

Personal aspect of choice should not be forgotten

Abortion is a fiery and dangerous topic that every American seems to have an opinion on. What most people are missing, however, is a personal experience with abortion.



ELIZABETH PRESTON COLUMNIST

These are three people who live with their choices on this subject on a daily basis. My sister is a person who can't deal with herself, much less cope responsibly with any of her personal relationships. When she found out she was pregnant a few years ago, she wasn't even sure who the father was.

unknown baby than my sister."

I sleep with many different women, sometimes two or three in one week. It isn't that I don't care about each of them, it is just that I crave affection and love, and sex is a safe way to get both without getting dangerously attached.

I thought I loved him. We were both in high school and had been dating exclusively - I thought - for over a year when we began sleeping together.

and was certainly not mature enough for the responsibility of a child. He wasn't even mature enough for our relationship - I found out later that he had been cheating on me all along.

I wasn't ready either. I had dreams of my own, dreams that I could not have accomplished if I had become a mother. Even a pregnancy would have ruined my life.

Now I am graduating from college, engaged to be married to a kind man and emotionally equipped to

sis are forgotten. In reality, abortion is rarely about what is right and wrong, or the larger picture of humanity or even the absolute certainties that bumper stickers declare - "Women must have a choice," "Get your laws off of my body," "Abortion is murder," "Hundreds of babies are murdered every minute."

All too often, abortion is only about surviving in the best way that people know how.

It is about recognizing personal shortcomings and understanding how best to deal with them.

It is about harsh reality and sad truths.

Until the world is a perfect place, abortions serve in the only way they can.

They protect the unwelcoming and unready parents from a life of hatred and bitterness, and they protect the unborn child from a life of tragedy and anger.

However strongly we may feel about abortion, until we have been faced with an unexpected pregnancy, it is impossible to say how we would act or what we would feel.

Arguments, statistics, debate and protest all serve a vital purpose.

However, none of them can adequately express how the people actually involved with abortion feel, and none of them help solve those people's problems.

We should all think before judging. Someday it could be you or me walking in their shoes.

Elizabeth Preston is a senior English major

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.

EDITORIAL FALLING FIGURES

The University should place more emphasis on academics, not athletics.

When the U.S. government approved the Morrill Act that created Texas A&M University and other land-grant colleges and universities, the idea was to provide inexpensive, quality education as well as industrializing and reconstructing the South.

rate of athletes is down 6% from last year, though this year's class was larger. This year the University budgeted \$1.8 million for athletic scholarships and will budget \$1.9 million next year.

Editorial Board

- Jay Robbins Editor in Chief
Rob Clark Managing Editor
Sterling Hayman Opinion Editor
Kyle Littlefield Assistant Opinion Editor

Should flag burning be legal?

YES

The conservatives are wasting time and tax dollars again. In late March, a group of senators and members of Congress attended a news conference in Washington, D.C. to reintroduce a proposal to amend the Constitution to protect the American flag from desecration.

That's right folks. The same all-important flag burning debate that ended five years ago has returned. Thanks to a Democratic senator from Alabama, Howell Heflin, and a Republican senator from Utah, Orrin G. Hatch, the Senate will once again engage in debate about whether or not American citizens should have the right to desecrate the "stars and stripes."

A similar amendment was introduced in the House of Representatives by New York Congressman Gerald B.H. Solomon and Mississippi Congressman G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery.

It's bad enough that our legislature wasted time debating this foolish issue in 1990, but does it have to make a mockery of itself again? Congress has a need to address important issues such as balancing the budget, reducing crime, increasing equality and lowering unemployment.

With the current wave of Americans hopping on the conservative bandwagon and the 1996 elections just around the corner, it should not be surprising that this amendment was reintroduced now.

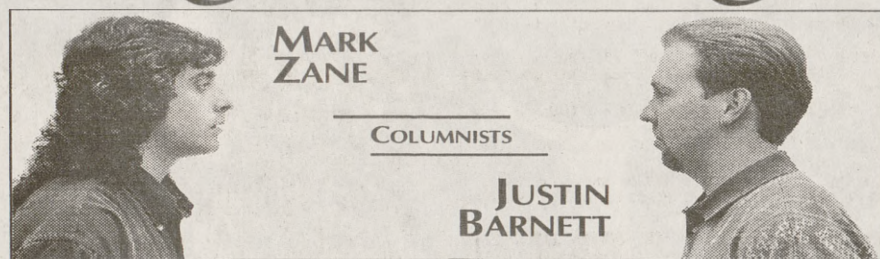
Luckily, President Clinton is against the proposed amendment, and he stated last week that he would not support a proposal that opposed the First Amendment.

We must ask ourselves whether our legislators really care about this amendment, or if it is just a political ploy to gain votes.

If this proposal eventually becomes an amendment to the Constitution, it will be an infringement on our First Amendment rights. The U.S. Supreme Court determined in 1990 that burning a flag was a form of free speech that is protected by the Constitution.

Have our rights of expression changed in the last five years? People have the right to do whatever they want with their property. If I purchase a flag, I have the right to burn it, blow my nose or wipe my butt with it.

