

Remember to vote

If you think you have plenty of time before you need to worry about voting in the March 13 primary, think again. The primary falls on the Tuesday during spring break. If you are registered to vote and will be out of town during spring break, vote absentee. Voting locations are in 146 MSC for the Democratic primary and 138 MSC for the Republican primary. They are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The last day to absentee vote is Friday. Before you hit the beach, fill out your ballot.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Mail Call

Mr. Big should be given credit it deserves

EDITOR:

Chuck Squatriglia's column in the March 1 Battalion described the show nearly perfectly, but I feel he forgot one of the major elements of the concert: the opening act. It's not often that a band like Mr. Big happens along and when one does, it should be given all of the credit it deserves. Mr. Big is a musician's band: They write music more for music's sake than for the money, and this allows them to explore musical venues that most pop performers don't even dream about. Billy Sheehan and Paul Gilbert, both of whom have already played for years in other bands, are two of the hottest players to lay their hands on a fretboard, and they proved that during their solos and a fiery dueling exchange. All of the power, creativity, talent and emotion present in their set Monday indicates a collection of seasoned musicians on the rise, and I find it strange that Chuck neglected to even mention them. They sure got my attention.

Shane Potter '91

Ross' background irrelevant in symbol issue

EDITOR:

It doesn't often amaze me when I read the Opinion Page in The Battalion, but I have to admit that when I read Bryan Skipworth's article, I had pretty well decided that I had read the stupidest, most irresponsible drivel yet to grace these pages. Just what exactly did Sul Ross have to do with anything, Bryan, except as an opportunity for you to get up on your soapbox? What he did and who he was is entirely irrelevant. These people's disgust over that symbol had absolutely nothing to do with censorship or the desire to relieve a "police state" or any other such nonsense. I have a German friend who would have beaten you silly just for putting that up, precisely because of what it stands for. You have every right to express your opinions, but a little responsibility would go a long way. You need to grow up in a big way, Bryan.

Michael Ternus '90

Cartoonist obnoxious, not fraternity men

EDITOR:

Are all C.T.'s obnoxious? Are all cartoonists stereotyping, narrow-minded flakes? I hope I got your attention, Don Atkinson Jr., because this is directed toward you or anyone else who blindly sees fraternity men as nothing but beer-drinking, womanizing jerks.

I've been following "Adventures in Cartooning" for several days as "Don," after being hit on the head, decided to join a fraternity and has progressively become more of a jerk ever since. For example, this is a quote from "Don" on Feb. 22: "Hey don't sweat it, Babe! I'm better than OK! I'm in a frat now, I own a motorcycle and you're hot for me! I can tell." Don, give me a break.

First, fraternity life is not about drinking and trying to look cool. It is about making the most out of your future. Second, if you are going to portray "Don" as a fraternity guy, please show a more realistic side of Greek life. Have "Don," for instance, take some underprivileged children to a baseball game or have him raise some money for the American Heart Association.

No, all C.T.'s are not obnoxious, and I don't know anything about cartoonists. But I don't stereotype them either. Don, if you are going to continue on with this character, please come find out what fraternities are really about before you judge us all to be jerks.

Greg Westmoreland '91

Pageant 'objectionable and offensive'

EDITOR:

I would like to express my support of the students protesting the Miss Texas A&M Scholarship Pageant on Saturday, Feb. 24. I was disturbed when I learned this University promotes the continuation of practices which encourage women to compete on the basis of their physical appearance, and which strengthen the notion of this society's standards of beauty as an acceptable and desirable goal. I was pleased to know there are students at A&M who also find this pageant objectionable and offensive, and are willing to make their opinion public.

Sandra J. Ellett
Graduate student

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.

Japan not cause of our problems

Japan-bashing is becoming a popular sport in U.S. politics. People are crying for some sort of protectionist retaliation against a Japan that supposedly refuses to open markets to U.S. goods; in the minds of many Americans our economic problems are a result of Japanese unfair trading practices. Our "special relationship" with Japan is being questioned.

We often blame others for our problems; recent scapegoats range from communism to drug abuse. Blaming Japan for our economic woes is one of our current obsessions. I think it's a bunch of bull. We're having economic problems (and are destined to have worse ones very soon) partly for some simple reasons: We've been greedy and stupid.

While Americans have been borrowing money for a spending binge, the Japanese have been saving and investing. Between 1970 and 1990 we have invested 16-20 percent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) while the Japanese have invested 28-38 percent of theirs. While their businesses have been working to improve performance, ours have been on a feeding frenzy of incredible proportions, racking up huge debts in a takeover spree.

