

EDITORIAL

Environmental hype

Making mountains out of molehills

According to the shared beliefs of environmental media experts and doomsayers, the next century should see our earth flooded, parched, barren and populated by cancer ravaged citizens. Environmental pressure groups insist that drastic action be taken now, because yesterday was too late.

However, dissension has developed among the scientific community of late, and formerly accepted claims are being widely questioned. As a result, the great majority of concerned citizens who receive information through press releases are left to wonder what is true and what is hype.



Some proponents of the most fatalistic environmental forecast theories argue that it is inexcusable for any scientists to point out the uncertainties of many of the worst case scenarios. This insulting mind set is partly based on the assumption that people will not take the situation seriously, and nothing will be done, unless they are frightened into action.

In 1991 a survey was sent to 120 atmospheric scientists, of whom the majority had contributed to a report by the United Nations-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change. This report was widely touted as being a "scientific consensus" on the imminent danger of global warming. Over 50 scientists responded, of which 23 complained that the summary of the report was an unfair representation of its contents.

Nearly every scientist who responded indicated that they were quite skeptical about the accuracy of the global climate models that are used to predict the rate of global warming.

No thinking person can claim that industrial societies have not damaged our environment or that action is not necessary to rectify past mistakes. There are real problems that deserve attention and great concern.

However, environmental groups with axes to grind for business and industry risk a "boy who cried wolf" effect with their ceaseless warnings of impending planetary doomsday.

There's nothing wrong with a rational, healthy concern for our air, water, and land. But environmental hypochondria and the stifling restrictions on our businesses and activities that its adherents propose threaten the welfare of us all.

Right-wing fundamentalism part of the LoBaido cliffhanger

Again Anthony LoBaido stuns us all with his supernatural insight. I can only describe his columns as much-anticipated amusement park rides which exhilarate and nauseate in one fell swoop. His political analysis of the situation in South Africa is well thought out and generally right on the money. The communist reality of the ANC is something few Americans know about. Each fact that he sets out in print raises the rollercoaster up a clanking notch. I was thoroughly engrossed in this intelligent column until four words signalled the beginning of the ride proper: "enemy of the Cross." Yes, he sure took us for a ride.

With the sickening sensation of being poised on the edge of a lofty precipice, I realized that his column was not about the plight of the black man in South Africa at all—it is Christian fundamentalist rhetoric decrying "mankind's rebellion against God." Now I understand why he fears the liberal (that is, broad-minded and free thinking) media—he realizes that any man capable of rational thought will possibly disagree with his twisted, ultra-right-wing, un-American philosophy and that makes him feel threatened more than anything else. If only people wouldn't think for themselves, eh? Perhaps he reels when I call his crusading mentality un-American: how can something as central as theism be un-patriotic? I am no patriot myself—I need no weak-kneed lying morality to sanction my views. However, by proving him un-American (meaningless though it is), I cut off the last refuge of his sort. Time for some history, kids.

Since the fall of the Roman Empire, Christianity flourished and soon became the supreme political and social power in the Western world. The authority of the Church was unquestioned and universal. The scientific philosophy of Aristotle and Galen as well as the works of many of the great ancient minds was submerged by the Church. The tradition of rational thought slumbered in the care of a few monks who preserved the classic philosophies through the Dark Ages until they could be rediscovered by the scholars of the Enlightenment. This is the very scientific tradition we

enjoy the fruits of today.

Under the empire of God, ignorance, superstition and corruption were the hallmarks of civilization. The mentally ill were diagnosed as possessed by devils or as witches and killed by methods which gradually evolved in horror and complexity under the auspices of the Holy Inquisition. Under the feudal system, serfs were bound to the land and became effectively slaves, much as the black man in America is still economically imprisoned today. Proponents of new thought were persecuted as heretical and enemies of the Church, stagnating intellectual growth. Religion is fond of wistfully seeking the Kingdom of God. Face facts, man, it has already happened. We've seen the Kingdom of God and its glories—corruption of the clergy, suppression of free thought, racist crusades, et cetera.

