

Sometimes traditions should die



Ellen Hobbs
Opinion Page Editor

People say that everything that happens twice at Texas A&M is a tradition. We're very attached to our tradition of traditions, and we fight it when it's time to give one up.

But some of our traditions just aren't useful anymore, if they ever were before. They've become a nuisance and it's time for them to go.

Don't get worried — I'm not talking about ending Silver Taps or not letting Reveille go to biology anymore. Most of the traditions I'm talking about are of a smaller scale than that.

I know that it's hard to let a tradition die, but here are a few traditions that should go the way of seniors' exemptions from finals:

- **The driving-through-parking-lots-recklessly-and-at-high-speeds tradition.** Sure, when A&M was smaller it wasn't quite as dangerous, but now there are just too many people on campus for it to be safe to try to get the Buick up to 65 m.p.h. in the Fish Lot.

This problem has spread off campus, too. You shouldn't have to risk your life to get your groceries from the store to your trunk.

- **The stepping-in-front-of-oncoming-traffic tradition.** A&M is a pedestrian-oriented campus, but are you going to trust the same people who drive like Speed Racer in the parking lots to stop on a dime when you walk in front of them on your way to the Commons?

- **The riding-bicycles-with-no-regard-for-others-or-yourself tradition.** Strangers to the A&M campus might think that it was against the law for anyone but suicidal sadists to ride a bike here. Even some people who aren't strangers to A&M might think that.

Bikers need to pay attention to the traffic laws, stay on the streets instead of the sidewalks, and, when they have to be on the sidewalks, slow down, for the sake of themselves as well as the pedestrians. Blood-splattered spandex is not a pretty sight.

- **The driving-around-honking-the-Aggie-War-Hymn-at-3-a.m. tradition.** If you're feeling proud of A&M and want to proclaim it by honking your horn, try to limit yourself to honking between the hours of noon and 11 p.m.

Almost every Aggie is proud to be at A&M, but if you wake them up by happily honking 'Hullabaloo' on your horn, they might not feel so proud to be in school with you.

- **The whining-about-parking-and-construction tradition.** Parking sucks. The construction sucks. I know they suck. We all know they suck. And I don't want to hear it anymore.

Instead of just complaining, do something about it. Get together with your fellow Ags and deluge the responsible people with mail. A few thousand angry letters might do the trick.

- **The leaving-Battalion-advertising-inserts-lying-all-over-sidewalk tradition.** It takes very little effort to hang on to the insert when you pick up The Batt and throw it away in a trash can. It's embarrassing that the same college students who complain about ugly construction and the ugly apartheid shanty can't even keep their own ugly garbage off the campus.

There. That's just a few traditions we could do without. And if you don't like it, Highway 6 runs both ways (Oh, sorry. That's a pretty stupid tradition too.).

Ellen Hobbs is a junior journalism major.

Mail Call

Religion should be offered, not forced

EDITOR:

I am a Christian, and I am writing in response to a recent opinion printed in *The Battalion* protesting against this campus' "religious zealots." I agree with what the letter said, and I will say it myself: Religion should not be forced upon people. The purpose of religion is to praise the One who created it. It should not be forced, only offered. To those who read this, I extend this hypothesis: What if everything I believe in is wrong? What if there is no God, and there is no heaven or hell? Then I will die and become worm food having lived a very misled life and done a lot of ridiculous things (including writing this letter). OK. BUT before anyone does any "microphone shoving" down "religious zealots" throats, what if when Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and the only way to get to God," ... what if it's true?

Joey Haveman

Adoption sensible but not practical

EDITOR:

I write this in response to the letter written by Casey Motl in the Feb. 8 edition of *The Battalion* regarding his response to my first letter. Apparently he missed the "practical value" of my so-called "extreme viewpoint," so I want to clarify it for him.

When I stated that the abortion issue is a waste of time, I meant that we can debate the issue until we are all dead. However, during that time some poor child who is here now is suffering because of neglect. That child needs our attention too. It appears that Casey did not understand when I stated these neglected children today are our future. I want literate and competent people running our country when we grow old, not a group of people who feel spiteful because we slighted their early presence. We all want to save the life of an unborn child, but it seems that we don't want much to do with them once they get here. An option that pro-life people give is adoption. This is very sensible but not practical. Are you aware of how hard it is to get black and hispanic children adopted? I am not saying abortion is right. I am saying let us take care of those who are here now. They are just as important as the ones who may still come.

