

Opinion

The Battalion

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A school divided

The clash that occurred at Friday's midnight yell practice only aggravated an already-painful division between the Corps of Cadets and civilians. If the much-vaunted unity of the Texas A&M student body is to be preserved, an understanding must be reached.

While the Corps has no legal justification for barring students from running onto the field, it has traditionally done so. While the civilians know the cadets will try to keep them from running onto the field, they traditionally try to do so.

But when this traditional sparring turns to violent conflict, something needs to be done. The civilians should have thought about the possible consequences of their provocation. The cadets should have thought about the consequences of using physical action to deter the civilians. Certainly, neither groups' antics should be repeated.

In this case, tradition served as a catalyst for violence. The only accomplishment either side can boast of is that the yell practice incident has helped to drive apart two groups that should be striving to come closer together.

Michael Kelley, a sophomore general studies major and bass corporal for the Aggie Band, summed it up better than anybody.

"We're Aggies, and we should be working for the common cause of Aggies. I'd like there to be a better bond between the Corps of Cadets and the civilians. It think it's stupid — Aggies fighting Aggies," he told *The Battalion* Wednesday.

Stupid it is. The differences that divide the Corps and the rest of the student body need to be rectified, not enhanced. We don't need traditions that encourage such a division at a University that boasts of its unity.

If the no-civilians-on-the-field tradition continues to be followed by the just-try-and-stop-us routine, repeat melees are certain. Many civilians do not understand the cadets' intent and purpose and vice versa.

This doesn't mean the tradition is bad or that it should be sacrificed because of a misunderstanding and a few hot heads. But it obviously needs to be modified — as most other traditions have been — to meet the needs and well-being of the entire student body.

Ice-related solutions

Why Iceland? Of all the places to hold a superpower talk, why would the United States and the Soviet Union agree on this geographical speck in the North Atlantic? Perhaps because Iceland, the most isolated nation on earth, may put the negotiators' goal in better perspective.

Iceland has a population of 234,000, a jobless rate of less than 1 percent and a literacy rate of 99.9 percent — the highest in the world. No ballooning defense budget saps vital social programs such as education.

It had its first reported armed robbery in 1984. The last presidential election was scrapped because no one ran against the incumbent.

On Thursday nights there is no television, so President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev don't have to worry about being distracted by either "Family Ties" (Reagan's favorite) or "The Cosby Show."

But the best things Iceland has to offer the superpower pre-summit is peace and solitude. The solitude may create an amiable negotiating environment, but it's the peace that may be the most valuable asset.

In the midst of divvying up missiles and evening up nuclear stockpiles, the two leaders should take time to look around their pre-summit site. If they get up from the table, go to the window and pull back the curtains, they'll see all around them what they seek — peace. Let's hope it's a strong reminder.

Mail Call

Lost faith

EDITOR:

