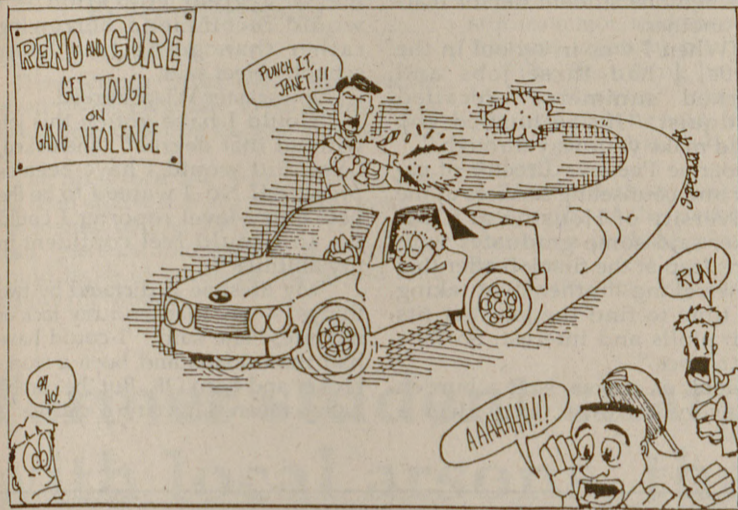


THE BATTALION Editorial Board

JULI PHILLIPS, Editor in chief

MICHAEL PLUMER, Managing editor
 BELINDA BLANCARTE, Night news editor
 HEATHER WINCH, Night News editor
 TONI GARRARD CLAY, Opinion editor

KYLE BURNETT, Aggiefife editor
 DENA DIZDAR, Aggiefife editor
 SEAN FRERKING, Sports editor
 WILLIAM HARRISON, Photo editor
 JENNIFER SMITH, City editor



EDITORIAL Shelter shock

Homeless need realistic help

The Dallas City Council needs to wake up and get a firm grip on reality.

During one session last week, the council voted to install portable toilets, running water and garbage dumps for the homeless people living beneath Interstate 45.

Later in the same meeting, it voted to destroy the shantytown and evict the 200 homeless people who currently live there.

All of the "luxuries" were scheduled for installation March 5, which gives the council's victims about three weeks to enjoy themselves before they are evicted March 25.

Granted, solutions to a problem that has existed since time began are not likely to be found in one session. Obviously, this is a complicated issue, but Wednesday's puzzling vote seems to point to a lack of any unified effort on the part of the Dallas City Council — not the only governing body facing such challenges — to deal with the problem realistically.

The council did decide to

continue plans for a homeless pavilion in the downtown Dallas area.

Unfortunately, the ordinance passed with so many stipulations that no one believes the pavilion will ever become a reality.

In essence, the council approved of a plan to build a shelter which is virtually assured to fail, and in the ensuing arguments took away what little the homeless people have left — a bridge.

Officials from the American Civil Liberties Union warned the council that the homeless were allowed by law to sleep in public if the city fails to provide alternative arrangements. However, council member Glenn Box argued that only one court in Florida had upheld that law, and it is not unconstitutional to stop people from sleeping in public.

That filthy, dangerous shantytown about to be destroyed is the only place those people have to call "home." Now, thanks to political bickering and a lost sense of reality, they won't even have that.

Life's meanings found in many ways Religion, philosophy provide sense of human purpose

Warning: This column contains fairly deep, philosophical, touchy-feely stuff. Most of us lead a very centered existence; we must, because we are students with important goals. The pressures and direction provided by this very structured environment lead to us what most people would certainly deem to be "meaning."



FRANK STANFORD
Columnist

Anyone on campus might say, "To graduate and get a real job is my meaning at A&M, and if I don't make an 83 on this next test I'll flunk my class and get kicked out for good. I'll be ditch diggin' and eatin' Tuna Helper for the rest of my life."

Even though this fear may be common on campus, can just one question on some exam actually have the power to thwart a person's goals in life? It seems quite possible. Through a domino effect, a grade may create a serious obstacle to a degree, and thereby a particular desired career. But can a single bubble on a scantron control the real meaning of a life? Surely not.

So just what is real meaning? What is it that makes us get up in the morning and live (besides Lucky Charms)?

