

Graduating seniors should be allowed to register first

I've registered for classes for the last time.

Somehow, I thought it would be different. I thought that maybe I wouldn't be filled with anxiety caused by the fear that I might not get into all my classes. After all, I am a graduating senior.

But when other business made me walk past the incredibly long line of people who were registering in the honors program, and who were registering before me, I decided that, perhaps, anxiety was in order. That anxiety made me feel compelled to take the trouble to stand in the two and a half hour line to register as a student worker, only a day before my regularly scheduled registration as a senior, for fear I wouldn't get into one of the



Ellen Hobbs
Columnist

single-section classes I wanted to take.

And standing in that line gave me a long time to think about the unfairness of my fear. As an incoming freshman I had been given the privilege of registering after all of my fellow Aggies. But as a graduating senior, I don't ever get the privilege of registering first.

It's true that student workers need to be able to schedule their classes around their jobs. Many of us wouldn't be able to pay our tuition without that income.

And it's also true that being able to register early is a great incentive for

getting people to go into the honors program. I have no doubt that many honors graduates will be produced because they have been enticed into the program by early registration privileges.

But it just doesn't follow that graduating seniors should be made to force themselves into classes they must have to graduate in their last semester. It doesn't even follow that graduating seniors shouldn't get the choice of not only the classes they've got to have, but also the classes they merely want to take.

A policy that would allow graduating seniors to register first, before honors students and student workers, would cut down on the paperwork for everyone involved in the "forcing" process.

Departments wouldn't have to worry

about leaving so many open spaces in classes for forcing in seniors who won't graduate without certain classes.

Teaching faculty would be more free to use the force spaces they do have to allow promising students with fewer hours a chance to get into upper-level classes and show their stuff.

And let's face it: With the state budget cuts, there are going to be fewer classes available and more seniors trying to force their way into them; unless we come up with a solution.

Separating graduating seniors from other seniors for registration is not an unworkable idea. It could work two ways:

★ *The Stand-In-Line Method:* This would work just like student worker registration. Graduating seniors would get forms from their advisers confirming their impending

graduation, just like student workers get forms from their supervisors.

★ *The Touch-Tone-Registration-Method:* Seniors with 16 or less hours to graduate would be allowed to register by phone for two days before honors registration. Seniors who were planning to take more than 16 hours and graduate would have to get forms from their advisers and get themselves unblocked for registration during that time. I think this probably is a better method than standing in line.

Early registration for graduating seniors would make life a little easier on everyone. And even though being able to say "reload" is nice, don't we old elephants deserve a little something more than that?

Ellen Hobbs is a senior journalism major.

Press coverage distorts coerced confessions case

On April 6, a Reader's Opinion was published concerning the much-publicized Supreme Court decision dealing with coerced confessions. The opinion by Greg Buford made several false assertions about what the Court found in its decision and proceeded to attack Presidents Reagan and Bush as the architects of a "... conservative majority on the Supreme Court (that) has managed to take away from the American public a fundamental and necessary tenet of our criminal justice system." He also states that the Court decision "... opens the door for innumerable abuses of police power ... by telling law enforcement officials they can coerce confessions from citizens who have been charged with a crime."

The rather apocalyptic vision presented in the Reader's Opinion is based on the mistaken assumption that the Court agreed "to allow illegally obtained confessions to be used to convict alleged criminals." If this were the case, I probably would be running around with a protest banner myself. But fortunately, despite the inflated rhetoric and all the slanted media sound bites to the contrary, the truth is much less insidious than what some people would like us to believe.

In its decision, *Arizona vs. Fulminante*, the Court did not change the rules dictating what is and what is not a coerced confession, and they most certainly did not find that coerced confessions are admissible as evidence in a court of law. But before I try to explain what the decision was, it might be helpful to say something about the case.