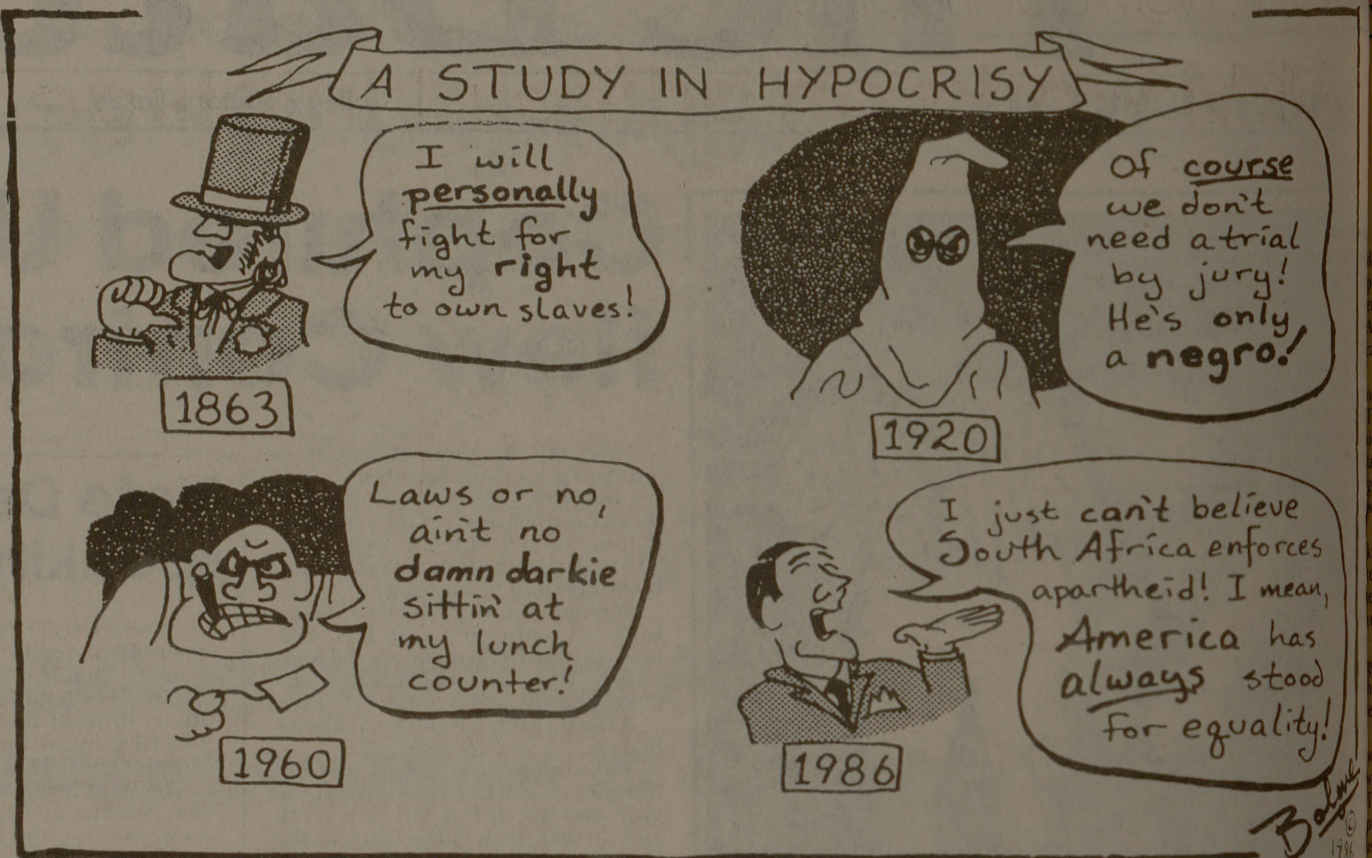
Two weeks ago I attended my first yell practice of the year only to leave in disgust and disappointment. To restore my faith in our yell leaders, who represent the Spirit of Aggieland, last week I attended my second yell practice of the year only to leave in disgust over the so-called spirit our yell leaders represent. This is one proud Ag who has hung his head low because of the filth I heard when the yell leaders told their grody stories.

Yell practice is a tradition that is used to "fire-up" the Ags for the upcoming battle on the gridiron. It is a showplace for future Ags, former Ags and visiting guests to see the spirit we are proud of at Texas A&M. It is a place to bring our family, friends and date to be a part of a fine tradition. It is a place to show the spirit and support we Aggies have for our fine "world-class" university.

To me, a "world-class" university doesn't have to lower itself to the distasteful stories our yell leaders tell at yell practice. We should be able to stand on the pride, traditions and spirit that has distinguished A&M to be the fine university it is today.

Michael Cooper '87

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 classification, address and telephone number of the writer.



Life marked with milestones

Several years ago, my family gathered on Cape Cod for a weekend. We met at one of those resort restaurants where the menu is written on a blackboard held by a chummy waiter, and we had a wonderful time. With dinner concluded, the waiter brought the check and set it down in the middle of the table. That's when it happened. My father did not reach for the check.



Richard Cohen

In fact, my father did nothing. Conversation continued. I waited and waited, and finally, it dawned on me. Me! I was supposed to pick up the check. After hundreds of restaurant meals with my parents, after a lifetime of always thinking of my father as the one with the bucks, it had all changed. I reached for the check and whipped out my American Express card. My view of myself was suddenly altered. With a stroke of the pen, I was suddenly an adult.

Some people mark off their life in years, others in events. I am one of the latter, and I think of some events as rites of passage. For instance, I did not become a young man at a particular age such as 13. It was later, when a kid strolled into the store where I worked and called me "Mister." I turned around to see who he was calling. He repeated it several times — "Mister, mister" — looking straight at me. The realization hit like a punch: Me! He was talking to me. I was suddenly a Mister.

There have been other milestones,

and I remember them all well. One occurred when I noticed that policemen seemed to be getting younger, not to mention smaller. Another came when I suddenly realized that I was older than every football player I knew. Instead of being big men, they were merely big kids. With that milestone went the fantasy that sometime, maybe, I too could be a player — maybe not a football player, but certainly a baseball player. I had a good eye as a kid — not much power, but a keen eye — and I always thought I could play the game. One day I realized that I couldn't. Without having ever reached the hill, I was over it.

