

Belittlers of Corps often lack understanding

In all my years at A&M, I have seen many letters written in *The Battalion* criticizing the Corps of Cadets. Some of these letters have been legitimate complaints that have actually prompted some minor changes in Corps activities. Many of these have been aimless conclusions drawn from a lack of knowledge about the Corps. However, I have never seen one as blatantly ignorant as the one written by Marcus Johnson in the Feb. 20 edition of *The*

J. Christopher Neel

Reader's Opinion

Battalion.

As a former Cadet of four years, I feel that there are many things that need to be told about the Corps that should be fully understood by everyone before they fulfill their right to criticize

it. The purpose of the Corps is to help prepare men and women to be leaders in the military or the business world. The Corps is organized on a class system just as most everything else is here at A&M. The functions of the classes are as follows:

I. Seniors lead the Corps. They develop the policies that will be followed by the underclassman.

II. Juniors implement the policies developed by the seniors.

III. Sophomores teach and discipline the freshman class.

IV. Freshmen are the Corps. They are the newest and least experienced of all the classes and need to be taught how to become cadets.

The manner that the Corps carries out its purpose is to teach the freshmen how to lead by example. One of the first things the freshmen are told is that in order to be a leader, they must first understand what it means to be led. Once they have spent a year in this role, they are given more and more responsibility until eventually they themselves become the leaders of the Corps as seniors.

The freshmen are taught how to become a model cadets, following the creed of Lawrence Sullivan Ross — "Soldier, Statesman, Knightly Gentleman." To fit this role, the freshmen must learn to discipline themselves. One way for the upperclassmen to measure the progress

believing certain things.

The privileges given to the upperclassmen are nothing more than a way of distinguishing the different class levels. They are given evenly to all cadets of the same class, but yes, those with seniority do have what many consider a nicer uniform. The level of knowledge of the cadets is recognized through the awarding of rank to the individual cadets. Those with "higher knowledge" are more than likely to hold higher rank.

Many of the traditions at A&M were developed while the school was a military academy. These were developed to promote a sense of unity to those at A&M. The motto of the Corps is "Per Unitatum Vis" — Through Unity — Strength. While many of the activities are nothing more than games, those who play and play by all the rules generally have more fun and get the most out of it. I myself have made many great friends and have found that I am capable of achieving many feats — mentally, emotionally and physically, that I don't believe I would have experienced had I not been in the Corps.

I do not feel that I am narrow-minded. I accept that there are those that would rather join a Greek organization and there are those who do not want to belong to either organization. I happen to have expressed myself by joining the Corps, do not feel that those who are not in the Corps are inferior to me.

Granted the Corps is not perfect, for not every cadet can and will live up to the creed "Soldier, Statesman, Knightly Gentleman." It is a demanding and difficult goal to achieve — few have ever truly filled the role completely, but I do not care for those who choose to criticize what they know so little about.

A&M is a land of great opportunity. It has a reputation of being an excellent school. But it also offers many things in the way of extracurricular activities, many things that are not offered at other equally excellent or even better schools. However, it is all for naught if all of these are lost in strife and division among the student body.

J. Christopher Neel is a senior mechanical engineering major.

Pageant contestants not 'like cattle'

I worked at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo this week. Seeing all those pigs, cows and sheep being judged (on muscle tone, suitability for breeding, etc.) made me start thinking about the 1990 Miss Texas A&M pageant.

Now, wait a minute. Calm down. I didn't say that I think that beauty pageants treat women like cattle. But a group of protestors who showed up at the Miss Texas A&M pageant last Saturday night said that they thought so.

Melissa Cuthbert, one of the protestors, is quoted in Monday's *Battalion* as saying that the University, through the pageant, is promoting the stereotype that women are useless unless they are beautiful. Another protestor said on the Channel 3 News that the women in the pageant were being judged "like cattle." So there I was, at the Astrodome, watching cattle being judged on whether they will make a good T-bone, or whether they could mate with other cows to make baby cows that will someday make a good T-bone. And I wondered, is this what a beauty pageant is like?

