

Activist overreact on Earth Day

Another Earth Day has come and gone. A day of earth awareness, environmental activism and hundreds of conservation and ecology projects is now a memory to millions of the participants of Earth Day '95.

ZACH HALL COLUMNIST



hundreds of statistics that show that the earth is in many cases better off than a hundred years ago.

Contrary to what many environmental groups would have you believe, the Earth belongs to us; we do not belong to the Earth. It is an inherent right of humans to use the Earth and its resources for our own personal benefit, but it is also our duty as humans to take care of it.

Mindless uses of resources and failure to replenish what we use can cause strains on the environment. Even though these environmental groups would have us believe that the majority of corporate America abuses the Earth's resources for their own gain, this is not the case. Businesses realize how important conservation is to their futures. We must also remember that the Earth has survived for millions of years — it is a very resilient creation.

Another popular Earth Day event was that of bashing Republican's as perpetrators of environmental downfall, citing that Republicans are threatening 25 years of environmental legislation. What these people fail to understand is that Republicans are not against the environment; rather they are against the excessive regulations that have been forced upon businesses and individuals.

We all realize that there are businesses and individuals who do not give a damn about the environment or those who respect it and use it properly. It is this group that needs to be dealt with individually. We only hurt those businesses and individuals who are environmentally conscious by over-regulating them, so as to catch the group of environmental troublemakers.

It's long overdue that we start putting humans before the environment.

We must also see how our everyday actions can possibly affect the environment. If we feel strongly that things we are doing may be hazardous to the environment, then we must correct our actions or change our habits. We should not, however, ignore our actions or put-off change only to "take action" at the urging of some activist group every April for Earth Day. More importantly, we must understand that the Earth is ours, and that it is our right and responsibility to use it and take care of it — not prevent its use at the demands of some environmental wackos.

Zach Hall is a sophomore mechanical engineering major

What has passed is another day of liberal, environmental indoctrination — a time when movies stars, politicians and earth activists preach about the ills of the earth and how Republicans, corporate America and the free enterprise system are the culprits of global downfall.

Many "Earth Dayers" were urged to carpool, boycott buses or bike and rollerblade to get where they needed to go. Ironically, these same people who were discouraged or discouraging the use of cars and buses will undoubtedly hop in their cars or onto the bus Monday morning on their way to work or school. How quickly they will have forgotten their actions of only a few days before.

Still, others may have participated in conservation projects such as recycling or highway trash pickups. These people can probably be found any day of the week throwing away their soda cans or littering on some deserted highway.

What these people have in common is not that they participated in Earth Day, but that they were easily persuaded by Earth Day activist into doing something in the name of the environment. Many people, in an attempt to make themselves feel good for doing something for the earth, may have participated in Earth Day activities without actually thinking about its meaning.

While I certainly believe we must conserve and be conscious of our actions with the earth, I feel that Earth Day has become a stage for environmental extremist groups to voice their lopsided views on how we and the earth relate. It's unfortunate that many citizens blindly follow these groups without understanding what they really stand for.

Granted, one purpose of Earth Day is to offer awareness of the Earth and the need to conserve its resources. However, the message being sent by many Earth Day activists is that the Earth is under a massive assault, and that we may only have a few decades left if changes are not made immediately.

Environmental groups constantly bombard us with statistics of earthly doom. Yet these groups never show us the

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EDITORIAL

JUDGMENTAL JUSTICE

The court should not have focused on the parent's sexual orientation in a custody battle.

A parent's sexual orientation should not be used as a deciding factor in a custody battle.

A case recently decided in the Virginia Supreme Court denied a lesbian custody of her son, and gave the child to his grandmother. The court found that she was a poor mother and that her live-in relationship could bring the child "social condemnation."

It has not been proven that a mother's homosexuality is harmful to a child. Without such proof, it cannot just be assumed that this arrangement is detrimental to a child's well-being or development. Social condemnation — a notably vague phrase — might affect almost any child, regardless of the parents' sexual orientation.

A pervasive, negative stereotype surrounds homosexuals. To ease that prejudice, the courts must not show preference to one party over another solely on the basis of sexual orientation.

