

Party politics have no place at Texas A&M

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Washington D.C. move over, College Station has its own political arena stocked full of enough backstabbing and b.s. to make us yearn for the relative calm of Communist revolt.

At least in Communism it is clearly stated that one group will be in charge. At A&M it is only an unspoken understanding. And it should change.

A certain organization on campus — well, okay ... the Corps — feels the need to organize for elections as if it were a political party. Perhaps it is a harmless nostalgic need to be in charge of things on campus, but it is an outdated concept that is poisoning the election process at A&M.

The Corps block takes time each year before elections to gather together all those interested in running for office. They chose the candidates they will support, and all others are expected to watch from the sidelines.

This year the system has been shaken up by one candidate who did not want to watch the game — he wanted to be in it. People who decide to take the time to run for any office on campus should be respected for making such a commitment. This candidate deserves the same respect from all Aggies, despite the fact that he did not receive his "party's" endorsement.

Candidates have to spend hours of hard work presenting themselves to their peers and asking for support. They put their necks on the line. People will openly discuss their strengths and weaknesses. They will question candidates' motives, and voters will doubt every promise.

It takes a certain amount of courage to put yourself in the arena like that, and all candidates should be commended for trying. We should respect and appreciate their efforts. And we owe it to them to give them all an even chance.

We should hear what they have to say without prejudice. Being a non-reg, I've often found myself paying more attention to the candidates that are not in the Corps. But I am wrong to do that.

I have witnessed very strong leadership from members of the Corps, and if I didn't listen to their qualifications and ideas, I would be settling for something less than the best.

No one should vote this way. Whether we are casting a vote for President of the United States or for class historian, we should take the time to find out who would do the best job. Unfortunately, political parties have an entrenched place in national politics, but such a system has no place at A&M.

Fortunately we do not have too many dividing issues in campus politics — which means we can choose people based on their merit.

Unfortunately, without many real issues to debate, we turn to childish tactics and mudslinging. Signs get defaced, and memos get passed around blacklisting people. We should not allow this to happen. We should make more of an effort to punish the individuals involved.

The Corps has a rich tradition of honor and integrity. It should not be reduced to party politics. It is more than a political party — even though it may seem hard to realize that during elections.

And most importantly, we should realize the Corps is not alone. It is not the evil secret police we sometimes make it out to be. It is only one very visible example of a political organization. But by organizing as a political party, they set the stage for trouble.

When it comes down to the intimidation and mudslinging, we can only blame the individuals responsible. If individuals think they are helping to promote their group's best interest by resorting to such tactics, they should take a course in public relations.

No organization wants to have a bad image, and members of the Corps hate negative elections as much as anyone else. They don't want to be judged by the actions of a few.

If the Corps wants to avoid a bad image, it should shut down the political machinery that has worked to create one. The Corps serves well as an example of integrity, honor and discipline throughout the year — it should not take a break during elections.

Rather the Corps should take the initiative and discourage block voting. They should show other groups on campus that playing political games is not in anyone's best interest.

For those who knowingly jump into this mess, you have our respect. And for those who seek to change the way things work, you should be commended. Thank you for your efforts.

Michael Landauer is a sophomore journalism major

Post-Spring Break Syndrome hits A&M

Full week of vacation causes students to return unmotivated, mentally deprived

Abolish spring break. "Have you lost your mind Drew?" A long time ago man, but that's neither here nor there. Another story, another column, another time.

Oh yeah, this spring break thing. Abolish it. "Diener has truly gone mad this time honey. Hide the women and the children. Lock up the Twinkies, and hide the remote control. The man is bezerk."

Abolish spring break — a bold statement with no logic behind it, or a ridiculous outcry with potential merit and justification?

Spring break causes more problems than it solves. "But Drew, spring break is a stress reliever!" Pity, pity, pity oh naive one, spring break is not a stress reliever, it is a stress annihilator. That may not sound bad, but it is.

While going to the beach, basking in God's tanning salon and maintaining a constant flow of recreational beverages into one's body may appear to be a stress reliever ... it is not.

The stress cells in the brain merely bathe in alcohol for the week, only to become waterlogged — making them extremely difficult to rejuvenate.

The result: tan, drunk man returns to College Station with a laissez-faire attitude and ever so slowly slips deeper and deeper into the academic abyss.

Seven days of sun, fun and 151 rum turn a once-motivated student into a worthless, lazy bum.

I call it the Post Spring Break Syndrome. Detrimental to one's academic health, if it evolves from a prior case of Pre Spring Break Syn-

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drome, the results could be of scope proportions.

Naive parents who pay little Jimmy or little Suzie's way through school may not want to read any further.

Oh yes, Pre Spring Break Syndrome.

