

Earth First! shouldn't be allowed at Texas A&M

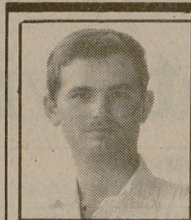
If the PLO wanted to start a student chapter here on campus, would they be allowed to do so? If the KKK attempted to gain official recognition in order to recruit members and hand out literature, would they be sanctioned by the University?

If you answered, "No, of course not," to these two questions, ask yourself a third: Why is the group Earth First! allowed on campus? The answer certainly eludes me.

Earth First!, like the KKK and the PLO, is listed as a terrorist organization by the FBI. Unlike the others, Earth First! holds meetings on our campus. While the KKK destroys churches and NAACP offices to promote white supremacy, Earth First! destroys equipment and commits acts of sabotage to promote radical environmentalism. Where the PLO kills and bombs in the name of Allah and the Palestinian cause, Earth First! maims and vandalizes in the name of Mother Earth.

A little background information on the group is in order. Earth First! was founded by Dave Foreman, Mike Roselle and Howie Wolke in 1980. These founding fathers gave Earth First! an obligatory exclamation point and a motto: "No Compromise in Defense of Mother Earth."

They, along with their fledgling group, perfected the concept of ecotage/ecological sabotage. Almost



Larry Cox
 Columnist

Foreman was arrested by the FBI in 1986 and jailed for conspiring to cut power lines around nuclear power plants in three Western states. Wolke was arrested and jailed in 1985 for committing acts of sabotage in Wyoming's Bridger-Teton National Forest. His response? "I did it and I'm damn proud."

Other Earth First! members responded in kind, and continue to do so. Across the country incidents of ecotage, or "monkeywrenching" as they call it, are reported by grazing, mining, timber and energy operations with alarming frequency. Equipment and buildings owned by these companies are destroyed, sugar is poured into gas tanks, electrical lines are cut, or property is simply set afire.

In 1987 the Forest Service commissioned a special agent to carry out a nationwide survey of Forest Service personnel in order to get some idea of the amount of ecotage being carried out. Good estimates range from \$20-25 million a year. An Earth First! member arrested in

Oregon in 1985 commented, "I figure I've done about a million dollars worth of damage in the last two years. They can sue me — I don't care, I don't have any money!"

Money can't replace some of what they've taken away, by any means. Their practice of spiking trees which are about to be cut — hammering nails and spikes into the trunks of trees at the height of cutting — has resulted in several loggers and lumber workers being maimed by disintegrating saws.

Turnabout is, however, fair play. Two Earth First! operatives in California were critically wounded this past spring when homemade bombs which they were carrying in their auto accidentally detonated. With typical radical fervor the group blamed the explosion on the FBI — an alleged assassination attempt.

These radical terrorist tactics have earned Earth First! the derision and condemnation of mainstream environmental groups. Jay Hair, president of the National Wildlife Federation, has denounced Earth First! as a terrorist organization, saying he sees "no difference between destroying a river and destroying a bulldozer."

Barbara Dugleby, a Texas Earth First! member, says, "It doesn't even bother me whether people call us terrorists ... in the end I think people will realize that the terrorists are

really the people we have been fighting, the destroyers of the Earth."

Earth First!'s zealous disregard for the law has apparently proven useful for some mainstream groups. "Frankly, it makes us look moderate," says Bob Hattoy of the Sierra Club. "I can turn to a congressman and say, 'Look, we're the voice of reason.'"

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A voice of reason is needed on our campus, to ask why an organization with this sordid background is allowed to exist within the confines of Texas A&M University.

While speaking to the "Rally for Unity" two weeks ago on our campus, Earth First! members read a "Student Declaration of Environmental Rights." Among them was "the right to break the law if it conflicts with the principles of justice." I don't recall

reading that one in the Bill of Rights. Of course they have the right to freedom of speech, but ponder that: are we so wrapped up in the concept of a "world class university" that we embrace and officially sanction a group which includes lawlessness as one of its basic tenets?

Malcolm Forbes said that "education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one." University sanction of a group which condones criminal activities is not open minded — it's foolish.

There are numerous environmental groups on campus which work within the framework of the law. The Texas Environmental Action Coalition, the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society and numerous other groups work to make the public environmentally aware through education and lawful protests.

Any group which is on the FBI's list of terrorist groups belongs off campus. Or in jail. Period. I hope that Student Services will take that into consideration next year when Earth First! reapplies for recognition and reject that application.

Until then, I urge everyone to condemn Earth First! and all groups which flagrantly ignore our nation's laws.

I'm sure Mother Earth would concur.

Larry Cox is a graduate student in range science.

Straight ticket voting characteristic of ignorance

On Nov. 6, we will exercise one of our most important rights we have been given as Americans — the right to elect the most qualified candidates to our national, state and local offices.

As educated Americans, it is not only our duty to vote, but also to become educated about the candidates in all races before we enter the voting booth.

Being a fifth-year senior at Texas A&M and an active participant in the political process, I have become all too familiar with the Aggie style of voting.

