

Facts needed before opinion

Tucked away behind shrubbery and foliage on the left corner of the Chemistry Building lies a wall plaque. Engraved on the plaque are the barely legible words of the famous philosopher Aristotle.



STERLING HAYMAN
MANAGING EDITOR

A&M still knowing nothing about different cultures. My guess is that the "Anthropology of Food and Nutrition" class or "Tropical Horticulture" will not provide the information I might need to understand a culture other than my own.

However, at least the University is making an effort — which is more than can be said about Congress right now.

Sen. Bob Dole and his cronies are now on a crusade to make English the "official" language of the country.

Well, it's a damn good thing. I can't tell you how many mornings I wake up sweating, fearing that when I go to school, everyone will be speaking Icelandic or Pig Latin. I dread having to be greeted every morning by "Owdy-hay" or "Oop-whay."

Is the English language in danger of becoming extinct? Or, are some people pissed off because "tawkin' in one of them forn tongues" is just un-American? I would guess the latter.

Americans have an odd way of adopting habits and characteristics and then never changing them. Ideally, society should evolve to represent the people. And today, there are many people in the United States who speak languages besides English.

Dole's solution to this is to ignore them, even though most are legal U.S. citizens.

Once again, "let us first understand the facts, and then we may see the cause."

The fact is that a small percentage of minorities vote, and when they do, it's usually not for Republicans. So Dole's response is ... screw 'em.

That's cause and effect for you.

Sometimes, however, members of Congress also feel the effects of causes.

Take, for example, former Sen. Bob Packwood, who resigned last week after 19 women accused him of sexual harassment.

His resignation came last week when the Senate Ethics Committee asked him to clean out his desk because it seemed clear that he had doctored his diary entries.

The following diary excerpt from Sen. Packwood was printed in Washington Compost, a political magazine. The suspected alterations are in all caps.

I can't tell you how many mornings I wake up fearing that when I go to school, everyone will be saying "Owdy-hay."

"September 5, 1977 ... Jane and I were working late tonight ... one time during a break when we were all alone I came over to her side of the desk and squeezed her ... MEMO and put my ... PENCIL in her ... BRIEFCASE ... and asked her to take off AS MUCH TIME AS SHE NEEDED FOR VACATION."

Well, there you have it, more cause and effect. Packwood should probably just leave his pencil at home the next time he decides to go on a vacation.

If more people would just follow Aristotle's advice, there would be fewer problems. Far too often we accept the first things that come to our mind, no matter how stupid or outlandish they may be.

Rather than jumping to conclusions about everything, we should attempt root out the causes and learn from them.

... and make life a little easier in the process.

Sterling Hayman is a senior political science major



MAIL CALL

More opinions on Faulkner's decision

I was an undergraduate student at Texas A&M in the '60s, and I, along with my two daughters, am currently an undergraduate student. In the '60s many used the same arguments Mr. Segrest expressed about the Citadel in their attempt to keep A&M from admitting women.

One of the biggest differences in attending class then and now is the improvement in the academic ability of my classmates.

The admission of women has played no small part in achievements made by this University in the past 30 years. If the Segrest line of thinking had prevailed in the '60s, I would now be attending a small school with declining enrollment, concerned with recruiting new students rather than having to turn them away.

The decision to admit women to Texas A&M was a good one, and we are most fortunate to have the benefit of their many contributions.

The Citadel should be so lucky.

*Howard Fetner
Class of '68*

"Everyone has heard about Shannon Faulkner and her ongoing battle with the Citadel. As a female, I can honestly say I do not feel she should have been admitted to the university.

Her actions were her way of proving she could get into the all-male university. Most females would honestly admit a male would never be admitted to an all-male university, even if the case was taken to court.

In Matt Segrest's article, he pointed out the Citadel was established 153 years ago. If the all-male school was successful for so long, why change it?

To prove a point and then not even fight the battle; actually living the life of a cadet.

She fought long and hard (two years) to live the life of a cadet, only to quit after three or four days of Hell Week.

Faulkner said the mental anguish was unbearable, did she actually think her fellow all-male cadets would be civil to her?

I think we all need to realize some things are the way they are for a good reason, not because any one person or institution is being sexist or has "anti-women sentiments."

The all-female universities outnumber the all-male universities 83 to three. The males deserve to have their three universities left alone.

*Dawn Humphreys
Class of '98*

Liberals rise above A&M conservatism

On time, upon arriving at my dorm, I found a herd of people congregated near my room. One of them stopped me to continue a political debate we had engaged in a week before.

After a few minutes, he glared at me and said, "You damn liberals should all go to t.u." Eva Darski shared his sentiment in a letter that appeared on September 13.

She says that she left Canada and came to Texas A&M not for the cowboy hats and coun-

try music but rather for the tradition, honor, and an environment where her beliefs (conservative) weren't ridiculed.

Unlike Darski, liberals obviously did not come to A&M because it is conservative, we came in spite of it.

Unlike Darski, I didn't come to starve school children, cut student loans or spew radically conservative propaganda; I came to be an Aggie. (This includes the tradition, honor and an accepting environment, along with cowboy hats and country music.)

Somehow, conservatism has become a quasi-tradition here. Thus, if by some curse of God you're not conservative, you meet with some permutation of Darski's clever phrase, "t.u. is accepting applications."

