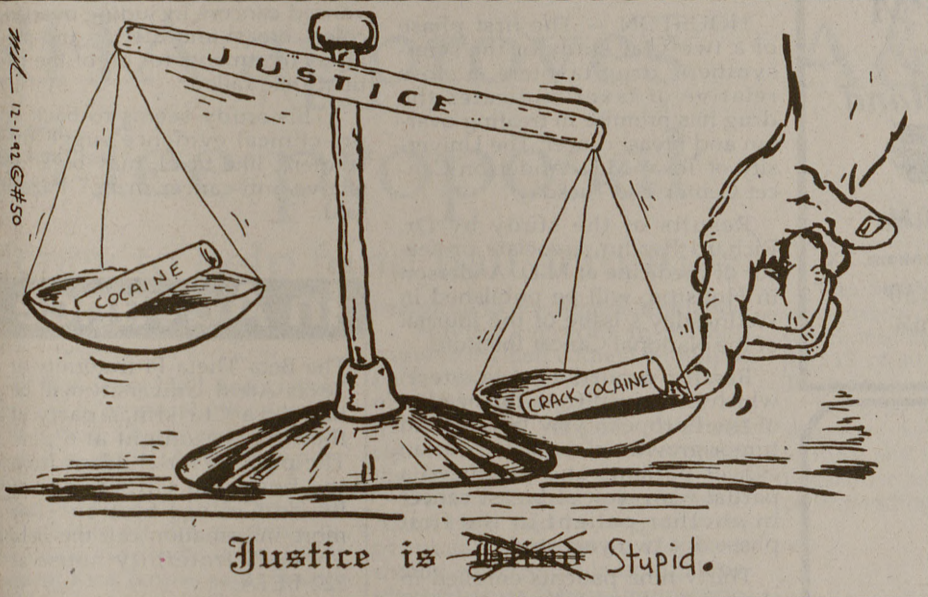


Wednesday, December 2, 1992



EDITORIALS

Drug sentences unfair

No basis for arbitrary standards

As the war on drugs continues along the embattled fronts of city streets and national borders, a new assault has been launched from within prison walls. A growing number of critics believe that current federal drug-sentencing practices are putting more blacks in jail, while white offenders escape with little more than a slap on the wrist. Currently, 90 percent of crack defendants are black, serving mandatory sentences, sometimes for possession of as little as five grams. Though many cocaine offenders are white, these are usually powder cocaine offenses which carry no minimum mandatory sentences. Drug-sentencing laws created by Congress in 1985 equate every gram

of crack cocaine with 100 grams of powder cocaine. Based on the idea that crack is more addictive and destructive than powder cocaine, Congress arbitrarily assigned the 1:100 ratio. While the scientific and medical communities agree that crack is more deadly than powder cocaine, the federal sentencing laws were not based on any of the available concrete evidence. Though concerns about racial inequity in sentencing are still being studied, Congress should enact more logical sentencing for both crack and cocaine offenses than the arbitrary standards currently in place. Despite sentencing reform, however, education and rehabilitation remain far more effective in drug prevention than incarceration.

Cross-ethnic adoption

Judge strikes down outdated code

On Monday, a San Antonio judge allowed a family to adopt the baby girl for whom they had cared since the day she was born. While adopting children isn't commonly considered against state policy, this particular case is being hailed as a landmark decision for Texas. The baby girl is Hispanic; the family who wants to adopt her is white. And the decision to allow them to be joined as a family is still a gray matter. While the idea of integration is considered old news, state policy has kept many hopeful parents and the children they hoped to adopt separate. But equal. The Department of Human Services told the family that they could not adopt the child because they

were not Hispanic. The family sued the agency and won the right to adopt her, breaking the time-honored policy barring cross-ethnic adoptions. The judge's decision to allow the parents to adopt the baby brings the state policy up to date, when families are judged as group of humans, and not as color-coordinated units. Until now, state policy has maintained that families could not adopt a child who was of a different ethnicity. The parents who choose to love a child regardless of ethnicity show that love truly can be blind. The fact that a state's policy prevents many families from doing so, shows that America's blind justice isn't even color blind.

Columnist defends RHA request

Proposal to benefit hall councils, students, campus

Confusion breeds controversy. Tonight the Residence Hall Association will vote on a proposal that has stirred some debate mostly due to the lack of understanding about the methods and the beneficiaries. The proposal would not increase room rent, and it would benefit every campus resident.



DWAYNE PURVIS
Columnist

Proposal R92F-04 requests that the University allocate five dollars of each semester's rent and \$2.50 from each summer session rent to RHA which would distribute most of the funds to individual residence hall councils. Some of the revenues would pay the wages of an accountant to manage the funds, and RHA would keep one percent of the revenues. The proposal also outlines a careful system of internal control.

RHA will distribute the money based on the number of students in each hall. Hall councils will discontinue sales of so-called "activity stickers" in order to receive the money. Activity stickers entitle the buyer to discounted and free services in addition to participation in the activities of the hall council. However, many of the services and activities of hall councils are available to students regardless of whether or not they have a sticker.

Hall councils are by nature service organizations, but, like any other organization, they need dollars to produce their many programs and services.

Hall councils, for example, organize most of the non-reg groups that go out to cut for bonfire. Councils take groups to All-U Night, yell practice, Silver Taps, and even volleyball games.

Most councils recycle aluminum cans, and some even recycle newspaper for their residents. Councils participate in many other community service projects like fundraising for the United Way and participating in charity drives. Many councils provide quiz files, vacuums and microwaves for residents' use, though some charge for the services.

