

# Opinion

The Battalion

Page 15

## The Battalion Editorial Board

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## Helping out

### Take time to volunteer

College students have many tremendous opportunities available to them. Both inside and outside the classroom. Perhaps, the greatest is the chance to have a positive impact on the community.

The people of Texas, ones seen everyday at the mall, grocery store and restaurant bear the large burden of the costs in higher education. The best way to say thank you to the people is to volunteer in local projects. These can range from community services like road cleaning to helping out at the hospital.

At Texas A&M, many students take part in Big Event each spring. But this is only for one day a year. There is a lot more to be done.

At a time when there are record numbers of people in need of assistance, students in this area are in a position to do a lot of good.

Programs such as Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPs) work with teachers and administrators to encourage students to succeed. The Thousand

Points of Light organization, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Big Brothers and Sisters are others to name just a few.

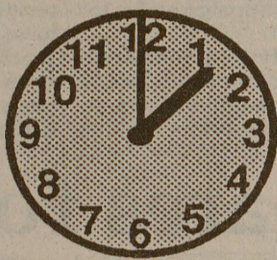
But there are also programs such as Meals-On-Wheels and others which help elder members of our community. A smile and helping hand from a young person can be a bright spot in a retired person's life.

And these are all programs which require very little time, usually no more than an hour a week. To sacrifice an hour at a social gathering or in front of the television is a small price to pay to make our community a

better place to live.

Volunteering in community projects gives students the chance to work with those people which society often forgets and work in a side of life many prefer to overlook.

No college class can be as rewarding and no pastime as productive as when volunteering in community projects.



## Guilty samaritan

### Idiotic award benefits criminal

Last week, the San Francisco Superior Court ordered taxi driver Hodden Charles Hollom to pay \$24,595 to Ocie McClure, a mugger he chased down and pinned with his car. McClure sued Hollom for "excessive force" when Hollom pinned him to a building near San Francisco's City Hall and broke his leg in the process.

This case was a perfect example of the absurdity of lawsuits today. People resort to suing each other for reasons that should not even be brought up. If this continues unchecked, society will begin to fear stopping, preventing or reporting times if there is a possibility that the criminal can sue them.

McClure acknowledged his guilt for robbing the victim. Hollom acted selfishly to capture the mugger. Yet, the jury ordered Hollom to pay because they thought he could have blocked McClure instead of pinning him with his car.

McClure's attorney said, "I do not think it is fair to take a 4,000-pound ab and ram someone against a wall." There was no fairness when McClure was robbing his victim.

Perhaps the jury and McClure's

attorney wanted Hollom to get out of his car and try to take McClure down by hand with a karate chop, without injuring him of course.

The jury never considered the fact that McClure could have easily escaped if Hollom only blocked him with his car. McClure could have easily jumped over or ran around Hollom's car.

