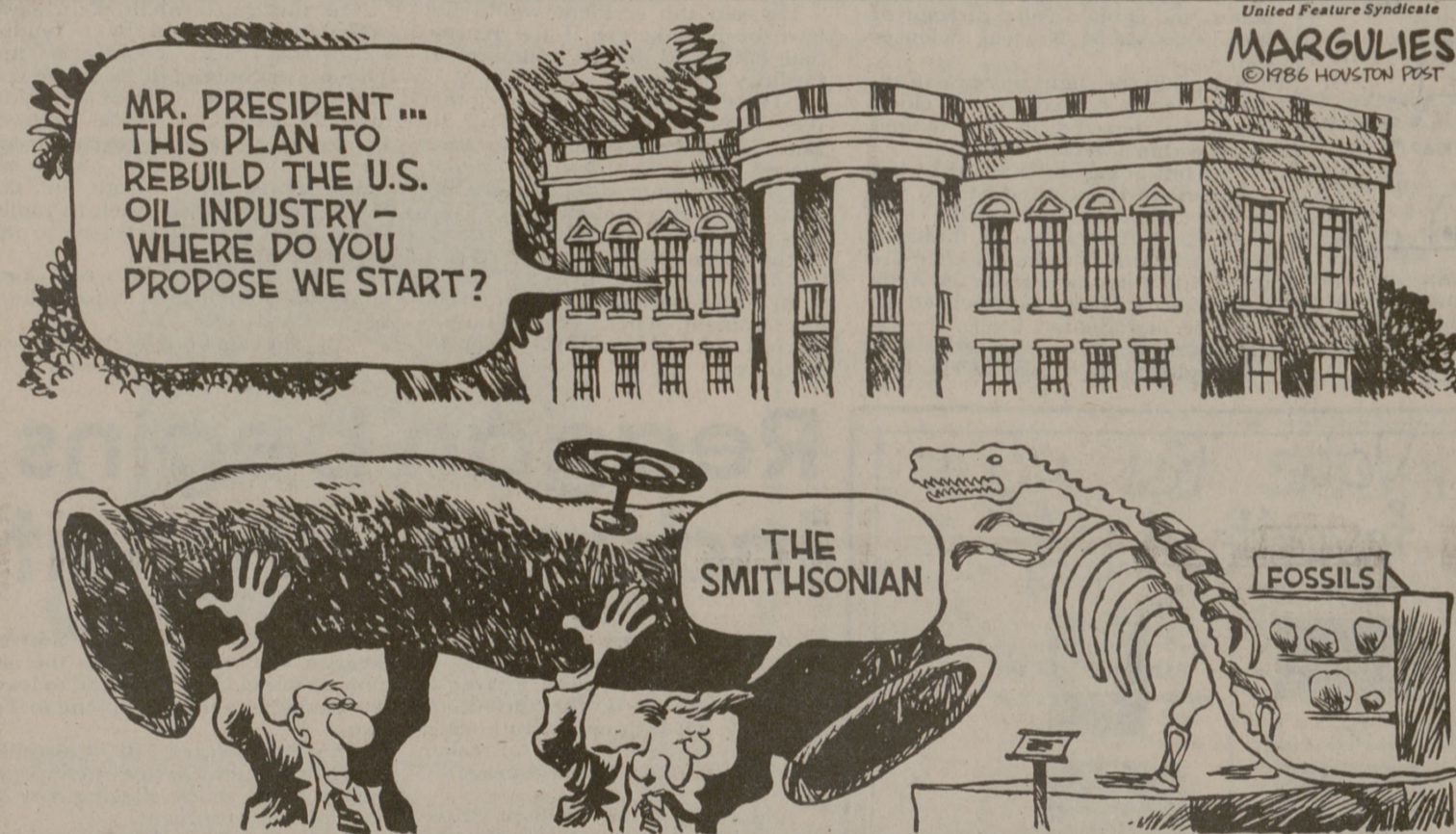
Party to flower in its environs, so the University of Mexico City does today. And just as Fidel Castro brought only broken values to the University of Havana in 1947 and soaked available propaganda, so also today in both Central America and U.S. universities are in danger of being only one side that leans left.

