

Opinion

A&M represented at inauguration

When George Bush officially becomes president at his inauguration Friday, the Aggie Band, Parson's Mounted Cavalry and the Ross Volunteers will be there, representing Texas A&M University.

We recognize what an honor and privilege it is for these groups to be invited to the inauguration, and we are proud to have A&M represented at the ceremony.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Mail Call

Racism is not abundant

EDITOR:

To be sure, racism is a problem that is still with us. And it is probably still a larger problem than many of us would like to admit. To say that it is "still abundant" is certainly an overstatement. As evidence, look at the rise of blacks and other minorities to high positions in industry and government, or the burgeoning black middle class. Look at the recent presidential election. When a black man can almost win a presidential nomination, that does not indicate "abundant" racism.

As far as a boycott, we don't shut the country down for George Washington's birthday, or Abraham Lincoln's. Mr. Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation and kept a country at war with itself united. Mr. Washington was our first President, and one of this country's founders (and please, I don't need to be reminded that Washington owned slaves). I don't feel Mr. King deserves to be honored more than these two men.

Finally, the Tawana Brawley case does indicate that racism is still around, but that it's victims are not always black, and its perpetrators not always white. The Brawley case is an attempt to frame four white men for committing a crime against a black girl, a crime that all the evidence indicates never happened. This is nothing but grandstanding by an attorney who should be disbarred, and a minister who cannot have the love of God in his heart and yet act in the manner that he has. Howard Beach was an atrocity, the perpetrators of which should be punished to the fullest extent of the law. And whether or not Mr. King deserves this holiday, I cannot imagine that he would want to be associated with the Tawana Brawley case. To do so is a dishonor and disservice to the victims of Howard Beach and to Martin Luther King.

Joe Dan Shelton

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.

Green is my favorite color

The scene is two months from now, one week before spring break and the most prestigious of the holidays, St. Patrick's Day. I am in my room, talking with my roommate about the injustice being served to Irish people by Texas A&M University.

"Pat" I say, "I can't believe that A&M isn't recognizing St. Patrick's Day. They should give us a day off from school to recognize the plight of Irish people everywhere."

"I agree with you two-hundred percent, Timm," says Pat Nolan, my Irish roommate.

Then Pat takes a brief look at the calendar. "Hey Timm, it turns out we do get St. Patrick's Day off. It's during spring break."

"I know that! That 'coincidence' is an obvious attempt by the University to totally ignore St. Patrick's Day and along with it the suffering of millions of Irish people."

"Uh Timm, are they really suffering?" my roommate asks.

"Yes, in Northern Ireland, especially, and even right here in our own United States!"

"What exactly is happening in Northern Ireland?"

"Well, the Irish Catholics are being repressed by those damn British Protestants!"

"Fair enough, but what's happening right here in the U.S.?"

"Well, Pat, Irish people are discriminated against all over the country in communities, shops, and religious places."

"Gee, I didn't know that, Timm."

"Let's face it, it's a reality. So in response to the University's choice to not officially recognize St. Patrick's Day, I think we should boycott the University."

At that point my Irish friend Thomas McBurnett walks in. "Nice shirt, Timm." I am wearing my FBI (Full Blooded Irish) sweatshirt.



Timothy F. Doolen
Columnist

"Pat and I are going to boycott A&M on St. Patrick's Day," I say, "because the University is totally ignoring the holiday."

"Good idea, you can probably get support from the Irish Tribe," Tom says. "By the way, why exactly do we celebrate St. Patrick's Day?"

"Wasn't St. Patrick the patron saint of quality footwear?" Pat asks.

"I thought he was the patron saint of alcohol," says Tom.

"No, all Irishmen could be considered that," I remark. "The reason we celebrate St. Patrick's Day is because on that day, hundreds of years ago, the great St. Patrick drove all the snakes out of Ireland, or something like that."

"Wasn't that the plot of that Pied Piper story?" asks Pat.

"Look," I say, "don't concern yourselves with the details, the point is that the University is acting blatantly racist when it ignores a holiday such as this."

Soon after the conversation, I write a letter that is printed in the next issue of *The Battalion*:

One way to combat the rising anti-Irish sentiment is to think about the great leader St. Patrick on the day given his name. However, Texas A&M has made remembrance impossible by ignoring the holiday and insisting we have spring break.

In protest, I urge students and faculty to boycott all University facilities. Don't buy books or food from the University, and don't go to class. Instead, remember a great man's life and his battle for the freedom of all Irish people.

