

## Mail Call

### Ags against bonfire still Aggies

EDITOR:

It's been over a week now since the flames of Bonfire '89 leaped into the night, but there's one thing that still bothers me. During all the speeches and ramblings that certain important people gave, one of the yell leaders made the statement that Aggies who are against bonfire are not true Aggies.

If it's one thing I hate, it's mindless generalizations. Just because someone doesn't approve of one specific tradition doesn't mean they're against the whole school. After all, traditions don't make an Aggie, it's the Aggie that makes the traditions.

I'm not against bonfire, but I can see how some people could be. I think it's important to try to understand how other people feel instead of just closing your mind to them. Besides, even if someday bonfire was discontinued, I'm sure the Aggie spirit would survive.

Jeff Goodmark '92

### Regents, make room for MSC

EDITOR:

The regents have recently purchased a large, half-finished multi-story office building on Tarrow Street behind the Hilton. The new sign in front designates it "the future headquarters of the TAMU System."

Proposal: Move the regents, along with regency assistants, secretaries, acolytes, et. al., to this newly acquired building and convert the Regent's Annex for MSC purposes. Dome over the fountain courtyard for year-around dining, lounging, gallery-ing, or whatever.

Maureen Reap, '84  
Graduate Student

### Parking appeal system unfair

EDITOR:

Does this story sound similar to one you might have experienced?

I was told by TAMU parking appeals adjudicator Judy Nesmith that an incomplete address on an appeal form voids an appeal, because it is too much work to plug an I.D. number into the computer and get the missing city. A space less than three inches was available to write the complete address on the appeal form I filled out. When I pointed out that the form did not specifically provide spaces for each part of a full address, I was told that a new appeals form has been drafted, leaving me penalized because of a questionably designed form.

Since I had given an incomplete address, and it was

against policy or too much work to do a quick check to find the complete address, I inquired as to why my phone number was not used to contact me. The explanation given was "because that's not the way we do it". Apparently, and unfortunately, a more personal form of contact, which would also conserve paper, does not make good policy sense to the parking and ticketing office.

When I inquired, why then, are we asked to include our telephone number, I'm told, in essence, simply because it's part of the form.

What truly angers me, though, is automatically being charged a \$5 late fee just for not having a full address. A late fee is only supposed to be charged after a person is given 10 days to pay (or appeal again) a ticket.

This action is surely a breach of the parking and ticketing office's own rules. For all the trouble a missing city supposedly caused, it certainly did not stop the denied appeal and bill from reaching me.

Other Universities give special parking privileges to graduate students, who carry an oftentimes substantial part of the teaching load. Not only should Texas A&M adopt this policy, but graduate (and undergraduate) students should be given better treatment than that described above.

Michael E. Worsham  
Graduate Student

### Abortion column poor

EDITOR:

I am writing in response to a recent article concerning the abortion issue. Ram P. Bhojanala complained that previous columnists hadn't substantiated their opinions. Granted, I did not read these as I was a visitor to Texas A&M. However, I remain to be unconvinced of Ram's so-called substantiation.

He states that "the education level of the 15-24 years age group is alarmingly low" because "88.1% (are) below college degree." Personally, I don't know many people under the age of 21 with a college degree, and I don't find it alarming in the least — it stands to reason.

Ram goes on to make an unfounded corollation between the lack of a college education and the lack of sex education. Is that what we go to college for? How many of us have taken a formal sex education class at the University? No reasonable corollation can be derived from this "evidence."

Another irrelevant fact is the "the United States has the largest percentage of abortions". . . "among Western nations". For this statement to be relevant would require the assumption that Europeans are, in contrast with the U.S., educated about sex. This is not the case in several western nations.

Furthermore, will someone please explain to me what the nutritional habits of the average college student have to do with this? If we're going to equate an abortion with the raising of cattle for human consumption (a ridiculous idea in the first place), then we must also realize that plants, too, are LIFE.

I agree with Ram that ". . . education, not restriction, is the solution to the abortion issue." However, with his irrelevant "facts", it is too easily disputed. Here is an example of real substantiation: Since Sweden has adopted a sex education program starting at age five, its teenage birth and abortion rates have decreased by 65% and 25% respectively, adding up to fewer pregnancies in the first place ("Family Planning in Sweden." Fact Sheets on Sweden. Swedish Institute, 1986.)

Cocky writers like Ram give a bad name to the Pro-choice movement. As a member of the California Abortion Rights Action League, the Bay Area Coalition Against Operation Rescue, and Retain Our Reproductive Rights, I could give wonderful facts supporting a woman's right to make her own decisions. But that is not the purpose of this letter. I am merely attempting to protect the integrity of a valid movement from senseless and unsubstantiated drivel.

Karen J. Schraven, student  
University of California at Berkeley

### Concentrate on good bull

EDITOR:

Almost every day there has been some complaint about A&M addressed in *The Battalion*. They have dealt with problems concerning parking, the anti-apartheid shanty, bonfire, and other traditions. I understand that all of these issues are justified, but sometimes enough is enough. I am not writing this letter to gripe about anything, but to praise.

This has been my first semester at A&M and I have thoroughly enjoyed it. I cannot explain the excitement I felt at the first football game; it overwhelmed me to see how everyone took so much pride in A&M.

It bothers me to see that only the imperfect details of our campus are concentrated on. All I am trying to say is that there are so many positive aspects about this school they far outweigh the negative.

Sonja Skelly '93

### Have an opinion? Express it!

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. All letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald, or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

# Religion should play role in government

It is nice to be a part of a pluralistic state where all have the right to discuss their own private views of a philosophical and political nature. Yet to discuss one's views through the twisting of facts and the manipulation of the truth does little to enhance the benefits which were meant to be gained by the free expression of ideas. To debate issues of a controversial nature is good for a democratic republic because through adversarial discussions, one gains a firmer understanding of the appropriate route to take in all forms of policy.

