

Racism prevalent at Texas A&M

Texas A&M is infested with bigotry. However, no one is willing to admit there is a problem, partially because it is so well-disguised.

Racism hides in campus organizations, justifies itself under the name of reverse discrimination and refuses to change for the assumed purpose of higher education.

Racism is also well-disguised because it is unintentional. Many students add to the problem, yet they have no idea. Self-righteously, most students boast they are not plagued by racial prejudice.

Bu, just look around this campus. Voluntary integration is scarce. In classrooms, the seating arrangements form distinct color patterns. And it's not just in the classroom — this holds true almost everywhere on campus.

Organizations are the epitome of segregation. Specific groups exist for African Americans, Mexican Americans and Asian Americans, but few minority members belong in other campus activities.

The Greek system is also plagued by this problem. The Interfraternity Council represent and govern only white Greeks. The Pan-Hellenic Council only represents and governs African American Greeks. The councils work together, but to cross the line from either side is taboo. Those few people who decide to boldly break down racial barriers on our campus are shunned by their own race as well as other races.

Although few white Greeks complain about the system, many hold the common view of "reverse discrimination."

White males complain women and minorities get their own organizations; therefore, they demand to form their own, too. But if any white male decided to join one of the established minority organizations, it might be difficult — but not impossible. To turn a white male away would be discrimination. Instead of questioning the system, white males cry reverse discrimination and blame minorities for racial attacks.

The same voice is heard in the consideration of a cultures course. No one wants to

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sound like a scared racist, so instead they say, "Requiring a course like this will only make races hate each other more." Obviously these people have never taken such classes.

Cultures courses provide our campus with the atmosphere needed for association among races. The interaction and discussions in such courses often get

personal. But the intense, heated moments add to a better understanding of one another.

More than once I've heard Aggies refute the need for a required cultures course by asking, "Why should we study our differences? Minorities don't have to study whites. Why can't they just be like us?"

The necessity for a cultures requirement stems from people who make these remarks. They are the same people who see an ambitious, well-spoken African-American male and say he is more white than black. Advocating assimilation is ironic, considering many continually stereotype

and classify individuals as "wannabees."

Others have taken the stance that having required cultures courses will make Texas A&M another UC Berkeley, or it is not the University's duty to interrupt students' major field of study. They say the University should not dictate what is important in their core curriculum and that this requirement would detract attention from classes necessary for the "real world."

Unless you are going to work in a lab with rats for the rest of your life, studying different cultures, learning to better understand one another, is incredibly beneficial.

Learning and growing through the social interaction in these courses will (at least) improve the atmosphere of the campus through teaching students how to effectively communicate. We should strive to become a hybrid society. Who cares if graduates of Texas A&M take .4 years longer to graduate? The quality of education is more important than a quick graduation.

Students of this conservative campus will suffer from the current sheltering of such issues as interracial relationships. This is something our campus rarely faces, but something that must be dealt with nonetheless.

No one will come right out and say they simply do not want to learn about other cultures because they do not want to look like bigots. Instead, they hide their resentment and justify themselves with phony sensitivity.

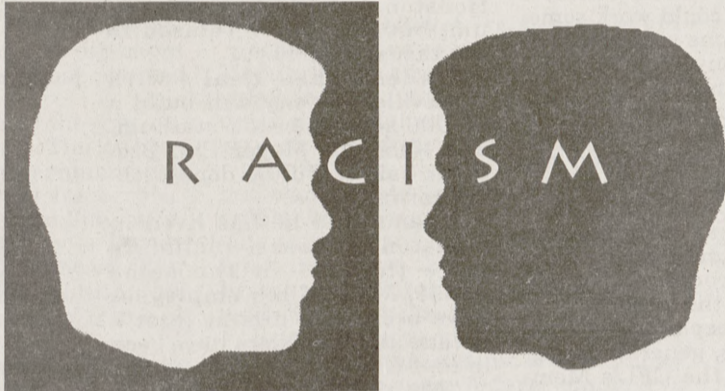
Yet, these people are not blatantly racist — just your average student. Behind closed doors the biggest remarks are made, laughed at and believed. Unfortunately, their closed-minded poking fun sets

back the development of our minds and society.

However unintentional these actions may seem, cultural illiteracy causes offensive language, beliefs and thoughts. Only education, even if mandated, can cure our campus.

If only Aggies would let down their guards and examine their beliefs. People against required cultures courses could learn a lot from an alcoholic's 12-step program ... the first step is admitting you have a problem.

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EDITORIAL

BLOW OUT

The Athletic Department should work to get better teams to play the Aggies.

"Beat the hell outta Middle Tennessee State!"

For some reason, that yell sounds cruel. Perhaps it is because the Texas A&M Football Team is playing a laughable opponent Saturday, and will not likely need the 12th Man, or even an 11th or 10th man to defeat the Blue Raiders.

Although the Aggies will have little trouble dispensing of MTSU, the Athletic Department exercised poor judgment in scheduling this game, and the mistake could have negative consequences for the football team.

