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The BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT WONDER DIET FAD

EDITORIAL Vote!

Get to polls, make a difference

There is an important statewide primary today. Unfortunately, only an estimated one-third of the voting-age public even knows for whom they are going to vote. Although this is not a national election year, it is vital for Texans to become an active part of the voting process now.

Only 16.5 percent of the voters are expected to vote in a primary that determines who will garner party nominations for several offices, including a U.S. Senate seat. With such a drastically low voter turnout, a small group of people will be making decisions that will affect an entire state.

In typical fashion, the campaigns for this election have been decidedly "colorful." Millionaire Rene Haas has been accused of running a misleading campaign against incumbent Supreme Court Justice Raul Gonzalez. Senatorial hopeful Jim Mattox has accused opponent Richard Fisher of participating in a Brazilian money-laundering scheme. It's a typical case of "same song, different verse."

It's up to the voters to wade

through all of the smokescreens and political smooth talk. For better or worse, we are all responsible for the election results — through our action or non-action.

If you don't vote, then you don't have the right to complain when everything goes wrong. Our generation soon will be taking over the reigns of power, not only in this state, but the entire country. Unless we start deciding who is going to be in charge of the state political machine, it will run us over.

It is time for us as American voters to appreciate how very lucky we are. Voting doesn't take a lot of time. It's not like a test; the candidates are already there in front of you. All you have to do is pick one that you like.

If you're registered, then today is your chance to make a difference.

There are people that don't believe one vote can make a difference. Statistically, that may be true. But think of all that could be done if everyone who thought their vote didn't make a difference got together and voted anyway.

Uphold the honor, image of brotherhood Fraternities must accept criticism when criticism is due

Where do rights end and responsibilities begin?

Two years ago, four members of a fraternity at Texas A&M University dishonored themselves and their brothers by taking the law into their own hands.

At the former "Zephyr" club, four fraternity members spotted and tracked down an innocent man. At least one member of the group wrongfully attacked him under the mistaken notion that this man had hit a young woman, while the rest of the accomplices claim to have just stood and watched. However "noble" the motivations behind the attack may have been, the assault stands as a testimony to the perverse use of intoxicated rage, not uncommon at B-CS nightclubs.

The question of who beat up the victim is not the issue. The issue is that three fraternity brothers allegedly stood by as the victim was repeatedly, blindly bludgeoned in the open parking lot of an apartment complex. Only when police showed up did the group decide that this was not such a good idea after all.

Two years later, one member was found guilty in criminal court, and all four have been successfully sued for damages — \$100,000 apiece.

The four fraternity members that were present — charged and responsible for all time to uphold that fraternity's honor, ritual and im-



WILLIAM HARRISON
Photo editor

age — failed miserably. Yet, the fraternity complains about the bad light cast on themselves, their honor, ritual and image — splashed across page one.

The fraternity's argument is that the group should not necessarily be judged by the actions of a few members. Coincidentally, this is the main defense used by the fictional fraternity Delta Tau Chi in the movie "Animal House." They should not be judged by the company they keep.

Last semester a friend of mine was assaulted in an intramural game by several members of another A&M fraternity. After my friend was called a "f—ing spic!" and a "f—ing Mexican!" my friend confronted the instigator. That member of the fraternity threw the first punch, and my friend defended himself. Soon, five to eight of the fraternity brothers were on top of him. The rest gathered around the struggle. And did nothing.

The only fraternity members that were present — responsible for all time to uphold that fraternity's honor, ritual and image — failed miserably. A pattern, perhaps?

Fraternities gripe about negative stereotypes, but why should they gripe when they are the second-worst group to insure for liability in America.

The first? Toxic waste dumps. Even doctors' malpractice insurance costs less than the kind of dough needed to back up a fraternity these days. Because of incidents like these.

Why should a gang in south central Los Angeles not complain when its name is used in headlines for acts of violence related to its members? Gangs consider themselves to be tight-knit, honorable blood-brothers. It may seem outrageous to compare an honored upper-class fraternity to the stigma of gang activi-

ty, but that's exactly what it is.

Originally, fraternities were not established to perform acts of gang brutality; they were founded as protective organizations to support and defend the rights of their student brethren. "Turf wars" had nothing to do with it.

There should be an obligation felt within fraternities to address these problems, to own up for their mistakes — no matter how minor, no matter how major — and learn from them. It is a losing cause to defend what one cannot, and it is human weakness to deflect legitimate criticism rather than accepting it, dealing with it and learning from it.

Page one publicity is merited when fraternities perform charity functions, raising great amounts of money and support for needy organizations. But fraternities should also land flat-footed on page one when they screw up.