Eventually, the fog lifted enough for the Protestant Reformation to challenge Clergy authority. A period of intellectual rebirth followed and the Western world began to think again after centuries of religious stupor. The Protestants took freedom to new levels, but not far enough for some. A handful of liberal Calvinists and Puritans fled persecution to settle on the shores of modern day America. Here they shaped a new nation based on personal liberty and toleration. It is noteworthy that the revolutionaries who threw off the English Imperial yoke were for the most part, Deists. The Deists believed in God as the first mover, the divine architect who set the universe in motion and then stepped back to watch the show. Perhaps the most liberal expression of philosophy, Deism rejected superstition and ritual and embraced science and Nature's god. America was founded by people who thought for themselves, not the narrow-minded dupes of religious indoctrination who perpetuated bigotry and hate.

To those who still await the Kingdom of God (a return to the Dark Ages) and a return to family values (Nazi Germany was a good example), I will say this: Will you stand up for the outdated structures of an unseen god that uses the Pope, Oral Roberts, and any number of other charlatans as his mouthpieces, or do you support the "inalienable rights" of man which his Creator endowed him with? They are in opposition and you must choose a side. I, for one, humbly throw in my lot with Locke and Jefferson against those who would take from me my freedom to think and choose. If you value the freedom that true patriots died for, I urge you to join me.

GUEST COLUMN

KENNETH W. ELWELL

What Fish Camp didn't teach you

Seniors learn some unusual lessons in campus life

by STACY FEDUCIA

Ah, the sweat-soaked sticky of our autumn air when the hallowed halls of our alma mater ring true with the stampede of students' feet — stumbling about, fee slips in hand, dazed and confused and asking the inevitable, "What class is this?"

But it's not the Fightin' Class of '96 you hear uttering those embarrassing words — no, they already figured that out when their beloved discussion group leaders walked them through their classes two weeks ago. No, the voices you hear are those of a more vintage age, an age of rings and things that go "WHOOOP!" and people who get good football tickets.

The confused ones that are hanging around in the halls and running into the light poles are none other than the classes of '93, '92 — and maybe even '91. You gotta' remember, it's been a long time since we've been to Fish Camp.

But that's not to say we haven't learned anything. In fact, though our brains may pickle from the inundation of alcohol heaped upon them by one too many nights at Dudd's or the Chicken, we've learned a lot of things that they never told us in Fish Camp, which I just thought I might pass along — before I pass out of this existence and into graduate school.

Stacy's Key List of Things They Never Told You at Fish Camp, or Everything I Ever Needed to Know, I Learned in College (Robert Fulgham lied!)

He who said "Everything I ever needed to know, I learned in kindergarten" obviously never came to A&M. For he forgot a few key essentials that they don't teach you in Fingerpainting 101 — or in cutting, glueing and naptime. Okay, well naptime is universal, especially in college. But we never got to beer-goggling in Mrs. Burnley's K-5 at the Little Red School House, Church of Christ Concentration Camp that I attended.

Avoid the following letters: PTTS, TABC, MIP, DWI, F, D, t.u.

Eat at least one good meal a day — pizza rolls contain all the basic food groups (especially if coupled with ranch dressing) and you can live off a dozen during finals for at

least 2 days.

Road trip early and often. Study now so you can play on the weekend. Don't drink and drive. Practice safe sex.

Comfort your mother — or in some cases your father (my mom was glad to get rid of Kelly and me; in fact she and my dad moved and refuse to give us the code to the security alarm system on the new house).

Sit up all night and talk to complete strangers about gods, higher intelligences, and supreme beings one night during your stay (It happens to the best of us, and I have yet to meet a college student who didn't do this).