I have observed a presidential election, a governor's election and numerous local elections at Texas A&M and have been shocked each time. I was told that college, especially one of A&M's caliber, was composed of politically aware students who questioned the people they voted for instead of succumbing to the "easy way out" syndrome and voting a straight ticket, a characteristic of an uneducated public.

On more than one occasion, I have seen experienced incumbents ousted from office by unqualified candidates who rode in on the coattails of their national and state-wide counterparts. The deciding factor has been the student vote, though most of the students could not have listed one fact about any candidate past the first two or three races.

This straight-ticket, ignorant mentality should not exist on the A&M campus, an institution that "educated" people supposedly attend.

Students often tell me this occurs because A&M is a conservative campus. This, however, is no excuse for ignorance.

I also have been told by students that local elections do not affect them in the short stay in the Brazos Valley. This is a cop out and an excuse for not taking the time to become educated about the issues.

Stacy Allen

Reader's Opinion

If you are one of the students possessing this skewed mentality, remind yourself of this next time you complain about a burglary and car theft on the A&M campus or want a campus rapist brought to justice. Remember that you will help elect the judges that will rule on these cases.

If you vote for unsatisfactory candidates out of apathy, you will receive unsatisfactory results. Experience, fairness and a good record are what makes a difference, and party affiliation does not play a role in a person's ability to make a good decision on the bench.

Bill Vance, Class of '61, is an excellent choice for justice of the Tenth Court of Appeals. He served as county judge of Brazos County for 12 years. He also is a past prosecutor and former director of the State Bar of Texas. In addition to his professional accomplishments, Bill Vance has been an active civic leader in the Brazos Valley, serving as president of the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce.

Judge W.T. (Tom) McDonald is the most qualified for the 85th District Court judge. He is an incumbent with 12 years experience as district judge and over 11 years of experience as a prosecutor. During his tenure as judge, he has had one-fifth of one percent of his rulings reversed, and he was named Outstanding Jurist of the Year by the Criminal Justice Section of the State Bar of Texas. Tom McDonald has sentenced over 800 criminals to over 10,500 years and has sent to jail over half of all the capital murderers sentenced in Brazos County. He is a bipartisan judge who has been appointed to state-wide

Straight party voting makes government efficient

As a recent great president used to say, "There you go again."

Last Friday the editorial staff wrote a condemnation of straight party voting. Local Democrats must have been delighted. Aggies tend to vote Republican, but if they don't down the ballot then area old-timer Democrats who haven't voted Republican since McKinley can carry the party in all the lower races.

There are several reasons why Aggies should ignore The Batt's editorial and support the party of their choice.

First, every candidate from governor to county clerk has made a choice of which party he or she will support.

Some feel comfortable in the same party with Michael Dukakis, Walter Mondale and Ted Kennedy. Others, support the party of George Bush, Ronald Reagan and Phil Gramm.

This choice tells you a great deal about the candidates philosophy of big vs. limited government, judicial activism vs. judicial restraint and criminal's rights vs. the rights of the victim.

leadership positions by two chief justices of the Texas Supreme Court — one Republican and one Democrat.

Voters also should not overlook Sarah Ryan for County Court at Law judge, a past professor of civil law at Texas A&M. Mary Ann Ward, a candidate for county clerk, is a 17-year veteran of the office and by far the most qualified candidate.

Scot Kibbe

Reader's Opinion

Second, the recent debacle in Congress should show something very clearly. A government that is radically divided in its ideals cannot govern effectively. The United States supported the ideals of George Bush in 1988, but because he has a hostile Congress he has not been able to carry out these ideals.

The question in 1990 is if you support the ideals of Clayton Williams why elect legislators, judges and bureaucrats who have the ideals of Ann Richards? This will only lead to the same inpassé in Austin as we have in Washington.

Finally, we have a very unique situation here in Texas. Not so long ago you could not run for office except as a Democrat. Thankfully, times have changed and now we are getting a two-party system.

But many of those Democrats are still in office. They represent the good-old-boy, back-scratching system

that ruled this state for so long. Republicans represent change from people outside the system on how to move forward and solve old and new problems.

In other words, if you like the way things have always been done in Texas government then add a whole lot more spending and then the Democrats are your choice for 1990. If you want change, vote Republican.

No race better illustrates this point than the race for lieutenant governor where a bright young Republican named Rob Mosbacher faces an old-timer in Bob Bullock who has been in Austin since God created dirt.

In short, if The Batt meant to do the Democrats a favor by its editorial on Friday then it certainly succeeded. But if it meant to make a valid point about our political system then it failed miserably. The party of a candidate does matter. And if Aggies remember that on election day, there are going to be some great changes in Brazos County and in Texas.

Scot Kibbe is president of the Texas A&M College Republicans.

We owe it to ourselves to vote for bipartisan candidates who represent interests. As educated students, I challenge you to take the time to research candidates before you vote. Our forefathers would have wanted us to. You'll see just how many qualified, excellent candidates there really are out there.

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The Battalion

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