That brings me to *Texas Monthly's* last category: atmosphere. UT gets it and we take home only a B minus, because the article's author claims our student body lacks diversity. As I see, we're all individually different.

Granted, we don't have what *Texas Monthly* calls the UT air of sophistication or its underground bustling with "hustlers and freaks." But the article adds that UT is fractured and students must identify with a fraternity or organization to feel they belong.

When the education experience extends beyond the classroom, Aggies are more able — because of our base of openness and friendliness — to discuss what we differ and learn more in the process.

Cynthia Gay is a junior journalism major and a columnist for *The Battalion*.



MARGULIES ©1986 HOUSTON POST

U.S. did what had to be done; strike nothing to be proud of

I remember a picture — an official White House photo taken in 1975 during the Ford administration. It showed Gerald Ford, Henry Kissinger, Donald Rumsfeld and two other officials, dressed in formal wear, exulting in news they had received about the U.S. attempt to rescue sailors from the *Mayaguez*, a ship captured by Communist Cambodians. The rescue operation, as it turned out, was something of a botch.



Richard Cohen

Hard to tell, though, from that picture. Kissinger is leaning back in a broad smile; Rumsfeld is beside himself with laughter; Ford, holding a pipe, is gesturing and laughing; and Robert Mc-

Farlane, then a staff member of the National Security Council, obviously thinking the matter funny is — pictures do not lie — smiling weakly. Since then he has learned to control himself.

But not the Reagan administration. For more than a week, it has been playing out its own version of that night. In exquisite bad taste, it has shown the same capacity to celebrate the odious. White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan (the little brain that could) had a joke to tell last week. He said a friend had suggested new lyrics for the Marine Hymn: "From the Halls of Montezuma to what's left of Tripoli." It is reported that no one laughed.

As for the Defense Department, it has almost daily released information celebrating the Libya strike. Unmentioned in all the hurrahs for this or that technical feat, is the fact that civilians were killed, that one F-111 did not return, and that two American pilots were killed.

Americans have been treated to war as a televised video game. On the TV screen, we zoomed in on the coast and then swung towards the barracks where Moammar Khadafy is said to live. We passed it once, and then doubled back at something like nine miles a second and — there! — released our bombs. In the corner of the screen, we could see nine little bombs, just like in the video games, and then — Kerpow! — we were told they hit. The president says we may have to play again.

And so we may. It may be our only recourse — something we have to do because we can think of nothing else to do, nothing that will work. There is no sense of obligation in some of the statements coming from the administration — no sense that we are into something where the end is unknown. Already, hostages have been murdered in Lebanon; a U.S. diplomat shot in Khar-

toum; and the United States is being seen by the Arab world as a colonialist-Zionist caricature. In attempting to control events, we just may have lost control of them. This is the way it is sometimes.

Official Washington seems to have little appreciation of this. When it is not busy celebrating a military victory over a sandbox nation ruled by a kook in a doorman's uniform, it is thinking of ways to compound the problem by showing contempt for history. House and Senate Republicans, led by Majority Leader Robert J. Dole, have introduced legislation that would give the president an even freer hand to respond to terrorist attacks. In an unintended assessment of their own worth, these Republicans would no longer require the president to consult with Congress before sending U.S. troops into a hostile situation.

But if the strike against Libya proves anything, it is how much the president ought to consult with Congress. With every day, the second-guessers are looking better and wiser. If ever there was a time to ensure the maximum participation of people with wisdom, experience and a different point of view, it is now. Instead, some members of Congress can hardly wait to give the president carte blanche, and some journalists seem to equate reflection and dissent with cowardice and virtual treason.

