

The Battalion Editorial Board

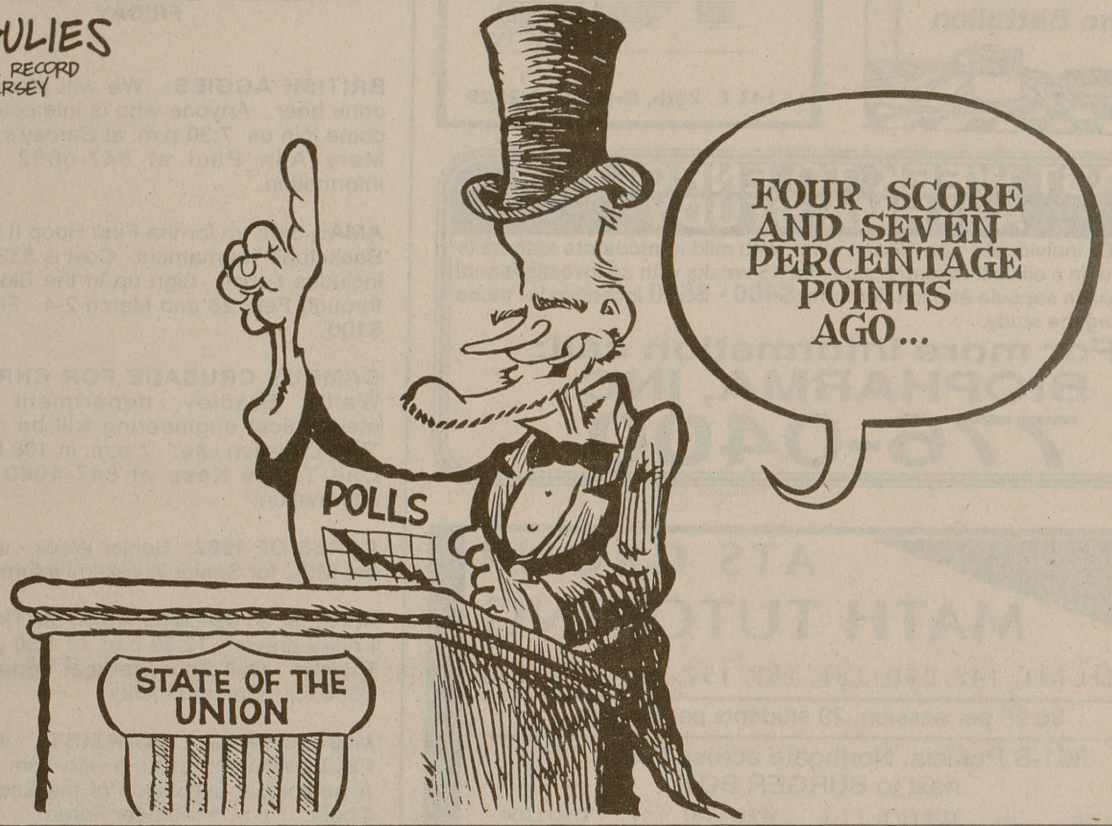
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The following opinions are a consensus of The Battalion opinion staff and senior editors.



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NEW JERSEY



Gay protests

Activist violence would hurt cause

Nearly five months from the scheduled Republican National Convention in Houston, militant gays and lesbians from coast to coast are making plans to stir up the city and the nation. The members of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) and Queer Nation, an aggressive gay and lesbian rights organization, plan to hold demonstrations in Houston to fight for increased funding for AIDS research and to take a stand against the anti-abortion activists.

obvious city damage, the activists' actions may do a great deal of harm to their own cause. The organizations are attempting to gain public support for gays and lesbians by drawing attention through violent action. If attention is what they want, they will surely get it, but it will be negative attention more often than not.

The group has caught the attention of Houston police, whose goal it is to keep the peace and protect citizens and property. As law enforcers, the police want to give people the opportunity to demonstrate, but they cannot allow the groups to disrupt the city with violent actions. The right to demonstrate has to fall behind the right of public safety.

ACT UP and Queer Nation have connected themselves to the abortion cause by volunteering to escort clients to and from the city's abortion clinics. Unfortunately, the militant attitude of the group may end up drawing more negative publicity to a cause that does not need it.

Before it is too late, other pro-gay/lesbian groups must try to encourage members of ACT UP and Queer Nation to throw down their militant ways and cancel their violent protests in Houston.

