

Mail Call

Tower atmosphere conducive to learning

EDITOR:

One cannot help wonder about the motives of Ms. Rizzo in writing an article downplaying the benefits and amenities offered by University Tower to TAMU students, giving the student an additional housing option; namely, whether to live in on-campus dorms, apartment complexes or elsewhere as compared to University Tower. Perhaps it is simply misconception or lack of understanding.

The benefits of University Tower are many, and far exceed those referenced by Ms. Rizzo.

University Tower believes there is nothing wrong, and it is in fact appropriate to give students the option of determining where they will live, study and establish friendships.

"Above and Beyond the Rest" is University Tower's logo and, in management opinion, an appropriate one taking into account the combination of the many benefits and amenities available at University Tower that are not available at apartment complexes or on-campus dorms (as was indeed noted by *The Battalion* when University Tower dorm plans were announced in a headline that read: "University Tower Will Provide Benefits Unavailable in Dorms"). There certainly does not appear to be any disagreement (even by Ms. Rizzo) as to the additional benefits and amenities at University Tower.

Indeed, University Tower offers many amenities that are not available elsewhere. Our intent is to offer serious minded students accommodations that are nice, yet conducive to learning. Our commitment to excellence does not differ from TAMU's quest for excellence. We are simply providing excellence in living accommodations. We believe that you will find University Tower to be an excellent value, a nice friendly place to call home and a place to share the fun and struggles in obtaining an excellent college education. Please do not be misled by rumor or misinformation — come by and see what University Tower is about.

Dr. Richard A. Berns
Wallerstein Property Manager

Drill teams deserve respect

EDITOR:

Texas A&M is known worldwide for its fine tradition of friendliness. We would like to thank Damon Arhos for carrying on this fine tradition in his June 29 column.

He wrote of the drill team "bimbos" that frequent our campus in the summer. Unfortunately, he needed more information before attacking the so-called "human Barbies."

These camps bring large amounts of revenue into the University. Each camp participant pays for meals, building use and dorm space. Many current students were first exposed to the University while attending one of the various types of camps A&M hosts each year.

As for Arhos' criticism of a team's color coordination, members wear similar outfits to present a unified look which makes performances more pleasurable for the viewer. Also, if you listen closely while these girls practice, you will not hear "Ready-Okay!" (as Arhos began his column) but rather a "5-6-7-8 . . ." The other command is reserved for cheerleaders.

Again, let us thank Mr. Arhos for welcoming visitors to our campus with open arms; only next time we hope you are more informed.

Jennifer Jordy '89
Head Instructor — NCA SUPERSTAR Drill Team Camps
Allen Johnson '87
Camp Director — United Spirit Association Summer Camps

Relocation of trees not trivial

EDITOR:

I would like to address an issue that not too many people, including our student body president, seem to have an interest in — the ridding of 26 trees surrounding the Memorial Student Center to make way for expansion. Now I do understand we need the room for student activities that are presently crammed on the second floor of the Pavilion. And I'm not a radical ecologist crying over where the birds and the squirrels will go. I am a concerned student who doesn't want A&M turned into a concrete and asphalt education complex that has to be annexed every two years. And I have an even greater concern about promises unkept.

The new student body president was elected in March, flying in on promises to lobby the legislature, increase campus safety, better the quality of teaching and protect green space from being lost to construction. Correct me if I'm wrong, but the MSC — the building and surrounding grounds honoring Aggies who have died for our country — has green space that is imminently being threatened. I haven't seen any action taken on Mr. Buchman's part.

If this is an omen of the future, I fear the events of the oncoming year.

Shannon Hatfield '92

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.



Abortion decision dead wrong

Last Monday the Supreme Court announced its decision on *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, a case which concerns Missouri's abortion laws.

The decision upheld three Missouri state laws. One law prohibits the use of Missouri tax money for encouraging or counseling women to have abortions. Another law bans abortions performed by public employees and abortions in public facilities and hospitals unless the life of the mother is in danger. The third requires doctors to test fetuses of at least 20 weeks gestation for viability outside of the womb.

The Court also stated that each state could determine its own laws regarding the restriction of abortion.

We believe the decision was misguided and wrong. As Justice Harry Blackmun wrote in his dissenting opinion: "Never in my memory has a plurality announced a judgment of this court that so foments disregard for the law and for our standing decisions."

Justice Blackmun alludes to the 1973 case of *Roe v. Wade*, in which the Supreme Court held that the constitutional right to privacy gives women the right to choose an abortion. The court reaffirmed this decision in court cases in 1983 and 1986. As one of the most common surgical practices in the United States, over 1.5 million abortions occur each year.

Fortunately, the *Webster* ruling left the *Roe v. Wade* precedent intact for the most part. However, the Supreme Court chipped away at some of the opportunities of those women seeking an abortion in Missouri. And with the states free to make their own laws, similar laws may be passed around the country.



Timm Doolen



Matt McBurnett

counseling, women contemplating abortion are educated and given the information necessary to make an intelligent decision. With no tax-funded counselors, or at least not any who can be pro-choice, fewer abortions will occur, thus adding to the quagmire of poor women not being given the chance to choose abortions. And, as expected, the burden of supporting the poor and their children will again fall on the taxpayer.

Another upsetting facet of the decision is the upholding of the Missouri statute banning the use of public facilities for abortions (even if the state makes a profit from the abortions). Because these institutions can only be used when the mother's life is in danger, the most important aspect of the entire abortion issue, the choice, is taken away from the mother.

