



Scot O. Walker
Editor

Hip hooray for absentee voting box

It took too much time and too much effort to get it, but Brazos County has finally placed an absentee voting box on the Texas A&M campus.

The idea of a box on campus has been brought up and shot down with regularity over the years. It became a more heated issue when the state legislature relaxed the rules so that anyone could vote absentee, without any special reason. (Some people now prefer the term "extended voting.")

The battle lines are defined basically by party affiliation, with the Republicans trying to get the box on campus and Democrats swearing that would never happen. The Republicans say that what they are really concerned with is getting more people to vote. "The whole purpose was to encourage more voter participation," Brazos Valley Republican Party Chairman Rodger Lewis said in December. Reading between the lines, I get "encourage more Republican voter participation." This would be especially important to the Republicans for the 1990 primaries, which fall during A&M's spring break.

"The best way to deal with it is to give you (students) an absentee poll here on campus," Lewis said.

The Democrats say that their opposition to the on-campus site is not based on partisanship, but fairness. Former Brazos County Democratic Party Chairman Ron Gay said that a site at A&M is unfair to rural, handicapped and elderly voters who will have to contend with A&M's crowds and parking problems. That would be a valid point, if A&M were the only absentee voting site. It's not. Besides the polling site on campus (in the MSC), voters can go to the Brazos County Courthouse, Ben Milam Elementary School on Ridgedale Street or College Station school district's administration office on Welsh Street. And anyone can vote at any absentee site, regardless of the precinct in which you are registered.

Another objection is that a site on campus would discriminate against members of minority groups. But that argument loses its validity when you consider that an on-campus site is convenient not only for students, but also workers, and Texas A&M is the largest employer of minorities in the area.

The main concern with where to place polling sites is how to get the most people to vote, period. I'm not a Republican or a Democrat, but I realize that a campus voting site will result in more Republican votes. But that's life. It's wrong to make it harder for some to vote just because you don't particularly like the way they vote or who they vote for.

I think the United States eventually should go to a system where all polling sites are open for at least a week, maybe even two weeks, and absolutely no returns are announced until every last vote has been counted. That would increase voter turnout dramatically, and reduce the influence of the networks, who often "project" winners with less than one percent of the vote counted, thus discouraging some voters.

But radical changes like that are way down the road. Until then, a voting box here on campus is a good idea. Now go use it.

Scot Walker is a senior journalism major.

Reunification threatens economy

We shouldn't worry about German reunification. Then again, maybe we should.

To clarify, the world should not worry that a united Germany will be a threat to world peace. But we should worry about the economic threat it poses.

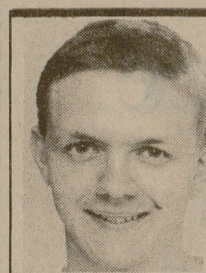
A reunified Germany may seem scary to many citizens of the world who remember or who have studied the tragedies of World War I and World War II. Yet, the new Germany would not exist under the same conditions as did Wilhelm's or Hitler's Germanies.

Before World War I, Europe was much more political and imperialist than modern Europe. The nations of Europe were in constant rivalry, always trying to gain power and always prepared for conflict.

Modern Europe is much more complacent. With the coming European Community, 12 of Europe's nations will economically become one. It would be difficult and unnecessary to try to overpower countries with which Germany shares a bond.

In World War II, Germany's escapades were almost a direct result of the devastation of the first World War combined with Hitler's charismatic leadership and incredible timing. A Hitler could not take hold of Germany in its present state. There is just too much democracy and too many human rights in both Germanies.

Few or none of the conditions that



Timm Doolen
Columnist

helped start the two World Wars exist in Germany today. There is no reason for anyone to think Germany will become a crazed nation again and seek world domination. Military and economic power is too decentralized in the modern world, and the political climate is different as well. Four decades of democracy have tainted the Germans' thirst for conquest, and the possibility of another charismatic leader taking over is unlikely.

