

Please, don't say the 'H' word

Complaints. They're almost all we get here at The Battalion and it's pretty much all we do, too.

A previous editor once made a form letter for Battalion readers. All you had to do was check the appropriate box for your complaint. It covered quite a few of them, too. One of the all-time great complaints for The Battalion, and one of my personal favorites, is what is known as "The Howdy Letter."

The Howdy Letter does have a standard form and usually goes something like this: "People just don't say 'howdy' anymore. Blah, blah, blah. We always used to say 'howdy.' Blah, blah, blah. Come on, Ags, let's keep up this great tradition."

Let's hold the phone for a minute. Is it that great of a tradition? Come on. For most of us city slickers, it's just not comfortable even saying the word. I've lived in Texas for 16 years, but I've never thought of "howdy" as a greeting. I suppose it had its place here at A&M back when it stood for Ancient and Moldy, but we're now the seventh largest university in the nation and Texas is no longer the rural, agrarian, pre-Civil War society it once was.

If you listen to people who say the "H" word, you'll find it's usually mutated into "Hahdee." This is a linguistic rebellion by your body. It's kind of like saying "Gig them." It just doesn't flow.

Personally, I don't feel comfortable mentally saying the "H" word. Howdy is a word I've always associated with people who didn't know that the proper way to greet someone is a simple "Hi." It can set off any number of side effects, like rashes or push-ups.

Now we even have the Memorial Student Center Traditions Council bribing students to say the "H" word. You can win dinners, T-shirts and night club passes. And some lucky person is going



Steve Masters Columnist

to walk away with a 12th Man towel autographed by none other than everybody's hero and moral role model Jackie Sherrill. That in itself is enough to untie my tongue.

Why couldn't those old Ancient & Moldy founding fathers have thought up another greeting? Because they were from rural areas. And they were here a long time ago. Maybe because they wanted to laugh at us from the grave. But it's probably because they couldn't think of anything better.

Now you say, "Oh, but it's not the word. It's the friendliness that goes along with it."

Yeah. We have an extremely friendly campus. We never find ourselves divided between Greek and non-Greek, Corps and non-Corps, the Chicken and Duddley's, males and females. . . . In fact since January, there have been 94 new cases opened at the Brazos County Rape Crisis Center because guys were more than friendly with women. And College Station and University police were scheduled to hold a lineup to attempt to identify the friendly individual who is charged with several counts including, in non-legal terms, being overly friendly to a student in Lick Creek Park.

We have an excellent example of friendliness following football victories — freshmen chase, tackle and carry yell leaders to the Fish Pond, where they throw them in. After the Tech game they were so friendly they separated

Head Yell Leader Steve Keathley's shoulder.

So you reply, "But those are just isolated incidents. People can be different and still get along — greeting people here is a tradition because we're all Aggies, not strangers. Yell leaders know the risks when they run for the position. Besides, his injury was just a fluke."

Here we go again. I hope I'm not the first to tell you that tradition does not mean set in stone. If you can't adapt to and even possibly (gasp!) accept new ideas, you don't really belong in college. And I like to think I know a lot of people, but (gasp again!) to think there's not a stranger among the over 39,000 students here is just a bit idealistic, even for me. The old story about helping other Ags with a flat tire kind of scares me sometimes. Some Aggies I've met I still wouldn't trust if my car was broken down beside the road.

Personally, I really don't want to see the campus turn into New York City with everyone ignoring each other as if they were in an elevator. But with almost 40,000 people, love and sunshine everywhere is just not realistic.

The next time you're walking around campus after dark with no light in sight and you hear what sounds like a faster version of the Ross Volunteers march, I'm sure the first thing that will pop into your mind will be, "Wow. What a friendly campus this is. I wonder if they'll say 'howdy' back. And gee, maybe Santa will bring me that GI Joe with the Kung Fu grip this year."

Maybe if we quit fooling ourselves into believing this school was just so darn friendly, people would be more careful. But let's not use it as an excuse for a stupid greeting.

Steve Masters is a senior journalism major, senior staff writer and a columnist for The Battalion.

