

THE BATTALION Editorial Board

CHRIS WHITLEY, editor in chief

JULI PHILLIPS, managing editor

MARK EVANS, city editor

DAVE THOMAS, night news editor

ANAS BEN-MUSA, Aggiefife editor

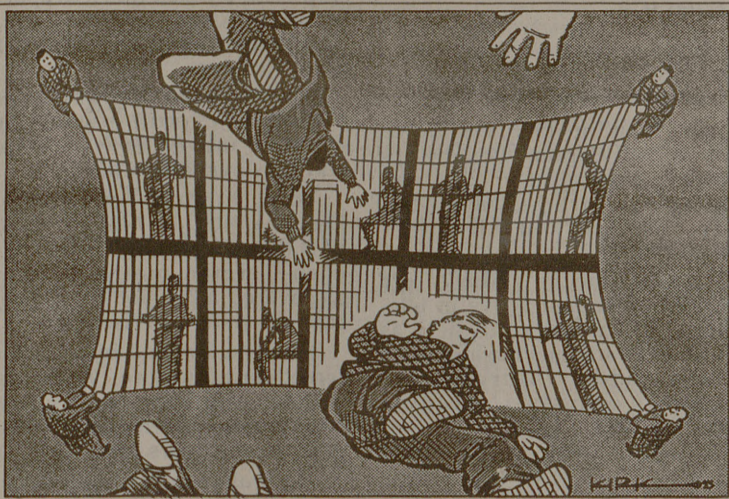
BELINDA BLANCARTE, night news editor

MICHAEL PLUMER, sports editor

MACK HARRISON, opinion editor

WILLIAM HARRISON, sports editor

KYLE BURNETT, photo editor



U.S. SOCIAL SAFETY NET

EDITORIAL

Greener pastures SWC has nothing more to offer

Should A&M leave the Southwest Conference? It can't be denied that the quality of the conference is dragging Aggie sports down. It's difficult to get national respect for the football team when the conference is consistently stomped by other teams in the Top 10.

A&M could play a tougher schedule, but when seven of the eleven games played each season are against other SWC teams, it's hard to do that. Only two of the games played this season were against ranked opponents: Louisville and Oklahoma.

For the last five years, A&M football has gotten recruiting classes ranked in the top five. It's unlikely that new recruits will want to come here in the future if the school doesn't start getting some recognition.

The Houston Chronicle

reported that a new league is in the works that would include Brigham Young University, the Big Eight Conference, and every SWC team except Texas Tech. However, the guidelines for the new league could be so expensive that Houston, Rice, SMU and TCU would have to bow out of the competition.

So what is stopping A&M from joining? Apparently, the Texas Legislature is pulling its purse strings to keep A&M and UT from leaving the SWC.

Since these two schools are the ones that bring the real revenue to the conference, the legislators will do their best to keep both universities from leaving for another conference.

The legislature should allow Texas A&M to do what is best for its athletic program — leave the Southwest Conference.

Looking to the future through the past Students can be conservative without blind acceptance

Texas A&M has always held a paradox for me. Now, don't go thinking that for my last column I'm gonna blast A&M's good name to smithereens or lampoon the University as some archetypal farce of backwoods learning.

I really do admire my soon to be alma mater. I have enjoyed my years here and truly feel the maroon pride coursing through my veins. It is just that there is one fundamental, almost structural anomaly within the pervasive philosophy of Texas A&M that has always left me confused.

Texas A&M University, a bastion of higher education and supposed leader of free thought, prides itself as being one of the most conservative, tradition-based schools in the nation. How can this be so?

For a moment, erase from your mind the popular political definitions of conservative and liberal. Our two main national political parties have skewed these words by associating them with both personality types and economic theories. Let us reassign the terms to their synonymous meanings within the social/philosophical field.

Conservative thought structures are based upon authority. This authority rests within the traditions of the past. Religion seems to play an important role within this power of authority also. A conservative paradigm always looks to some perfect past and longs for the return to those standards or values.



