

# Opinion

## The Battalion

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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.

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## Academic farce

The Board of Regents on Sunday granted Jackie Sherrill the title of Professor of Athletics with tenure. How idiotic.

Professorships, especially those with tenure, are not tokens that the Board of Regents can hand out in appreciation of a football team, no matter how many Cotton Bowls or Southwest Conference Championships the team may have won. Sherrill's accomplishments are deserving of recognition — but not in a way that makes a farce of academia.

Faculty members are, as they should be, outraged. But they may soon be able to console themselves: At the rate it's going, the Board of Regents should be giving the faculty Cotton Bowl rings any day now.

## An open search

Texas A&M's Board of Regents is to be commended for giving faculty and students a voice in choosing the University's new president, but those appointed could find their role little more than symbolic.

The regents named student body president Mason Hogan, agricultural engineering Department Head Edward A. Hiler, management Professor Don Hellriegel, Speaker of the Faculty Senate C. Richard Shumway and College of Liberal Arts Dean Daniel Fallon to the search advisory committee. That group will work with the search committee to recommend suitable candidates to system Chancellor Perry Adkisson.

Adkisson then will narrow down the list, submitting a revised version to the Board for its consideration. Faculty and student representation in this process is welcome, but it will be all too easy for their voices to get lost in the shuffle.

During the regents' last search, their reluctance to release the names of candidates and finalists led to a lawsuit. This time around, the Board says it will be open about releasing the names. Let's hope the openness extends to serious consideration of all views — not just the administration's — in picking a president.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

My Russian prose class just finished a short story titled "The Stationmaster" by the great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin. In the story, a young cavalry officer traveling across Russia to St. Petersburg stops at a way station run by a peasant and his beautiful daughter. As one might expect, the hussar falls in love with the daughter.



Brian Frederick

Seeing that the father is possessive of his daughter, the hussar realizes that the father will never willingly give up the girl. So he carries her off to St. Petersburg and installs her in her own quarters until he can marry her. The story ends happily for the couple, contrary to every expectation of the reader.

During class discussion of the story, one classmate could not conceive that the hussar had not violated the girl, seeing he had ample opportunity to do so. Yet this was no ordinary hussar. That his noble treatment of the girl he loved should mystify my classmate is not surprising, for he was governed by a concept largely alien to the 20th century mind — the notion of honor.

Honor is one's reputation. It is a sense of what is right, just and true. Honor is any particular virtue or virtues that we value highly. The possessor of honor scrupulously observes these virtues, and this distinguishes him from his fellows. In Latin, honor also means a public office (oh, that it were so today!). Very conscious of a man's virtue, the Romans of the early Republic sought only the men of the highest character to hold public office.

These definitions may be too esoteric for our enlightened 20th century minds. We generally do not much care

about our reputations, having been taught to do what pleases us without being constrained by the opinions of others. Holding all things to be relative, we have no standards of what is right, just and true. Virtue is a dead concept to us, and few care what the Romans thought.

Yet we Aggies have something called the Aggie Code of Honor. Composed in the days before honor's demise, the Code is largely ignored today. Only when someone's backpack or senior ring disappears is the Code invoked (with a proffered reward, of course) to little effect.

Still, the Code's words remain to prick our consciences. "Aggies do not lie, cheat or steal, and will not tolerate those who do." The Code establishes a standard for Aggies to live by and defines the virtues that Aggies particularly value.

Honor serves as a powerful force to govern a man's actions. In Shakespeare's "Richard II," the Duke of Norfolk calls honor "The purest treasure mortal times afford." He goes on to say, "Mine honor is my life . . . take honor from me, and my life is done." Such a man would rather die than lose his honor by compromising his principles. If we credit Pushkin's young hussar with a measure of this honor, his actions may become a little less incomprehensible to our minds.

Even so, honor remains an archaic word to most of us. I suppose our professed egalitarianism compels us to surrender honor's distinctions so we may all live equally base lives. For are we not mere animals evolved from the same slime? And have we not declared any God dead who might have called us to rise above animal instinct? Man's brotherhood has no place for some to claim moral distinction from the rest, no room for honor.

But we have not always been strangers to honor. There was a time when a

man's spoken word and a hand sealed a contract. Honor stood before the parties to see the contract fulfilled. If a man said "I will . . ." he did, regardless of any unforeseen cost.

