

Mail Call

Don't burn the hell outta the cows!

EDITOR:

Every year someone proposes to move bonfire, as Scot Walker did in his Sept. 18 column. I agree that bonfire poses a fire hazard in its present location. However, the vague solution of moving bonfire "across the tracks" to somewhere on all that "undeveloped land over there" is *not* a solution at all.

I cannot think of a single acre between the tracks and 2818 that isn't put to use. The "undeveloped land" that is always mentioned as a new site for bonfire happens to be the classrooms for the College of Agriculture (Remember what the A in A&M stands for?). Agriculture must be taught in a practical situation. It cannot be taught by books alone.

In addition to serving as a teaching facility, the land is used to raise a variety of domestic and exotic animals, crops are raised to feed these animals, new experimental crops are grown, new pesticides are field tested and the land is used for even more. Just because land does not have a building on it does not mean it is undeveloped or unused.

Moving the traditional bonfire to a place where bonfire presents less of a safety hazard is a good idea. However, the question is where should bonfire move to? Perhaps this is the major reason why our University administration will not discuss moving the bonfire site.

Donna J. Wallace
Vet Student

Parking on bonfire site?

EDITOR:

This is regarding the editorial about the bonfire site on Monday, Sept. 18.

I completely agree with Scot Walker. Bonfire is an imposing fire hazard and it should be moved across the tracks.

There is, however, another reason why bonfire should be moved. Bonfire has on reserve a large vacant lot (the bonfire site) that could be turned into a much-needed parking lot. Texas A&M boasts of being one of the largest campuses in the nation, as far as acreage is concerned. Well, let's put those acres to use and move bonfire to that undeveloped land across the tracks, away from business and residential areas.

This way the present bonfire site can be turned into a parking lot for all of the off-campus students whose parking spaces were given to the increasing number of on-campus students.

Vivian Rojas '90

Thanks from our Chinese friends

EDITOR:

After the June 4 Beijing Massacre, the China Club (the Association of Chinese Students and Scholars at Texas A&M University) established a "friends of Chinese students foundation" and several donation-collecting stations in an effort to raise money to help the families of our brothers and sisters who laid down their lives for China's democratic movement.

Since June 6, a total of \$8,815.96 has been collected, including \$2,000 from the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station. The China Club wishes to express its sincere gratitude to those American friends and other friends of Chinese students for their moral and financial support. The warm hands you stretched out to Chinese students greatly helped ease their suffering and sorrow and made them aware that they are not alone in the struggle for democracy and freedom, thus strengthening their resolution to strive for final victory.

Chinese students and scholars at A&M held a meeting on July 8. At the meeting, a five-member executive committee, whose duty is to take care of the fund and send it to the families of Beijing Massacre victims, was elected. Another committee has been formed to supervise the work of the executive committee; and some regulations have been established to ensure proper use of the fund.

Due to the current situation in China, it may take years before this fund can be safely sent to those who need it. With all the difficulties ahead, we Chinese students and scholars are determined to fulfill this task, and also aid China's democratic movement.

Tianhan Xue
China Club

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.

Adam says 'real' student body holds key to A&M's future

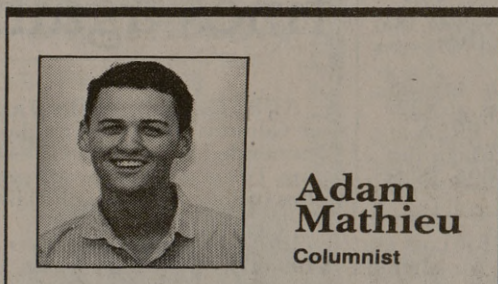
There has been an avalanche of interest in traditions lately. Because of an abundance of well-publicized attacks, many are concerned about the status of certain traditions at Texas A&M. There have been articles bashing bonfire and others questioning the sanctity of the Corps. People have expressed dismay that individuals can hold these opinions at good ol' A&M.

I do not see these as isolated attacks, but as an indication of the changing composition of the University. I also believe that the voices behind these attacks will control campus policy within a few years.

I resent the way the Corps persistently bullies the rest of the student population. This desperate group has attempted to manipulate the thoughts of the student body as it did in the 1940s. However, in 1984, the Corps represented a paltry 5.7 percent of the total University population. This was part of a 10-year decline from 10 percent in 1974. I do not believe that there has been a significant increase in Corps enrollment since that time.

However, fraternity and sorority enrollment has increased tremendously in the last 10 years. By conservative estimates, today there are approximately 3,000 Greeks at this University, which amounts to about 7.5 percent of the population.

