

Opinion

Don't neglect opportunity for expression

What's an open exchange of ideas? I wish I could say for a fact that open exchange is a desirable object. It's not, especially on the A&M campus. The best I can offer is an example of open exchange.



D.A. Jensen

One of the best examples of open exchange is in front of you now, *The Battalion*. Despite the many cries of commie/left-wing/right-wing journalism, the newspaper represents, in my mind, an avenue for each student to facilitate the exchange of ideas and the dissemination of information. Not everyone on the campus appreciates these functions.

The Battalion often receives letters to the editor berating another person's right to express controversial material. These letters often are written by the same people who would not tolerate an open atmosphere in the classroom. The correlation is clear. Both the newspaper and the classroom are areas that depend on the free expression of ideas. Without the open exchange of ideas, learning could not take place.

The fact that the opinion page of *The Battalion* is open to the entire student body in the form of letters to the editor and guest columns is often ignored. People proclaim their doubt that their letters will ever see print. While some letters don't get published, none are held out of print because they do not represent the opinion of the editor.

The Battalion opinion page gives

A&M staff, faculty and students a place to express their opinions, including criticism of the University system. It's the beauty of the First Amendment.

Not all college newspapers enjoy the privilege of almost unlimited editorial freedom. College newspapers that are operated as laboratory papers, as *The Battalion* is not, are subject to editorial policy determined, at least in part, by the administration. The editors of *The Battalion* exercise full control over the editorial content of the paper and are not subject to administration censorship.

The Battalion allows the free flow of ideas and information. Editorials are not published to inflame the readership. My primary goal as a columnist is to encourage an open mind and the free flow of ideas.

Many people complain about the newspaper, and those complaints ring loudly across the campus. They are published, rightly so, in the vehicle they so loudly criticize. Every student should realize the freedom that publishing such letters proclaims.

As a student body we have incredible access to a public voice for our opinion regardless of what view that opinion takes. We can present new and conflicting ideas. We can speak our minds without fear of censorship, that commie word. It is a voice that we should not take for granted.

Next time you sit down to write that letter to the editor complaining about the newspaper or the University, remember that you read a newspaper that has the freedom to print your letter no matter what or who it criticizes. Just

make sure you follow the letters, which can be found on the opinion page daily.

I'd like, for posterity, to point out the view expressed about *The Battalion* in this column is solely my own. It does not necessarily express the opinion of the editorial board of *The Battalion* or any other individual. I have tried to be as objective as possible. I am not holding *The Battalion* up as a bastion of freedom of expression, although I hope students on this campus it can be the opinion page is used.

Let's keep the free flow of ideas on this campus. It's important to every person who wants to learn and grow. We should all take advantage of the opportunity.

D.A. Jensen is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.

Striking NFL players never had a chance against rich owners

If the football players have any doubts that they've lost their strike, all they have to do is look at the newest issue of Forbes magazine.



Mike Royko

In it, they'll find a list of the 400 wealthiest people in America — men and women whose individual fortunes range from \$8.5 billion to a modest \$225 million.

Included in this awesome list are at least eight super-rich individuals or their offspring who own all or part of eight National Football League franchises.

One of the wealthiest of the franchise owners is William C. Ford, of the auto family, who owns the Detroit Lions and has a bundle estimated at \$900 million.

Those kinds of numbers are hard for most of us to comprehend. But to bring it into perspective, figure it this way:

If Ford invested his \$900 million in nice, safe CDs or government bonds at the going rate of about 8 percent, he'd earn about \$72 million a year in interest.

Then if he invested the \$72 million the same way, he'd get about \$5 or \$6 million in interest.

If he did the same thing with his \$5 or \$6 million, he'd pick up another \$400,000.

And with that \$400,000 — the interest on the interest on the interest of his fortune — he could hire some huge, All-Pro palooka to body-slam a quarterback.

For that matter, he could invest that final \$400,000 and the interest on the interest on the interest would bring in \$32,000 — which would satisfy the majority of American families.

In other words, what most people consider big money, the \$250,000 average salary of pro football players, is little more than pennies or nickels to someone like Ford.

Or to Jack Kent Cooke, who owns the Washington Redskins. He's up there, too, with a worth of \$900 million.

Or to young Edward J. DeBartolo Jr., who owns the San Francisco 49ers. His father, Ed Sr., is worth \$1.25 billion. I won't figure up the interest on the interest, etc., on that fortune or my calculator will have a hernia.

Then you have Leon Hess, owner of the New York Jets, who is worth \$625 million; H.R. Bright, who owns the Dallas Cowboys and comes in at about \$600 million; Carl Pohland, one of the owners of the Minnesota Vikings, at

\$550 million; Alex Spanos of the San Diego Chargers, about \$500 million; and Hugh Culverhouse, of Tampa Bay, \$250 million.

