

The Battalion Editorial Board

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

Not so special

Put event center money into academics

It is ironic that the University is considering going ahead with a \$42-million Special Events Center at the same time that the academic programs at Texas A&M are being hurt considerably by budget cuts. A more worthwhile project would be to channel some of the private funding for extras, such as a special events center, into the academic realm itself.

Unfortunately, state laws require money raised for university buildings to be spent only on buildings.

But state laws are not etched in stone. They can be changed, or in this case, waived. And with the financial crunch A&M faces, now is the time for the University community to come together and work to change the laws so that A&M can put the money for the center to academic use.

The administration, faculty, and students must work to convince private contributors to give priority to academics over the extra-curricular programs. The status of the academic colleges, after budget cuts, mostly affects the students themselves, who are already having to deal with newly installed limitations on registration for fall 1992.

Lack of funding is evident in almost every college on campus with the largest cuts in liberal arts and sciences.

Many of the classes in these colleges have been cut to a minimal number of sections, and some classes will not be offered at all. When students cannot even take the classes they want because there is not enough money available to offer an adequate number of sections, one should question why the University would allow millions of dollars to be spent for recreational activities without putting up a fight.

Many people around campus have been discussing this issue, but something concrete needs to be done in order for a change to take place. The Student Senate should take the first step by passing a referendum in support of reallocation of private funds. Although this alone would not be enough to bring about a change, a referendum would allow the administration and faculty to hear student opinion on the issue and would allow the students to go on record in support of academics.

Then, it is up to University officials to convince private donors to use their money for something more worthwhile and fundamental to our school.

We must not lose sight of the fact that education should be the most important part of the overall experience at A&M.

Passing grades

Athletes must meet standards set for all

The purpose of a university is to educate. It is supposed to offer higher education to those students who have distinguished themselves by doing well in high school and on the Scholastic Aptitude Test.

But exceptions are made for athletes.

Last week, a Rice University faculty committee released a study condemning the practice of allowing athletes into their university who do not meet the academic qualifications. The study stated that when athletes are admitted who cannot function in the education process, "the ideal of the 'scholar-athlete' becomes a shameful travesty."

The study went on to denounce the practice of admitting athletes without the proper grades by saying these students "have little more chance of success in most classrooms than would non-athletes if plopped down in front of the A&M line with a football in their arms."

While it would be easy to say this is a problem unique to Rice, it would also

be a lie. Right here at Texas A&M the problem is rampant.

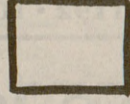
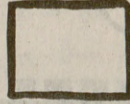
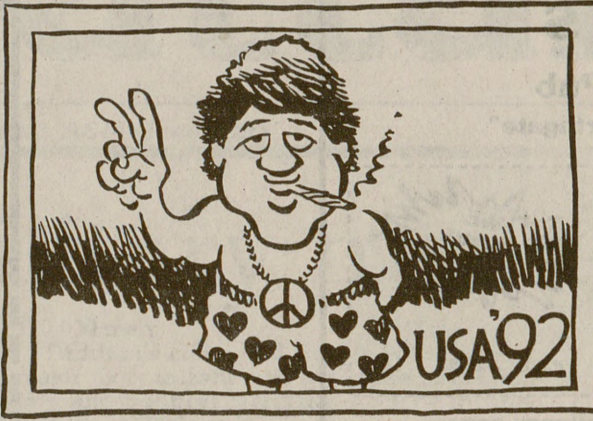
For residents of Texas to enter A&M, they must make a 1200 on the SAT if in the third or fourth quarters of their high school classes, 1100 in the second quarter or 1000 in the first quarter. Students in the top 10 percent do not have an SAT minimum. For out-of-state students the minimums are even more strenuous. Students in the second, third and fourth quarters are not even admitted and those in the top quarter must have an 1100 SAT.

Last fall, A&M's freshman class had an average of 1058 on their SAT.

However, freshmen in Aggie athletics averaged only 918, well below any standard.

This is, in the words of the Rice committee, a travesty. To allow someone to enter a university simply because they can throw a ball or run real fast is wrong promotes the idea that athletics are more important than academics. It also cheapens the educational experience for other students.

CAST A BALLOT FOR THE CLINTON OF YOUR CHOICE



(CHECK ONE)

MARGULIES
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NEW JERSEY

Beleaguered bovine

Cows in Brenham need help after vicious blast ruined 'heaven'

The Brenham explosion has brought forth all sorts of concerns regarding the safety of natural gas storage as well as the effectiveness of salt domes in containing the concussion. However, one tragedy of the crash has escaped the scrutiny of both state and federal investigators. What happened to the Blue Bell cows?

We've all heard the stories of devastated homes, cracked trees and victims scarred by severe burns. We've seen the images of scorched earth and the billowing flames from the gas pipeline, but no one has mentioned the fate of Texas' famous ruminants, aside from pictures of dead cows littering pastures.



Mark Evans

I know the subject has weighed heavily on everyone's mind ever since the news came last week of an explosion in Brenham. That and where am I going to get my ice cream from now?

The little creamery in Brenham has centered all of its advertising around its special cows which give Blue Bell ice cream its unique flavor.

"Our cows think Brenham is heaven," croons the announcer as a picture of cows chomping on grass and surrounded by bluebonnets fills the TV screen.

Do they still think Brenham is heaven? After having endured an earthquake which measured 3.5 on the Richter scale and seeing their comrades fall dead around them, you would think the cows would begin seeing Brenham as the other place.

