

Be smart: do not believe everything you read

Hullabaloo! magazine's printing of bogus parking coupons was a reckless and irresponsible act that inconvenienced many students and the Department of Parking, Transit and Traffic Services. The ad also may have damaged Hullabaloo!'s credibility, a quality that all reputable publications strive to maintain.

However, it raises an issue that isn't often addressed on this campus, but is something that everybody has heard: Don't believe everything you read.

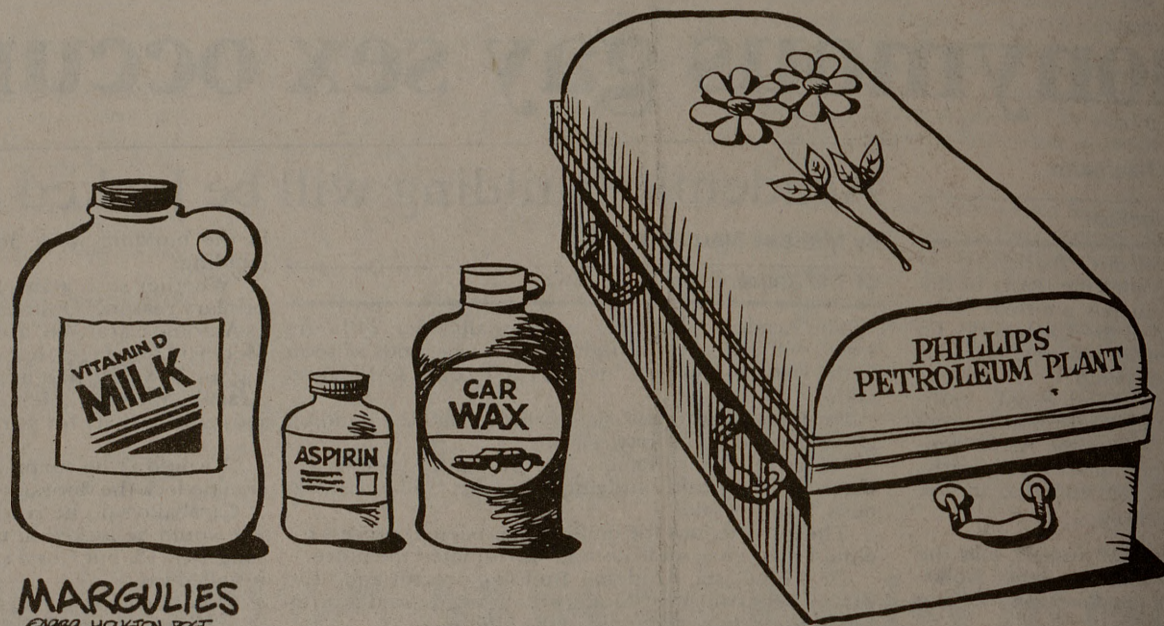
As college students, we should challenge ideas. Things that appear too good to be true almost always are.

If we, those who are considered "educated" in the United States, cannot identify and investigate false claims and ideas, who will stop the Jim Bakkers who lie on the horizon?

Remember to think. It's what college is supposed to be all about.

The Battalion Editorial Board

POLYETHYLENE CONTAINERS



Dress codes not in style Ignoring lefties not right



Juliette Rizzo
Opinion Page Editor

Some say it's not who you are but what you wear. But in many of today's learning institutions, what you wear may prevent you from getting an education, which is the key to becoming who you are.

Many schools, especially high schools, across the nation are attempting to revive stricter student dress codes, because school administrators claim student attire has a direct correlation to student behavior in a classroom environment.

In an article in the Oct. 23 issue of *People* magazine, Gary Marx, associate executive director of the American Association of School Administrators, said, "The school has become the place where the limits are being tested."

It is obvious from the article that many school administrators and parents believe "sloppy duds make sloppy minds." I disagree not only with this premise but with their definition of sloppy.

Flashy jewelry, bandannas, short mini skirts, muscle shirts (bare biceps), boxers (underwear worn as outerwear), long trendy tresses on males and leather jackets are not my definition of sloppy. But these so-called fashion faux pas, among others, have sparked controversies which have resulted in student suspensions and a significant number of withdrawals by students who, aside from the way they dress, are generally well-behaved and diligently attend school.

What school administrators fail to realize is that they should be thankful students are in school, regardless of how they are dressed. Clothing is a means of expression, and under the Bill of Rights we are all guaranteed that freedom.

