

Mail Call

Vandalism morally wrong

EDITOR:

Last Saturday was Veterans Day. Veterans Day is a holiday set aside to recognize the veterans of the armed forces. On that day, we pay tribute to and remember those that have served in our nation's armies, fought in our nation's wars and died for their country.

However, this letter is not written to educate the reader about our nation's holidays but to demand an apology for acts of indignation by a group of ignorant bigots.

On Saturday evening, this group towards which I am addressing this letter saw fit to vandalize another's property.

The property happened to be a Honda 600 Coupe with a rising sun on its sides. The car was overturned and obscenities were spray painted to its panels.

These are acts of vandalism. And I feel, as many do, that it is morally wrong to destroy and deface memorials, whether they be statues, edifices or cars.

David K. Yeung '89
Kenneth A. Carothers '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.

My next request — wait your turn!

"THE CLASS YOU REQUESTED IS FULL. NO OTHER SECTIONS OF THIS CLASS ARE AVAILABLE. PLEASE ENTER YOUR NEXT REQUEST, NOW."

I wish I had a penny for every time I have heard this statement whine through my receiver. Every time I register, some class I just absolutely HAVE to have for some reason is full. And you know, when I was a freshman, I kind of expected a few of the classes or sections that I wanted to be full. After all, I had to wait until all of the seniors, juniors and sophomores had already registered to let my fingers do the walking.

Now I am a senior. And on November 3, the second day of senior registration, I finally got my first chance at registering as a senior. I was really looking forward to getting the classes and sections I wanted. But lo and behold, the same whiney voice came through my receiver.

How could this be? Surely that 100 level philosophy course I wanted was not full? Did someone crack the system and preregister?

After a little research, I found my answer. Yes, someone had preregistered (even before preregistration began). And to my amazement, they were authorized to do so.

Actually there are two culprits. First of all, those students who are enrolled



Damon Arhos
Columnist

in the University Honors Program registered in person in the Honors Program Office on October 31 and November 1. The only qualifications for this pre-preregistration are (1) that you have a cumulative GPR of a 3.25, (2) that you either be currently enrolled in at least one honors course or have at least six hours of previous honors coursework on your transcript and (3) that you must register for one or more spring honors courses.

And if you register under the honors program, you are not just limited to registering for honors classes. You can register for non-honors classes, too! It sounds like a pretty good incentive to have a 3.25 to me.

Secondly, there are the numerous "student workers" who get to register before the rest of us. Any student worker who can get a letter from their boss confirming their employment can pre-preregister. And I do mean ANY. The term "student worker" doesn't

only apply to those students employed by the University. If you have a job off campus, you can pre-preregister too.

The theory behind the "student worker" pre-preregistration plan is that those students who work need to plan their classes around their work schedules. And this is a legitimate concern for those students who put themselves through school or have rigid work hours they must schedule their classes around.

My objection is that many students take advantage of this privilege only to get a head start on everyone else. Many students are technically employed by the University but are employed solely on a "part-time basis."

For instance, I am technically a "student worker." I receive a University pay-check for the work I do on *The Battalion*. And I typically work a five hour week. Should I be entitled to pre-preregistration? No, I shouldn't. Or how about University tour guides? They make their own hours. Should they be able to pre-preregister?

The singling out for pre-preregistration those students who are involved in the University Honors Program and those who work is a big mistake. As for the University Honors students and student workers, they should tough it out like the rest of us.

Damon Arhos is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.

Racial progress: we've come a very long way

The returns from the recent plebiscite offer many snacks for thought, but let us begin with congratulations to the state of Virginia, cradle of the Confederacy, for having elected a black governor.

Perhaps we all deserve a thump on the back for this one, especially black Americans of course, for having helped create a country in which this is possible — we have come a long way, beloveds. And for all the ugliness, nastiness and despair that still remains to be dealt with, we needn't stint ourselves on the pleasure of thinking how far we have come.

If you want to know how much things can change in this country and how fast things can change, you have only to study the civil rights movement. And that gives me another opportunity to plug Taylor Branch's splendid book, "Parting the Waters," which is so much more than a biography of Martin Luther King — such a wonderful portrait of this country trying to change itself — so messy and glorious. Should be must reading for all serious Christians.

One of the oddest residues of racism in politics is that white people apparently have a hard time telling others, notably pollsters, they will not vote for a black. Doug Wilder, the governor-elect of Virginia, and David Dinkins, the mayor-elect of New York City, both went into election day with the polls showing them between 10 and 20 points ahead. They both won in squeakers. Even exit polling, normally the most reliable kind — just a matter of record-keeping; "Who'd you vote for?" — was off by about five points in both places, a lot less than the pre-election polls, but still bizarre.

There had been much talk here in New York about "closet racists," those who won't admit they oppose Dinkins because of his color. The smart money was betting the race would be close not because Dinkins is black, but because he didn't pay his taxes 20 years ago. To be sure, it was 20 years ago; on the other hand, he didn't cough up the money until it became an issue in the mayoral race. If there's one thing most citizens truly loathe, it's some arrogant jerk who thinks he's too good to pay his share of taxes. That's the main reason Leona Helmsley became the woman we love to hate. Fortunately for Dinkins, his opponent came across as the kind of guy who pulled the wings off butterflies as a child.

