

Students need time to learn true wisdom, not useless facts

Have you ever noticed how some object can jolt one's subconscious? Such a shock hit me while I was taking a study break and I picked up my trusty copy of "The Official Boy Scout Handbook."

JOSEF ELCHANAN
Columnist



anything in our 20-year-plus lives. Alexander the Great had conquered the known world by the time he was our age. We have all this desire and drive, and we waste so

sense. Learning how to do things must be more important than learning the reasons and meanings of old events. And none of us get enough time to build ourselves into people that have anything but regurgitated information. An important note is a definition of experience. Experience is not hanging-out at South Padre drinking beer or going on cruises or any other bought-in-a-candy-wrapper vacation. Experience is one of those things you work for. Hiking through dense forests, sailing ocean waters on a small boat,

seen our own face, and be able to say, "I know who that person is?" How can any of us identify with our mates or our children if we cannot know ourselves? Is it enough to have drive, without direction, without true purpose? Through hard exercise of the spirit, we can learn our limitations. Through real-life mistakes, each of us may be able to change now, while we are flexible, instead of when we are too old for it to make a difference. I would love to never be trapped in an office, but see and experience things that will make me grow and mature. Things that will make me wiser.

I flipped through it, entranced by Norman Rockwell's pictures of young men adventuring in the grand North American woods. I never was much of a Boy Scout, but I felt like I was there, hiking along with them or grabbing a canoe and fishing from an ancient lake. Moreover, I found myself wishing I was there. In fact, every time I see anything in magazines or television that shows people accomplishing ordinary feats in some foreign or exotic place, I stare in awe. I have been in school since I was six, like most people. Each year, all of us are encouraged by teachers to make the grade, to produce, so that we all may have stunning futures. As soon as we get out of school, we have wonderful choices ahead, to either get a job or go back to school. How exciting! The more I think about this subject, the more it bothers me. I don't want to spend my whole life dug into the pit of preparing for a life that will not be lived, time slowly ticking away. How few of us have actually accomplished

much of our time in classrooms, memorizing names and formulas for esoteric theories developed by other people - whom we are supposed to respect because they spent their lives out experiencing the real world! These people created an original relationship with nature, with humanity, with the ebb and flow of time; and we study them in a stale environment. After all, Charles Darwin did not sit in a classroom to figure-out evolution and Whitman did not write poetry in study hall. Most importantly, why are we allowed no time for realization or self-discovery? The University can continue to push information down our throats at an increasing rate, but what good will this information be to us if we have nothing left to respond to it, no human skills? I have had very few classes that ever placed enough value on experience, wisdom, or common

Hiking through dense forests, sailing ocean waters on a small boat, fly fishing in Alaska - Why shouldn't these be included in the educational experience?

fly fishing in Alaska. These activities may not earn us merit badges anymore, but they are no less important. Why shouldn't these be included in the educational experience? Don't these self-actualizing activities have as much or more weight than any class we take to graduate? How many of us will get married, have kids, and get old without ever having looked in a clear spring,

ourselves must become as important as exploring chemistry, math, English and the like. A complete education can be relied upon, a classroom "education" is a fallacy, as well as a misnomer. *Josef Elchanan is a senior business management major*

Endless hike ends with car crisis

Personal experience proves Aggies really do help Aggies on highways

ERIN HILL
Columnist



Last spring as everything began to bloom and finals loomed ominously in the not too distant future, the opinion page staff decided to go on a camping trip to Huntsville State Park one Friday. After an enjoyable evening of storytelling around a campfire, we awoke to lovely weather. Nature beckoned. And so we took a group walk down the road that passed our campsite. After successful completion of that 100-yard trail, we decided to end the camping spree with a real nature walk. The lake around which the trail would look small. We could see the other side - it couldn't be too bad, right?

one thing: car trouble. We pulled off the highway and examined the steadily growing pool of liquid under the engine. What, we wondered, were we supposed to do? It beat us. We just stood there, opening and closing the hood in hopes that the fanning action would trigger long lost memories of basic car repair skills. But no such memories came back to us since they were never there in the first place. Thankfully, I discovered that the Indian Paintbrush found plentifully in every nearby field was edible (event tasty if you're into that flora kind of thing).

