



Mail Call

Non-regs build hell outta bonfire

EDITOR:

I am writing in response to a comment made by Heidi Halstead in her Nov. 11 letter and to a general misconception held by many Aggies. In her letter, Ms. Halstead writes, "Who works the longest and hardest on the world's largest bonfire? The Corps."

It's statements such as this, made in ignorance, that cut deep into the hearts of the hundreds of non-regs like myself who spend countless hours of their time to make bonfire possible. It is statements such as the one made by Guy Broom at last year's bonfire, when he thanked the Corps for building such a beautiful bonfire, that fuels the resentment felt by some non-regs toward the Corps.

These statements are made in ignorance because if either of these individuals had spent time working on bonfire, they would know that of the eight days designated for cut this year, the Corps attended three and non-regs attended all eight. They would know that of the eight ropes that secure centerpole, six were the hands of non-regs when it was raised. They would know that when push came to shove, the shifts will be divided evenly between non-regs and the Corps. They would know that the redpots, who supervise the building of bonfire, are both non-regs and cadets.

If these individuals and others who believe that the Corps builds bonfire would spend some of their time building it, they would know that AGGIES build bonfire.

Ruston Hughes '89

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for 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.

It's Thanksgiving, but are we really thankful?

When one thinks of Thanksgiving, an image of turkeys, relatives, and football usually comes to mind. Thanksgiving is a time for rest and relaxation. It's a chance to get away from the pressures of life for a few days and to forget about the hassles of school or work.

And it's only right for people to want to forget about the bad things in their lives for a while. But have you stopped yet to consider all of the *good* things in your life that you can be thankful for?

I just did, and I came up with more things than I had expected.

First of all, I'm thankful that I'm healthy enough to enjoy this holiday. I don't have cancer, I don't have the flu. I don't even have the sniffles. There are lots of people who want nothing more from life than to be in good health. All over the world, people are dying simply because they don't have enough food or adequate medical attention.

I'm also thankful that I have a family with whom to share this holiday. When I go home I will be greeted by my parents

and my two brothers, whom I love dearly. I will spend Thanksgiving Day with cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. We'll all sit down to a giant meal and we'll eat things like turkey, cranberries and pecan pie. During the day, twenty different people will ask me how I'm doing in college, and they'll do so because they really care about me.

Another thing that I'm thankful for is that I live in the United States of America. I could just as easily be some place like Cambodia or Afghanistan. Here in America if I feel like running through the streets screaming that Ronald Reagan is a foolish dunderhead, I can do so without fear of governmental retaliation. If I ran through the streets of Moscow yelling the same thing about Mikhail Gorbachev, I'd probably end up shoveling snow in Siberia for the rest of my life.

And what if I'd been born in South Africa or Iran? Would my life be as good as it is right now? I doubt it.

So no matter how much we like to



Dean Sueltenfuss
Columnist

complain about America, maybe tomorrow, on Thanksgiving Day, we should make an effort to remember some of the positive things about our country.

But perhaps all of these things (friends, family and country) aren't enough for you. Maybe you still see yourself as being on the bottom of the heap. Maybe you're thinking, "Yeah, if life is so great, how come all of my neighbors can afford expensive new cars, while I have to settle for an '81 Chevy?"

Maybe you look around and you see only the things that you can't have. When you're walking around town, maybe you notice the guy in the three-piece suit and maybe you wonder how much money he has.

Maybe you think to yourself, "I'll bet he lives in a really fancy, expensive condominium." Maybe you secretly envy him for all of the things he owns.

And as the man in the suit gets into his Mercedes-Benz and drives away, maybe you don't notice all of the folks on the corner waiting for the bus.

But they are there. Standing in the cold. Waiting.

One of them is an elderly woman. She's wearing an old, moth-eaten overcoat that's not doing a good job of keeping her warm. She's waiting for the bus to take her to her job at a local motel. When she arrives at work, she'll start cleaning rooms, dusting furniture and making beds. Nine hours later she'll be waiting for the bus again. Eventually, it will come and it will take her home to a tiny, dingy house on the "bad" side of town.

When she gets home she'll —

But you're not listening to me, are you?

No, you're still watching the Mer-

cedes-Benz as it drives off. There it goes. Grandly, extravagantly, it wheels down the road.

