

Strides of march must be furthered

It is finished. Those who attended the Million Man March have returned home with their souvenir T-shirts and buttons. The remnants of the march have long since been cleaned up.

Many have deemed the march a success, but as the hush over the Mall takes the place of the inspirational words that reverberated across America, the question arises: "What is next?"

This question plagued me. After all, the march has little value if the unity and positive feeling fades away.

But last week I attended a forum sponsored by Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity that renewed my hope that the achievement accomplished in Washington was not in vain.

I heard three simple, but effective suggestions on how to further the positive impact established by the march. Cedra Brown, a student who attended the forum and the march, suggested a three-point plan to get the African-American community back on track.

"First we need to focus on being more brotherly and sisterly towards each other. The next step is to promote voting, and lastly, we need to take up the slack for young children by going to the area school and being a mentor," Brown said.

As usual the audience members nodded their heads in affirmation, but unfortunately the same people who talked about the changes, will do little in their everyday lives to help make the change.

The idea of being brotherly and sisterly toward one another isn't anything new.

The basis of that point originates from the lack of friendliness that African-American students show toward one another when walking on campus. Although a simple hello could work to break the barrier among African-Americans on campus, that is just a minute part of being brotherly and sisterly.

The idea of being brotherly and sisterly toward each other isn't as simple as saying "hello." Extending a hand — tutoring one another, offering a ride or simply lending an ear to someone who needs help are all ways in which African-Americans can show their brotherly

PAMELA
BENSON
COLUMNIST



and sisterly love.

Promoting political awareness isn't anything new either. It is time to realize that in order to have a voice in America, it is important to be knowledgeable of politics.

It is useless to complain about being under represented in politics, but until voter-turnout increases considerably, African-Americans will not be taken seriously.

The children of the African-American community should not be overlooked. If we are able to make time to go to the mall, or to a party, we can certainly make time to visit a child who may only need a little attention which could make a positive change in their lives.

Other suggestions that emphasized similar change dealt with a more personal plea to students on campus. David Washington, Student Government executive vice president, suggested that students get more involved in all facets of Aggie life. "Where you see there isn't a black face in an organization, put your own there."

For instance, the number of African Americans that participate in student senate are not representative of the population at Texas A&M. The change could be made if African-Americans decided to apply for those positions in order to have more input on issues that concern students.

But it doesn't stop at Texas A&M. There are state-level positions to be filled, and national positions that could be filled which would strengthen African-American representation.

Another Aggie who attended the forum, Germaine Hailey, somewhat echoed this sentiment when he said, "Where we don't have representation, we have weakness."

All of these suggestions and the march that spawned them, have one thing in common: African-Americans have the power to change their communities and the world around them.

