

Corps defends Aggie spirit

As I stood on Kyle Field Saturday watching the Aggies snatch defeat from the jaws of victory, I wondered why it is that most of our former students have such a distaste for Longhorns.



BRIAN BECKCOM
COLUMNIST

After watching the postgame festivities and talking to some former students, I understand their animosity.

I talked to my dad after the game, and asked him what it was like when he was an A&M student. He relayed a story that, quite frankly, made Saturday's skirmish look like a church recital.

Back in the time when the Aggie football team was lucky to get a first down, let alone a touchdown, the students would nevertheless travel to Austin to cheer on the team.

After the games, Aggie faithful would leave the stadium amidst taunts, jeers and flying beer bottles.

My dad told me he wasn't worried about getting out of the stadium — he was worried about getting out of Austin alive. He would walk quickly across campus, dodging beer bottles, rocks and spit.

What made this situation all the worse were the actions of the Austin police department.

My dad vividly recalls the officers in Austin laughing at him and his buddies as they were spit on, laughed at and showered

with projectiles. Everyone with any common sense realizes the fighting following the game was unfortunate. However, there is a small minority on this campus who are ashamed of the students' actions after the game.

I wonder if the two collective neurons they possess rubbed together and produced any rational thought about the events that took place.

For critics who understand logical argument, the irrefutable facts should be considered. First of all, I counted five announcements from the public address system exhorting fans to stay off the field at the end of the game.

I was in the middle of the second deck, it was thunderously loud the entire game and I still heard the announcement.

So we can be reasonably sure that everyone in the stadium heard the announcement too.

Which brings me to my second point. Stadium regulations at Kyle Field prohibit alcohol.

Anyone with even a modicum of common sense recognized that the t-sippers weren't drinking tea.

Either the Texas fans drank enough liquor before the game to remain drunk for five hours — I'd like to know the brand of alcohol, if that's the case — or they were drinking during the game, a clear violation of A&M regulations.

Third, about 30 police officers

formed a barrier between the Texas fans and Kyle Field.

The officers were backed up by 30 senior cadets. The officers repeatedly told the drunken Longhorns to stay off the field.

The cadets weren't standing behind the officers for no reason. Even with the rules of the stadium clear and the consequences obvious, Longhorns insisted on rushing the officers and cadets.

The policemen and the cadets had two choices — stand and get attacked, or defend themselves.

I was proud to see that not only did the cadets defend themselves, but a large group of students came quickly to their aid.

It was Aggie spirit personified.

The fourth important point is the noble actions of our yell leaders. As the Corps thoroughly pummeled the lawless Longhorns, the student body itched to join the fight.

I was surprised with pride as I saw the reaction of the civilian students and yell leaders. What could have turned into an ugly mob scene was controlled with characteristic grace by our five yell leaders.

They stood in the middle of the track and held a yell practice.

As the drunken Longhorns fought with uniformed police officers and practically fornicated on the field, Aggies showed their

class and supported our school.

The issue here is a simple one that careless critics would do well to consider. Have the Aggies ever rushed the field in Austin after a victory? Did the Longhorns blatantly break the law?

The answer to the former is no, and the answer to the latter is a resounding yes. Saturday night was clear evidence of the 'spirit that can ne'er be told', and it made me proud to be an Aggie.

Those who question the actions show little class and no common sense. It goes without saying that they have no spirit. To call them two percenters is an insult to the number two.