And here comes the tired, rusty bus chugging up the street. The old bus just got on it. She's on her way to work.

But I forgot. You don't want to talk about her. Nobody does.

You are too busy complaining that you don't make enough money, that you don't get good enough grades in school or that you can't afford the payments on your new stereo system. But if just for a moment you would think about the children in Ethiopia who are starving to death, or the people all over the world who are dying of AIDS, maybe meeting the payments on that new stereo wouldn't seem like such a life-or-death crisis.

Maybe then you will understand how thankful you should be.

Dean Sueltenfuss is a junior journalism major and columnist for The Battalion.

Pallmeyer's legend still casting large shadows

Earlier this semester, an era ended. You probably felt it and didn't even know it. He's gone, but I've decided we'll never outgrow him.

His ghost still haunts this place. Everywhere I look, I see him. He's in the museum. He's in the files. He's in the morgue. He's in the walls (even though we attempted to cover him with paint). For as long as we live, he'll be with us.

He's even in letters we get from freshmen. I don't even know where they've heard of him. He's a legend. That's all there is to it.

I'm talking about Karl Pallmeyer. Once the object of hatred the world 'round, we now get letters saying, "Bring Karl back!" Talk about a fickle public. Well, you're too late. You took too long to make up your mind. Heaven knows he stuck around here long enough. Now he's gone. The Lord works in mysterious ways. And that's why Karl works for the *Brazosport Facts* now.

You see, Karl was that one of a kind phenomenon who could see if you could get everybody under the sun as annoyed off as possible with as little effort as possible. It's kind of a "tradition" (we do hold some things sacred) here at *The Batt* to see how much mail columnists get. Of course, you have to believe in what you're writing. And boy, did Karl believe.

When Karl said bonfire was a dangerous waste, he meant it. When he said the Corps of Cadets was inhabited by apes, he meant it. When Karl said bowheads were stupid, he meant it. When Karl said College Station is a cultural black hole, he meant it. (Of course, this was before Street Pizza started playing.)

Do you get the impression that Karl made a lot of friends here?

Actually, he did. If you spoke to him instead of yelling and calling him a communist (the all-encompassing super-duper new-and-improved insult-to-beat-all-insults), you'd find out he's a nice guy. A little weird, but nice.



Steve Masters
Columnist

Obviously some of you know who he was. I picked up a letter from a partially informed freshman who wrote, "I heard about somebody named Carl(sic) who once worked there . . ." Someone else wrote and said we columnists weren't (aren't) doing our jobs properly because we aren't (weren't) controversial enough. This is because we live in a shadow. Try as we might, we're stuck with the Legacy Of Karl. And believe me, it's a *big* shadow.

I never actually met The Man, The Gut, The Legend until last summer when we both took Philosophy 111. He graduated in August 1986, but stuck around trying to get his grades up

enough to get into graduate school. In Fall 1987, the traitorous scum (I mean that nicely Karl.) left *The Batt* to work for that other newspaper in town. That's OK.

We spent most of the first summer session cracking really sick abortion and pornography jokes. I learned two things about Karl this summer. One, he's one sick puppy, and two, if you throw a party, Karl will show up.

Karl is widely known for his drinking skills. Just ask our reviewer, Shane "The Beast" Hall. Together they made sure Carney's Pub stayed in business. And on more than one occasion they helped rid me of a keg or two.

But what most people don't know is that Karl was a musician, too. You haven't heard a song butchered until you've heard Jerry (another old *Batt* god) and The Battmen sing R.E.M.'s "S. Central Rain."

The problem is, no matter how good we are, no matter how controversial we are, we have to answer to Karl's ghost. If

one of us writes some scathing anti-condition column, somebody out there (most guaranteed to write us a letter saying A) we're communist bastards, B) Highway 6 runs both ways, C) we're trying to be the next Karl Pallmeyer, D) all of the above.

Actually I'm probably screwing just by mentioning his name, because now another whole generation of people knows about him.

Listen. I know most of you don't believe in what we write. We understand that. We expect that. I know that some of you will even write letters to us telling us how much you don't believe in what we write. But if you would stop comparing us to the legend, you might find we aren't exactly imitators.

OK. Maybe we are.

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

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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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