

THE BATTALION
Established in 1893

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Aggies can learn a lot from Loupot

If the final question on Heaven's entrance exam was "What does it mean to be an Aggie?"—would you be able to answer it definitively?

I don't know if I could. Aggie-ness is a rather mercurial quality. Every time one tries to pin it down, it moves. Historically, being an Aggie meant one thing. Currently, it could very well mean something different. It depends on how you define it.

Consequently, A&M struggles to figure out how it can be both a large, world class university and a small, cozy Texas-flavored college at the same time. The juxtaposition of the state of Texas (a diverse and heavily populated state) and Texas A&M (an old-fashioned university with strong ties to the past) has caused more than a little discomfort in Aggieland.

A lot of what it means to be an Aggie is personal. The perception is that there seem to be fewer experiences that bring the student body together than existed in Ol' Army days.

Midnight Yell tries, but so many of the students there are drunk that I would hardly call all of that unison yelling 'unity.' The same could be said about Bonfire, except even more students are drunk, and we don't even yell in unison.

Reveille is cute, but you don't have to be an Aggie to appreciate a darling dog, so she can't exactly be called our rallying point.

Occasionally, however, something will remind you what it means to be an Aggie. Maybe not definitively, but generally.

Such is the case with Judson Loupot, class of '32, better known round these parts as Ol' Army Lou. With Loupot's passing, we have an opportunity to reflect on the life of a good Aggie and figure out how we can be better Aggies.

His life is an illustration of what it means to be an Aggie, and by following his example, we could all end up a little or a lot better than we started.

Loupot started school here in 1928, just a couple years before the depression hit. He and his roommate started a business out of

their dorm room during their junior year. Who hasn't wanted to make some money out of their dorm room or apartment? If I had a nickel for every scheme I had thought up to make an extra buck, I'd have that extra buck. But Loupot did it, which is rare. He displayed a go-get-em attitude, a com-

mendable Aggie trait.

After he had established himself as a local business owner, Loupot still helped out around Aggieland. He often tried to work out new schemes to help the cadets. On hot days, Loupot would provide the Corps with ice.

Loupot tried to help other students, too, by lending out merchandise and even money, based only on Aggie word, when the need arose.

He was helpful, a trait not just for boy scouts anymore. All Aggies might try helping each other out more often. We share a bond, for better or worse, that might as well work toward our advantage. Think about the golden rule, then think about how you could apply it, as Ol' Army Lou did.

"For these past 40 or 50 years he's just been a quintessential cheerleader for Texas A&M. Whenever you meet him, you walk away with a smile. If anyone bled maroon, it was him," said Don Ganter, owner of the Dixie Chicken, and northgate neighbor of Loupot's.

While John Raney, owner of the Texas Aggie bookstore, was constructing his store, Ol' Army Lou would often bring over drinks and conversation.

"He was a friendly guy and a good friend," Raney said, another northgate

neighbor and competitor.

He was friendly. And furthermore, he was friendly toward people that he wasn't expected to be friendly to, not always an easy task. Wouldn't it solve a lot of problems around here if we reached out to those who we felt most justified in ignoring or shunning? If we were friendly to each other, we might be more inclined to be tolerant and accepting.

Ol' Army Lou's generosity was observed by many, especially Shri Parchure, text-

book manager at Loupot's at Northgate.

"He used to help A&M students in any way that he could. He did so many little things for so many students that you couldn't even count them."

He was generous, not only with material goods, but also with his energy and time — two extremely precious commodities. Again, we could all benefit from his example of giving without expecting anything in return.

Judson Loupot proved what it truly means to be an Aggie: a go-getter, friendly, helpful and generous.

It's rare that a person becomes an Aggieland tradition, but Ol' Army Lou, through his kindness and true Aggie spirit, joins the ranks of other larger than life legends, E. King Gill and James Earl Rudder.

It was said of Loupot, "He befriended every Aggie that came through the door." So too should we befriend every Aggie who comes through our door. In doing so, Aggieland would be a much more tolerant and admirable place.

