

Disregard for tradition makes frats unpopular

People have always been suspicious of groups. For instance, the Grateful Dead, the Colorado Buffaloes and, for some reason, the National Organization for Women.



ALEX MILLER
 COLUMNIST

It's practically human nature to cast critical attention on large groups of people gathering for whatever reason. We, as Aggies, are in no way above human nature, and in that respect we delve annually into debates on Bonfire, Gay and Lesbian student groups, Corps activities and never-forgotten fraternities. This year, I feel obligated to stir the pot. When I first came to A&M, I was fairly open to the idea of fraternities. Some of my friends had decided to rush, and I was only moderately offended that my friendship could not offer them what they seemed to crave. I became indignant toward fraternities when I began to realize that the more I was involved with Texas A&M, the less I was involved with my friends who had chosen the Greek path. When I decided to write about the subject, I asked a few people what their big problem with fraternities was. The responses I got were categorically the same, and spoken with the same fervor I hear my Greek friends speak with. The core of the anti-fraternity movement lies in these arguments, and it is for the purpose of clarity that I include them. The first argument against fraternities I encountered is the idea that they offer nothing that Texas A&M did not offer before their presence here. Unity and brotherhood have and hopefully will always be a part of this University. This can be found in dormitories, Bonfire, stu-

dent activities and in the abounding traditions at Texas A&M that seek to unite individuals as Aggies.

All of these institutions were here to gel our student population nearly a century before someone decided we needed fraternities to make the system fail-safe.

Fraternities have long since argued that service to the community justifies their existence, but the Corps of Cadets with March to the Brazos and the incredible independent turnout during Big Event both serve to show that Aggies were capable of community service before fraternities rallied around it.

The ensuing bad press to Texas A&M which seems to build with the expansion of the Greek system is another reason people choose not to support fraternities. In the past several years, fraternities have flocked to trouble like Bryan gang members to a monster-truck rally. Every semester

there is, at least, one blatant incident of wrong doing by fraternity members that ends up in the major newspapers dragging Texas A&M down with them.

Last spring it was group of fraternity members that broke into a police officer's house who made the front page. This summer, a fraternity was caught selling drugs. It goes on and on.

Aggies are tired of their name being tarnished by a faction of gentlemen who seem unable to conduct themselves with the integrity expected of students of this great University. Lastly and most importantly, many students feel that fraternities do not treat the traditions and ideals of Texas A&M with the respect they deserve. When tradition is the common link among A&M students everywhere, those who do not actively support these traditions, as a rule, command less respect. Every year I read the publications sent to incoming freshmen by fraternities. Usually I am shocked

when I come to the part that expounds on all the activities the fraternities support.

I know from involvement in student activities that they have greatly inflated their role or, in fact, directly lied to incoming Aggies.

I am sometimes dismayed at members of fraternities when they show careless attention to A&M honor and tradition, but I am angered when their disregard does not seem to embarrass them whatsoever.

Recently, I was standing behind two fraternity members at a local club. When one asked the other whether he was going to attend Muster, he replied in a clear voice, "No, that's a dead Aggie thing." I'm sure he was joking.

Last year a fraternity chose to hold a mixer during the first Silver Taps. Do you think they would have been partying if they had lost one of their own?

Two years ago a fraternity sat en masse in the Kyle Field end zone at every home game. Maybe there were already enough Aggies standing.

In no way am I saying all fraternities act in poor taste.

