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Censorship infringes upon right to free speech

Some friends and I were sitting around bonfire last year, enjoying the evening and reminiscing about the old days, when our night was rudely interrupted. We were on the tailgate of a pickup to which we had attached an A&M flag, a Texas flag and a Confederate battle flag to show pride in our school, our state and our heritage.

We were approached by Mr. Bill Kibler, the faculty bonfire adviser, who informed us that if we did not remove the Confederate battle flag he would have a police officer remove it for us, and if we raised a ruckus we would be thrown in jail.

Quite shocked, we asked what authority he had to order its removal. He replied that former University President Frank Vandiver had issued an executive order which prohibited the presence of the Confederate flag at bonfire, and that he was acting under that authority.

The fact that Vandiver, a noted Southern historian, would issue such an order was quite shocking. We asked if there had been any complaints about the flag's presence and were told, "No, but it 'might' be offensive to some



Larry Cox Columnist

I'm quite sure Mr. Kibler overstepped his bounds in threatening police intervention, but this incident brings up a very unsettling question: Does the stereotype of a world-class University mandate that only "socially correct"

The sanctimonious presidential decree which Mr. Kibler quoted is Constitutionally indefensible, but is not surprising given the recent trend in universities across the country to stifle expression which is socially incorrect or "might" be offensive to the delicate sensibilities of some preferred group.

expression be accepted and condoned

by campus authorities?

manifested itself across the country on college campuses where comments or opinions which "might" be offensive to some are squelched or dissuaded.

From decrees which outlaw "racially insensitive" speech to the firing of a newspaper editor who allowed unflattering articles about a controversial faculty member to be published, campus liberals have been the guidon-bearers of the censorship movement during the 1980's.

It's interesting to note that groups and individuals who vociferously defend the right of an individual to burn the American flag or to display homoerotic art are often the same individuals who try to have Huckleberry Finn removed from high school libraries, because it "might" offend minority students.

A good case in point is the protest which will occur on Duncan Field before bonfire this year. The "socially correct" expression of the anti-bonfire club's viewpoint will be condoned and defended by the University - as it

should be. They won't be threatened with arrest or the possibility of having their signs confiscated unless they break a law. A legal precedent exists which exposes the contradictory treatment which they will receive and which we received last year.

In the 1970s case of Tinker vs. Des Moines I.S.D., a high school student was sent home for wearing a black armband to protest the Vietnam War. The student took the case all the way to the Supreme Court, who ruled that an educational administrator could not dismiss or discipline a student based on content or type of speech based on dress (within the realm of good taste). More importantly, the Court ruled that the administrator could not discriminate between types of free speech.

In our state, the Texas Education Agency has ruled that two Fort Worth area schools could not prevent the students from retaining the Confederate battle flag as their school symbol. It's discouraging to think that high schools are more concerned with protecting the right to speak and express oneself freely than are colleges, especially our own.

My purpose in writing this colur not to comment on bonfire, or the or the University administration. M purpose is to stress the fact that censorship is wrong in all shapes an forms. Dr. Vandiver's condescension pressure, either real or perceived, brought about a blatantly unconstitutional decree and an infringement on the rights of a wo

I urge President Mobley to do away with all archaic rules which limitor impede free speech. Keep up the University's battle to fight against racism and discrimination - but do discriminate against me and my right speak as I want or to show pride in heritage because someone else "mig

Samuel Adams once said, "I don't agree with a word he said, but I'll defend to the death his right to say Remember. And learn. Or we just "might" lose one of our most preciou

Larry Cox is a graduate student in range science.

Mail Call

How will history judge bonfire?

Two questions to ponder as the bonfire burns:

How will history judge the bonfire?

How will Texas A&M University fare in the court of public opinion if the peaceful protesters at this year's bonfire are seriously hurt or injured by aggressive and/or drunk bonfire advocates?

Michael C. Worsham graduate student

Destruction has purpose

A number of opinions about bonfire have been presented on this page. The reason usually given for abolishing bonfire is the destruction of resources on a large scale for no purpose. I believe this argument is not valid.

First, the destruction is not without purpose. The individuals involved with bonfire gain valuable experience.

Teamwork, working under hazardous circumstances, organization and leadership are all important skills enhanced at bonfire and cut sites. This is "the other educa-

The emotional value of bonfire for alumni, students

and the community is also real and significant. Second, the destruction is more purposeful than many

other things in our culture. Bonfire burns useless natural resources for social entertainment.

On the other hand, virtually all entertainment and convenience in our culture involves destroying resources - cruising by teenagers, driving to a movie theater, heating the movie theater.

What about amusement parks? Watching T.V., candles, air conditioning or barbecuing?

Have you ever wondered how much wood is needed every year so we can eat charcoal flavored beef? Or how much lighter fluid? What if bonfire is abolished?

