

Guest Editorial

America needs MIA hearings

Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., plans to reopen old wounds by having the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee conduct hearings on the issue of Americans missing from the Vietnam War. While the process may be painful, the hearings are necessary if the country is to ever heal completely.

At least 2,273 servicemen are listed as missing in Indochina. Over the past two decades, there have been unconfirmed reports that some of these men have been seen alive. Some reports have listed Americans as still being held prisoner. ...

Few can comprehend how it feels not to know whether a husband, father, brother or other relative really died more than 20 years ago in the jungles of Southeast Asia or still is being held prisoner.

The Foreign Relations subcommittee and other formal inquiries can help find answers. ...

The families of these missing servicemen are entitled to know what happened to them. Rep. Sam Johnson, R-Dallas, is asking the Pentagon to open its file on reports of sightings of missing servicemen. The Pentagon should comply.

The Dallas Times Herald

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. There is no guarantee letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald, sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111 or can be faxed to 845-5408.

B-CS cable viewers won

EDITOR:

I've been asked several times lately, "Who won the challenge between TCA and MTV?" and the answer is simple.

The customers won. Customers, regardless of their opinions about MTV, now have a better deal than they had before.

At first glance, it may be difficult to see a difference between our current agreement with MTV and the old agreement. But there are very important differences that relate directly to the central issue of this controversy — the one thing that people from both sides seem to agree on — freedom of choice.

Prior to the non-renewal of the previous contract with MTV, TCA was limited in how we could tell our customers they had the freedom to block MTV from their homes if they wanted to. Granted, that wouldn't be all that important to an MTV fan, but it might be very important to someone who wasn't. Our experience and research have shown there was a large number of people who were unhappy, or who simply avoided cable service altogether because they weren't aware of the choices available to them.

We don't mean to suggest that MTV doesn't have a place in the marketplace; it is, in fact, present in millions of households worldwide. But if you don't want your household to be one them, we feel you should be aware of that option.

It was never TCA's desire to drop MTV; it was our desire to allow customers to know that they could have a choice whether the channel was included as part of their basic cable lineup. Until provisions in the contract could be modified, notification of this choice was not practical.

We weren't about to ignore one group of customers by simply renewing an unacceptable contract. Neither were we about to ignore the other group by dropping MTV with no efforts to get it back where it was wanted.

The result of our stand: MTV will be back on in Bryan-College Station next month for those who want it; customers not wanting to receive MTV can conveniently pass on the channel if that is their wish. Everybody wins.

We've already taken steps to advise our customers of their options, and the same options will be explained to all new customers when they sign up for service.

The MTV situation brought out opinions — strong opinions — on both sides. We've taken a lot of heat over the past few weeks from our critics, but those who supported our actions have been just as vocal and just as numerous. Both sides deserved a choice.

The TCA-MTV battle has ended, and a winner has emerged. But it wasn't MTV, and it wasn't TCA.

It was you. Congratulations.

Randy Rogers
general manager of TCA Cable

Swimmers should follow rules

EDITOR:

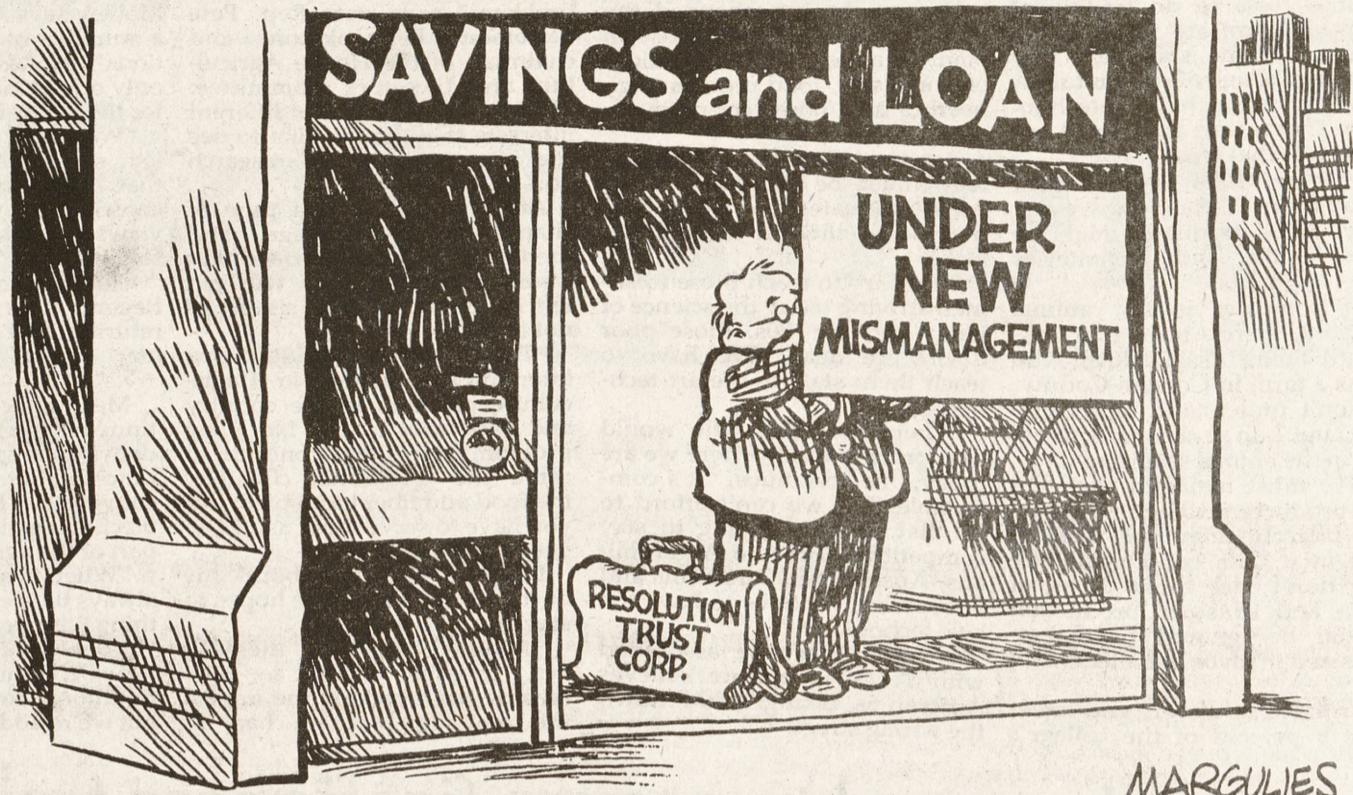
So every day I go to swim in Cain Pool. I pay the dollar and use the showers like the signs say. So I go to the locker rooms in DeWare Fieldhouse, and there is a whole mess of kids also preparing to use the pool. These kids are all part of the YOU Program sponsored here at this world-class University.

Now granted, what the program is doing is great, wonderful. Don't get me wrong. I'm glad we can provide the University and its facilities to these children. However, when someone is invited into your home, you expect them to be courteous and smile.

These kids use the showers, like there supposed to, but so very often they forget to turn them off. Numerous times I have turned off all eight showers on one side of the locker room and found the other eight going on the other side. I have even found them running an hour later when I am done working out.

The point is that according to College Station water statistics, a ten-minute shower takes 55 gallons of water. Do the math and you find that for the men's locker room for, say 30 minutes, all heads running, there were 1,320 gallons of water used. Now, I have a feeling that whatever fee was charged to the YOU Camp did not include the wasting of water. Want to know who probably gets the bill? That's right, we do.

Richard Szecsy '91



MARGULIES
OFF THE RECORD
NEW JERSEY

Foreign students deserve hospitality

Tim Truesdale

Columnist

Picture the following scenario: an A&M student is riding his bike across campus. It's 3 a.m. on Sunday morning. He has just completed another 60-hour work week and is heading home. In front of Sbis, a car pulls up next to him and three Aggies throw half-full bottles of beer at him, call him names and pull off into the night.

What did this fellow Aggie do to deserve this type of treatment? He happened to be born in the "wrong" country. He is one of the hundreds of international students studying here.

Unfortunately, this scenario is not purely mythical. In fact, there are very few foreign students here who have not received some kind of "special treatment" by "hospitable" Aggies.

I realize that many of you have never had any direct contact with foreigners, and it's hard to find out much about someone when you are just passing by and throwing beer at them. So here are some very general statements that apply for most foreign students at Texas A&M:

They do want to speak English better. I'll admit that many times it's frustrating to work with people who don't seem to speak English fluently. But when I consider that English is a second, third or fourth language for some students, I wonder if I could do any better with their native tongue.

Most foreign students have learned English in a classroom setting from teachers who were not born to English-speaking parents. These students have no way of understanding all the nuances and nonverbal communication that is associated with the Texas dialect of English many of us use.

