

Mail Call

Silver Taps is worth the hassle

EDITOR:

Coriene Case thinks Silver Taps is "just not worth the hassle." If they weren't friends of mine, why should I give a damn? That's the attitude I get from reading her letter.

An amazing reversal from last semester when she warned us that bonfire is a silly, wasteful little tradition (destroys squirrel habitat, you know).

Case informs us that she "has a life," and therefore can't attend Silver Taps. How fortunate for you that you do have your life. Yet it's so very sad that you, and people like you, are so caught up in your own personal little lives and self-centered activities that you can't even take just a few minutes to pay respect to one of us who no longer has a life to live.

Where do you draw the line, Coriene? When do you stand up and put out? An Aggie isn't just an Aggie when it's convenient.

I am so sick of hearing whining excuses for not going to Silver Taps. "I've got three chapters to read," or "I've got to get up early."

I have lived off campus and I have driven to Silver Taps. I now live in Pur-year Hall, a mere 300 feet from the Academic building. We go as a dorm, but even here there are always those who have to "study." I'm home in 15 minutes; when I lived off campus, I was home in 30. That's a long time? Most study breaks last that long.

If you make a serious attempt to attend Silver Taps, you will find a great big empty staff parking lot behind Law Hall, just waiting for you. There is no parking problem.

If your time management skills are so poor that you can't even spare 30 minutes, then by all means stay home and study. Just don't make excuses for not going!

It's obvious that Case has a real problem with some of our most important traditions here at A&M, but she shouldn't feel alone. Two weeks ago The Battalion showed us that even its staff doesn't know what day of the month Silver Taps is held on. I'm going through Austin next week — I might be able to get all of you in my truck.

Kevin Jimmerson '89

A lesson about atheism

EDITOR:

This letter is in response to the article, "Evil doesn't prove there is no God," by Ronda Sheppard.

This article was obviously written from a narrow-minded point of view by a person who knows nothing about atheism. The question addressed was simple enough: "Why is there evil in the world?" Unfortunately, Rhonda, you never answered the question. Sure, you talked about good things that seem to cancel out the bad things (in your mind, at least). It seems to me you ignored the question you set out to answer.

By the way, what is "evil" anyway? A person's personal concept of evil depends on their socialization and cultural background. I'm sure a tribe of cannibals would not believe they are "evil."

How ethnocentric of you, Rhonda.

Maybe you should think a little deeper about the subject you attempted to write about. It's a big world out there, and there are a lot of different religions with different concepts of evil. Here are a few things I suggest you address in your next attempt to write an article:

Think about your all-loving God who created the earth and said "believe in me or else suffer infinite damnation." Think about the concept of infinite time relative to your (and the earth's) finite existence. Think about evolution, mythology, astronomy, cosmology...

Now you know that, as an atheist, I am not constantly dwelling on such a flimsy concept as "evilness." What of it?

Try keeping an open mind and viewing things from different angles, and don't write about things you don't know about.

David Hague '92

Personal headphones should be allowed

EDITOR:

This semester I have been studying at the Browsing Library on the second floor of the MSC. It is very peaceful and quiet there, unlike the regular library. One of the many enjoyable features of this library is the music. You can check out some headphones and listen to just about any type of music you want.

My problem is that I wear glasses and the headphones they have cover the entire ear. After a long period of wear the headphones begin to bother me because they put pressure on the top of my ears and the ear hooks of my glasses.

Today, I decided I would bring my own headphones, the kind used for walkmans. When I told the lady at the counter I had my own headphones, she told me I could not use them. I asked why and she said because it is a rule. I asked her why it is a rule, but she said it did not matter because it is a rule.

I told her I would check out their headphones but use mine. She told me no. I then seated myself and plugged my headphones in, but she came out and unplugged them. I asked her again why and she said it was a rule. She even showed me their manual which had the rule, but it did not say why.

I understand that there are many rules all over campus, and I understand most of them because there is a reason for their existence. I am not trying to be a jerk, but if I can bring in my own tapes and ask to listen to them and if I can listen to other people's music (they have six or eight tape players), why can't I use my own headphones? Or, at least, why can't someone tell me the reason?

Mauricio Freyre '90

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. 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.

The Big Event is coming to A&M

The Event is coming. You know, the Big one. The Event that's one of the Biggest of the year. The one that involves literally thousands of students and has a really Big impact on the B-CS community. The one you can be a part of. It's the event of the season.

It's the Big Event, and it's happening March 24.