In a recent New York Times ar-



MARK ZANE COLUMNIST

NO

Not surprisingly, the aggrieved party found a willing civil rights attorney to plead his case, which eventually found its way to the Supreme Court. The rest is another shameful chapter in American jurisprudence.

Thankfully, some members of Congress have seen fit to challenge this affront to American sensibilities. It is noteworthy that these members are both Democrats and Republicans. They could not have found a better issue to agree upon.

In these times when unity seems to be the goal of so many, why allow a symbol of unity like the flag to be publicly destroyed? What does it accomplish? If one angry soul believes it is his constitutional right to burn a flag then another angry soul may feel infringed upon if he is not allowed to urinate on the White House lawn.

Unfortunately, the courts are top-heavy with bleeding hearts. Anyone with an ax to grind with America can easily find an "unbiased" judge to hear their pleas of persecution.

Sadly, our court system has become flooded with trivial "civil rights" lawsuits designed only to advance personal or political agendas.

Flag burning is such an agenda. It is not worth the time and money to have such a bogus issue decided in a court of law. Our courts should be reserved for important matters of law. Allowing judges judicial review has become the equivalent to giving convicts the keys to the slammer.

If we allow the flag to become nothing more than the object of some homegrown fanatic's anger, then we completely denude it of all meaning.

The notion that the flag is not worthy of constitutional protection seems to be the prevailing sentiment among a great many of the self-ordained elites. The very idea of putting certain restraints on individual action leads to accusations of censorship and persecution. Liberals suffer under the illusion that there is life without limits.

The philosophers tell us the flag is only a piece of cloth. The sociologists worry that we are not focusing on issues of "real" importance. When are these people going to get "real" jobs and stop worrying that civilization is crumbling?

The debate has been framed as one in which freedom of speech is at issue. The issue should be the protection and preservation of the symbols of our history and heritage. These are the things which endure and provide us with an identity.

We owe them a small measure of respect and honor.

Protect the flag and desecrate all the lawyers.

Justin Barnett is a senior English major



MAIL CALL

Diving program was beneficial

My blood runs true Aggie maroon, and I believe in and support all traditions and programs that make up the Texas A&M University System.

I recently attended the last Texas A&M scuba diving class. I acquired and experienced all necessary skills to be a good and qualified diver. If I had not learned the proper skills and techniques, then I would not have received my divers certification.

I attended class and lab, with-

out any absences, and not once did I hear Tom Meineke support one dive shop or another.

Never did he tell us to buy our equipment at one shop or the other, in fact, not once did I hear him mention even one of the dive shops' names.

I don't understand how the University can cancel a program without talking to some of the students who attended the class, or rely solely on the information and allegations of the previously unsaid party.

The diving courses were prominent, steadfast, informative and represented the attitude and reputation that Texas A&M is known for world-wide.

Vicki Bounds Class of '97

THE BATTALION

EDITORIAL STAFF
JAY ROBBINS, EDITOR IN CHIEF
ROB CLARK, MANAGING EDITOR
STERLING HAYMAN, OPINION EDITOR
GRETCHEN PERRENOT, CITY EDITOR
JODY HOLLEY, NIGHT NEWS EDITOR
STACY STANTON, NIGHT NEWS EDITOR
MICHAEL LANDAUER, AGGIELIFE EDITOR
NICK GEORGANDIS, SPORTS EDITOR
STEW MILNE, PHOTO EDITOR
STAFF MEMBERS
CITY DESK - ASSISTANT EDITOR: Eleanor Colvin; REPORTERS: Katherine Arnold, Javier Hinojosa, Scott McMahan,

Jill Saunders, Michael Simmons, Wes Swift & Tara Wilkinson
AGGIELIFE DESK - FEATURE WRITERS: Kristen Adams, Amy Collier & Libe Goad; COLUMNIST: Amy Uptmor
SPORTSWRITERS - David Winder and Lee Wright
OPINION DESK - ASSISTANT EDITOR: Kyle Littlefield; COLUMNISTS: Elizabeth Preston, Frank Stanford & David Taylor; CONTRIBUTING COLUMNISTS: Justin Barnett, Margaret Gordon, Alex Miller, Chris Stidvent & Mark Zane; EDITORIAL WRITERS: Jason Brown & Alex Walters; EDITORIAL CARTOONISTS: Brad Graeber & George Nast
PHOTOGRAPHERS - Mike Friend, Roger Hsieh, Nick Rodnicki & Eddy Wylie
PAGE DESIGNERS - NEWS: Kristin DeLuca; SPORTS: Robin Greathouse; AGGIELIFE: Stew Milne
COPY EDITORS - Rob Clark & Sterling Hayman
GRAPHIC ARTISTS - Toon Boonyavanich & Melissa Oldham

STRIP CARTOONISTS - Valerie Myers & Quatro Oakley
OFFICE STAFF - OFFICE MANAGER: Julie Thomas; CLERKS: Wendy Crockett & Heather Harris
NEWS: The Battalion news department is managed by students at Texas A&M University in the Division of Student Publications, a unit of the Department of Journalism.
News offices are in 013 Reed McDonald Building. The Battalion (USPS 045-360) is published daily, Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters and Monday through Thursday during the summer sessions (except University holidays and exam periods), at Texas A&M University. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77840.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.