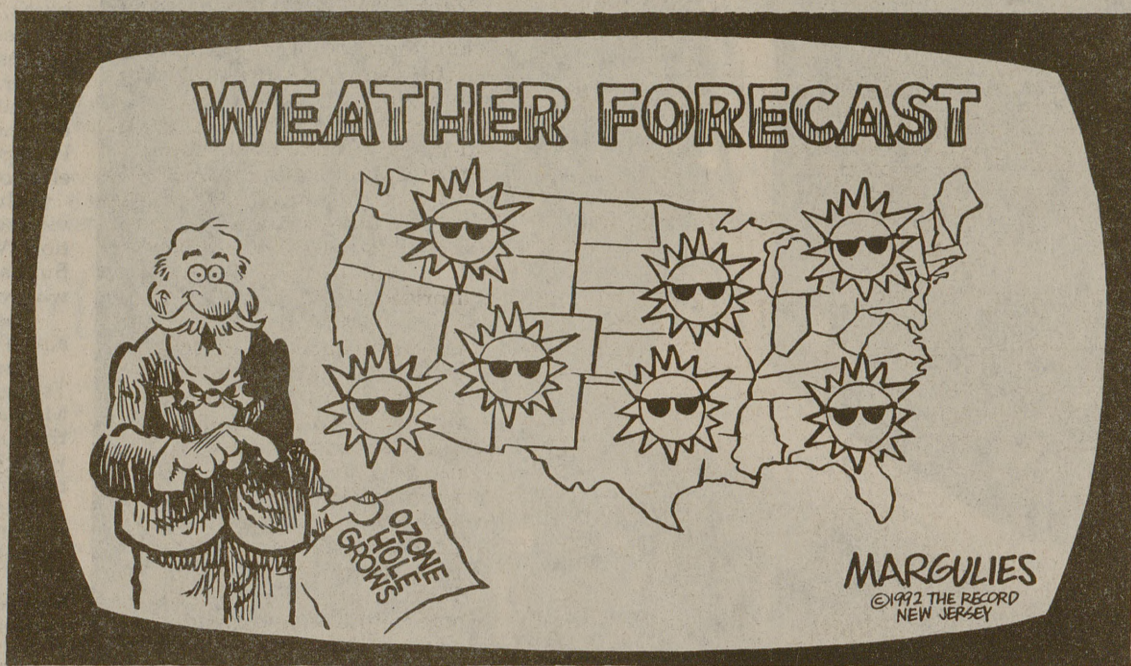
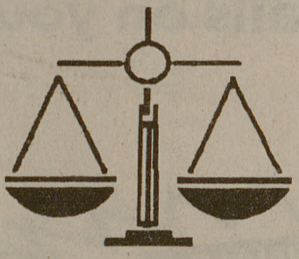
Also, McClure could have been armed with a knife or gun. Hollom might not have seen anything on McClure, but could Hollom take the chance and try to just block McClure with his car and give McClure a chance to shoot or cut him. No one would have questioned Hollom if McClure was armed, and if he was, the jury never considered that

fact.

The most ironic aspect of this case is the criminal gets paid for committing a crime while the hero of the story is considered a cold human being who inflicts unnecessary pain.

Society needs to be aware about cases such as Hollom's and protect those citizen's against lawsuits by criminals.

Hollom was guilty only of being a good law-abiding citizen.



"Don't forget those umbrellas tomorrow... there's a 100% chance of sun!"

## Feeling leftied out

### Southpaws suffer from discrimination that others fail to see

Life is so interesting, with its nuances and little injustices. "Interesting," by the way, covers both good events and bad. Just so you know. (Are you getting a feeling of foreshadowing?)

The big events and those magnanimously (look it up) important injustices take up all the front page space in newspapers, but the little things add up, too. Many things seem unimportant to you is seen as callous oppression and forced conformity to a member of a minority. Yes, even I, a male caucasian, am being discriminated against daily, although 90 percent of you have no idea why.

I am left-handed in a right-handed world, and we are being oppressed.

We lefties have had it rough since day one, when some right-hander decided everyone was going to write from left to right, ensuring that for generations to come left-handers would be smudging pencil and ink all over the page. Way back in the Dark Ages the left hand was viewed as evil; we were called "sinister" for using weapons with the "wrong" hand.

Today southpaws are no longer called sinister, but the abuse continues. As children, natural lefties are discouraged from using the left hand for writing and other activities, leaving many kids scarred for life.

Researchers have concluded that lefties don't live as long as right-handed folk. But at least when we die early, we won't have to put up with new studies.

Most lefties are left alone now, but off-handed remarks still abound. A klutzy person has "two left thumbs" and one who can't dance has "two left feet." In science and engineering, there are 1,342 (give or take) right hand rules compared to none for left-

ies.

In society we greet each other by extending the right (not the left, mind you) hand. A useful sidekick or cohort is called - you guessed it - a right-hand man. Will the oppression never end?

The tortures today include those lecture room desks all over A&M. You know, those chairs with the appendages on the right side that have just enough room for a notepad and the right elbow. I am in a constant state of contortion trying to adjust to writing on these desks which were designed by Joseph "Righty" Mengele, who used them to torture southpaws to death by discomfort.

Left-handed versions of these ergonomic (look it up) atrocities (look this one up, too) are almost non-existent on campus. I've counted a total of three such desks, all in the same classroom in the basement of Reed McDonald. I can also claim two more left-handed compatible desks in a lecture classroom in the Engineering Physics building, although these are technically designed for wheelchair users.

Not that lefties are considered completely useless by normal people. My old friend Simon (you don't know him) was a great basketball player in high school and was left-handed. Southpaw baseball players are major commodities to a team's roster. We are considered superior in many thinking skills due to our right brain dominance.