Also, if no public facilities or public doctors may be used for abortions, we rightly wonder where the abortions will take place and who will administer them, especially for the poor. By leaving this question unanswered, the *Webster* case has simply added another stumbling block on the path for those women who choose to seek an abortion.

After 16 years and over 20 million aborted fetuses, the United States surely cannot turn its back on abortion. And although overturning *Roe v. Wade* would not end abortion, it would surely limit it in the United States.

With the Court's decision on Monday, it has taken a first step in the wrong direction to overturning a landmark.

Timm Doolen and Matt McBurnett are junior engineering majors and columnists for *The Battalion*.

The Court, in making this 5-4 decision, is unfortunately allowing the states too much freedom to restrict when, where, and how abortions are performed. The extra tests that will have to be performed will knock up the prices of those abortions occurring 20 weeks after conception. This will have a side effect of allowing only those who can initially afford the costs to obtain abortions in the second trimester, and forcing many poor women to have their children, thus multiplying their problems.

By allowing the states to liberally pass conservative abortion laws, more states will have more laws that limit the abortion process. Not only will this create abortion laws that vary widely from state to state, it will also probably bring more litigation, such as the Missouri case, challenging the state's right to pass those kinds of laws. And the litigation may eventually reach the Supreme Court, in hopes of overturning *Roe v. Wade* once and for all.

In upholding the Missouri law preventing the use of tax money for pro-abortion causes, the Court has created a situation which will eventually be more of a burden on the taxpayer. Through

Burning of American flag not always unpatriotic

Great. George Bush thinks we need an amendment to the Constitution to stop flag-burning. Of all the cheap, political grandstanding, of all the shameless pandering to an ill-informed national snit — it makes me want to vomit; but of course that would be symbolic political speech and symbolic political speech should be punishable by law, shouldn't it?

The flag is, after all, the symbol of our freedom. It must not be desecrated. We can burn crosses in this country, but our secular symbol is more important than our religious symbol — isn't it? The president says that as a combat veteran, he is offended by flag-burning. So am I. Black citizens are offended by rac-

Molly Ivins
Syndicated Columnist

ist speech and it does more than hurt their feelings — it costs them in countless ways, sometimes it even costs them their lives. Shall we outlaw all racist speech?

Women are offended by sexist speech — it not only demeans us, but many studies show it promotes violence against us — rape, assault, beatings, murder. Shall we outlaw all sexist speech?

Jews have at least 6 million reasons to

be offended by anti-Semitic speech and by its symbol, the swastika. Shall we outlaw anti-Semitic speech? Shall that include all criticism of Israel?

Muslims are deeply offended by Salman Rushdie's book "The Satanic Verses" — shall we outlaw Mr. Rushdie's work?

Let's try this again, very slowly.

The argument is that it should be against the law to desecrate the American flag, right? The flag is desecrated every time the Ku Klux Klan carries it in a march or displays it at a rally. The flag is desecrated every day in this country — it is worn on the bottoms of blue jeans, it is worn on the leather jackets or motorcycle thugs whose idea of fun is to get drunk and wreck and rape. It is tattooed on the fat bellies of ignorant slugs who don't even know how to read the Constitution for which it stands. It is printed on ashtrays and wastebaskets and even toilet seats, and even though I've never seen one, it's doubtlessly on spittoons somewhere. Every George Washington's Birthday, and every other day of the year, merchants use the flag to help sell underwear, deodorant, toilet paper and machine guns. The American flag has been so commercialized and is so commonly used to shill by hucksters that burning it sounds clean. And above all, the flag is used by politicians for demagoguery. I would rather see it burned by a passionate protester than exploited by a sleazy politician for

his own cynical ambition.

Twenty years ago, after James Meredith was shot in the back while walking down a Mississippi highway on a lonely civil-rights march, a black man named Sidney Street burned a flag on a Harlem street corner to protest that shooting. If a man could be shot for marching (symbolic political speech, of course) for equal rights, said Street, then we don't need a flag because America's ideals have already gone up in smoke. Did Sidney Street have no right to say that? Did he have no right to think that? Did we have any right to keep him from saying that?

All right, speech is speech and burning a flag is an action. So is sticking out your tongue at the flag. So is shooting the well-known middle finger at the president. So is wearing a black armband on a day called to protest the war in Vietnam. Shall we have a constitutional amendment to stop anyone from holding his nose when the flag goes by?

What is someone who burns the flag saying? "I'm mad at the government, I'm mad at this country, I think there are a lot of things wrongs with it." God Almighty, at least 50 percent of the people are mad at the government at any given time. The most common conversation in the country starts with someone saying, "Did you see what those fools in Washington . . ." Since when can't you criticize the government, since when can't you say there are things

wrong with this country? What do you think freedom means?

Fascism is not a word I like to throw around, but there is something fascistic about these national snits we get into. Perhaps it's because we are so seldom united about much in this country — given our ethnic, religious, political and linguistic diversity. Our constant condition is of that of conflict and tension, all of it underlined by our national habit, when confronted with a problem, of immediately mounting horses and riding off in 360 different directions. So there's something gratifying about finally feeling that everybody, absolutely everybody is finally together on A) hating the Ayatollah B) being mad at Gadhafi C) feeling terrible about American hostages being held in Iran or D) whatever the snit of the month is. It's the same pleasure you get from being part of the crowd that stands up to scream during a football game.

There is a terrible pressure toward conformity during these snits — as though anybody who doesn't agree isn't a loyal American.

Thomas Paine said that true patriotism is refreshed by reference to first principles. One of the principles on which this country was founded — the Founders could not possibly have been more clear about it — was freedom of expression. To limit that freedom because someone burned the symbol of it is crazy. It just makes no sense.

The Battalion

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