

Rights of gays at discretion of University

Christian Gribble

Reader's Opinion

It seems that over the past couple of years, there have been great strides made at Texas A&M regarding the rights of gay and lesbian faculty and students. This is all now changing.

Recently, I learned President Mobley has signed into University law anti-discrimination language which omits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. I don't pretend to understand all of the inner workings of campus politics, but it seems clear to me the end result. Without the inclusion of this language, Mobley has given his approval to discrimination against gays and lesbians.

Surrendering to the pressures of economic gain and alumni support, Mobley, against the advice of the Faculty Senate, has omitted an essential and most basic right.

If you are a man, a woman, a black, an atheist, a Catholic or a member of any group, you have rights — the right not to be discriminated against — that is unless you happen also to be a gay man, a gay woman, a homosexual black or any other type of homosexual. You then are at the mercy of anyone who wants to discriminate against you.

When one group's rights are allowed to be violated, this is an invitation for those asserting power to selectively discriminate and cut off various segments of society which they feel are inappropriate. This could mean anyone. In the chaos of World War II, Hitler took it upon himself to violate the rights of thousands of Jews and homosexuals. Was it appropriate for his morality to be so brutally imposed upon a people whose lives varied from his definition of normalcy?

In the April 3 edition of The Battalion, in a section titled, "We asked and you said ... Are gays discriminated against at A&M?" the overall view seemed to be one of "I don't know if there's discrimination" and an overall unawareness of the gay population. I'm writing to tell you there is discrimination and hatred.

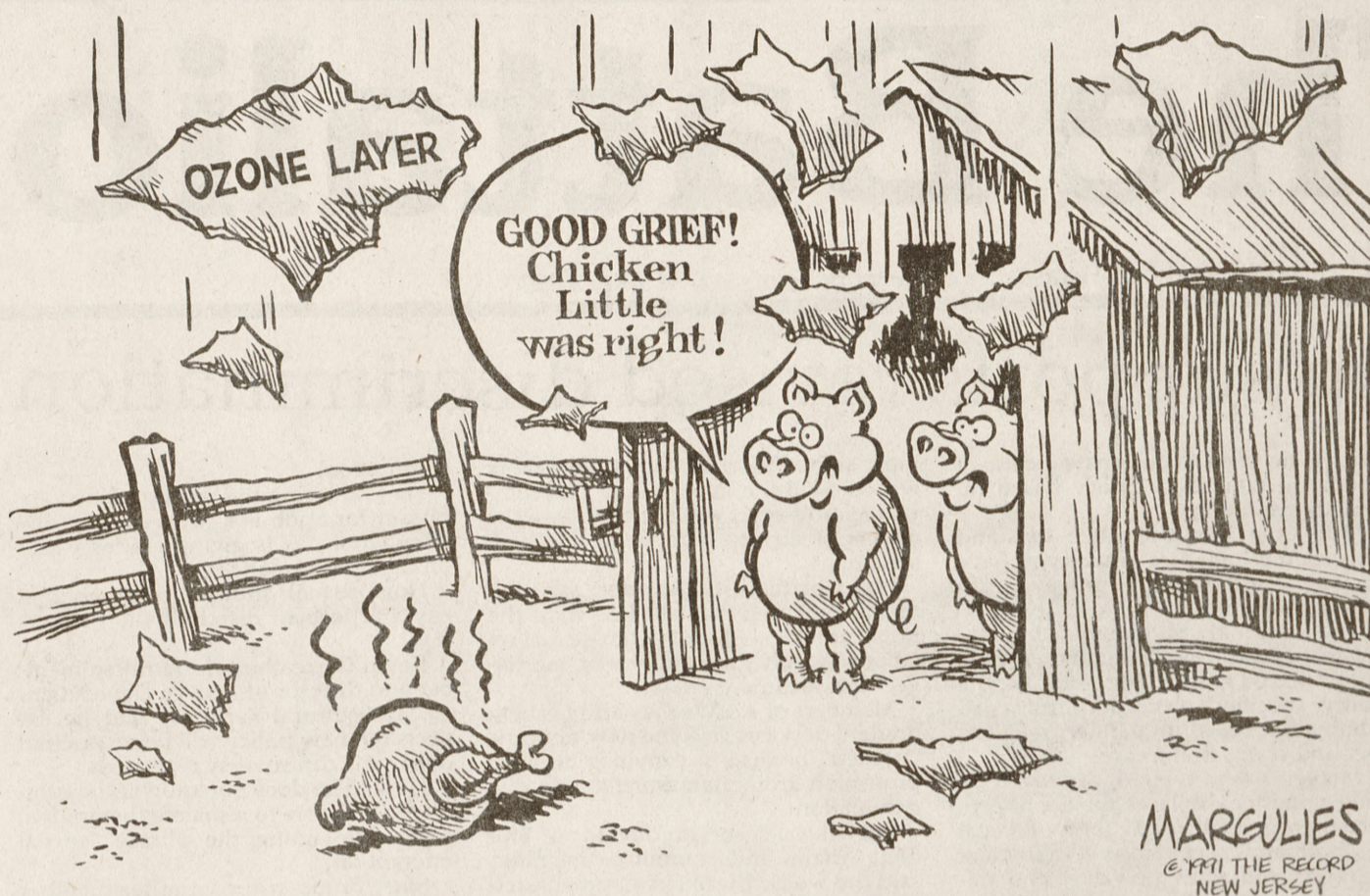
There is a huge gay and lesbian population at A&M. It is underground and discrete for good reason. Almost everyday, I hear people, often people who are my friends and co-workers, make derogatory comments about homosexuals in front of me, not even considering the possibility that I am a lesbian.