Head Football Coach R.C. Slocum said that the game exists because there was a hole in the schedule, opened by the expiration of the University of Louisville contract. He insisted that there were only two teams A&M could play in the ninth week of the schedule, MTSU and Central Florida. Both of these are Division I-AA teams, or teams that are not strong enough to be one of the 108 Division I teams.

Slocum stated there were no

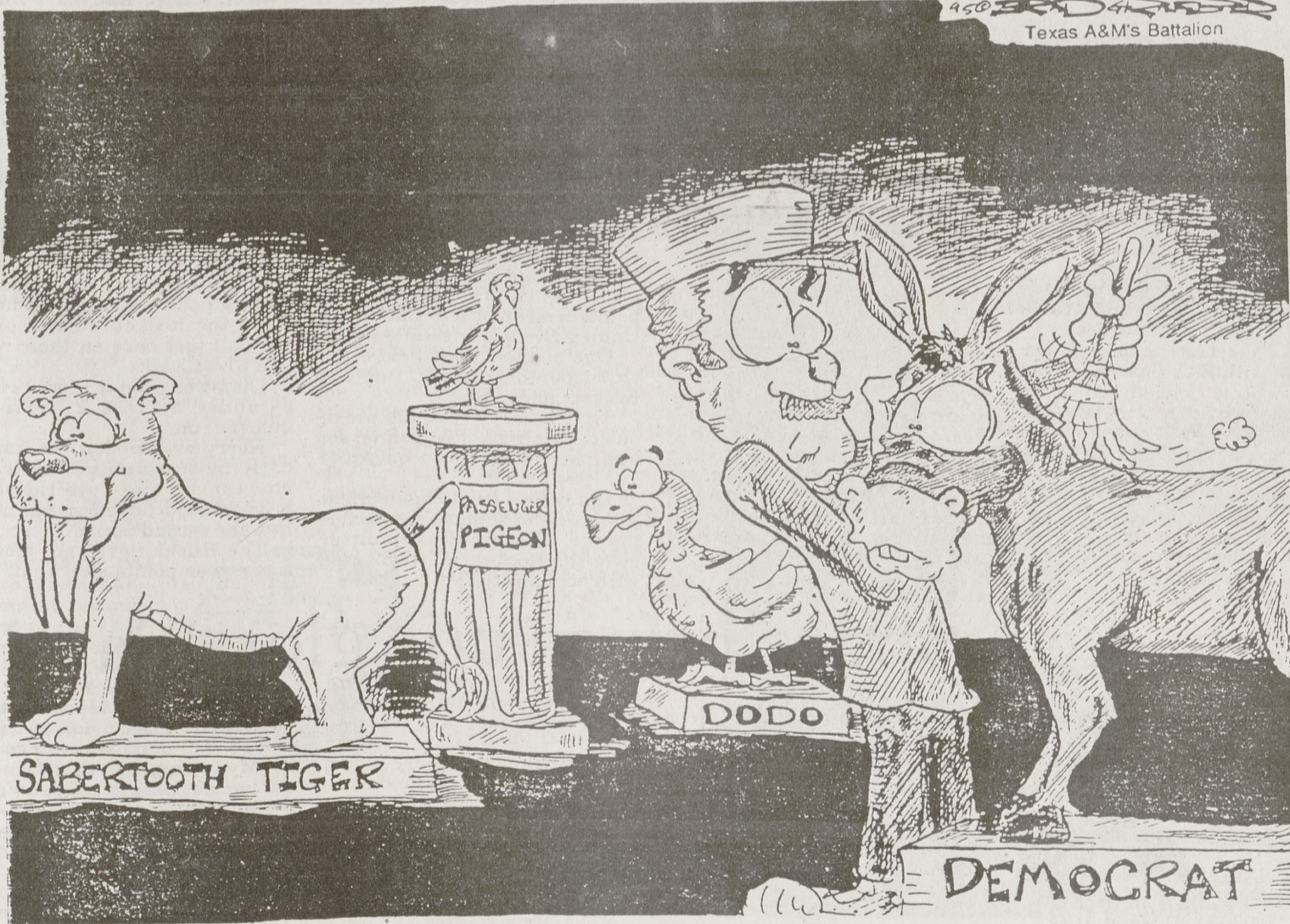
Division I teams available because most schools are deep into their conference schedules, facing opponents they must play.

However, worthy opponents, such as University of Nebraska are not even playing this week, so it appears the department did not work hard enough in finding a good team. Also, the department could have planned better by arranging a schedule before it had to resort to Division I-AA schools.

This is a no-win situation for the football team. If it beats MTSU by 50 points, everyone will have expected it. If the game is close, critics will attack the football team for being weak.

Besides, many people think the football team lacks big-game experience, and would find more success against teams like Colorado and bowl opponents if it played more challenging teams. MTSU will hardly provide the challenge the Aggies need.