I came to the conclusion that there is no similarity, and Cuthbert and her cohorts are getting uptight about nothing. The Miss Texas A&M pageant is not a bad thing; in fact, in many ways it is a good thing.

A steer does not choose to participate in a livestock show. He is just led into the ring and put on display. He doesn't have to sing; he doesn't have to answer



Scot O. Walker

Editor

questions. If he has a problem with the concept or the procedures, fine. Tomorrow he's a Big Mac. A woman, on the other hand, says, "Hey, these people are offering money — lots of money — to someone who is pretty and smart and talented. I'm pretty and smart and talented. I think I'll enter." I see no problems with that.

Unlike cows, Miss Texas A&M isn't selected solely on looks. This year's contestants all had above a 3.0 grade point. They also had talent.

Cuthbert said that A&M discriminates against women who cannot compete with society's standard of beauty.

This is true, but every scholarship competition discriminates against somebody. There are scholarships for engineering majors, for African-Americans, for smart people, for people who score high on the SAT, for citizens of certain counties — even scholarships for people who raise certain kinds of cattle (of the non-human variety, of course). That's the nature of competition: someone has or does something better than someone else, and is rewarded for it. The others don't have it or do it as well, and they are

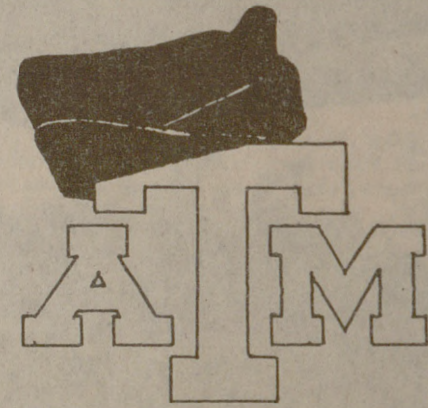
discriminated against. In other words, they lose. So what?

Cuthbert said that the pageant should be based only on a woman's academic achievements. But, even ignoring her blatant bias against men, she's still discriminating. Some people are born smart and can get through school on cruise control, making A's and B's. Others aren't so lucky, and have to really work just get C's. So is it fair to give the person with better grades a scholarship while snubbing the other? Of course it's not. But life ain't fair.

Let's suppose just for a minute that beauty was the only prerequisite to be Miss Texas A&M. There is still nothing wrong with that. We judge entertainers on how well they sing or dance. We judge athletes on how well they run or throw. We judge models — and beauty contestants — on how good looking they are. Everybody is judged on something. If you don't want to be judged on your looks, don't enter beauty pageants. If you don't want to see other people judged on their looks, don't attend beauty pageants.

All the women in the pageant were there because they wanted to be there. They were all smart, talented and pretty. The winner was intelligent, gifted and gorgeous. She's happy she won, the other contestants are happy they competed, the audience is happy because they got to see a good show. Everybody else should find a better cause to justify their silly protests.

Scot Walker is a senior journalism major.



of the freshmen is to see how well they conform or fit in with the crowd. This is not done through the changing of their viewpoints or beliefs, but through uniform inspections and evaluations of how well they associate with their "buddies" or fellow freshmen. The same thing is done in the U.S. Military, which the Corps is modeled after. Texas A&M, after all, was once a military academy. It is true that many of the people who do enter the Corps do share many common viewpoints and ideas, but this is because they have a common interest in the military, not because they were coerced or brainwashed into

Students must realize AIDS can threaten their lives

AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) is a lethal disease and a consequence of infection by the immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Other less severe illnesses, grouped under the term ARC (AIDS-related complex), as well as asymptomatic infections may also result from the HIV infection.

The incubation period for AIDS may range from few months to five years or more. Currently, there is no vaccine to protect against HIV infection, and there is no cure for AIDS.

HIV infection is transmitted through sexual intercourse, contact with blood, semen, and body fluids, and prenatally from an infected mother. HIV transmission does *not* take place through casual contact such as by air, food, or water routes, contact with inanimate objects or through mosquitos.

The HIV infection is preventable. Increasing awareness and providing education to students at all levels and backgrounds are the primary forms of prevention against AIDS.

