

# Parents should take more responsibility around children

I am one of the people who sees a small child in a grocery store and oohs and aahs for several minutes. I can not resist children. I don't care about their color, age, size or mood. My friends are occasionally even annoyed by my obsession. I am convinced that every child is born perfect. And that is why I am insanely, overwhelmingly, incredibly furious at some of the events reported in the media recently.

Before I begin, I want to say that I realize that the comparisons between these two cases end with the fact that both were parents who murdered their children. One was involuntary and the other was deliberate and evil, but the current trend of murdering children is revolting and infuriating.

The thought of Susan Smith pleading insanity makes me weak with anger. I can't read the stories about her watching the children die without tears welling up in my eyes. Over-emotional? Maybe, but I can't calm my anger because I can't explain her actions. Children speak to me. Their innocence and purity is all encompassing. No part

of any child is evil. Watching children die — your own children, by your own hand — is unimaginable.

At least she can claim insanity.

Today, I opened my Battalion and read that another child was murdered by her own father. Robert Crabtree, a man caught in the throes of power that come when you hold a gun, shot and killed his daughter as she played a childish prank on him.

For those of you who missed the story, Crabtree is one of the gun-toting Americans who is frantic at the thought of someone invading his "castle." His 14-year-old daughter hid with one of her friends in a closet, then began making noises to scare her parents as they came home early last Sunday. Granted, their small town had had eight burglaries in the past month, but trigger-happy Crabtree did not even pause to see who it was jumping out of the closet. As his daughter, Matilda, jumped out and yelled "Boo," he shot and killed her.

Not only is this a painful, tragic, needless death, it is additional proof that gun control is sorely needed in the United States.

Gee whiz, one of my friends might jump out and scare me. There has been a rash of crimes in the Bryan/College Station area, you know. Maybe I

should carry a gun in my backpack. No, now that I think about it, maybe we should all carry guns in our belts. What if someone flips us off, or approaches us in a manner that might be construed by our overanxious minds as threatening, and we don't have our handy .357 in instant reachable distance?

Maybe we would find out they were just trying to play a prank on us.

If Mr. Crabtree hadn't had a gun in the house, Matilda would be alive and still laughing at the funny trick she had played on her parents. Instead, her father is mourning her death and she

and everything she could have been is lost forever. Children should be treasured and loved each and every second they are alive. Anything that endangers children, from guns lying around the house to mothers who do not appreciate their children, should be removed with haste.

I know that it is trite and has been said hundreds of times before, but I truly need to know: Why on earth do you need a license to drive, to vote and to hunt defenseless animals, but any ordinary person was created with the organs necessary to produce another living being?

Someone should have been able to stop Smith from having children, or at least from keeping them. And anyone who thinks that it is necessary to keep a loaded, easily accessible gun in the house where young kids are playing — I'm not even going to touch using it on them — does not deserve to have children in the first place.

The next time I see a child, I know that I will still feel warm inside and make goofy faces at him/her, but my reaction will have changed. Now I will wonder if their parents hug them and tell them how perfect they are. If they take care of them and encourage them to develop their personalities. If they are secretly planning to drown them, or if they have a gun around that goes off too easily.

Why can't children be kept free from the tragedies that surround adult life?

*Elizabeth Preston is a junior English major*

**ELIZABETH PRESTON**  
Columnist



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## EDITORIAL

# GUILTY AS CHARGED

Former A&M VP convicted of soliciting gifts

Jurors found Texas former A&M Vice President Robert Smith guilty of asking Barnes & Noble Bookstores, Inc. to pay for his wife's airfare, meals and entertainment during a June 1993 trip to New York City. Smith's conviction is rightly justified as he sold out Texas A&M and its students, and his actions should be viewed with the same disdain West Point students felt about Benedict Arnold.