Today, we employ expensive lawyers to release us from written contracts bearing our signatures. Few of us consider the words "I will . . ." to be of value. How many times have we said to a friend, "I'll meet you at 5:00," only to arrive at 5:30 or not show at all? Our friends are not worth more attention than that.

Not only do we lack the honor sense to keep simple commitments, we are so base as to depreciate our academic achievements by cheating. I count myself fortunate to know honorable individuals who are satisfied only with real accomplishment. In some reason they fail to study for they still go and take their lumps, or shamefully refusing to resort to cheating or their neighbor's papers, such is honor.

I have another acquaintance who maintains that there is not a man who, given an appropriate opportunity, would decline to have his way with a beautiful woman. My acquaintance would consign Pushkin's honorable hussar to the realm of the imaginary, divorced from modern reality. Great such men may be rare, but they are yet extant.

In this enlightened age when state governments sponsor cheating and business weeks and our politicians mislead us with platitudes to the character they honor seems hopelessly anachronous. But perhaps, buried somewhere inside us, there remains a shred of honor yearning to find expression. When it does, noble men such as Pushkin's hussar will no longer mystify us.

Brian Frederick is a senior history major and a columnist for The Battalion.

## The latest calculations about the year 2000

Ever since the 1980's began, I've been counting down to the new century.

According to my latest calculations, the year 2000 should be here in slightly less than 12 more years.

I don't know about anybody else, but I am glad I've got a shot at living to see a turn of the century.

According to further calculations, there have only been 19 of those so far. Not everybody gets a chance to witness such a momentous occasion.

If I make it to 2000, I'll be 53. That's not nearly as old as I once thought it was. I might still have enough left in me by then to throw a giant Turn-of-the-Century party at my condo on the moon, where some developer no doubt will have built a golf course.

I've also been considering what problems we might encounter when the new century arrives.

I can't think of how we're going to say "2000" in regard, say, to the World Series.

This year we will say, "Welcome to the 1988 World Series."

Somehow, however, I can't come to grips with "Welcome to the 2000 World Series."

It seems awkward and cumbersome to say that, and the only other time there was such a problem was in the year 1000, when there was no baseball.

And think about checks. All our lives, we would have written checks with the little "19" up where you fill in the year inn which you are writing the check.



Lewis Grizzard

Twelve years from now, you'll pull out a check and there will be a little "20" up ther in the corner.

Then, again, there probably won't be any checks by the year 2000.

You'll have your own computer that is hooked into the bank and you'll simply punch in the amount of your withdrawal and the bank will put your money in a tube that leads directly to your house.

The only real problem will be learning to count in yen.

Think of the state of things by the year 2000.

- Somebody will have figured out by then how to make a commercial airliner go 5,000 miles per hour. Of course, it will still take 45 minutes to get the plane from its gate to its takeoff position.

- It will have been determined that heavy exercise, like jogging and aerobics, causes flat feet, hepatitis, and acne.

- The Wall Street Journal will have run a photo on page one; and USA Today will have printed an article with more than 11 sentences — three compound.

- Dentists will have figured out how to fill your teeth using a laser beam rather a drill. It will cost 27 times more to have a tooth filled, nullifying any loss of pain.

- McDonald's will be selling goat sandwiches.

- Everybody will have seen every episode of "M\*A\*S\*H" 600 times.

- The federal deficit will be so large by then we will have to sell off North Dakota, Montana, and that silly-looking top part of Idaho to the Canadians.

- Dogs will be able to talk. They will say, "I've always enjoyed Alpo but it gives me gas."

- Elvis will be dead.

- So will the Atlanta Falcons.

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## Mail Call

### Where's our Aggie honor?

EDITOR:

What has happened to the great Aggie Code of Honor, "Aggies don't lie, cheat or steal?" One of my best friends left her backpack in the Commons along with all the other briefcases, books, and backpacks. Hers was stolen! Whoever took this bag not only took everything inside but also some respect for fellow Ags. Why did they choose hers from all the rest? Was it because it looked "fully loaded"? Now my friend has to buy her books again and replace everything else that was stolen.

Up until today, my friend trusted her fellow Ags. Even when she discovered her bag was missing, she believed

someone had picked it up by mistake and would soon turn it in. However, another girl's bag was also missing. Two cases of mistaken identity in less than twenty minutes?

Whoever took those two bags listen up. You have been too great an expense, both in money and respect. If you remain an Aggie, shape up. You are causing us all to lose our great reputation.

Sharla Richards '91

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.

## BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed

