

Beware of Mr. Chicken

Minors who drink need to stop and think

You're standing next to the pinball machines, out of the way, trying to be inconspicuous. You quickly glance around the room as you joke with your friends about surviving last night's drunken stupor. Ever so smoothly with your (left) hand you pick up the long-neck your buddy bought you and take a fast gulp while no one is paying attention. Or at least you hope no one is.

You're at the Dixie Chicken drinking beer, and you're not 21. Imagine that.

You manage to down one beer without being caught and boy does that feel good. You let out a small belch to show your satisfaction for your great accomplishment.

Nothing to it, just like your friends said, "You'll never get caught. The Chicken is the place to go and drink if you're underaged. And, if you do get caught, just tell them you lost your ID or something. It's that simple."

After two or three more beers you loosen up and decide to wander around. While discussing plans to leave with the person you accidentally spilled beer upon, someone taps you indignantly on the shoulder. Angry that you've been interrupted just as things were moving so smoothly, you flash a disgusted glance backwards.

Ahhh! Horror of horrors! It's the little dweeb with the round glasses, the one you're supposed to be watching out for. You're **busted**.

Your pulse quickens as he asks for you to show him a stamp on your hand or your ID to prove you're 21. You break out in a sweat, but cleverly come up with an answer for him. "Uh, I wasn't drinking it, I was just holding it for my friend," you confidently tell him.

Monique Threadgill

Guest Columnist

The voice bellows again, "Excuse me, if you don't have a stamp I need to see your ID, even if you weren't drinking." You look at him with amazement.

"I don't have it with me, I left it at home because I came here with a friend," you tell him. Whew! That sounded pretty believable, you tell yourself.

He looks at you with that 'Do you think I just fell off the turnip truck yesterday?' kind of look and tells you to follow him.

Your heart sinks down into your stomach as you sheepishly follow behind him, hoping he might lose you in the crowd. He heads behind the bar. **Not behind the bar**, you think to yourself. Everyone and their dog will see you.

As you tromp through the muck on the floor behind the bar, looking down in hopes that no one is watching, you hear loud voices screaming, "Ooh. Busted!" and "Have fun going to see the big man upstairs!"

The big man? Upstairs? At this point you begin to realize you may be in a little bit of trouble.

"Well, what have we here?" a powerful voice calls out as you enter the office. A grey-haired, round-bellied man sits in front of you with his big Reeboks propped up on the desk, flicking through television channels. So, this must be Mr. Chicken.

He intimidatingly asks you for your driver's license, and out of the blue it mysteriously appears in your pocket, in

spite of the fact that you told the manager you didn't have it with you. Mr. Chicken begins to inquisition you about the beer you had.

You lean on his desk and plead with him to believe you weren't drinking it, you were just holding it for your friend.

Without even glancing your direction he yells, "Don't lean on my desk. Sit down on that box over there and shut up until I pull your chain and want you to talk!"

You sit down on the box and wait for your interrogation to continue. He keeps on watching TV and you wonder if he even remembers you're sitting there.

About 10 or 15 minutes later, he acknowledges your presence once again.

"Are you aware that according to Texas law you don't have to be DRINKING the alcohol? You only have to be touching it," he tells you. "That's what minor in POSSESSION means."

Oh dear, you hadn't thought of it that way, had you?

Next he insults your intelligence, your family, the way you're dressed or possibly all of the above. You feel about two inches tall and all you can do is stare at the floor. A chill runs through you as you realize that you're sitting on a wooden box with a glass front that is actually a home for a snake — a big snake.

To make things worse, all of this intimidation and embarrassment is conducted in front of an office full of people he calls his "chronies."

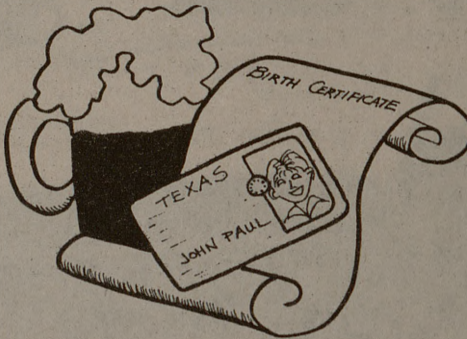
He proceeds to inform you that in all reality he should call the police and have them give you a ticket for \$68.50.

He leaves you alone to ponder this thought for a while.

You think about it and decide it would be best if you just "suck it up," admit you were drinking and apologize to him.

"Sir, I'm really sorry. I'm not old enough to be drinking and I won't do it again," you say.

He looks at you to see if he can detect the slightest bit of sincerity in your face. If so, he lectures you a little while longer on the laws of underaged drinking and lets you know that whoever bought you the drink could be arrested



and taken to jail for contributing to the delinquency of minors on a licensed premise.

By now you're completely humiliated and all you want to do is get out of there.

He tells you that although he doesn't agree that the drinking age should be 21, he has no choice but to abide by the law, and neither do you. He urges you to continue to visit the Chicken, but in order to keep him in business and you out of trouble, you'll have to just enjoy the atmosphere with a coke until you're 21.

"That's it, you can go," he says. "See ya' later."

Well, it's over. You survived being busted at the Chicken and now you go back downstairs and tell all your friends what a jerk he is and how you managed to weezele your way out of a ticket. Smart cookie, aren't you?

O.K., the "Being Busted at the Dixie Chicken Scenario" is over. Now I just want to say a few things to those of you who have gone through this wonderful experience, or will be blessed with it in the future.

Did you ever think of telling your friends what *really* happened while you were up there? You couldn't possibly admit that he intimidated the hell out of you, that you feared for your life that if you got a ticket your parents would kill you and that actually he was pretty civil and understanding?

No? I didn't think so. You would look like a wimp. Well, I don't blame you. I just hope you realize that YOU were in the wrong, not him.

He could very easily have called the police, gotten you a ticket and had your partner-in-crime sent to jail. (These two things, by the way, are probably what the police would prefer.) But, he didn't. He let you off with about 30 minutes of humiliating interrogation and a great story to tell all your friends.

This is just an example of one bar in College Station, but the laws are the same all over Texas.

I'm not going to tell you I never drank when I wasn't old enough, or that you shouldn't. But, if you feel you are mature enough to drink when LEGALLY you're not old enough to and you get caught, you should be mature enough to suffer the consequences.

Monique Threadgill is a senior journalism major and assistant news editor for The Battalion.

Clearing up misconceptions about homosexuality

I write in response to the recent discussion of homosexuality in *The Battalion* on behalf of the local gay community as represented by the signatures attached. Also attached are supporting signatures from some heterosexuals who feel strongly that discrimination against gays is wrong.

I would like to thank Mr. Mathieu for taking the initiative in proclaiming his pro stance on the gay issue in human rights. Not many people will do that. I hope that more of those people who support us will be willing to vocalize their views in the future. I also thank Juliette Rizzo, Opinion Page Editor, for her patience in dealing with the flood of articles and other evidence of opinion submitted to her in the last few days. Finally, I appreciate that Prof. L.M. Smith seems to have minimally researched this topic before discussing it. Some people don't. The other rebuttals, for instance, are so laden with misinformation and faulty logic that I am compelled to present this article to provide a clearer, more accurate view of the gay community.

First of all, religion is probably the single most likely source of anti-gay sentiment, and it need not be. Addressing Christianity in particular, I'll start by saying several prominent religious figures throughout history have been gay — including both Popes and Saints. Also, many texts that people use against us are either mistranslated (the original words having little or even nothing to do with the word 'gay' today) or part of the Old Law rendered inapplicable with the coming of Christ. Similar laws, for example, would prohibit wearing today's cotton/polyester

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Guest Columnist

blends, allowing women to pray in church with men and interbreeding cattle. Furthermore, if homosexuality is such a great evil (as many modern Christians seem to indicate by their knee-jerk reaction just to the discussion of this topic), then why did Jesus Christ never speak **EVEN ONE WORD** about it?

In regard to psychology, I'm sure there are indeed professionals who still see homosexuality as a 'pathological condition' as Smiths says. But are these 'traditional psychologists' in the poll he mentioned the same ones who think Freud's theories are the final statement on human psychology? The *DSM-IIIr*, the definitive reference in the field of psychology, does not list homosexuality as a condition requiring treatment. But contending with a sexuality that you don't share is a significant stress that 'straights' don't have to suffer through. People should be careful not to make crude generalizations about the overall mental condition of gays while ignoring this fact.

I wonder how well heterosexuals would fare if they suddenly found themselves forced to adapt to a homosexual lifestyle because of a change in cultural values. Popular opinion is certainly no source of justice in such matters. Witness the atrocities committed by the Church during the Dark Ages and the Inquisition or the abuses of political power during the Holocaust. These are not rare, disconnected

events. History is riddled with such incidents.

All significant minorities must be recognized. Civil wars and rebellions result when any authority threatens the identity of any group of people. In America, women and blacks have already proclaimed their freedom from the white male's dominance. The gay rights movement, however, is much younger than either of these two, and it owes much to both.

For gays, the Stonewall Rebellion in 1969 marks the time when we openly resisted arrest in New York and then rioted for three days to demonstrate our refusal to recognize laws prohibiting homosexual conduct.

Many of the rebuttals in *The Battalion* also seemed to imply a relation between homosexuality and AIDS. Again I must caution that it was only in this country that HIV infection first showed up primarily in the gay male community (and this percentage is decreasing). Worldwide, HIV shows no such discrimination. It is simply a virus. To claim otherwise is to ignore reality.

Finally, I find bestiality and pedophilia both to be terrible degradations of sexuality and human nature. Rape is also horrifying. But homosexuality has nothing to do with these activities. One cannot say these things have any closer

relation to homosexuality than to heterosexuality; they do not and neither do lying, stealing, prostitution, drug abuse, the Fall of Rome, or the eventual self-annihilation of our sun. I suggest David Brooks, Professor Smith and people like them determine what their own prejudices are before laying claim to knowledge about what it means to be a homosexual.