Unfortunately, today there are those using falsehoods to delude many about the position religion has played in the intricate weave of our American heritage. Groups like Students of Objectivism have misused their right of expression to perpetuate lies concerning the so-called danger religion plays in the existence of our nation. So to the end of exposing myths which have been expounded, let us take a brief look at the place religion has played in the founding of this country.

Warren K. Smith

Guest Columnist

First and foremost, it is incredibly important to point out that the opinion that stated the Enlightenment philosophy was the intricate foundation upon which this nation was laid, was a terrible mistake. Rather, it is important to point out that while the Enlightenment philosophy gripped Southern Europe's view to life, Northern Europe was affected more by the effects of the Reformation. And, as any historian can state, the majority of the early colonists to America were from Great Britain and Northern Europe.

There is a clear pivotal point, however, which must be added here. Many of the colonists were religious dissidents. Indeed the Pilgrims and Puritans are clear examples but there are many more. It was these religious dissidents who actually wove the fabric of Ameri-

can culture, for they established the first schools, seeing that the local preacher was usually the only truly educated member of that early society. Indeed every institution of higher education (including Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth, Columbia and Brown University) before the American Revolution was founded by a Christian church. Then according to history books, an event known as the Great Awakening spread like wildfire across the American colonies in the 1740's. In fact, in New England alone 25,000 to 50,000 people were added to the church out of a total population of only 300,000.

Take also into consideration the Christian, Sir William Blackstone. This individual was a lecturer of law at Oxford who molded from the tenets of Judeo-Christian theism, the "Commentaries on the Laws of England." By the

year 1775, more copies of his "Commentaries" had been sold in America than in all of England, and as any honest attorney will observe, William Blackstone's "Commentaries" became the foundation of our system of laws.

Finally, I would like to end this column with a fact and a few quotes. Of the 55 men who attended the Constitution Convention, 52 were professed Christians while the remaining three claimed to be deists. The most famous of American deists, Thomas Jefferson, did not even attend the constitutional convention, being the ambassador to France at the time. As most will remember, he was the man who coined the phrase of "separation of church and state", which does not even appear in our Constitution. As George Washington clearly stated, "Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may

be conceded to the influence of religion education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both lead us to expect that national morality will prevail in exclusion of religious principle." We can also draw some wisdom from one of Thomas Jefferson's letters dated in 1801. "(The) Christian religion . . . is a religion of all others most friendly to liberty, science and the free expansions of the human mind."

Is religion a danger to America? You be the judge.

As with all columns, opinions expressed by Guest Columnists are not necessarily those of *The Battalion*. Persons interested in submitting guest columns should contact the Opinion Page Editor at 845-3314.

## NOW HIRING The Battalion

is looking for two Texas A&M faculty members to write bi-weekly columns for *The Battalion* Opinion Page during the Spring '90 semester. Applications can be picked up in Room 216 Reed McDonald and are due in Room 230 Reed McDonald by 5 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 17.

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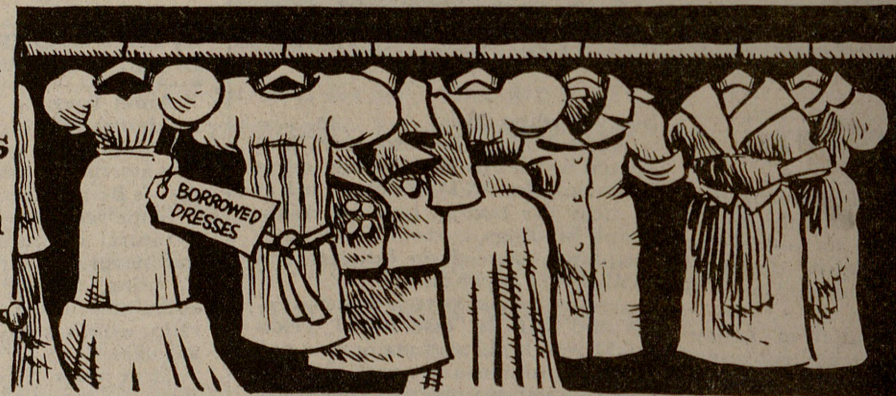
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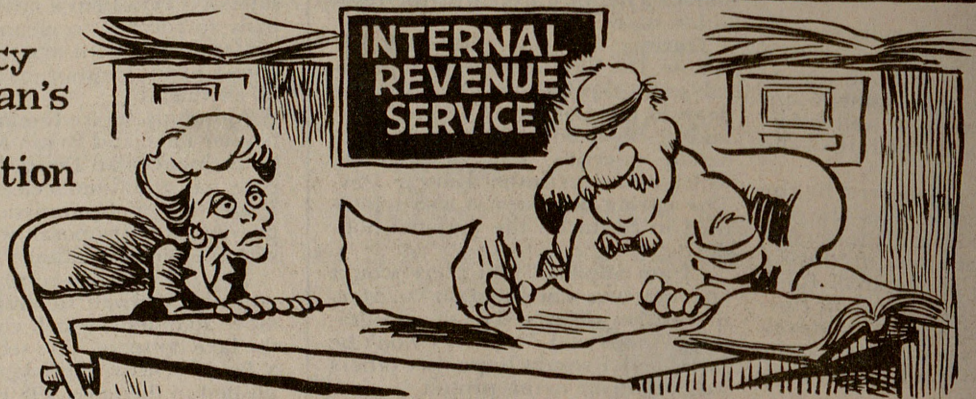
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