When we ask ourselves why we are doing what we are doing, or why we have set certain goals for ourselves, it is not difficult to arrive at quick, easy answers. To get mar-

ried. To get a good job. To make good money. To be financially independent. To live in the manner we would prefer.

Most people spend their entire lives chasing — and many times achieving — these very goals. This chasing seems to be quite the norm actually. But what if, due to some circumstance, these goals were bypassed? While sinking in schoolwork, you are offered the secure job you always wanted — a career requiring only the skills you already possess and offering the money you desire. Would earning a college degree have the same appeal? Winning a \$50 million lottery would certainly make these popular, motivating goals obsolete. What will meaning be then? Although such scenarios are hypothetical for most of us, they force us to delve deep within ourselves beneath superfluous purpose to find the meaning that can never become obsolete. This is real meaning.

Meaning cannot be — as you may have surmised — one particular thing or anything external. It is different for all of us and is always changing.

There are a number of ideologies which provide technique for the task of finding the meaning of human life. Existentialism and religion are perhaps the farthest apart, but both still can remain "true" in their meaning. Such ideologies are necessary. Man needs a reason to live, and any reason will do. With a reason made powerful enough to die for, man can well withstand the sufferings of life. The famous philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche stated, "He who has a WHY to live for can bear almost any HOW."

An existentialist viewpoint concerning

meaning holds that man invents his own ideals, that the essence of a person is that which he has designed himself. Through the power of their own will, people are free to be happy or sad and to choose whatever they decide will be meaningful in their lives through self-determinism.

Essentially, there is no other meaning in life but the life itself. As described to me by a distinguished professor, the journey of experiences from birth to death is all that is life and is its very meaning.

The process of life is the meaning of life — it occurs every moment, and is the reason to remain living. Although existentialism is regarded as being a somewhat pessimistic manner of thinking, we must remember that included in the journey that is life is happiness, love, pleasure and the other emotions and elements that make us people.

Religious ideologies provide meaning for human lives as well, and are certainly more popular than existentialism. All of the religions of the world (with possibly a few exceptions) share what I think are commonalities. The most pervasive quality of religion is the concept of a form of life after death and the hope of having such a continued life. It is my perception that this hope along with the presence of the supreme being(s) and the individual intricacies of this hope gives those with religious convictions meaning to their lives.

Even though this column may be a far too simplistic approach to this topic, it has still managed to prompt the use of aspirin.

Frank Stanford is a graduate philosophy student



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

New windows smash Academic Building's historic integrity

I do not normally get ruffled about many things, but as an Aggie (since 1985) and a student of preservation, I felt compelled to write this after reading a Jan. 24 article regarding the Academic Building windows.

The issue over the window replacement has gone rather unnoticed. There have been only two news articles and one editorial on the subject. By the time the first article was published during the fall semester, it was probably too late to do anything since the new windows were presumably on order. While the Physical Plant has put forth seemingly justifiable arguments for the choice, as an architecture student, I find fault with their reasoning.

SCOTT CLANTON
Guest Columnist

According to David Godbey, associate director for engineering and design services, the windows were chosen not only for their cost and apparent ease of maintenance, but also for their aesthetics. He claims to have used "computer visualization techniques" to determine how they would look. It does not take computer visualization to tell that these windows look crummy. Take a look at the Agriculture Building in front of the Evans Library to see how well the windows weather after a short time. Did the Physical Plant really use the "latest" computer visualization techniques like those in the College of Architecture's Viz Lab, or did they use the computers at a paint store which show color combinations for houses?

If the Academic Building is such a focal building on campus as Godbey suggests (which it really is), then shouldn't it stand out and be maintained as one? The old windows set the Academic building apart from the others on campus: they gave it character and integrity. Just because old windows have been replaced across cam-

pus does not necessarily require the same for the Academic Building. Ugly repeated is still ugly!

If cleaning the windows is so important, then why weren't the old windows kept clean? The only reason they deteriorated so quickly was because they were not maintained. I doubt the new ones will be kept any better. There are many manufacturing companies who could have dupli-

Texas A&M has one of the best historic preservation programs in the country. It is a shame that officials did not consult with their resident experts on renovation.

cated the existing windows with new, easy to maintain, energy-efficient materials (with little cost difference), which would have at least looked better than those chosen.