Two weeks later the Battalion ran the story on the boycott.

Timm Doolen, in collaboration with the Irish Tribe, boycotted all University facilities on March 17 in honor of Patrick's Day. Doolen says it was a surprisingly overwhelming success.

"Nintey-nine percent of the student body complied with the boycott and didn't even show their face on campus. No single undergraduate attended class which is slightly below normal level," Doolen announced.

The boycott apparently went much better than a similar boycott held in January on Martin Luther King Jr.'s observed birthday by another organization.

During the same week of spring break, the shanty erected by Students For Irish People met with little success being vandalized and torn down. Phrases like "Death to the Pope," "I go home" and "Bite me Notre Dame" were spray painted on the green shack.

"The shanty probably wasn't such a good idea, but overall the boycott went well," Doolen commented.

When it was pointed out that the boycott took place during spring break, when no classes were being held, Doolen refused to comment further.

Then I woke up as my alarm went off.

"Timm, what were you mumbling about in your sleep?" Pat asks.

"I had this crazy dream that boycotting the University on St. Patrick's Day would make people become more aware of the holiday."

"What a silly idea."

"Yeah."

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

Aggies need to work together to stop racism

Monday evening I attended a ceremony for the late civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Sponsored by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., the program consisted of speeches by members of the fraternity as well as a rousing speech by a visiting member of the fraternity.

The program was well put together, and it was done in grand fashion. Alpha Phi Alpha deserves quite a congratulations on the ceremony.

But as I sat in the audience, I realized something that greatly disturbed me. I, to the best of my knowledge, was the only person in the audience that was not black.

Surely members of other ethnic backgrounds were aware of the ceremony, or at least aware that Monday was the day designated for celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday.

So why was there not a wider representation of ethnic backgrounds in attendance? Why were there not more Hispanic, Oriental, and white people? Didn't Dr. King work for the good of all people, not just blacks? So, knowing this, why weren't members of other races in attendance?

The answer to these questions, as I see it, lies in the fact that Texas A&M University is full of racism.

What was the last musical group to perform here at A&M with a black or Hispanic sound? Who was the last prominent black or Hispanic leader to speak here at A&M? And once again, why was there not a greater representation of ethnic backgrounds at the Dr. Martin Luther King ceremony?

Why are the majority of janitorial workers black or Hispanic? Why doesn't A&M's radio station program black or Hispanic music? Why, and I know, therefore I speak, aren't there more blacks or Hispanics on the Battalion staff? The answers to these questions lie in the fact that Texas A&M is full of racism.

The time has come for Texas A&M to admit that which it refuses to. Texas A&M discriminates and shall continue to do so until the students of this University force this school to change its ways.

We are the students that pay the money. We are the students that eat the food. We are the students that buy the tickets to the football games, which, ironically, is one place where they do allow minorities to be dominant.

We must, as a student body, promote racial equality and demand it from the University. We must support those organizations that are working towards a more equal balance: the Black Awareness Committee, the Committee for the Awareness of Mexican-American Culture, and most of all, the Multicultural Services Center.

It is time for the students of this University to require that everyone be represented equally, not just those with the highest enrollment.

Please understand that I strongly protest reverse discrimination. I am not

J. Frank Hernandez
Guest Columnist

suggesting that all eyes should be turned towards those who are less represented on this campus. But I am saying that if we support Silver Taps and Aggie Muster, let us support Gospelfest and Martin Luther King day. To support one and not the other would be discrimination all over again.

The student body has failed. The student body has not supported Martin Luther King day. The student body has not supported Cinco de Mayo. The student body has not supported those occasions that do not represent the majority, and that is wrong.

The student body, despite what we may be told by those above us, controls the University. We are the source of money. We are ones who build A&M's reputation. Never forget that without

the students, there would be no University.

I say this to stress the fact that we can make a difference. We can make the changes that we deem necessary. I hope that the student body can and will realize that it is time to change this University. If it is not done now, it may never be done. It is time to make a change.

To those who at this time are not well represented, I say this: Keep strong. Soon this University will be forced to correct this situation. Don't lose sight of what you desire and what you know is right. You must continue the struggle, for they will continue the fight.

To those who at this time are well represented, I say this: Consider how it feels to be well represented. Think about the fact that some are not being treated with such respect. Admit that you too must help to achieve equality. Your work is just as important as theirs.