I love A&M as much as any Aggie, but I also would like to be counted among the Aggies whose rights don't come under the scrutiny of this administration, who then decide to carve them up and limit them.

I'm not sure of the repercussions of this letter, either personal or for the readers. In writing this letter, I feel certain I have shocked and horrified many. In signing my name to this letter, I am risking the friends who assume I am a heterosexual. I believe in all that I've written though, so I suppose I shouldn't feel uncomfortable with this risk.

I am one of many students and faculty who are homosexual. Don't assume you can spot us a mile off — don't assume you know how we feel — and don't assume your rights are any more valuable or any safer than ours.

Christian Gribble is a senior psychology major.



Tolerance has become apathy in our society



Tim Truesdale

Columnist

Anyone who says that American college students have no morals is in lulu-land. Of course, cheating might be common place now, shacking up may be the way to go and drugs might be a way of life for many of us. But we have something those old farts who judge us didn't have: tolerance.

Yes, "tolerance" is touted as the social fix-all of the modern age. This is obviously social progress taking place before our very eyes.

After all, our bigoted forefathers literally hated homosexuals and hippies and anyone else who wasn't identical to them in every way. But now, instead of walking up to people and saying "I HATE YOU," the advanced among us can walk up to people who are different and announce "I TOLERATE YOU." Wow, as the advertisement states, "You've come a long way, baby."

If this sounds absurd to you, you're not alone. For, what's being pushed as tolerance these days is actually no more than benign apathy. How do I know? Look at the new and improved Golden Rule: "Live and let live." This can be clearly paraphrased as, "You be apathetic about the way I live my life, and I'll be apathetic about the way you live yours."

"If you don't care about other people, then 'live and let live' is a great motto for you. At first, apathy can be a difficult attitude to embrace. But you'll get accustomed to it. Millions and millions have, after all."

Regardless of what the dictionary says, psychologists tell us that hatred is not the opposite of love. Indifference is. At least hatred acknowledges one's humanity.

No one can hate a liquid or a gas. In fact, I am downright apathetic about most of the gases in the universe. My opinion is that as long as they don't bother me, I won't bother them. Does that statement sound vaguely familiar?

Don't get me wrong. I'm not for hatred. As far as I'm concerned, all the hatred can stay in the factories in Hell where it is produced.

But this benign apathy is really no better. I mean, if you saw me rolling off the side of a cliff (whether or not I could "help it"), I certainly would hope you would try to help me.

If you don't care about other people then "live and let live" is a great motto for you. At first, apathy can be a difficult attitude to embrace. But you'll get accustomed to it. Millions and millions have, after all.

On the other hand, for those of you who are interested in a life of love, the honest-to-God Golden Rule is the only one you'll need: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

Tim Truesdale is a graduate student in urban planning.

MAIL CALL

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers and welcomes all letters to the editor. Please include name, classification, address and phone number on all letters. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for style and length. Because of limited space, shorter letters have a better chance of appearing. There is, however, no guarantee letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

Were our forefathers Christians?

EDITOR:

This letter is in response to Dan Purvis' April 2 Reader's Opinion: "Bible serves as true, inspired word of God."

First, Purvis and his fellow signers said, "We believe the Bible is the inspired, infallible word of God." One example which leads me to believe that this might not be true is in the text of the document to which he refers. In Matthew 1:6-16, there are 28 descendants from David to Jesus. In Luke 3:23-31, there are 43 descendants from David to Jesus. This simple contradiction seems to question the infallibility of the Bible.

Second, Purvis says, "God has not turned His back on us. He loves us so much that He allows us the freedom to choose for ourselves." Yes, Purvis, your god does allow us the freedom to choose for ourselves. He allows us to choose to bow down, follow him and go to heaven; or to be individuals, not bow down to him and go to Hell. This does not seem to be the sort of ultimatum that a caring creator would give us.

