

MAIL CALL

Cultural similarities key to race relations

I am one of those who opposes the multiculturalism requirement. However, I believe I offer a view that has not yet been considered.

The concept of multiculturalism here at A&M calls for us to recognize the differences in the various ethnic groups that make up our American society. This is fundamentally the wrong approach to take in eliminating the tensions between the races. Racism itself stems from those very differences that the University seeks to emphasize to us all.

To spell out in black and white the differences of certain groups to other groups who harbor racist feelings only adds fuel to the racism fire. This curriculum will only work to further divide the nation.

The answer requires an entirely different approach to the issue. It is clear that America is divided against itself along the lines of race. If the University plans to make any changes to the curriculum, it must construct existing classes so as to emphasize our commonalities as Americans.

We must together find the common ground that we stand on if we are going to avoid stepping on each other's toes. Instead of separate history and literature classes for whites and blacks and Hispanics, we should incorporate the history and literature of all such groups into classes that represent true American history and real American literature.

Only when we can see what we all have in common can the uniqueness of our respective cultures become the strength that it is supposed to be.

It is time for us to stop pledging our allegiances first to ethnic pride and second to our home, America. It is time for us to be first and foremost, Americans; not African-Americans, not Hispanic-Americans, nor Anglo-Americans — just Americans.

Edward Klein
Class of '95

More two percenters in Aggieland

As one of the two-percenters Ken Fontenot described in his letter of Nov. 13, I would like to respond. Usually we are too apathetic to even write a letter to The Battalion if it concerns anything about A&M. We generally just want to get out of this repressive environment and never look back, but here goes. We are out there, we're more organized than people think, and there are more of us than anybody would like to know.

I am not proud of the fact that I am receiving my degree from a school that spends endless manhours cutting down 10,000 trees, dousing them with jet fuel, and burning them in a matter of hours, producing more carbon monoxide in one minute than a typical factory does in an entire day of production. At least the factory is producing something.

So, you tell me, go somewhere else? That is exactly the kind of mindset that turns my stomach. Wouldn't want to actually think about things, would you? I have no problem at all with school spirit and togetherness, but hasn't it occurred to anybody that there are less wasteful ways of achieving those things? In the old days, bonfire was made up of trash everyone went around collecting. At least the town was clean afterwards.

So, you say, what do we care if there are a couple of thousand two-percenters at A&M? You should care. We are the ones who leave here and never look back. We are the ones the Former Student Association never gets a shiny penny from. We are the ones who take our impression of A&M out with us into the real world. We are the ones who will discourage our children from ever attending this institution. Think about it.

Kellie R. Heckert
Class of '92

Column wrong about Aggies, tradition

Ken Fontenot, please control your impulse to overgeneralize the community of students living in and around this University. We are not all "blind sheep" that mindlessly follow the crowd. I realize the audience that you intended the essay for, but your tone and acrid attitude was far too out of line to go unnoticed.

Since when are completely voluntary events considered fascist traditionalism? Traditions are a means of honor. If you do not see the significance in attending Silver Taps or bonfire, or in supporting our athletes by simply standing, then I feel sorry for your shallowness.

As far as classifying the acts of ignorance that you mentioned — such as intolerance, racism, sexism — as traditions, you again miss the meaning of the word.

These behaviors are not considered positive or socially correct and should rather be defined as unfavorable attitudes.

Nonetheless, you seem to view them as prejudices "that you just have to tolerate here at A&M." I do respect your attempt to enlighten us about these matters, but don't you think we are all well informed of these incidents thanks to this semester's racial outbursts and political contempt?

I don't have the answers, but I guarantee that these acts are definitely not tradition.

You make it sound as if being an Aggie is shameful. We are completely aware that problems do exist, but pointing the finger and calling us insecure simply because we enjoy A&M's fellowship and traditions is not the way to solve them.

Arthur Oakley IV
Class of '96

Traditionalists not uneducated fascists

Ken Fontenot would have everyone here at A&M believe that those who participate in bonfire, football games, saying "howdy," or any other tradition here on campus, are not receiving a quality education. We are in fact supporting a subtle fascist agenda the likes of which have not been seen since Mussolini, Hitler and the Third Reich. And to think all I was doing was getting involved on campus and having fun doing it!

Since I do support tradition here at A&M, I am also a racist, sexist pig. Students stand up during the games not to symbolize their readiness to play for the team, but to get a better look at all the fine feminine butts and make it easier to pick out the minorities so we can throw nachos at them.

I choose to get involved with this campus of my own free will; not because Fish Camp brainwashed me. The

generalities you threw around in your column hurt those who support A&M by grouping us with racists and sexists, people I have to believe most students don't tolerate. I have to believe this because if it is not true, where are we going as a campus? As a country? I don't believe A&M's traditions are the evil you make them out to be. In fact, I think they allow the students to become closer.

I am not talking about just the white males on campus, but male and female, African-American, Asian, Hispanic and white. Those who in fact are bigoted did not become so by participating in Aggie traditions; they were raised that way.

Let's all stop bashing our fellow Aggies whether they participate in traditions or not. We are all Aggies; we have been since the moment we walked onto campus.