JOHN SCROGGS
Columnist

On the other hand, liberal thought structures look to the future for improvement. Basic tenets of the liberal paradigm reside upon political and social freedoms and the idea of continual progress. Also, just as religion plays a role in conservatism, so does science play the same role in liberalism. Science, being founded upon an ideal freedom of thought, strives, through knowledge, for a better tomorrow.

At this point, I always encounter a seeming contradiction. How does education get applied to these apparently opposing philosophies?

A conservative education would necessarily be restricted to studying the past; preserving the good old days. Some authoritative hierarchy would be essential to ensure that only topics deemed as non-threatening to the standard norms be pursued. Any area of knowledge that might lead to a downfall of the conservative beliefs, i.e. conflict with past values, would have to be in some way suppressed.

We have witnessed throughout history how dangerous traditional authorities can be as they prevent the progress of views contrary to their norm. The struggles of the Copernican Revolution or Galileo testify to the need for freedom of educational pursuits.

It would then seem that education is more suited to the advancement of liberal philosophies. With the freedom of thought inherent in liberalism, one could easily question and study which ever field was of interest, regardless of political or social threat.

As a prime example of this, we can look to the role of major universities in our recent past. Most social and political reforms can trace their births to some college campus grass roots organization. College students have long been recognized as liberal-minded, future-oriented individuals who, through education, hope to change the

world into a better place to live.

Yeah, it's quaint and idealistic, but stereotypes usually have a basis in truth. This stereotype pegs college students as a group with a fairly liberal thought structure.

Yet, most A&M students find a sense of pride in holding just the opposite view. Doesn't that seem to go against all logic?

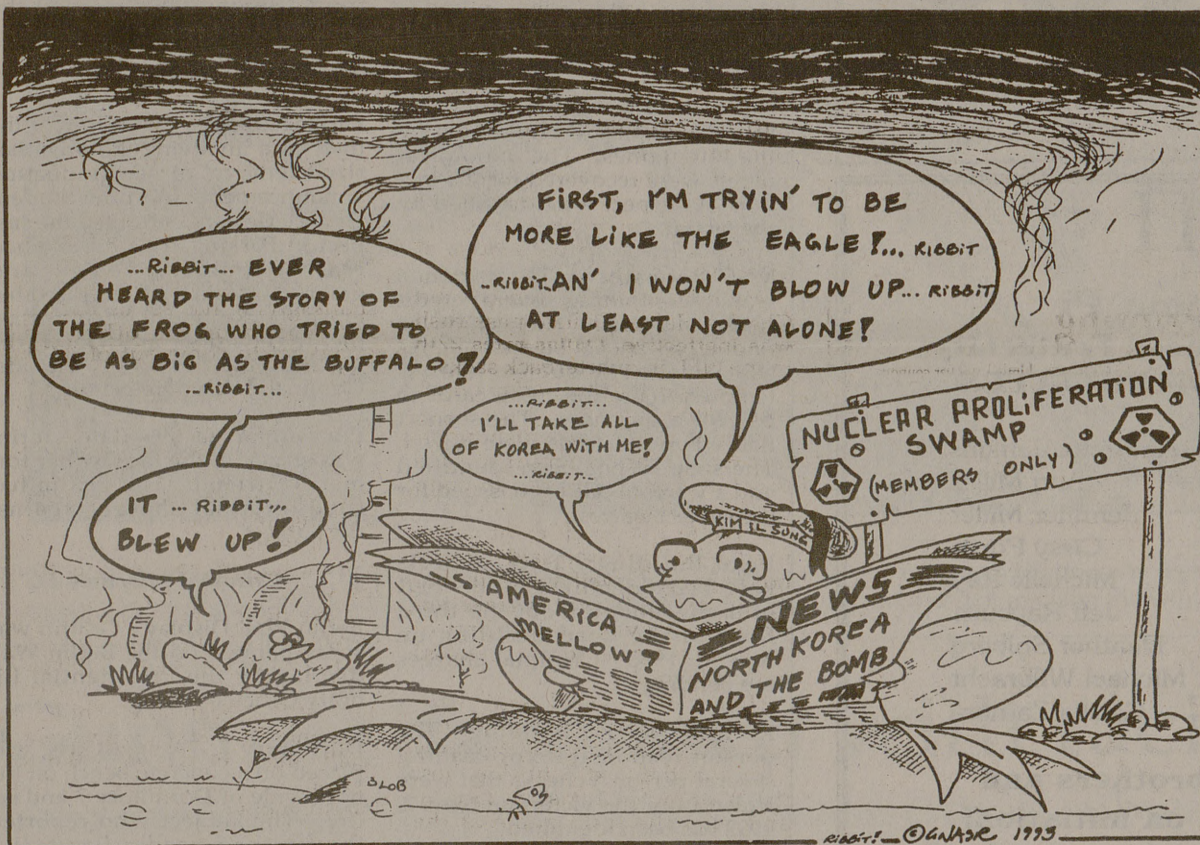
The only answer I can find lies within the origin of Texas A&M's conservative values. If the conservatism is based on dogmatic beliefs passed down and forced upon each new generation, then the conservatism blinds the real truth of education. With this method, new learning is never achieved. Only the regurgitation of past knowledge occurs, just as if alchemy were still considered a viable science in today's post-modern age.

