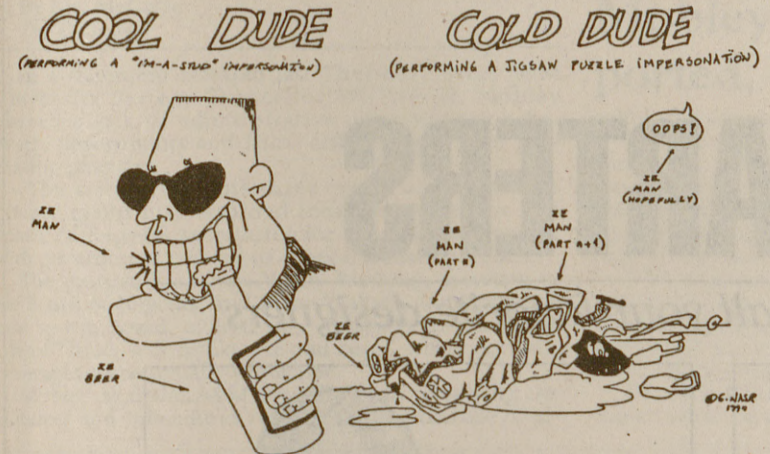


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HAVE A SAFE SPRING BREAK!

Defending the system Tenure crucial to academic life

On March 3, the Houston Chronicle reported that A&M Regent Billy Clayton "has not voted to approve a tenure application since he has been on the board because of a philosophical opposition to the concept." Furthermore, without even having discussed the files of upcoming tenure candidates, he plans to vote against all 73 of them.

This compares to a professor flunking all of his students because he's "philosophically opposed to the grading system." Or a taxpayer refusing to pay taxes because she's "philosophically opposed to taxation." Or a state legislator (which Clayton once was) voting against all legislation because he's "philosophically opposed to government."

In our system, of course, such irresponsibility would subject the offender to severe punishment. The professor would be denied tenure or have it revoked; the taxpayer would go to jail; the legislator would be defeated or impeached. But Regent Clayton is immune from all such consequences because of the power and secrecy that surrounds the appointed position he holds.

Tenure is earned by seven years of hard work. It is granted only after a thorough scrutiny of accomplishments in teaching, research and service. Faculty submit their work not only to peers and administrators at their home institutions, but to scholars at other universities. The review process takes nearly a year and involves every administrative level in the University. Only the most deserving candidates are successful.

What many people, including some members of the Texas A&M Board of Regents, fail to understand is that tenure simply guarantees due process to faculty members. It spells out the reasons for dismissal and the procedures to follow, and provides a well-defined system of hearings and appeals before the decision is final. If these guidelines are followed, tenure can be revoked for cause at any time in a professor's career.

Rescinding tenure is analogous to disbaring a lawyer or revoking a doctor's medical license. Such actions occur rarely because very few individuals go far in these professions without the

ability and commitment to perform well throughout their careers. They are willing to face enormous academic and professional hurdles in order to achieve the security accreditation confers.

For professors, many incentives exist to ensure continued excellent performance. At Texas A&M, generous teaching and research awards provided by alumni encourage professors to do their best. Grants from national agencies are approved only after rigorous review. Promotion to higher ranks is competitive and usually requires an additional five or ten years of teaching. And salary increments — when they are available — are based on annual performance reviews.

If Clayton thinks that incompetent professors are abusing tenure, he should study these annual reviews and specify his complaints. Instead, he has employed a thoughtless, scattershot approach that harms everyone and damages the reputation of Texas A&M. Ironically, tenure was designed to shield professors from precisely this kind of arbitrary and capricious behavior. Far from illustrating what's wrong with tenure, Clayton's actions reveal why we need it.

If anything ought to be changed, it's the method of appointing regents. The current politicized system has given us some regents who enter the academic system without understanding its rules or sharing its values. Former students who give so much to support Texas A&M and its faculty should feel embarrassed by Clayton's cavalier, irresponsible attitude toward one of the most important decisions in the professor's career.

Sadly, this is only the latest in a continuing series of revelations that have discredited the regents and caused faculty members of long standing like myself to question their competence. In my 23 years at A&M, I cannot recall a Board that has displayed so many errors of judgment and, in the present case, an outright abuse of authority.

In today's tight academic job market, only the very best professors, those who have achieved tenure at their institutions, can move to positions elsewhere. If Texas A&M abandons tenure, particularly in the climate of fear and intimidation that now exists, I assure you that's exactly what will happen.

Dennis Berthold is a professor of English at Texas A&M

Don't tell anyone - I don't hate Barney I love you, you love me, let's just let the dinosaur be

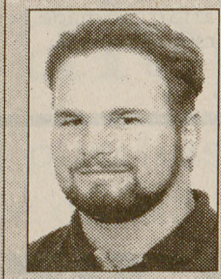
I've asked the FBI to hide me and change my identity. I've shaved my beard, and I'm considering a nose job and an earring. But they might still find me after what I'm about to admit — I don't hate Barney.

Let me explain. I have two nieces who are in love with the huge purple dinosaur, and it makes me sick to watch his stupid tapes. I know my nieces are addicted to the goofy mass of sickening goodness, and for a long time I wanted Barney dead. Many others share that sentiment.

But I've had a change of heart. I wasn't overcome by the warmth and love that is so present in the myriad of Barney videotapes. I still leave the room and bang my head into something permanent every time the "I Love You" song starts. But I've realized that I don't hate him ... he just isn't for me.

Hate is a word I reserve for Adolf Hitler, the IRS and guys who imitate Beavis and Butt-head. But what does Barney do that is so offensive? When my niece walks up to me singing the "I Love You" song and Barney is nowhere in sight, I realize he isn't so bad.

It is one thing to be irritated by something,



MICHAEL LANDAUER
Columnist

but why not take Barney for who he is and not get so vehement about our dislike for him? Older kids who have jumped on the "I hate Barney" bandwagon have attacked people dressed up as the popular purple dinosaur. We should try to put up with Barney so that kids will listen to what he teaches them and take him seriously. We can learn to accept Barney, and I have proof.

One Saturday at about 3 a.m., some friends and I took turns wearing a Barney suit while walking around campus posing with statues. (Please, keep your doubts about my sanity to yourself.) A few people threatened to jump Barney, but most people we saw came up to us singing the "I Love You" song and asking to take their pictures with us. Without questioning the sobriety of these people, I think their reaction shows that people are willing to accept Barney.

Growing up, we had "Sesame Street" and "Romper-Room," and now the kids have Barney. We can't expect them to realize how cheesy the show is, and we certainly don't want them growing up with Bart Simpson as their role model, so let's just accept Barney. We don't have to like him. After all, how many of our parents really liked Mr. Rogers and thought he was cool?

Barney isn't the bad guy anyway. It's those kids whose facial expressions are more animated than Disney could make them. Those kids are just like the ones we all remember watching get beat up a lot on the playground.

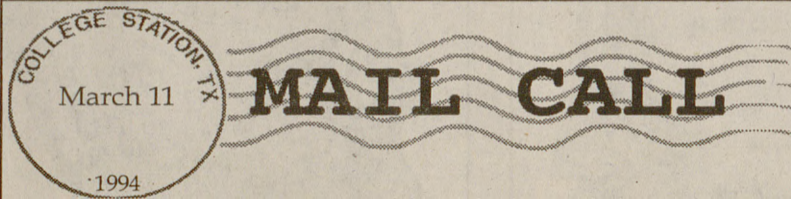
Barney would probably be a cool guy if he wasn't surrounded by the leftover child actors on sugar highs. In fact he would be around forever and appeal to children of all ages if he could get rid of the kids. One of them will probably publish a book someday accusing Barney of sexual abuse and saying that he forced them to overdose on caffeine before each show.

But there are ways to cope with the agony of watching a Barney show with a child without showing any negative signs. If you ever find yourself in this unfortunate situation, you should: 1) Close your eyes and imagine Macauley Culkin beating one of those kids with a blunt object. 2) Frequently sneak hard liquor shots — who knows, you might be singing along after a while. 3) Try to convince the child to turn Barney off, or at least distract them and turn it off when they aren't looking. 4) Leave the room. Most kids won't even stop gazing at the screen long enough to notice.

The point is there are ways to deal with our dislike of Barney without creating so much animosity. I should not be the one who has to hide for not hating him. If people want to think violent thoughts about the dinosaur, they should be the ones to keep quiet.

Don't be afraid to admit you don't hate Barney, and keep it quiet around kids if you do.

Michael Landauer is a freshman journalism major



Don't believe Holocaust revisionists

On March 4, The Battalion ran a classified ad placed by an organization called "Revisionist Network." The ad, which appeared under the "Services" heading, appeared to offer alternative viewpoints on history. This organization is dedicated to spreading the lie that the Holocaust, Adolf Hitler's slaughter of the Jewish people, did not occur.

So-called "revisionists" claim that while a few Jews may have died of disease in a few work camps, the widely-quoted figure of six million was a fantastic exaggeration by the American media. They claim that there were no death camps and no mass graves, that the gas chambers at Auschwitz were only used for disinfection and the ovens for disposing of diseased corpses, that no lamp shades were made of Jewish skin, and so on. They say that there is no proof that so many died.

These are absolute falsehoods, perpetuated by racist, anti-Semitic hate organizations. The unfortunate reality is that there were many concentration camps throughout Nazi territory and several camps designed purely for killing. Treblinka, for example, was nothing more than a train station with a series of poorly-ventilated rooms connected to exhaust pipes of BMW engines. The only survivors of Treblinka were the workers who carried the bodies out to the pits.

Proof of the Holocaust's existence lies not only in the gut-wrenching testimony of the survivors, but also in the Nazi's own records. Fully expecting to eliminate every Jew on the planet, the Nazis documented their systematic mass murder, so that they would one day be able to boast that they had succeeded in making the world "Jew-free."

The Holocaust happened, and anybody who would deny this has no basis in reality. Read "Night," by Elie Wiesel, for a moving account of the author's experiences in Buchenwald and Auschwitz. See "Schindler's List" or read the book by Thomas Keneally. Consult with Dr. Arnold Kramer of the Department of History, our local Holocaust scholar. Please, don't patronize the "Revisionist Network."

Seth Adelson
Graduate student

Clarifying issues in Hutchison trial

Who is continuing their campaign of disinformation? Jerome Lynn Hall's letter of March 3 shows that it is clearly not the College Republicans. The Battalion printed misinformation in their front page article on Feb. 15. Kay Bailey Hutchison's case was not dismissed because the judge ruled statements by the prosecution inadmissible (the legal technicality). When the judge refused to rule on the admissibility of evidence before the trial (but was willing to do so as the trial proceeded), the prosecution (Ronnie Earle) refused to proceed. He threw a temper tantrum with the jury already seated. The judge didn't rule anything inadmissible. He directed the jury to make their verdict based upon the refusal to proceed. With the prosecution supplying no evidence against her, Hutchison was found innocent. Because the trial was completed, she cannot be tried again on the same charges (not so in a dismissal). Also note that all charges against the other treasury employees were subsequently dropped.

Kudos to Judge Onion for his efforts to separate a jury trial from a media trial. Also, contrary to the quotes in the aforementioned Battalion article, Onion is not a Reagan judge. He has never been appointed to a federal court. As for his political affiliation, Onion is a long-time Democrat. So much for disinformation.

Dollie Criste
Class of '92
Vice-President for Public Relations, TAMU College Republicans

Fraternities not similar to gangs

I write this in response to William Harrison's attempt to portray fraternities as Los Angeles street gangs. When I first began reading his column, I found myself in agreement with what he had to say. I am a journalism student, and I agreed with the Battalion's decision to run the name of a fraternity in a recent story. I believe the fraternity name made the story newsworthy. Otherwise, it would have been a typical assault. Yes, we all know the story I am talking about now. I believe the incident was unfortunate, and I sympathize with the members of the fraternity because I am also a member of a different fraternity. But I still felt it had to be printed because it is news.

