OPINION

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EDITORIAL

12th Man mistake

Boosters should have known better

The Twelfth Man Foundation, a booster organization bound to support athletics at Texas A&M, only hurt the University when four members of the foundation's executive board did not relay employment information about running back Greg Hill to the proper authorities.

According to a letter obtained by The Battalion, executive board members Jim Peterson, Cliff Taylor, James "Stormy" Kimrey and Warren Gilbert discussed the fact that Hill had been employed by two Texas A&M boosters, Welton Jaynes and Gilbert, at the same time. However, neither booster notified the University that a problem could exist.

Since A&M suffered through the turmoil of NCAA troubles in 1989, the University has stressed unendingly to its boosters that any question about booster involvement should be directed to the University Compliance Office. This office was designed to handle alumni's questions about actions related to A&M athletes.

The Twelfth Man Foundation has encouraged compliance with NCAA and University regulations as well. Yet the fact that four of the top officers of the foundation — including the incoming president — did not act upon this information gives one the sense that they were not serious about compliance at all.

In a year of troubling incidents for Texas A&M, this latest episode only adds to the public's negative perception of the University.

The Board of Regents, the Office of Finance and Administration, the Department of Food Services, the Athletic Department and now the Twelfth Man Foundation have all seen their share of scandals this year. Yet in each case, the University seems more intent on preserving its image rather than solving the problem.

On Sunday, the NCAA Infractions Committee will hear A&M's side of the football program's year-long investigation.

As the school's top administrators sit on the NCAA's firing line with sanction clouds hanging over their heads, maybe those four members of the Twelfth Man will realize that all of this could have been avoided if they had only practiced what they preached.

Why volunteering is good for students

Altruism helps givers as much as it does the recipients

JOHN SCROGGS
Columnist

We've all heard the excuses before:

"I gave at the office." "I just don't have the time." "I'm way too busy simply taking care of myself." "I just don't know how to help."

Well, let me tell you, these excuses won't cut it any longer. We live in a rapidly decaying society. Everyday the media screams about crime, murder, theft, rape, domestic violence, hatred and decadence. People continually complain, yet rarely does anyone lift a finger to help.

Folks, as cliché as it sounds, if you are not part of the solution, then you must be part of the problem. But how does one make the momentous transition from an apathetic do-nothing to a concerned citizen?

Well, as a volunteer you can help solve the ailings of society. Try it out. It can be as easy as turning off your television and picking up your telephone — as if that were terribly easy for a couch potato generation.

As it just so happens, I was sucked into the vortex of volunteerism. My original intentions, though, were not as golden and pristine as I would like people to believe.

I didn't take that first step into the whirlpool because I had some feeling of obligation to a society that has raised and nurtured me. No, I was offered a free lunch.

Now, don't get me wrong. I have always been a thoughtful, concerned member of society, but it just so happened that at the time in question, I also doubled as a starving college student. The free lunch was an incredible incentive. It still is.

I was invited to be a member of the Peers Material Review Panel (PMRP) for the newly formed Project MAIN, which stands for Multicultural AIDS Information Network. The name really didn't mean much to me at the time, but the free pizza and sandwiches did. I was there to eat.

Once I got to the meeting, I realized there was more to the organization than just feeding poor students. They had a true cause, something worth spending time doing. My life really lacked that.

The PMRP was a monitoring board that previewed the educational materials that were to be distributed by Project MAIN. As a board member, my job was to be sure that anything dispensed by Project MAIN would not be culturally offensive or factually inaccurate. It was fairly easy, and hey, I was getting free food.

Then, over the next few meetings, the pizza and sandwiches turned into cookies and chips. I made a mental note of the dwindling meals, but as I became increasingly active with the group, I could find no time to complain.

Finally, the food ceased altogether. But it was too late. I couldn't stop saying yes. I had already agreed to be on all sorts of sub-committees, ad hoc committees, planning committees, executive committees and I-need-to-be-committed committees.

I was a volunteer junkie.

Finally, my life had some meaning. I could go home at night, turn on the evening news and know deep down that I was doing something to help slow the decay of modern society. It is a great feeling, an addictive feeling.