But if conservatism is chosen, through the process of education and personal belief development, then the blind acceptance of dogma can be avoided. Once presented with unbiased information on all possible viewpoints, any choice made would be an educated choice and pass beyond the realm of dogmatic doctrine.

This is where I hope Texas A&M is today. I wish to believe that the extremist conservative viewpoints on this campus reflect a true examination of the viable alternatives available instead of just being a mindless party line spewed forth from the conditioned minds of malleable drones.

Of course, at this point the conservative thought structure becomes legitimately attained through a liberal configuration. Texas A&M students are then free to look to a future of following tradition.

John Scroggs is a senior English and philosophy major



Editorials appearing in The Battalion reflect the views of the editorial board. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of other Battalion staff members, the Texas A&M student body, regents, administration, faculty or staff.

Columns, guest columns, cartoons and letters express the opinions of the authors. The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

We reserve the right to edit letters and guest columns for length, style, and accuracy.

Contact the opinion editor for information on submitting guest columns.

Address letters to:
The Battalion - Mail Call
013 Reed McDonald
Mail stop 1111
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX 77843
Fax: (409) 845-2647

All I want for Christmas is ... leg warmers and jelly shoes

Yesterday, while on the phone with my grandmother in Tennessee, she hit me with the inevitable December question: "What would you like for Christmas, honey?"

Like always, I insisted I really don't need anything and will be happy with any gift that she chooses. In truth, my mother has been doing all of my grandmother's shopping since I can remember. The conversation was strictly a holiday formality.

Once off the phone, I started to remember my Christmas lists from the past. Strung together, my wish lists would make me a top contender for the People's Worst Dressed in the Twentieth Century Award.

In first grade at Prestonwood Elementary, you simply were not cool unless you



MELISSA MEGLIOLA
Columnist

wore jeans with embroidered patterns across the back pockets. For Christmas that year, I yearned for a pair with a tube of toothpaste stitched across my rear.

The disco look may have been on its way out in 1980, but in second grade, my friends and I held on to images of John Travolta and disco balls, with those little metallic gold belts that resembled thin, tightly wound slinkies.

Although by third grade I had figured out the secret about Santa, still equating letters with gifts, I wrote Santa for a ripped sweatshirt and a pair of leg warmers. The Flashdance Look. If my parents wouldn't allow me to see R-rated movies, at least I could dress like I belonged in one.

Fourth and fifth grade passed harmlessly. The fashion faux pas were kept to a minimum. But sixth grade made up for it. To celebrate the musical brilliance of Michael Jackson, I requested a pair of parachute pants and a single white glove to go with a copy of "Thriller." My mother bought me a new pair of mittens.

As a hip seventh grader, I felt compelled to roll bandannas and tie them around my ankle. Right leg meant you were single.