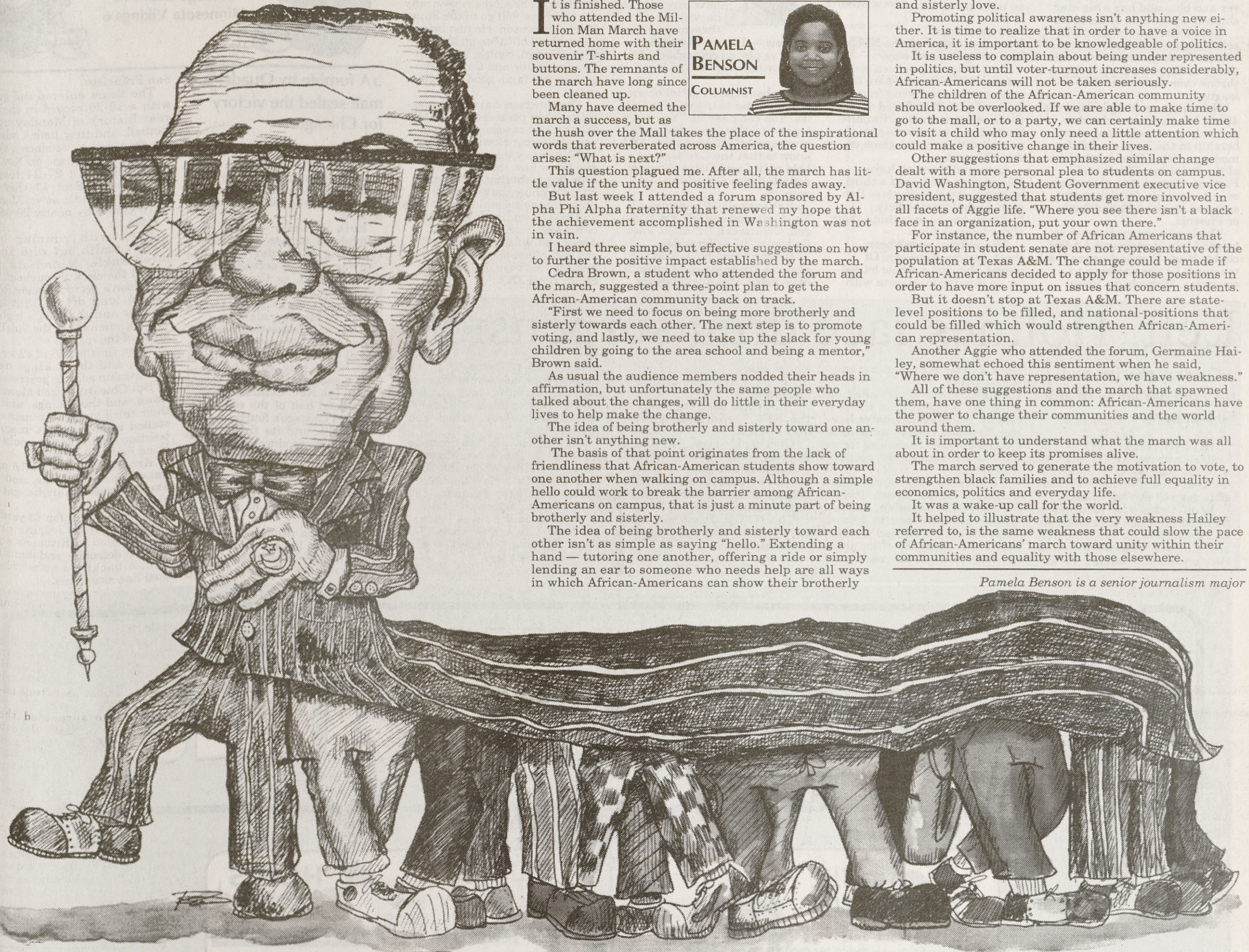
It is important to understand what the march was all about in order to keep its promises alive.

The march served to generate the motivation to vote, to strengthen black families and to achieve full equality in economics, politics and everyday life.

It was a wake-up call for the world.

It helped to illustrate that the very weakness Hailey referred to, is the same weakness that could slow the pace of African-Americans' march toward unity within their communities and equality with those elsewhere.

Pamela Benson is a senior journalism major



Library takes back seat to gridiron

I guess it's time that we as a group of relatively intelligent University students faced up to some of the unpleasant facts around here.

Our football team is really popular. Our library is not.

Our football team gets a bunch of money and alumni and student support.

Our library does not.

People go to our football games and stand for hours on end in the blazing sun, often times kept from fainting only by the sharp kick of a good-minded traditionalist Aggie standing right behind them.

People go to the library, rip some pages out of some random periodicals, photocopy their friend's butts, throw books all over the damn place, eat Tabasco-flavored Fritos and jalapeno-coated Trail Mix while using the computers and then fall asleep in one of the less well-lit study rooms.

Those of us who are not really sports-minded, as in we never really had a chance to make the Twelfth Man, often pause to ask ourselves why this might be.

Why do our fellow Aggies love athletics so much and show such astounding apathy when it comes to doing what we are supposed to be doing around here?

That's studying, by the way.

Maybe it's because athletics in general are more exciting than academics. I guess that's one possible explanation, and it makes sense when one considers how much money our University just spent for that fab new sports complex. Yet, I don't think that quite covers the issue.

Here are some possible alternative reasons. Has anybody checked out the penalties for overdue books around here lately?

I think if you keep a book for something like six months, you "might get barred in the future from further library borrowing privileges." Gee, that's a stiff punishment.

A student could just run down to the library, check out some books, and then turn around and loan them to his friends for a fee. I think the library limit on how many

CHRIS
STIDVENT
COLUMNIST



books a person can check out is somewhere around 800.

So let's get this straight. I can go down to the library, check out an entire floor's worth of books on some subject that I think students might want to research in the near future, and then open my own little book-lender's operation right in front of Sterling C. Evans.

