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The Battalion



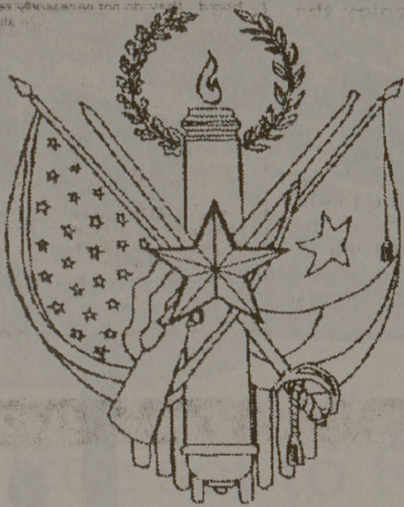
100 years at Texas A&M

## EDITORIAL

### Aggie Muster

Tradition transcends differences

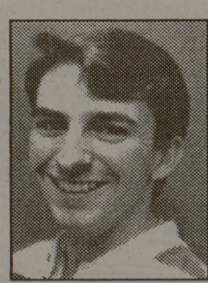
Muster. Many people consider it the most beautiful of A&M traditions as Aggies all over the world remember friends who have died during the past year. Today, Aggies will participate in "Roll Call for the Absent" during which the deceased's name is read, a candle is lit and a friend or family member answers "here," signifying the person remains in spirit. Muster symbolizes the bond that draws students, faculty and staff to Texas A&M. It is this sort of tradition that distinguishes A&M from other universities and unifies the community. Muster was once a time for Aggies to remember their college days and celebrate Texas' winning its independence at the Battle of San Jacinto. Over the years, Muster has since developed into a day to remember fallen heroes - our fellow Aggies. Indeed, Muster may be one of A&M's most endearing traditions as Aggies participate today in the 110th anniversary of the event. Aggies have held an average of 400 registered ceremonies each year around the world since the 1980s. More than 8,000 Aggies and Former President George Bush are expected to attend Muster at the A&M campus. Bush's appearance symbolizes the world-wide recognition Muster has achieved. As the University continues to grow and become more diverse, Muster proves there are some traditions which have a positive impact on campus. There are traditions at Texas A&M which everyone can embrace if they wish. Despite cultural, race or religious differences, Muster shows that anyone can be an Aggie. As the motto says, "Once an Aggie, Always an Aggie." We at The Battalion encourage everyone to participate in Muster and embrace the Spirit of Aggieland.



## Politics of fear: Neoconservatism

### Separate church and state for better government

My dictionary at home defines Christian fundamentalism as the belief that the words of the Bible were inspired by God and should be believed and followed literally. Recently, a movement toward fundamentalism integrated with politics has emerged in the United States political arena. The combination of religion and politics has historically been a touchy subject.



JOHN SCROGGS  
Columnist

Newspapers were filled with commentaries on the combination of Christian fundamentalism and official policy making during last year's turbulent presidential election. Since this movement has received so much media coverage, I decided to look into the ramifications of such a union.

The recent swing to the far-right within the Republican Party and the sprouting of ultra-conservative grass-roots organizations such as the Oregon Citizen's Alliance are just two examples of this influx of fundamentalist groups in both federal and state governments. These groups are pushing for legislation to formalize their beliefs into law.

Formalization and mobilization of the movement began with Jerry Falwell's call for the "Moral Majority" to rise up to power in 1979. This call to power has led to the takeover of the Republican Party by the far-right fundamentalists, as seen most clearly in last year's speech by Pat Buchanan at the GOP convention.

The rise in fundamentalist politics poses many questions for the common American. Yet, before these questions can be addressed, we must look to the history of this growing influence. In its roots we can find the answers and the future of the far-right. The average age of the current Christian fundamentalist leader is mid to late 50s. During these individuals' formative years, they were experiencing the post World War II red scare.

In their late teens and early 20s these people were entering into a world full of propaganda about the omnipresence of communism and the security of family values as the sole defense against a decaying world. Also, a campaign was initiated to get women to return to the home so that the returning soldiers could have their jobs back. As a result of this wide-spread propaganda, the majority of Americans accepted that women were only meant for the

home. Everything would be alright if family life was "normal" and secure. There was no need to fear the awful communist threat or the bomb as long as one led a moral life.

Well, times changed. People soon began to realize this was not an acceptable way to handle fear.

In the late '80s and early '90s, these people (usually upper-middle class, white heterosexual males) have grown up and become leaders of our nation, Congress, states, and even local school boards. Yet, in that process of growing up, they never seemed to learn how to handle fear.

