

Walking a mile in their shoes wears on your soul

Wearing 'gay' T-shirt on campus draws criticism, compliments

As a freshman, I remember seeing a man in Bernie's with a T-shirt that said "Everybody thinks I'm straight."

ELIZABETH PRESTON Columnist

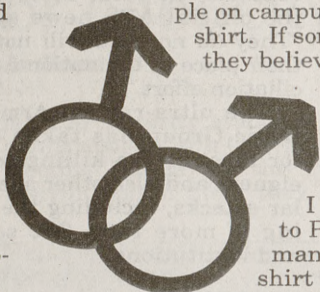


think of new ways to publicly demonstrate my receptiveness to the A&M homosexual community.

The night before I wore the shirt I spoke with several friends to gauge their reactions. Three thought that I was coming out of the closet.

that impression. I was only a few hours into this experiment and already feeling uncomfortable.

I then began to worry that the homosexual people on campus might see me and trust my T-shirt. If someone came out to me because they believed I was homosexual and then discovered that it was an experiment, the betrayal would be deep and uncorrectable.



I walked to school early and went to Pie Are Square. A handsome man sitting at a table stared at my shirt openly and then pointed me out to his friends as I waited in line.

As I walked around campus all day, the reactions remained constant. In Hullabaloo people stared as they read my T-shirt, then quickly

looked away without making eye contact.

When I was walking with a friend in the afternoon, a young woman looked at me closely and then laughed out loud.

She touched my arm and said "Great T-shirt!" with a kind smile.

In my last class of the day, a man who always compliments my style glared as he read the shirt, rolled his eyes at me and then scoffed audibly as he turned his back.

The surprise reaction for the day came from the Quad. I stereotypically assumed that when I strolled around the Quad people would stare, point or otherwise show

scandal that they are overcompensating.

Whatever the reason, they were the nicest people I came across all day.

The reactions were nowhere near as hateful as I had imagined they would be. Speaking with friends this weekend, many pointed out that the reactions would have been significantly different had a man worn the shirt.

I also realize that throwing on a T-shirt and wearing it around campus all day does not come close to discovering how it feels to be homosexual in today's homophobic world.

Today is National Coming Out Day, and all around the country brave men and women are stepping out of the closet to join the ever growing homosexual population.

Having the guts to come out and face those reactions for the rest of your life is admirable and must be the most difficult process a person can go through.

Homosexuals do not choose to be gay, but in coming forward with their sexuality they are choosing to be an example in honesty that we should all strive to follow.

Elizabeth Preston is a junior English major

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themselves to be homophobes.

Actually, all of the people I encountered there that read the T-shirt smiled broadly at me and practically yelled an enthusiastic "HOWDY!"

I don't know if I just came across accepting Corps members, if the stereotypes are overblown or if the Corps are just so scared of being burned by another

THE BATTALION Editorial Board

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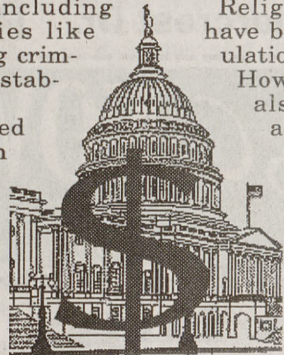
EDITORIAL

LEGISLATING LOBBYING

Need for reform remains despite bill's failure

The Lobby Reform and Disclosure Act passed the U.S. House of Representatives, but Thursday, a filibuster killed the bill in the Senate.

Lobbyists constitute one of the most powerful political forces in this country. The influence they wield can help determine the fate of almost any legislation, including funding for universities like Texas A&M.



The failed bill included several points which would be beneficial to the future regulation of the lobbyists. When a similar bill come to Congress' floor again, these features need to be present in it.

Under the Lobby Reform and Disclosure Act, small groups who paid out more than \$2,500 for expenses or spent more than \$5000 during a six-month period, would have had to register with a director of lobbying.

who dedicate such resources should be considered influential on legislation, and subject to regulations.

The banning of free lunches is also needed. Such practice is considered unethical in several professional fields, and congressmen should be held to the same standards, if not higher.

Religious organizations would have been exempt from such regulations under the proposed bill.

However, these organizations also have special interests and spend a great deal of time trying to attract the ears of Washington. They too, should be included as lobbyists, as they attempt to influence public policy.

Many constituents are members of these lobbying organizations and should have the right to know how their membership dues are being spent.

