



Bonfire's good and bad sides

I've tried . . . and failed. I couldn't resist the urge. I made several attempts to fight it: I torched my flair pens, burned my pencils and paper, short-circuited my word processor, tied my hands behind my back. And all to no avail. Temptation tapped on the door to my conscience and I answered.

I never thought I would write about it. After all, we hard-line, high-blown flacks (that is spelled correctly, by the way) are supposed to criticize, analyze, theorize, scandalize, hypothesize and every other "ize" known to man. We journalists are obligated to the public and are expected to dissect every important issue, crisis and event that comes along. And that's exactly why I felt compelled to write about **BONFIRE**: it is an important event, at least here in Aggieland. Why, I hear it's even in the Guinness Book of World Records.

I must admit that in my five-year stay here at Texas A&M, I've been what is commonly called a "two-percenter." I've never gone to a midnight yell practice, the Dixie Chicken, a football game (heaven forbid!) or . . . bonfire. This semester was my last shot at seeing some of these events and early on, I decided to take the plunge. Why heck, I'm probably even a 10-percenter by now.

Well, back to the point at hand. Yes, I went to bonfire last Tuesday and when the band marched in and the bonfire was torched, I all of a sudden wished I had known more about this renowned Aggie rite.

How many gallons of fuel is needed to saturate the logs so they'll burn? In fact, how many logs are there? How tall is the bonfire stack? How many man hours are spent in building it? What substance is in or on the outhouse (is that what that thing on top is?) to make it burn so vehemently?

A friend (who had also never been to bonfire) and I stood in awe as the bonfire went up in a breath-taking conflagration. Even from where we stood (which was "far from the madding crowd") the heat was intense. The only word that came to mind was the valley girl term "awesome."

As we looked at the other spectators we noticed the comradery, the enthu-



Suna Purser
Columnist

siasm, the excitement. Indeed "The Spirit of Aggieland" took on new meaning that night. Former, present and future Aggies were huddled in tight formation as the yell leaders carried the crowd through one yell after another.

"Beat t.u., burn Bevo and kill the teapots," were on everyone's lips as the fire raged, a fire that in every way is a symbol of Aggie spirit. Small children looked on in amazement and I thought to myself, "There is a future yell leader."

The crowd swelled and the echos of the yells resounded off of the surrounding buildings. I looked on in amazement and tried to decipher the yells I never learned. Sensory overload: the sights and sounds were spectacular and I was proud to be an Aggie . . . proud to be a minuscule part of such a monumental event.

No one seemed to mind the mud was knee deep. After all, mud at bonfire is as much a tradition as bonfire itself. No one seemed to mind the air had a nip to it. Everyone seemed to be taking a nip, so who cares if it's a bit chilly. Get a little closer to the bonfire and I guarantee that'll take care of the cool.

Like the logs, people were stacked on top of each other so they could get a better look. I kept waiting in eager anticipation for some guy to slip in the slimy mud and send the stack crashing into the quagmire . . . it never happened. Indeed, the entire scene was awesome.

But there is a turn in every tale and this one is no exception. I can't count the number of people I saw being carried out feet first, too drunk to stand on their own. Some minus shoes, some minus shirts, all minus their dignity. Their eyes rolled, their tongues hung out of their mouths: they were making spectacles of themselves. Fortunately

for them, they were too blasted to know or they would have been humiliated. I'm just sorry they missed what everyone else, and probably they themselves came for and hope that alcohol poisoning didn't take its toll.

And then there were those blissful young lovers who were attached at both the lips and hips. P.D.A. (Public Display of Affection) in its most disgusting and sleazy form. No modesty among that crew. I'm certain you couldn't have pried them apart using a crow bar. Their bodies and lips were hermetically sealed. Like the drunks, they were oblivious to all . . . except each other, obviously. Listen lovers, save that kind of lewd stuff for the bedroom where it belongs.

Of course, we can't forget the brazen young boys who decided to relieve themselves of their Miller Lite on the buildings. Aren't we supposed to use restrooms for that? Don't those buildings have rooms designed specifically for that purpose? I had heard some guys did that and I'm here to tell you it's true and it's disgusting. No further comment.

And bringing up the rear, are those who talked trash and I mean filthy, nasty trash. Some of the profanities I heard, coming from both men and women, would rival any slime bag bar. And the cavalier attitudes they had while shouting such language was, quite frankly, unbelievable. I can't even imagine how they came up with some of the word combinations. It was truly awesome.