Then I kept on reading and starting growing angry at the comparisons and conclusions Harrison was drawing. He touched a nerve, but I always find myself laughing at people who stereotype and compare groups with very little to back it up.

I do not even understand how you can compare fraternities to the

street gangs of Los Angeles after two isolated incidents. He talks of patterns and does not give enough information to even begin to see patterns. I know he was writing an opinion, but if I was going to have my name placed in print, I would want more substance to my claim. I learned that in journalism class.

College students have been charged with assault, and they were not all fraternity members. Street gangs kill people. I hope you are beginning to see the pattern here.

Harrison manipulated a few words to stereotype a group of people. He was right to talk about fraternities accepting blame. But comparisons to gangs and primates are taking it too far. We are all Aggies.

In closing, I would just like to ask why a fraternity alumnus could compare fraternities to street gangs?

Shane Luther
Class of '94

Big Eight move good for Texas A&M

I'm writing in response to a letter about the traditions we're dumping to join the Big Eight. I believe in traditions, too, but times change. We've played Texas 100 times, and the SWC has only been around for about 80 years, so traditions have to start somewhere. We'll take our traditions with Baylor, Texas Tech and U.T. and gain new ones.

And on the other point, last year Kansas went to a bowl game, the Final Four and the College World Series. Who in college sports has done that recently? That football team won their bowl game, was invited at the beginning of this season to play the now national champion Florida State, and it took the national contender Nebraska down to the last play of the game before the Huskers won. The Big Eight is a competitive conference, even for the big Aggies. So don't overlook any team, Aggies, because future traditions may be there.

Brett Lehr
Class of '97

Cartoon poses threat to moral values

I am writing in response to the continuing threat to basic moral values that has materialized itself in the form of Bartholomew. This small mucus-based, alien life form has been a constant visual harassment as I scan The Battalion's pages day to day.

What form of citizen can remain unaffected as Bartholomew is molested by an obviously sexually-repressed youth by the name of Gertrude? Bartholomew responds by introducing a "pet" named Joystick! I honestly hope that the responsible students of Texas A&M do not subscribe to this form of perverse humor. Kalvin, the artist, should in any case seek guidance. It is obvious that all of the artist's desires have manifested themselves in this twisted display of gross, misguided humor. Besides, it's really not that funny.

Zachary Lara
Class of '97

Accompanied by 10 signatures

Rude raggie harasses fellow student

If you have ever attended an Aggie Baseball game, I'm sure you will agree that you have never left Olsen Field disappointed in the talent of our team. However, I came away from the Pan-American double header extremely disappointed — disappointed in one of the fans, that is.

I'm sure everyone has, at one time or another, been amused by the comical antics of the "Raggies." The Raggies are the group of guys and gals that sit in the first few rows above the visitor's dug-out and poke fun at the other team while raising spirit for the Aggies. Well, I was anything but amused when one very supportive Aggie a little higher in the stands tried to join in on the fun and was met with the rudest comments from one of the Raggies.

The innocent fan was jokingly yelling "One twinkie, two twinkies ..." as Pan-Am's portly pitcher took his warm up swings at the plate. The Raggie turned and yelled, "Hey, good one! We did that one yesterday. Where were you?"

I just have three words for this rude individual — BAD BULL, AG! The object is to break the batter's concentration, rattle the pitcher and shake up the other team, not your own fans! Like you, this individual had come out to join in the fun of supporting Aggie Baseball. Let's keep in mind that camaraderie is one of the many cherished traditions here at Texas A&M and that when we attend athletic events, we are all members of the 12th Man, coming together to support our team. So, as the old saying goes, "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all."

Lezlie Hello
Class of '93

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 clarity.

Contact the opinion editor for information on submitting guest columns. Address letters to: The Battalion - Mail Call, 113 Reed McDonald Hall, stop 1111, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843. Fax: (409) 845-2647.