They do want to learn American "ways of doing things." Through TV programs, movies and music, American culture is the most widely distributed in the world. Yet, foreign students can't learn everything about American customs through those media. There are still many questions about everything from dating customs to American public opinion about the reunification of Korea.

No one wants to be considered an "odd ball." Foreign students are no exception. Even if they choose to cling to their own culture, they want to understand why we do things the way we do, so they can adapt when they deal with Americans.

They are the best and brightest of their respective homelands. Furthermore, admission requirements for foreign students are often more selective than those for American students.

Many foreign students have progressed through the most respected academic institutions in their own countries before being selected for schooling here. **THEY ARE NOT STUPID!**

Many foreign students have made great sacrifices to study at A&M. This topic is inexhaustible. And I realize that those of you who have never studied abroad can never totally understand. But let me give an example.

I have a friend who came from an Asian country to pursue a degree at A&M. He left behind a good job, his native land, his relatives and his wife and children. Because of the high cost of international calls to his country, he primarily relied on letters to keep in touch with his wife and family. He had to prove his dedication and competency before the organization sponsoring him would send his wife and children. After living here for nine months, his family has flown here to be with him.

Why do I tell you my sob story? To prove the point that

there are many international students who need friends. And there are many reasons to become friends with a foreign student.

Some of the reasons are admittedly selfish: **The opportunity to experience another culture.** This includes everything from eating great food to listening to funky music. Believe me, I've never met a foreign student who wasn't willing to answer even stupid questions about his country.

The opportunity to know someone who will be important. As I stated previously, most foreign students at A&M constitute the brightest and best of the countries they are from. Therefore, when they return with degrees from America, they will likely be placed in key positions. In fact, several current presidents of foreign countries graduated from schools in the United States. You just might get to know the future president of Korea or Egypt or Colombia during your career at A&M.

There is a very disturbing negative side to this issue. What if the guy you throw beer at happens to become the president of Tanzania? He may appreciate his American degree, but he might not appreciate Americans. And that could have some serious implications on American foreign relations.

Of course you don't want to be selfish to have an incentive to befriend foreigners. The Golden Rule says, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." So put yourself in the shoes of that late-night biker I referred to.

How would you feel if you had left the United States to pursue a degree in another country? You've left literally everything and everybody behind. You feel clumsy with the new language, and you're never sure if the laughter you overhear is directed at your pronunciation or at a joke you didn't quite understand.

I realize that most of you don't have the courage to embark on this kind of experience. But what kind of courage does it take to throw beer at defenseless bikers?

Hopefully you'll have the courage to do at least one of the following:

Quit treating foreigners worse than animals! This requires no effort at all. If you can't treat them well, then just leave them alone.

Get to know foreign students in class, neighborhood, etc. This shouldn't be all that difficult. Oftentimes they sit alone or walk to their apartments wondering if anyone will talk to them.

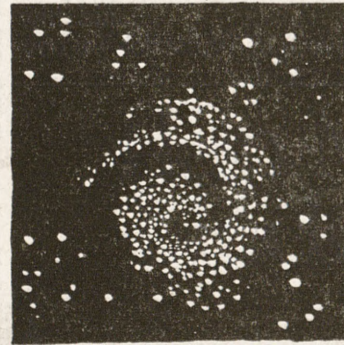
Get involved with groups that help Americans meet foreigners with similar interests. For example, International Student Services sponsors a Friendship Family Program which assigns new international students to Americans who want to help them get adjusted to life in the United States.

As Aggies, we are incredibly fortunate to be able to meet people from all over the world without leaving home. Let's take advantage of that opportunity while helping foreign students feel a little less foreign.

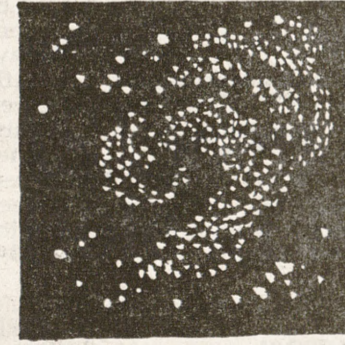
Tim Truesdale is a graduate student in urban planning.

Help NASA identify the black hole in space:

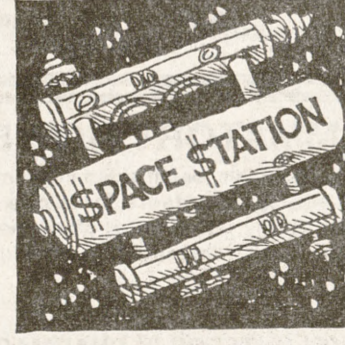
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