

The Battalion Editorial Board

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



One of few

Engineering program shows excellence

Texas A&M's graduate engineering program received some well-deserved recognition recently as U.S. News & World Report ranked the program 13th among the nation's top engineering graduate schools.

For specialty degrees, A&M's petroleum engineering program captured the top spot when evaluated by the deans of other engineering schools, tying with the University of Texas at Austin.

A&M's engineering programs have long since been recognized as among the best offered. This latest rating serves to place the school among a distinguished group which includes the likes of Stanford University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Cornell University.

This is the third consecutive year the program has garnered a spot in the top 20 engineering programs rated by the magazine.

"We're better than we're generally thought to be," said Dr. Carl A. Erdman, executive associate dean of the College of Engineering. "Our reputation has not kept up with the quality which we're putting out, but

we're catching up."

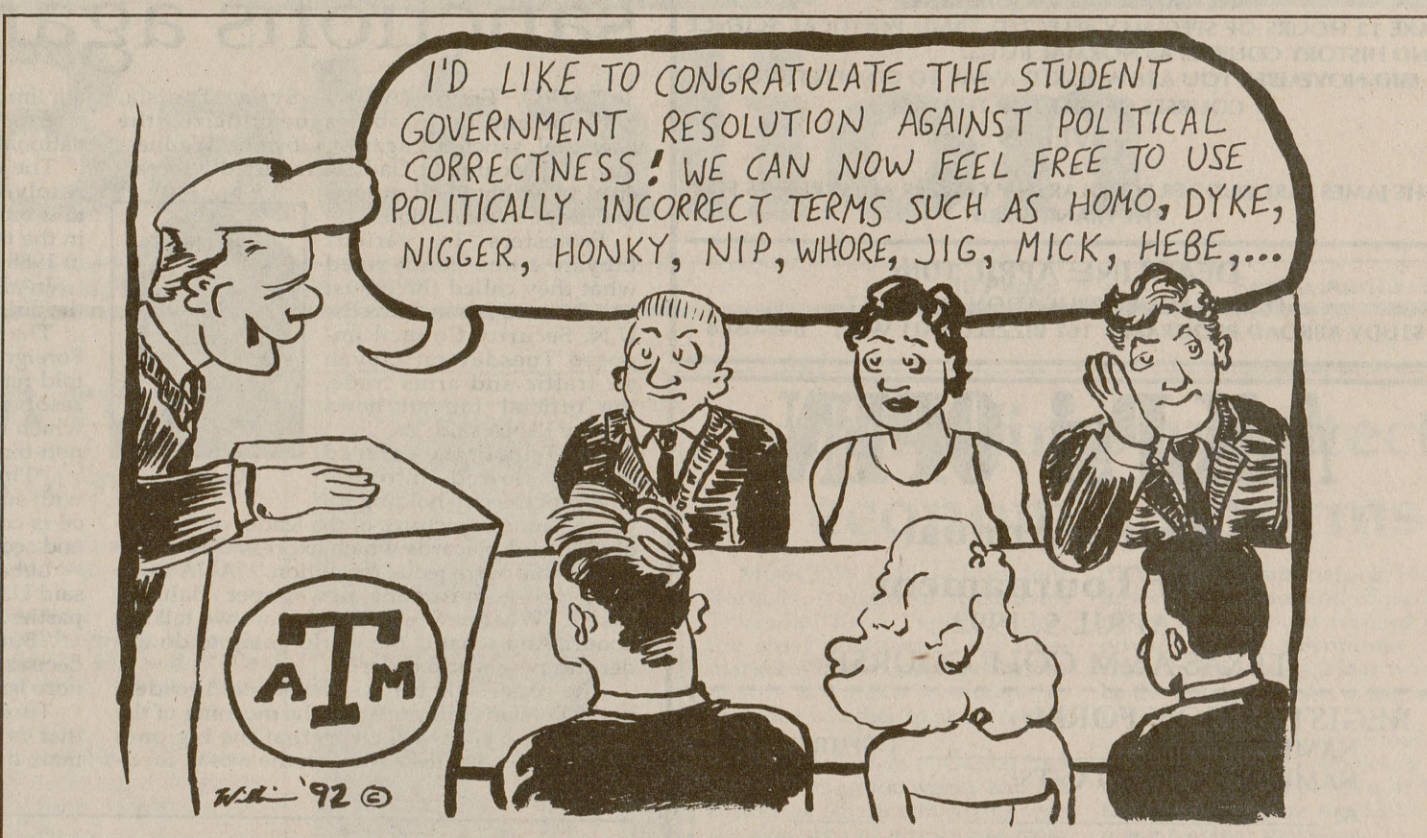
After suffering from public image problems following last semester's Corps controversy, this ranking solidifies A&M's national status as a quality school with quality programs.

At a time when the nation reels from the effects of a recession, college graduates need an extra edge to gain an upper hand in the job search. Often, they must compete against other highly qualified and talented candidates. A degree from a nationally-recognized engineering program may make the difference in whether they succeed or fail in their search.

For A&M, the recognition will mean an increase in the number of quality students seeking positions in engineering graduate programs, boosting the program even higher.

A&M's graduate engineering program is young when compared to its competition in the rankings. For it to place so high is quite an accomplishment.

The College of Engineering deserves congratulations for a job well done.



Color me purple

Acclaimed book offers perspective of black women in Ol' South

I just turned 21 this last Saturday and let me tell you it was incredible. It was a fantasia of frolic, a Bacchanalian debacle (as my friend, Stacy Feducia, would say), a thigh-slapping, hip-banging, orgy on the front lawn, lip locking 'till your face turned inside out, roomful of fly girls celebration.

Psych! April fools!

I did absolutely nothing to celebrate. ("Oh my gosh! It can't be true.") Yes, I was a good little Muslim! I didn't drink (shock!). I abstained from sex (shock! horror!). I treated girls like human beings (shock! horror! utterly disgusting!). I was a decent guy!

In fact, I spent the weekend relaxing, watching some great NCAA basketball games, playing some volleyball, and reading my favorite book, "The Color Purple" by Alice Walker for my English class.

I highly recommend this great piece of literature during National Library Week and since I have gotten your attention by mentioning sex and alcohol, now I can discuss my favorite book (Don't turn the page). Most students would think I am crazy for not celebrating my birthday, but once you pick up the "Color Purple," it is hard to put down.

"The Color Purple" is the first novel by an African-American writer to win the Pulitzer Prize; in addition, it won the American Book Award.

"The Color Purple" covers the life of two African-American sisters, Celie and Nettie, over a 40 year span from 1906 to 1947 and the lasting love and relationship between them. The story begins when Celie writes her first of many letters to God after

being raped by who she thought to be her father but later understands to be her stepfather. After repeatedly being raped by her stepfather, Celie bears two children. Both of her children are sold by her stepfather and later Celie is forced to marry a man she calls Mister. Celie's sister, Nettie begins to fear her stepfather's sexual advances and decides to stay with Celie and Mister. However, Mister pursues Nettie and finally banishes her from Celie and his home because Nettie refused to do his bidding. In the years to come, Celie evolves from a half-literate little girl to a much abused and oppressed wife.

Eventually Celie's life changes after befriending Mister's mistress, blues singer Shug Avery. After discovering the letters from Nettie that Mister hid for many years, Celie rebels against Mister's dominance over her. Celie leaves Mister and becomes a successful and independent woman and finally reunites with her sister, Nettie.

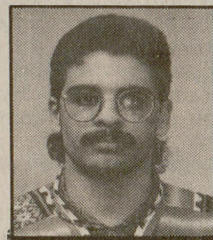
Many critics considered Walker's novel outstanding. In her book "Freedomways," Maryemma Graham said, "Alice Walker's novel is the most compelling and thought-provoking of her works to date." Yet Graham considered Walker's view of African-American men's lack of compassion and brutality disturbing in the novel. Walker never intended to balance the story, she wanted the reader to understand and know one or two characters, Celie and Nettie. In Henry Louis Gates' "The Signifying Monkey," he explains the reason for the lack of balance. Celie wrote in letters to God to survive through her oppression and degradation. Gates explains, "We read Celie reading her world and writing it into being, in one subtle discursive act." There is no longer devices of empathy and distance, found in third-person narration. The reader is almost reading over her shoulder about her life. The reader overhears what Celie

wants us to know. Celie is in control of her narration and every character's speech is also controlled by her. Celie is the object and subject of narration. It is this manipulation that makes "The Color Purple" such a great piece of literature because Walker manipulates the reader's responses about Celie. It is not the bias of Walker that portrays men badly, but the experiences of Celie's life.

However one critic, Gerald Early in "The Antioch Review," disliked Walker's novel. Early states, "In essence, the book attempts to be revisionist salvation history and fails because of its inability to use or really understand history." Early goes on to explain the lack of coherence to historical references and the refusal to show change in society during the span of years Walker's novel covers. Early fails to realize what Gates pointed out. The novel was based on Celie's letters to God. She was not explaining the world around her and the changes that were occurring because, in fact, as an African-American living in the South there was no change in the treatment of African-Americans since the Civil War. They were a second class race, and Walker realized that was not the reason for Celie to write the letters. The reader understood history through Celie's eyes and thoughts. She might be even incorrect at what she explains, but that enables the reader to better understand and appreciate Celie or Nettie because the reader sees their bias, point of view and understanding of the world through their eyes, not Walker's.