Erin Hill is a graduate pursuing a teaching certificate

ERIN HILL
COLUMNIST



Loupot

EDITORIAL TASTELESS TALK

R.C. Slocum's Chalk Talk underestimates women.

Thanks to R.C. Slocum, head coach of the A&M football team, local women can turn off the soap operas and turn on a football game, and understand it almost as much as men.

Last night's "Ladies' Chalk Talk with R.C." dinner offered women a chance to hear A&M football players and coaches give a lesson about football. The purpose was for women, naturally ignorant compared to men on football's difficult intricacies, could learn a little and share an important component of a man's life — weekend football.

Slocum addressed crucial issues, such as how many players take the field for each team (11) and who the man in the white hat is (the referee).

In sensing the women's ignorance, he openly assumed they knew little or nothing about the sport. To put it on a level they could under-

stand, he related it to powder puff football.

Women all over Aggieland should be grateful that Slocum is willing to take the time to correct their mental deficiencies.

The players and coaches, especially Slocum, should have exercised better judgment in their remarks. Although a gathering for women to discuss football is not insulting itself, the condescending and sexist attitude displayed at the dinner is.

To see Slocum express this sentiment is particularly disappointing, considering that women fill Kyle Field during home games and cheer on his team with the same knowledge as men.

Perhaps Slocum should do less to educate women on the basics of football and do more to educate his football team on the basics of offense.



The negative on affirmative action

Bill Clinton has admitted affirmative action needs some work but is a good program. Phil Gramm has made the elimination of affirmative action a central plank in his platform.

Commentator Dinesh D'Souza feels affirmative action is defeated by its own logic. Stanley Fish, a Duke law professor, offers a serious argument for fighting historical patterns of discrimination with modern forms of discrimination.

People on all sides of this controversial issue have offered sound justifications for both sides of the affirmative action debate. But perhaps the most profound quote concerning the legal ramifications of affirmative actions policies comes from a little known law professor.

Benjamin Cardozo says "In law, there is a tendency for a principle to unfold to the limits of its logic." A few recent incidents confirm this notion.

The idea behind affirmative action is noble. Even though America is a great country full of opportunities, we have a history of withholding opportunities from deserving minorities. Affirmative action is intended to rectify past injustices and to offer minorities a chance to participate in all aspects of the American dream.

Likewise, the principle behind affirmative action is sound. In order to level the playing field and create a climate of diversity, minorities are given preference in graduate school admissions, federal contracts and corporate positions. While this leads to a reduced amount of positions for otherwise qualified citizens, it is justified in light of our past.

The problem with affirmative action is not in motive or principle. The problem comes when the policies are written into ambiguous and poorly worded legislation,

and the legal principle begins to 'unfold to the limits of its logic.'

Specifically, the problem arises when general guidelines become absurd quotas and blind discrimination. A few examples will illustrate just where affirmative action has gone sour, and where proponents of affirmative action should concentrate their energies.

The problem with affirmative action today is that immigrants and foreign visitors are eligible, and receive preference over American-born minorities, even though they haven't lived in America. However, according to Larry Hardy, the affirmative action officer for the University of California system, "To make the connection that affirmative action should only be for native-born Americans seems kind of ludicrous."

As the logic demonstrated by Hardy begins to unfold to its limits, Pacific Bell rides the slippery slope by not even checking the citizenship of its applicants, and illegal immigrants are given preference over the intended recipients of affirmative action, American minorities.

The spiraling logic of affirmative action doesn't stop there, however. As recently as 1994, Catherine Crier of "20/20" reported that U.S. Forest Service job postings for firefighters stated "only unqualified applicants will be considered," and that "only applicants who don't meet standards will be considered."

I don't know about the U.S. government, but I like my firefighters qualified, and when I call the fire department, I don't care if the Energizer Bunny comes to put out the fire.