War is ugly and the celebration of it nearly as ugly. The raid on Libya may have been necessary but it is not a cause for celebration, a reason to ignore history or a rationale for squelching criticism. The United States did what it thought it had to do — just as it did in 1975 when 41 U.S. servicemen died attempting to rescue 39 captured seamen who may already have been freed. That incident should serve as a reminder.

The first laugh is easy. The last one is best.

Richard Cohen is a columnist for the *Washington Post Writers Group*.

Mail Call

Home is where the heart is

EDITOR:

In the article I read in *The Battalion* on Thursday entitled "Khadafy not evil at heart" the author, Derek Bercher, claims that Khadafy is not an evil man because he adopted a 15-month-old orphan. I agree that it was too bad the young child was killed in the attack, but if Khadafy is such a great guy, why didn't he move his family away from his known home? Khadafy knew from earlier warnings that the United States would eventually strike back, and he personally moved away from the house to protect himself, but left his family in the house that he was afraid to stay in himself.

Yeah, Khadafy has a heart and must be a great guy. It seems that this man with the great big heart seems more concerned with his own well-being than that of his 15-month-old daughter.

Maybe now that one of his own family has been killed needlessly he will know how his terrorist-attack victims families feel. I doubt the loss of his daughter will in any way bother this man with the big heart. I believe Khadafy is a man with no morals or a sense of right and wrong. As far as I'm concerned we should BEAT THE HELL OUT OF KHADAFY.

Doug Stephenson

Mopeds to motorcycles

EDITOR:

This letter is for all those moped owners to be on the watch for the ever-alert University police and their brave officers. You see, for your moped to be considered a moped it as to be of 50 c.c.'s or less, and it must have one speed only.

You may think your moped qualifies, but wait! You'd better watch your speedometer. If it says your moped can run above 30 mph, it is considered a motorcycle. Yes, your little moped! So you must have a motorcycle license, written and driving test. You must also have insurance, because you may crunch another vehicle badly. I would also advise you to check your turn signals and light bulbs, we want your moped to be in top shape for the tough University police inspection.

Finally, I would recommend you double check all your movements while you are driving. Remember, somebody is watching you.

Aldo C. Lopez
Class of '86

Oil industries funding terrorism?

EDITOR:

As one more concerned American, I find it necessary to address some distasteful questions regarding our true role in the Libyan terrorist activities which led to the military action taken against that country.

Much has been reported about the rights and wrongs of such an action. Yet, little has been said about the role which some of our American oil companies have played prior to our military action, and continues today, apparently with this administration's blessing.

Several weeks ago it was reported that President Reagan ordered all Americans out of Libya. Why, then, were certain American oil firms, which reportedly provide as much as 75 percent of Moammar Khadafy's revenue, granted exemption to that order? It is certainly apparent that the billions of dollars in revenue generated from our American oil interests in Libya is not being used to improve the standard of living for the people, but instead, to purchase the very arms used to carry out its leaders' terrorist designs against innocent people.

It appears to me that far too many loyal Americans, most of whom I am certain were in favor of dealing strongly with this "Madman of the Middle East," are overlooking some important alternatives to our relatively ineffective military action.

One of the hardest things to accept is knowing that these same firms continue to line the pockets of a government that almost certainly will use this revenue to carry out further terrorist assaults against civilians and particularly against our fine young men and women to whom we have entrusted the defense of our nation.

Perhaps a much closer look at all of our corporate business ventures is in order. Not necessarily by our government, but by we, the consumers, stockholders and citizenry, for we are the ones unknowingly being made partners to the financing of such governments.

J.R. Nardi

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.

The Battalion
(USPS 045 360)
Member of
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Conference

The Battalion Editorial Board
Michelle Powe, Editor
Kay Mallett, Managing Editor
Loren Steffy, Opinion Page Editor
Jerry Oslin, City Editor
Cathie Anderson, News Editor
Travis Tingle, Sports Editor

Editorial Policy
The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.
Opinions expressed in *The Battalion* are those of the Editorial Board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.
The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.
The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods. Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester, \$33.25 per school year and \$35 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.
Our address: The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.
Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843.