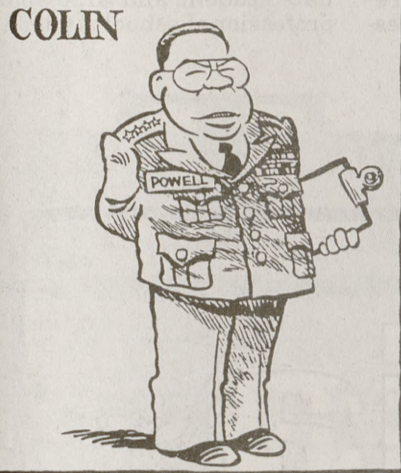


Coming Out Week (Oct. 9-12)



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MARGULIES

THE BATTALION
Established in 1893

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EDITORIAL

EYEING THE PRICE

The creation of a committee to oversee fee changes is a smart move.

Last night, Texas A&M students could see how Student Government is working to serve them. In its first public meeting, the Student Fee Oversight Committee made a pledge to the students to keep them informed on recent and future fee changes. After a series of such changes culminated in the general use fee increase, Toby Boenig, student body president, felt the need to create the committee. In doing so, he identified a need that was not being met.

With all of the various fees students have to pay each semester, most students do not know exactly where the money is going. When the fees are increased, they are not well-informed about why they are expected to pay more.

In reality, most of the fees are spent for valid reasons, but students do not realize this and cannot easily find out this information. In addition, until the creation of the Student Fee Oversight Committee, no orga-

nized group existed that was devoted to representing the students' interests in matters of fee changes.

Based on the first meeting, it appears the committee is taking its job seriously. The members have already displayed insight into the issues they are facing and common sense in organizing the committee. For example, dividing the committee into smaller groups to study each major fee individually is a good idea.

Unfortunately, the committee did little to inform the student body that the meeting was taking place. Given the committee's focus on awareness, it should do more to inform the public of its meetings and activities.

Boenig and the Student Senate deserve credit for their quick and effective response to the fee increases. Hopefully, the student body will appreciate the effort, and the new committee will live up to its potential.



Tech fans did not show Ags respect

This letter is in reference to the game against Texas Tech. We were outscored, but that is not what angers me. For all the Ags that were unable to attend, let me fill you in.

After the game was over, Tech students jumped out of the stands onto the field and joined the players in celebration.

Meanwhile, we were having our yell practice in the stands. This is where it gets bad.

The Tech mob soon saw that we had not left the stadium and rushed over to rub it in our faces.

They had every right to express their support for their team, but that is where it should have ended. Three or four security guards attempted to hold the mob off our Yell Leaders and Boot Line.

But during our Yells and "Spirit," Tech fans ran to the Yell Leaders, pointed their "guns" in their faces and ran around hitting Boot Line with their caps while the Ags were humping it.

Other Tech fans were flipping us off and showing us where they had written A&M sucks on their backs. There are other instances of poor sportsmanship I could mention, but I think you get the point.

On behalf of every Aggie, I

MAIL CALL

would like to say how proud I am of our Yell Leaders and Boot Line. They handled the situation with class. It sure would have been tempting to "Beat the Hell" outta some Tech fans.

I realize that the actions of some people cannot represent the whole school, but that is why Texas A&M is a notch above other schools.

We don't demean our field in that manner. Also, our students would never allow something like that to happen. It makes me proud to be an Aggie.

The team did get outscored and we all have our opinions why and ideas on what needs to be done. But remember the days of Ol' Army when Ags were glad to get a first down. Whether we win or lose, one thing still remains — we're still Aggies.

Beat the hell outta s.m.u.!

*Lee Wall
Class of '94*

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

We reserve the right to edit letters for length, style and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald. A valid student ID is required. Letters may also be mailed to:

The Battalion - Mail Call
013 Reed McDonald Fax:
Texas A&M University (409) 845-2647
College Station, TX E-mail:
77843-1111 Batt@tamvm1.tamu.edu

At A&M: Count on your Allies

Wanted: any gay, lesbian or bisexual person who enjoys being taunted, ridiculed and outright disrespected. Texas A&M University is the place to be.

There are many perks such a person will receive at Texas A&M. For example, on our lovely campus, homosexual and bisexual Aggies can be terrified to hold hands with their mates.

Our traditions are so exclusive that when a touchdown is scored at a football game, kissing a partner could result in having someone spit or throw food.

But the fun doesn't stop there. Gay, lesbian and bisexual students will have the opportunity to attend programs that feature guest speakers who say not only that their lifestyle is wrong, but that homosexuals are living in sin and going to hell.

These Aggies are held accountable for the origin and



PAMELA BENSON
COLUMNIST

spread of AIDS, and are called friendly names like "faggot" or "dyke."