Only a small percentage of Corps members actually use the Corps as a first step to a military career. For the rest, it is essentially a social support structure. The difficult initiation draws the individuals together. They live and socialize with the others who endured it. They profit from the superior experience of older members. In short, they belong to the Corps for many of the



Adam Mathieu
Columnist

same reasons that other people belong to fraternities and sororities. The only difference is that Corps members pay for their membership with a loss of personal freedom and time, while those in sororities and fraternities pay with actual money.

Both the Corps and the Greek groups are organizations of roughly similar people with roughly similar aims, and I think that the analogy between them is both reasonable and accurate. However, campus opinion is most clearly opposed to those in Greek organizations assuming the dominant role in student life. In essence, the Corps is simply a large, co-ed fraternity. Why, then, should we allow one large, co-ed fraternity, the Corps, to control virtually every occurrence on this campus?

There are Corps members on television. There are Corps members on this University's prospectus. There is not a sporting or university-life event the Corps does not dominate.

How does this large fraternity retain the authority to govern this campus?

The answer is one simple word: tradition. Texas A&M could easily maintain tradition in the "Ol' Army" days, because there was a relatively static, homogeneous population. Members of the same families came here, as did people

from the same areas with similar backgrounds and similar amounts of money. Monotonous? The entire course of student life was monotonous and simple to control.

There is now a joy to this school that lies in its newfound diversity. Women constitute roughly 41 percent of the student body. The minority and international enrollments are increasing. The percentage of graduate students increased one-half of a percentage point last year. A&M ranks in the top 10 in research grants, total endowments and incoming National Merit Scholars. The purpose of this list of statistics and trends is simple. People are coming to A&M for educational reasons.

There are a large number of people who are totally unaware of the old traditions. This is not bad. Many traditions will be retained with all of the old fervor. Many will not. If this new, dynamic group loses interest in a tradition, then let it die. The good ones will be retained and bad ones will be replaced. Traditions are at one time made. The time has come for the real student body, what we now call "non-regs," to decide for itself what the future holds for Texas A&M.

Adam Mathieu is a senior chemistry major and a columnist for The Battalion.

Mattox: from political pussy cat to polecat

Texas political folks were holy-cowin' and gee-whizzin' up a storm all weekend over the results of the new Richard Murray poll for the Houston Chronicle that puts Jim Mattox a dim and distant third in the Democratic gubernatorial primary, behind both Ann Richards and Mark White.



Molly Ivins
Syndicated Columnist

Murray, the state's most-respected pollster, puts Richards at 35 percent, White at 23 and Mattox at eight percent, with 25 percent undecided. A poll taken this far out is not usually much of an indicator of how a political race will turn out — it reflects mostly name recognition — but as Murray himself said, "These are very bad numbers for someone as well-known as the attorney general." And they should help Richards' fund-raising efforts considerably well.

Mike Sharlot of the University of Texas Law School predicted that Mattox's reaction to the bad news would be "No more Mr. Nice Guy." A bet placed on that premise is likely to be a sound investment. Now we get to watch Mattox get mean, and he ain't been playing patty-cake to this point.

A smarter move for the A.G. would be to take a chunk of that big war chest he's got and to put a bunch of ads making him look cuddly all over television. Of course, when Mattox is being amiable, his resemblance to Buddy Hackett becomes even more noticeable.

In a coda to last week's Mattox-inspired flap over the alleged spy allegedly planted in his campaign by some minion of the opposition, a group of about 30 Ann Richards campaign workers went to have lunch in the Chinese restaurant in Austin at which the alleged spying occurred. They were all cleverly disguised in identical Groucho Marx nose-glasses-and-eyebrows masks and they slunk into the restaurant surreptitiously so hardly anyone noticed them at all, really.

On the Republican side, the Murray Poll puts Kent Hance well ahead with 33 percent, Clayton Williams at 12 percent, Jack Rains and Tom Luce way behind, but with a much larger pool of undecideds — 51 percent. That reads like a name-recognition list.

On to other matters, the power of the press is seldom evident in an "A-causes-B" sense — and there is even a persuasive case to be made that the press doesn't actually have much power, but every now and then, cause-and-effect is too obvious to overlook and, so let us pause to salute the Austin American-Statesman for the recently-announced retirement of State Rep Stan Schlueter of Killeen, easily the most-feared member of the Texas House for the past few sessions.

Bagged him, is what the Statesman did. That's one they can put right up on their wall. The paper has been running

a series of articles about just who among our very fine state lawmakers has been living high on the money in their campaign funds — especially those, like Schlueter, who have never even had an opponent.

The morning after the first article appeared, federal agents — IRs according to sources, Treasury according to others — were in the Secretary of State's office crawling all over Schlueter's campaign-contribution records. Schlueter announced his retirement a few days later, attributing it to his concern for his two young sons. "I need to spend more time with them," said Schlueter, who was divorced four years ago. "That's No. 1, primo reason." And, he added, "I've got to get out and start making a living."