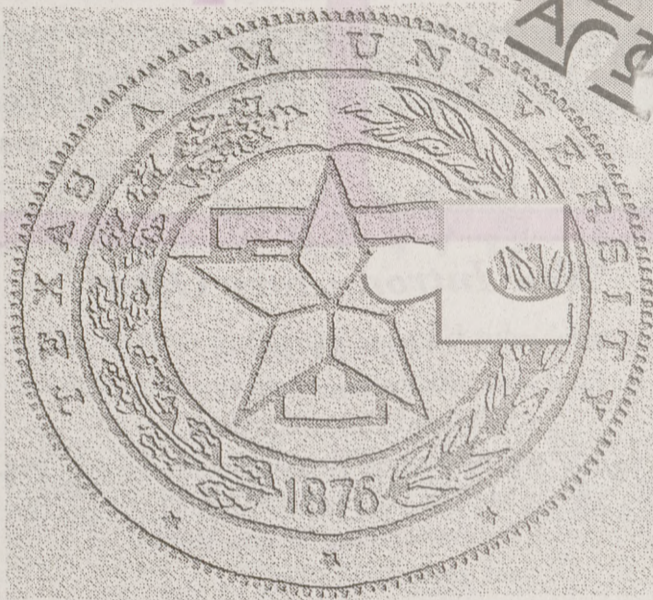
Many of the fraternity members I know are exceptional Aggies. They realized a long time ago that the only way to win Texas A&M over was to be above reproach.

This is a respectable attribute for anyone regardless of their social inclinations.

No other school in the nation supports its own the way we do.

The idea that someone has to be anything more than an Aggie to gain acceptance is sad to Aggies old and new.

Alex Miller is a senior bioenvironmental science major



MAIL CALL

A senior reflects on A&M quirks

I came to this University as a fish in the fall of '92. Since then, I have grown a little older and a little wiser, but there are still some questions I would like answered. For instance, what is that malodorous white stuff blowing out of the man-holes on West Campus and Northside? Is it just smoke seeping past the gates of hell, or A&M's cold fusion/alchemy experiments flushed down the drain? Since I was a fish I have wondered why the premier engineering building on campus (Zachry) has so many broken, wobbly, mismatched seats with tiny right-handed desks. This is the very reason lefties have to curl their hand up-side down to write. Perhaps there should be a left-handed awareness class to learn how to deal with them. "Dining on campus is fun!" Does anyone believe that yet? While we are talking about Sbis, is there any way the Student Senate can outlaw pimentos in all of the vegetable dishes? Where does the University get toilet paper? Russian military surplus? There are bicycle lanes for a reason, Ags. Can we use them? Where did all of the cars in fish lot come from? Back in ol' army days (1994) there was acres and acres of parking in fish lot. I don't know where off-campus people park anymore. At least the state's largest grackle population is gone. Maybe the evil white clouds killed them all. Can Moses Hall show a little class at Midnight Yell and hush up during the good bull story? The sidewalks — who designed those? Someone from Venice who didn't understand that canals are not cool in Texas? How hard can it be to make water run off the sidewalks? While we are at it, does it really make the grass any greener when you run the sprinklers in the rain? PITS — I really do not think the "S" stands for service. What about the truth in labeling act? How about just PIT — Parking Ticket Troopers. Why do University-educated people step out in front of buses? It just can't be safe to step out in front of 18 tons of steel with brakes that sound the way those do.

Before someone writes the traditional October letter saying that the "Howdy" tradition is dying, let me just say that it is not dying, it just hits a seasonal slump. Folks are just a little less chipper when it is 45 degrees and they have just been screwed by a calculus test. I have recently become aware of a small problem of Aggies who are unfamiliar with some traditions. I propose The Batt publish a traditions supplement including the proper wildcats, Aggie slang, no wave on Kyle field, E-Walk, 12th man and Bonfire. As a closing statement, I would encourage everyone to write in and liven up Mail Call a little bit this year. P.S. This is not a Frat, CT or College Republican rebuttal.

David Halvorson
 Class of '96

Reason for Dial-A-Ride bike policy

I am writing in regards to Missy Mitchell's letter in Mail Call on Oct. 2.

I am sorry about her particular situation, but I have several points to make.