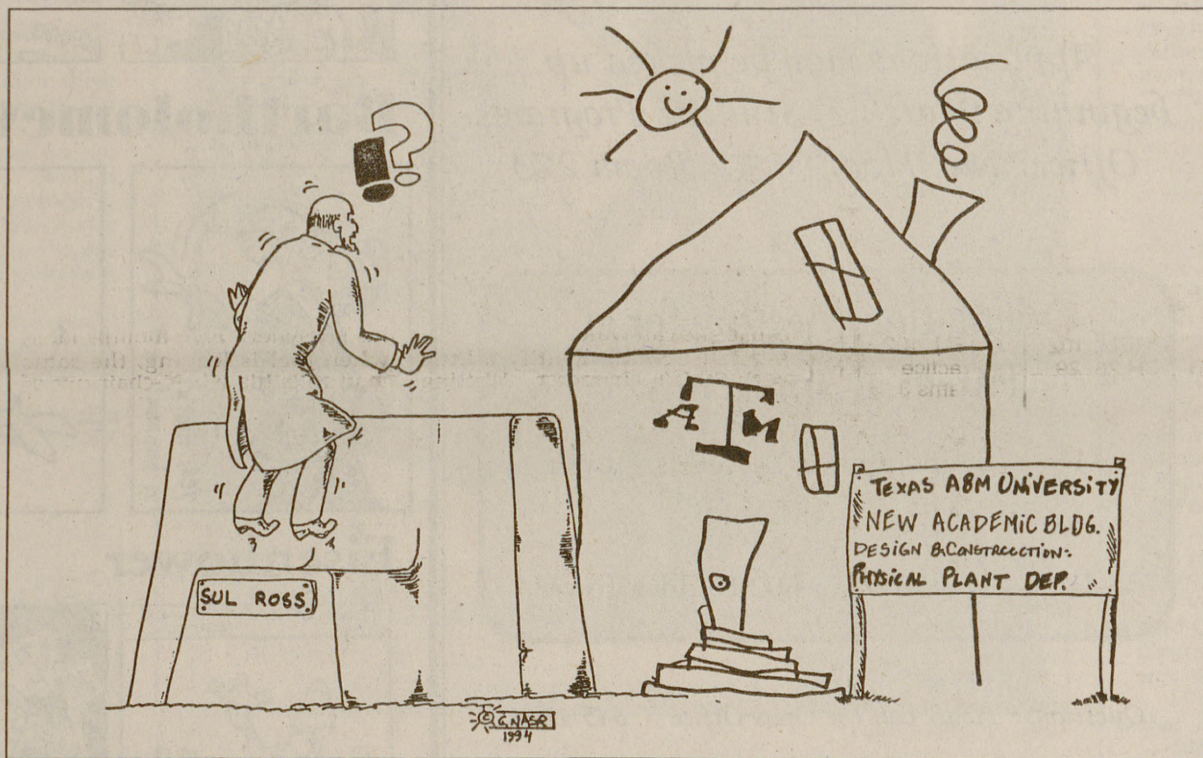
Fraternities seem to have an inherent flaw of not taking criticism when criticism is due. It's human nature to look for silver linings, and blame is that gift in our country's politics that is much better to give than receive.

When a fraternity man is initiated, he is charged to exercise the rights of his fraternity by guarding them with its responsibilities. The man and the fraternity are one.

Fraternities should not sit pat and watch injustice mutely. They should stand up for what is right — through responsible behavior, honoring what they have sworn on their lives to uphold and displaying wisdom and courage.

The alternative is to accept being seen not as an elite organization, but as a sub-class of primate running loose at Texas A&M.

William Harrison is a senior journalism major and alumni of a campus fraternity



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:
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Gap of age, circumstances bridged with time, love and humor

It didn't really hit me until I was driving home Saturday night that I had just said my final good-bye to him. Our final conversation was nothing fancy.

"Take care, Bill," I said. "I'll see you later." To which he replied, "Take care, son."

He then extended his hand which I grabbed with both of mine. But the hand was not strong and bold like before. Instead it was ice cold and weak. I tried to say something else, but his eyes stopped me before I could speak. He just looked at me for a moment, then turned to say something to my grandmother.

As I drove on into the night, I thought



DAVE WINDER
Columnist

of a million things I wanted to tell him. They didn't seem right at the hospital but now on a lonely country road they seemed perfect. I should have said all the thank you's and done all the apologies, but something kept me back.

Nothing could hold back my tears though when I remembered how I acted when I was informed as a boy that he was now my stepgrandfather. I resented the fact that he had become a part of my life and never was afraid to let him know it. He took it all in stride though, never treating me like I was treating him.

He could entertain the whole family with his anecdotes, but I chose to ignore most of them. Magic tricks were also one of his specialties, but only my younger cousin learned them, because I wanted to show Bill up. They will all have tons of memories to cherish him by, but I will not.

The only thing I really have to hold on to is Thanksgiving Eve about six years ago. Bill was an excellent cook and always prided himself on how well his

turkey tasted. The night before the big day, I went to the refrigerator to get something to eat but could only find his turkey.

So I broke off a small piece hoping that nobody would see my thievery the next day. It tasted so good I did it again. But

I tried to say something else, but his eyes stopped me before I could speak. I thought of a million things I wanted to tell him. But something kept me back.

this time I took off a bigger chunk. My hunger was not satiated though, so I kept eating until I was full.

My mother went into the kitchen about an hour later and discovered my half eaten meal. She almost killed me, she was so mad. But Bill just laughed. That didn't

stop him, however, from poking fun at me at every holiday afterwards.

As I grew older, I noticed we did share one thing in common — a love of television. He loved to watch "Dallas" and "Falcon's Crest," while I was more accustomed to watching "Cheers" and "The Simpsons." The only thing we agreed on was "The Tonight Show" which brought us closer in a way. It seemed we only spent quality time together watching Johnny Carson's monologues.

He would only talk about his life before he met my grandmother in bits and pieces because of how painful it had been. He spent most of his early years in the Navy before he met his wife and had three children.

Then his life took a turn for the worst. Within three days of each other, his wife died of a heart attack and his daughter, whose body was never found, drowned at sea.

His eyes would light up when I brought my girlfriend, Mindy, along for a visit because she reminded him of the

daughter he had lost. He would look at Mindy and recall details of his daughter's hair and face. I think it made him happy that he was able to remember her that well.

Bill had his first heart attack last fall and wasn't expected to make it. But his will to live got him through it, and he made it home in time for Thanksgiving.

Two weeks ago, though, his body failed him again. This time his heart was only working 10 percent, and both his liver and kidneys had failed. But nobody ever heard him complain once.

He was living strictly on will power the last couple of days. As he faded in and out of consciousness, he would tell his stories just like old times, but this time I wanted to listen.

And as I drove through the hills, I prayed that this old sailor would find a calmer port at his next stop.

Dave Winder is a sophomore journalism major

damages?"

Instead the Battalion chose to take an opportunity to grab the attention of all of our fellow Aggies by diminishing the reputation of one of the largest student organizations on campus. The fraternity system at A&M has maintained a respectable academic record and is continually striving to do more for the campus and the community. When The Battalion does recognize these accomplishments, it is often in a small article tucked away in some unread corner of the paper.

The fact that the four defendants are alumni members of Kappa Alpha has absolutely no bearing on the jury's decision. There is no need for this tabloid journalism committed against any student organization, be it the Greek system, the Corps or varsity sports. The editors and staff of The Battalion should stop headlines and articles characteristic of the cheap tabloids found in our local convenience stores. Start reporting on the pertinent facts that

truly affect our everyday lives.

This letter represents the opinion of the 25 fraternities on Texas A&M campus, which constitutes over 1,200 students.

Ben Raymond
 Class of '94, President of Kappa Alpha Order
 Accompanied by 25 signatures

Letter writer receives harassing phone call

I recently had an article published in The Battalion in the Mail Call section. The night after that paper was published and circulated, I was at home making dinner with my wife when the phone rang. I picked it up, and a man came on and told me what he thought about my opinion. He ended the short harassment with, "get

your head out of your —" (you can guess the rest) and hung up. The rest of the night my wife and I were in shock that something like this could happen. I can't believe that people with a higher education can still lower themselves to prank calling. I thought this fad was only a junior high thing, not a college thing.

To the man that harassed me that night, what would you have done if my wife answered the phone? Harassed her? Swore at her? Possibly even scared her? If you would have, I feel sorry for you and any girlfriends you might have. Even more sorry than the night that you called.

It is really a shame that action like this is present in our society. People want everybody to get along. This is an example of how it will never happen. Thank you, Mail Call, for giving us our freedom of speech.

Dale Wierenga
 Class of '95

COLLEGE STATION, TX
 March 8
 1994
MAIL CALL

Battalion engages in tabloid journalism

This letter concerns the article titled "Four Kappa Alpha members accused of assault begin trial" (Feb. 22). Our concerns center around the judgment call made by The Battalion when deciding its headline. The behavior of the individuals involved is the issue at hand. Being members of Kappa Alpha Order had nothing to do with the case.

Even if this fight had been a current af-

fair (it occurred two years ago), The Battalion would still have no justification for this blatant misrepresentation of the Greek system. Every act like this on any fraternal organization reflects poorly on the Greek community as a whole.

After visiting with some of The Battalion's editors and staff, it was determined that the real reason they gave this case so much publicity was because of the amount of money the plaintiff is suing for and because all those involved in the case are or were Aggies. Why didn't the headlines read something like, "Former Aggie sues other Aggs for \$10 million in punitive