

'Small step' for man just as big 20 years after Apollo 11

The miracles of the heavens have been continuous sources of fascination and intrigue for as long as man has possessed the power to speculate. The moon has always held a high place in this speculation, possibly because it is the easiest celestial body to study.

Early civilizations worshipped the moon and built spectacular pyramids in its honor, or maybe in the honor of the "man" residing there. Later, someone even decided that it was made of blue-cheese. When this palatable but not plausible myth passed, others took its place. The fabled dark side of the moon was an excellent gathering point for imaginations worldwide.

In 1961, President John Kennedy began what was to become one of the most amazing single events in scientific history. This project cost \$25 billion, employed more than 300,000 technicians and culminated into what became the first step in the direction of solving the mysteries of space and one of the last steps in the race to reach and understand our moon.

Neal Armstrong, commander of Apollo 11, took this legendary step, or should I say leap, 20 years ago Thursday.

I see this first moonshot as being the most important event of 1969 (with the exception of my birthday, of course). At the time, the United States was in turmoil over Vietnam. This was also the year that Charles Manson decided that the Bible and the Beatles were synonymous and that both instructed him to lead a series of murders beginning with Sharon Tate's. Oh, and who can forget the day at Chappaquiddick when Ed-



Matt McBurnett
Columnist

ward Kennedy forgot to ask Mary Jo Kopechne if she could swim?

It was obvious that the country was not going to rally around its troops in Vietnam. Woodstock, at the time, only captured the fancies of a few individuals. There was nothing present to unify the rapidly growing masses of people discontented with America at home and abroad. Then came Armstrong's step.

Experts estimated that 600 to 700 million people watched Armstrong's fateful footstep. But a select 200 million felt extra warm inside when "the Eagle landed." It was just what the doctor ordered to cure some of America's ills during that tumultuous period. Apollo 11 gave Americans what they desperately needed, something to be happy about.

Though Apollo 11 had a profound effect on America in 1969, its major importance lies in the fact that it was a wonderful triumph of science.

Many people criticize NASA for being an extreme in its waste of money without producing tangible results. I disagree. In this case, the ends do justify the means. When dealing with something such as space that is on such a

grand scale, the stakes are high. I admit that the space program employs means which are expensive and dangerous but the end result is the priceless gift of knowledge.

Knowledge, though intangible, is what originally spawned the development of science. Unfortunately, most of the scientific advances of this century have been for the purpose of business. I certainly am not implying that, without business, scientific advances would not be made. I am simply saying that most of the advances made in science are capitalized upon in the business world, therefore combining the two entities, science and business, into the competitive monster that we see in large corporations of today.

Apollo 11 was different. It was not owned by a large company. No material items inspired Apollo 11's flight. It was put up by the people. The moon, that celestial hub of speculation to people of all ages, was the sole inspiration of the Apollo 11 mission. It, like the six subsequent Apollo missions, was solely inspired by the quest for knowledge, not money. Therein lies the beauty of the space program.

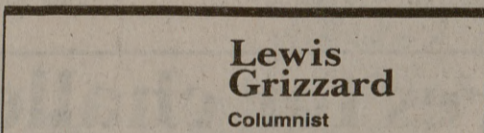
In the wake of Thursday's 20th anniversary of Apollo 11, we should look with pride at the space program. In 1969, Nixon said that the moment Armstrong landed "will stand through the centuries as one supreme human experience." It is supreme, to me, because the space program is one of the few remaining scientific endeavors that has kept its integrity.

Matt McBurnett is a junior electrical engineering major and a columnist for The Battalion.

Sometimes you just have to say NO

THINGS I'LL NEVER DO:

- Jump out of an airplane.
- See another movie starring William Hurt. Seeing "Kiss of the Spider Woman" and "The Accidental Tourist" was my cure.
- Move to New York.
- Forget Mother's Day.
- Jog.
- Buy magazines from some kid who knocks on my door and gives me some song and dance about working his or her way through college.
- Send one dime to a television evangelist.
- Take any of my freedoms for granted, especially the one that allows me to despise any slimeball who desecrates the American flag.