Joy L. Marshall '91

Student comments on campus problems

EDITOR:

I would just like to make a couple of observations and comments about the things I see going on around campus. Before that though, I'd like to say that this is my first year here and I don't know exactly where priorities lie, but some things do stand out. First, the traffic on campus does appear to be a problem. This is not a shock to me, but what the University planners are doing about it is. It appears that money is being spent to expand the streets leading onto campus and to build a new parking facility. It seems that this would increase the number of speeding cars entering campus. As I attempt to walk and cycle about, this concerns me. I would rather see more proximal parking and shuttle buses.

Furthermore, I feel that addressing issues such as the quality of life on campus, (i.e. water quality — which I have tested chemically and found to be worse than the College Station or Bryan municipal water in concentrations of impurities), or the slow and cumbersome registration system. This might serve those on campus a bit better. A top institution needs a solid and efficient infrastructure to support its growth.

Is the automobile more important than the safety, health and time of stu-

dents and faculty? I don't know, but next time A&M must improve on don't you think there are things that are more appropriate to spend on? We need to take this seriously because students learn from their environment as well as from their classrooms.

Derek Ryter
Graduate student

Cyclists should obey traffic laws

EDITOR:

Is it my imagination, or do the bicyclists on campus have a ticket to any and all traffic laws, hit any unsuspecting pedestrians they choose, through the grass that others have been asked to avoid and show a total regard for common courtesy? Today I was hit by a cyclist for the umpteenth time, and I'm fed up! There are those, of course, who are courteous and to respect the rights of those of us who walk from class to class, but there are too many cyclists who have taken advantage of their mobility. How many times have you driven up Ireland only to notice a cyclist heading the way directly toward you and giving you the "go-to-he**!" look for honor? How many buses or cars have you seen come inches from hitting cyclists turning on to Ross from Ireland as they blatantly run the stop sign? It's "STOP" — not "STOP IF YOU CAN'T SQUEEZE BETWEEN TRAFFIC!"

Maybe the University Police Department should make a concerted effort to see that the bicyclists on campus obey the same traffic laws that the rest of us are compelled to adhere to, not only for the safety of ourselves, but also those around us.

If the police can't resolve the situation, maybe the rest of the students take it upon themselves to purchase, for a nominal fee of course, a steel net to throw in the spokes of disrespectful cyclists. After all, that would be no more dangerous than they are when they speed up to a group of pedestrians on sidewalk and expect us to move wherever it is "convenient."

Should any other students or anyone have suggestions on a solution to this long neglected problem, I'm all ears.

Paul Grupe '91

Silver Taps not worth 'hassle'

EDITOR:

In reference to Carl K. Gilpin's letter on February 14, I would just like to say that Silver Taps is indeed a wonderful tradition, but let's face it Carl, some of us *do* have lives! Some may have a test the following morning or assignments due, not to mention personal obligations or emergencies. Many of us have to get up early every morning to go to work and/or school. You cannot expect the Aggies who live off campus to drive all the way over here at 10 p.m., attempt to find a parking space, and truck over to the ceremony just not worth the hassle. Just because we cannot attend some ceremony does not mean we do not want to pay our respects to "fellow Aggies who have passed on."

Give it a rest, Carl.

Coriene M. Case '91

Have an opinion? Express it!

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. There is no guarantee that letters submitted will be printed. 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.

A&M police don't deserve all criticism they get

The Texas A&M University Police Department is sometimes the target of undeserved criticism and a great deal of misunderstanding. I have had the unique opportunity of interacting with officers in our police department on official business, and I found out some very interesting things.

OK, one more time, the University Police Department is separate, completely separate, *completely* separate, from the Department of Parking, Transit and Traffic. This means, of course, that the University Police officers *do not* write parking tickets. That is the responsibility of the parking patrol officers.

Our University Police Department is composed of 40 professional men and women who have obtained an average of 84 hours of college education each. We have 15 officers who have earned a bachelor of science degree, one who has earned a law degree and two who have earned their associate degrees. In addition to this, 10 of our officers are currently pursuing bachelor's degrees, five are working on their master's degrees and one is pursuing a Ph.D.

Furthermore, each of our UPD officers have received an average of 1,055 hours of law enforcement training. This is 655 hours above the 400 hours of training that the state requires. As far as experience is measured, our UPD officers have an

Kevin Buchman
Reader's Opinion

average of nearly six years each at Texas A&M University and over a year and a half with another police department.

The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officers' Standards and Education has identified three areas into which officers are categorized: basic, intermediate and advanced. At A&M, 18 of our officers are classified in the basic category, 10 in the intermediate and 12 in advanced. Furthermore, 12 of our officers are certified to teach law enforcement courses.