Mail Call

Aggie Band wrongly accused

EDITOR:

In response to The Battalion editorial of Oct. 25, there are a few clarifications I wish to make.

First, the Aggie Band holds no "grudge" against the MOB.

Second, until it was brought out in your newspaper, current band members knew virtually nothing of the incident involving the MOB and the Corps of Cadets in 1973.

Third, the Aggie Band, contrary to your article, is a part of the A&M student body and also "enjoys the refreshing change the MOB adds to a halftime show."

Several members of the band, including myself, have commented that if we were not in the Aggie Band, the MOB would be the only other Southwest Conference band we'd consider joining. The MOB, although it is on the other end of the spectrum from our band, is unique, entertaining and able to hold the audiences' attention throughout the halftime.

Simply put, we respect your right to express your opinion, but not your right to wrongly express ours.

Allan Hess Aggie Band commander

MOB 'a breath of fresh air'

EDITOR:

If you were not at the Rice game, you missed out on probably the BEST halftime show to come to Texas A&M in a long time.

I love the Aggie band, but after three years of military drills (with their slow march, lines, angles and music), it was like a breath of fresh air to see the Rice band performing.

The happy, amusing, halftime show really made you want to sing along with the popular tunes of the 1960s and just laugh at the comical overtones. This talented bunch of funny people along with an excellent band coordinator need to be congratulated on the outstanding show they put on. I have never seen the fans clap and cheer for an outside band like that.

I still believe the Fighting Texas Aggie Band is the greatest, but in all the years that I have played in marching bands (and I have gone to hundreds of football games), I still believe that the Rice show was the BEST.

Lori Ann Borroni '89

1973 display embarrassing

EDITOR:

I too am one for letting go of grudges and I have begun again to see the humor in the antics of the Rice MOB. But every account I have read of what happened in Houston in 1973 leaves out the real reason Aggies felt insulted and outraged by their behavior.

On the reviewing stand during the march-in to downtown Houston, as an honored guest of Texas A&M, was a former student and Corps member who had recently been released from a Vietnamese POW camp. This man, who had suffered much in the service of his country, had to be witness to a bunch of anti-military, pseudo-intellectuals, goose-stepping up and down the football field dressed in Nazi uniforms while making noises representing the Aggie War Hymn. The references to Reveille, or the fact that Marvin Zindler, the man who closed the Chicken Ranch, was a featured twirler might have been viewed as a "harmless prank," but those of us who were there will remember that soldier and how embarrassed we were for him to see his university and his country insulted by a hosting school.

Brenda Bevers Staff Assistant, TAMU Food Services

MOB spits in A&M's face

EDITOR:

How dare you? Your Oct. 25 editorial is obviously written out of ignorance because all the facts were not presented.

As you presented in your editorial, I suppose that you were also between the ages of three and seven in 1973. I was 11. Also, I was there. At Rice Stadium, I saw my grandfather, Class of '36, along with other Aggies, restrained from entering the field by yell leaders, the Corps' officers of the day and police officers as the Rice band stepped off in a mock block formation to an out-of-tune "Aggie War Hymn," and made their attack on Reveille III who had just died.

Are you also ignorant of the 1983 game, at Rice Stadium, in which the Aggie Band's halftime performance was devastated by whistles blown from the sideline by . . . Guess who? I never will forget the look on the head drum major's face as he looked toward the sideline in disbelief, then slowly stopped his disarrayed colleagues and marched them from the field.

Or, perhaps in 1980 when the Rice Band spelled out IRAN on Kyle Field. If you recall, the United States was involved in a crisis concerning hostages in Iran. All these times, I was there. Were you?

On Oct. 22, 1988, to the ignorance of the A&M student body, the Rice band struck again. Only at A&M would the Rice band command the audience to say the pledge in the same show with rubber chickens and sexist innuendos. Knowing the reputation of the Rice band, I knew they were laughing amongst themselves as all Aggies stood in unison to say the Pledge of Allegiance.

Your article discusses how the student body "appreciates the refreshing change the MOB adds to a halftime show, as evidenced by its reaction following the MOB's performance Saturday." Once again your ignorance shows. Some said Saturday that they enjoyed the Rice band's free spirit. I remind all Aggies that the Rice band's freedom of expression was made possible by all Aggies who have defended the ideals of this country. In return, the Rice band spits in our face.