Lewis Grizzard
Columnist

- Wear a cowboy hat.
- Go back to writing sports.
- Eat liver or celery.
- Be caught anywhere near a mobile home during a tornado.
- Watch a soap opera.
- Use cocaine.
- Live to be 90.
- Go less than 55 miles per hour in the passing lane of an interstate highway.
- Order any sort of clothing by mail.
- Say the word "irregardless." It isn't a word.

- Wear an earring or a ponytail.
- Discuss abortion or gun control with anybody who is against either one. I could get hurt.

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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.

Mail Call

Groups misrepresented in cartoon

EDITOR:

I would like to comment on the cartoon by Don Atkinson that ran Wednesday. In the first place, no one can ram amendments down our throats. I find it hard to believe that Mr. Atkinson is unaware of the process through which our Constitution is amended. It is the American people and their representatives who have control over amendments, not President Bush.

Secondly, Tipper Gore is not trying to force her beliefs on anyone, rather she is trying to help concerned parents know the facts about certain lyrics. If Mr. Atkinson doesn't care that his 10-year-old is hearing about the joys of rape and murder, he has a right to ignore the Parents' Music Resource Center. However, he should not take away from others the right to know what their children are hearing.

Third on the hit list were pro-lifers. We are not trying to force our beliefs on anyone. We just want everyone to know the facts concerning the murder of innocent children. You could just as easily show a pro-choicer holding a sign that says "Nobody's body belongs to the mother."

The final group to be ridiculously misrepresented was the Supreme Court. Rather than forcing its beliefs on us with its abortion decisions, the Supreme Court is doing exactly the opposite. All they did was give the American people the right to put their own beliefs into law.

In none of these instances are many Americans in danger of having one group force his or her beliefs on them. The only "danger" is that this democracy in America will actually function as a democracy where the people as a whole make decisions through the ballot box. If that scares Mr. Atkinson so much, perhaps he would prefer living in a totalitarian state.

Tara Knapp '91

Column wrongly denounces Court ruling

EDITOR:

Recently, several articles and cartoons have appeared in this paper that denounce the *Battalion's* Editorial Board is for abortion on demand.

Sadly, they argued from emotion rather than reason and in the process missed several important points out.

First, the central question the abortion issue is built around is "When does life begin?" This is a question that only society, through society's government, can answer. No civilized society ever has allowed individuals the right to have his or her own answers to such questions.

Why? Because it would create anarchy. I may decide that by my definition life has not yet begun. Do I then have an inherent right to kill you?

Another point that has been missing from these pages is what the role of the Supreme Court is. Like many pro-choicers, Timm Doolen and Matt McBurnett had convulsions when the Court handed down its *Webster vs. Missouri* ruling last week and they wrote a column denouncing it. It is astounding how anyone can write an entire editorial about a Supreme Court decision without once mentioning the Constitution. But isn't the Supreme Court's job to interpret the Constitution and remain silent where the Constitution is silent?

In the Court's written opinions, none of the majority said abortion is wrong. It should be made illegal. They simply gave indication, which they will likely find next year, that they do not believe the Constitution addresses the issue and that legislators elected by the people should decide when life begins rather than unelected judges who must be deaf to the will of the people.

The American people will decide when life begins in the years to come. When they do, let's hope they use reason and open-mindedness to reach their decisions rather than the emotional drivel that has become all too prevalent in our paper.

Scot Kibbe '90

Editor's note: Opinions expressed by columnists and cartoonists are those of the individual, not necessarily those of The Battalion Editorial Board. Opinions of the Editorial Board are designated as such.