Perhaps Aggies Against Bonfire will be renamed "Aggies Against Christmas Trees". Now there's a waste of natural resources we should stop.

Third, Aggies Against Bonfire claim that the energy of all these individuals could be productive in the community. Perhaps it could.

However, bonfire gathers a group of people and produces something significant, while Aggie Against Bonfire gathers a group of individuals and produces nothing but arguments and outright hate. Whatever happened to leading by example?

My final issue is with those individuals claiming bonfire should be abolished because it reduces the property value of the homes near the site. This argument is wrong and

Bonfire was there long before most homes were. The owners knew the risk when they bought the property. Therefore, their property value is not reduced: abolishing bonfire would enhance it.

Bonfire should not be abolished so a few property owners can make a buck, whether they are faculty or not.

John Lambregts graduate student

Don't extinguish bonfire

The thought of bonfire extinguished for good turns my stomach as I'm sure it does most all Ags.

Bonfire is probably Texas A&M's most precious tradition, but there is a group who doesn't quite feel the impact bonfire has on the spirit of Aggieland as we feel it.

These "environmentalists", AAB, are hypocrites. They probably haven't stopped for a second to actually realize a blatant waste of natural resources in their own homes.

I wonder how many of these Aggies Against Bonfire, who are so concerned about the Earth's natural resources, have live Christmas trees in their homes, as well as in their apartments here. I wonder how many people

in the world do. Oh, what a waste! I also wonder how many of these environmentalists enjoy fireplaces in their homes and apartments. Almost every home built has a fireplace. They would probably say this warms their house.

Right, let's see them sleep upstairs that night. That's why all houses are equipped with heaters.

Natural gas is a much cleaner and efficient way of heating, and still many houses in the world use their fireplace. Oh, what a waste! A fireplace may warm your family rooms, AAB, but bonfire warms our hearts.

I'm proud to be an Aggie and bonfire will always be a part of me. No other alternative, manufactured, tradition

Bonfire, There is No Substitute!

Until you and your families do away with live Christmas trees and logs in the fireplace, don't go protesting bonfire. Practice what you preach!

Troy Lindsey '92

A tree's best friend?

On behalf of the forest science department and the Forestry Club, we totally disassociate ourselves with Aggies Against Bonfire.

Recently, Aggies Against Bonfire have used in their literature and flyers what we in the forest science department have as our slogan:

A TREE'S BEST FRIEND IS ITS AGGIE

Except Aggies Against Bonfire have added the phrase "AGAINST BONFIRE" underneath in the same type. Although there is no copyright for that slogan, the forest science department has used that slogan since the department was established. We feel it is an infringement on our values to be associated in any context with Aggies

50 YEARS LATER ...

SO YOU USED TO DRAW

"ADVENTURES IN CARTOONING?"

RETIREMENT HOME

FOR BATTALION CARTOONISTS

Against Bonfire.

I confronted Kelly, the person in charge of Aggies Against Bonfire, about this issue last Earth Day when we both had booths. She merely said there was no copyright, therefore they could use that slogan and would continue to do so until there is a copyright.

This is not a letter associating ourselves with bonfire ther. However, we in the forest science department associate ourselves with Professional Forestry

In my mind, bonfire and forestry are not synonymous. What students do on their free time is up to them. I have worked on bonfire for over four years while working to get my degree in forest management. I have no problems with what bonfire does and will continue to support bonfire in all that I can do.

The forest science department in no way condones, associates or accepts the ideals portrayed by Aggies Against Bonfire. Remember:

A Tree's Best Friend is its AGGIE.

Mike Morrison '90 **TAMU Forestry Club President**

The poor could use firewood?

Well, isn't that special. It seems that the redpots donated a truck load and a car load of firewood to the students from Tau Kappa. (For those of you who missed it, Tau Kappa was having a scavenger hunt to collect items for Twin City Mission — and firewood was one of the items the Mission had requested.)

Hey, wait a minute. Do you mean that there are people — families, children, elderly people — right here in Bryan and College Station who will be cold this winter because they have no firewood??? My, isn't that a pity.

Hey, I have an idea. Let's invite all of them to bonfire. That way, they can warm themselves up for at least a few hours, before heading back to their cold, cold homes. Think about it, folks. This winter, when you're freez-

ing your boots off before returning to your nice cozy, warm dorm or apartment or house, think about the fact that there are people right here in your town who are freezing, perhaps literally, because they can't afford firewood. Better yet, think about it when you watch bonfire go up in smoke.

Think about it - please.

Jan Fechhelm '81 research assistant

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

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

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Adventures In Cartooning



I REMEMBER THE DAY

NOW YOU AND ALL THE WHAT'S GOING ON OVER OTHER CARTOONISTS ARE HERE. SCOTT "WARPED" THERE? MCCULLAR ... BOOMER TUBULARMAN CARDINALE.





by Don Atkinson