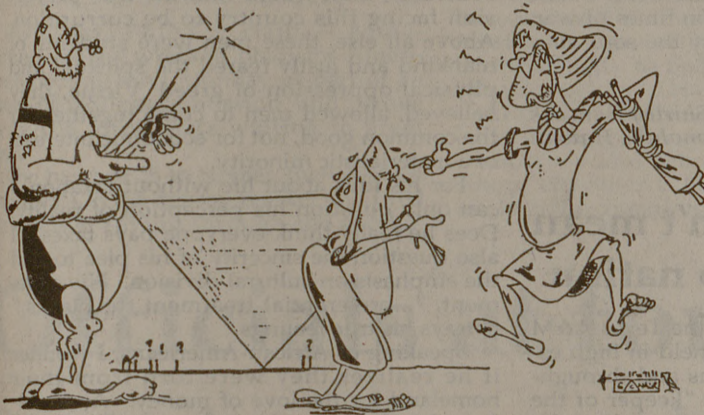


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KHU-FU'S FIRST PYRAMID: AGGIE STYLE



EDITORIAL

Building lessons

A&M must learn from mistakes

Texas A&M needs to keep past lessons in mind as it initiates millions of dollars in new building projects. Problems with the design and construction of many University facilities should serve to point out expensive mistakes that can be avoided.

University buildings have long suffered from flawed planning and construction mistakes. Engineers designed the foundations for the most recent addition to Sterling C. Evans Library without factoring in the weight of the books into their calculations.

Rooms on the north side of Haas Hall are smaller than those on the south because someone forgot to leave room for the hallway.

The University Center Parking Garage and Student Services Building has undergone extensive work in the year since it opened. Sinking foundations caused many problems. Last month, the Board of Regents approved funds to be used for emergency repairs on the building.

Problems also stem from ineffective projects and unmet needs. Poor drainage plagues nearly every area of campus. A short rainfall can result in days of sidewalks and parking lots covered in inches of water.

Residents of Married Student Housing have circulated a petition requesting bike path improvements. Many on-campus offices face serious space and storage shortages.

Currently, construction is under way on the new recreational sports center and natatorium, the west campus library, and the College of Business headquarters. Future projects include the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum and the proposed special events center. These facilities will be in use well into the next century.

Blunders in the planning and building of these projects hinder their use and reflect poorly on the University. Officials should ensure that previous errors are not repeated and devote future plans to remedying constant needs.

Receiving stares in local nightclubs

Subtle attitudes sometimes make blacks feel unwelcome

Topics for columns come to me in the strangest ways sometimes. I can just be sitting around talking with friends and extract a subject from that.

They were talking quite a bit after I mistakenly led them to a gay bar. And one of the things they were saying was that there are really no decent nightspots for blacks to go out to. Which is how we ended up at the gay bar to begin with.

While there are a number of good nightclubs and recreational centers around town, many blacks, myself included, find them unwelcoming. I don't mean that there are people standing in the doorway refusing to allow blacks inside. Often this attitude is very subtle.

It's so subtle that if you do not differ from the appearance of the majority in the club, you probably won't even notice it. But it is there.

It's the looks that are given to a black person who walks in, maybe even just to go to the bathroom. It's in the hard looks that follow a black person who comes in and actually sits down. It is there. And if you are on the receiving end, you definitely notice it.

I remember going to dunk my ring at the



TRACEY JONES
Columnist

Dixie Chicken with some friends of mine who happened to be white. A black girlfriend had also gone with me just for the fun of it. We were meeting the other girls there, so we walked in to find them.

As soon as we walked in, I felt self-conscious. And while I understood perfectly that I had every right to be there, I felt uncomfortable. As we walked to the back where you buy the alcohol I could just feel numerous eyes on us. One person stared at us like we were a new life form.

Being the patient person I am, I politely stood with my head erect and waited for my friends to show. We even ordered food. Which is very good, by the way.

But the icing on the cake — and I will never forget this — was when I went to go and use the telephone. There were two couples who were standing talking near the pay phone. As I walked over, they immediately parted to let me through.

It wasn't a natural scooting over; it was more like reflexively jerking your hand away from a burning stove. I even think that if a white person had been on the phone at the time, he would have just handed it to me.