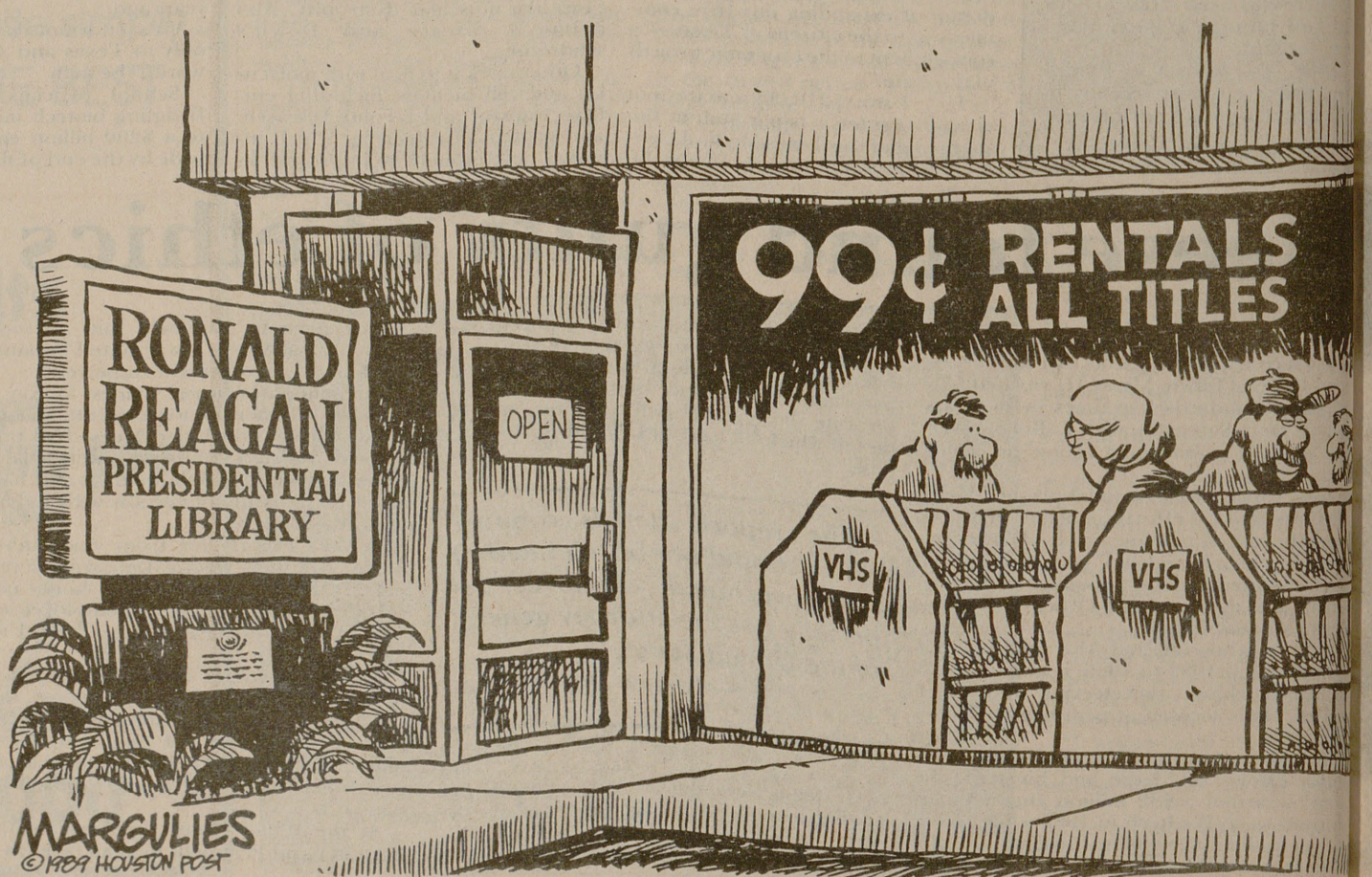
To those who condone such inequalities, I say this: Realize that it is time to

change. You may fight, but what is right will survive. I pray for you, because you are the ones who have the most anger inside you. Accept yourself and accept others as equals. Now is the time to do so.

And to the student body, I say this: We must come together. Things are not right as they stand, and we are the ones who can change the situation. Obviously A&M will not do so on its own.

To Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Thank you for what you accomplished. Thank you for what you stood for. Thank you for raising the light to where we all could see it. Know that it your absence, the struggle continues, and we are doing our best to continue what you began. Most of all, thank you for teaching us that there is only one race—the human race. With God's guidance we shall realize this soon.

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