

# Why would you pick A&M?

## Anyone can fit in through involvement, individuality

It was another one of those balmy nights in my hometown of Baton Rouge, La. This was not just any night, however. It was the Saturday night that my cousin, some girlfriends and I had planned to visit the hottest place going - Club Strawberries. I am not usually a "club" person, but I had grown tired of two things: First, explaining to people why I had not yet been there - "Girl, are you sure you're black?" And second, my cousin Ursula's whining about being bored because she did not have a man. So, there I was, preparing myself for a night of movin' and groovin'.

After 63 miles, two wrong turns, and one dirt road later, I was good and angry. I silently cursed my ex-boyfriend (Ursula's, also), because if they had acted like the respectable men we thought they were, we would not even have been in this predicament, now would we? The minute we turned into the parking lot, though, all curses were forgotten as I noticed sleek, sexy brothers spilling out of the club everywhere. I sighed contentedly.

Once in Strawberries, I drank the whole scene in - everyone was jumping rhythmically to the hypnotic, pulsating beat of New Orleans rap. I found myself tapping my clog-encased feet and assuming that slightly bored, clubby look.

"Hey, baby, lookin' good! What about those digits?" I gazed into a face, and he showed off what seemed like 40 gold-capped teeth in a broad grin. Then, I shot a withering look at my cousin, who was fighting laughter a tad unsuccessfully. I had a feeling it was going to be a long night.

Many dances and cups of chilled water later, I was engaged in a pleasant conversation with another guy. Upon learning I went to Texas A&M,

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Columnist

he responded, "Oh! It must be a lot of fun to go to a predominantly black university!" I heard muffled laughter coming from Ursula again. I smoothly informed the brother (by now I had learned that his name was Bruce, and he was a football player at USL) that he must have Texas A&M confused with Texas Southern. This happened all the time, I assured him.

"Oh, yeah!" he cried, snapping his fingers. "You go to that school with all those white people!"

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Yes, that school. "Over 40,000," I responded, knowing what was coming next.

"So, what do you do there? How do you cope there?" he inquired. When I told him that I write for our paper, this little tidbit made his handsome face light up. He wanted to know what I would write about, whether I would start riots, whether I would start war. He wanted to know if my column would be geared toward the majority, or if it would be a little slice of solace for people of color.

I am home now, recovering from the throbbing music and upbeat swing of Strawberries. There are some things about the night that I would rather forget, but one thing I can't get off my mind are all those probing questions that Bruce was asking me about this column.

I will tell you what I told him in response to his queries: that I am an African-American female, and this is all I want to be and know how to be. That is the perspective from which my words and messages will flow. I told him that I am not here to stir up destructive winds of hate and accusations, but rather the winds of positive transformation. That I feel the personal self-conviction to write what is true. Because if it's not true, it's not real. And if it's not real, it's not right. And if it's not right, it's not for me, because I want to deal with what is right in a world where the line between right and wrong keeps blurring.

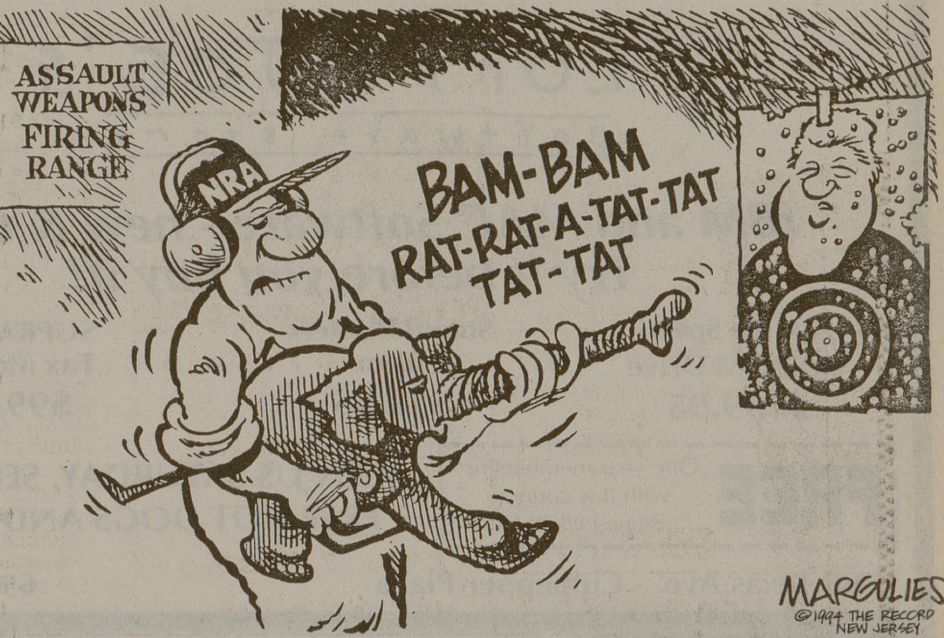
So, this is what I told him, and it's what I am telling you. You might come under lots of heat for attending this university, and you might be told that you should not be up here with all these white folks.

I beg you to get involved in a melange of activities and clubs, including ones that will expose you to people who may not think, act, dress, or even dance as you do.

By shunning prejudice and ignorance while simultaneously embracing your cultural identity, you will find that Texas A&M can be a very educationally stimulating place.

Groove on!

Aja D. Henderson is a sophomore finance major



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## EDITORIAL

# PUT A BITE ON CRIME

### Americans should support Clinton proposal

Something has been done about crime in the United States, and it's time for Congress to realize it. The Federal Crime Bill proposed by President Clinton may not be perfect in all respects, but at least it is an attempt. Perhaps it will not solve all the crime problems, but in may curb some of the violence.

It is evident that crime in America's streets and neighborhoods has reached a dramatic peak within the last few years. More and more headlines in form of murders, rapes and robberies. Isn't it about time something be done about it before more innocent people get hurt?

The Federal Crime Bill drawn up by President Clinton not only calls for an assault weapons ban, but it also calls for limiting early releases, expanding the death penalty, building more prisons, enhancing police efforts, putting repeat offenders in prison for life and curbing the violence against women.

It definitely has its legitimate points, and it's time for the name

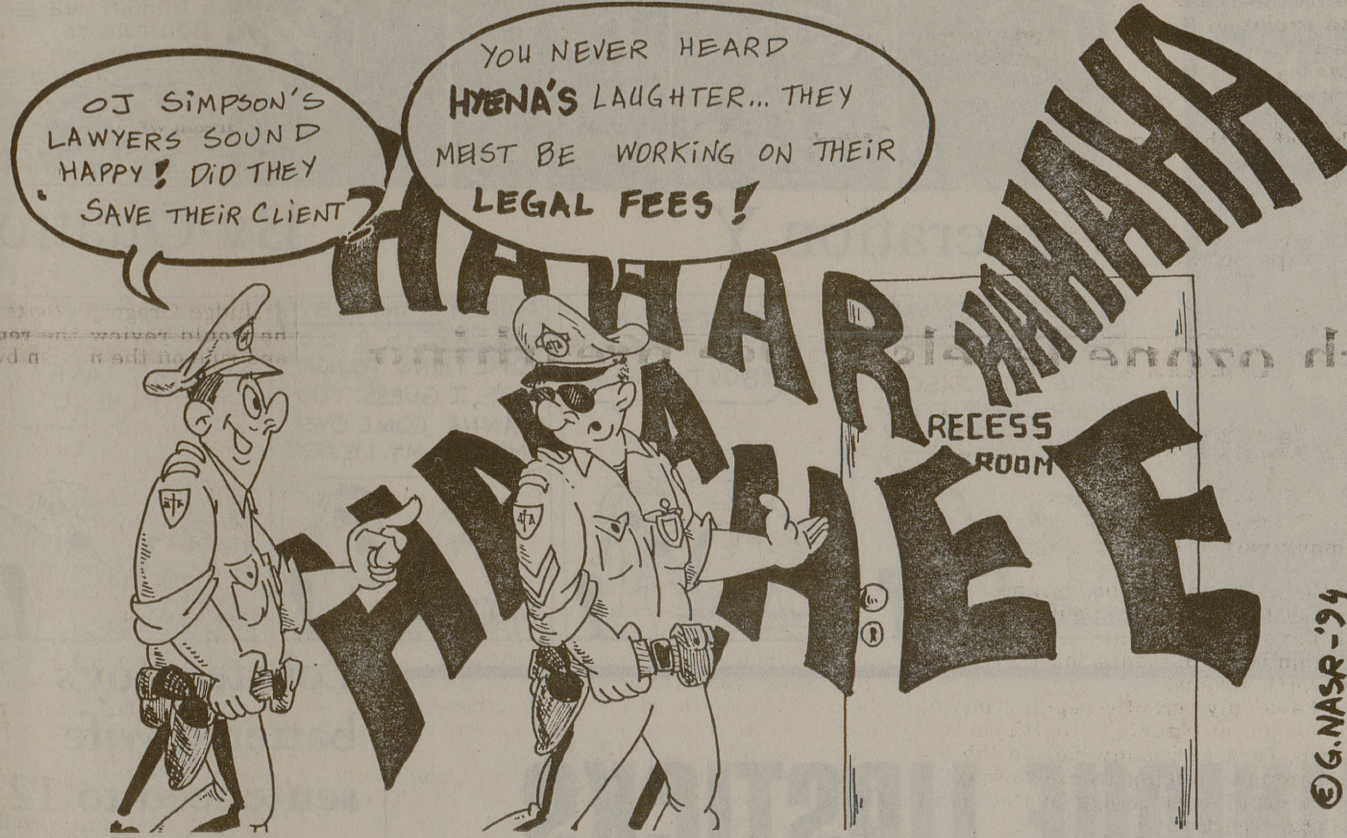
calling and delaying to stop. It's time to give this bill a chance.

Some political opponents argue that aspects of the crime bill are nothing but "pork" and are simply adding to the money spent on social programs. But this so-called "pork" might be the answer to saving at least a fraction of the nation's streets.

Programs such as midnight basketball leagues may help promote safer neighborhoods. Taking at-risk youths off the streets and encouraging them to participate in such programs may prevent them from committing crimes. It may cost money to support these programs, but they may also help to save lives.