According to Dr. Richard Keeling, director of student health at the University of Virginia and chairman of the Task Force on AIDS of the American College Health Association, the prevalence of HIV infection on college campuses is relatively small: 0.2 percent. Yet, in a campus of the size of Texas A&M, it means that we can expect to have 80 students infected with HIV.

The early symptoms of AIDS are similar to other illnesses such as bronchitis or colds, including the

Erika Gonzalez-Lima

Health Columnist

following: unexplained fever, night sweats or shaking chills lasting several weeks; unexplained diarrhea lasting more than three weeks; a persistent dry cough, unexplained weight loss of more than 15 pounds over a short period of time, persistent and unexplained swollen glands and hard, painless bruises in the skin that do not disappear.

A person can look and feel healthy and be capable of spreading the virus.

There are tests available to check for the presence of antibodies in the bloodstream, such as ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay), and the most precise test, Western Blot.

If the test is positive, this means that the person has been exposed to and is infected with the virus. A positive result does not necessarily mean that the person has developed or will develop AIDS. A negative test result means that the person has probably not developed antibodies to HIV, and it may not accurately reflect whether or not the person is infected.

College students are at increased risk infection because of three factors:

1) Feelings of immortality that provide them false courage and denial for personal risk.

2) Active sex lives: as shown by the high incidence of sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancies.

According to Dr. Keeling, 83 percent of college students have had sexual intercourse before graduation, and 60 percent did not use a condom.

3) Drug experimentation: curiosity, peer pressure, stress, etc. can lead to drug use. Drugs add risk of HIV infection in three ways:

a) Intravenous drug use may lead to sharing needles which transfer contaminated blood from an infected person to another.

b) Drugs may also act as "cofactor," weakening the body's immune system.

c) Drugs may also impair student's judgement, decreasing chances for making "safe sex" decisions.

The last reports from the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta show that 50 percent of all heterosexual and 30 percent all cases of HIV infection are drug related.

As a college student, you can choose not to do certain behaviors that will endanger your life. The first thing you need to develop is self-respect. Be honest with yourself and decide what you want from a relationship. Abstinence is the only guarantee against HIV infection but it may not be what you want. If you decide to have sex, choose safe sex. Communicate effectively with your sexual partner and choose lower-risk sexual activities. Use latex condoms. When used properly,

Instructions for condom users

- For maximum protection, condoms must be used correctly.
 - Use a condom every time you have intercourse.
 - Always put the condom on the penis before intercourse begins.
 - Do not pull the condom tightly against the tip of the penis. Leave a small empty space — about one or two centimeters — at the end of the condom to hold semen. Some condoms have a nipple tip that will hold semen.
 - Unroll the condom all the way to the bottom of the penis.
 - If the condom breaks during intercourse, withdraw the penis immediately and put on a new condom.
 - After ejaculation, withdraw the penis while it is still erect. Hold onto the rim of the condom as you withdraw so that the condom does not slip off.
 - Use a new condom each time you have intercourse. Throw used condoms away.
 - If a lubricant is desired, use water-based lubricants such as water-based jelly. Lubricants made with petroleum jelly may damage condoms. Do not use saliva because it may contain a virus.
 - Store condoms in a cool, dry place if possible.
 - Condoms that are sticky or brittle or otherwise damaged should not be used.
- These instructions are reprinted from Population Reports, Vol. XIV, 3, July-August 1986.*

condoms are 98 percent effective in preventing sexually transmitted disease, including AIDS.

The well-known Planned Parenthood adage "Hope is Not a Method" applies to both avoiding AIDS and pregnancy. Seek a mutually faithful relationship with one partner, or at least, limit the number of sexual partners. Don't use drugs or share needles, and do not have intercourse with intravenous drug users

or with persons with multiple sex partners. Remember to take precautions before sharing sexual intimacy.

*Have a question on a health issue? Write to the Health Columnist, Dr. Erika Gonzalez-Lima, Student Health Center, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77845-1264. Letters will be answered anonymously through this column in *The Battalion*. If an individual reply is expected, please include your name, address and telephone number.*

Adventures In Cartooning

by Don Atkinson Jr.



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, \$34.62 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.