These groups must realize that violence will only hurt their cause and make it harder for other gays and lesbians to gain rights and public recognition.

Members of the groups and city officials predict the course of events could be a repeat of the Democratic National Convention of 1968 in which anti-war protests sparked violent battles between demonstrators and the Chicago police. ACT UP and Queer Nation are hoping to disrupt the convention by engaging in an entire day's worth of civil disobedience.

In fact, and organizer brags about it. Matt Weingart, an ACT UP organizer from Dallas, said, "Everyone coming is hyped on making it uncomfortable for the government. If the police start cracking heads, it could be a repeat of 68."

While these groups have the constitutional right to protest and voice their opinions, they do not have the right to destroy property.

Judging the groups' past experiences in other cities, the demonstrations may very well prove to be extremely damaging. But, besides the

Proper stance

Bush must support South African leader

South African President F.W. de Klerk last week put his career on the line and took another step in his drive toward an apartheid-free South Africa.

This brave decision by de Klerk is seemingly being overlooked President Bush. It would be admirable if Bush and Congress urged white voters through diplomatic and economic means to support de Klerk in his referendum.

On Feb. 20, he called for a nationwide referendum on his 2-year-old reform plans to be taken within the next six weeks. This decision is in reaction to a defeat suffered by de Klerk's National Party at the hands of the Conservative Party in the town of Potchefstroom, last week.

Along with his decision on the referendum, de Klerk made a gutsy move of announcing that if he loses the vote, he would step down and his administration would resign.

But if he wins, de Klerk said his government would be free to pursue

reforms directed at ending apartheid. In making that ultimatum, de Klerk may have committed political suicide, but he also will find out just where he stands with the voting people in his country.

In his former and present reform plans, de Klerk has legalized the African National Congress, released ANC leader Nelson Mandela from prison and declared that he was ready to open negotiations with black leaders.

These and other reforms have allowed South Africa to regain some of its worldly stature. Some of the tangible benefits include the lifting of cultural and athletic boycotts.

Many believe this vote could fail. But either way the vote goes, there will be a change in the current system of South Africa.

If de Klerk wins, there is a great chance that blacks will be voting and enjoying some of the rights that whites enjoy.

Quiet remembrances

Lack of recognition hurts philosophy of Black History Month

History is philosophy teaching by example, and also by warning; its two eyes are geography and chronology.

Tomorrow is Feb. 29, which signifies the end of another Black History Month. I began this month urging all to make good use of this month by learning about the accomplishments of famous and not so famous black Americans for yourself. Did you?

Well, lately I've heard many people around campus say, "This has been a quiet Black History Month." At first I agreed, but after thinking about it, I realized it is only quiet because people allow it to be quiet.



Tanya Williams

For some reason, it is believed that if this page is not filled with racial slurs or arguments, the month is not exciting or worthy of talking about. That's not what black history, or any other history for that matter, is for.

If you thought that the month was quiet, it was only quiet because we, in general, didn't take the time to share the richness of the black culture with others. Not once did I notice a guest column or letter talking about the pride of African-Americans. Also, the month was filled with lectures, speeches, and seminars about black topics that people overlooked. Again, if the month was quiet, it can be blamed on no one but yourself.

To digress, I did not come to complain to you about the lackadaisical attitude about black history on this campus, but rather about more important thing topics such as the

lackadaisical attitude about black and African history in this country.

It has always bothered me that Black History Month has always been thought to honor only the accomplishments of Black Americans.

When I think black history, I think of the history of blacks that stretches all the way back to Africa and the accomplishments made there in the past and the accomplishments that are being made there right now.

OK, just to give examples, we're going to venture into a history lesson all our own.

Many people generally assert and believe that civilization began in the Middle East or in Asia. There have been considerable amounts of research that suggest that those beliefs are wrong; it has been said that civilization began in Africa. OK, let's skip down a few years. Nefretete, the woman thought of when the word beauty is mentioned, was a black African queen in 1358 B.C.

Imhotep, a virtual unknown among Americans (even to this writer until recently), was considered the real Father of Medicine. There is evidence that he treated more than 200 diseases, including spinal tuberculosis.

Those were just a few of the many thousands of accomplishments that Africans can be proud for, but unfortunately they haven't been remembered and taught in American schools and textbooks.

