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EDITORIAL

Fence-straddling Clinton needs consistent policy

Remember when President Clinton promised to get American troops out of Somalia? Or when he told Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic that he could expect no military help from the United States? Or how about implying to the Haitians that they would be welcomed to the United States once he was elected President?

Once again, Clinton's straddling the fence — this time on foreign policy. It's hard to say whether Americans or foreigners are more perplexed by his erratic decision-making.

The original stance on Somalia was for American troops to feed the starving people and then get back to the United States. Only now the famine has broken, Somali farmers are raising crops and American soldiers are still there. Now they are fighting to depose warlord Mohammed Farah Aidid and Clinton announced that American troops will stay in Somalia until at least March 31, 1994 — and he's sending in even more troops.

Then there's Bosnia, where Congress is now debating whether to send 25,000 troops even after months of Clinton's

insistence to the American people that the United States would stay out of the fighting.

In addition, Haiti didn't react well to Clinton's announcement after his election that he planned to continue Bush's policy of not accepting Haitian refugees into the United States.

Tuesday he sent 194 American troops as part of a United Nations plan to restore democracy by reinstating ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Haitian authorities refused to let the ship dock, eliciting cheers from hundreds of Haitians on shore.

The Haitian mission seems to be a point of confusion even for the various parties involved. According to the latest issue of Newsweek, the United States Security Council considers it a peacekeeping mission, but a State Department spokesman said it is in no way a peacekeeping operation.

What is the American public to think? Clinton is obviously up to his old game of trying to please everyone and consequently pleasing no one. He needs to take a stand on foreign policy if he ever expects to be taken seriously.

When the podium becomes the pulpit Instructors inject their religious beliefs into class lectures

I've tried. I've really tried. For two semesters now, the topic of religion has managed to escape my writings and allowed me to sleep at night without the fear of molotov cocktails and burning crosses.

I am aware of a new fear, however, that this university might be just a little bit prejudiced against those students who do not practice the Christian faith.

As a liberal arts student, I can't recall any strong or unsuitable references to Christianity in any of my classes, but several friends of mine — Christian and otherwise — have mentioned numerous accounts. For example, one friend told me her professor implied the big-bang theory and evolution are fallacious according to Christian beliefs and Creationism. This is both rude and extremely improper on the part of the professor and detracts from the integrity of the learning environment.

As we all know, the United States, Texas and Texas A&M are overwhelmingly populated with Christians. This in itself is quite understandable, as this country was more or less founded by them, as was this state. And our university, being notably conservative and of rural begets, is predominately of that same faith. There is nothing right or wrong about this phenomenon, because we live in a



FRANK STANFORD
 Columnist

free society and attend a public institution. However, when on occasion I have let my agnosticism — no particular religious belief — be known, many of those within earshot either ply me with friendly invitations to "talk" or inform me of their prayers for my salvation. Although I try to appreciate these gestures, I often wonder why other religions never attempt to convert me with "talks" and sympathetic behavior.

I have been told countless times that hell awaits me, that most of the world — 93 percent according to one individual — is condemned to eternal damnation, and that Christians who act hypocritically or do horrible deeds are not "true" believers. Once, a fellow Aggie informed me that even those who smoke cigarettes are banned from heaven. In addition to inferring that students who light-up will spend eternity in hell and the existence of a divine "no smoking" policy, I wondered aloud if the same fate awaits those who dip snuff as well.

Because many of my friends are Christians, I know that many believers in Jesus don't subscribe to this brand of salesmanship that utilizes coercion, shame, fright and fear of social rejection. Although most Christians refrain from such methods, Aggies of different religions will tell you these are not isolated encounters, particularly on this campus.

Most non-Christian students at A&M unfortunately expect such behavior from some Christian peers. I understand it's part of the responsibilities of the faith. Frankly, I feel that if an individual insists on informing me of who I should worship, she or he is merely exercising a right to do so, regardless of how annoying I might find the gesture. However, we enter an entirely new realm of inappro-

priate behavior when professors in classroom atmospheres exhibit similar conduct.

Moreover, being a state institution, Texas A&M must follow the directives of the Constitution regarding the separation of church and state. "Preaching from the podium" is clearly illegal and should be stopped.

In a similar vein, The Battalion printed an advertisement for "Faculty Friends" on Sept. 23. The ad was a list of Christian faculty members, listed by department, who were offering some form of free counseling to students in need of help. This is not only an admirable gesture, but has most likely been helpful to a number of students.

Although I'm not certain of the legalities involved with faculty being listed as Christian — anyone can submit an ad — it is improper for Interim President E. Dean Gage to be publicly listing his help to students as a Christian.