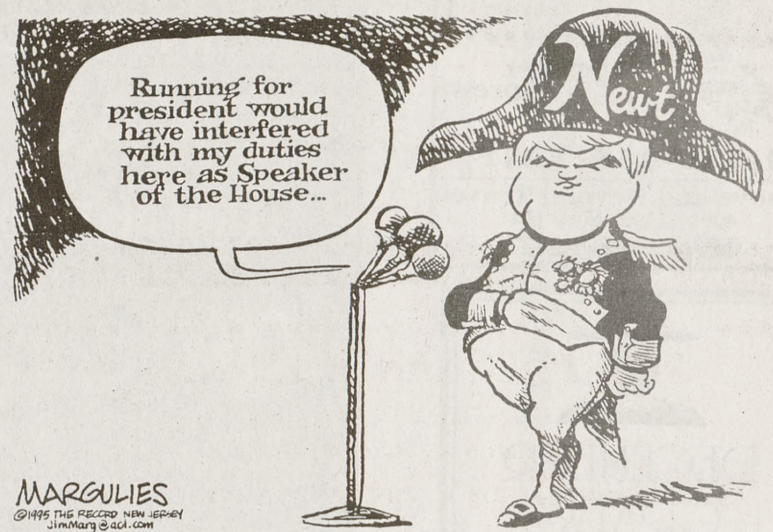
For those Aggies who did the right thing, who supported the Corps, and who showed their pride, I commend you.

For those who slunk into the shadows and wallowed in their cynicism, I feel sorry for you. Being a student at Texas A&M doesn't necessarily make one an Aggie, as they well show.

It takes pride, spirit, and undying devotion to the institution, and I'm glad it doesn't come easy.

To the students — don't listen to the baseless criticisms of those who know they will never be a part of the Spirit of Aggieland.

Brian Beckcom is a senior computer science major



MARGULIES
©1995 THE RECORD NEW JERSEY
jimmy@ed.com

Kyle Field serves to memorialize Aggies

It can truly be said that even though we lost the game we sure as hell didn't lose after it.

It was incredible. The t-sippers lined up in there taunting formation ready to make their final assault.

They knew Kyle Field was a memorial. They knew it would really piss us off if they stepped on it. But they did it anyway. Big mistake.

What they didn't know was that there were hundreds of fire-breathing cadets and non-regs ready to defend the sacred ground of our football stadium.

And that's exactly what it is — sacred. For those who disagreed with the action taken by the Aggies allow me to explain something.

Long time ago 55 us went to the most terrible place imaginable. A place where people come together with the sole purpose to kill each other.

A place called combat. Those Aggies, who have walked on the same ground as the one we walk on today, met a violent death there.

Never again will they take a breath of air, or see the dawn of morning or ever embrace their loved ones on this earth.

They are lost to us — forever. I don't care if some believe that their death was in vain. It doesn't matter now. The fact remains that these people are gone.

One memorial to the memory these Aggies is Kyle Field. The sacred ground that stretches out before us every Saturday is there to remind us of their loss.

When I look at the 55 flags surrounding the stadium I think of them. I don't know their names but I know who they are.

They are me and I am them. They are my buddies that I live with day in and day out.

They weren't any different from us. Just like us, they hated studying, loved to party and fall asleep to the rhythm of their girlfriends' hearts.

They're young. And when a bullet blew a whole through them on some forgotten battlefield I only wish I could've been there and embrace them as their



ADAM HILL
COLUMNIST

life slipped away. I wish I could bring them back. But it's too late.

What I do have, however, is their memory right in front of me every day.

Kyle Field looms over the campus for all to see.

This is why we did what we did last Saturday. We protect what is sacred. That is our way here at A&M.

Oh sure, we could've been nice guys and let the t-sippers run amuck on our memorial. We could've let them tear down the goal post and prance around with their little horns in the air. But then, what the hell kind of memorial would that be?

It damn sure wouldn't say a lot for us. I mean, even Aggies aren't allowed on the field unless their in football pads, have a tuba in their hand or their defending it.

Kara Hultgreen, the first US female fighter pilot who was killed in October of 1994 went to t.u. If t-sippers were ever to have some spirit of unity and build a memorial in her honor, I guarantee, you wouldn't see a mob of Aggies trampling all over it. It's just down right tasteless and demeaning. But that's not the case with the orange and the white. You never know what they'll do.

It wasn't enough that they beat us in football. No, they had to take it a step further. This time, however, it bit 'em in the ass. You know, you gotta wonder what they were thinking. We only outnumbered them 10 to one. But I guess it's just like t-sippers to forget where they are.

Yeah sure, it got nasty, and I'm sorry it did. But hey, our memorials will not be violated with impunity.

It's what makes us different. It's what makes us Aggies.

