

# Why must we have the biggest bonfire anyway?

Ah, fall; and a college student's mind turns to football and, of course, bonfire. Not academics, mind you, but other things such as "school spirit" (translation: party?). Thoughts are focused on tradition and the insecurities associated with attending Texas A&M.

Do we really need the biggest bonfire in the nation in order to feel its significance? It is not suggested herein that it needs to be reduced in size, or any other parameter, but I have a few questions:

First, do people helping out with the affair have designated drivers if alcohol is present? And do helpers have any academic problems resulting from their participation? And finally, do people who do not share the feelings of those associated with the bonfire and see a

Derek W. Ryter  
Reader's Opinion

need for a reduction of its size really sit around and commune with Mother Earth? (I suggest that they probably don't; that is a stereotype that died long ago.)

Are you sure that nothing is broken and nothing needs fixing, Mr. Cox? If a school can't change and evolve, it is inevitable that it will be left behind. I don't know about Mr. Cox, but I don't want my degree to read "Ph.D. Texas A&M, the land that time forgot." Let's be proud of A&M's heritage and follow the old Ags' model of hard work, discipline, maturity, and believing in

your University, not "hitchhiking ... for booze." This is where respect comes from.

This whole issue is really bringing together some ideas and observations made in the time that I have spent at Texas A&M as a graduate student and dedicated scientist. I believe that in an institution of higher education, academic excellence should be the priority, with energies brought about by pride in the traditions and sports programs providing impetus for this excellence.

In my experience as a graduate teaching assistant at other schools as well as A&M, I have put forth as much effort as possible to give students the best education that I can. And I have never seen academic apathy similar to that here.

I have seen too many students coming in at the last minute checking their grades (200-level classes) to see if they would be able to graduate or not; students with undiagnosed dyslexia having trouble with written exams; students missing class because of bonfire, parent's week, among other things; and students withdrawing from the University in order to salvage a GPR high enough to return next semester. Is it really that hard?

I also read what I consider shallow-minded statements concerning everything from bicycles to the Corps of Cadets. In his bonfire column Mr. Cox (Battalion, Oct. 10) uses language not heard since the 70s. And the recent letter concerning bicycle usage suggests that if a bike is operated improperly she will not give any room.

I would like to note that signaling and brake usage appear to be options on automobiles around here, and if a bike did violate a traffic law, are you driving at the prescribed speed? you miss a bike by two feet, you can't within two feet of subjecting the rider to a gruesome death. Conversely, if you ride a bike irresponsibly you are creating a traffic menace and a danger to pedestrians.

I suggest that it will be your GPR graduation and what you do when you leave the school that will give A&M a reputation favorable to that of the University of Texas at Austin, most surely not the size of the bonfire, the size of the scoreboard, or seedy T-shirt slogans.

Derek W. Ryter is a Ph.D. student.

## Mail Call

### Don't whine about garage parking

EDITOR:

I feel compelled to respond to the whining parking editorial in the October 18 edition of The Battalion. Is my heart supposed to bleed for the "many off-campus students who live only blocks away from Texas A&M" because it takes so long to drive, park, and walk to class?

Don't be so pitiful. If all the Aggies who live within five miles of campus would bike to school, there would be no need to keep building parking garages. This would also save immensely on pollution and wasted gas. Aggies like to think they're tough ... what a joke.

Michael Biek  
graduate student

### Try to understand your neighbors

EDITOR:

We live in a world of changes, a world sometimes contradictory, always changing the masquerade it uses, depending on the conductor of the play.

In such a world, we play our roles trying to understand our foreign neighbors, and more than once, we make our comments based on stereotypes rather than the real truth. I think that it's time to change some things.

The international community at Texas A&M (more than 2,400 students from 110 countries) has been an active group trying to diffuse the culture of their countries to their U.S. counterparts. We have never tried to educate anybody or change their minds about foreign subjects, but we believe that mutual exchange of cultural experiences can give all of us a better picture of the world.

The need for integration has never been stronger than now, because old barriers are fast coming down and we cannot think of ourselves as being isolated anymore. The benefits of integration are many: we can make friends who one day will be leaders in their own countries, and it will help us to break the stereotypes that lead to many problems. We can also learn from both our cultures, and that will increase our knowledge about our environment, but most important, it will make us wiser, because it is only when we know the truth about other cultures that we can consider ourselves part of this global village.

All cultures have both good and bad in them, but a wise person is one who, knowing both sides of the coin, focuses on the good things and tries to learn from them. It's up to all of us to benefit from cultural integration, but always remember that international students on campus provide us the chance to learn a little bit more about our world.

Juan Ignacio Corujo '91  
ISA President

### Page 2 doesn't represent A&M

EDITOR:

When I enrolled at this fine institution over 4 years ago, I wondered what being a "true Aggie" was all about. Well, through reading The Battalion opinion page over that time period I think that I have finally figured it out. Are you ready?

