

Opinion

Lighten up, you raving UT-bashers

Several weeks ago, I was driving down University Boulevard on a weekend night when some guy in a truck, seeing a decal on my rear window, chunked a beer can at my car and hollered, "UT sucks." I decided then that the rivalry between the University of Texas and Texas A&M has gotten decidedly out of hand. To students who wear T-shirts criticizing UT, Bevo or some combination of the two, I say "lighten up."



John MacDougall

There is an underlying principle in sports and war. Don't kick a dead dog. Aggies should take this to heart.

In the past five years we've witnessed

the decline and fall of the University of Texas. For years, UT beat A&M in football, baseball and basketball. Slowly, A&M made gains. In recent years, UT has gone through several coaches. First there was the ousting of Abe Lemons, the former cigar-chomping basketball coach who had become a legend of sorts in Austin. Then, Fred Akers, one of the winningest football coaches in Southwest Conference history, was sent packing.

Supporting UT has become as lonely a proposition as being a Maytag repairman — and that's in Austin. In College Station, supporting UT means taking the brunt of the jokes. Oh, sometimes I'll get a little sympathy from so-called "two-percenters" when I lament about the football team. But for the most part, Aggies have become cold and unforgetting. Besides, UT-bashing is in vogue.

And to a degree I don't really blame you all. I have two older brothers. One went to Texas A&M and the other to the University of Texas. There was always a lot of snipping going on around the house when I was in high school. I almost went to Texas A&M as an undergraduate but couldn't get on-campus housing, which turned out to be a deciding factor in my decision to attend UT. When my oldest brother, Joe, was going to A&M in the late 1970s, the school was a little different. The football team was terrible, but almost everybody at school supported it wholeheartedly. Socially, in College Station, things were pretty laid back. To get a date, you had to take a road-trip to Austin. For these reasons, Joe was always on the defensive.

beautiful coeds and an awesome football team. Texas A&M was seen by T-sips as an agriculture and engineering school with a country-bumpkin mentality. But the Aggies' humiliation of the Longhorns at both Kyle Field and Memorial Stadium and the surge in female enrollment here signify a changing of the guard.

Though Aggies should be proud of their school's improvement in academics and sports vis a vis UT, they should not take the rivalry too seriously. Some of it is pretty amusing, like the UT toilet paper, but sometimes the intensity of UT-hating gets out of hand. Though there are a few Longhorn supporters in College Station, you won't find too many of them advertising it. There are a few exceptions. The bravest, and maybe stupidest, Longhorn I've ever seen was this guy who wore a Longhorn warm-up

suit into the Dixie Chicken on a Friday night. Later, I heard that he had a Black Belt in karate, which probably came in handy.

Almost every major college has a rivalry. The University of Texas, for example, despises the University of Oklahoma. Every year, UT and OU converge on Commerce Street in El Paso to raise hell. What is unique about A&M-UT rivalry is that it seems to sort of one-way, at least during the season.

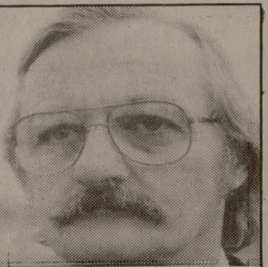
Rivalries spice up athletic events and help foster camaraderie among students. Unfortunately, some Aggies think a little too seriously.

John MacDougall is a graduate student and a 1985 graduate of the University of Texas.

What, me worry? You better believe it

I worry about . . .

SOCIAL SECURITY — I used to worry about Social Security a lot, but then I stopped. I worried that our huge federal expenditures for "entitlements" were going to sink us under a burden of debt. I was told not to worry. Social Security isn't part of the federal debt; it is financed by its own tax and is taking in more money than it gives out, in anticipation of the retirement of the Baby Boomers down the road. Things were hunky-dory.



Donald Kaul

That was good enough for me. I stopped worrying. Then I picked up the paper the other morning and read this headline: "And Who's Going to Pay Back All the Money Borrowed From Social Security?" It turns out that the Social Security surplus isn't "saved" for future generations, it is loaned to the federal government, which uses it for waste, fraud and abuse. When those future generations retire and their requirements overwhelm the payroll tax, the federal government will be expected to make up the difference, and there won't be any money in the till. Social Security then is apt to go bust, just as Pete duPont warned.

So I'm worrying about Social Security again. What was it duPont wanted to do about the problem? Revoke drivers' licenses of elderly people who hadn't saved up for their retirement? Something like that.

Anyway, we should start doing something about the problem.