The (il)logic of affirmative action and ridiculous hiring policies has indeed unfolded to its limits, but alas, it doesn't stop with firefighters. In fact, it extends to millionaires like O.J. Simpson and Colin Powell.

According to the U.S. government, both men are "economically disadvantaged," and as such, both men are eligible for affirmative policies in government programs.

Gen. Powell and Simpson joined a group of investors (which included such down-and-out citizens such as Patrick Ewing, Julius Erving (Dr. J) and several members of Michael Jackson's family) and bought a radio station. They benefited from a tax break given to minority owners of small businesses when they later sold the business.

I wonder if the federal government realizes that hiring an army of lawyers costs a lot of bucks, and Simpson is about as "economically disadvantaged" as Ross Perot.

Affirmative action should continue, but the benefits of the program should go to truly disadvantaged citizens ...

The problem with affirmative action is not the principle, but the application of the principle. Affirmative action should continue, but the benefits of the program should go to truly disadvantaged citizens, not baseless greed.

If a youngster grows up in a poor household without adequate schooling or parental care, he or she should be eligible for affirmative action policies regardless of race or gender.

Only when the proponents of affirmative action admit their faulty logic will the majority of Americans embrace these principles. Only then will affirmative action be considered a noble practice of American values, rather than an arbitrary study in illogical discrimination.

Brian Beckcom is a senior computer science major

BRIAN BECKCOM
COLUMNIST



MAIL
CALL

Clown questions column's claims

This letter is in response to Michael Landauer's Nov. 10 sports column about football and baseball franchises moving to different towns.

The analogy he used to illustrate this was the traveling circus, and he stated "... clowns aren't happy, but in fact have serious problems like drug or spousal abuse."

That's when he, shall I say, stepped on the heels of my clown shoes.

Allow me to introduce myself. I am D.D. the clown. I love children. I am happy. I don't do drugs. I don't victimize children or spouses. And the only serious problem I have involves my refusal to grow up.

Also allow me to dispel this myth further. All the clowns I know have hearts of pure gold. They clown for the smiles of children, not because of some perverse reason.

No one could entice us to dress up in hot and cumbersome costumes if we didn't love kids.

Clowns are unique in that nothing puts a smile on our faces as much as children do, when we give them a balloon animal or twist a hat just for them.

It's the same when we perform magic tricks and watch those children's faces light up when the tricks actually work.

Clowns add a touch of whimsy to the lives of children and adults alike.

When I was a child, I looked forward to watching the clowns and their antics. They were the best part of the parades, circuses and fairs I attended.

Please don't take away this thrill from the children of today and tomorrow with negative stereotypes and lies that have no facts to back them up.

Holly Blume
Class of '98

Investigate before enrolling at A&M

For students at A&M who seem to, as they say, "not fit in," I would like to ask, what were you expecting?

If you would have taken the

time to talk to students here before you blindly made your decision, you would have realized that this is a predominantly conservative school.

A&M has its own "personality." It is up to all applicants to find out whether or not they will fit in with any college's personality before deciding to attend.

Just as you feel out of place at A&M, I would feel out of place at a small liberal arts college. I, however, took the time to talk with over 50 students and old Ags before deciding to come here, and I love Texas A&M.

It is not the school's or the rest of the student body's fault that you do not feel welcome here. It is your own.

Amit Bhavsar
Class of '95

Creamery closing a loss for students

Last week while on West Campus, I decided to get some strawberry ice cream at Rosenthal's.

When I arrived, all I saw was Blue Bell ice cream. Now, Blue Bell is great, but I was really craving strawberry ice cream.

The lady behind the counter informed me that the Creamery had closed down last May.

With my schedule this semester, I haven't had a chance to go by Rosenthal's as much as I used to, so I didn't know anything about this.

Can someone tell me what happened? I must have missed the day that the Batt published an article about the closing, because it seems that everyone but me knows about this.

Does the University have plans to reopen it anywhere?

Kristian Hayes
Class of '97

Editor's note: The missed day in question was Aug. 2, 1995.

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.

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