Brown nose. Say "Howdy." Pad your resume often and early. Vote. Learn to handwash underwear or always have emergency money on hand to buy more. Don't wash the colors with the whites. Save your quarters instead of buying that Coke in Blocker between classes.

Start your conversations with "What's your major? Where are you from?" — everyone else does, no need to break tradition.

Speaking of traditions, go to Silver Taps. Go to Yell Practice. Lose your voice at the games — even though yelling effectively is difficult up where the air is thin. Go to Muster: one day your name will be on that list. Treehuggers aside, build the hell outta Bonfire.

Learn to two-step — though I don't endorse this type of behavior (or that kind of music). Two-stepping however is a necessary social skill here in the heartland of honkytonks, harmony and belt-buckles that double as satellite dishes. If you really want to make a splash, dazzle your friends with advanced jitterbug skills. You'll be the hit of any party or dance floor.

Always remember to take your sunglasses and sunscreen to the football games. And stay in school so you can get your Aggie Ring.

And as Mrs. Burnley told us at the neo-nazi, fascist death camp kindergarten, "You'll do it, and you'll like it." Then you'll forget it all and run into the light poles with the rest of us.

Feducia is a senior English and history major

And upon Judgment Day, the Lamb opened the eighth seal, disgorging the environmentalists upon the earth.

THE SKY IS FALLING!
THE SKY IS FALLING!
THE SKY IS FALLING!



—But this was determined too harsh a judgment.

MAIL CALL

It takes students to keep tradition

I've got some very bad bull to talk about, Ags.

I was in the MSC Monday afternoon when an old Ag approached me and asked me a few questions. He asked if the building he was in was still the MSC. I told him that it was. He then asked if it was still a war memorial and I gave him an affirmative answer. Then he said, "What's the deal with the hats? I've seen about a dozen or so since I've been in here."

I felt lower than one of Bevo's cow-piles. Here was an old Ag stopping me, a junior in the Corps, and asking why people are covered up in the MSC. I felt really bad about it because I didn't have my head pulled out enough to catch it myself. The MSC, for those of you that still don't know, is dedicated as a memorial to those Aggies who gave their lives in defense of our country since World War II. That's why you take off your hat upon entering the

building and stay off the grass. But the shock from that old Ag got me started thinking, and I'd like to refresh all Ags on the traditions that we have.

What makes this university great is the size of the student population, the academic prestige that we have, and the winning tradition that we have in the sports arena. But that's not what makes Texas A&M unique. There are larger schools, better departments at other universities, and football teams with better winning averages. What makes this school unique is the traditions that we have. It's these traditions that distinguish us from any other school in the world, no matter how big we are or how many national championships we win or how much money we spend on research and teaching.

It's not up to the old Ags or the Corps or the Traditions Council to keep the traditions of Texas A&M. It's up to the student body as a whole. Don't depend on the old Ags. If we don't keep the traditions now we probably won't as former students. Don't depend on the Traditions council. It takes more than some T-shirts, Howdy Week and Muster to keep the traditions. And don't depend on the Corps of Cadets. Even though the Corps is still a strong influence on the campus, we're only 2,000 or less out of more than 40,000 students. Keeping the traditions is up to the entire student body, whether you're Corps or non-reg, Greek or not, American or international.

I just wanted to say I was impressed at the turnout for Silver Taps Tuesday night. Recently, my father passed away. He, too, stood in front of Sul Ross honoring Aggies before him. In the corps, he blew taps on his trumpet his senior year. Now I stand there for him. Someday, somebody who is not even born yet will stand there for me. This is truly an Aggie Spirit that will never die. Bonfire, Aggie rings, and whooping at football games are fun but Silver Taps is an Aggie Spirit from the heart. I welcome all Ags, past, present, and future into my family for I have discovered a whole new meaning to the phrase "I bleed maroon and white." Keep up the good work, Ags, to preserve such a lasting tradition.

Donnie Bilancich
Class of '93

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