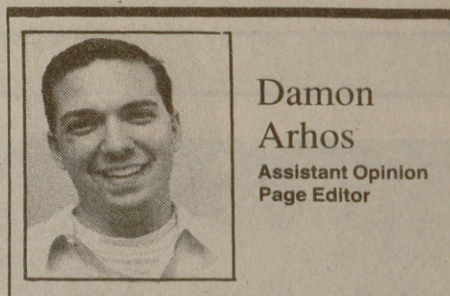
It's no ordinary event. This year, it is estimated that approximately 6,000 students will mobilize for this massive community service project that is quickly becoming one of the largest of its type in the nation. The A&M student body cares about the B-CS community and its people, and it shows.

And the people of this community will find that this year's Big Event will be even bigger and better than before. Changes to the seventh annual program will include the addition of new areas of B-CS to its agenda, a Special Olympics softball tournament at the College Station Central Park and a Brazos Food Drive for the hungry.

The Big Event doesn't discriminate, either. Every student at A&M can volunteer themselves or their group for the project, and students can even specifically request the type of community service activity that they would like to participate in. To do this, however, students must sign up themselves or their group by March 9. All it takes is one phone call to the student government office.

Inevitably, there are those students who will think, "Why should I get up on a Saturday morning just to go pick up trash on the side of some highway or paint some house? I'm too busy with school and other activities to spend my time volunteering for some service project. What's one less person to the Big Event anyway?"

But for every excuse there is *not* to volunteer your time for the Big Event,



Damon Arhos
Assistant Opinion Page Editor

many more reasons exist why you should join this effort. It is kind of like the commercial that suggests that if everyone just gave 5 hours every week to your favorite cause, many of the world's problems would be eradicated.

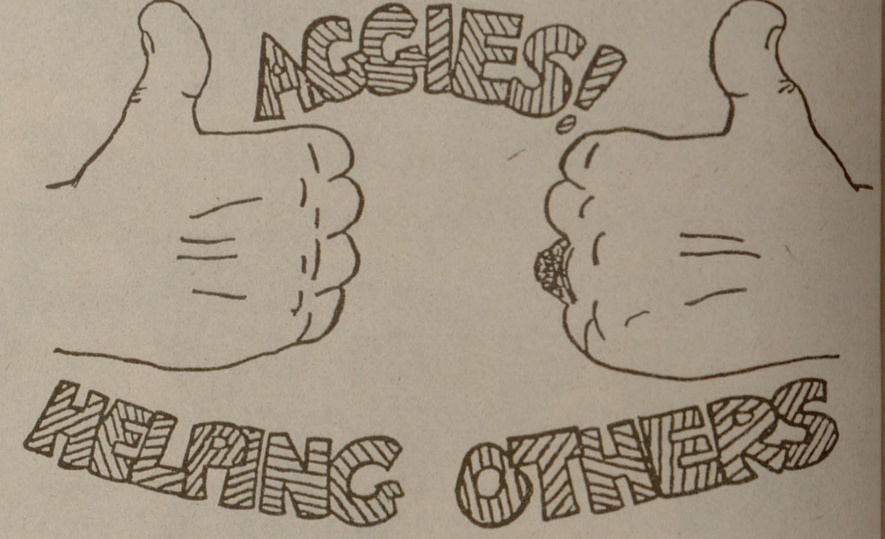
The same goes for the Big Event. If every student would volunteer his time for the project, just think of the impact it would have on this community and our University. One can of food from every student would amass over 40,000 cans. One piece of trash picked up from the side of the highway by each student would be quite a bit more than a

dumpster full. Over 40,000 brushes would paint more than a few houses. And one less person participating means there will be one less hand helping out.

Then there are the benefits that student gains from participating in the project: the camaraderie that is created from working with fellow Aggies toward a common goal; the working relationships that are developed from participating with members from the group or organization; the pride that they have knowing that you have improved the community and helped others. While these rewards may seem little in view of the activities themselves, the experience and self-esteem gained from them can prove to be invaluable.

So, go ahead. Give the student government office a call and ask to sign up for the Big Event. Believe me, after the last piece of trash is picked up, the last house is painted and the last can donated — you'll be glad that you did.

Damon Arhos is a senior journalism major.



Moral Aggies should help ban bonfire

The students at Texas A&M take pride in their traditions because those traditions are good traditions: good in the sense of contributing to personal value, school spirit, leadership and comradery. Few Aggies would maintain that a practice (like hazing, sexual harassment or racism) must be protected simply because it has been the norm for years or because its rejection on moral grounds would offend some current or former students.

No doubt there are mean-spirited Aggies; no doubt there are sexist Aggies; no doubt there are bigoted and racist Aggies — all of whom argue that their beliefs are grounded in the traditions of this University. But hiding behind tradition to support an immoral practice violates everything this University stands for.

Like most immoral behavior, the destruction of the environment when building bonfire is never presented as a moral question at all. We hear that the land is to be cleared regardless of whether or not the wood is used for bonfire, just as we hear that hazing, sexual harassment and racism will occur no matter what the University does. So, the argument goes, if this environmental evil is to occur anyway, why should we not take advantage of it?