The biggest upset (on a world scale) a united Germany could manage is in international sports competitions like the Olympics. The two sports superpowers when combined will probably be a more formidable opponent than the Soviet Union or the United States could even hope to be.

On a more meaningful level, a reunified Germany could become an economic giant, especially with the coming of the European community.

Using current figures, the two Germanies combined export more than

any other country in the world. Their combined balance of trade is second only to Japan's.

The infusion of cheap labor from East Germany into the well-established industries of West Germany is a scary thought. Germany's strength is exporting manufactured goods, and with so many Eastern European markets opening up, it could mean big bucks for the German economy.

Of course a united Germany would have to overcome the temporary problems of East Germany's poor economy, stagnant industries and low-valued currency. But after a few years of economic building, the united Germany could become the strongest member of the European community, and could rival Japan as an economic superpower. It's ironic that the two big losers of World War II would turn out to be the top economic leaders of the world a half-century later.

As a modern democratic nation, a reunified Germany poses no threat to world peace. Germany does, however, pose a threat to the United States' economic position with respect to the world and Europe.

The reunification of Germany was decided in November when the Berlin wall crumbled into souvenirs. We need to be aware that there will be a united Germany, and begin preparing for the economic consequences.

Timm Doolen is a junior computer science major.

Claude E. Mounce
Columnist

Traditions grow, change with culture

The dictionary defines tradition as the passing on of a cultural aspect from one generation to the next.

As an organization grows, some traditions remain, others fade away, sometimes new ones spring up. Even at Texas A&M we see our traditions beginning to reflect the culture of a generation. Some changes are a result of the evolution from a small, all-male, agriculture and military-oriented college to a large, coeducational traditional university.

Some traditions are so firmly entrenched, they will probably never change.

The Twelfth Man and standing at football games. Notice, however, that recently some student seats have been set aside for sitters.

Gig 'em, football yells and school songs. Some have wondered what the heck a "caneck" is and how come some students outside the College of Agriculture are still farmers. Some of the lyrics have changed to rhyme with "Texas AMU" rather than "Texas AMC."

Aggie Muster. Growing rather than declining.

Male yell leaders. These positions probably never will be open to females. If they were, yell leaders might be cheerleaders, and besides they could perform that ritual that yell leaders do when a field goal or point after touchdown is attempted. What are they're doing anyway?

t.u. — not a capital idea. Some traditions are beginning to fade.

Silver Taps. A fine tradition, but sparsely attended.

MSC grass. A probable victim of progress and MSC-Rudder expansion.

Hazing and saying "howdy." One due to common sense and the other to apathy.

Spring break. Originally set up as a time for students to go home and help with spring plowing. It's just a matter of time before educators and students realize a week of leisure is a luxury no longer affordable.

New traditions come slowly and without loud wailing, gnashing of teeth and sometimes lawsuits.

Women in the student body, Corps Aggie Band and Ross Volunteers. Generally accepted even if one of them didn't get a polite handshake from the A&M president at graduation.

Campus fraternities and sororities. Mighty hard for some Ags to stomach.

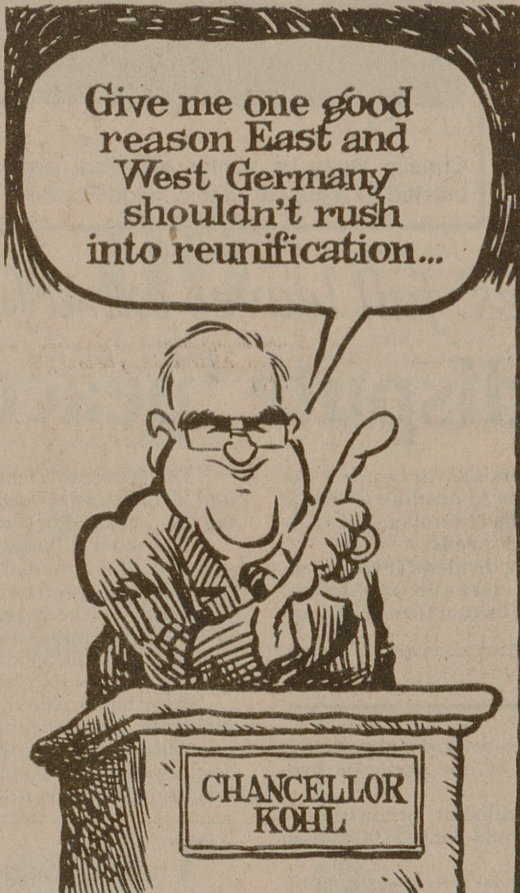
Gay student organizations. Their acceptance of this still hangs in the balance.