1) Dial-A-Ride is for the safety of the students, 2) it was not our fault that your meeting ran long 3) it was not our fault you were on a bike 4) and it's not our fault you were locked out of your building. Did it ever occur to you that if we allowed people to put bikes on the bus it would only be a matter of time before everyone would ride with their bikes. You could just leave your bike, get on the bus, ride home in total safety and then get your bike the next morning by catching a Rudder bus. Being a freshman, you still have four years at this University, you should learn how the system works before you criticize it. I am a bus driver and have been for almost four years. I have heard many complaints, but the fact is that your poor planning caused your misfortune. We would have been more than happy to take you home, just not your bike. We also could not compromise the safety of others by allowing your bike on the bus.

Sean Kilgore
 Class of '95
 accompanied by 8 signatures



Size weighs heavily on student minds

Waiting on the curb for my parents to pick me up from the airport after my first semester of college, I watched as they continuously circled the passenger pick-up area. It was obvious that they were looking for me, but even as I tried to flag them down, they still passed me by. Didn't they see me?



PAMELA BENSON
 COLUMNIST

The car suddenly halted and flew back in reverse. At that moment I realized that my 30 pound weight gain had altered my appearance. My parents didn't even recognize me. Come to think of it, I would hardly recognize myself. At the time I was unable to recognize my problem, but I continued to eat. One day I sunk so low I just stayed in bed. Unlike anorexia or bulimia, the disorder that overwhelmed me isn't often spoken of. It's called overeating, and believe it or not, it's a disorder like these. The National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders states that there are 7 million females and 1 million males in the United States that suffer from eating disorders. The scary part about overeating is that you don't immediately recognize it as a problem. It sneaks up on you like a shark. Then you realize that you aren't eating to fulfill physical needs, but emotional ones. Anything fattening, rich or good old junk food became a regular part of my day. Food was no longer only for survival — food was a cure. Not only was food always present at vari-

ous social occasions, it could be found in my dorm room, my purse and backpack. The cycle of junk food didn't end there. Food cured me whenever I was sad, mad, depressed, stressed, angry, happy, excited or just plain bored. As a matter of fact, eating when I wasn't hungry became as much a part of my life as brushing my teeth. Not only had my body changed, but my attitude had as well. I was withdrawn and bitter, and friends stopped coming around. My behavior had driven my friends away. My family tried to be supportive, but my actions and the emotional roller coaster I was constantly on drove them crazy. They constantly walked on eggshells trying not to offend an over-sensitive me. Making the situation worse, my older brother, who had spent the majority of his life overweight, had begun a new health action plan on which he lost 70 pounds. The positive comments I once received about my appearance were all concentrated on him. My jealousy drove me deeper into my depression. Finally my parents stopped walking on glass to please me and bluntly told me to do something about my weight. They were tired of seeing me depressed, and my attitude brought unnecessary stress to their lives. Realizing that I was hurting myself and my family, I knew it was time to begin a health action plan. I started focusing not only on weight loss, but also on self-improvement. Regular visits to a local health club and a complete change in lifestyle started me on

my way to recovery. I use the word recovery because I honestly was sick. It took more than eating vegetables and drinking several glasses of water a day to cure my problem. My attitude, my self esteem and my overall image of myself needed restructuring. It only took a month before I started to see results. The weight eventually began to fall off. The first time I got on the scale, I had lost five pounds. It only took that one time to hook me. After working hard, the results finally began to surface. It was only a matter of time before the real Pam came back to life. I'm still going strong 26 pounds later. It's not just about the weight loss, it's about feeling good about myself. Some people notice the weight loss, some don't. The important part is I have a new walk, a new talk and a new outlook. I feel like I've been paroled and its great. The best part about it is that I like myself again, and I know that I'm the only person who can control how I look and feel. Four years ago, I would have never thought that a weight gain could tear me down. I can't say that I would want to experience that problem again. But I do guarantee that I will never ever forget the pain I put my family through and the damage I did to myself. Over-eating is a dangerous disease that is often overlooked in modern society. My war against it was successful, but difficult. I will never again depend on food for emotional support.

Pamela Benson is a junior journalism major