The argument that clothes affect learning shouldn't get in the way of education. Making mandatory dress codes and then reinforcing them with severe disciplinary action is by no means the best way to keep students in school. Contrary to most administrators' beliefs, it's the outlandish dress codes, not the revealing or offensive clothing, that contribute to why students rebel, drop out and fail classes.

Travis and Brian Wilkinson of Houston have been out of public school for a year, because they refused to trim their long hair. At another high school, when hair beyond collar-length was banned, 37 boys were suspended. And as recent as this school year, students at Taylor High School in Houston's Katy Independent School District have been limited to wearing black

clothes no more than three times a week, because the color symbolizes the occult and depression. Concert shirts, earrings on males also are forbidden.

Across the United States, the list of fashion "no-nos" is endless. Back when I was in junior high school in Dallas, boys couldn't wear muscle shirts because "arm hair could be a turn-on." In Baltimore schools, high-priced apparel such as animal skin jackets have been banned to "eliminate competition to be best-dressed." Gold chains, ripped jeans and tie-dyed shirts have been banned elsewhere. The only school I agree with is the one in Los Angeles that outlawed accessories like message beepers to eliminate drug dealing.

Schools across the states have banned too much, thus infringing on students' rights — the right to express oneself and the right to learn. Teachers should concentrate more on teaching and disciplining students to study instead of disciplining them for how they come to class.

Although school administrators believe they are preparing students for the "real world," they are in fact depriving them of real learning experiences, those that deal with real people. The dress codes that administrators enforce are somewhat short-lived anyway.

In college, students are responsible for the way they dress themselves. A&M doesn't have a strict dress code, but according to the Student Life Regulations section (Part II # 67) of the Texas A&M University Regulations handbook, "Members of the faculty and staff have the authority and responsibility to maintain responsible standards of student dress and grooming within their respective classrooms...and other areas of public presentations for which they are responsible."

Responsible standards of dress should be maintained in all schools, but the responsibility of what to wear should be left to the individual's discretion. We are a reflection of what we wear, and we should have enough pride in ourselves to make good impressions on others.

In college, you can't tell a professor you failed a test because you couldn't concentrate because the guy next to you had on ripped jeans. I've seen it all at A&M: blinding fluorescent clothes, ripped clothes, guys with longer hair than mine in pony tails, clothes that leave nothing to the imagination, and even striped, brown and blond hair (and those are just my co-workers).

Through it all, I've still been able to attend class and study undistracted. As long as black clothing (virtually my entire wardrobe) isn't banned, I'll be fine. If black were banned, I'd have to go naked, and I don't think the administration would consider that responsible dressing.

Juliette Rizzo is a senior journalism major and opinion page editor for The Battalion.



Susan McAloon
Guest columnist

I have a problem, a problem that causes me a good deal of pain. It's being left-handed in a right-handed world. (Isn't there a country-western song by that title? There should be.)

Being a "leftie" generally doesn't cause a lot of problems for me, maybe a few hassles with scissors and irons, nothing major. Nothing, that is, until I get to class and look for a desk.

Now you'd think there would be an abundance of desks for lefties at an institution like Texas A&M, one that is proud of its reputation for being innovative and unbiased. Ha! I can't tell you the number of times I've come home at the end of a day and had to untwist myself from the pretzel-like shape I became while trying to write at a desk designed for "righties." Is there no mercy?

In an informal survey conducted by myself and two other lefties on campus, we came up with a brief synopsis of conditions for lefties in a few buildings on the A&M campus. Our findings are listed alphabetically by building. They're rated on a scale from one to five; one meaning there are leftie desks available and five meaning hostile anti-leftie territory:

Academic (5): Horrible. No leftie desks to be found. Extremely hostile. Plan on painful contortions from writing at ancient desks designed for dwarfs.

Blocker (2): Hallelujah! In the rooms where the desks are free and unbound to the floor, there are a few leftie desks shoved in corners and against walls. In the lecture halls, no leftie desks are to be found. Nevertheless, friendly territory for lefties.

Francis (4): Another leftie nightmare, although the desks are a little bigger than in the Academic Building. Uncomfortable.

Harrington (2): The desks extend too far in front of your body. Perhaps they're designed to accommodate mutant students having arms growing out of the center of their chests. Pretty uncomfortable, hostile for lefties.

O&M (5): Who designed these desks, anyway? Too close to your neighbor, not to mention nowhere to put your feet. No leftie desks.

I don't want very much from life. Freedom from oppression, McDonald's, ball games, straight A's. I don't think it's too much to ask that there be desks provided for us "southpaws."