According to the "representative" Aggies who grace the opinion page with their literary masterpieces, a "true Aggie" must surely be a person who:

- supports abortion;
- loves apartheid;

- hates women (and rapes them on dates);
- supports homosexuals and feels that there is nothing wrong with their lifestyle;
- hates Black Americans, Mexican-Americans and Asian-Americans;

- wants all foreigners to go home;
- believes in gun control;
- is an atheist;
- destroys the environment;
- cheats at everything (especially football);
- votes Democratic (or Libertarian);
- strongly dislikes George Bush, Ronald Reagan, Sandra Day O'Connor, Clayton Williams, Robert Bork, Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson;
- burns the American flag;
- ignores poverty;
- worships money;
- is strongly anti-hunting.

Does this describe you? I honestly think that Tang and his crew are an absolute disgrace to this school. Their ideas are consistently left wing and out of touch with the vast majority of the student body. THIS IS A CONSERVATIVE UNIVERSITY. I think it's time for conservative Aggies to take a stand and let these limp-wristed writers know that we are sick of their outrageous stereotypes and tired of the liberalistic garbage which tarnishes our school newspaper everyday.

Would it be impossible to have an outstanding writer such as Bruce G. Hudgins as a guest columnist someday? Probably so, because anyone that stands up for moral, conservative principles is surely too radical for our school newspaper. I love Texas A&M, and I am tired of the mindless morales morons who are trying to change its image with their pens.

Mark Dean VanCleave '90

### Abortion ban won't end problem

EDITOR:

This letter is in response to Juliet Grable's article, "Legal Abortion Won't End Problem."

In her article, Ms. Grable downplays the importance of the David Souter nomination. With the Souter nomination we will likely see the reversal of the Roe vs. Wade decision. I'm sorry it makes you "mad," Juliet, that some people are opposed to this.

In your letter you raised a valid point: the ultimate responsibility for preventing childbirth does lie with the woman. I'm afraid you seem to have forgotten a few things.

Apparently Juliet Grable lives in a world where rape and incest do not occur. Sure, in the parallel world the woman would always have the opportunity to use some sort of birth control. For the rest of the country's women this is not always an option. Rape and incest are horrible crimes in which women can only be labeled as victims.

Are you saying, Ms. Grable, that women should be forced to have children that were fathered by a rapist? What if the mother found out the baby would be severely retarded? Would you still have the child? I certainly hope you never encounter such a situation in your life, Ms. Grable. I do hope though that you would want the ultimate decision on whether or not to bear that child to lie in the mother, and not David Souter or some other politician thousands of miles away.

Ms. Grable speaks of being narrow minded. I think she is the one who needs to take another look at the big picture. Yes, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." In Ms. Grable's case I think a ton of common sense is more ap-

propriate. Ms. Grable, to be so conservative at our age is downright embarrassing. Think about it.

Mike Brannon '94

### Apathy perpetuates bonfire

EDITOR:

In Larry Cox's column (Wednesday, October 10) he states that the biggest danger to bonfire's existence is student apathy. Actually student apathy is the primary reason why bonfire continues to exist. Many students fail to see the connection between burning around 10,000 trees here in College Station and the destruction of the rain forest in Brazil by cutting and burning. It is hypocritical to condemn the destruction of the forests in Brazil and the rest of the world while we ignore the destruction of the forest in our own backyard.

While the trees used in bonfire are cut to allow strip-mining, I do not think Texas A&M University should participate in the cutting. If Texas Municipal Power Authority wants to cut and burn the trees they have the right to do so, but the University should not participate in the cutting and burning. The bonfire sends the wrong message to the rest of the world especially from a university which is ranked eighth nationally in terms of research funding. A large amount of this research is directed toward environmental studies. The proposed 50 percent reduction in the bonfire size is a step in the right direction, but the change is only cosmetic. Many other universities in the United States, such as Stanford, stopped having bonfires due to environmental concerns.

The enormous amount of work and money put into bonfire could be directed towards an activity which does not harm the environment. The Big Event is an example of an activity which benefits the community while not leading to the destruction of the environment.

Mark A. Fletcher  
graduate student

### Go in' to the big fish lot in the sky

EDITOR:

In response to "We asked and you said ..." about the possibility of an A&M University cemetery, we have one suggestion. Why not bury the deceased Aggies in each empty parking space in the staff lots across from the Zachry Building and over by Kleberg. Considering that there are not any day students needing to park in that unused area, it would be a grand way to utilize the space. In addition it would be an extraordinary honor to be lain to rest in an A&M parking space considering the fact that we spent half our lives trying to find one.

Furthermore, we know we'll rest easier with the knowledge that if we were ever to be moved down by the "Howdy" bus, our bodies would be forever enshrined on the A&M campus.

Elizabeth Haney '92  
Jennifer Clark, '92

### 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.

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