Unfortunately, the only ones who can know firsthand what it means to be gay are people who are themselves gay. Although it is roughly estimated that 10 percent of the population is homosexual, some people will still persist in believing they do not know anyone who is gay and will never have to face this issue again after reading this article. It is for these people especially that I now present what the gay community would like to tell you about itself that may seldom be accurately presented in the news:

We are many people. Moreover, we are people that you know. A few of us, you know about. Most of us, you don't. Many of us would like to be honest with you but fear your rejection. We hide our identity for our own protection.

We are agnostic, Catholic, Baptist, Jewish, Muslim, Taoist and atheist. We are Republican, Democratic and non-political. We are single and we are mar-

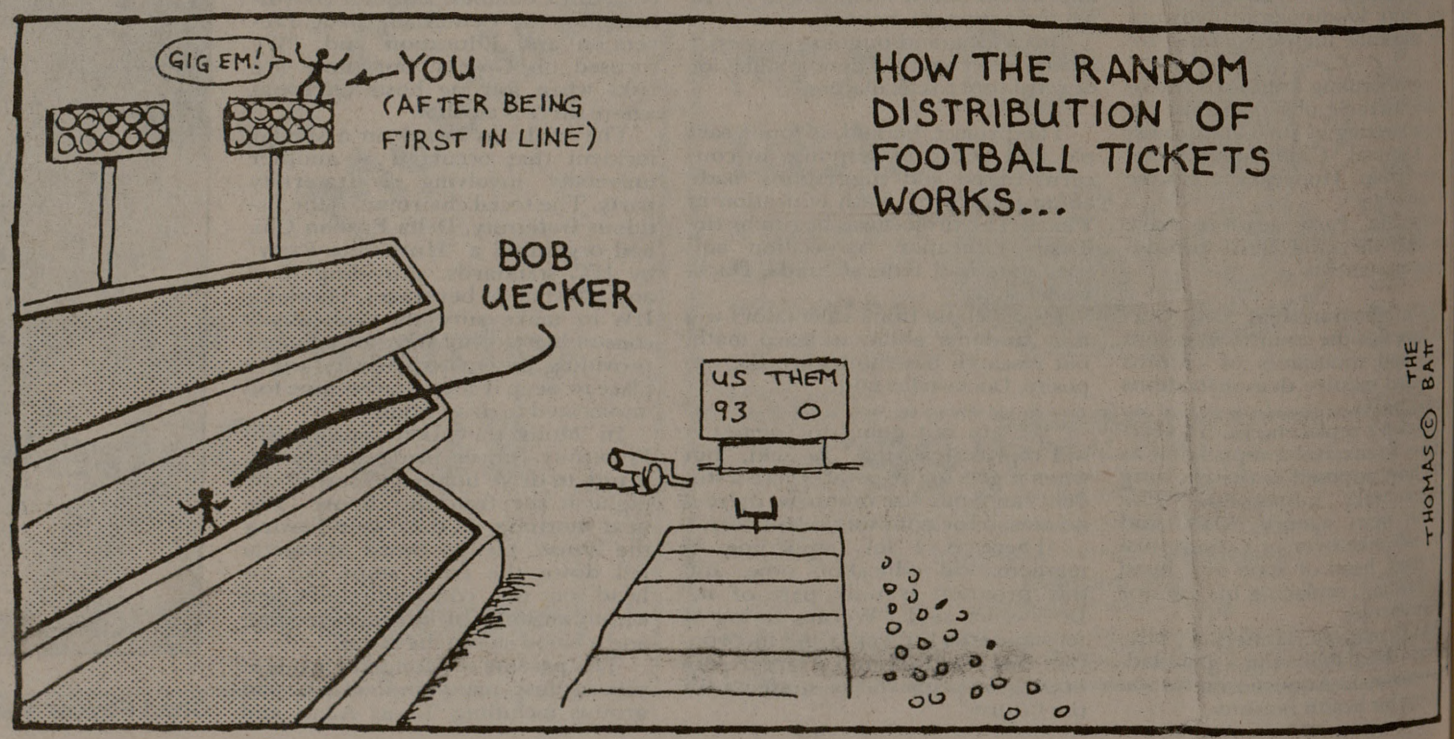
ried (perhaps previously in a straight relationship, perhaps now in a gay relationship). We are children to our parents. We are parents to our children. We are scientists, politicians, artists, military personnel, programmers, religious figures, poets and blue-collar workers. We are white, brown and black. We are American, Oriental, Indian, African, Hispanic and European.

More than anything else, however, we are people who want the same things out of our lives that you want out of yours. We ask for the equal opportunity to pursue happiness in our lives, perhaps in a loving, adult relationship. We fight for decriminalization in states that have laws against certain sexual acts, laws that many heterosexual couples may violate also.

You already know us as your friends, just not as your gay friends. Think of that fact before you blithely condemn us as the misfits and throwaways so often depicted by Hollywood. We are as diverse as any group of people can be.

We merely ask that you accept us as we are.

Terry Walker is a junior philosophy major and President of Gay Student Services. This column was accompanied by 31 signatures.



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