Mike Williams
Class of '94

Reader addresses nonsense complaints

I have read enough. It is time for someone with a little bit of common sense to wake up those that like to complain.

1. To Dedrick Walker: I'm proud of you. It takes a real man to admit that you have not participated in many (or any) Aggie traditions. Way to support your school. Hint: Wear that scarlet 2 percent symbol on your chest. Maybe it will become a fashion statement.

2. To those that have asked what is wrong with UT and responded that it is our perception that is wrong: Nothing is wrong with the school itself. But it is obvious some of the readers have never been accosted by t.u. exes or fans for wearing Aggie apparel. The next time you're in Austin, try walking across the campus in maroon and white. Even you, Dedrick. I'm sure you'll be received warmly.

3. To Ken Fontenot: If you are so insecure about yourself and your beliefs (reference: Ken said no one outside this University cares what goes on here, traditions, etc.) maybe it's time you review and alter your beliefs. They might not be as correct as you would believe. By the way, Bonfire will be on HSE again this year. But no one cares, do they Dedrick?

4. To the officers of the Class of '93: Ladies and gentlemen, if you so desire to have elephant walk be the solemn

tradition it used to be, why didn't you start last year by trying to stop the current "bug brawl"? Maybe, just maybe, the juniors want to continue the current trend. But guaranteed, they'll try to stop it when they're seniors.

It's amazing how much sense can be made out of so much nonsense.

Dean Hensley
Class of '95

Greeks make needed contributions as well

It seems that recently all we have heard about the Greek system here at Texas A&M has been on the negative side. It is true that not everyone or everything relating to the Greek system is perfect; however, we are living in an imperfect society.

It seems that if people are told of negative happenings within the Greek community, they should also be told of the many positive effects the 3,400 members of Texas A&M's fraternities and sororities have on this campus and its two supporting cities.

As part of their year-round commitment to the University and the Bryan-College Station area, these Aggies donate much needed time and support to local charities. These philanthropy projects are done on an individual chapter basis or as a collection of several or all chapters. Many of these projects include lending a helping hand or even collecting funds totaling thousands of dollars annually to non-profit charities who would otherwise have to do without.

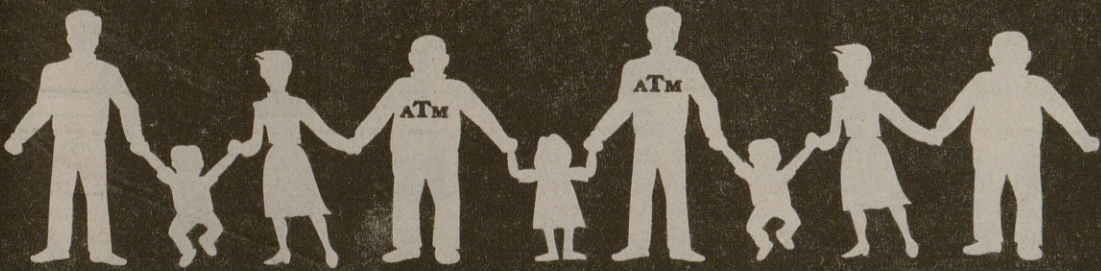
It also seems that you don't often hear about events that seem to bring fellow Aggies closer. Recently, a paint-pellet competition was held between members of Corps of Cadets Company I-1 and members of Phi Kappa Theta and Delta Upsilon. Though a time limit draw was called and neither team was declared the victor, both sides seemed to enjoy the fun and camaraderie. This time together also allowed for misconceptions about either side to be realized and overcome. We were not two separate groups battling it out between each other, but Aggies having a good time with other Aggies.

I congratulate all of those who participated in the event and hope that whatever you gained from the experience will be with you for years to come.

Michael Harris
Class of '95

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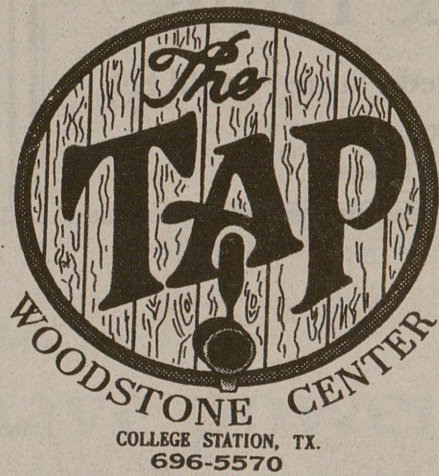
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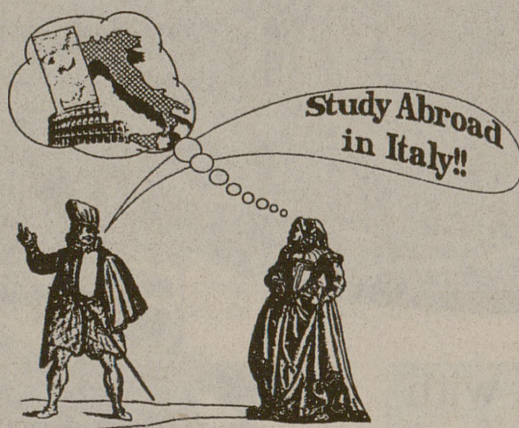
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