A fairly recent development in our UPD is the creation of a crime prevention unit. As a professional, full-service department, the Texas A&M University Police is committed to serving the faculty, staff and students of the A&M campus community. Lieutenant Bert Kretschmar and Officer Betty LeMay have been assigned

to direct the unit. Their goal is to create a safe and secure environment at A&M through education. Contrary to popular belief, A&M is *not* immune from the criminal element. The crime prevention unit was not established to merely emphasize the negative aspects of crime on campus, but rather to extend well beyond that to educate the A&M community on how to prevent crime from occurring.

This unit is responsible for conducting building security surveys to measure the vulnerability of certain areas to crime, as well as being available to organizations (especially student organizations), to provide lectures and seminars on topics such as theft protection, property protection, personal safety, burglary, office security, assault, sexual assault and drug abuse. If you would like to contact someone within this unit for additional information, please phone 845-2345. The University Police Department Crime Prevention Unit is dedicated to meeting your needs in preventing and combating criminal activity.

Campus security is most definitely the responsibility of us, the students, as well

as the UPD. We often criticize what we do not understand. We should realize that we are not living in a bubble at College Station. We are just as vulnerable to criminal activity here as we were in Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Austin and Bridge City. Our UPD officers are working very hard to protect us, but we need to be responsible enough to take the necessary sensible precautions to protect ourselves as well.

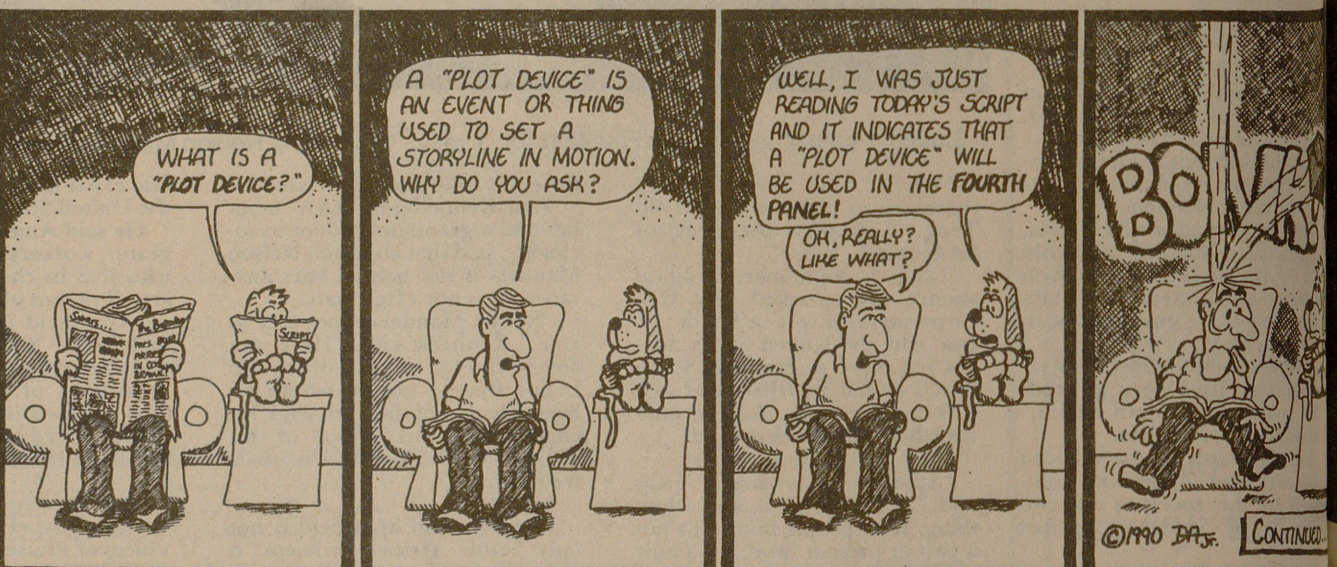
I urge you to become involved in the issue of campus security. If you have a legitimate complaint with or a sincere compliment for the University Police Department, please call me at the Student Government office at 845-3051 or at home at 7206 or the Police Department at 8058.

Kevin Buchman is a senior speech communication major and the student body president.

As with all columns, viewpoints expressed in Reader's Opinions are not necessarily those of *The Battalion*. Persons interested in submitting Reader's Opinions should contact Opinion Page Editor at 845-3314.

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by Don Atkinson



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