All that anyone asks is to be respected as a person. Respected. Not feared.

Not all people act this way. I have met nice, friendly people. I met some that same day as the phone incident, and my girlfriend and I dined on our rings in peace. However, it is often the more ignorant ones that you tend to remember and the nicer ones that seem so far and few between.

I understand that the whole Northgate

strip has been a tradition of A&M for the longest time. I'm not suggesting that all the buildings be torn down and something else erected. I'm not suggesting that the Chicken stop playing country music.

However, some things can be done to be a little more accommodating to minorities. Perhaps having different nights is an option. For instance, Thursday night could be country night, Friday night could be alternative night, Saturday could be hip-hop night. This way, the mood encompasses a greater variety of people and tastes.

I hope this doesn't seem a trivial point. As I stated earlier, if you're not on the receiving end it probably won't phase you. But if you're curious to see how it feels, go in with a date of a different race.

Going out and enjoying yourself with friends seem very natural and not really a big deal for people who fall into the majority that happens to be there.

If you are not part of the majority, it is much more like a chore. It is difficult to just have fun when people all around you are staring. Or when that stare tells you that you do not belong here.

Traditions are "classic" because they symbolize ways of doing things that are important to people. They last because they are meaningful. Let's start some new traditions in addition to the old and include as many people as possible in them.

I have a feeling that these, too will last.

Tracey Jones is a senior psychology major



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Coming Out Day important for straights as well as gays

Picture it — Greenwich Village, June 27, 1969. It's a steamy night in a steamy town. You go with a few friends to a local bar to have a few drinks and mourn the sudden death of a dearly remembered film and stage idol. During the night the police decide to stop in, yell "Raid," and start swinging their nightsticks.

You get fairly ticked off, mainly because this happens far too often, and you decide to finally fight back. You and several dozen of your screaming, flaming friends, that is.

That bar was the Stonewall Inn, and that riot was the birth of the gay rights movement. Those few brave homosexuals decided to come out of the closet, take their fight into the streets, and wipe out years of oppression. Next June marks the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots.



JOHN SCROGGS
Columnist

During the past two decades, many changes have occurred. The gay culture has taken a completely new shape. It now strives toward legitimization and acceptance from the law and society. To further this goal, Oct. 11 has been declared National Coming Out Day. It is the one day a year that those individuals who are not publicly "out of the closet" are urged to tell their relatives, friends, co-workers and neighbors about their sexual orientation in hopes that society will finally realize that we are not "those" people, but just plain people.

Closeted homosexuals and bisexuals are individuals who feel it necessary due to societal pressure to hide their feelings and their sexual orientation from the rest of the world. Many deem it necessary to hide beneath a thin veil of heterosexuality. This lie they feel forced to live degrades their dignity as human beings and, furthermore, tends to retard the movement toward societal acceptance.

Yet, with more and more representation of homosexuals and bisexuals in the movies, on television and in popular literature, it is becoming easier for people to be open about their sexual orientation. Along

with this openness comes the inevitable breakdown of myths and stereotypes. When the general public comes to realize that homosexuals and bisexuals are just like the people next door — in fact, we are the people next door — then the need for a gay rights movement will be gone.

In the latest New York Times/CBS News Poll, approximately half of the respondents said they personally knew someone who is homosexual. Within that

Every time a homosexual or bisexual tells someone about him- or herself, it helps to destroy the myths and lies formed by the ignorant masses.

percentage, a large portion said they were more accepting and sympathetic toward homosexuals because of this. Those individuals polled who did not acknowledge knowing anyone gay were less likely to approve of the homosexual lifestyle.

So we return to the importance of hav-

ing a National Coming Out Day. Every time a homosexual or bisexual tells someone about him- or herself, it helps to destroy the myths and lies formed by the ignorant masses. It helps create a more tolerant society in which people are judged by what they do, not what they are. With the increasing number of homosexuals and bisexuals out of the closet and demanding equal considerations under the law, this once non-traditional and unconventional lifestyle is now gaining acceptance.