The way football and basketball coaches are fired. A relatively new tradition that seems to be really catching on.

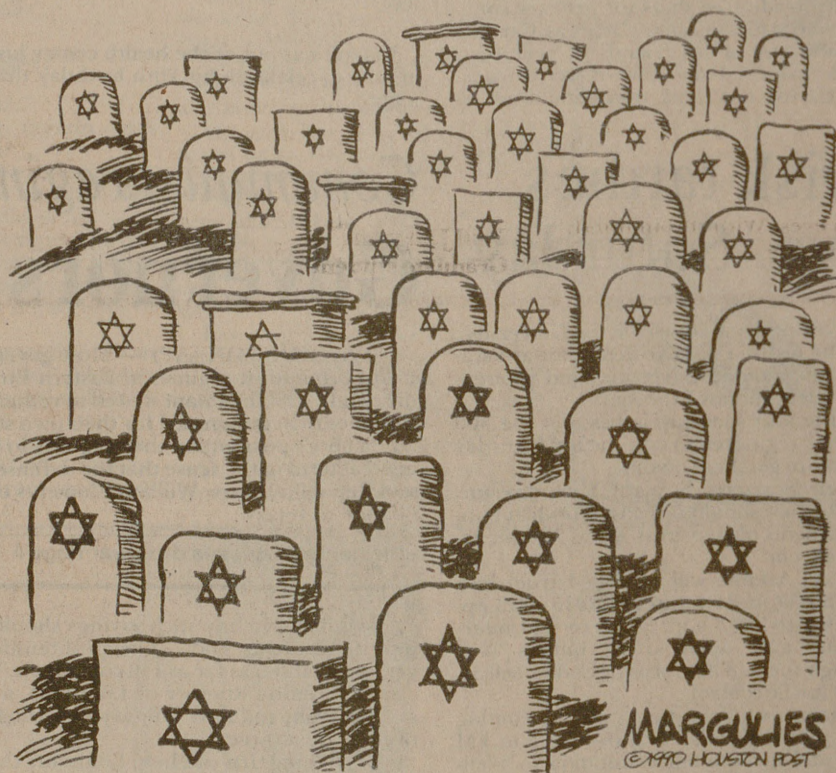
Traditions come and go. Institutional change to meet the demands of progress. Highway six will always run both ways, but soon will be a four-lane divided expressway.

The Spirit of Aggieland won't die, but it may change a little.

Claude E. Mounce is a lecturer in the Department of Agricultural Engineering.



SIX MILLION GOOD REASONS



Two-percenter, head to Highway 6

In response to Marcus Johnson's letter belittling Texas A&M, I would like to make a few comments.

1) A&M and tu are not the only major rivals around. Have you ever heard of Army-Navy? Alabama-Auburn? USC-UCLA? Try walking around on one of these campuses with a rival's emblem. Don't act like A&M is uniquely immature in this attitude. (By the way, rivalry doesn't necessarily mean hate for another school, but a deeper love of your own school.)

2) Aggies hiring Aggies does not mean that the Aggie is unqualified nor does it mean that graduates from another university won't be hired by an Aggie. Stop searching for a reason to condemn a bond that is a century old — a bond of friendship, nostalgia and pride that comes with attending this fine institution. But you wouldn't under-

Cristen M. Van Vleet
Reader's Opinion

stand that. Don't you lose any sleep about getting hired for being an Aggie. It won't happen.