But inadvertently we took the path that circled around the Great Lakes, instead of the two-mile, "jaunt around the pond" trail. For 12 miles we kept looking around each bend in the road for our tents and for twelve miles we saw nothing but more bends in the path. No one had food, water or bug spray ... or the cardiovascular fitness needed to hike 12 miles in the middle of a humid Texas afternoon. By the time we completed the trail and checked out of the campsite we were beyond tired. We were also beyond rumped and dirty. The whole lot of us on a poster with the caption "Save America's Future - Take care of a pitiful college student" would have brought in untold fortunes to A&M's scholarship fund.

Just as I was trying to weave a basket in which to store our food supply, a truck pulled over. The driver asked if he could help and offered the use of his cellular phone. The man who had been driving our car walked over to the truck to place a call while I, waited behind the car with another woman. Then came the real kicker. Out of nowhere came a Honda with an A&M sticker in the back window. This Aggie stopped because, as she told us, she was concerned when she saw the two of us standing by ourselves and wanted to make sure we were safe. She had nothing to fear, since the man who stopped was a well-intentioned camper returning to College Station - he ended up taking us back to town. But, it was incredibly thoughtful that she stopped to make sure we were in good hands. With a smile, she drove away into the sunset. As we watched her go, we laughed. Laughed because of the irony of these two kind souls stopping to help us: the man in the truck and the Aggie.

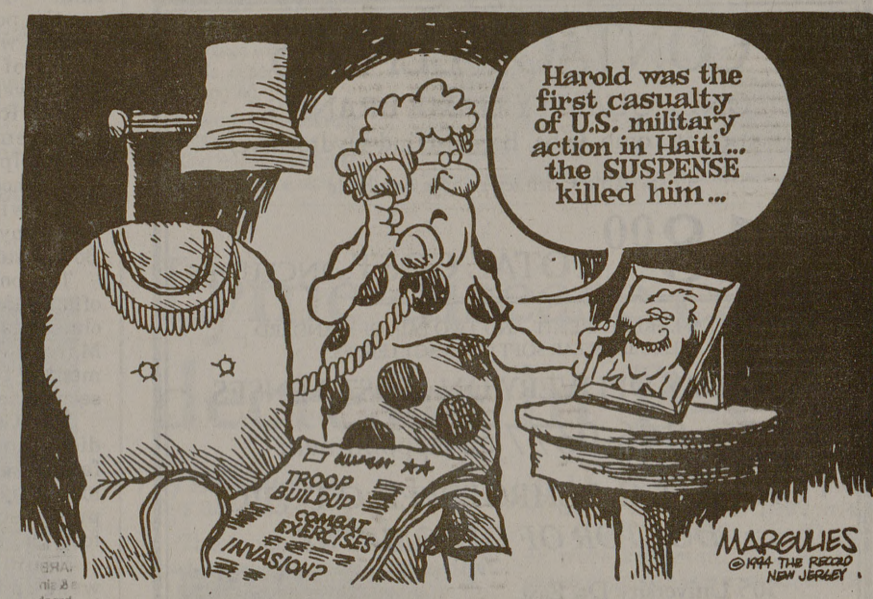
It was in this disheveled and fatigued state that we headed back to College Station. Not surprisingly, our well-planned caravan of cars fell apart after only a few miles. The lead cars sped ahead and didn't notice the driver of the car I rode in. Hard to believe since he was honking, flashing his lights and swerving across the road. Believe me, other people noticed ... and accelerated away from us as quickly as they could. After all, a swerving, honking and flashing car with smoke billowing out from under the hood means only

man in the truck and the Aggie. You see - and I admit this somewhat hesitantly - I thought The Battalion was receiving an excessive amount of "Aggies helping Aggies on the highway" letters to Mail Call. I may have snickered once or twice at the improbability of so many people being helped and some people may have heard me making comments like, "Where do these letters come from, anyway?" What's the likelihood that an Aggie will be on the same stretch of road when one's car breaks down? I don't know, but it didn't seem promising.

We inadvertently took the path that circled around the Great Lakes, instead of the two-mile, "jaunt around the pond" trail. No one had food, water or bug spray.

Well, promising or no, I learned my lesson. And now I promise that I will never again chuckle when someone writes in with a heartwarming story about kindness on the highways of Texas. I've been there and seen it.

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EDITORIAL

CHOICE CHANCELLOR

Thompson capable of meeting challenges

Dr. Barry Thompson, newly named chancellor of the Texas A&M University System, fulfills the System's need for a strong, experienced leader in that position. Thompson has been lauded by the Board of Regents as an individual with an exemplary track record. He has spent many years in both public schools and university education as a teacher, scholar and administrator. In addition to his honors in these positions, Thompson has displayed energetic commitment to community and professional organizations. Dr. Thompson also boasts a history of close, personal ties with his students and is reportedly ready to hit the ground running and working hard. He earned the nickname "Dr. T" from some of those former students. His many accomplishments in only three years as president at West Texas A&M University include significant increases in enrollment, retention, grants and other development funding. Hopefully the System will benefit from his

direction to the same extent. Thompson already has made plans to polish the tarnished image from which our school is currently suffering. This "Operation Lone Star" will be designed to aid in changing the public's view of the System and particularly the University. Under Thompson's leadership, perhaps the recent setbacks, athletic, the state budget and the recent indictments among other pressing public relations sticklers. Despite this appearance of personal readiness, Thompson will face many challenges after he takes the helm on August 1. First and foremost among these responsibilities will be the preservation and extension of the System schools' academic reputations and financing. Dr. Thompson deserves a warm welcome to this campus and best wishes for the best of luck running the System. Hopefully, the decision to choose Dr. Thompson as head of the administration will prove as productive and impressive as his previous record indicates it will be.



MAIL CALL

Abstinence remains preferable to abortion

I am writing in response to the July editorial about the inaccessibility of abortion facilities. It is not the community's responsibility to provide a place where mothers, who are irre-

sponsible, can go and have their babies killed. It saddens me to think that no one would have said anything if the student who was indicted for manslaughter would have gone and had an abortion. It is the same thing, it's still murder. People think just because the baby is inside the mother's womb that it's not a person, and that makes it right to kill. It is terrible to think in some hospitals on one floor they are fighting to save premature babies and on another they are killing them. There are so many people who are not able to have children and would give almost anything to be able to adopt a baby. I think it is the community's responsibility to teach their children

that abstinence till marriage is the only way to prevent unwanted pregnancy and the spread of disease. I can only hope that our community and its doctors will continue to have a conservative attitude about this matter.

*Stacie Blake
Texas A&M Staff*

Nobody 'knows' right, wrong of homosexuality

While reading Buzz Refugio's letter on July 18, I was pleased to see an articulate response to Susie Carter's July 13 letter, and I felt he made sev-

eral good points. I, too, felt that Carter's letter heavily implied that AIDS and sodomy are exclusive to the homosexual community, and indeed any article on AIDS will show that they are not. I was disappointed, however, when I came across Refugio's closing paragraph which began, "As a Catholic, I know that homosexuality is wrong ..." because his next sentence reads, "... as humans, we are not and never will be the final judge and jury." His use of the word "know" indicated that it is fact that homosexuality is wrong, when really it is Refugio's own personal belief. If we as people cannot judge others, then perhaps he would have made a better point by saying that he "thinks" or "believes" this way

about homosexuality. No person can ever declare that he or she "knows" that homosexuality is right or wrong, because one can only know facts which can be proven; despite the endless discussion concerning this matter, no one has yet to prove either case.

*Jennifer Wormuth
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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 for length, style, and accuracy. Address letters to: The Battalion - Mail Call 013 Reed McDonald Texas A&M University College Station, TX 77843-1111 Fax: (409) 845-2647