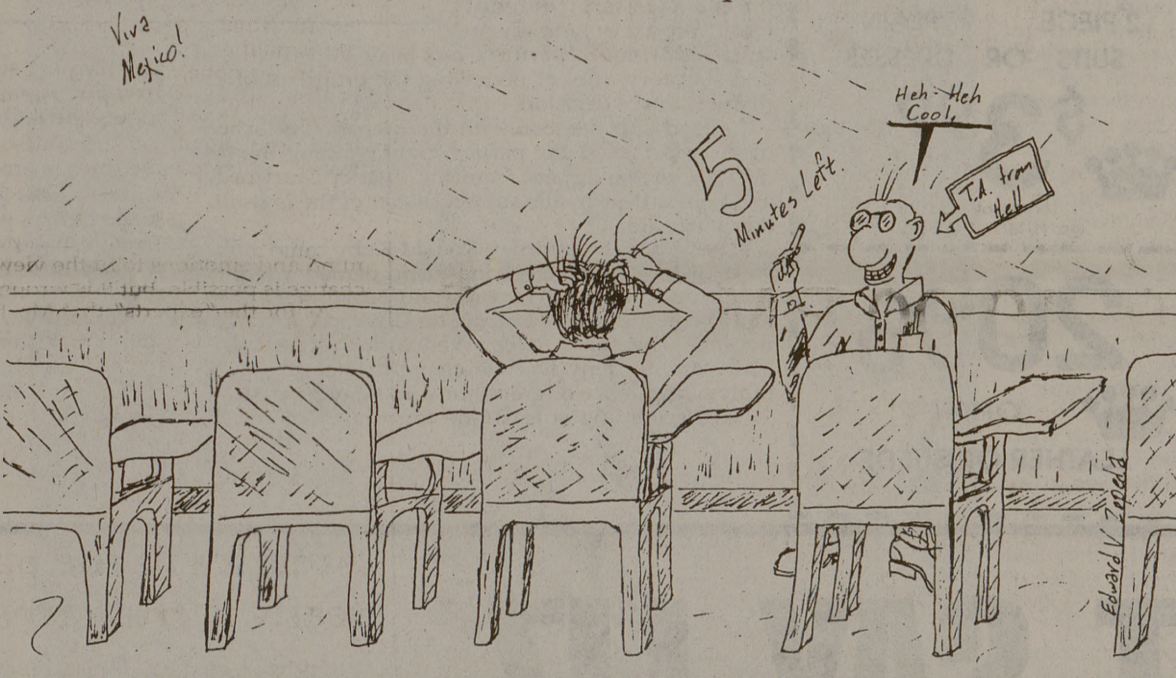
Were I a Rastafarian worshipping the former prince of Ethiopia and concerned about possible discrimination from a devoutly Christian professor, I wouldn't feel supported by Dr. Gage displaying himself in such a manner. I am, however, aware of a memo released to faculty on Oct. 5 regarding respect for students' religious preferences. Much applause.

I, and the other non-Christians at Texas A&M, obviously have the same affection for this university that every student has or we wouldn't be here. Before I'm told 2,000 times that Highway 6 runs both ways, I would like to reiterate that, yes, Highway 6 does run both ways.

This makes it a much more effective highway.

Frank Stanford is a graduate philosophy student

The real reason for male pattern baldness



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A&M allows historic house to rot rather than maintain it

One more piece of Texas A&M's history is gone. The old Commandant's house, which stood on campus until 1952, has been torn down.



ROY CLAY
 Sportswriter

The sad part about the demolition of this historical building is that it was offered to the University at virtually no cost, and the administration declined the offer.

The house served as the residence of all Corps commandants from 1909 to 1952, including Maj. Gen. George F. Moore, Class of '08. Moore led the most famous of Aggie Musters while under heavy enemy fire on the Pacific island of Corregidor during World War II. He later became Corps commandant after a successful military career. It is ironic that A&M, which boasts of its loyalty to tradition, would refuse a gift

of such historical significance. However, this isn't the first time the school has failed to preserve its history.

When the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas decided to expand its facilities after World War II, it sold the Commandant's quarters in 1952 to W.M. Dowell, a teacher at A&M. He moved the house south of campus to what is now the corner of East Bypass and Emerald Parkway.

The house was rented out for several years after the Dowells passed away. But in 1987, their daughter offered the building to the University for only the cost of moving it back on campus.

A survey by a graduate class in the College of Architecture reported that the house was in excellent condition. The front and back porches were the only areas in more than a minor state of disrepair. At the time there was some interest in the house as a possible museum and historical marker. But, for various reasons, the project floundered and the house remained vacant.