The performances of the Rice band differs dramatically between Kyle Field and Rice Stadium. Before making any judgements, I challenge each Aggie to experience a Rice band performance in Rice Stadium for themselves.

Mike Rice '84 Graduate student

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.

And the winner is . . . Bush!

Why did George Bush win? That's right, did win as in past tense.

The election is just days away, but it's already over, decided by a mysterious entity known as "Conventional Wisdom." Conventional Wisdom is the general consensus of ideas that belong to the political watching community (reporters, consultants and political commentators). Conventional Wisdom (CW) has been wrong many times before, but with the quickness with which the election will be upon us and the accuracy of modern polling techniques, the election has been decided. Bush was the victor.

George Bush won because his message appealed more to the average mainstream voter. He's tough on crime, for a strong defense and against a tax hike. Dukakis has somewhat similar views on these issues, but Bush has successfully convinced us otherwise.

Dukakis had a chance, months ago, but George Bush successfully painted Dukakis as a liberal in the mind of the average voter. Dukakis finally admitted that he is a liberal, and that's something the average voter just doesn't want to vote for.

Dukakis should have realized that we Americans are a conservative lot. Not in the sense that George Bush or Pat Robertson is conservative, but we tend to take few chances when things are running smoothly. Our country has been running smoothly, in fact very well, over the past eight years and we wouldn't mind it staying that way. Whatever small part George Bush had in the last two administrations, we nevertheless see him as a symbol of the Reagan Revolution. And Bush is the man chosen to carry the torch for the next four (or eight) years.

Despite what the Democrats claim,



Timm Doolen Columnist

Ronald Reagan has done many good things for our country. When Ronald Reagan came into office, we had double-digit inflation, high unemployment and a bleak economic outlook. With a few magic elves, like David Stockman, Reagan helped bring our economy back into prosperous shape. A little tightening of the M-1 money supply here, a cut in the discount interest rates there, and we were smack dab in the middle of a recession. But when we emerged from that recession, we were economically stronger than we had been in years.

As it is now, unemployment and inflation are at their lowest in more than a decade. Trade deficits are decreasing, however slowly, and our overall economy is doing great. We average voters realize this, that we are better off than we were eight years ago, and we would like to continue in that direction.

Reagan's past catapulted George Bush into the future. However, although Bush won, and probably by an electoral college landslide, he didn't have the same mandate from the people Reagan had when he came into office in 1980. Much of the Conventional Wisdom is saying that George Bush swayed many of his voters because he wasn't Dukakis, not because he was the overwhelming people's choice.

This says something about the effectiveness of Bush's negative cam-

paigning, but it also says something about the voter's ideas of the redeeming qualities of the candidates.

George Will, a respected columnist, has said that no matter who wins, we are electing an immediate lame-duck President. With George Bush as the Chief Executive, and the Democrats controlling Congress, Will's not too far off. CW says that George Bush may have one of the shortest honeymoons as president in this century. He will not be able to control Congress. In fact, Congress might control him. And that will be a harsh blow to the momentum of the Reagan Revolution.

Yet Bush still has four to eight years to prove himself. I have confidence that he will be a fine leader and a strong president. As Bush wins the vote in 1988, the year that peace broke out, he can continue the push towards world peace and prosperity.

Bush has won, but unfortunately the Constitution dictates that we must have an election. We'll be lucky if a majority of the eligible voters actually vote, as few people are genuinely interested in this campaign. We've seen declining voting rates for decades and this could be the worst yet, but more about that at another time.

The race is over, and it will probably go down in history books in trivial manner. History is not kind to un-dynamic presidents and 100 years from now, Americans may likely remember the next president as we now remember James Garfield or Grover Cleveland.

So vote for whomever you want on Tuesday, but I warn you, Bush will win. Me? I'm voting for Ron Paul.

Timm Doolen is a sophomore computer science major and columnist for The Battalion.

BLOOM COUNTY



by Berke Breathed

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