The University calendar states that spring break begins when class- es end on Friday. The pre-spring break syndrome victim's calendar states that spring break begins after happy hour ends on Wednesday.

Looking at a time table, it is easy to see just how spring break hinders the scholastic achievement of the average college student.

Catch a bad case of Pre Spring Break Syndrome, which I should mention is highly contagious, and the books end up on the shelf a couple of days earlier than the Texas Education Agency would prefer.

Don't forget about those vital stress cells — the entities that keep us motivated to perform in the classroom. As spring break creeps up, the stress cells begin to slowly flow out of the conscience and into a sea of alcohol, thus embarking upon an infinite hiatus.

The absence of stress cells causes the absence of mind, which in turn causes absence in class. The end result is not a pleasant one. In some cases it is spelled B-L-I-N-N.

Spring break and its trail of empty shot glasses, astronomical bar tabs and frequent visits to the friendly automatic teller machine come and go.

Bronzed, boozed and broke, the emphatic return to Aggieland greets the dazed spring breaker with a host of tests on the horizon, a mass of peeling flesh in the

mirror and insufficient funds in the bank.

The stress cells desperately try to come up for air; however, they are repeatedly forced back under by an array of beverages.

The spring breaker has physically returned from Padre, Cancun, Daytona or wherever it is he or she may have been. However, the spring breaker has not mentally returned.

Monday sees the spring breaker floating through campus like a piece of lightweight garbage. Halfheartedly, notes are taken with a lazy stroke of the pen. Wholeheartedly, naps are taken with on-going bobs of the head.

A week passes. Drifting, drifting, drifting, Post Spring Break Syndrome settles in.

Tests, papers, quizzes and bills stare the victim in their red eyes. Motivation is in exile. The light at the end of tunnel has burned out. Jobless and broke, the spring breaker lacks the cash to buy a new bulb.

Content to wade out the rest of the semester, the spring breaker boldly rides a roller coaster of failed tests, missed classes and overdue bills.

The University calendar highlights several key dates in the coming month. Three and a half weeks removed from sandy beaches and floated kegs, the victim's calendar highlights one key date in the coming month — the Q Drop date.

Dreams of attending law school or med school or grad school are flushed down life's commode. Mothers cry, ambitions die and the University sends home a letter that says "Bye-bye."

Stop the madness, stop the heartache — do us a favor, and abolish spring break.

Drew Diener is a junior English major



Americans must pay taxes for services government provides

It is out there. And it is approaching with rapid speed. It is lurking in the near future like a monster hiding under a child's bed, waiting for the opportune moment to leap out and gobble him up.

Yes fellow Americans, on April 17 (April 15 is a Saturday) our worst nightmares will become reality — taxes are due.

Maybe not everyone is sacred of the big, bad tax monster. Certainly there are people who actually pay their taxes on time without complaining. But the majority of Americans like to complain.

Taxes just wouldn't be taxes if we didn't postpone, resent, try to avoid or forget to pay them. In fact, they might not be that bad.

The general American attitude toward taxes is amazing. First of all, how do people forget to file their income tax forms? Really, it is not as if there wasn't a plethora of newspaper articles and news broadcasts reminding the population of its dreaded obligation to its country. Even those who live in complete oblivion to the world around them would have a hard time making a convincing argument that during the whole month of April they never heard the word "taxes."

But even more entertaining than watching the "forgetful taxpayers" is watching the vehement anger of the "complaining taxpayers" build as the due date draws closer.

The "complainers" feel abused, exploited and robbed by the government. Really, what right does the government have to take part of their hard-earned money?

Let's pause for a brief hypothetical. Let's pretend the government is a health club. Let's pretend it is a pretty nice health club. Maybe a few machines break occasionally, but overall it is clean, well-equipped and runs fairly smoothly — especially in comparison to other health clubs. No one would think that it was completely crazy for the health club to charge its members a fee in order to maintain the club.

In a similar manner, the U.S. government requires citizens to pay a yearly fee, and in exchange, the taxpayers get to live here. This is an important point, when taxpayers are reminded that if they didn't live in America, they would be living elsewhere. And "elsewhere" may not have as nice equipment or as many membership benefits.

Continuing our health club hypothetical. Some members may argue that they only use the cardiovascular equipment ... so why should they have to pay for all the other equipment that they

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will never use. To which the health club responds, "Because you want to join this health club. If you don't want our equipment, go somewhere else."

At least with the government, Americans have the ability to elect the people who decide what kind of equipment they are going to provide.

Once we get past the fact that taxes are due and they must be paid, we take particular pleasure in making a big spectacle about how much certain people are paying in comparison to how much other people are paying. After all, it is very important that our suffering be equal.