Reasons reportedly cited for the school's rejection of the offer run along a familiar vein. The University wanted the owners to underwrite the cost of moving

the building back to campus and felt that there was no reason to move a building onto campus simply because it was historical. The administration also believed that the University didn't have the resources to undergo such a project.

Another reason stands out from all the rest because of its familiar ring. The Physical Plant lobbied hard against this project. It didn't want a wooden building on campus.

What would have been the problem with accepting the old Commandant's house? It's a classic case of Texas A&M looking a gift horse in the mouth.

The Physical Plant is replacing the wooden windows on the Academic Building with dark-tinted aluminum ones. Many have noted that this fails to preserve the original appearance of the structure. The aluminum windows are also just plain ugly. Still, the Physical

Plant feels that the old windows take too much effort to maintain.

The Academic Building was designed to allow exterior light to flood the interior, but the dark tinted windows will allow little exterior light to enter the building. It wouldn't be hard to order windows that are similar to the ones already in place. But, hey, they can always put in more fluorescent lights.

The Physical Plant didn't want to take care of a wooden building, and it has been replacing all the wooden windows on campus. What will its employees do once the entire campus is entirely maintenance-free? Maintenance is their job. It is their duty to keep those structures which are important to the University.

What would have been the problem with accepting the old Commandant's house? Even if the school didn't have the funds to refurbish it immediately after getting it on campus, it would have at least been on school property. The structure would have been safe from the kind of vandalism that eventually ruined it.

The house was offered to the University as a gift, yet A&M declined the offer partially because the owners wouldn't

pay to move it. It's a classic case of Texas A&M looking a gift horse in the mouth.

Buildings with historical interest to this school are slowly going to the wayside while buildings with acoustic ceiling tiles, fluorescent lights, tile floors and low maintenance are becoming the norm. Apparently, these old buildings just aren't worth it.

The state of Texas is in love with the history of Texas A&M. It is an integral part of the appeal of this institution. However, the respect the University affords the physical remains of this history has been sorely lacking.

Texas A&M cannot do anything about the many buildings destroyed by fire. It may be beyond our means to preserve buildings from the expansive clays destroying DeWare Fieldhouse and Downs Natatorium. But it is within the powers of this University to preserve buildings that have escaped natural disasters.

All except the Commandant's house — which now lies as a pile of scrap lumber. Let's hear it for tradition.

Roy Clay is a senior history major

COLLEGE STATION, TX
 OCT 14
 1993
MAIL CALL

'Order food or leave'

The sign out front reads "Big Screen TV," but don't plan on watching a football game there unless you are going to eat for three hours. During the second half of the Texas A&M-Texas Tech game, the owners of the new Cow Hop restaurant were asking

folks (who had ordered lunch and eaten during the first half) to either "...order more food or leave." Those who were drinking beer (read as, spending more money) were allowed to stay.

Now, I can understand this behavior if people were waiting for a table, but there were at least four or five empty tables available inside the restaurant and addi-

tional ones outside. I know where I won't be watching football from now on.

L. Clark McDonald
 Class of '87, '89

Audience threatened anti-North protester

I am writing to refute the distortions in Mr. Holle's letter (Mail Call Oct. 6) concerning the protester at the Oliver North speech. It is W. Holle's letter which distorted the truth and not E. Murphy's letter (Mail Call, Sept. 30) as Mr. Holle claimed. Contrary to his statement "... not once

did I hear one physical threat," there were many physical threats made to the protester. Some said they wished they could "kick in his sign," "beat him up," and most disturbingly, "see him dead."

Rudder officials prevented this protester from entering with his sign because of a "no-sign" policy in the complex. Officials also confiscated several other anti-North signs.

However, before North spoke, a man in a suit distributed about 30 pro-North signs to people sitting in the front rows. People holding these signs were included in the KBTX and Eagle photographic coverage of the speech. Young Republicans and Rudder Complex officials did not enforce the no-sign policy with people who had pro-North signs in the auditorium. After the speech the protester brought

his sign into the hallway outside the auditorium. The protester's sign had strong language, but did not, as W. Holle claimed, have "... profanities that had letters in common with North's name."

The sign had the words Oppressor, Liar, Iran-Contra, Villainous, Evil and Rancid. There was also one word at the bottom that could be called profane, but it was not that word that offended people. The head of the University Center Complex then approached and told the protester to either get rid of his sign or leave.

People who do not consider North a hero were effectively silenced that night. In Rudder Complex, many were denied their rights to free speech and expression.

Marilyn Smith Yeager
 Graduate student