They still rely on the fundamentalist values to save them from the realities of a post-modern world. When confronted with trials and fears of modern American life, the fundamentalists seek refuge in the safety of the leftover values of the 1950s.

Now there are a few questions that need to be answered: Can a nation founded on the freedom of religion condone a fundamentalist takeover of local, state or even federal government? Can faith in a literal translation of the Bible be legally or politically forced upon others? And, even more to the point, can the Bible, with its numerous allusions, allegories, and parables, even be interpreted literally?

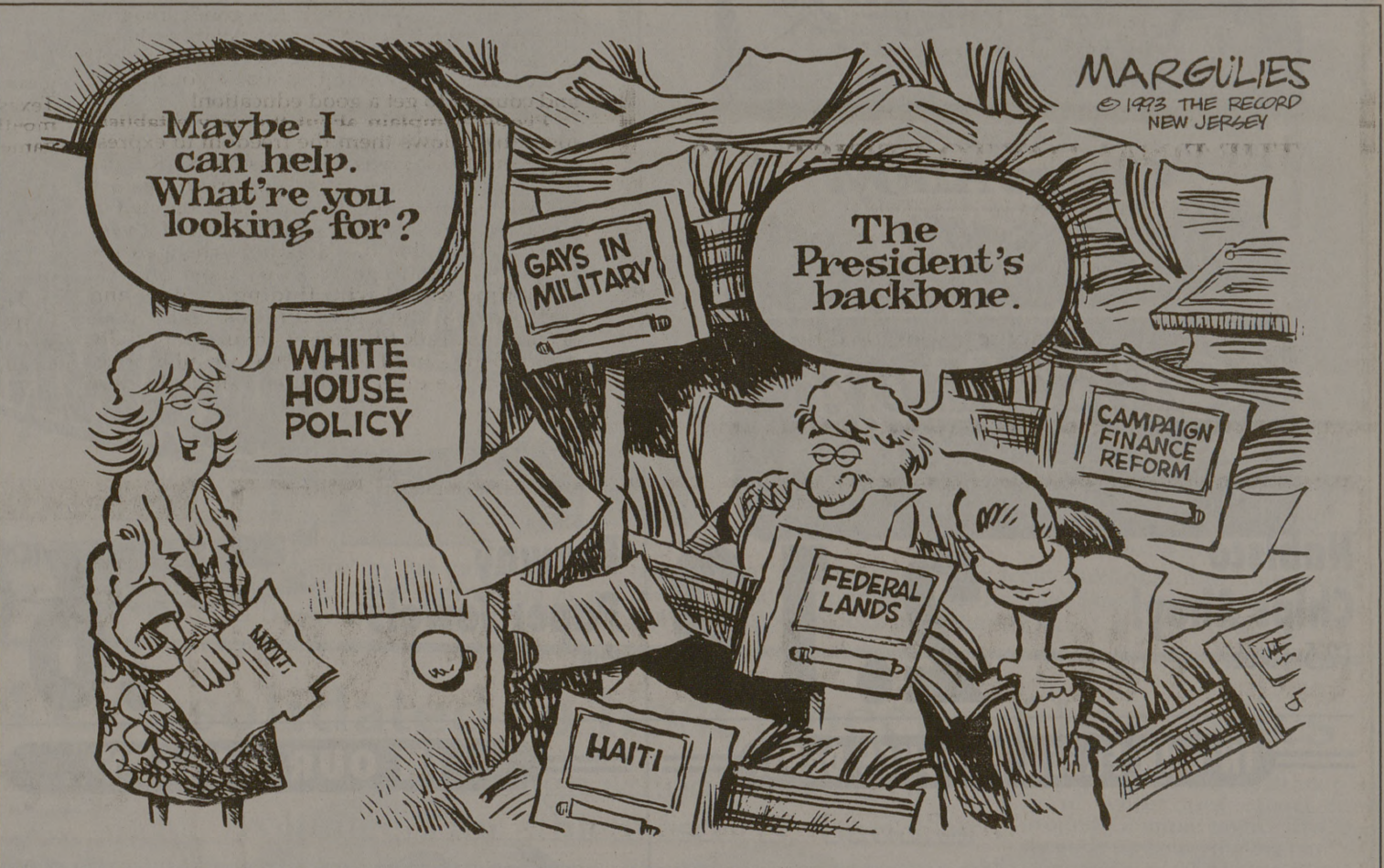
The answers to these questions seem to draw a gray border between the separation of religion and politics. How will the fundamentalist moral majority cope with the fear and anxiety that changing social values has forced upon them? How will American politics cope with the growth of ultra-conservative political groups?