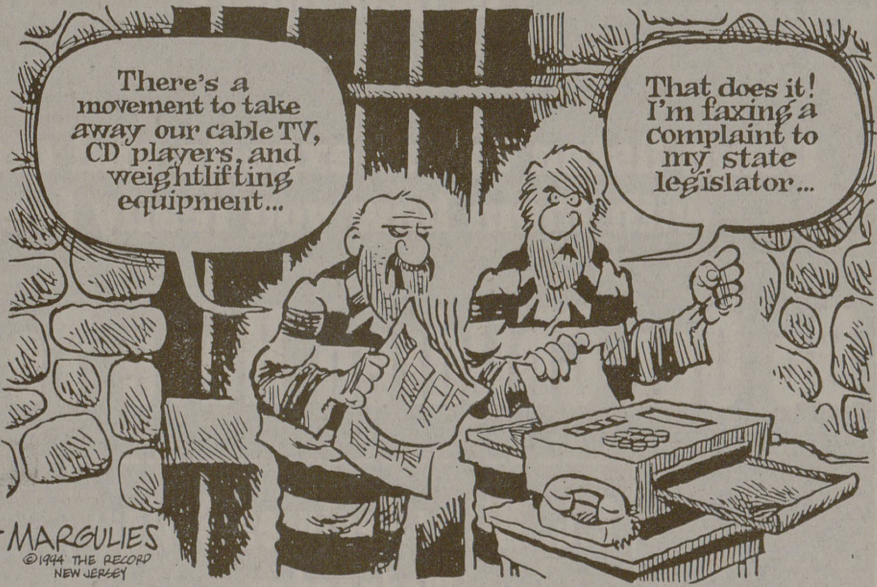
Smith's conviction sets an example for other A&M administrators and faculty that the community will not tolerate abuse from administrators, nor will they permit free reign over the school's financial perks without enforcing punishment.

Students should serve as watchdogs for the A&M community and care about administrator's actions, as it is their money that is being used in illegal ways. These administrators invest little if anything financially to this institution, and abuse will not be tolerated. Aggie's do not lie, cheat or steal, unlike Smith. To rid the University of those administrators who do, Aggie Mom's and the Former Student Association should continue to actively serve as watchdogs.

Smith's conviction was triggered by an anonymous letter which was sent to Gov. Ann Richards, leading the Texas Rangers and FBI to conduct investigations. Without such watchdogs and concerns, A&M has the potential to be exploited and abused. All that is required of students is that they keep their eyes and ears open, questioning things that seem unusual.

Students should become curious and inquire where their money is sent. They should inquire about the salary of their faculty, and realize that it is their money which helps keep this University functioning. This University is also funded by grants and donations from corporations, and that financial source should not be risked by the abuse of administrators.

Texas A&M should be investigated thoroughly, with the support of the students, to rid the school of all administrative illnesses. By doing so, Texas A&M will be able to move forward into the 21 century competitively and retain the reputation it has built throughout the years as a fine and outstanding University. A&M cannot continue to bear the burden of greedy administrators.



# Aggie tradition gone awry

Historian gives tips for taking care of campus statues

First there was Lawrence Sullivan Ross; known far and wide as Sully. Then along came the venerated Twelfth Man. Now James Earl Rudder has come. Three wonderful bronze statues for three giants in Aggie history and tradition. Aggies everywhere love, adore and honor all three, more than students anywhere else love the giants of their institutions. It is a widely accepted truth that Aggies, whether they are current students or former students, love every aspect of their school more than students from any other college or university. And they demonstrate that love through gifts of money and services.

**CHARLES R. SCHULTZ**  
Guest Columnist

Add to these statues the bronze sculptures of the Centennial Eagle, the Victory Eagle, the Arch 602 (the student with his dog), the Silver Taps memorial, the base of the flagpole in front of the Academic Building and the Robert J. Kleberg statue and you quickly realize that A&M probably has more bronze sculpture on its campus than just about any other academic institution.

Most outdoor sculptures have been largely ignored unless they were the victims of malicious or mischievous vandalism or some natural calamity such as a storm. However, this has not been the case at Aggieland. As early as 1927, Aggies have been showering their love, affection and energy on Sully by polishing him to a high gloss.