While he was in jail on another charge, Fulminante admitted to FBI informant Anthony Sarivola that when his wife was in the hospital, he had driven his stepdaughter to the desert where he choked her, sexually assaulted her and made her beg for her life, before shooting her twice in the head. He confessed to Sarivola because Sarivola told him he would protect him from other inmates if he told him the truth.

In its decision, the Court found that because of Sarivola's offer to protect Fulminante from the other prisoners, the confession was coerced and, therefore, inadmissible as evidence. However, a majority of the Court also ruled that if there had been sufficient evidence other than the confession to convict Fulminante, the admission of

Stephen Beck
Reader's Opinion

the confession into the trial would be treated as a "harmless error."

The point of the decision was that if a confession is utilized in good faith, but subsequently is found to be coerced, it does not necessitate the conviction be thrown out, if, in the opinion of the Court, there was ample evidence to convict without the confession. The key point for people to realize is that under no circumstances can a forced confession be considered as admissible evidence. Some people might question the possibility of the prosecution using a coerced confession in good faith, but the possibility of honest error is aptly demonstrated by the fact that only by a 5 to 4 margin did the justices find Fulminante's confession coerced.

Additionally, the harmless error analysis employed in this instance is not a new or novel invention of the present Supreme Court. Since the 1967 landmark decision in *Chapman vs. California*, the Court has held that a constitutional error does not automatically require reversal of a conviction if the error is found not to have affected the outcome of the case, and has recognized that most constitutional errors can be harmless. (See section II of the decision.)

I am particularly incensed by those trying to make some warped connection between this decision and what happened in Los Angeles to Rodney King. There is absolutely nothing in the decision which would suggest to any police officer anywhere that coercion of a confession, especially by violent means, is any less reprehensible or illegal now than it has ever been.

In light of the shoddy media coverage of issues like this which require more than a 10 second sound bite to explain, it is understandable that some people have gotten the wrong impression about the decision. Admittedly, there is much more to the case than I have touched on in this short opinion, but I hope I have made things clear concerning the most important aspects of the decision.

Stephen Beck is a senior electrical engineering major.

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.

Get off the homosexuality kick

EDITOR:

Give it a rest! I am really getting tired of the whole "homosexuality fest" that's been going on in The Battalion. And nothing turns my stomach more than a religion willing to compromise what it says it stands for.

If in fact, the Bible is what it claims to be, then it means what it says and it says what it means. Leviticus 18:22, Deuteronomy 23:17-18, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 1 Timothy 1:8-10 make at least one thing clear — it is a perversion. "The word became flesh — and through theologians it became words again."

If you are a Christian, you have an internal conflict. You must balance unconditional love for your fellow man based on your own integrity and the only allowable form of hate — hating evil.

Don't get me wrong, homosexuals are not evil. Let me put it to you like this. Low self-esteem is a perversion of your concept of yourself. There are many forms of perversion: jealousy, greed, rape, incest, murder and the welfare system. If you want to engage in jealousy, go ahead. You will pay the price, not me. Just don't try to indoctrinate me with your perversion.

I know what I want, a female partner in life, peace and happiness. Idealistically I know, but you must have a vision of your goal before you will ever accomplish it. So get on to another topic.

I really have no desire to understand homosexuals. Am I closed-minded? Highly probable. I just wonder why the campus can't get off the homosexuality kick. I know I just added to it, but I figured while I was at it — what the heck. I think it's about high time we got onto something else.

Dale Legan '92

Another stupid fee

EDITOR:

This entire year, I have refrained from sending my highly valued opinions to The Battalion opinion page. I can restrain myself no longer.

I have to tell everyone how excited I am about the student referendum supporting the cable TV proposal. Just think: I'll get to pay for others to watch cable TV. Thank you, fellow Aggies, for giving me this privilege.

As long as we are sharing in such a communist fashion, there are a few things I would like. Why don't we provide them for everyone:

- George Michael pin-ups.
- Minnie Mouse T-shirts.
- New Kids on the Block paraphernalia — all of it.
- Vomit-patterned baggy weightlifting pants.
- The clapper.