In the arena of personal finances, the story is similar: Americans borrow and spend, Japanese save. In the past two decades, the rate of savings in Japan (again as a percentage of GDP) has fluctuated between 30 percent and 40 percent; the comparable statistic for the U.S. has gone from 18-20 percent in the '70s to 15-17 percent in the '80s.

We've not only messed up our personal and business finances. The avarice and shortsightedness have extended into the political realm as well.

Jeff Farmer
Columnist



Our government is in debt to the tune of over \$15,000 for every man, woman and child in the country, and it's getting worse by the minute. It's not the fault of our political leaders as much as it is the fault of the people who elect them. We twice elected a president who promised to lower taxes, spend more on defense and balance the budget. We re-elected our representatives based on the amount of tax money (extorted from our fellow citizens) spent in our district. We continue to believe those who promise us a free lunch.

The facts are clear. We don't save as much, work as hard or as long, invest as much, operate as efficiently or plan as far ahead as the Japanese do. Anyone trying to be "fair" would give them first prize in the economic race. If we want to compete with them, we must improve our performance. The Japanese have learned from us in the past, and we can learn from them now.

The Japanese who buy American businesses seem to be running them as well, if not better than, the Americans who preceded them. Our managers can begin by treating the employees better, and by paying attention to their suggestions. We have taken the authoritarian model as far as it can go;

it's given us labor unions, strikes and a lot of general waste and unrest. It's time for employees to take an interest in the business, and for employers to reward those who do.

Brokers need to stop trying to make quick buck on the market, and start trying to find quality companies to invest in for the long term.

We need to spend less, save more and quit borrowing all together. I personally refuse to borrow money I can't repay or spend on things I don't need in order to keep up with some artificial television-created standard I don't like. I refuse to vote for people who will spend government money foolishly, even if they spend it on me. I refuse to believe that the quality of my life is measured in dollar terms, or that anyone else's is, either. I will happily pay a little more for a good product from a small businessperson I know over a mediocre product from a large company that is unresponsive.

There are also a few things we don't need to learn from the Japanese. We don't need to work so hard that we neglect our families. We don't need to pressure our children to achieve so much that they are driven to suicide. We don't need to turn our schools into factories of rote memorization.

The better economy of the future starts with each one of us. Stop thinking that the solution to our problems involves forcing other people to do (or not do) certain things (import tariffs and quotas are examples). The solution involves each of us living an honest, informed, productive and contented life. We must stop trying to get something for nothing and start doing a better job. It's our own choice.

Jeff Farmer is a graduate student in mathematics.

Pageant measures more than beauty

My intentions are not only to refute the arguments of the students who staged the protest at our 1990 pageant, but to also show the true purpose of the Miss Texas A&M University Pageant.

The fact that the students staged a protest against something they strongly oppose is admirable; America needs more people to stand up for things in which they truly believe. However, their motivations for doubting the significance of the Miss Texas A&M Scholarship Pageant in particular, and their strategy for expressing this doubt need questioning.

If Texas A&M was promoting the stereotype that women are useless unless they are beautiful, submitting a picture and bodily dimensions would have been an application requirement to enter the University. Confidence, intelligence and personality are only a few of the qualities required for contestants in our pageant. Therefore inner beauty, or substance is our emphasis.

Melissa Culbert is correct in believing that the selection of Miss Texas A&M University should be based on academic achievement. An individual's academic achievement reveals that person's diligence, responsibility and determination. Ninety-two percent of all Miss Texas A&M winners have had G.P.R.'s above 3.0. These ladies of substance have pursued degrees in various disciplines. They do not pursue degrees in hair and make-up; they do not earn M.R.S. degrees.

A contestant's academic standing influences her admission to or rejection from the pageant. However, the value of a well-rounded queen is much greater than that of a queen who is solely "book smart. Miss Texas A&M is talented

Shanedria M. Ridley
Reader's opinion

"and" intelligent. Her responsibilities are ceremonial to a certain degree; however, she also completes service oriented tasks in the Bryan-College Station area.

Whether or not a person is physically beautiful is a matter of personal opinion. Natural beauty is determined by birth, not by choice. Therefore a young lady's poise, etiquette and personal ambition are considered instead of her physical characteristics.

The Texas A&M University Scholarship Pageant does not make the contestants sex objects in any way. The pageant is an official search for a female representative for our University. Our pageant cannot be compared with a strip joint, the contestants with go-go girls, nor our program book with a pornographic magazine. Those who attend the pageant agree that it is a positive experience. Only a woman can make herself a sex object.

