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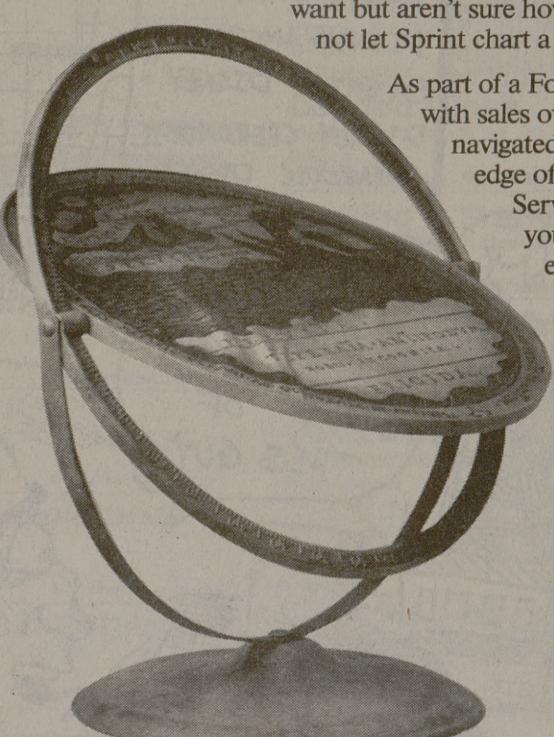
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500 years ago, doing business globally was a simple thing. All you had to do was navigate uncharted waters, watch out for sea dragons and hope to not sail off the end of the earth.

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Hate mail airs public opinion of other views

Aggies should be grateful they're not all alike

As do all the columnists, I receive what we at The Battalion affectionately call "hate mail."

Oftentimes people write in and tell us just how wrong we are, or how lousy our writing is.

Hopefully, those individuals will include their viewpoint as well.

These letters are good for several reasons. Hate mail proves that our newspaper is read.

It also shows that The Battalion's readership not only cares about most of our issues, but even cares enough to share its stance on these issues with us. This feedback gives us a better idea of how most, or many of you feel about things.

Usually we are not shocked, but I can assure you every opinion sent in is read and digested, particularly if it is regarding a certain column, columnist or cartoon.

Hate mail is like getting constructive criticism from a professor, except sometimes the letters aren't so constructive. Nonetheless, the opinion editor tries to include a balanced mix of opinions in each day's Mail Call. Some of them are real doozies and certainly enhance the readers' interest.

Since I now have written more than 50 columns for The Battalion, I have received my share of hate mail — as well as "love letters" (fan mail) — from interested students and faculty. As is the nature of hate mail, anger in the letters ranges from emphatically questioning an opinion to wanting me fired.

From these reactions, I'm able to get an idea of how many Aggies think. Just as my thoughts are questioned, I question what seems to be the dominant channel of thought in Aggieland. I have taken this to be my job, and it is a large portion of what I write about.

We have even received letters from students' mothers. These particular types of letters kind of get to me for several reasons. They often claim opinions in a student newspaper ought to reflect the majority of students' viewpoints. Although I must admit I've never minded offending anyone with my opinion — nor should any of us — offending someone's mother is ... well ... uncool or something.

However, sometimes I force myself to think of mothers as people too, and that they should be subject to the same scrutiny as anyone else. Aside from this internal conflict, I was rather pleased that some columns actually made it out of Aggieland and are read by parental units.

More importantly, I'm bothered that anyone would be upset at commentary which didn't necessarily jive with the way most people think around here.

This leads me to second-guess the whole rea-

FRANK STANFORD
Columnist



son a person might want to go to A&M, or college in general. So, why are we here? Well, we're here for many reasons.

We're here because our parents made us or because our friends came here. We're here to be in the Corps and get a military contract, or for the camaraderie and leadership it offers. We registered because I am Class of '62 and everyone else in our family went to A&M.

We enrolled because the engineering, agriculture and veterinary departments are world famous.

We came because we got a good academic or athletic scholarship at a school with winning results in both arenas. We came to get a job eventually. We stayed to enjoy the traditions and the friendliness. We're here because we like it.

But for all of these reasons — and the many others I'm unable to include — we came to learn. And we didn't just arrive in College Station to learn how to drink beer, pass Differential Equations or march in precision.

Even though degree plans, financial and time restraints prevent us from being exposed to everything we have at our fingertips in a college setting, we owe it to ourselves to learn everything we can.

To graduate from the third-largest universi-

ty in the country and say, "I went to a school where everyone thinks just like I do" is not only a sad statement, reeking of ignorance, but laughable among educated people across the country and particularly the world.

Relish the fact that Aggies aren't all white, middle class, Americans, engineers, Christians conservatives, left-brained, militaristic, Southerners or short-haired. We're not. If we were all the same it would really be snoresville around here. It's these interesting differences that provide exposure to stuff we don't already know.

Although it may be difficult, try to experience as many cultures, outlooks and life philosophies as possible, as long as they aren't your own.

When you are exposed to something new or different, you learn.

And that's why we're here.

Frank Stanford is a philosophy graduate student

ATTENTION ORIENTATION LEADERS

F.A.C.T Training will take place on October 3 or October 6. Remember that all O.L.s are required to participate in four (4) hours of F.A.C.T calling to welcome new students to Texas A&M.

Training will take place:

October 3 @ 8:30 in 110 of the Koldus Building

Or

October 6 @ 8:30 in 111 of the Koldus Building

Call the O.L. annex at 862-2746 if you need more information or have any questions. SEE YOU THERE!!!