Is this really a tradition? "Gee, I don't have enough time to go to the games or build bonfire, the Dixie Chicken kinda scares me, and usually, I forget to take my hat off at the MSC, but at least I'm conservative."

I've never been to Canada, but in Aggieland, good Ags aren't snobs. We refuse to "ridicule" other Aggies. If more Ags are Republican than Democrat, that's great.

But A&M is not about "ridiculing" people or telling them to go to t.u. because of their beliefs. It's about education, inclusion, football, dominoes, good times and dare I say it, lots of beer.

*Jeff Miller
Class of '98*

Aggies not always gentlemen on bus

Got a little story for you about a bus ride at TAMU (whoop!).

I usually use my feet to get around, but I sometimes break down and take a bus to West Campus. One time, the bus was full when I got on, plus my hands were full. I was barely able to hold onto a rail. To my pleasure, a gentleman stood up and allowed me to sit. I did not expect this, it was simply a kindness he offered.

Perhaps I've been spoiled. It's entirely possible. I've been on many buses around campus and in a few major cities. That's why this particular morning affected me so much.

The bus quickly filled. More students filed in and the first two were young women.

I watched them make their way toward the back, looking for a seat which wasn't already filled.

About halfway back, after the first one passed, a guy got up and did the expected: offered his seat. The second girl accepted. And then ... what happened?

The only girl left standing on the bus was the first one. Every other one was offered a seat immediately. Why? I could point out her heritage — Indian, I think.

Maybe no one got up because she looked different. Selective chivalry? Is that where 30 years since the Civil Rights movement has brought us?

I wanted to apologize to her, to tell her things like that don't happen in Aggieland. I wanted to stand myself, but besides having to crawl over two guys wearing Christian "Life" shirts, I didn't want to insult her by embarrassing her.

Now, I just want it pointed out.

*Cynthia Clark
Class of '96*



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Attempting to accomplish too much

Trying to get a balanced education leads to overwork without fulfillment

"Get a little balance in your education."



DAVID TAYLOR
COLUMNIST

I've lost count of the number of times someone has shoved this handy little phrase down my throat.

I don't really know what it means, but I think after hearing it, I'm supposed to go and accomplish everything ... now.

So in this, what should be my last semester as an "undergrad" — Latin for "bend over and pay general use fees twice in one semester" — I decided to make sure to "balance" my education.

In other words, I signed up for everything under the sun.

In my third week of school I am now starting to realize what a "balanced education" is supposed to mean.

I feel like a duck at a shotgun convention, wearing bright orange and wearing a sign around my neck saying, "I'm in season."

I don't suppose anyone else can relate.

After all, these are the best years of our lives.

Sometimes around the end of this past summer, I spoke with one of the counselors in the business school about my plans for the fall.

After I finished, he was quiet for a minute. Then he opened a book sitting on his desk and asked me to take a look at its pages.

I felt an object lesson coming on, but I listened anyway ... not well enough, apparently.

The counselor asked me if I could read the pages.

It's amazing how few pages I have actually read during my college years, but I answered "yes" anyway.

Then came the kicker: "Would you be able to read the page if the words began in the crease and went off the edge of the page?"

Well, gee ... let me think.

The punch line kind of caught me off guard, and it makes perfect sense now.

"Just like a book needs margins to do any good," he related, "your life needs margins to really mean anything to you."

I just said, "Thanks," and then I walked out. But let me say it again.

I get it now. Too bad I didn't listen in the first place.

Allow me to impart my newfound wisdom to those less for-

tunate: If you try to do everything, you're not going to accomplish much.

At this point, I'm not sure how I'm going to pull this off. Before anyone thinks I'm feeling sorry for myself, think again.

Many of the things I'm doing and learning right now are things I've wanted to do all of my life. That, I guess, is the goal of education.

In other words, we're having fun, now — or we're supposed to be.

A few years back, I was looking for a way to blow off steam.

And since I was getting sick of punching my fist through the wall ... ok, of going to the emergency room because I had tried to put my fist through the wall and accidentally broken it — the fist I mean ...

I bought a guitar.

Being the dutiful student of music that I am, I went and bought every kind of "do it yourself in only 13 seconds a day" handbook. Ever seen the "Chuck's 12-step Learn the Guitar" video series on TV at three in the morning?

Yep, got that one, too.

In fact, after four years of practice and dedication, of long hours late at night, of swollen, aching fingers, I came to a striking conclusion.

I will always suck at guitar. Fortunately for me, however, no one else has to hear me play.

Well, no one except my neighbors in apartment 605 (sorry!).

Fortunately, neither have I made any 1 a.m. trips to the Death, er, I mean Health Center.

Like a book needs margins to be any good, life needs them for meaning.

Have you ever tried to think up an excuse for not being able to put your fist through a wall? You may as well just say, "Hi. I'm a wuss!"

Well, a long time ago my esteemed editor suggested, "Have a point. It makes things a lot easier on your readers."

I guess it's time to make one. As we all spend the next two months trying to figure out how to pay the retroactive fee increases bestowed on us by our benevolent regents, remember not to let words go over the edge of your pages.

You might also try listening to your counselors, studying for your classes and ignoring words like "balance."

Balance is overrated.

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