Councils organize social events within the halls from floor activities to events like assassination games and vol-

leyball tournaments. Many halls host or subsidize formals and semi-formals for their residents.

Hall councils also provide educational programming for residents. Councils commonly sponsor free programs about issues like AIDS, stress reduction, and multiculturalism.

Councils spend some revenue on physical improvements to the halls. In the past, councils have paid for trophy cases and bulletin boards. Hall councils and RHA have paid for or helped pay for three volleyball pits on campus.

RHA itself has a long and distinguished record of bringing student concerns before the University. Before endorsing a proposal to provide on-campus residents with cable, RHA conducted campus-wide surveys. RHA successfully championed the efforts toward coed housing and 24-hour visitation.

Though councils work long and hard to improve life in their halls, they cannot depend on consistent funding sources. Councils must ask students for money in exchange for activity stickers before students have the chance to see what they'll get in return. During the semester, councils seem to perpetually petition money from residents.

An organization intended to serve can occasionally annoy instead. Ironically, councils cannot provide good programs without money, but it is difficult to raise money without putting on good programs.

Living on-campus, hall councils know the needs of their residents and how to meet them. Being close and responsive to the constituency, hall councils are uniquely able to serve on-campus students.

Already under the watchful eye of the Department of Student Services, councils that share the values of the University can become an effective and responsive means to execute its goals such as providing the "other education" and educating about multiculturalism.

The RHA proposal, if approved, will go to University officials for consideration. If the University administrators enact the idea, the proposal will serve their best interests as well as those of the residents and the hall councils.

Purvis is a junior petroleum engineering major



MAIL CALL

Quanell X offends gay community

Editor's Note: The following is an open letter addressed to Rep. Ron Wilson.

Dear Rep. Wilson: We are writing to express our shock and disappointment at the homophobic remarks that were made by Quanell X during your recent visit to Texas A&M University and especially at your refusal to repudiate these remarks when later queried about them. There is perhaps no community at Texas A&M that is more supportive of the African-Americans on this campus than the gay and lesbian community. We share the experience of prejudice and discrimination and the desire for tolerance and acceptance, and we have worked very closely together in the past toward the goal of a discrimination-free campus. Therefore, we were deeply pained by

Mr. X's remarks, which were a gratuitous insult to our community and were doubly hurt by your failure as a leader and role model for African-Americans to refute his remarks. You came to our campus to fight the vicious disease of racism, and you had the strong support of the gay and lesbian community in this fight. However, you left behind the germs of the equally vicious disease of homophobia, and you alienated your friends and supporters in the process. We believe that you owe the gay and lesbian community an apology for your silence, and that you need to clarify your position on this issue to the African-American students and the campus as a whole. In this way, and only in this way, can you heal the rift that you and Mr. X have created between our two communities.

- Dr. Jim Mazullo
- Dr. Harriette Andreadis
- Dr. Larry Hickman
- Faculty Advisors, Gay and Lesbian Student Services
- Dr. Wendy Stock
- Faculty Advisor, NOW

Band members' acts spark mixed reviews

As we watched the Aggie Band perform for the first time along with the

t.u. band, we wondered what the seven band members were doing leaving the field.

We figured there must be a legitimate reason for these members to be leaving. Never in our wildest dreams would we have thought these Aggies were trying to be like the rest of the t-sips in the stadium. You guys are just about as low as all of those Longhorn fans who were throwing ice at the Aggie Band and football team. Colonel Toler did not act "irrationally or in haste." We believe it was you who embarrassed yourselves, the Aggie Band, and Texas A&M University — and in front of 81,000 people and a national television audience!

Throughout the game we felt proud to be supporting a team that had class. But on hearing the reason that these band members left the field, we were disappointed to find out that not all students at this University represent Texas A&M with class.

To Jerry Gonzalez, Blake Clampfper, Jeff Gibbs and the rest of you misguided Aggies — there are a lot of traditions at Texas A&M like the Aggie Band, bonfire, Elephant Walk, senior rings, and Muster. These traditions are upheld with a few traditional Aggie characteristics like pride, integrity, spirit and class. The seven of you failed to show any of the above!

We have one question for you. If you really felt that strongly about not sharing the field with the t.u. band, why were you even out on the field?

Next time you have a point to make consider the image of the Aggie Band and Texas A&M University and spare the spotlight on yourselves!

Cagla Akgerman Darveaux
Tiffany Blaschke
Class of '92

As a former student and as a supporter of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band, I have to admit that I am disgusted with the disciplinary action that Col. Toler took against some band members after the halftime performance at the t.u. game.

I agree that some action should have been taken to reprimand those few students that had no desire to perform with the Longhorn Band, but forced removal from the Aggie Band is entirely too harsh. Those students were exercising their rights as Americans by choosing not to stay on the field during that part of halftime.

I realize that the Corps of Cadets and the Aggie Band are priming men and women for military service, but the message Col. Toler is presenting is that if you feel strongly about something you have no business in the service.

The entire idea of these two groups performing together was a fallacy cooked up by t-sip officials. By inviting the Aggie Band to perform with them, the Longhorn Band could present a special halftime performance and their team would not be penalized if the half-

time show went over time.

In closing, I would like to point out that next year marks the 100th meeting of these two teams on the football field. I strongly suggest that the Aggies shouldn't plan any special type of celebration at Kyle Field (besides the customary beating the hell outta t.u.) I also feel that those few Aggie Band members who left the field were wrong. They should have organized their entire outfit to walk off with them. I am sure that Lawrence Sullivan Ross would have felt the same way.

Catherine Amos
Class of '90

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