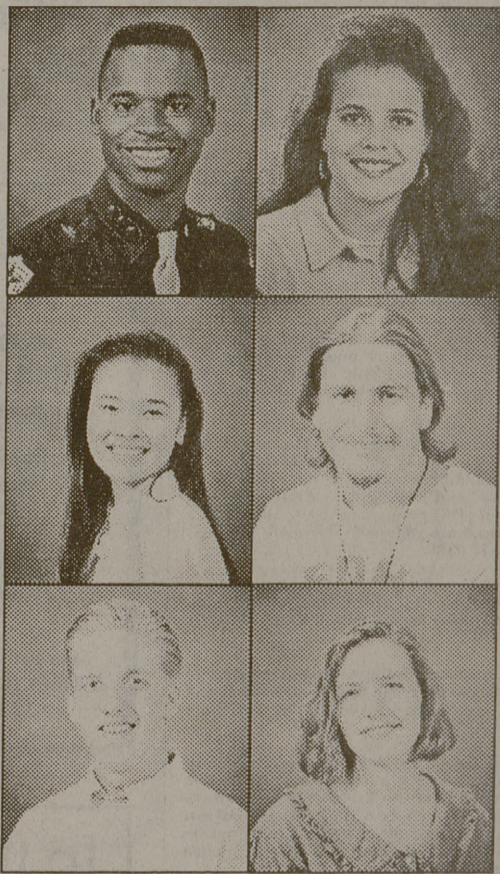


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## MAIL CALL

### Americans, media misunderstand Anglo-Irish affairs

The cease fire declared by the Provisional Irish Republican Army last Wednesday has once again caused a great deal of interest in Irish affairs.

Indeed, even a Battalion columnist thought himself enlightened enough to write an article referring to the IRA. Unfortunately, he shares in the general ignorance and misconceptions we have been fed by the British government. Now we are being exposed to a whole slough of new names and nomenclature. However, behind these thinly veiled definitions are facts that have been tangled by British-censored press.

Take for instance Sinn Fein, which in Gaelic means "We Ourselves". Though often tagged as the "political wing" of the IRA, Sinn Fein is actually much older than the Provisional IRA. Though the British government officially recognizes Sinn Fein as a political party, it refuses to negotiate with the party or allow its president, Gerry Adams, to travel to mainland Britain.

The British government even bans the voice of any Sinn Fein party members from being broadcast over British airwaves, effectively limiting the political debate to one side.

Following coverage of the events in Northern Ireland, one discovers a certain dichotomy in nomenclature.

On one side there is the IRA, which is a ruthless army of Catholic "terrorists," and on the other side we have "Protestant extremists."

Think about this for a second. Which sounds more despicable: terrorist or extremist? The fact is that there are several loyalist terrorist groups in Northern Ireland, including the Ulster Volunteer Force (the front group of the Ulster Defense Association, which was only recently declared an illegal paramilitary organization) and the Ulster Freedom Fighters.

In the last five years, these "extremists" have killed twice as many people as the IRA, and in almost every case, these have been Catholic civilians, victims of reprisals for IRA attacks on police or military targets. A recently leaked Protestant "Doomsday Plan," calling for the elimination of all Catholics in four of the six counties of Northern Ireland should unification be achieved, shows how far these loyalist groups are willing to go.

What the press also fails to tell you is that not only has it been proven that the British military provides loyalist groups with weapons, but that these death squads are actually legally functioning organizations on the

British mainland. They can openly and vigorously solicit funds, hold meetings and recruit members. In the last week these groups have injured or killed three innocent Catholics and bombed the Sinn Fein's Belfast office in an attempt to derail the cease fire.

From the Stocker Affair to British "shoot-to-kill" death squads that have committed extrajurisdictional assassinations, the British government has consistently pursued a hard line against Irish nationalism.

Indeed, the IRA has good reason not to trust the British. After the cease fire of 1975 failed in the face of British obstinacy, crown forces swept through Catholic neighborhoods picking up suspects targeted by British intelligence. While the IRA was obeying the cease fire, the British security forces were busily preparing for an end to the cease fire.

British persecution is not limited to military affairs. As a suspected Irish terrorist, you can be held for up to 7 days without seeing a lawyer, during which time you are stripped, beaten and humiliated in order to extract a confession.

By exercising the right to silence, you are presumed guilty.

Further, you do not have the right to a trial by jury and must face a legal system overwhelmingly staffed by Protestants.

The fact that the IRA is willing to call a cease fire does bring hope. Who deserves credit for convincing Irish republicans that there is a future in peace? First and foremost the Irish-American community, which has been ever vigilant in its watch over Northern Irish affairs.

Indeed, just after a delegation of five Irish-American political and business leaders, headed by former Congressman Bruce Morrison, returned from negotiations with Sinn Fein and the IRA, the cease fire was announced.

The overwhelming amount of credit for this particular cease fire goes to our president. During his election campaign, he promised to take action by appointing a special envoy to investigate the situation.