3) Granted, A&M is not the most open-minded school in the nation. A&M is different. A&M is unique, with our traditions, our Corps of Cadets and our 12th Man — you know, students who actually support A&M! I just don't understand who someone who is so irritated by these qualities would attend this school. No, A&M is not open-minded.

But being chided, hated and belittled by "fellow Aggies" like you, Johnson, is not going to open any minds. Why don't you try being helpful and persuasive with your ideas with your ideas instead of blatantly rude?

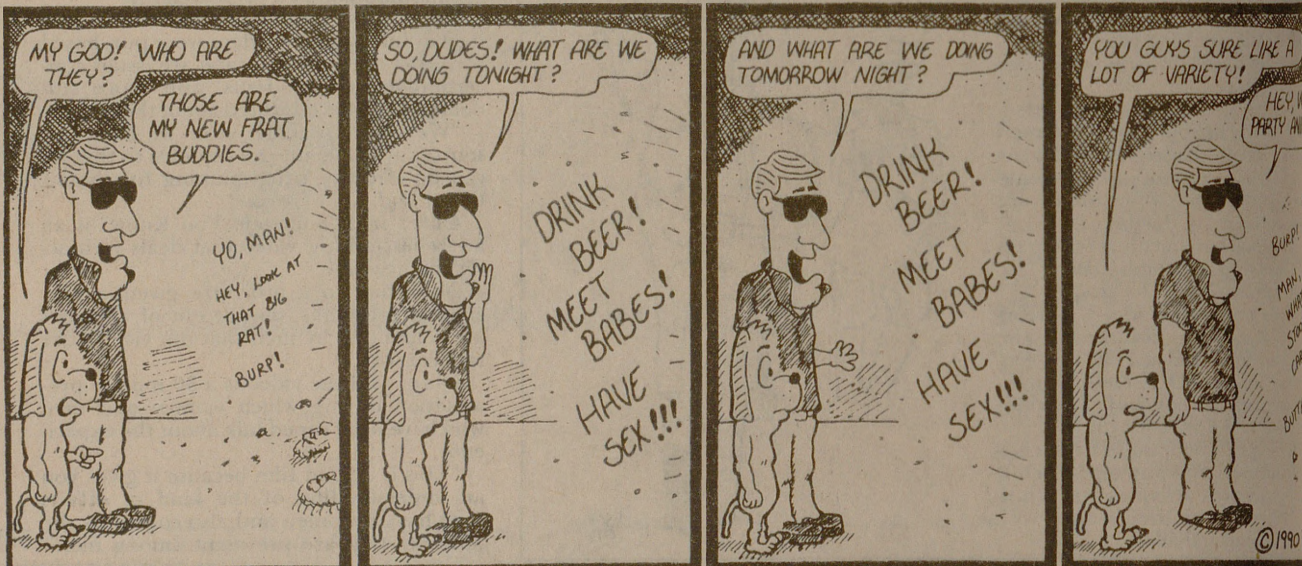
4) As for the Corps — people, stop losing sweat and tears over the Corps of Cadets. You can't beat 'em, you don't want to join 'em, so just leave them alone.

Oh, and I think I will tell you Highway 6 runs both ways (being the narrow-minded Aggie that I am). Now that you've been told so many times, why don't you try seeing if it works?

Cristen M. Van Vleet is a sophomore psychology major.

Adventures In Cartooning

by Don Atkinson



The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

Member of Texas Press Association Southwest Journalism Conference

The Battalion Editorial Board

- Scot Walker, Editor
- Monique Threadgill, Managing Editor
- Ellen Hobbs, Opinion Page Editor
- Melissa Naumann, City Editor
- Cindy McMillian, Lisa Robertson, News Editors
- Richard Tijerina, Sports Editor
- Fredrick D. Joe, Art Director
- Mary-Lynne Rice, Lifestyles Editor

Editorial Policy

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station. 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 is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods.

Mail subscriptions are \$17.44 per semester, \$34.82 per school year and \$36.44 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111.

Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.