With such government regulations, both lobbyists and individuals will still be able to voice their opinion and see its effects on the law.

U.S. should have finished Iraq job

American soldiers again may die in defense of oil, money

When we all were in high school, the image of Colonel Oliver North in front of Congress, explaining U.S. foreign policy in the world order was somewhat depressing.

JOSEF A. ELCHANAN Columnist



Then, in my freshman year of college, visions of tanks blasting away across the desert landscapes and terror weapons unleashed by a backward and vicious country continuing its petty little struggle for power in the Middle East filled our television screens.

Unfortunately, many strategists of the time were calculating thousands of American losses during the Gulf War. The single reason that our losses were so low is that instead of striking at the heartland of Iraq, liberating the Kurds from Iraqi oppression and creating a safe environment for the Saudis and Kuwaitis, the United States, under the leadership of President Bush, decided to stop its offensive - and set-up sanctions instead.

Now, four years after the big parades and with a new president, we are again preparing for an attack by Saddam Hussein against Kuwait, or his possible use of blackmail to force the world into easing the sanctions levied against Iraq.

While Americans are in Haiti, trying to fix a problem we got involved in long ago, we are now being pulled back into a problem we helped to create in the Middle East.

While many people hate to admit it, Ross Perot has again provided a glimpse into the mirror of our foreign policy, and it is a poor sight to behold. When the Congressmen of this country ignore many of the discoveries of the Iran-Contra affair, they also did not allow the American people to realize how we were supporting people around the world through unsafe arm sales.

These dictators, who we all despise for their brutal regimes and aggressive natures, were created by the U.S. government in some kind of balancing game with the Soviet Union. Now that we do not need them anymore and they have become intolerable to our new-found sensibilities, we are forced to destroy them.

On top of these problems, our military has not received the

kind of support that it truly needs. Tactical needs, like more troops and training, have fallen by the wayside while base closings and fancy weapon systems have gotten all our Congress's attention.

Everyone also should remember that many soldiers came home from the Persian Gulf with illnesses as yet unexplained and uncured. These soldiers have been ignored by the military, much like their fathers who were poisoned by Agent Orange in Vietnam.

Money talks, it seems, and soldiers are expendable. While former president Bush runs around making speeches about his wonderful successes, the troops that he should have allowed to take Iraq last time are now there again because he did not have the guts.

We were forewarned. Two men, both generals and presidents, told us of the problems we have now. In their last moments of office, George Washington advised future Americans to not get involved in, "foreign entanglements," and Dwight Eisenhower warned of the, "military-industrial complex." Now, we are both up to our noses in the foreign affairs of others and are being guided by interests of profit and greed instead of common sense and morality.

When people around the world are being decimated through famine, plague and war, we barely step in; but when our oil supply is threatened, we jump through hoops like trained circus animals.

Furthermore, the countries we are defending are not

exactly the most democratic people on earth. Both the Saudis and the Kuwaitis guarantee almost no rights for women, to the point that our women in uniform had to cover themselves in the native garb in order to move around in those countries.

Whether Iraq makes an aggressive move that forces us to war is now a totally irrelevant issue. The very fact that we are being forced to deal with it is the issue.

Instead of the end of the Cold War becoming a time of peace, it has again pushed us onto the brink of war, and all for a little oil.

Josef A. Elchanan is a senior business management major



Trade school mentality sacrifices 'education'

I have never read anything so offensive to the spirit of education as Amy Michelle Bench's whining critique (Oct. 7) of her professor's alleged "tantrum." Bench is upset over her instructor's criticism of his students who "had not sufficiently read for the day."

they need to know to be a part of the competitive job market." In other words, students are not here to experience life, broaden themselves and their minds, be challenged by new ideas inside and outside the classroom, grow emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.

Arguably, this trade school mentality is the largest problem facing educators today. Bench has given voice to a common view of the value (or lack of value) of what used to be referred to as "an education."

While it is, perhaps, amusing and ironic that she is studying English - a discipline known for producing subtle intellects, well developed souls and articulate waiters - what is truly frightening is that she plans to "stand before her own classroom of men and women struggling to get an education." All I can say is given her attitude they will no doubt be struggling!

Ryan Soisson Department of Philosophy

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.



What is most pathetic and offensive about Bench's complaint is her characterization of what she refers to as "the goal of the college experience," which is supposedly to "teach students what