Some rights are sacred for all

EDITOR:

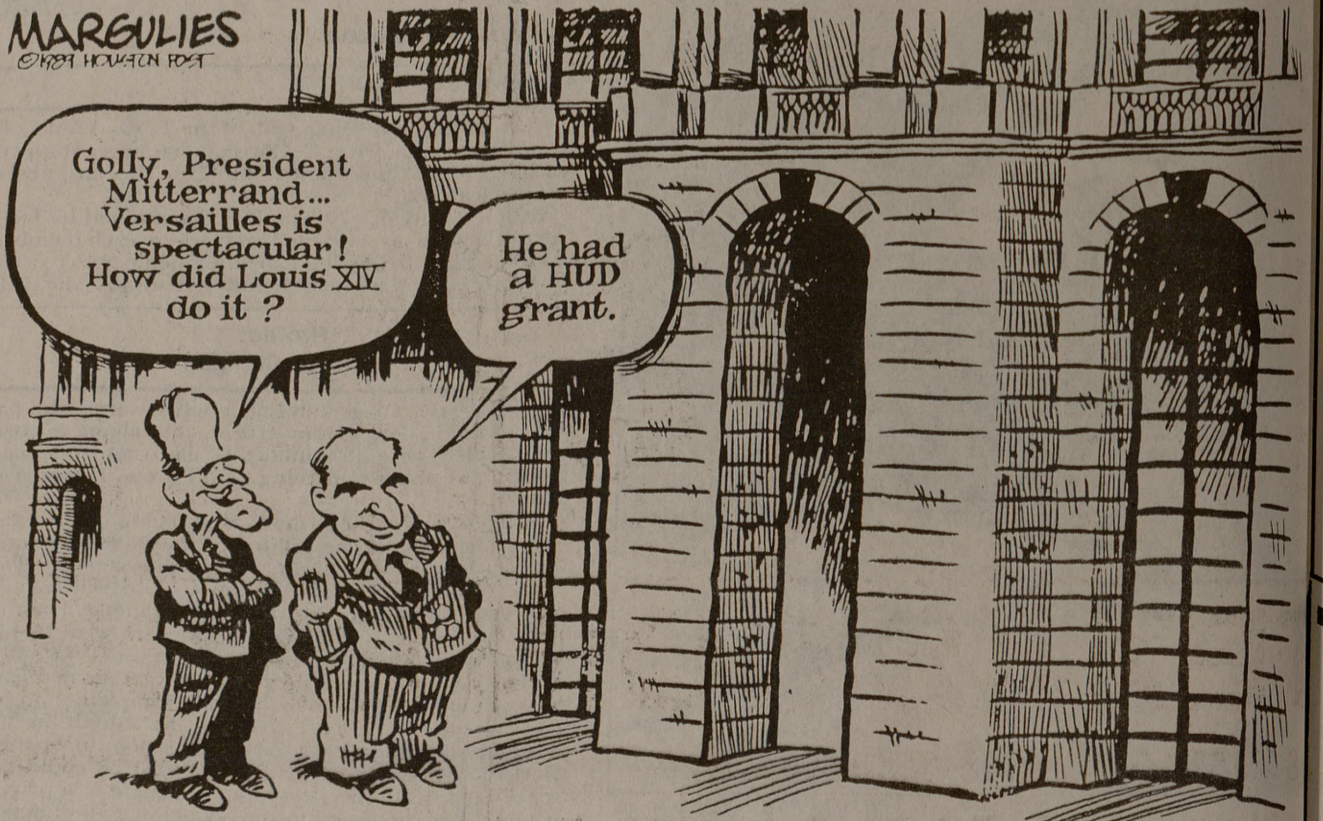
Mike Ternus is not the only person to serve in the military! Some have died not for the country, the flag or for any such bogus statements. They served and died because they had NO CHOICE! They "got a letter in the mail, go to war or to jail!" (as the song goes.)

I spent two long, boring and overpaid years in a service that had no IDEA about our flag was there or really cared. Most of the people I knew joined because they needed the money. Almost every person I met wanted the free room and board plus \$800 a month. (Nothing to cry about.) Yet the freedoms we proclaim as so valuable are stripped away by the service.

The people complaining outside your compound, Mike, may have had some reason that you never bothered to learn about. Americans are always correct, at least in our own eyes, and sometimes it takes a few of the trampled masses to bring a flag or throw some rocks just to get our attention. America is not my country, wrong or right! It is a place I want to help make better by using my rights. We all share these sacred rights but when we use them, someone says they don't belong to us. These sacred rights are not only for those who served but those we served for in this and all countries.

Paul Normandin '84

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.



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