Society has already reached a turning point in its recognition of the queer lifestyle. The Hawaii State Supreme Court is in the middle of hearing arguments about legalizing homosexual marriages, and the prospects seem to be favoring homosexuals. Also, New York City has just joined the ranks of about 25 other cities that have established a form of domestic partnerships fully recognized by official documents giving the partners the same rights and benefits as a marriage license. The more homosexuals and bisexuals that proudly and publicly announce their union, the more tolerant and accepting society seems to become.

Yet, one aspect of National Coming Out

Day that appears to be missing is the "straight ticket." Not only should homosexuals and bisexuals be coming out, but heterosexuals should be also. Straights that are gay-friendly can face just as much discrimination and harassment as non-straight, sometimes even more.

It is just as important to the movement that society realizes how strong the gay rights movement is among heterosexuals. One staunch, upper-class, Republican, heterosexual male — like Barry Goldwater — advocating gay rights is just as influential as an entire brigade of Queer Nation members. It is very important that gay-friendly heterosexuals announce to the world that they are "straight, but not narrow."

So this Oct. 11, let society see not only homosexuals and bisexuals standing up for equal rights, but also the straights who believe in the freedom and equality of all people. National Coming Out Day should not be a holiday restricted to one subculture, rather, it should be celebrated by all of society.

John Scroggs is a senior English and philosophy major

Another student falls to A&M bureaucracy

This letter is in reference to the article about Wade Graham. It continues to amaze me how this university can continue to tell prospective students and those students already attending Texas A&M that this school may be large, but it has the "feel of a small school."

Texas A&M continues to tout itself as a school that is in touch with the students. If this were the case, then officials would be bending over backwards to rectify Wade Graham's situation. It appears that poor Wade is yet another victim of the ever present bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo that has been plaguing this university.

Texas A&M University is one of the largest schools in the nation, so things get mixed up and mistakes happen. It's a

fact of life ... but, it's about time that they admit their mistakes.

J.M. Brown
Class of '93

Following traditions a choice; give it a try

I am writing this letter in response to the column on Oct. 5 about the growing idea that following traditions is a requirement. When students choose to come to A&M, they choose to come here for various reasons, among those, the education they can receive and the history behind what makes this university something that students at other universities envy.

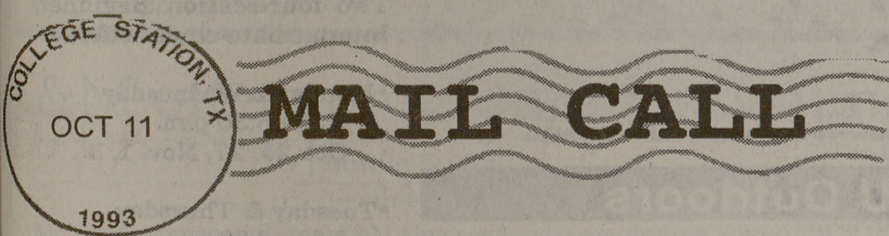
The history of A&M revolves around traditions. Following a tradition is a choice made by each individual. The tra-

ditions here at A&M give this institution dignity and class. Each tradition here at A&M began as a voluntary activity at A&M: Elephant Walk, Bonfire, Howdy, Muster and many others.

In order for the traditions to live on, we, as students, must also make a voluntary choice to participate in them. I was speaking with an Old Ag recently, and he said that we, the current students at A&M are "parasites. We are living off of what the former students at A&M have built."

I would hate to think that we would be killing off what this university has built for us to enjoy, either by not participating or by taking the right of choice away from the current students. If you have never been to Midnight Yell, Silver Taps or other traditions, I strongly encourage you to give it a try and see what it's all about.

Susannah Pell
Class of '95



Batt should leave the politics to politicians

The Sept. 29 editorial "Truth in politics" about Sen. Hutchinson's recent trouble with the law said she "has an obligation to account for her conduct to her constituents." Earlier it is casually mentioned that she "denies the allegations."

Please forgive my poor, tired brain if

it has misunderstood this, but it appears to me that she has accounted for her conduct. Until her trial, we should be gracious enough to allow her to be innocent until proven guilty. And if she is lying, would it not be suicide to publicly admit her guilt before the trial? I know editorials are all about opinion, but how about leaving party politics to the parties.

Chris Brooks
Class of '97