For some people, the ultimate milestone comes with the death of a parent and the realization that you have moved up a notch. As long as your parents live, you stay in some way a kid. At the very least, there remains at least one person whose love is unconditional.

I count other, less serious, milestones. I remember the day when I had a ferocious argument with my son and realized that I could no longer bully him. He was too big, and the days when I could just pick him up and take him to his room/isolation cell were over. I needed to persuade, reason. He was suddenly, rapidly, older. The other conclusion was inescapable: So was I.

One day you go to your friends' weddings. One day you celebrate the birth of their kids. One day you see one of their kids driving, and one day they have kids of their own. One day you meet at parties and then at weddings and then at funerals. It all happens in one day. Take my word for it.

I never thought I would ever fall

asleep in front of the television set as my friends' fathers did. I never thought I would have trouble sleeping. I remember my parents and their friends talking about insomnia like they were members of a different species. Not able to sleep. How ridiculous. It was all I did once. It was what I once did best.

I thought that I would never eat food that did not agree with me. Now I meet them all the time. I thought I would never stop playing basketball and never go to the beach and not swim. I spent all of August at the beach and never went into the ocean once. I thought I would never appreciate opera, but now the pathos, the schmaltz, and, especially the combination of voice and music, appeal to me. The deaths of Mimi and Tosca move me. They die in my home as often as I can manage it.

I thought I would never prefer to stay home instead of going to a party, but now I find myself passing them up. I used to think that people who watch birds were weird, but this summer I found myself watching them and marveling. I'll get a book on the subject. I yearn for a religious conviction I never thought I'd want, exult in my heritage anyway, feel close to ancestors long gone and echo my father in arguments with my son. I still lose.

One day I made a good toast. One day I handled a head waiter. One day I bought a house. One day — what a day — I became a father, and not too long after that, I picked up the check for my own. I thought then and there it was a rite of passage for me. Not until I got older did I realize that it was one for him too. Another milestone.

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'Woman's place' analogous to the role of cheerleader

Assault victims constitute 25 percent of the group's visits to emergency rooms — its members have learned to fear the dark. The group also receives an average of only 62 cents for every dollar that the ruling minority earns for the same work.



Bill Sparks

Of elected representatives, only 5 percent are members of this majority of the population. This group has been attempting for more than 100 years to secure the same constitutional rights that are now the privilege of the members of every other group in the country — with no success.

The stereotypical place of the woman in our society finds its perfect analogy in professional cheerleaders: grown women, chosen for solely for their appearance, on the sidelines cheering on men in their basically worthless activity.

In the average conversation, which sex dominates the talk? Which sex yields its voice when the other speaks? Which sex is considered the final authority in the instances of disagreement? Hold on to that cheerleader image.

I am no longer surprised to find my English professors, who consider themselves absolutely modern in terms of the latest artistic movement or philosophical

perspective, still using the male gender for the majority of their speech.

By using the male gender I mean, for example, "The degeneration of Man in the industrial Age . . ." or, "When a writer ends his treatise he must first consider . . ."

I realize that — especially for males — this may seem like nitpicking. However, when we consider the inverse of the two statements, so that they read: "The degeneration of Woman in the Industrial Age . . ." or, "When a writer ends her treatise she must first consider . . ." you may notice a slight discomfort or even an alienation with the usage.

To understand how a woman can feel left out by sexist word choices, you might try for one week — or even only a day — to make a conscious effort in using only female-generated words, being careful to note the response of the person you are speaking with. It requires only a little extra effort to make your speech completely non-sexist.

The A.P. Beutel Health Center also subscribes to the cheerleader analogy. It has only one gynecologist — who appears only twice a month. Imagine going to the Health Center with a common ailment and being told that only regular gynecologists are on hand at the moment and that you will have to come back in two weeks to see a doctor about your "special" problem.

There are 17,000 female students on this campus who have paid their share of building use fees, health service fees et al., and who deserve at least one full-time staff gynecologist on campus. It is not unusual for universities — the University of Houston and the University of Texas, for example — to have a full-time gynecologist.

Is it right that grown women (grown men) do not have the ability to obtain birth control and birth-control information at our university?

There are influential people on the campus who believe that to have non-marital sex, regardless of your age, is immoral. They insist that a woman's womb is not her own but the property of society and that these concerns are the matters of the University.

But it is certainly not illegal for consenting adults to have sex if they choose (at least, two of the opposite sex), nor for a woman to decide whether to carry her pregnancy to term — yet.

They paid their share of fees, they have certain rights entitled to them as students of this University, one of which is to oppose prejudicial policies on campus — and to help effect a change.

Bill Sparks is an English major and the newsletter editor for the campus chapter of the National Organization for Women.