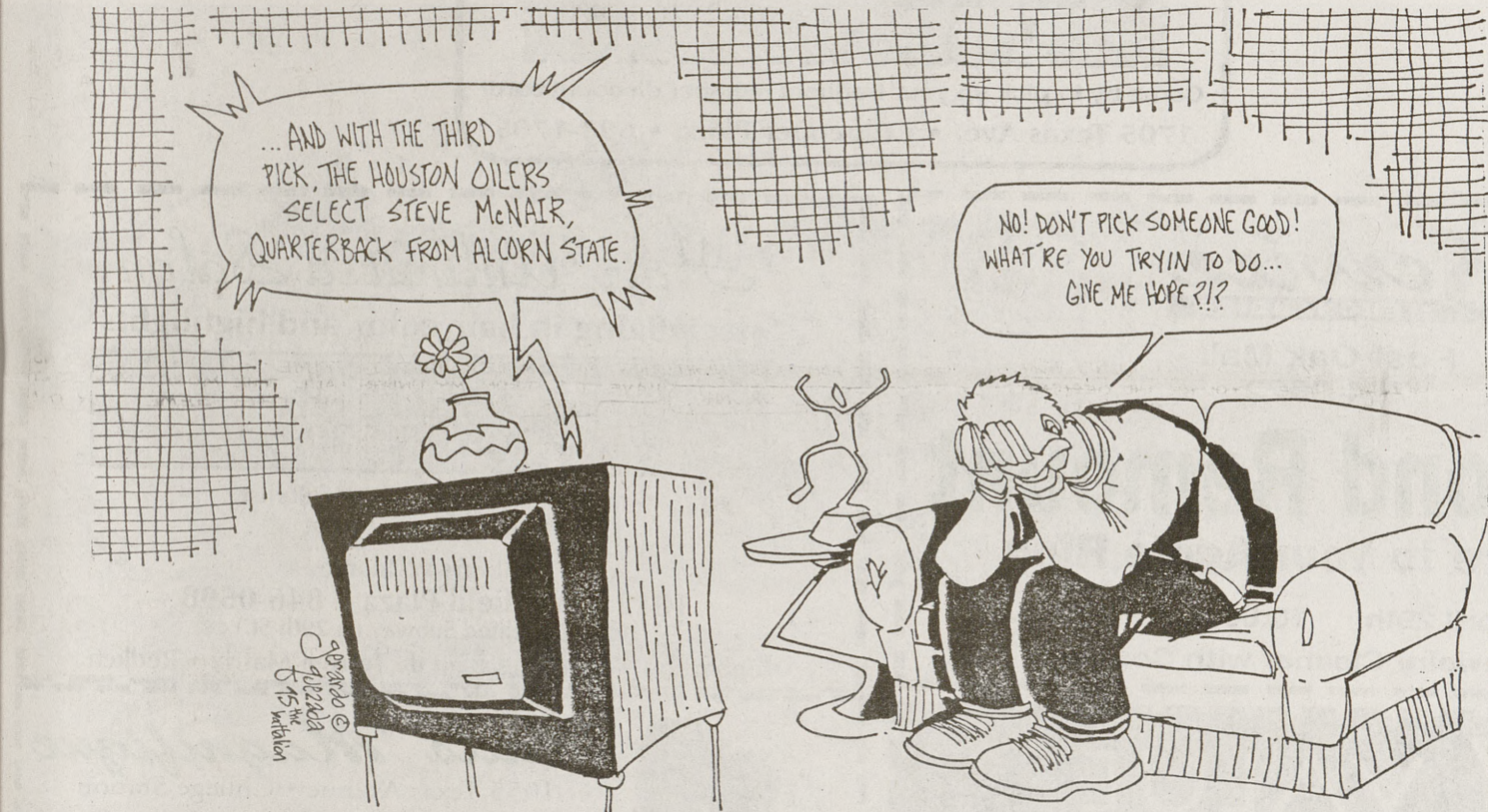
On the other hand, evidence was introduced to claim the mother in this

case had a history of moving with great frequency, that she relied on others for support and that she had trouble maintaining control over her temper. The truth of these allegations should have been the basis for judgement.

The mother's sexual orientation was singled out by her lawyer and elements of the press as the prime factor behind the court's decision. This fact alone is very disturbing. The central issue in any custody hearing should be the welfare of the child in question.

In this case, however, an element of the mother's life is being put on trial. She could have just as easily been a heterosexual who dyed her hair purple — the resulting "social condemnation" might have caused her to lose custody. The court wrote that a situation such as this "may impose a burden on the child by reason of 'social condemnation' attached to such an arrangement."

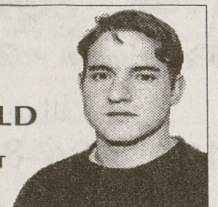
The burden of social condemnation against this child was placed on him by the Virginia Supreme Court.



Ranch replaces "X" in our generation

I know that our generation has been given the name "Generation X," but I would like to offer the label-geniuses perhaps a more fitting moniker.

KYLE LITTLEFIELD COLUMNIST



There has been much public dissent over the label "Generation X," because many feel that it is a negative stereotype. We aren't all jobless, MTV-watching, flannel-wearing, Nirvana/Pearl Jam-listening rebels without ambition. In fact, very few of us are — only the ones that get the most media attention.

But what are these words "we" and "us?" These words imply that we share a common characteristic or pattern of behavior. And in terms of how "Generation X" has been defined, we do not all share these characteristics.

But there is one pattern of behavior that bonds us — our love for a certain condiment.

Contact "Time," "Newsweek" and the rest of the media; "we" have been renamed. Let's put the tired label "Generation X" to rest.

We will now be referred to as Generation Ranch. Allow me to explain.

For starters, it's not just for salads anymore. For many, Ranch is a way of life — a life that I was quickly inducted into upon arrival to college.

