

MAIL CALL

NAACP denounces fraternity for racism

The Texas A&M Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, pending further investigation, would like to officially denounce Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity for their extremely racist and insensitive "jungle" party of Oct. 2.

To have members simulate the hunting of human beings is in poor taste; to have those members simulating the hunting of African slaves is reprehensible. If SAE president Michael Hebert did not want anyone to perceive that they were "singling out any particular race or specific jungle," why were the pledges dressed in black face? Whether they intended to be racist or not, the theme and the message of the party is clear.

While I am sure the Interfraternity Council will take appropriate disciplinary action in this matter, I hope the student body and the administration are not too quick in dismissing this as an isolated incident of racism.

First, SAE admits they held the same party last year and no one complained. Without the courageous letter from band member Joe Salem, no one would have known about this party. This shows the IFC would have been remiss in its duty to monitor the fraternities here at Texas A&M. In the future, I hope there is some type of review process installed so the IFC is aware of what activities take place at fraternity parties.

Second, SAE does not have a monopoly on racial insensitivity. Racial incidents occur every day on the A&M campus, whether it be in classrooms, dorms, or the fish lot. I hope Texas A&M will develop a system by which knowledge of these incidents will reach upper administration officials so we can stop pretending racism does not exist at this University.

Finally, all racial incidents are not due to hatred. A large majority can be attributed to ignorance of other cultures and races. A lot of students are not aware that someone might find their actions offensive. Education and information are the only cures for ignorance,

prejudice and stereotypes. Without required anti-racism classes, Texas A&M University is failing in its mission to educate the student body and prepare them for the future.

*Joseph Gourrier
Class of '93
President, A&M Chapter, NAACP*

Fraternity's excuses don't hold water

Band member Joe Salem, in all probability, has nothing whatsoever to gain in writing the letter in which he told of the antics at a recent Sigma Alpha Epsilon gathering on October 3, 1992. I, and several other students with whom I have spoken, am convinced that he would have no logical reason to exaggerate and that his story is valid.

"There are a lot of jungles besides Africa, and we weren't singling out any particular race or specific jungle," is the statement so eloquently employed by Sigma Alpha Epsilon president Michael A. Hebert in defense of himself and fellow members of the fraternity. Racism, however, is a societal disease that infests the roots of humanity, and no branch of any shade of color is immune.

The president of this group then wrote a letter that appeared in the editorial section, the majority of which was a list of good deeds the fraternity has accomplished. His reason for the elaboration of these actions is a mystery when one attempts to draw a parallel between their significance and the issue at hand. In listing these deeds, it would appear as if Hebert is attempting to declare that, as a fraternity, had earned their right to chase the "pledges dressed in black faces, grass skirts and carrying spears" around at the gathering.

As far as the lone individual is concerned who was referred to as "a black guy in our chapter," it is a tragedy when a human being would sacrifice his or her own identity in order to gain the right to don "three letters."

*Troy J. Bell, Jr.
Class of '95*

SAE's are innocent until proven guilty

I am not a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon, yet I am an active member of the Greek community and specifically a member of Beta Theta Pi. Since Joe Salem's letter was published on Mon-

day in the Battalion I have sat back and watched yet another fraternity receive unfair abuse.

The entire basis for the allegations placed on the SAE chapter is from a single source, Joe Salem. What about the 100 plus people that attended the party? Sure, these people might have a chance to defend their chapter later, but for right now it seems to me the damage is done. The word is out; Wednesday, Oct. 14, Texas A&M and the Greek community have once again become front page news because one person decided to write to The Battalion.

I think everyone should reflect upon last year's incidents involving sexual harassment within the Corps. I think the person making the allegations rescinded them later, only after Texas A&M, a school I'm terribly proud of, was slandered throughout the media of the entire United States.

The point I'm trying to make here is: Please don't unfairly judge the Greek system, and in particular the Sigma Alpha Epsilon chapter before all the facts have been brought out. In America it's innocent until proven guilty. I hope everyone remembers that for now.

*Peter O. Barnhart
Class of '93*

Maybe it's a public relations problem

Those leftist-liberals have done it again! They have managed to turn an apolitical issue into another discussion of political correctness. Their outcry over the fraternity "jungle party" is simply an act of desperation; we've heard enough about race relations. After all, the fraternity does have its negro, a full member no less; doesn't that show that the fraternity shuns racism?

Public relations is the only real issue in this case; the apologetics simply weren't up to par. Considering that fraternity members will no doubt be the next leaders in our society, we should make sure that they learn how to deal with the public when liberals try to make something out of events like the jungle party. Professionals are well versed in foiling liberalist attacks. Let's consider the case of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America. Millions of dollars have gone into the celebration of this glorious event, and just like clockwork, the leftist-liberal front has tried to ruin all our fun. But professional public relations men have done a good job in preventing these party crashers from making much headway.

Let's apply the professional Colum-

bus party tactics to the jungle party; The jungle party was a celebration of the meeting of two races; a meeting which over the centuries has evolved into a dynamic society of different cultures. The races contribute aspects of their respective cultures such that the whole society benefits from the integration. We have much to appreciate from the meeting of negroes and whites. If it weren't for the African encounter, we wouldn't have rap music today; the negroes contribute their inborn talents of rhythm and rhyme, and the whites make their contribution. Who do you think buys all those rap records? The whites, of course. See how well this relationship has developed? Sometimes one side might get carried away, as with the song "Cop Killer." But the harmony between the races will always bring extremes back into line, which is what happened when distribution of the record was stopped. The fraternity should be praised for enlightened efforts to celebrate the theme in this 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery — the fruitful encounter of races.

So let's not get side-tracked by non-issues like racism. The guys at the fraternity (and their friends) simply haven't learned how to conduct public relations. Should we fault them for this? Certainly not! The University is at fault for not providing enough education in this area; we don't need to know any more about racism. Let's get on with the more important problems; public relations skills are lacking in the graduates of this University. If Clayton Williams had an extra course in public relations, he might be governor now. But instead, the liberals clobbered him on a harmless statement about rape. He could have turned that around, but the University just didn't provide the right course work.

Let's credit the fraternity for a good job. They have helped us better appreciate the harmony between whites and negroes and the great events that initiated this relationship. Good work, guys! I have an excellent theme for next year's party: Buchenwald, 1943 — The Phoenix Scenario.

*David Kriewaldt
Graduate Student*

Aggieland's lack of protest a good thing

This letter is in response to a Shawn Ralston column in The Battalion's Oct. 13 issue. The column was entitled "No Dissent Allowed in Aggieland," and portrayed her opinion that not enough protesting goes on at Texas A&M. She

also went on to say that physical violence was about the only method used to "stifle" protests on campus. I would like to say that no one at the University is happier than I that physical protesting (yelling, carrying signs, etc.) occurs on this campus to great extent.

I have a friend that attended for one semester whom I went to visit one or twice. People were yelling at me from both sides of the walkway to stop their stupid petitions protesting blah blah. It makes me sick to see anti-abortionists protest on campus. It makes me sick to hear pro-choice activists rallying on campus. It is sickening to me to hear or see any activities on campus not condoned by the University. School is not the place; it's the simple. I can also tell you, Ralston, I am not the slightest bit "unsure" or fearful of your so-called "free expression." If you would like to call me to discuss this issue, my number is in the student locator. However, I must give you credit for using a column for expressing your thoughts rather than protesting on campus.

And you even got your little lick on Bonfire at the same time! Now, if only we could get rid of the Houston Chronicle peddlers that bug the hell out of you to subscribe to their paper, this would be a better place.

*J. David Price
Class of '95*

Gays have no 'right' to convert people

I have four friends who had previous "encounters" with a homosexual. After these one-time meetings they actually questioned their sexual orientation, despite not having given it a single thought their whole lives thus far. How many people out there succumbed to homosexuality during depression or rejection, when they were weakest? Until we can separate the law that might be biologically abnormal from these who (almost like my friends) are merely psychologically deceived, then I can never agree to giving them minority rights status. If "freedom of expression" allows gay counselors in public schools and gay leaders in Boy Scouts with the sole purpose of "converting" our youth and our children, then I think we need to re-examine our new definition of freedom. We would be giving rights to a people based not on who they are, but on what they do.

*Christopher Koehn
Class of '95*

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