When the bonfire fell at approximately 8:40, my friend and I had seen and heard enough and decided to cut out. As we walked to our cars, we were glad we went and left with mixed emotions. Regardless of whether one is pro or anti-bonfire, it is exciting to see such a spectacular event, one which in so many ways symbolizes Aggie spirit and unity. Nevertheless, some of us "good Ags" have a lot to learn about common decency, dignity and honor. I guess you have to take the good with the bad.

Suna Purser is a journalism graduate, a graduate student in English and columnist The Battalion.

Mail Call

Batt's crap annoying

EDITOR:

It is bad enough that the editorial page is too often dedicated to such unintelligent drivel as discussions about Saturday morning cartoons, the demise of Robin (of the Dynamic Duo), or some loud-mouth out-of-state student's complaints about Texas and the residents who live here. Granted, editorials are opinions, but let's use facts, or at least a semi-logical thought process to base our opinions and not write annoying crap just to see how many people we can get a rise out of.

The two editorials by *The Battalion* Editorial Board in the Friday, Nov. 18 edition are just more examples of what a poor-quality newspaper *The Battalion* is.

I can understand *The Dallas Morning News* and Al Carter of *The Houston Chronicle* jumping on the band wagon to convict A&M's Athletic Department, Jackie Sherrill and anyone else in sight without waiting for all of the facts to be revealed. Granted, the phrase "if true" appears in the second editorial, but the sentence declares ". . . the last penalty was only stiff enough to keep the dirt off the football program for three days." It had not been proven at press time if any rules had been violated, and it still has not been proven.

But, worst of all is the bold headline "Ags deserve death." Why do the Ags deserve death before being proven guilty? "Sherrill's got to go" is not a good piece of journalism either. This masterpiece includes the sentence "While portraying themselves as victims of unnecessary scrutiny, A&M Athletic Department officials under Sherrill's supervision were paying off a former player to keep quiet about violations that the NCAA apparently missed."

Has that been proven beyond a doubt? Why does "Sherrill's got to go" yell? Let's give him a fair trial before we run him out of town.

If indeed Jackie Sherrill and/or any of his assistants are proven guilty of violations, I would be among the first to expect them to be accountable for their actions and face the consequences. However, none of us are qualified to make such a grave decision. Until the proper authorities decide on a verdict, we should not make premature judgements.

Bill Frawley '87

'Stonewall' Sherrill a cancer

EDITOR:

Congratulations on your forthright stance in calling for the immediate resignation or firing of Coach Sherrill. You are not alone — the vast majority of major newspapers and sports journalists also are demanding his immediate resignation. Unfortunately, however, we have a Nixonian mentality here with Jackie and his palace guards now stonewalling the issues. First they (Jackie and his boys) send cash in overnight envelopes to a former Aggie who left the University six years ago! Now these cash payments are a loan! How ludicrous!

I did not attend A&M, but did go to SMU. And from the NCAA investigation and all the trouble here at SMU, I can say the only way to clean up the athletic program is to get rid of all the cancer. And that goes for the entire athletic department at A&M from top to bottom.

Although the Board of Regents and Jackie's palace guard will continue to stonewall it, keep up the editorials. Good luck!

Sandy McDouglas

Batt only good for few laughs

EDITOR:

Hal Hammons is entitled to his opinions on Jackie Sherrill and the A&M football program, but his statement, "If you don't like the facts, don't read *The Battalion*," is a joke. *The Battalion* proved how it deals with the facts when it printed the pre-election voter's guide.

The Battalion is a rag with the credibility of the *National Enquirer*. The most one could hope for when reading it is comic relief.

Debbie Partain
Geography drafter leader

Misinformation feeds sexism

EDITOR:

Oh give me a break, Laura! If you want to be a housewife, that is your right. But when you start spewing forth a lot of "facts" that are contradicted by everything I've learned as a psychology major (and from experience), I feel the need to speak up.

Children of employed parents are not deprived, do not feel "second-best" and do not become "materialistic."

There is no evidence to show that they develop any differently, psychologically or emotionally, from children with mothers who don't work. In fact, children, especially females, of women who voluntarily work seem to have more self-esteem and higher goals. Even if you do believe a child needs a parent at home, why should it be his or her mother?

Doesn't the father have half the responsibility of the child's upbringing? Can he just as easily become a "house-husband"?

You are correct about one thing — your ideas are "old-fashioned" and "archaic" and are one of the reasons it has taken women so long to progress in society.

Choose your vocation as you wish, but allow the rest of us to pursue our goals as well. It is misinformation such as you gave me in your column that allows sexism to remain alive even in this "modern" era.

Hope Warren '89

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

The Battalion

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BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed

