

Ireland Street needs Keep Christianity out of politics a few improvements

The chaotic flow of traffic on Ireland Street is creating a dangerous situation for pedestrians, bicyclists and motor vehicles. The Department of Parking, Transit and Traffic Services needs to implement a better plan to accommodate all those who use the street.

The heavy inbound flow of traffic has generated congestion as students and vehicles try to squeeze past each other. Those on bicycles cannot ride north in the street because traffic flow is one-way south. Bicyclists cannot ride on the east sidewalk because of the masses of students, and they cannot ride on the west side either, because it is devoid of ramps. The Department should definitely take into consideration the addition of a bicycle lane.

Also, something needs to be done to alleviate the confusion caused at the intersection of Ireland and Ross streets, where pedestrians, shuttle buses and bicyclists converge in a swirling mass of confusion.

The serious conflict between pedestrians and vehicles that existed before the parking garage was built and the street was rerouted hasn't been lessened but may have intensified to the point where someone may be seriously injured unless some action is taken to remedy this dangerous situation.

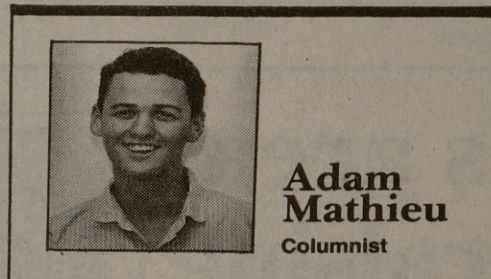
The Battalion Editorial Board

I have received a large number of letters about my article on the need for homosexual rights. They have taken three forms: general letter of support, letters berating me for my support of an issue that is so absolutely immoral and letters that expressed general contempt for me and all my ideas.

I would like to address the second type of letter, those that implicitly state that Christian morality should shape American policy.

The first amendment to the United States Constitution states that, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." I know there are many subtle interpretations of this amendment, and I am not going to explore these because of a certain ignorance about Constitutional law. But I do feel justified in saying that basing national policy on one religion's doctrine is in violation of this amendment. Clearly, this is exactly the kind of religious intervention that the framers of the Constitution wanted to avoid.

I feel that one of the great myths surrounding American identity is that this nation is a special Christian nation, ordained by God to set world morality. Again, history tells us this is false. Most of the framers of the Constitution began their intellectual development during the Age of Reason. The focus of this huge movement was on science and experimentation. It was marked by a rejection of mystic ideals. Certainly a great part of classical religious thought



Adam Mathieu
Columnist

is based on mysticism. As a result, many of the intellectuals of this era, some of whom composed the Constitution, rejected classical religion and embraced other, non-Christian religions. The argument that all of these people were good Christians is clearly a myth.

There is an additional problem to letting the beliefs of one religion dominate the character of the entire nation, and that problem is the presence of other religions. The *Statistical Abstract of the United States* states that only about 54 percent of all people in the United States belong to Christian religions. A full 46 percent of this nation, or 113 million people, do not belong to a Christian religion. How can we discriminate against this huge group of people? They have the right, according to the Constitution, to believe as they wish without being politically oppressed by another religion's doctrines. Everyone must have the right to believe as he or she wishes.

I am not writing this column as an attack on Christianity or on the people who practice it. I am writing this col-

umn because the infusion of Christianity into national government is destructive to political progress. Many people used (and in many areas continue to use) the Bible as a means of justifying discrimination against blacks. It is used, as every reader of this paper saw, as a means of justifying discrimination against homosexuals. People have used the Bible to suppress important scientific developments, including, in this day, the brand-new theory of evolution).

Orthodox Christian beliefs continue to hinder action on important national issues. We have difficulty constructing an effective solution to the drug problem because of the persistent belief that drugs are evil. We cannot help curb the spread of AIDS because of a Christian unwillingness to legalize prostitution. Many good plans are squashed by religious puritanism.

I do not believe that all of the problems in the United States today are a direct result of orthodox Christianity. Simply believe these people have a strong voice. I also wish Christians would forget these moronic idealistic petty morality. They should embrace the more fundamental doctrines: kindness to the less fortunate and one's foes. Government created these ideals would be extremely different. These people should forsake the sickening piety and concentrate on a rather beautiful tenets of their faith.

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

Mail Call

Be careful out there

EDITOR:

I have some concerns about life at Texas A&M and in College Station. There is a traffic problem on Ross and Ireland streets. Every day students stream across the streets seemingly oblivious to the cars and buses that are also on the roads. On many occasions I have been on buses that were forced to suddenly stop because someone did not notice the bus. (They're really so hard to miss, aren't they?)

Come on A&M — use the crosswalks or at least cross the streets when a car or bus isn't practically less than a few inches away from you.

Trudi Gilfillian '93

Chivalry not dead at A&M

EDITOR:

This letter was inspired by Todd Stone's article on "The Challenge of Manhood" in last Monday's edition.

It appears that many women at Texas A&M believe that the men on this campus are only interested in quenching their thirst for physical satisfaction. While I must admit there are a few who fall into this category, they definitely do not represent every male on campus.

Believe it or not, ladies, there is still such a thing as an old-fashioned gentleman here at A&M. Many of us attempt to live up to the "soldier, statesman and knightly gentleman" standard every day. I just wish that we would be given more of a chance to show it.

Those of us who follow this lifestyle really do enjoy long talks, holding hands, walks in the park, and just spending time with someone special. A hug or a kiss is meant to convey affection, not to arouse for an evening of sex. Unfortunately, many women choose to think we are always after something more.

I am certain that I share this frustration with many men (and possibly some women) on campus. Ladies, all we ask is a chance to show our true colors.

Chivalry is not dead at A&M, we just wear a different kind of armour now.

Russell J. Murie Jr. '90

Blame victim, not perpetrator

EDITOR:

A Florida jury acquitted Steven Lord of rape, because the victim "asked for it by the way she was dressed," said jury foreman Roy Diamond. Roy, did she ask to be attacked at knife-point? As long as juries blame the victim rather than the perpetrator, it is no wonder that so many violent crimes go unreported. I pray that this wrong-headed decision does not set a precedent for the rape and assault charges Lord now faces in Georgia.

Mark Oakland
Graduate student

Cutting corners wastes grass

EDITOR:

Walking around our campus I've noticed something that has been bothering me and I felt I had to express my opinion.

It's about the shortcut paths made through the grass and designated green areas (the spots of trees and bushes on campus). Readers may be asking, "Why is this student concerned about this trivial thing?" I'll reply by saying that as it is with the construction of more buildings on campus, the amount of greenery on campus is already shrinking. And if we continue to make our own shortcuts, nothing will be left but dirt paths.

There are several reasons we should stay off of the grass: (1) to show pride for our impressive campus, (2) because the sidewalks are there for us to trample on and (3) because it just isn't aesthetically pleasing to see dirt paths instead of grass. If you don't believe me, just look at the "greenery" in back of the Pavilion, on the south side of Harrington Tower and in front of G. Rollie White.

I realize that at times it seems as if we walk all day, but what would it take to go 3 feet further around the grassy areas? After all, we treat the grass surrounding the MSC with respect, why not treat green lots the same way?

Adrienne Yurdyga '89

Culture has place in history

The media, through the press, television and history books, has led American society to accept what is available and take it as fact. Research over the years has proven to correct some of the wrongs society has taken for fact about black history.

History has neglected some of the facts surrounding black history and its positive points. The key individuals in black history such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Nat Turner and Malcom X have been exploited as if they were the only Negroes to have successfully entered the history books with an impact on future generations.

These subjects only scratch the surface about the true innovations black and Hispanic inventors and politicians have made in America. We as a nation have been robbed of many rich cultures such as the Mexican-American culture as well as the Asiatic-African culture.

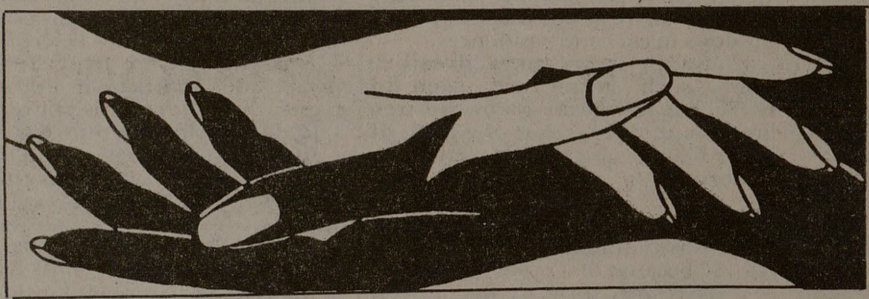
History itself has deprived Hispanics and Negroes of some of their past history by secluding evidence of achievement from the masses. This includes Benjamin Banneker, Granville T. Woods and the great medical discoverer, Dr. Charles Drew. These individuals made great contributions to the world, but people of their own race cannot identify them.

Is the history of minorities important to only minorities? From our history books we acquire knowledge about cultures other than our own. In a sense, we must identify our own culture before we can learn about others.



Curtis Franks
Guest Columnist

As a black individual, I've experienced a culture shock at Texas A&M. I find it difficult to identify with my roots when I'm exposed to a campus that is predominantly white. Trying to cope with the sense of an unheard voice has effects on all minority stu-



dents. This is why minority student groups are at the forefront of the battle to gain a more powerful voice that will influence activities on campus.