Recently, in the face of fierce British opposition, Bill Clinton allowed Sinn Fein, President Gerry Adams and several other Irish nationalists into the country. And now Clinton has committed himself to taking an active role in this peace process, a role that America must take if there is to be a solution. We can unequivocally say that President Clinton has made successful headway where Presidents Reagan and Bush utterly and completely failed.

If our two past Republican presidents could have stood up to the British like Clinton has, who knows where this peace process would be right now.

Sean O'Donnell  
Class of '95

### Society should pay attention to real world problems

What a sorry state our country is in! Instead of working to help the people and improve the nation our leaders are too busy bickering and worrying about re-election.

O.J. Simpson dominates headlines while the massacres in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia are relegated to secondary status. Violence and sex are glamorized on TV and it is not even safe to walk down the street.

People are starving and homeless, beaten and battered, while we turn our backs. What happened to moral responsibility, values and compassion?

How can people play God and decide which life is worthy to be lived and which is not? What is it with all the apathy? Children are murdered in the streets by children.

Scandal and gridlock are the norm in Washington. What are we to do?

If this is the best country in the world, which I believe it is, then what is happening? Stop "not caring" and start to do something.

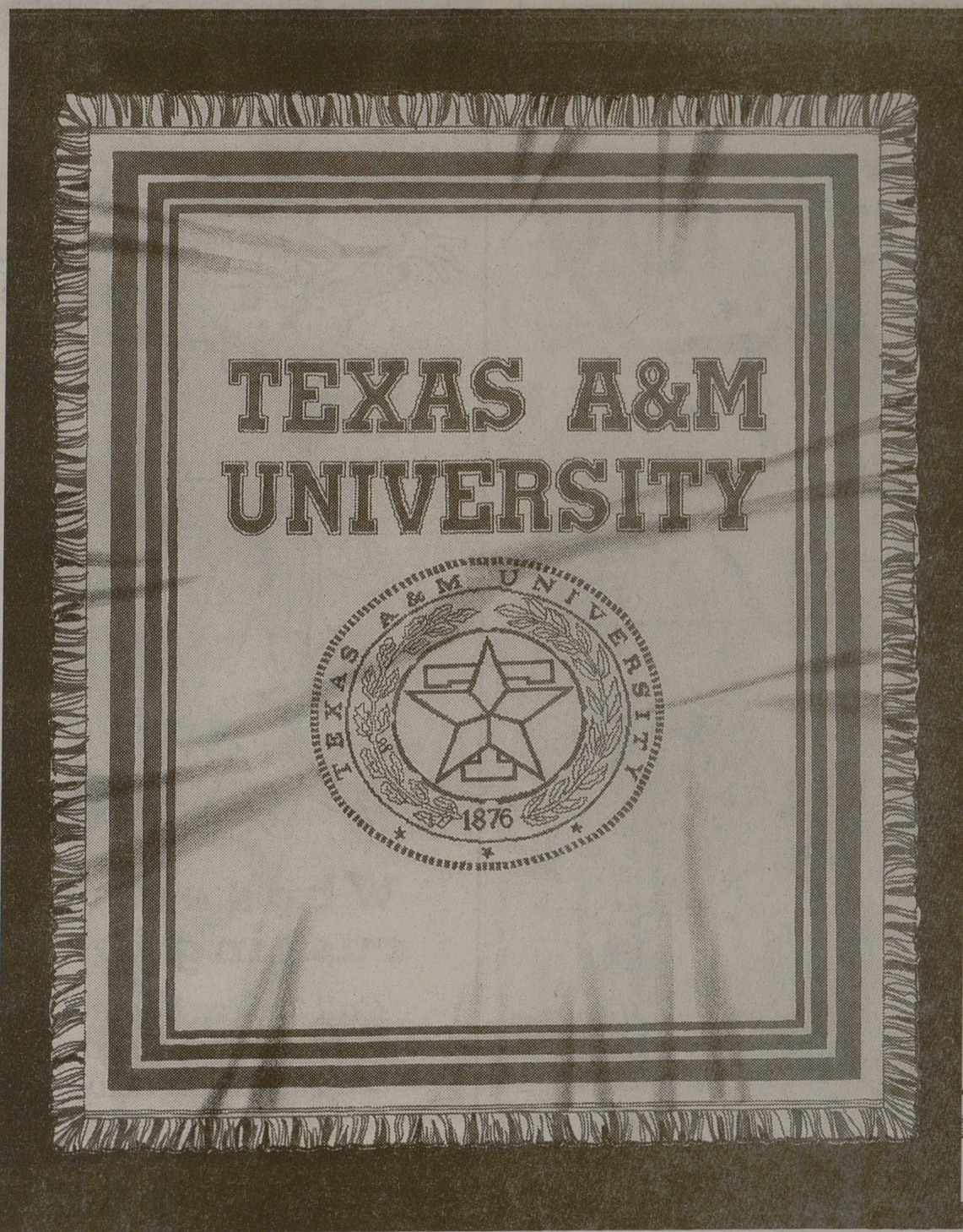
Voice your opinion, vote, write your elected representative, get involved in government and pray for help because God knows, we need it!

... Class is over - have a good day.

Marcel LeJeune  
Class of '95

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