I was a stranger in a strange land, roaming the country-side in search of something to remind me of home. Instead I witnessed someone pouring a bowlful of this creamy white substance on his baked potato. Hearing others joke, "Would you like some potato with your Ranch?" I saw others dipping their sandwiches in this Ranch. I saw people dunking their fried mushrooms in Ranch. Pizza rolls constituted tubs of the stuff. Some eating establishments, realizing that its customers go through Ranch at such a pace, charged \$.75 for extra cupfuls. I've seen people dip apples, cookies and their fingers in Ranch.

Ranch is bipartisan, non-discriminating and is good for the local economy. Some have even theorized that Ranch was created by the government in an attempt to keep the masses complacent and amiable.

And by now, you are probably thinking, "This guy has totally lost his mind."

But seriously, "Ranch," which is basically seasoned fat, is a metaphor for all of the unhealthy things college students eat. Do I hear a few groans from the audience? Yeah, I know, "Who am I to lecture you about what you put into your body?"

But one thing that I have learned from college is that eating habits are important as finals arrive.

It doesn't make sense to fill ourselves with junk food when we need to be sharp for upcoming tests.

"You are what you eat," applies to college students too.

Our eating habits just aren't too healthy. But it really isn't our fault.

College students are nocturnal creatures. I guess the A&M Administration has failed to realize this. Their solution for hungry college students, after the Hullabaloo's and Pie Are Squared's are closed, is the almighty vending machine. This is why vending machines punctuate the campus.

Convenience can sometimes be a great downfall for us. We know that we shouldn't eat junk food, but as students, we don't always have the time it takes to prepare healthy food. When the munchies strike, we find ourselves being drawn to the alluring lights of vending machines.

True, students are being catered to, but this isn't always a good thing — certainly not in terms of healthy eating habits.

When you start to rationalize that peanut-butter crackers, a bag of pork rinds and an orange soda is a balanced meal, you have a problem.

The all too familiar scenario: It's late at night, and you are on campus studying for a test. You have ignored the empty feeling in your stomach for hours. But don't worry, because you know that you can satisfy that hunger.

You've seen the commercials; all you need is a candy bar. Something to fill you up and give you the energy to "keep on keepin' on."

But don't stop there. Get you something to wash it down — your favorite cola.

After the initial sugar high and caffeine shock wear off, you aren't in any state — physical or mental — to study.

All too often, instead of eating brain food such as carrots or celery for snacks, students will opt for having a pizza delivered. Or maybe some will run across University Drive to fast-food heaven.

Burgers, fries and pizza are loaded with calories and fat, and they leave students feeling like they just ate Thanksgiving dinner. In order to digest all of this food, the blood rushes to the stomach, leaving you feeling tired.

It's just another strike against you when you are running on inferior fuel.

Of course there are a few of us that would just dip the celery and carrots into ... well, Ranch.

Kyle Littlefield is a senior journalism major



MAIL CALL

Conservatives dish it out, but can't 'take' it

As I read David Taylor's April 20 column, I just had one question for him. Why can conservatives dish it out but have such trouble taking it?

He complains about Donna Shalala's comments on the Vietnam police action, but this comes from a member of a group (conservatives) who has defined themselves through harsh criticism.

The group who gave us "Barney Fag" "pot-smoking, draft-dodging, ..." and "feminazis" now is complaining because she said that the best and brightest were not sent to Vietnam. Those who are complaining forgot one thing, she was really referring directly to two of the many conservatives who did not feel the need to go to Vietnam and risk their lives, Phil Gramm and Dan Quayle.

Dale Christensen Staff, Chemistry

Opinion page provides needed campus forum

Imagine my surprise when I opened up The Battalion on April 20 and found not one, but two pages in the Opinion section!

I was ecstatic, since the only reason I pick up The Battalion is to peruse the Opinion page.

Simply put, I like to read what other people think, even when I disagree with them — and I seem to disagree with a lot of people around here. Besides, it's nice to see evidence that people are thinking.

Now, if you could just move the Opinion page to its rightful place — in front of the Sports section ...

John Lane Graduate Student

Battalion writers use articles to boost egos

I've kept it to myself long enough, but after another article today, I decided to voice my opinions.

Many of the writers on The Battalion staff are little more than hypocrites, spouting useless garbage to inflate their egos.

Example one: The column a few days back concerning Selena and Howard Stern's remarks.

Here the author was telling us that Howard Stern should not have made the remarks he did, because no one was forcing him to listen to Selena, and that he could easily just change the channel.

While I do not in any way approve of Stern's comments, who here is being forced to listen to Howard Stern?

If you don't like Howard Stern, don't listen. I don't, and I don't.

Example two: The editorial a few days ago concerning how unfair it was to have on-campus residents pay for cable whether they want it or not. The author stated that almost 15 percent of the students didn't want it. Simple math dictates that almost 85 percent of the students do.

I'm sure many of you are saying that I just shouldn't read The Batt.

Well, since I paid for it, I'm going to read it, and just wade through the blatant liberalism to get the comics, the coupons and the decent A&M sports coverage, which is much better than the Houston papers.

Craig L. Bickley Class of '98

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