And with the natural gas fire and all of the burn victims... well, you get the idea.

And what about Blue Bell? Will its ice cream feel the effects of the traumatized cows? Will they have to hire replacement cows until their own recover from the shock? And what about hazard pay? The Blue Bell cows have a pretty good case. They could easily milk (sorry, I couldn't resist) the creamery for all it's worth, claiming emotional trauma and the like.

Blue Bell has made tons of money off of the reputation of these cows. Who do you think of when you think of Blue Bell ice cream? Cows, right. Borden has Elsie, and Ben and Jerry's has Ben and Jerry. If it weren't for the cows, everyone would think Blue Bell was a dress manufacturer or a brand of hair color. Let's face it, the cows have made Blue Bell what it is today.

And what do the cows get in return? Someone pulling on their private parts. Hardly due compensation in my opinion. Where are the animal rights activists when you need them? The cows deserve their due compensation.

The Brenham explosion has done much more than just kill three people and obliterate entire square miles of land. It has permanently scarred the lives of some of Texas' most famous citizens. Their lives have been shattered. Their comrades killed. Their grass turned into charcoal. Yet, they received no help from the American Red Cross. No paramedics rushed to their side in their time of need.

Quite to the contrary, veterinarians came out to put them to death, believing a simple injury cripples them for life and damages their abilities to serve as official spokesanimals for the ice cream company. Yet, no one said a word.

After all, they are just animals.

Randall's supermarkets has come up with a good idea, but it needs to be taken a little further. For every Blue Bell product purchased, the store will donate \$1 towards Brenham relief efforts. While noble in its aims, this program neglects the cows.

I propose for every dollar that Randall's collects, they earmark 25 cents to be used as aid for the Blue Bell cows. This money can be used to help pay off the substantial expenses which the cows have incurred following last week's catastrophe.

Of course, some benefits did arise from the explosion. For the next few weeks, Central Texas ice cream shops will have an easier time when making shakes. The milk will come preshaken, so all they have to do is add ice cream and chocolate syrup then serve.

And think of all of the extra beef we will have on the store shelves. Hopefully, this will flood the market, causing beef prices to plummet. By next week, we could all be eating steak.

But even this cannot take away from the tragedy in Brenham. The cows have suffered, and right now no one seems to care. It's bad enough that Blue Bell uses them for its own gain, but it's even worse when no one responds in their time of crisis. The time has come for Texans to stand up for their celebrities. Let those cows know you care. And the next time you pass a cow, go over and give him a friendly pat on the head. You never know, one day he may be famous. He may become a Blue Bell cow. Then, you can say "I knew him when..."

Evans is a junior biology major

Mail Call

SG does much to keep spirit alive

Many of us feel in love with this first-rate university the moment we first visited here. Immediately, we experienced the famed Aggie Spirit. Then, we were introduced to the highly regarded traditions of A&M, some of the most recognized traditions being Aggie Muster, Big Event, and Parents' Weekend. What many of us did not realize at the time was that Student Government is the backbone of these honorable traditions.

Not only does Student government entail Student Senate, but it also has committees such as Parents' Weekend, Muster, and Big Event, which dedicate months of their time and energies to making these fabulous events become overwhelming successes. Events such as Big Event, a community-wide service project, and Replant, sponsored by the Environmental Issues Committee of Student Government, have been nationally recognized and acclaimed. Student Government even has a committee, Traditions Council, dedicated solely to upholding all the traditions of A&M.

The members of these and other committees in Student Government are encouraged to participate in many organizations such RHA, OCA, various religious and ethnic organizations,

and MSC programs. Students are often chosen as members of the Student Government committees based on their involvement at A&M so that a multitude of organizations, and their members will be represented.

Student government is here to represent the traditions, the spirit, and the students of A&M. So get to know the senators representing both your college and your living area. Give them your perspective on upcoming legislation, and feel free to suggest any other ideas which you feel to be discussed.

The truth of the matter is that none of these activities would be a success without the time and energy that numerous non-Student Government members have volunteered. Nor would these occasions be so special without the undying Aggie Spirit of those volunteers.

As for Stacy Feducia, does this University need dedicated students who are willing to devote the months necessary to plan, organize and put on the wide variety of events that Student Government sponsors, protecting the environment to supporting the community to honoring a fellow Aggie who has passed away, or does this University need a bunch of drunken students who are too busy guzzling beer to care about keeping Texas A&M a world-class university?

Anna Johnston
Class of '95

Don't try to convert your readers

When I opened the paper on April 10 to see an article called "Christ's message," I read it with an open mind. I think it's very righteous of Mr. Sullivan to speak about how he feels about Christianity and how he thinks people should feel about it. I'd like to know what your nerve is, Mr. Sullivan. This is supposed to be an opinion page, not an opportunity to try and get people to convert.

I might have been able to overlook your request for Jews, Muslims and Hindus to take what you have said seriously, but I lost my mind when you said, "Put behind you everything you have been taught or seen or heard or experienced in regard to Jesus Christ! So, am I supposed to change my religion because you have discovered Jesus Christ?"

I am very happy you found yourself, but please leave it at that, there is enough anti-semitism on campus and neo-Nazis everywhere that I need to deal with. These are people who think Christianity is the only way to go. Let people be, a little diversity in the world is good.

Cindy Luffer
Class of '92

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.