It seems that liberal politicians have been able to move forward, confronting issues such as the ERA, AIDS, abortion, gay rights, and the difficulties of the welfare state, while conservative politicians take a reactionary stance, fighting for strict moral codes and the support of a male-dominated family. Yet, with the ever growing dissolution of the patriarchal structures within society, the fundamentalists find themselves also fighting to maintain their influence and power.

As the fundamentalist agenda struggles to attain more power, we must remember the words of Jesus Christ, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's." (Luke 20:25)

Politics is politics and religion is religion. The separation of church and state has always been a good idea. It's just a thought.

Scroggs is a senior English and philosophy major.



COLLEGE STATION, TX  
 APRIL 21  
 1993  
**MAIL CALL**

### KKK rally sparks quest for alternatives

On April 24 the Ku Klux Klan has decided to bless our community with a rally because they think this area is ripe for recruitment. Imagine that. Unfortunately, the Klan still feels that they will receive support. Last week, the University issued a statement to the effect that they do not condone the Klan visiting our community. As a student body, we can do more except for the fact that our student organizations have decided to avoid any protest by having the Whoopstock Unity Fest '93. Sure this is a noble idea, and we agree that we do not need to have any altercations with the Klan or draw any unnecessary attention to them. But hey, just the simple fact that the Klan will show their faces in public, the media will be here to focus on them. So we ask this: Do you want this area

to be portrayed like Vidor, Texas was? We don't. People, this is 1993, not 1893. A group like the Klan needs to know that they are not welcome here. All we're trying to say is, if they can hold a peaceful rally, then we can hold a peaceful protest. Meaning that we don't have to exchange words with them. We'd recommend not even talking to them because then you would be stooping to their level. We do, however, think that a group like the Klan needs to see a large number of students making the KKK feel unwelcome here because as we have already seen, ignoring the problem does not make it go away. That's what April 29, 1992 tried to show America. And if you don't know April 29, then in case you weren't invited, welcome to the "me" generation. We also agree with Professor Yang from the "Nay to the KKK" article on April 14 stating that people need to see what the KKK really stands for and what they really do. The Klan doesn't just promote dis-

crimination and prejudice against minorities. You can still be white, and the Klan will not be promoting your better interests if you do to fit their ideal of white.

As we sit in the aftermath of the second Rodney King trial, maybe we should take a little time to realize how prevalent racism still is in our society. So the Unity aspect of Whoopstock is good, but it just can't quite entertain the feelings of the coined festival. Peace.

Jason Rogers  
 Edward Castillo  
 Class of '92  
 Accompanied by 16 signatures

My friends and I were talking the other day about the upcoming rally for the KKK. We were disturbed that they would choose A&M as a place to express their beliefs, but then again we were disturbed that we would be as close minded as they, in wanting to prevent them from gathering.

I suppose if we are to be truly open minded then we must accept the fact that the beliefs of the KKK are just as valid as ours.

And we must not force our ideas on them just as we expect that they will respect themselves and us enough not to force their beliefs on us.

Once this conclusion was made, my friends and I were wondering if we

should do anything in response to this meeting. Should we go and listen to what they have to say, or should we join in the rally that speaks out against them?

We came to the conclusion that the most effective way to protest is simply to not protest. It seems that if we don't respond, their rally's effectiveness will be diminished. In the 1960s when similar meetings of the KKK convened, people responded, sometimes violently. This response gave the KKK extensive media coverage, and this is exactly what they wanted.

It would be interesting to see the Klan members walking down the street while everyone else went on as if nothing out of the ordinary were occurring. Neither their voices nor their beliefs would be affirmed by any sort of reaction from the general public.

How effective would they be then? By what means would they convey their message?

I am putting this forward as a point of contemplation for those who are concerned. I don't believe in taking away the right of the KKK to express their beliefs anymore than I believe that the KKK may deny others their right to hold their own beliefs. It is simply a suggestion that we avoid providing a vehicle for their message of racism.

Kristian Tenwolde  
 Class of '92  
 Accompanied by 11 signatures

### Accept differences work for future of all

Now is the time for all races to unite in thought, not in culture. Our thoughts should be inclined to fairness, equality, and cooperation. We should divert our attention to solving problems which plague all of society, not to filling quotas, catering to minute special interests, and pandering away our thoughts and actions to "political correctness."

We should realize that everyone regardless of ethnicity, sex, or religion, will have differences. Only when we as a whole community of human beings are to accept our differences and attempt to each a point of moderation, can we coexist peacefully and happily.

Justin Paul Howard  
 Class of '96

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