Karen Bell feels that by participating in the pageant voluntarily, the contestants are hurting women as a whole. Chauvinism (sexism), lack of respect and rape hurt women as a whole. By voluntarily pursuing the title of Miss Texas A&M University, these contestants help themselves to accept exciting challenges. Hard work, sacrifice and dedication allow the contestants to work continuously from their moment of selection in October, to the moment of our production in February.

In a "beauty" pageant, the main emphasis is physical beauty, as denoted by its definition. However, the Miss Texas A&M Pageant is a "scholarship" pageant where education, positive role maintenance and the development of our queen are most important. A young lady's true "beauty" is determined by her attitude and ambition. Society's standard of beauty is insignificant when talent and intelligence are important.

I am not criticizing the intentions of the protestors because opposing opinions must be allowed and respected in the "real" world. However, congregation in front of our pageant with signs expressing opposition to a nonexistent occurrence at Texas A&M needs to be challenged.

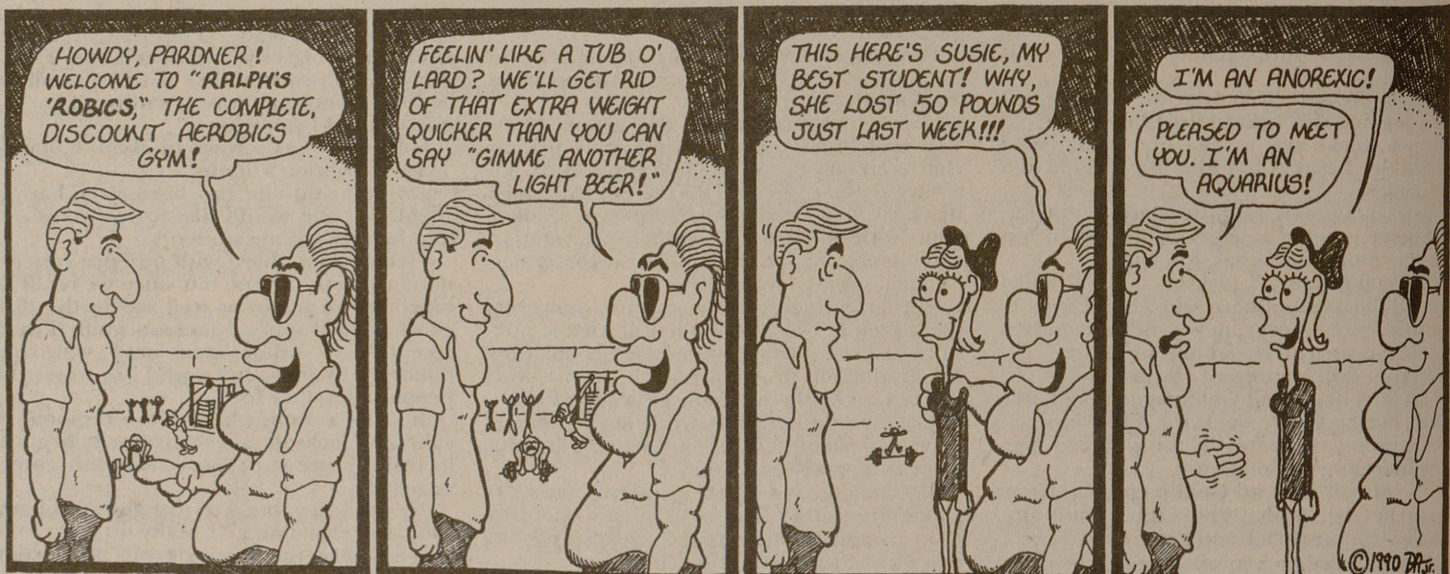
Their sincerity was not evident at the pageant because they protested among people who do not agree with their views concerning the Miss Texas A&M Scholarship Pageant. Therefore, they walked away with the little support that they approached us with. Their actions gave the impression that they wanted to aggravate those in attendance, intimidate the committee members and receive ultimate attention.

The protestors should not consider my response an insult. I am simply expressing my views while being sensitive to their purpose. I challenge not only the protestors, but the entire student body to learn about Rhonda Jo Horn, our 1990 Miss Texas A&M University. We look forward to seeing everyone at our 1991 pageant.

Shanedria M. Ridley is a sophomore French and speech communication major and executive director for the 1991 Miss Texas A&M Scholarship Pageant.

Adventures In Cartooning

by Don Atkinson Jr.



The Battalion

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