In a recent class of mine, Seminar on Minority Leadership, taught by Kevin Carrethers, we talked about how the pyramids in Egypt are of such precision and measurement that people today could not even reconstruct them with modern equipment, much less with the equipment they used then.

In class, it was pointed out that

though Egypt is in Africa, the pyramids are said to be built by Egyptians, which people most often tie to the Middle East. Is it just me, or do people not want to admit Africans are capable of doing anything worthwhile?

If you think about it, when the people of Botswana or Zambia do something, it is immediately said to be in Africa, but on the other hand, Egypt is rarely associated with Africa.

Americans have been brainwashed that Africa is a place of uncivilized people, running around with spears and other primitive weapons. It is time that people realize that the men and women of Africa were civilized far before we were ever thought of and remain as civilized as we are now.

It is time that our schools realize that African history is a part of world history in a serious aspect. If school children can take the time to study the history of Europe, which is the background and the home of America's forefathers, they can take the time to learn the the history of Africa, which is the background and home of the beginning of civilization.

For that matter, if President Bush wants America to be a globally aware country and establish a "New World Order", he needs to encourage that a great number of countries' backgrounds and histories to be taught in America's schools.

When we study history, we should study history in a broad sense and open our minds to the geography and the chronology mentioned in the beginning quote.

Williams is a sophomore journalism major

Mail Call

Feducia's humor feels like beer

I am constantly amazed by the anal-retentive objections to Stacy Feducia's columns. They are almost as funny as what she prints. However, I have only one thing to say: Relax! Humor is like beer. You either like it or you don't. I can assure you her hunger for attention dwarfs in comparison to her ability as a writer. Sit back, have a beer, if you are inclined to do so, and enjoy life. We're in a recession you know. Next time you are offended by a column maybe you should ask for a refund.

Chris Poteet
Class of '93

Consider Asians minorities, too

This letter is for all of those minorities, especially Luis Vega, who complain about not receiving scholarships and/or aid to attend college. Why is it that whenever anyone speaks about

minorities not having money those minorities are either black, Hispanic or Indian. According to Webster, the definition of the word minority is "the smaller in number groups which constitute the whole." If this is true, than I am considered a minority far more than you are.

In the past, I have always complained about how Asians are never considered a minority (even though we constitute less than five percent of the United States' population), how blacks and Hispanics have special scholarships and national funds set aside only for blacks and Hispanics, how only the extremely rich or extremely poor can go to school, and how the majority of people (except ourselves) have this preconceived idea that all Asians are so intelligent that colleges hand money out to us or that we will blow the curve in your classes. I am tired of complaining.

You can keep complaining about how blacks, Hispanics and Indians are treated unfairly and how you need more money. But while you are complaining think about the other millions of students out there; think about the families who have parents that work as hard as yours do but cannot send their child to college; think about the average caucasian student who financially struggles to graduate; think about how minorities fought to be treated equally and then stop complaining.

Jennifer Fong
Class of '94

Aggie spirit shows during crisis

We feel it is our obligation to share with you what happened recently during a family emergency which involved our loyal and protective thoroughbred Brazilian Dalmatian mascot experiencing cardiac failure. The professionalism, efficiency, sensitivity and friendliness of Texas A&M graduates and students were overwhelming during our ordeal.

Down here in the Cypress-Tomball area, Veterinarian Dr. Buck at the State Highway 249 Emergency Clinic took swift action to stabilize the animal and provided care until we could transfer him to our regular vet, Dr. Stan Zyblot, of the Spring Creek Animal Hospital in Tomball, who immediately contacted the Veterinary Medical Center at Texas A&M.

We are very grateful that Dr. Matthew W. Miller and technician Lisa Banks at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital went out of their way to immediately examine and care for Menzo. The staff at the front desk could not have been more helpful and friendly. Doctor Miller deserves special recognition and thanks for the manner in which he handled the situation... thoroughly professional, methodical, forthright and friendly.

... and with only an hour's notice.

Moreover, while we were waiting for results of tests, our son Dave Jr., a sophomore at Cypress Creek High School, visited the A&M campus, where students walked up to us to say hello and to help us find our directions. We even took a campus tour and, with minimal notice, counselor Edward B. Williams of the Office of School Relations took time out of his schedule to talk to Dave at length about admission requirements.

What a positive impression we received of Texas A&M University, its students, staff and everyone at the College of Veterinary Medicine. Thank you all for your hospitality and helpfulness.

David L. Lockwood

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 845-2647.