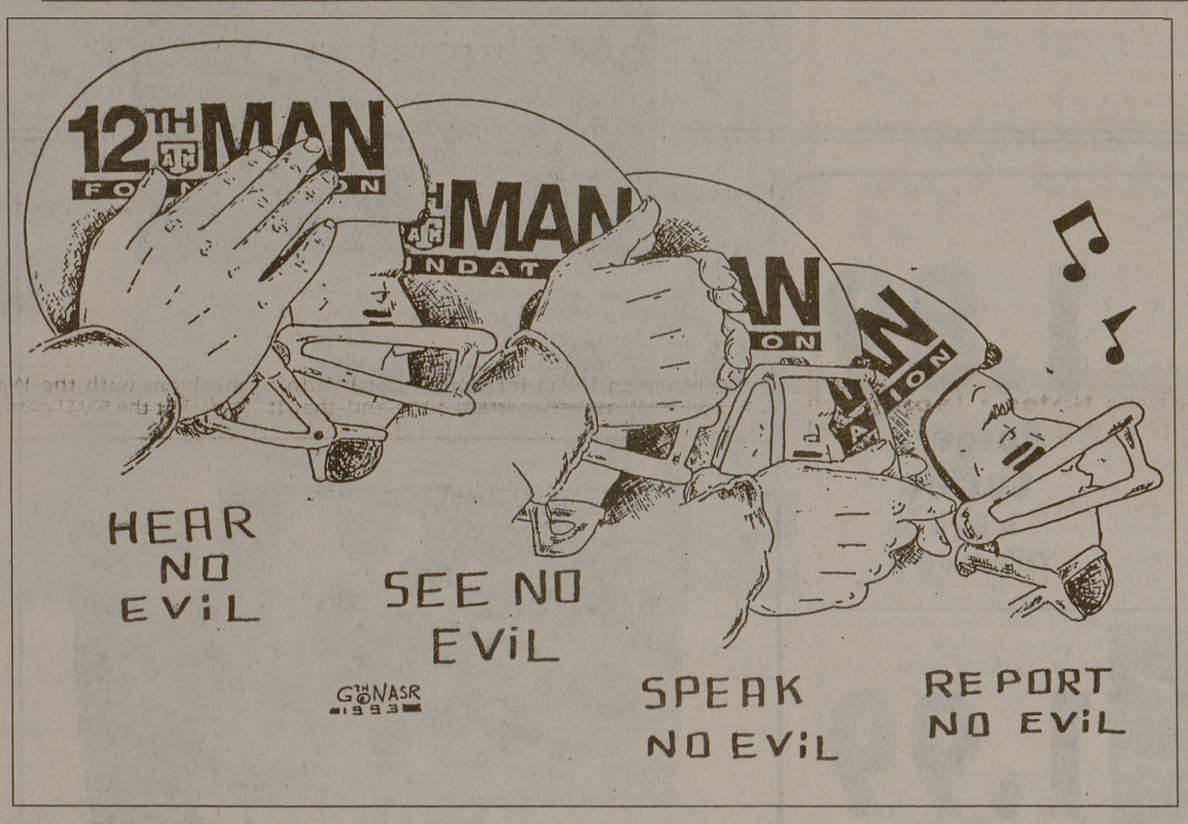
Altruism, contrary to popular belief, is not a completely selfless act. Having a genuine concern for the welfare of others feeds a personal need to feel useful. The first time you see someone smile as a result of something you have done, you get covered with the warm-fuzzies. This self-centered need, though, is not necessarily bad or wrong. In our society, it may be the only solution to ending the ever-growing problem of despair.

There are many organizations here in the Brazos Valley that are waiting for a flood of well-intentioned college students to come knocking on their doors and beg to help them reach their goals of making local life just a little bit better. Not everyone may feel comfortable with any one particular social service, so check around until you find one most suitable to your field of interest.

To name just a few, there's Red Cross, Crisis Pregnancy Service, Brazos Valley Council on Alcohol and Substance Abuse, Twin City Mission, Phoebe's Home, which offers assistance to battered women and children, and Special Health Services, which handles HIV/AIDS education. Each one of these organizations would appreciate any amount of volunteer help that you could offer.

And the psychological rewards you receive will benefit you for the rest of your life. I know that my one free lunch has completely changed the way in which I view the world.

John Scroggs is a senior English and philosophy major



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Going to the placement center for a taste of the real world

MELISSA MEGLIOLA
Columnist

The simple thought of venturing into the realm of bid cards, corporate binders and bond paper resumes can send many students into hysterics. The game, a real life version of Monopoly where we race to pass go and finally start collecting for all our years of college, can be stressful and scary.

After weeks of preparation and careful planning, today is the big day. At precisely 11 a.m., I will enter the placement center and begin my official quest for a summer internship.

Rules are different in the office on the second floor of the John J. Koldus Building. On time means be early, and mandatory attendance means you really must be there.

On a campus where Levis and oversized sweatshirts make up the fashion norm, the placement center stands alone as a magnet for wool gabardine suits, conservative ties and sensible pumps. This corporate dress code causes students to speculate on the specific fashion dos and don'ts.

According to Jenny, a 1993 graduate trying to break into public relations, shoes are the key to making a good first impression.