The Black Awareness Committee and the Committee for the Awareness of Mexican-American Culture are sometimes thought to be specifically for those of ethnic background. Many students identify these student organizations with their cultural affiliations, but in reality their purpose is to serve everyone. The groups are specifically defined to be open to all interested students, regardless of race. Maybe it's an absence of concern on the students' behalf, but when it's left up to the specified ethnic group, the purpose of educating other races is lost due to lack of involvement.

A major cause of racism is a lack of understanding about another's cultural

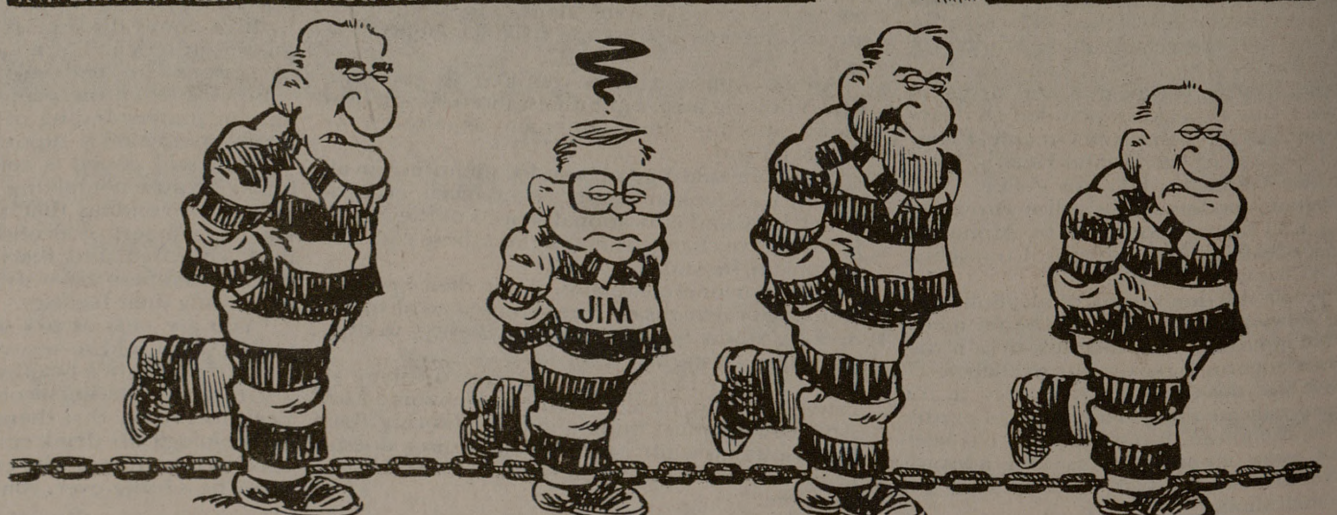
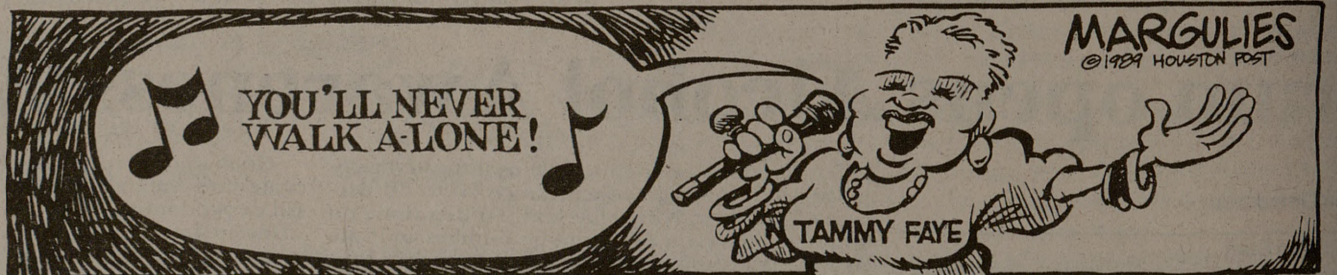
heritage. Myths about what other groups can and cannot do in terms of mental capacity destroy the gains in progress.

Tremendous advancements in racial equality have been made in general, but in specific areas of society, we have a way to go. One specific area, the classroom, lacks the types of subjects and material to satisfy the growing number of minorities across America. Teaching methods are sometimes biased against the learning styles of minorities, which makes class material difficult to learn.

The civil rights movement has helped make peoples of this nation accept the progress of minorities and their achievements. As the '90s approach, the figures of minorities in America look bright. The subject of affirmative action has arisen as a reverse discrimination issue. The opinions on this issue may vary, but with a rising number of minorities in all areas of society, we productive citizens must assume roles of leadership in this country, and affirmative action allows us to do so.

Whether progress continues to increase or declines, all groups have contributed significantly to make America what it is today. Sometimes we neglect to learn about other cultures because they don't directly affect us, but the truth shows us that the contributions made to the world are colorless.

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