For those that don't understand this then they're in the wrong place. I don't care what anyone says about that day, the 12th Man did the right thing. So hats off to the defenders of tradition and the keepers of the spirit.

Adam Hill is a junior history major

Tradition warped in Aggieland

Aggieland is a world of its own. Most Aggies will tell you that. It's a source of pride for them.

I think it's great to have a sense of pride. But when your pride exceeds your senses, well, you have a problem.

That is exactly what has happened to many otherwise fairly intelligent people on this campus.

I must be honest. Whenever I heard people say things like, "My heart bleeds maroon." I basically thought these people were just caught up in the affection of a moment — I didn't really think they knew what they were saying. It always sounded like hyperbole to me.

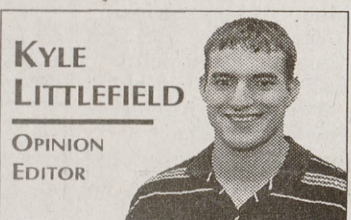
But the recent heat created by the Texas-Texas A&M game, proved me wrong.

Many people see Aggie spirit as something that transcends ordinary school spirit. If someone questions their Aggiehood, it is the equivalent of questioning their patriotism to their country. They live and die by the Maroon and White.

However, Aggie spirit is a sociological phenomenon. It is derived largely from the power of conformity. There isn't anything holy about it. It isn't anything to live your life by, like a religion. Yet, that is how many students treat it.

Because such an importance is placed on tradition and the Aggie spirit, many negative incidents can and do result.

Students who do not share the same beliefs as the majority of the student body are ridiculed, ostracized and sometimes harassed.



KYLE LITTLEFIELD
OPINION EDITOR

Those who do not see the worth in Bonfire are considered by many to be "two-percenters" — they are told to leave because they will never be happy at Texas A&M.

Another unfortunate occurrence when one puts too much importance in Aggie spirit is the shock that many students

experience upon entering the real world to find, much to their surprise, that everything is not tinted maroon.

Students must realize that the Aggieland they so want to attend is in some unreachable dimension.

You will always come up empty by trying to live your life in the Aggie-most way because "Aggieland" is an artificial environment created by students kept alive by indoctrination.

Former students who can't let it die and just go on with their lives are too consumed with living vicariously through the current student body and erecting statues to realize that this isn't the same Aggieland they once attended. Furthermore the Aggieland they attended wasn't the place they thought it was.

Texas A&M is a school. A place to receive an education.

It also happens to be a place that many people are proud of. A place where following tradition is somehow meant to pay respect to those that went before us.

But that's the thing about traditions, if you follow them too religiously, you will never do anything original. You get stuck in a rut.

Everybody is always talking about getting back to the Old Army way of doing

things. To borrow some Aggie terminology, Old Army was "red ass" because everything it did was off the cuff. It wasn't blindly following some dusty tradition from 1902. It was creating something new.

That leaves me wondering, what are we going to be known for? Have we started any long-lasting traditions? How will the Class of 2050 remember us? They will probably remember the fountains we constructed and the statues we erected.

I doubt they will remember us by the strides we took to establish racial harmony, or how we sat aside political beliefs to unite for a common good.

I don't want to give the wrong impression: I have met some of the nicest people at Texas A&M. I have even made friends with those whose political beliefs differ drastically from my own.

But it seems like the power of numbers and the fear of not being accepted into a community pushes many students to do and say things they normally would not do.

Kicking an fans of the opposing team in the head because they dishonored a memorial is one example.

When someone is overcome with tradition to the point of protecting it with their fists (and the majority of the campus sees no wrong in those actions,) that tradition has blinded the sector of the brain that oversees common sense.

Many people will say that I am a bad Ag, and they might just have a point — if being closed-minded and irrational is what Aggie spirit is all about, then I will always fall short of bleeding maroon.

Kyle Littlefield is a senior journalism major



MAIL CALL

• The game started with a prayer. That doesn't happen at very many schools. And it makes the violent post-script to the game more difficult to swallow. You could tell that something bad was going to happen as the UT students filed out of the stands before the game was even over.