THE BUDGET — The House passed a federal budget of \$1.09 trillion the other day, and it didn't even make the front page of a lot of newspapers. That may be a perfectly sensible figure for a country of our size and wealth — I don't know. The alarming thing is that the budget projects a deficit for the coming fiscal year of \$134 billion. Even more alarming is that the \$134 billion figure is a phony. Had Congress used less optimistic, more realistic economic projections provided it by the Congressional Budget Office, it would have projected a \$170 billion deficit. Moreover, \$4 billion was shifted from "discretionary" to "mandatory" loan accounts, thereby reducing the budget on paper but not the amount of money shelled out. Moreover yet, the figure does not take into account that Social Security tax is giving the government a temporary \$30 billion surplus which will have to be made up someday. The "real" federal deficit,

then, is likely to be more than \$200 billion, or about 20 percent of the federal budget. And Congress and the president are congratulating each other over the accomplishment.

I worry about that. We ought to do something about it.

DEMOCRATS — The two-party system has flaws, but it beats the one-party system by a long way. The Democratic Party has won only one of the past five presidential elections and hardly showed a pulse in three of the others. If it fails to win this time I fear that it will go the way of the Whigs. (If you can't beat George Bush, whom can you beat?) Yet it continues to wrangle and kick and scratch and fight through its primaries just as though it still had a choice. It doesn't. Michael Dukakis is its man. He may not be the Democrat of everybody's dreams, but he is clearly the class of the field, the one candidate who has run a national campaign and shown some strength everywhere. Instead of trying to wear him down so that he arrives at the convention looking as though he has just taken a midnight stroll through the south Bronx, Democrats should now unite behind him and start beating up on Republicans. If they don't, we are going to have Republican presidents until Heck (as Mr. Bush calls it) freezes over or until a Great Depression, whichever comes first.

It worries me. Someone ought to do something about it.

OZONE — You're not going to believe this, but the depletion of the ozone layer is a big problem, bigger even than ring-around-the-collar. A recent study indicates that it is deteriorating at a frightening rate, stripping the Earth of its protection against the sun's ultraviolet radiation, putting at risk its animals, its plants and us.

This deterioration has been known since the early 1970s when scientists warned that we must reduce the use of the industrial chemicals that were causing it. Industry being what it is, it lobbied against such restrictions — and won. President Reagan's (Ha-Ha) secretary of the interior even argued that the best defense was a hat with a broad brim.

The 11 nations that produce the offending chemicals, chlorofluorocarbons, tentatively have agreed to cut back production somewhat, but even that feeble gesture won't go into effect until everybody signs the agreement — and only two have so far.

In the meantime we and the plants and animals of the hemisphere are going to burn to a crisp.

I worry about that.

Don't you?

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PEN SARGENT 3/22
1987 Texas A&M University Journalism Underclassman



Mail Call

Class of '91, where were you?

EDITOR:
On Thursday, FIJI sponsored a political forum for the Class of '91 presidential candidates. This attempt to inform the voters of what these candidates could contribute to the class was well publicized through flyers placed throughout the campus. To my disappointment, only about 30 people showed up, five of whom were candidates!

Class of '91, where were you? Aren't you concerned about the issues of your class? What about the problems? Don't you care who will find the solutions and push for the improvements? We are a major part of Texas A&M, so let's start acting like it. Let's put the "student" back into our Student Government, and the "class" back into our class meetings!

Tracey Butler '91

It's not finished yet

EDITOR:
I happened to be in the MSC yesterday and saw a crowd gathered around a *Battalion*, so I stopped to look. But I couldn't understand why everyone was standing there once I saw what they were reading. That's right. It was the Mail Call section of the March 22 paper. A letter by Richard G. Scott, knocking the video yearbook.

True, I am no expert on television or anything either, but did you, Mr. Scott, notice the ads in *The Battalion* and the flyers on campus advertising that this was a PROMOTIONAL tape being shown? "Promotional" as in "not for sale?" As in "preview?" Perhaps, as in "unfinished?" Didn't

the 15-minute length clue you in? You probably thought the Association of Former Students' building looked like a parking garage before they finished it.

I, for one, am glad that they restarted the Video Aggie Land (now Aggievision) after a one-year absence. Since this is my final semester, I find it comforting to know that I can hold on to some of the memories I experienced here at Texas A&M preserved on video. It would've been a real pain for me to lug a video camera everywhere to record everything I wanted to remember.

To Greg Keith and all the others who are putting their time and effort into producing the video, thanks!

Diamond Dave Mendoza '88

Accept the ugliness

EDITOR:
I would like to make a closing remark to what a few narrow-minded observers would call the "ugliness" on A&M's campus. This issue pertains to the anti-apartheid shack built across from the Academic Building. A&M should accept this so students can be open-minded in the future to the reasons why other people do what they do. (This is not bringing up the dispute of apartheid being right or wrong). There will always be issues brought up on campus, and everywhere else, that people will have disagreements on. It's the fact that we can learn and grow individually by seeing more than just one side of the picture.

Katherine Coffey '90
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.

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(USPS 045 360)
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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 \$17.44 per semester, \$34.62 per school year and \$36.44 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: *The Battalion*, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. 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 77843-4111.

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