Godbey later states that the Physical Plant "... didn't want to turn back the clock to 1912." Preservation is not about turning back the clock, it is about maintaining what exists. According to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation for outstanding buildings and sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

- The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

- Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

- Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

- Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced.

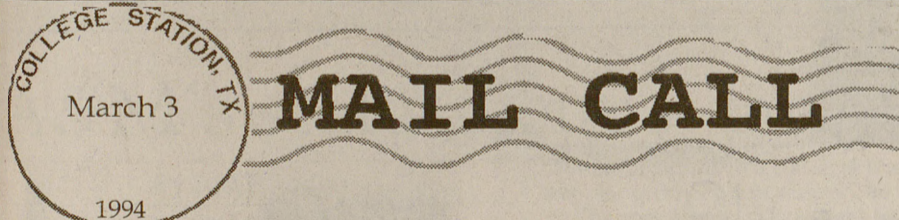
While I acknowledge that these are only

guidelines and not laws, and are usually directed towards structures on or eligible for the National Register, responsible decisions regarding historic buildings should be made in the spirit of these recommendations. As stewards of the built environment, the University should take better care of its physical resources.

Texas A&M has one of the best historic preservation programs in the country. It is a shame that officials did not see fit to consult with their resident experts in the College of Architecture on the philosophy behind the renovation. It is also a shame that as a public institution of higher learning, the University does not set a better example, and practice what they preach.

Finally, if the eyes are really the windows to the soul, what then are the windows to a building? Perhaps we should add the Academic Building to the next Silver Taps list!

Scott Clanton is a graduate architecture student



A&M sells tradition for Big Eight bucks

I am thoroughly sick of the thought of our beloved school sneaking out of the Southwest Conference for the Big Eight. It is a move that could possibly be the death penalty for the four left behind.

It is sad to think that these schools would turn tail and run for TV money and leave four others to fend for themselves. The SWC is a conference of schools, not individuals. A&M should have waited un-

til the others had a plan of action before slipping out the door. To think of our university, a friend well known for honesty, loyalty, and friendship leaving these other schools out to dry turns my stomach. And we Aggies are big on tradition. Tradition is great, right? How's 80 years of tradition? Gone. Who cares, right? We need competition, right? Well, we have only been on top of the conference for a few years now. What would have happened to us if the conference had dissolved back when we were getting creamed every year? Besides, we replace SMU and Houston with Iowa State and Kansas. Whoa! Big step up.

So, when we get on top, we wave to the have-nots and head for the bank, careless that the others will now be left in a void with no one of status to play. I will love Texas A&M until death, will bleed maroon until the day they suck it from me, and will follow the team to Nebraska and Colorado even if I have to hitchhike, but what we have done to these other schools is beyond distasteful.

J.D. Slaughter
Class of '96

Results of Hutchison case misrepresented

While walking across campus today, I spotted a pink broadside posted by the College Republicans that read, "Kay Bailey Hutchison Found Innocent." Either the

College Republicans, in their ignorance, have failed to distinguish between "being found innocent" and having a case dismissed on a legal technicality, or they are purposefully continuing their campaign of disinformation.

Jerome Lynn Hall
Graduate Student

Magee myopic about optometry profession

I couldn't help but to point out the ignorance and stupidity that I found in Jenny Magee's column on Feb. 23. She whined about a routine visit to the optometrist's office as though she had been attacked by hit men.

Although I must commend her on her far-fetched imagination and extensive ex-

aggeration, she has absolutely no knowledge whatsoever of any ophthalmology-related fields. First, she incorrectly compares a dilating pupil to an enclosing room (one gets larger while the other gets smaller). Then she continues her tirade of peevish complaints by describing various optical instruments according to the degree of discomfort they caused her.

These instruments detect serious tumors, diseases and visual acuity problems that may exist. Also, her "retarding near-sightedness" indicates a halt to further depletion of her visual sight. Finally, she states that optometrists are not "real" doctors. Four years of extensive medical training, in addition to four years of undergraduate studies, merit some credibility. As a future optometrist, I simply want Magee to open her eyes with respect and appreciation toward the profession.

Vu K. Nguyen
Class of '95