Finally, we will do our best to make sure everyone is exposed to homophobic jokes daily.

And just when gay, lesbian or bisexual students think they have had enough, they'll meet — their Allies.

Allies are people who respect other's sexual orientation and don't prejudice on that basis.

Allies are students who will respect each individual's right to display affection to mates when a gay or lesbian couple is walking to class.

These Aggies believe that their religious beliefs are theirs — and not necessarily everyone else's.

Allies know that the AIDS affects everyone and does not cater to the misinformation about the origins of the virus. They want all students to

have a good time wherever they choose to go out.

Aggies like this will consistently confront those who choose to tell offensive jokes about other people's sexual preference.

These students focus on accepting differences and opening themselves to learn more. These fellow Aggies remember the spirit that our campus was founded on and promote the sense of community for which A&M is known.

At A&M, there are programs and departments like Multicultural Services, Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Aggies and Allies which work to make this place an environment where all people are allowed to be themselves.

Another source of support is just a phone call away. Calling the Gayline will allow a person to talk to and identify with someone who is understanding of what is faced on campus and in everyday life.

There is another way for gay, lesbian or bisexual Aggies to receive support as well.

12) offers the opportunity to celebrate being themselves.

These Aggies can meet new people with coming out stories at the special rap session. They can also learn to cope with the lack of respect and understanding displayed on this campus.

We all should feel free to celebrate Coming Out Week privately or in silence. The choice should be made on an individual basis.

No one should spoil the one-week opportunity to attend programs that deal with issues facing the gay community.

Make an effort to simply be happy. Everyone should have that right.

Educate, inform and answer the questions that some may need answered in order to better understand.

Take pride in this week.

And remember, there are people out there who do support individuals' choices.

Pamela Benson is a senior journalism major

Coming out to a better way of life

Several months ago I wrote a letter to a friend who I will call "Dave." I had not seen this person in a while and I wanted to keep in touch and catch him up on things that had been happening.



JEFF ANDERSON
GUEST COLUMNIST

My business was for sale, and I was applying to graduate school. Dave knew my plans and ambitions as well as anyone else in the world, and seemed to have an interest in them.

However, he found out something about me in that letter that he could not accept, and he found it hard to associate with me again despite the friendship we had.

What did I tell him in that letter? What made this man so afraid that he would be 'guilty by association' just because he was my friend?

I told him that I was gay.

In other words, I "came out" to Dave.

Coming out is a life-long process, so I should not be impatient with Dave. It took me 18 of my 32 years to come out to myself. I hope it doesn't take him that long to accept me, because he is a good man, and I do not want to lose him as a friend.

I am lucky in most respects because almost everyone that I have told so far has accepted me. All of my siblings, nieces and nephews know about my orientation.

My parents will know any day now, if they don't know already. Even after all of my family and friends learn of my preference, I will need to decide whether or not to tell other people.

Some people will accept the news and some, like Dave, will not.

It is because of the negative reactions that lesbians, bisexuals and gays are compelled to regulate the sharing of their true

relationships, jobs and lives depend on this lie, because they must hide from those whom they believe would be biased against them.

One way to avoid this problem is to not come out. But many gays are tired of hiding and need to be open.

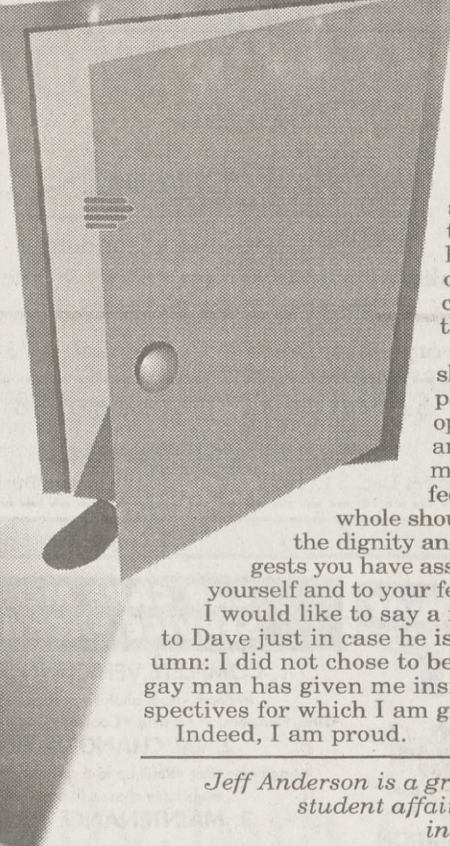
Some people might suggest that they stop being gay, yet those that are gay can no more change their sexual orientation than they could change the color of their skin.