As is often is the case around tax time, Congress has been talking about tax cuts. Recently, the Republicans have been criticized for supporting tax breaks for the wealthy. A Washington Post-ABC News Poll suggested that 59 percent of Americans believe the Republicans go too far in helping the rich and cutting needed government services that benefit average Americans as well as the poor.

Let's pause for another brief hypothetical. Let's pretend it is Christmas, and Grandma arrives with two gifts. Your brother gets a brand new mountain bicycle, and you get Silly Puddy. Now, who is going to be upset?

The point is that Grandma would never do that, and neither should the government.

If we consider the right to live in America a good provided by the government and purchased by taxpayers, it makes sense to say that no one should get more good for less money or less good for more money.

However, this philosophy, taken literally, would demand that everyone paid a flat rate. Which, like it or not, is unfair. And because fairness is of utmost importance to retain peace among people, flat rates are out of the question.

So the big, bad tax monster in his infinite big, bad wisdom came up with a system that became the model for many other countries — where the taxpayers pay a percentage of their annual incomes minus children and other acceptable deductions.

And this system works out pretty equally if we think about it. The only problem is, once we realize this, it walks Congress with a bicycle for the rich and silly puddy for the poor (or vice versa).

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THE BATTALION

Established in 1893

Editorials appearing in The Battalion reflect the views of the editorial board. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of other Battalion staff members, the Texas A&M student body, regents, administration, faculty or staff. Columns, guest columns, cartoons and letters express the opinions of the authors. Contact the opinion editor for information on submitting guest columns.

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EDITORIAL

EDUCATION EXPENSES

The Texas House should not increase out-of-state tuition by 26 percent at once.

House Bill 1792, which calls for a 26 percent increase in out-of-state tuition for Texas Universities, should not be passed. Such a bill would not only discourage out-of-state students from attending Texas A&M, but could also have a detrimental effect on some of the University's programs.

Texas universities have always been known for their affordable education rates. Currently, Texas A&M ranks 48th among the most affordable schools in the nation. However, if this bill is passed, the University would no longer be grouped in this category.

Because the price of an education at Texas A&M is relatively inexpensive, many out-of-state students choose to attend this institution rather than schools in their own states.

If out-of-state tuition is increased by 26 percent at one time, A&M's out-of-state recruitment efforts could be seriously affected.

While it is true that this bill would effect more graduate students than undergraduate students, it still would

have negative effects. Graduate students play a very important role in the education process at A&M as teachers assistants and lab instructors.

An increase in out-of-state tuition may be needed, but an increase of 26 percent at one time is ridiculous.

If the increase were implemented in smaller increments, perhaps such a bill would not be as detrimental. For example, by increasing tuition by almost 30 percent, out-of-state students would be forced to pay almost twice as much for each credit hour, as compared to Texas residents.

Texas A&M has a reputation based upon its academic curriculum, student programs, traditions and its affordable price — the exact reasons why so many students are attracted to this institution.

Texas universities should continue to offer an affordable education to students who are dedicated and committed to their futures. Such a dramatic increase in out-of-state tuition would deny many that opportunity.



MAIL CALL

Involvement in other education important

Have you been wanting to get involved in "the other education" but didn't really know how? Or have you been watching the way different issues are being handled on campus and say, "If I knew how to get involved I could make a difference." Well, here's your opportunity to get involved no matter what your reasoning is. Every year students are selected to represent the students' voice on a variety of University Committees. Some issues these committees tackle include Parking, Lighting, Academic Appeals, Illegal Discrimination, Honors Programs, Financial Aid and Student Health Services. These are only a few of the possible issues to help represent the student body on. If you're interested in getting involved there is an application procedure that needs to be completed. You can pick up one of these applications and a description of all committees in the Student Government Office in the Koldus Building. Applications are due at 5 p.m. on March 31, 1995. Any questions please contact the Student Government Office at 845-3051.

University Committees

Battalion should not endorse candidates

The Battalion has gone too far this time. The endorsement of one of the Student Body President candidates was way out of line.

I know the Student Senate passed an endorsement package, but it clearly stated that no money be spend on endorsements.

Did you fail to read that part? By using The Battalion to make a political endorsement, the editors not only spent money on an endorsement, but also spent our money.

As students, we have no choice but to pay the ridiculous fees imposed on us. As leaders of the student newspaper, you have an obligation to use that portion of those fees allocated to you prudently.

In the future, please remember that we are all subject to the Election Commission's regulations.

Renee Bleifeld
Class of '98

Accompanied by 10 signatures

Editor's note —
• The Battalion always endorses a candidate for Student Body President. The endorsement was made after two extensive interviews with each of the candidates and review of their platforms and ideas. The Election Commission was fully aware of The Battalion's plans for an endorsement.