Left leg meant you were going with someone. Weird. Even so, you can guess what filled my stocking that year.

Eighth grade brought sweaters from the Limited. I updated what my Mom thought was a classic by wearing it backwards and exposing my tank top covered back. Unfortunately, the tag always scratched the front of my neck.

Strung together, my Christmas wish lists would make me a top contender for the People's Worst Dressed in the Twentieth Century Award.

At some point in junior high, jelly shoes, jams, and fluorescent clothes all made my Christmas list.

In high schools across the country, girls are required by national law or order of the homecoming queen to dress for class daily. Thus the four years before I entered college remained rather tasteful.

With my freshman year at A&M, came the beginning of my fear of computers, hatred of exams and my love affair with running shoes, sweat pants and mismatched socks. Boys in engineering are thrilled to see a girl no matter what she is wearing.

Sophomore year, my Christmas list stayed fairly free of fashion items I would later regret. Somehow, I passed on the clown suits with the big collars, puffy sleeves and baggy legs that reduce college women to 4-year-old Barbie toting children. The mega bow look never got me either. Having something seemingly explode out of the back of my head has never appealed to me.

However, last year as a first year S.B., I folded under pressure and took part in the ritual of clutching my wrap skirt for dear life whenever the wind started to blow. The skirts just started appearing in my closet. Long, short, chambray, cotton, wool, plaid, floral and striped: they all fly open.

Finally, as a senior, I have become more practical — buying my first navy suit may have changed my life forever. This year I

am simply requesting workout clothes. Although I own a few pairs of the obligatory spandex shorts, after a few laundry-less weeks, I find myself sporting unevenly cut-off long underwear adorned with pink and green snowflakes.

This request is not exactly safe from a fashion disaster. Mom might fail to notice that it is almost impossible to find a leotard with a butt. The workout industry has somehow found a way to satisfy people's desire to wear a thong without being thrown out of the house. And the look works — for about one out of five aerobic instructors.

As for those of us who work out in order to improve our less than perfect bodies, designers forget that a single strap of cotton will hardly camouflage our resemblance to Miss Piggy in certain areas.

Even if I am forced to wear ballet leotards for the rest of my life, it is going to be a great holiday season. See ya at the Cotton Bowl.

Melissa Megliola is a senior industrial engineering major

COLLEGE STATION, TX
DEC 8
1993
MAIL CALL

Don't talk unless you know what's going on

I can't believe you published that trash by P.B. Deignan (Dec. 7). What does P.B. stand for anyway? Peanut Butter?

Well, Peanut Butter, before you go

slandering the fine men that run this paragon of institutions, I suggest for you to check the facts. And if you know more than the SEC or Texas Rangers, step forward. If not, SHUT UP!

Ronald Lorenzo
Class of '95

Student service is not a priority for library

This semester the Student Services committee of the Student Senate has met many times with various staff of the library administration to voice concerns about the cutback in midterm library hours.

Neither the petition signed by more than 100 students, who wanted the library to be open at least 'til 2 a.m. as in previous semesters, nor the articles in the newspapers about students fighting for seats in IHOP and the Kettle seemed to be of concern to the library administration.

They stood by their reasoning that the library posed security problems between midnight and 2 a.m. and that students spilled drinks on books. How was the security maintained in the past 'til Fall '93? Was it that difficult to get security for two hours?

Suggestions given by the Student Services committee were not heard and the library administration asked us to check with Food Services to see if they would let students study in Sbsa at night.

It did not seem to occur to them that this facility used to be available to the students until this semester, and a student who messes up the library valuables could as well mess up the food machines serving thousands of students in Sbsa.

I wish that they had been there when the library closed to hear students surprised and upset as to why the library was closing earlier than in previous semesters and that the 2 hours made a difference.

After all the discussions we had with the library administration, without any good coming out of them, one can come only to one conclusion — that the library administration is totally indifferent to the concerns of the students and that it is one department at Texas A&M where service to students is not a priority.

Ranjan Natarajan
Graduate student