We are *not* mutants, and we are a rising minority. It's time that our needs were voiced and accommodated. Put the leftie desks at the end of rows, in the back of rooms, anywhere! But do it soon. My chiropractor is making a fortune!

Susan McAloon is a senior English major and a guest columnist for The Battalion.

Mail Call

Phony ad funny

EDITOR:

As an off-campus student used to having my parking areas continually taken away for dorm students, conferences, etc., I was greatly amused upon finding the "Free Parking Pass" in the Oct. 15 issue of *Hullabaloo* magazine. The ad gave me a much-needed laugh and was just clean fun. I cannot believe anyone who parks on campus (or tries to) would actually believe the coupon, especially with dates on which school was not in session and the statement "void where prohibited by law" plainly printed on the coupon itself.

Sure it was a ruse, but it did two things. It brought attention to the parking nightmare at Texas A&M in a light-hearted way and hopefully separated those with some common sense from the hopelessly gullible.

Surely if some naive student actually believed the coupon and suffered the consequences, he would have learned a valuable lesson. Although a \$10 parking ticket may sting a bit, it teaches students to read the fine print and investigate, rather than obligingly accept any scam that sounds too good to be true.

College is a learning experience, and not all of it comes from books. I commend the designer of the advertisement for making people think, and allowing those of us who can appreciate a good joke the opportunity to enjoy it.

Marilyn P. Ambler '89

Re-examine personal values

EDITOR:

In Adam Mathieu's October 24 column on American values he makes some interesting (and truly frightening) points about our society. Unfortunately, his analysis of two of our worst problems contains some terrible misconceptions. The problems that Mr. Mathieu dealt with were suicide and drug abuse. In essence, Mr. Mathieu applauds the addicts and the suicidal for raising the consciousness of the nation. According to his article, American society owes such people the plaudits of scrutinizing the reasons behind the method of escape.

I can't agree. The most important facet of American society rests on a fact that Mr. Mathieu totally missed. He even stated it within his article: "The status quo ALMOST always wins." Correct. But if no one attempts to change it, it can't help but win. The beauty of America has always been that everyone, no matter how inconsequential, has the opportunity to change things around them. What people who lose themselves through drugs or suicide don't realize is that the status quo DOESN'T ALWAYS win.

Admittedly, there are some terrible problems in society today. Unfortunately, the answers to these problems aren't to run away from them in a drug-induced haze or self-perpetuated annihilation. The "escapes" do cut across socio-economic boundaries. However, I submit that the problems of each class can be solved from within, as opposed to being "escaped" from. The opportunity exists for the poor to work

themselves out of their situation.

Don't malign such a statement as a simplistic, idealistic solution to the problems of poverty. The truth is that the poor can dig themselves out of their hole by working hard enough and long enough. My own parents began far poorer than what is considered to be "poverty-stricken" now. The important factor that determines the road out of poverty today is the willingness to forsake short-sighted "escapes." If the easy avenues of escape are dismissed, then anyone can climb to the top.

Unfortunately, the crack pipe often looks like a quicker way to satisfaction than years of school and hard work. The explanations of the middle and upper class problems are a little simpler. Without the excuse of a bleak or harsh daily existence, the problem becomes an inability to deal with the everyday problems of life. If money creates a hollow existence for an individual, then the person has a problem, not the society.

In summation, I too can understand the desire to escape. The difference is that I consider such escapes the weak way out of life. I feel that the people who abuse drugs and commit suicide do not necessitate a re-examination of American values, but a re-examination of the personal or individual values.

David N. Brooks '93

Be friendly at Yell Practice

EDITOR:

I have a question for those "die-hard" Aggies out there: If you are for the opposing football team, are you not allowed to attend Midnight Yell Practice?

The reason I am wondering about this is because at the Yell Practice for the Houston game, a guy from Houston was standing a few rows away from me and, stupid guy, he didn't want to "hump-it" with all the Aggies. Now, if you are from the opposing team, shouldn't you want to participate with the Aggies and cheer against your own team? This jerk didn't want to, so he got what he deserved — I think every word in the book was shouted at him. Then he had the nerve to actually do the Houston sign, and of course he was rightfully punished by most of the people around him — cups, ice, and anything else that could be found was thrown at him, as well as enough insults to last a lifetime.

Call me a two-percenter, but I don't think it's right to treat people this way. I thought that as Aggies we are supposed to be friendly people. I guess this friendliness does not extend outside our campus. Please set me straight on my question, because I have some friends from t.u. who plan to come for the game, and I would like to know if they would be allowed to attend Yell Practice.

Laura Dean '90

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.

The Battalion

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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.

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