As we watched a UT student pulled to the ground and then covered by at least 30 Corps members, most of whom were punching and kicking him, we couldn't help but think of the films of the people being beaten during the Los Angeles riots.

And I couldn't help but be astonished that the Corps members were not more civilized and honorable than that.

The University of Texas students' actions were stupid and disrespectful. But in a civilized culture, we don't meet stupidity with brutality.

There were already hundreds of students on the field; the beat-

ing of a single student by 20 or 30 people made it clear the Corps was no longer trying to keep people off the field. They were looking for an excuse to unleash their aggression.

How are we supposed to respect the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets? Had they used non-violent means to protect Kyle Field, we would have respected them.

If they had failed, what would have been lost? There may have been bruised pride, but this could have been replaced with pride for acting in an honorable manner.

Only the University of Texas students would have looked bad. As it happened, we came away with feelings of disgust and dismay for the Corps members and other students who participated.

What a disgraceful end to the Southwest Conference.

*Adrienne Means
P. Niels Christensen
graduate students*

• Jason Brown and Chris Stidvent, I hear that the Dallas Morning News is looking for a few new recruits to slam A&M at any opportunity.

What happened Saturday after the game happened because of pride. The pride we have as Aggies and in one another to watch each other's backs.

If any people should be em-

barrassed and ashamed it should be the people who attend t.u.

An Aggie was the victim of a hit and run Saturday night and the sorry t-sip that hit him or her did not even stop or even offer any type of help.

Unbelievable. Regardless of where you are enrolled, that is another human being, and that takes precedence over any rivalry.

Nothing happened on Saturday that caused me to feel shame or embarrassment for being an Aggie. If anything, the opposite occurred. An intruder to our home threatened the things we love and we protected it — nothing more, nothing less.

And to the members of the Corps of Cadets and the yell leaders, I would like to tell them that their behavior Saturday should be commended.

My pride in Texas A&M shines as bright as ever. A&M may have been outscored — not beaten — but we still have the most class.

For those of you who don't agree with what happened Saturday, I apologize, but you are most likely in the minority.

*Nathan E. Hodges
Class of '96*

• After indulging myself in The Battalion's gross account of Saturday's postgame occurrences,

I felt it necessary to retort with my own explanation.

Being a proud member of the Corps, I understand the responsibility of guarding Kyle Field. It is a responsibility we take pride in.

Aggies, both Corps and non-reg alike, take great pride in the fact that we guard our field from destruction and mayhem.

For Chris Stidvent to refer to Texas students as "unsuspecting" is an affirmation of his ignorance. For the editorial to say that "the targets themselves ... [were] not being violent" is a pure fallacy.

For example, the mother of my friend was repeatedly called an 'Aggie bitch' by UT students.

A buddy of mine was spit on by a female Texas, and intoxicated Texas fans in the horseshoe threw bottles and trash throughout the game, even knocking one freshman unconscious.

And the list goes on.

My only confrontation was with a Texas student who approached me and flashed a Hook 'em Horns hand gesture in my face and said, "Man, today is a good day to be a Longhorn fan."

I responded with a Gig'em hand gesture replying, "Mister, every day is a good day to be an Aggie fan."

For once, Battalion staff, I ask you to give the Corps its due respect for doing its job. Show

some pride in us so that we may, in turn, be proud of you.

*Chris Clinkscales
Class of '97
accompanied by 344 signatures*

Pullig played poorly against UT

I cannot begin to express my disappointment with the Ag's performance against t.u. Simply put, the Ags were out-coached, not out-played.

Perhaps the one positive thing I can see resulting from this game is that this is the next to last time I'll have to watch the most overrated quarterback and quarterback coaching staff in the conference.

Corey Pullig has cost A&M a number of critical games in his career, and I cannot understand why the coaching staff does not have the vision to see that he just doesn't have it, and never will get it ... seriously, four turnovers by himself?

My only hope for next year is that not only will Pullig be gone but also the quarterback coaching staff, or whoever is responsible for keeping him in the line-up.

*Scott Carey
Class of '80*

*Wm. Bryan Campbell
Class of '99*