This is National Library Week. If you liked the "Silence of the Lambs," "The Prince of Tides," or "JFK," they were all based on highly acclaimed novels. If you thought the film "JFK" was a controversial film, read Walker's novel.

Ben-Musa is a sophomore history and junior major



Anas Ben-Musa

Have a heart

Dance raises money for A&M research

Today in G. Rollie White Coliseum, the American Heart Association(AHA) will hold a "Dance for Heart" fundraiser. From 7p.m. to 10 p.m. people will dance to support AHA. Many people will enjoy themselves and get a little exercise. It's also, a great way to raise money to fight the number one killer in this country, heart disease.

Rene Hickerson, a member of the committee for "Dance for Heart," explained the event as a mixture of different types of dances. The "Dance for Heart" will comprise low-impact aerobics. In previous years, polkas and square dancing were performed.

The majority of the money raised from the dance will be donated to Texas A&M for cardiovascular research. There will be prizes to be given away for the most donations raised by individuals. In addition, a \$10 minimum is accepted for donations with a free t-shirt given to each donor. Also, there will be refreshments at the event.

The "Dance for Heart" needs to be supported by as many students as possible. The majority of A&M students do not consider their health to be at risk. Yet, heart disease takes on many forms. It does not strike only the old or less athletically fit individuals.

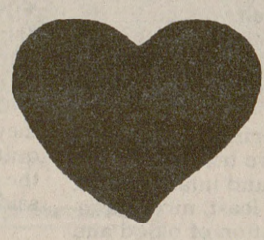
Even professional athletes, such as Houston Rockets' center Hakeem Olajuwon, have suffered from minor heart problems. Statistics show more than 25,000 babies are born annually with heart defects, and more than 1.2 million adults will suffer from a heart attack this year.

Furthermore, AHA helps in the education of cardiovascular disease.

The association realizes more than half of heart attack victims die before reaching the hospital. Many victims are not aware they are suffering from a heart attack at the time.

Other factors not understood that contribute to cardiovascular disease are high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels and smoking. High blood pressure increases the chance of numerous cardiovascular diseases such as stroke, heart attacks or congestive heart failure. High levels of cholesterol in the blood increase the chance of coronary heart disease. Smokers have double the chance of having a heart attack.

With AHA, better research can be done to understand the complexities of the heart and why so many Americans suffer from cardiovascular disease.



Mail Call

Ansbach deserves blame for absences

True to usual The Battalion form, the "journalists of the 'news' paper have left off certain important issue in their story titled "Board inquiry probes allegations." One point I would like to address is the quote "he (Ansbach) got thrown off the Senate by the same person." (Who was also tampering with his mail.) The Speaker did not throw John Ansbach off the Senate, John Ansbach threw himself off the Senate by not attending the meetings. As a senator, I took my responsibility to my constituents very seriously I only missed a meeting for important reasons. The only way a senator could have an unexcused absence is if he/she didn't care or didn't know about the meeting. The only other meeting John might not have known about is the Special Session, but those absences weren't counted anyway. So the next question is, why did he have two unexcused absences instead of just this one? I don't know, but I think it's a good question to ask. Sure the mail tampering is bad but it should not be linked to John getting kicked off the Senate.

If he truly cared about representing those people who elected him in the first place, he should have never had any unexcused absences.

W. L. Taylor
Class of '91

Ags need to know about candidates

During the 1992 Presidential Campaign season, there are a few examples of sneaky political underhandedness that stand out: "I never inhaled and I didn't like it"; "... (I) later returned the information to the office mail box"; "I have never broken any law of my country"; "I don't believe I've violated election commission regulations in any way".

Who would think that at Texas A&M we would have serious ethical questions in our own little election. But these transgressions should not be overlooked or excused by any governmental organization on campus. In fact, it is simply an administrative travesty that further action has not

been taken against David Brooks. Why hasn't The Battalion spoken against the candidate? Why hasn't some group present itself as a vanguard of integrity and ethics? David Brooks' actions are tantamount to invasion of privacy and compromising the integrity of his position and his campaign.

As a voter, I believe that the only respectable recourse for Mr. Brooks would be an outright resignation from his position and a withdrawal of his candidacy, plus a formal apology to all parties involved, including his constituency. The reputation and integrity of Texas A&M and Aggies everywhere are at stake.

Also, kudos go to The Battalion editorial staff for its comprehensive candidate coverage and its endorsement. The Academic Affairs Committee is incorrect in its opinion that The Battalion should not endorse a candidate.

Not only is The Batt a source for news and information, it is also the only effective forum for political, social, economic issues and opinions, and is expected to take a side in the political campaign (what newspaper hasn't?). Besides, there have been numerous forums for the electorate to learn about its candidates.

I think that the committee should rather spend its time with the ignominious failure of the

Candidate Forum, which drew so few people one could hardly consider it a forum.

Sean W. O'Donnell, Jr.
Class of '95

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.