These eight men alone represent a total net worth of almost \$6 billion.

And while the other team owners didn't make the Forbes 400, they're all worth at least \$100 million because that's about what a franchise sells for today.

When you have the kind of money of a Ford, a Bright, a DeBartolo, or the rest of them have, you don't have to worry about 10,000 or 20,000 ticket holders asking for a refund. You don't really have to worry if players ever come back to work.

You can let them sweat. You can pick up the newspaper and laugh when you read about one of your big stars losing \$50,000 in salary for every game he sits out. To someone like a Ford or a Bright, that's walking around money. They spend more than that to throw a party. And when the star misses his paycheck, that's just another \$50,000 that stays in the owner's bank account. Drawing interest, of course.

As the saying goes, the rich get richer. And even with the strike, most of the franchises showed a healthy profit. They still got their TV revenue and they saved those big salaries while paying scab wages.

That's just too much firepower for a bunch of football players to deal with. They can stay on strike until their hair turns white. And when that happens, the Fords, Brights and the others would have even a more impressive bottom line.

The players, unrealistic saps that they are, don't even have the support of the fans. If anything, the fans are angry at the strikers for depriving them of their Sunday afternoon entertainment.

They've shown that if they can't watch Payton or Marino or Taylor, they'll watch Whoozits, Whatsis and Whodat. It turns out that the owners were clever enough to know what the fans would buy. After all, many of them became rich selling stuff that fell apart once you got it home.

So the players wised up, faced reality, admitted they are whipped dogs and slunk back to work under the bosses' terms.

They shouldn't have kidded themselves that they, the players, are the game. They aren't. The guys with the billions are the big factories, the great skyscrapers, the oil wells and the printing presses.

The players aren't the game. They just work there.

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Mail Call

Greeks are Aggies, too

EDITOR:

After reading Matt Flanagan's letter on Oct. 22, I was offended. You heard correct, Mr. Flanagan: Fraternities and sororities are on the rise at A&M and have been for approximately 15 years. I've worn an occasional bow in my hair, but I'm a "loyal Ag."

I agree with you that A&M is a great university, but that's about the only issue I agree with you on. There is another great university down the road. Those of us who chose A&M (Greek and you included) did it for special reasons, reasons which may vary from wanting to take a military commission to being an ag major to pleasing your dad by becoming a fifth-generation Aggie.

Now that A&M has joined the ranks as one of the ten largest universities in the nation, many things have changed "since the beginning." Would you like to keep all the traditions alive and stop allowing women in the Corps and in the band? Should everyone at A&M be a CT? As A&M has grown, the need for smaller social organizations has grown, too. Social sororities and fraternities are just another vehicle to avoid being lost in the masses of Aggeland. (Similar to the Aggie Men's Club and the Corps of Cadets.)

There have been times when I have not been a proud Greek and there have been times when I have not been a proud Aggie. I think the number of obnoxious Greeks is well proportioned to the number of obnoxious Aggies. Back in 1982, I spent my first week as an Aggie at Fish Camp and my second week going through sorority rush. It had never occurred to me that one could not be both an Aggie and a Greek. Greeks participate in Special Olympics, blood drives, CCC, honor societies, MSC clubs, the Big Event, All Night Fair, Fish Camp, and many other activities. And personally, I'd rather work a "cute little bike race" than work on a tradition of trashing our proud campus every fall with mud, liquor bottles and cans, and

other garbage. As the saying goes, Highway 6 runs both ways, but doesn't it meet in College Station, too? Once again for all, I wish everyone would realize that Greeks are Aggies, too.

Barbara J. Chappuis '86

Grow up, Aggies

EDITOR:

Texas Aggies, grow up. Though not many may have agreed with the preaching of Michael Woroniecki during the past week outside Rudder Tower, let us not forget something called freedom of speech. This is a right granted to all of us by the Constitution, which we all should respect. Woroniecki wasn't inciting a riot or physically harming members of the crowd, yet many tried to deny him his right to free speech. I witnessed one get repeatedly slapped and others pick fights with him.

And what have these idiots proven? All they have proven is what spoiled, children they really are. These students had no right to act this way towards him regardless of his beliefs and opinions. Once again, if you didn't agree with him, great, sign up for your own pulpit next week. For that time, he had the pulpit, and you should have let him say what he had to say.

My advice to those students is for them to learn to THINK, instead of mindlessly attacking another's beliefs just because these beliefs don't jibe with their set of dogmas. These students are an embarrassment to this university and only serve to perpetuate the stigma of Texas A&M being a closed-minded institution.

Rene' Salazar '90

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editor 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 classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed

Today:
Ms. Leona O'Connor,
Exec. Vice President
of Bloom County, Inc.
will tell a funny
political joke.

All of us here in
management are
behind you
the whole way,
Leona!
Go for it, girl!