Not to take anything away from Schlueter's affection for his kids, but what we have here is hardly a coincidence of timing.

The Dallas Morning News managed to publish a farewell interview with Schlueter, full of what Billy Wayne Clayton would call "heart-rendering quotes about his concern for his children, without ever mentioning the proximate cause of his resignation.

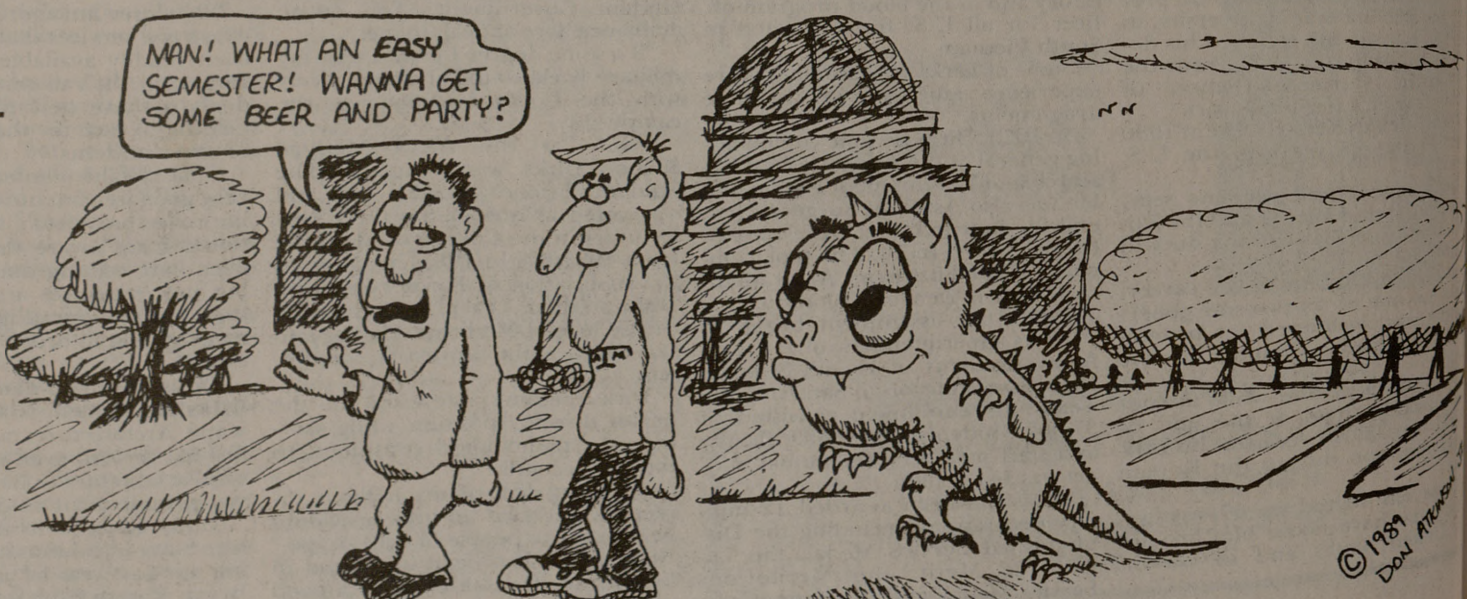
Lest you think the lobby is despondent about the impending retirement of such a true-blue pal of theirs as Schlueter, comes word from the ungrateful members of the Third House that many of them are not in the least unhappy to see Schlueter go, on account they were tired of getting hit up by the guy.

In fairness to Schlueter, it should be noted that he was always one of the brightest and most able members of the House, and as chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, he three times performed the most thankless task in all of government, writing tax increase bills, in 1984, 1986 and 1987. Since he is about to depart, I pass in silence over the rest of his record.

In other news, the funniest reaction to the Statesman's series on who uses campaign funds for living expenses came from poor Bill Haley of Center, new state senator who may have managed accidentally to violate a state law while proceeding in what he thought was good faith.

Haley, who has an East Texas accent thick enough to cover a parking lot, said he put down the first article in the series and announced to his wife, "May-r, are real nice folks, but we are going jay-il."

UNAWARE, THE "HAPPY-GO-LUCKY" STUDENTS DID NOT SEE THE DREADED "FIRST EXAM" MONSTER SNEAKING UP ON THEM UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE...



The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

Member of
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Conference

The Battalion Editorial Board

Scot Walker, Editor
Wade See, Managing Editor
Juliette Rizzo, Opinion Page Editor
Fiona Soltes, City Editor
Ellen Hobbs, Chuck Squatriglia,
News Editors
Tom Kehoe, Sports Editor
Jay Janner, Art Director
Dean Sueltenfuss, Lifestyles Editor

Editorial Policy

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

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.