I figure I could charge the students something like \$5 a day, and then when my six months are up, simply go back to the front desk and get a whole new batch of books.

There are tougher ways to work my way through school.

Now, let's compare this with the penalty for running on Kyle Field. Those of us who remember the old midnight yell practices of a couple of years ago can look back fondly.

We remember fellow students getting the holy hell beaten out of them by the Corps of Cadets as they tried to sprint across our illustrious football field.

Same thing holds for Simpson Drill Field. For some good ole Aggie fun, throw an unsuspecting individual onto the band's practice field and watch the band pour screaming out of its dorms and take turns kicking the poor guy in the ribs and gleefully step on his head.

I propose that we make the penalties for overdue books a little more harsh. Maybe we could have our own little library goon squad.

Turn in a book three months overdue, and they haul you out back and take turns punching you in the face.

If the book is six months late, they could tar and feather you and parade you around Kyle Field at halftime.

Or, better yet, they take you over to Simpson Drill Field, tie your feet together, and throw you in the middle wearing a "University of Texas Rules" sweatshirt.

And how about that beeping noise that goes off when students "forget" that they stashed seven magazines and three books under their overcoats and made a dash for the front door.

Let's set up a trap door over a pit of alli-

gators and just dump them right down in there. Sure, the books might get eaten, but at least we'll cut down on theft.

Or maybe we could throw some statues up in the library lobby.

Our University alumni seem to have an unnatural fascination for putting up metal monuments to our dearly departed students and heroes.

There's some kind of relationship between the amount of money that a University institution receives and the number of statues that can be found within a hundred-yard vicinity of it.

Head over to Kyle Field and take a look at the Reveille graves, the Twelfth Man statue and the brand-new \$3-million "Coach's Endowed Spot."

That's right, \$3 million for a big rock with somebody's name on it.

If we put up a bunch of statues in our library, maybe some wealthy alumni will be fooled into thinking that they play sports there. It doesn't really matter who the statues are supposed to represent, maybe we can have some sort of tribute to our dearly departed chief microfilm curators.

Then we could dress up or librarians in their official "Academic Twelfth Man Jerseys" and make them run wind sprints from the front doors to the elevators and back. Boy, I bet the money and support would just come pouring in.

Or maybe we could think up some traditions for our library. We spend the entire football game humping it, stepping off the wood, standing up and generally contributing to an advanced state of heat exhaustion and fluid dehydration.

I say we get rid of all of the tables in the library, make everybody uncover when they walk in the front door and tell everybody to "keep off the grass."

If they ask us what grass we're talking about, we'll make them do a yell.

We'll make our library as popular as our football team if it kills us.

Chris Stidvent is a senior English and philosophy major

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BITTER SWEETS

Conservative parents should not ruin Halloween fun for schoolchildren.

Tonight, "kids" of all ages will celebrate one of America's most enjoyable holidays — Halloween. Strangely enough, some people want to see it ended.

In the 2,000 years Halloween has existed, it has evolved from a Celtic ritual, to a Christian holiday, and now to a non-religious festival. The current purpose of Halloween is simple — to have fun.

However, a hypersensitive group of Americans has identified Halloween as glorifying evil, or even Satan. Not content to privately maintain these beliefs, these people are hell-bent on eliminating Halloween wherever they can, particularly from public schools.

Although the idea that Halloween is satanic is ridiculous, these people are having some success. Some schools, fearing lawsuits and irate parents, are suppressing Halloween observances just to satisfy a small fringe group.

According to an Associated Press story, the principal of a Boyertown, Pa. elementary

school eliminated Halloween to appease parents who had "satanic-type concerns."

Granted, Halloween does suffer from problems, such as an occasional prank gone too far, or candy that has been tampered with. These problems are serious, but they are rare and generally unrepresentative of the holiday.

Those who argue for the elimination of the holiday call to mind the story of the Puritan who would lie awake at night, worried that somebody, somewhere, was having a good time.

Apparently, some people are disturbed by the idea of a holiday in which people have fun for the sake of having fun, but that is exactly the appeal of Halloween. It allows even young children to understand and appreciate it, while adults can also have a good time.

Halloween should remain a time when kids can have fun without worrying that someone will take it away. With all the fun at stake, the thought of ending it is just plain scary.