"I read somewhere that you should always keep them polished and never wear 'pleather,'" she said in reference to the temptation to buy synthetic or plastic shoes to save money.

Bonnie, a 1993 chemical engineering major, struggles over whether or not to wear her engagement ring. Senior rings seem to be the only truly safe piece of jewelry.

"I was told never to wear a watch, dangling or hoop earrings and never to paint my fingernails," Bonnie said.

One interviewer from a large oil recovery company joked about wanting to hire an industrial engineer because of his impressive socks, black with tiny gray diamonds.

Aside from shoes and accessories, interview attire should be fairly easy to purchase. Guys should think dark and conservative. Girls should do the same while trying to avoid the flight attendant look.

Creating a resume is often the only part of interviewing more carefully thought out than what to wear. Technically, the disc resume required from the placement center is all that you need. However, anyone can improve their paper image with a more professional design and few well written, slightly exaggerated phrases.

"If they ask you to write a program in Pascal, you'll figure it out," said Aaron, a mechanical engineering graduate. "Or find somebody who can do it for you."

The "previous work experience" section provides a place to stretch the truth a little. After mowing your next door neighbor's lawn for years, suddenly you are a lawn care technician. What about that summer you worked at the mall. Sales associate sounds good. Work as waiter or waitress supposedly shows that you are comfortable working with people. But how many times have you secretly spit in the pasta fussili of a man known for stiffing?

Many resumes now contain a section outlining computer skills that list two or three computer languages and at least four or five word processing and spreadsheet programs. The rule seems to be if you have ever typed a paper or completed a homework assignment on a specific program, that program should be included on your resume.

"If they ever ask you to write a program in Pascal, you'll figure it out," said Aaron, a 1992 mechanical engineering graduate. "Or find somebody else who can do it for you."

Now for the really scary stuff. The actual in person, real-life, think on your feet interview. You sit in a tiny room and wait to be grilled like a T-Bone on the 4th of July. Although you are probably safe from the now infamous Fish Camp situation where some bubbly interviewer cheerfully asks, "If you were a pizza topping, what topping would you be," the questions can still be unusual.

Matt, a mechanical engineering major who graduates in December, was asked, "When you are in traffic, do you continue to change lanes and try to move ahead or do you wait patiently like everyone else?"

He and his girlfriend are still arguing over the real meaning of the question.

Trying to evaluate how he attacks a problem, one highly selective consulting firm asked Brad, a Class of '93 industrial engineering major, "How many bicycle tires were produced in the last year?"

To really learn more about an applicant, companies should question about things that seem obvious. Can a mechanical engineering student change the oil in his/her car? To what level do beer and twinkies make up the diet of a nutrition major? When interviewing an accounting student it would be helpful to see his/her checkbook.

Chances are it isn't balanced to the penny.

Melissa Megliola is a senior industrial engineering major

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MAIL CALL

Multiculturalism the wrong step for A&M

Texas A&M took a giant step backwards in improving the educational climate here with the Faculty Senate's approval of the multiculturalism bill. The faculty and student supporters of this legislation have failed to learn their lesson from the failure of other "world class" universities that have instituted mandatory multicultural programs.

The reason multicultural curriculums have created problems is not the intolerance of some students to other cultures but rather the content of classes that seek not only to promote other cultures but to denigrate elements of our existing culture.

The courses become the professor's forum for political indoctrination rather than an open forum to exchange ideas. Tenured professor are virtually immune from sanction and university administrations have demonstrated shocking timidity in dealing with these abuses.

For the most part my experiences with professors at A&M were positive, but I did have classes under now tenured professors that were alarmingly political in 1985. It frightens me to think how their classes might be altered to fit the multicultural requirement.

A free exchange of ideas is the cornerstone of a sound educational environment. If history repeats itself (and it's a safe bet it will), then Texas A&M will face difficult times in dealing with problems created by reaction to the multicultural curriculum.

I urge the University administration to seriously consider the problems similar proposals have created at other universities by their restrictions on the free exchange of ideas before approving this proposal.

Ed Marcinkiewicz
Class of '85

MSC already funds 'political' groups

The First Amendment guarantees free speech, not balanced speech. If one organization on campus works hard to promote a message (with its own funds), what gives the University the right to balance that out with its funds or to require that organization to provide a balance?

The MSC already provides skewed balance by funding such campus groups as Earth First! ($200 in 1991), Pro-choice Aggies ($125), Gay Lesbian and Bisexual Aggies ($500), National Organization for Women ($200), College Republicans ($0).

These groups, with the exception of College Republicans, all received money from the University in the past few years. This information is totally open to the public at the MSC finance center. I encourage everyone to see where University money is going and then decide where the balance is.

Frank David Brown
Class of '97