The Federal Crime Bill may not be the solution to all of the violence in the nation's streets, but the President and his committees have taken a stab at it, and something has been done.

Even if it prevents one less woman from being beaten or helps to build one more prison, it would be making a difference.



# P.I. laws can allow punishment of 'responsible' drunks

The Public Intoxication Law gives police an excuse to arrest someone who is intoxicated and causing trouble, but not actually breaking any other law.

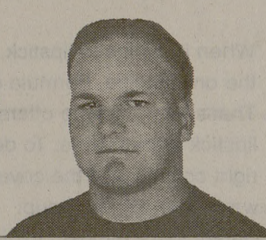
Without the law things could be ugly. "Officer, can't you arrest this guy? He's sleeping on the hood of my car, and he has thrown up twice."

"Well, there's no law denying him that right. But may I suggest you buy some Posh Wash?" Of course our police would never say this. Their motto is the other extreme: "To protect, serve and hassle college drinkers." Where would we be without the valiant officers arresting people from the backseat of cars or even from their own dorm rooms? These things have happened.

The worst part about the crusade against drunks is when the police arrest people for walking home. My friend was arrested this way. He was avoiding driving drunk at the time.

He was angry and sober enough to ask questions. He asked what he could have done to avoid the punishment. After running through several scenarios, the officer told my friend to get better friends. I guess the logic here is that if you have sober friends with you, they might be able to persuade a cop not to arrest you.

MICHAEL LANDAUER  
Columnist



without being arrested every time we screw up. The police have a tough job to do, but they can't protect and serve using a vague law to moralize. They should reserve the law for those who really deserve it. Or just be consistent - give out tickets to smokers with a nasty cough.

That could never happen because a smoker's hack doesn't create a public disturbance. But then again, neither does riding in the back of a friend's car or walking home.

When I was in high school, U2 was coming to town for the first time in four years. They were cool then, and I could not wait to see them.

In my excitement on the day of the concert, I accidentally drank over half of a bottle of cheap whiskey. I remember buying a t-shirt, and that's about it. Until my mom woke me up and made me go to school.

Sometimes our officers lose sight of the spirit of the law. We know that it is wrong to get drunk. We also know it's wrong to speed. We're big kids now, and we can be taught lessons

I was told that I had fallen down five rows of seats, thrown up, been carried out by police, passed out on the sidewalk, been spared a public intoxication citation and finally taken home. All this happened before the opening band had finished its set.

I deserved a PI, but my punishment was much worse. That day at school was the longest day of my life. People would come up to me and say, "Remember when you saw me last night, and..." I

**The worst part of the crusade against drunks is police arresting people for walking home. Can't they protect and serve without such**

would just smile and nod. Then say, "No."

When I got home, my mother asked me if I still had a hangover. She got her answer when I fell onto the couch where I remained for the rest of the day. I heard her walk away and say, "Good. You deserve it."

Whenever I have a hangover I still hear my mother's words. What she lacks in sympathy, my

mother makes up for in well-timed guilt-trips. It's a special talent.

Not every drunk should be left to answer to nature's law alone. But when people become victims of the witch-hunt that targets drunkards in this town, they might be so mad at the system that they never blame themselves.

At Muster this year, think back at how the tradition started. Aggies used to play the part of Santa Anna's army every year on San Jacinto day to restage the battle. One year they took a few kegs on the train to San Jacinto, and by the time they got to the battlefield they weren't in the mood to lose the battle. Sam Houston lost that particular battle, and we weren't invited back the next year. But we have kept ourselves busy with Muster on April 21 every year since. That is what we call Good Bull.

Today, Sam Houston would have won the battle by default with a bunch of drunk Aggies sitting in jail with P.I.'s. That's what we would call Bad Bull.

It's a shame the Good Bull-Bad Bull doctrine will never apply to our police. Oh, but if your a Minor In Possession, just try to convince the cops that it's just ice and cups.

Michael Landauer is a sophomore journalism major



### School improvements deserve recognition

As the State Board of Education Representative for District Nine, it has been my privilege to visit all of the 33 counties which I represent and most of the 175 school districts during the last

two years. I have observed first hand the hard work and determination of the teachers, staff members and administrators in their efforts to improve the performance of their schools and meet the needs of the children. Many times, I have seen teachers coming in early, staying late and working through their off-periods to help the students raise their test scores. I have observed teachers and administrators collaborating to redesign methods to enhance the effectiveness of their schools. In short, I have seen committed people going the extra mile to improve education.

Therefore, I was not surprised when the new, higher accountability ratings were recently released. No matter what formula was used, I expected

them to reflect the efforts of those involved and to show significant improvement, which they did.

Despite the political posturing and rhetoric which often tend to distort the facts, ACT, SAT, and TAAS test scores in this state have shown consistent improvement over the past several years. The drop-out rate has decreased by over 47 percent since 1987, and although achievement levels and expectations have been raised five times over the last seven years, our kids continue to measure up. It is time for us to recognize those responsible for this turnaround: our teachers, administrators, staff members, students and their parents.

I am not completely satisfied. We still have a long way to go. But I, for

one, applaud the schools of District Nine.

Patsy Johnson  
State Board of Education

### College Republicans sell unpatriotic images

I believe, College Republicans, that true Aggies and any other patriotic Americans would never show the total lack of respect for the President of the United States and the United States of America by attempting to sell such items at any time. I believe that Chad Walter, as president of the College Republicans, should apologize to Texas

A&M University and all Aggies, especially those who have sacrificed their lives by serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, for the unflattering and unpatriotic image of Texas A&M University that the items his organization is attempting to sell portray.

Matt M. Murphy  
Class of '96

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