Stephen H. Daniel
Reader's Opinion

To this I answer simply: It is because the practice is wrong. The students of this University, as caretakers of the planet and morally sensitive citizens, do not need to endorse or legitimize the immorality of others in order to continue a practice that, whatever its history is here, is nationally recognized as fundamentally immoral. Suggestions that other trees be planted for every tree burned are only attempts to placate our consciences by saying it is permissible to do something wrong as long as we balance it with something right (or with something that at least counteracts a negative, anti-environmental public image).

The moral argument against bonfire is not against developing school spirit or leadership, and is not primarily concerned with the lost hours of studies, the liabilities of possible injuries, the damage to homes in the area of the fire or even the pollution made by burning the logs. The moral argument is fundamentally an invitation to think about what this systematic destruction of forests means from a moral standpoint and not simply from the standpoint of what is legal or popular from a public relations perspective.

Just as we are not obligated to suggest alternatives about how gangs bent on attacking African-Americans might better develop their spirit of fellowship,

morally conscientious individuals have no obligation to dictate alternatives to bonfire. Aggies are resourceful; there is no doubt that they will find non-destructive ways of expressing their pride and commitment.

All of us, though, have a responsibility to educate one another and especially former students about how the changing conditions of the planet have elevated environmental concerns from simply technological problems to ethical issues. We need to spread the word that a good Aggie is a morally good person, one who holds on to a practice like sexual harassment or racial exclusion because it's done that way.

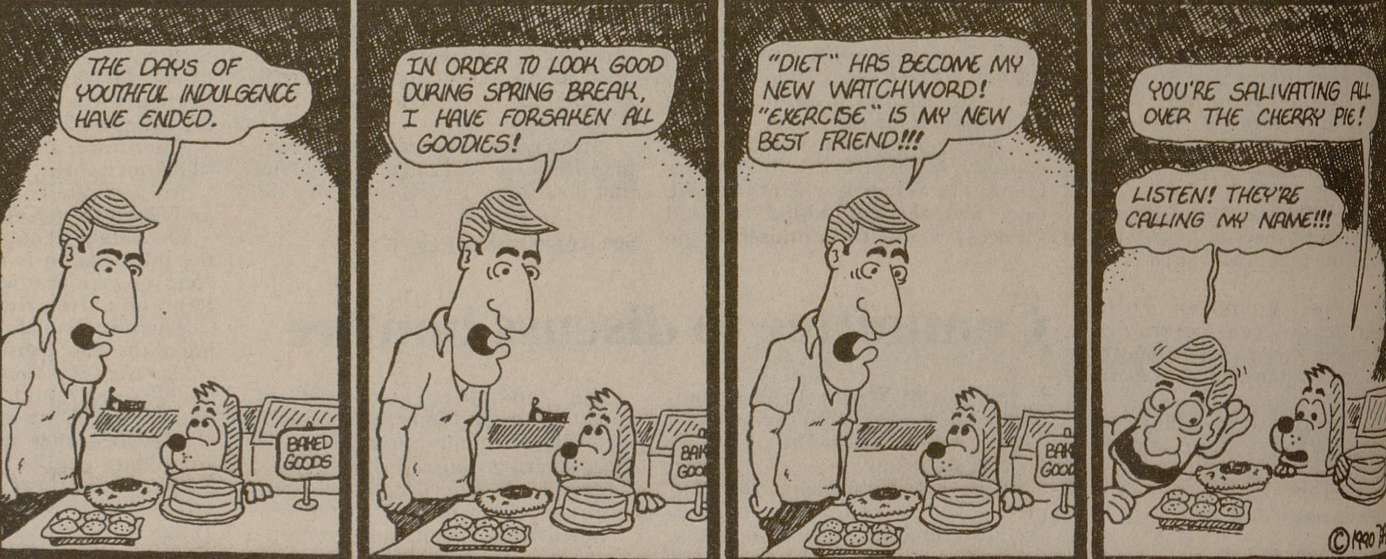
Furthermore, once we recognize the immoral character of the bonfire tradition, there is no middle position. Just as sexism or racism cannot be condoned even in moderation, so also even the reduced destruction associated with smaller bonfire cannot be rationalized on moral grounds.

Admittedly, this is a harsh message, but one that takes the high road rather than the low one of seeing how much longer the University will be permitted socially or legally, to condone an immoral practice. Before we are forced to change, why not acknowledge this wrong and recommit the University to the ideals of responsible stewardship proper to a land-grant institution.

Editor's note: A Faculty Senate ad hoc committee is soliciting opinions on bonfire at an open hearing tonight from 4-5:30 p.m. in 338 Psychology.

Stephen H. Daniel is an associate professor in the philosophy department and the faculty advisor for Aggies Against Bonfire.

Adventures In Cartooning by Don Atkinson



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