Now, if everyone will just pay \$100 per semester, we can have all of these things for this small fee. We can call it the **another stupid fee**. I'll get back to you soon with more details.

Jason West '94

Jesus lives today

EDITOR:

In response to Cecil N. Bedford's letter in Mail Call on "Inspired word of God," I would just like to draw attention to Jesus Christ and His feelings toward mankind today.

Jesus Christ, God's only son, dearly loves every human being (every Aggie). He wants every person to understand Him and to have a real, honest and sincere relationship with Him (1 Timothy 2:4).

He wants the absolute best for every individual and it does not matter whether a person is hetero or homosexual, upper, middle or lowerclass, white, black, yellow or whatever (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 6:11).

Jesus will accept and love any person at any time, whether they understand Him or not, and whether they have said incorrect things about Him in the past or not — so long as they acknowledge Him and turn to Him for the forgiveness of their sins (John 1:12, 6:37).

People always will misunderstand Jesus (and Christianity) and defame His name, until the end of time (John 15:18-25). Nevertheless, Jesus does not change (Mal. 3:6, Hebrews 13:8).

He weeps for the lost and calls them "back home" to

Himself every second, until the end comes (Matthew 9:36, Revelations 20:11-15). Jesus told a skeptic of His day (Nicodemus): "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him" (John 3:17).

Jesus lives today. He's real and He's not in the business of condemning people — only loving them and saving them.

H. C. Ross '94

Aggies helping other Aggies

EDITOR:

During the past four and a half years, I have been pleasantly reminded of the original reasons I chose to come to Aggieland.

Those reasons included the University's excellent academic credentials, the friendly atmosphere and the down-to-earth student body, plus the rich Aggie traditions.

Recently, I have been fortunate enough to experience another characteristic more common to Aggies than probably any other group of individuals. I am speaking of the exceptional loyalty Aggies have for each other.

Early in the fall of 1989, I lost my Aggie ring at the Southwood Valley Athletic Complex. After a number of unsuccessful attempts at trying to find my ring, I ended up ordering a second one.

Two weeks ago (over one and a half years later), I received a phone call from a sophomore named Daniel Santellana.

Daniel had been playing soccer at Southwood Valley when he noticed something shiny in the grass. After digging up my ring, Daniel did what most students from other institutions would not have done.

He tracked down my phone number through information and called me once he returned home. Daniel even went to the trouble of cleaning my ring before returning it to me.

Of course, I am thankful and deeply impressed with Daniel's selfless and honorable actions. I also look forward to the friendship that will grow between the two of us in the future.

Most of us have heard stories of Aggies helping other Aggies. I just want other Aggies to know that there is a good chance they too could experience the strong ties that bind each of us together, even though we might not know one another.

I would also like to take this chance to tell Daniel, "Thanks," once again.

Brian Burdorf '91

Bible says what it means

EDITOR:

In response to the April 8 front-page article about homosexuality not being condemned in the Bible, I must strongly disagree.

First of all, what the Bible says is what the Bible means. It is not our place to "interpret" what the Bible says because:

God directly inspired the prophets to write what is contained in the Old Testament.

The apostle Paul knew exactly what he was writing in his letters in the New Testament, and Paul knew a lot more about God's intent than Helminiak could ever hope to know.

Romans 1:32 clearly states, "they that commit such things are worthy of death," referring to homosexual acts in verses 26 and 27. If that is not a condemnation, then I don't know what is.

And in Leviticus 18:22, "Thou shall not lie with mankind as with womankind; it is an abomination." Helminiak disputes the meaning of the word "abomination." This word has no significance in the purpose of this verse. It clearly says, "you shall not do it," meaning to commit such an act would be a sin. And all sins are equal in God's eyes whether it be lying, committing homosexual acts or murder.

I don't claim to be an expert on Bible interpretation, but no one needs to be an expert to understand what these passages are trying to say.

Mike Miertschin '94

The Battalion

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