Way back in grade school, though, nobody bothered to tell me there were baseball gloves made to fit the right hand. But at least while I was throwing a really mean curve ball (with my right hand as those oppressive, rightist PE teachers insisted), I managed to hit a few right-handers in the head.

Speaking of schools and such, southpaw achievements are never mentioned in textbooks. This is a major omission by right-hand-centric forces in education today. Every person mentioned in textbooks who may possibly have been left-handed should be labeled a lefty.



JON  
DESHAZO

The inclusion of such information would do much to help teach children and their parents that "it's OK to be left-handed" by showing them that many important and famous people are southpaws, such as President Bush and a lot of other people, including my dad and a friend of mine, a 1996 Olympics hopeful (you don't know her).

What I'd like to see is a Left-Handed Americans Act that would correct a lot of wrongs in this country, like allowing more right-hand drive cars in this country (so my left hand can reach all the controls now located on the right side of me) Add left-handed telephones (rotary and touch-tone phones) to all those zillions of right-handed phones in the country. Make A&M put some left-handed desks in classrooms. Provide more left-handed tools and guns (ever tried using a right-handed gun left-handed? I ain't near as much fun). Kill all the lawyers (oops, sorry, good idea, wrong column). Provide federal scholarships based on the hand with which we write (Hey, my bad handwriting is caused by having to write backwards, and many people discriminate against bad handwriting. When was the last time you saw a lefty with decent penmanship?) Most importantly, outlaw right-handed butter knives, can openers and punch ladles, all of which cause an inordinate amount of stress for us southpaws. They're almost as bad as those tiny desks.

I expect this bill will be a difficult fight, but I hope that the politically correct forces join in our cause, a cause pitting an oppressed minority against an entrenched majority. In the mean time, all southpaws should unite in this fight against tyranny. Write your congressman. Join in marches for my new group ACT LEFT! Start pushing newspapers around. And until we get justice or a lot of monetary entitlements, write backwards!

!aH !ti ekil srosserppo dednah-thgir esoh! woh ees s'teL

DeShazo is a junior electrical engineering major

## Time teaches us best how to hate each other

### Guest Column

Matthew  
McKnight  
is a freshman  
mechanical engineering  
major

entire race. John even started a "war to end all wars" to accomplish his task. One person obviously did not start the African slave trade and did not kill more than six million Jews while fighting a world war. It is a historical impossibility. The idea is that, as kids, these totally fictional characters saw their physical and religious differences, but dismissed them. Despite what their families told them, they were still friends. Things like prejudice and racism didn't exist to them and didn't need to. Segregation had no meaning to them as far as they were concerned. What they saw, as kids, was only

friendship.

Now why can't we be like that? Why should things like race, religion, age, sex, whatever, have any impact on our lives at all? So what if some people look different? So do you. Why do we need to go through hell trying to decide what the politically correct word is, so that we don't offend anyone? Why should we need to replace "white" students with "ethnic" students to take a more realistic picture (Battalion Feb. 10 issue)? Why should anyone have to worry about racial balance? John, Leroy and Mark didn't care until someone pointed them out, so why do we?

Some might say that the young friends were ignorant and didn't know any better. So what? Don't you think it's worth sacrificing "intelligence" to stop fighting? Real intelligence is the ability to see past these differences to the people themselves.

Some would also say that to achieve this "intelligence" they

would have to ignore their own heritage. Can't people realize their heritage and still be friends?

I am 50 percent Hispanic and very proud of it (by the way, I don't care if you call me Latino, Mexican or whatever. "Spic", I might have something to say about, though). I love Mexican food, people, art, language, everything. I have great love and respect for my heritage. I also have great respect for the Germans and Russians for what they are going through in the name of peace and democracy. None of these things interfere with my respect for other cultures, and my pride in being American.

Is there something inherently evil in looking past your heritage in order to learn about someone else's?

Once you learn about it, it's easier to respect it. When that happens, racism, prejudice, segregation and, most important of all, hate will all but disappear.

### Have an opinion? Express it!

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers.

All letters are welcome. Letters must be signed and must include classification, address and a daytime phone number for verification purposes. They should be 250 words or less. Anonymous letters will not be published.

The Battalion reserves the right to edit all letters for length, style and accuracy. There is no guarantee the letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 013 Reed McDonald, sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111 or can be faxed to 845-5408.