The Athletic Department should avoid starting a trend of scheduling opponents outside of Division I, which means Bryan High is off-limits.



Understanding hatred will bring peace

My friend's name is Jack. I kept butchering his Hebrew name so he let me call him Jack.

Jack was a native Israeli in the United States on an exchange program.

By the time he was 18, he already had a degree in both business and math. He spoke Hebrew, Arabic and English, and in addition to his academic achievements he had a congenial, affable character that was pure eloquence. He was one of the nicest guys I had ever met.

We had become pretty good friends, and during summer school one day I asked him what he thought about the Israeli/Arab relationship.

It was during this time that Jack's soft demeanor abruptly changed.

A fire lit in his eyes, and he stared at me for a moment.

In a cold, icy voice he said something I never expected.

"Adam," he said, "all Arabs should die." Whoa. I expected maybe a little animosity, but I didn't expect that from Jack.

I couldn't fathom how this guy, who had been the perfect gentlemen in every way, could have these feelings.

So I asked him why he felt that way. Then he told me a little of his history.

Both his father and his uncle were killed in the Yom-Kippur War with Egypt. His brother, at the time of the conversation was

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getting shot at in occupied territories in Palestine.

And even Jack at the age of 10 faced his own mortality when a Palestinian terrorist threw a hand grenade in his crowded school bus. Fortunately, the grenade was defective and didn't detonate.

I do not pretend to understand what is going on in the minds of the Arabs and Israelis.

But after my conversation with Jack, I realized that the conflict in the Middle East is much deeper than politics or territory or even religion.

Over time, the fighting has graduated to something more akin to a blood feud.

I'm not saying that a blood feud is the reason behind all the killing in the Middle East. Religion and territory obviously are major instigators. But during my entire conversation with Jack, not once did he mention territory or religion. It was all pure hatred.

The alarming thing is that Jack's sentiments can be found elsewhere — even in the top leaders of the Israeli government.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of the Right Wing opposition party was accused by Prime Minister Yitshak Rabin's wife of indirectly causing Rabin's assassination by stirring up anger in Right Wing extremists.

I don't know if she's right, but I do know a little about Netanyahu that may give some credit to Rabin's accusations.

Netanyahu was shot in the hand by a ter-

rorist when he was with a counter-terrorist unit that raided a hijacked airliner.

In addition, Netanyahu's brother was killed while leading the most incredible hostage rescue in history — "Operation Thunderbolt."

I would bet that these events had at least some effect on his political position.

Countless Israelis and Arabs have lost family members in this ancient conflict. And it seems that every time peace is at hand, some extremist group manages to stall or derail it. The hatred between these two peoples burns beyond anything I can fully understand. I've never lost a family member to a conflict. I can't imagine what that's like.

The anger may be the only thing many Jews and Arabs have to keep from facing the pain. Hate can keep you warm. When you try to take away that hatred with peace, it causes fear. A fear of losing the enemy, a fear of facing the unknown.

When the Berlin Wall fell, the Soviets' top military leader committed suicide. His entire life had been spent fighting the United States. When that threat was suddenly gone, he was like a child lost in the woods. The same thing can be applied to the Middle East. If the threat of peace is on the horizon, some may resort to extreme measures to prevent it — even assassination.

This hatred is what we will have to try to understand if we are ever going to help bring peace to the Middle East.

Adam Hill is a junior geography major



MAIL CALL

Smokers should be more considerate

It is 9:45 a.m. and you are sitting outside of Blocker. With some time to kill and some studying to do, you decide to sit outside and take in the fresh air. The only problem is that some disrespectful person just sat down a few feet away and lit up a cigarette.

Not only can you breathe, but your clothes will now smell like smoke the rest of the day.

Is this right? I realize that it will probably be a long time before the campus is totally smoke free — if it ever happens. Until then I would hope smokers would have the decency to ask the people near them if smoking bothers them.

Just because they want to suffer the consequences of smoking does not mean the people around them do.

*Kim Wofford
Class of '98*

Don't judge religion by actions of a few

I am writing in response to Wes Swift's Nov. 8 column "New Century Calls for New Religion."

Swift states that "Christianity no longer has the kick it used to" and blames the decline of Christianity on "fallen" leaders of the church, such as Jimmy

Swaggart and Jim Bakker."

Many Christian leaders often are hypocritical and deplorable, but Swift has made a logical error by inferring that such actions are representative of the decline of Christianity itself. Christianity has nothing to do with the actions of these individuals. Evil deeds are done out of the imperfection of humanity, not out of any imperfection in Christianity itself.

If anything has changed recently, it is certainly not the Bible, but simply the sincerity of a few prominent people.

Swift further criticizes the church for taking actions that have caused it to lose its "prominence" in modern-day society.

To change the teachings of the Bible to meet modern society's tastes would be to falsify the words of God. The absolute truth spoken by Christ must not be modified for the purpose of pleasing people who wish to be entertained every time they enter a church service.

*Matthew Morton
Class of '98
Accompanied by 10 signatures*

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