Recent studies by professional conservators have provided convincing evidence that the neglect suffered by many bronze and other outdoor sculptures throughout the United States has caused them to suffer decay. This led to a nationwide survey of the condition of outdoor sculpture coordinated by the Smithsonian Institution and conducted by volunteers in every state and virtually every county. The study in Brazos County shows that the sculptures here, nearly all of which are on the A&M campus, have fared quite well although many of them do need some attention. However, the attention that is needed is different from what they have been receiving.

Through a variety of experiments and studies, museum professionals have learned that bronze sculptures need regular attention to preserve the original patina that the sculptures give them and to protect them from acts of van-

dalism as well as from the hazards of occasional bird droppings and polluted air.

The treatment needed to best protect and preserve bronze sculpture includes regular washing with a special soap followed by a thorough rinsing with copious amounts of water. This should be followed by an application of a special paste wax that is applied with brushes. A modest polishing with an old T-shirt or some other soft cloth brings out a nice shine to the sculpture. Treatment of this nature about every six months will assure that each bronze sculpture will retain the dark, rich patina provided by the original sculptor. It will also assure a shiny but dark appearance, which bronze is supposed to have. Bronze was never intended to glitter like gold.

Thus, I issue this plea. Please Aggies, no brasso on General Rudder, and no more brasso on Sully, the Twelfth Man, the Silver Taps memorial, the base of the flagpole at the Academic Building or any other piece of bronze on campus. Instead, give each one a good scrubbing with appropriate soap and water and then a protective covering of wax. Such action will show true love, devotion, affection, attention, and whatever else you want to show to these giants of Aggie lore and will. But at the same time, assure that they retain the appearance that the original sculptor intended and that they will always remain clean and beautiful for both students and visitors to enjoy.

In spite of the copious amounts of brasso and other polishes that have been applied to Sully in the past six decades, he can still be restored to his original appearance with the help of a professional bronze conservator. Texas is fortunate to have one in Dallas. Since 1994 is the 75th anniversary of the dedication of the statue of Sully, what more fitting birthday gift could Aggies give him than to restore him to the original rich, dark patina he had when he was dedicated.

That original hue is readily evident of the photographs taken when the statue was unveiled. Those and many other pictures of Sully and all the other outdoor sculptures on campus are available in the collections of the University Archives in the Sterling C. Evans Library.

*Charles R. Schultz*  
Professor and Clements Archivist and Chair,  
Brazos County Historical Commission



## GLBA deserves funding at both A&M and SFA

I am proud of the article you ran on the

front page about the Gay and Lesbian Student Association at Stephen F. Austin University, and the accompanying editorial on the opinion page in Tuesday's Batt. I hope it serves to remind people that discrimination is still occurring all around us.

There are a few points, however, which I would like to be perfectly clear. First, when SFA's student government stripped the GLSA of a mere \$106 which had already been allocated while leaving other organizations' funding untouched, it was obvious that the action was discriminatory. There is no other explanation. Second, the GLSA president states that 10-percent of SFA's student body is homosex-

ual. Finally, at no time during the GLBA meetings here, nor the meetings of the GLBA when I was at the University of Alabama, nor do I imagine at SFA, did anyone advocate violating the law. You don't believe me? But to the student government at SFA, and its sympathizers here, don't deny us due process. And don't deny us funding to which we are entitled simply on the basis of our name. To do so only demonstrates the depths of discrimination which still exists around us all.

*Frank Thomas, Jr.*  
Graduate Student

## Student is fed up with unequal treatment

If you are a minority, you could have gone to the Student Counseling Center on Thursday afternoon for "walk-in counseling." I am a non-minority. I have been on a waiting list in the Student Counseling Center for over a month, with no hopes of getting in anytime soon. Not only does having a walk-in time keep non-minorities waiting, but for some reason, it appears that a minority's problems are more impor-

tant than a non-minority's. Can we say DISCRIMINATION? My money that goes to support the service is just as good as a minority's, or is it?

*Chris Bradford*  
Class of '95

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