Third, Purvis states, "It should also be mentioned that at one time, our forefathers, a large number of whom you might call radical Christians today, were termed 'radicals' because they were willing to die for what they believed in." Both Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine were not Christians. The myth of all our founding fathers being Christian is just that, a myth.

Thomas Paine, the writer of "Common Sense" and a Diest, also wrote a good book called "The Age of Reason," a book that I hope all you good educated Aggies out there will take the time to read, if you haven't already.

In closing, I would hope that all Aggies, no matter what race, religious background, sex, etc. will take the time to learn about the beliefs of everyone around you in this world, because I'm sick of hearing people tell me that Texas A&M isn't a world class institution.

David Cooksey '94

Laws won't end armed violence

EDITOR:

Larry Cox's article on a waiting period for guns had to be the largest collection of irrational and unfounded arguments found in one place. Although he criticizes waiting period proponents for teary-eyed emotionalism, his defense is emotionalism *ad absurdum*, invoking a scenario in which innocent citizens are left defenseless against terrorizing villains, all of whom got their weapons at the friendly, neighborhood, illegal gun-mobile.

He mentions a Department of Justice study which found that 21 percent of felons who acquired guns through retail means would have found non-retail means prefera-

ble and accessible if a waiting period was in place. That would mean up to 79 percent of felons would have been prevented, a damn good number for such a simple piece of legislation.

He also says waiting periods discourage handgun acquisitions, compromising citizens' abilities to defend themselves. Except for criminals, I don't see how anyone who wanted a gun would be deterred at all, unless they were too shy to talk to the store clerk or something. Whenever I try to understand the urgency some people feel against this legislation, I always imagine this picture: a humble citizen runs into a store, rushes up to the clerk saying, "Quick! I need a gun, and I need it NOW!"

I can assure Cox that I don't consider a waiting period to be a substitute for tougher laws against crime. But it is naive optimism to believe tough laws alone will be a cure-all for armed violence, or to believe we suddenly will find an abundance of empty jail cells in the near future with which to carry out tougher jail sentences.

He did do a pretty thorough job, however, of bashing Mrs. Brady, saying she was emotional in her argument for a waiting period. If a concern for human life is considered "blatant emotionalism," then I guess I'm on her side.

Chad Redman
graduate student

Don't stand for discrimination

EDITOR:

For the first time in our history, the Texas A&M Rules and Regulations book gives the right to gays not to be discriminated against in the form of the addition of the words "sexual orientation" to a list of groups/people already protected by this document. This has been a major breakthrough in the fight for gay civil rights here on campus. This wording has been given only as a "statement" and has yet to become "policy."

After the Faculty Senate's overwhelming vote to make this statement a policy, President Mobley has signed a revised statement which does not include the protection of gays. Once he gave us rights, now he's trying to take them away. When one minority's rights are violated, who's to say another's won't be? This only threatens other minorities' rights by saying "it's okay to give rights to a group of people, then take them away!"

I challenge every member of every minority and majority alike to take a stand against this form of discrimination. You can express your feelings by writing to our student body president, Mobley or by petitioning against this oppressive action. We must all work together to fight for everybody! This will not give gays any "special" rights that aren't already held by all other groups here at A&M. We are your brothers and sisters and by helping us, we will someday be able to help you.

Jeremy C. Collette '94

The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

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The Battalion is published daily, except Saturday, Sunday, holidays, exam periods, and when school is not in session during fall and spring semesters; publication is Tuesday through Friday during the summer session.

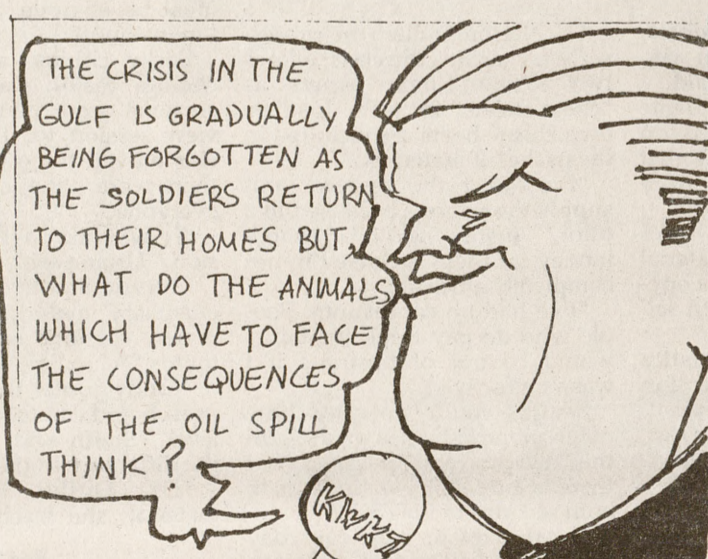
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Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.

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