Poor Rudolph Giuliani, a prosecutor to the bone, who would have been terrific during the Spanish Inquisition. You can talk to the man about breakfast and suddenly he's grilling you about what you ate.

The other high-profile issue in New York and Virginia, and New Jersey as well, was abortion. You know Lee Atwater is holed up trying to figure out how Republicans can crawlfish on it right now. Nothing makes politicians pay attention more than an issue that loses political races.

This is the moment women have been waiting for — now they know it can beat them — although the pro-choice movement will have to continue to prove that in every state in the coun-



Molly Ivins
Syndicated Columnist

try. President Bush said the other in his news conference there are "mate differences" over his veto of a bill that would have provided abortion for poor women who are the victims of rape and incest.

He also assured everyone that is room for those who are pro-choice the Republican Party. But Bush threatened to veto economic aid to Hungary and Poland because the package includes support for a U.N. planning service that supports abortion in China. You know, this argument "Not one penny of my money will support abortion" that is used so support abortion is frantically by right-to-lifers is frantically silly.

We are all part of large agglomerations that do things we don't approve of. I think capital punishment is a bad idea, but I pay the taxes that make it possible. I know the CIA commiserates, but I still pay taxes. Their argument makes no sense.

On the home front, we have again failed to reward the Texas Legislature for its pitiful performance giving the members a raise. I know seems logical — why pay this collection of geeks, dweebs and yobs no money? It might encourage them. I predict that we will once again fail to regret paying these folks a pittance to spend part time taking care of state's *bidness*.

For example, when the schools open next fall, I trust we will all be smart enough to blame the man responsible, Dollar Bill Clements, only governor we've got, Biff the Mr. No New Taxes, No Matter What. But it will be the Legislature once again failing to act in time that we'll see.

I know it's hard to believe but they more will help, especially if we're just now finding out that we seem like half of them have been being very nicely off unused campaign contributions, thank you. The last seriousness in the Legislature is attributable to the pathetic salaries. So we've got some splendid public servants through the years with this term — but not enough, not enough Texans.

Speaking of the ineffable Clements, here's a classic Biff story for you. Mr. Rawlins, chairman of the Task Force on Public Utilities Regulation, went to report to the governor recently had prepared a detailed, thorough, exhaustive account of structural problems at the PUC, and was 10 minutes into all this statistical analysis of Clements, who had been gazing into a corner, said, "Moke, you moke, tell me you have spent all this time on all this money, and you still haven't ten rid of those two wimmin'?"

There are days when you can't but like the Gov.

Issues outside of A&M pertain to Aggies, too

Once again Aggies have shown their ignorance towards anything that doesn't directly affect them.

Last week the Students Against Apartheid erected a shanty that resembled similar living conditions for Africans in South Africa. (I did not use the word "black" because it was created for people of color here in the United States.)

The purpose of this shanty was not to deface the University, provide an eyesore for our beautiful campus or destroy the integrity of Texas A&M.

The purpose was to awaken the student body, faculty, staff and administration to the moral injustices that are being inflicted on the people who are the majority in South Africa.

Instead of allowing the shanty to remain standing or convincing the Board of Regents that divestment is crucial, we insist on writing letters to *The Battalion* on how ugly the shanty is and how it doesn't serve a purpose here.

We are no doubt showing our ignorance on a very critical issue to 21 million Africans in South Africa and the rest of America.

The problem at this University is that we don't care about social issues. We are not really concerned about the drug problem, the people of China, the revolts in the Soviet Union, the tearing down of the Berlin Wall or apartheid.

If it doesn't have to do with bonfire, traditions or the MSC trees, we don't give a damn.

Roland S. Martin

Guest Columnist

We are more concerned about the removal of trees or the burning of useless trees than the beating, removal and burning of human beings from the face of this earth.

The shanty, in my mind, needs to be a permanent fixture on this campus. A&M needs the shanty because we need to open our eyes and see what is going on outside of Aggiland.

If we have to look at that ugly, trashy eyesore every morning when we wake up, we may begin to realize that apartheid is an ugly, trashy eyesore to the world.

If you are one of those students who believes the shanty cannot make us aware of the problems in South Africa, then you need to rethink your position.

During the Civil Rights movement, America did not wake up and stand up until they saw the hoses being turned on a group of people who were oppressed (South Africa?), kids being blown up in church (South Africa?), human beings being attacked by dogs (South Africa?) and a Nobel Peace Prize winner constantly being arrested (South Africa?).

Do you still believe it doesn't make a difference?

The student body needs to realize the problems of America are now the problems of South Africa.

We have yet to dissolve the theory of racism in the United States, but the Jim Crow signs are gone, African-Americans can vote freely and even if I sit in the back of the bus, I know I can sit in the front.

As Aggies, we must put our collective feet down and our above average minds together to do our part in stopping apartheid. Since we are a Top-10 university, let's join the ivy league schools and many others who have divested.

My last point is a plea to the student body. We need to stop limiting ourselves to issues that only concern A&M.

When we get out of school, we will be associated with the University on another level. We will be making decisions that are socially valuable, and unless we learn and understand the crust of the problems that affect us we never will.

Apartheid doesn't belong in South Africa, A&M needs to divest in South Africa and racism doesn't belong on campus.

Roland S. Martin is a junior journalism major and a representative of the National Association of Black Journalists.

The Battalion

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