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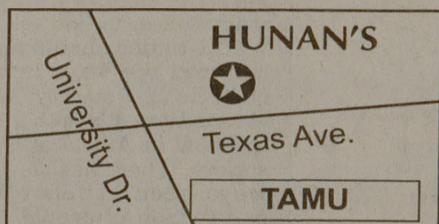
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MAIL CALL

A&M community addresses racism

I am writing this letter in support of Bo Armstrong. Although I do not know him personally, nor am I affiliated with the College Republicans, I do agree with his belief that we should all be viewed as Americans rather than African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans or Asian-Americans.

If this is the case, then I guess I am an Irish-English-Scottish-Indian-American and wish to be recognized as such.

My point is that I am also proud of my heritage, but I am even more proud of being "American" and so should these groups. It seems to me that the goal of every minority group is equality.

Hey, here is a hint: you will never achieve equality until you decide to quit separating yourselves; ie, affirmative action and quotas.

In my opinion, the selections of race and sex should be left off all applications entirely. We should be accepted or hired on the merit of our achievements and merits, not race or sex.

Gerrod Heath
Class of '96

As Americans, we have the privilege of living in a society with vast material resources and unrivaled personal liberties. A significant percentage of citizens do not enjoy all of these privileges, though, and face economic hardship and prejudice instead. Affirmative action is heralded by many as a means to end unnecessary injustice and create a more utopian society in which people are judged solely on personal merit. In short, affirmative action aims, as America must, to end discrimination.

In practice, though, affirmative action becomes a contradiction, and in many ways furthers the very bias it seeks to conquer.

This "comprehensive policy action" targets specific groups of people and attempts "to make their hurdles just a little lower" (quoting from Aja Henderson, The Battalion Oct. 13). Still, solely through their own hard work and personal merit, countless Americans have overcome immense socioeconomic challenges and become "self made successes." Everything these self-made people achieve opens a new, true door of opportunity, and puts an end to another pocket of prejudice, bigotry and bias. With each accomplishment, the seeds of true equality and meritocracy are spread. Many people, however, including the College Republicans, seem to feel these "self made people" are anomalies, and that the majority of people belonging to groups targeted by affirmative action have in fact crossed lower hurdles. This misperception serves to delegitimize the great strides of the "self made people," and prolongs society's ailment.

It is for precisely this reason that affirmative action is unalterably flawed. It seeks to artificially "fix" society's ills, but its unintended consequence hurts the true "self made successes." The alternative to affirmative action is harder, and less pleasant for many. While it requires more sacrifices and is not a "quick fix," the reward will be worth far more. Hard work, self reliance and the willingness to face challenges head on is what made America great, and more of the same is the only thing that will make her greater.

Jeff Livingston
Class of '96

Accompanied by 3 signatures

I am writing in response to Aja Henderson's column in Wednesday's Battalion: "Our Young Black Men Are Dying..."

Henderson writes that black youths "do not need America's instant problem-solving, they need comprehensive action designed to make their hurdles just a little lower." What does that mean? What is your solution? Henderson talks about stereotypes attributed to black men: "Popular thought shakes its head at the young black male and continues to label him as an inherently violent individual who is destined to

a life of failure." By printing a sense like that, Henderson perpetuates these negative stereotypes. Surely Henderson does not believe that the entire (white) "popular thought" labels African-Americans as "failures" and "lazy." If so, Henderson, here is guilty of judging an entire race of people without taking the individual into account.

As for a solution, I'm afraid don't have one either. I believe it starts at home, not in government programs. All youths need a loving family and role models to look up to. We, as future parents, need to provide support network that does not proliferate stereotypes and fosters education and cultural awareness.

Kathie Caplan
Class of '96

I was shocked by the College Republicans' flier against affirmative action.

Personally, I am for equal opportunity employment, but as a black female, this flier offends me. Corporations do not lower their GPR requirements for black females; we have to meet the same requirements as every one else. I am also offended because the Republicans singled out black females.

Affirmative action and quotas are geared toward all minorities, which include all females, Hispanics, Asians and black men, so why were black females singled out? I have nothing against equal opportunity employment, but I do have a problem with the way the Republicans chose to state their viewpoint.

Mekesha Johnson
Class of '96

Accompanied by 34 signatures

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.

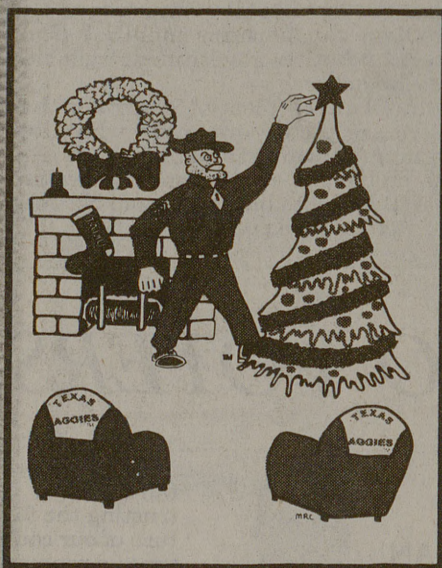
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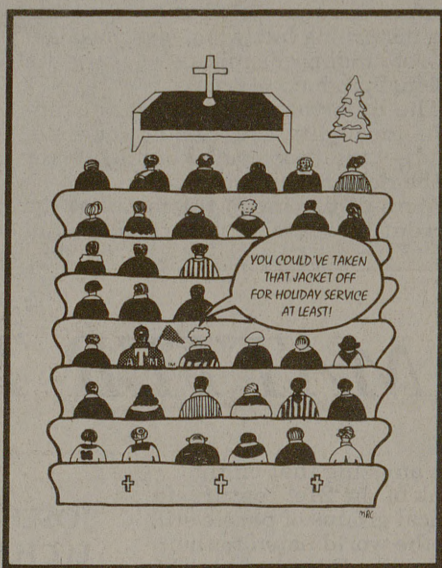
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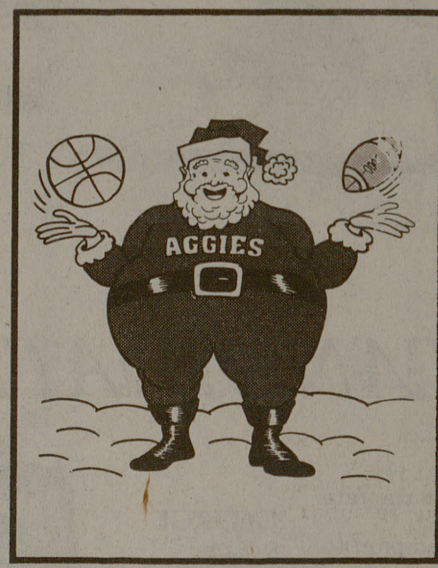
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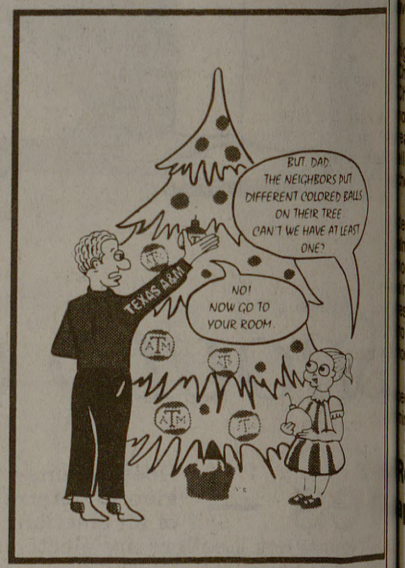
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