The irony is that most heterosexuals would never hide their orientation, yet some would hide their support for gay family and friends. They too are in the closet and afraid.

Do you fear gays and lesbians? And if you do, do you know why?

Stereotypes, religious dogmas and ignorance give many people, including many homosexuals, a negative image that perpetuates an irrational fear of homosexuals called "homophobia."

Because of this fear we hide, and because we ourselves hide, we are not known by society as ordinary people. The cycle goes on. In fact, we are



a diverse group of people of all races, sexes, ages, political parties and religions.

This is why there is a coming out week, because it gives us an opportunity to come out of the closet and draw attention to our similarities.

Our efforts and goals are directed towards the common good and the fact that we do not want special rights, only equal ones.

These are the same interests that all people have, to live an open life with the companionship of the people we love.

Coming out should become a part of your philosophy of living. Act and live in the manner which you feel society as a whole should act — with the dignity and poise that suggests you have assigned value to yourself and to your fellow humans.

I would like to say a few more things to Dave just in case he is reading this column: I did not choose to be gay, yet being a gay man has given me insights and perspectives for which I am grateful.

Indeed, I am proud.

Jeff Anderson is a graduate student of student affairs administration in higher education

Know the facts before deciding

Students should know facts before forming an opinion on the cultures courses

Many students have heard the recent talk of a mandated cultures course being instituted at Texas A&M University.

However, amidst heavy debate from both sides, many facts regarding the cultures requirement have been misconstrued. The students of Texas A&M should know the facts regarding this matter.

This issue is not new. It has been in existence for about two years now, following a bill put forth by the Faculty Senate which was approved on Nov. 8, 1993.

In this proposal, the Core Curriculum Oversight Subcommittee approved a mandated six-hour cultures course requirement as an addition to the core curriculum of all students.

Three hours would be satisfied in a U.S. cultures requirement, which is described as a course that would "take into account groups such as African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, European Americans, and American women. Connections between majority and minority perspectives, or different minority perspectives, must be developed."

The remaining three hours would be fulfilled in an international requirement, which is described as a course that "must incorporate a comparative international perspective on agriculture, business, culture, education, engineering, geography, history, science or society."

The bill states that any course fulfilling one of these two requirements must contain at least 33 percent of the issues detailed in the course descriptions.

It also says that no single course could be used to satisfy both requirements, but that "a course satisfying another core category, satisfying a college/departments requirement or used as a free elective" can be used to fulfill either of the two three hour courses.

The Faculty Senate bill, after approval, was sent to the Dr. E. Dean Gage, interim president, for executive approval. The bill was not approved at that time and now sits on the desk of current Texas A&M president, Dr. Ray Bowen, who has yet to make a decision concerning the issue.

In the fall of 1993, the Student Senate also passed a bill calling for the implementation of a cultures course requirement. However, the Student Senate's bill differed from the Faculty Senate's bill in a number of ways.

First of all, the Student Senate's bill changed the six-hour requirement to three hours. These three hours could be fulfilled with a U.S. cultures course or an international course.

Secondly, the Student Senate's bill included a clause which would establish a committee comprised of three members of the Faculty Senate, three members of the Student Senate and a chairperson from the Academic Operations Committee.

This proposed committee would provide jurisdiction over any "additions or deletions to the number or type of classes offered under this elective."

Finally, the Student Senate's bill called for the requirement to be uniform for all colleges and that the courses satisfying the elective be chosen from a list compiled by the Student Senate, which included close to 100 courses.

This bill was also passed and resides on Dr. Bowen's desk for consideration. As of this moment, this bill is the official opinion of the students at Texas A&M University.

However, the issue reappeared for consideration at the request of two student senators on Sept. 20.

The request was granted and the issue was sent to the Academic Affairs Committee for research and debate concerning the current Student Senate's position.

At the Academic Affairs Committee meeting, the members decided that a bill should be written to repeal the former Student Senate's bill passed two years ago.

This repeal was written and presented on Oct. 4 to the Student Senate and then referred back to committee.

The purpose of this request for repeal (which has not been voted on yet) was to allow the Student Senate to educate the students of Texas A&M University and discover the general position held by these students.

The repeal should not be construed as an action taken by the Senate to deplore or advocate the institution of cultures courses.

However, it is imperative that all students understand this issue, and after reviewing all of the facts, they can then inform their senators of their opinion.

The Student Senate, in order to properly represent the student body, must know the opinions of their constituents.

A forum concerning the cultures course requirement will be held Oct. 12 at 5 p.m. in the MSC Flagroom in order to educate, facilitate debate and discern the current opinion of the student body regarding the cultures course requirement.

It is important that all students attend and speak their minds on this issue.

Bo Armstrong is a junior computer science major

Chris Miller is a sophomore English major