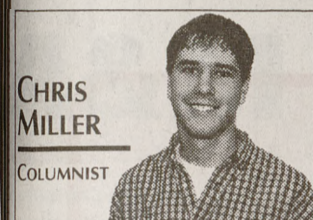


Castration prevents sex crimes



CHRIS MILLER
COLUMNIST

There's an evil man in San Antonio, and he wants to be castrated. Larry Don McQuay, considered "public enemy No. 1," has just been released from prison and is in a Bexar County lockup in order to be monitored. He has admitted to molesting over 200 children, and he doesn't believe that he will ever be psychologically rehabilitated unless his testicles are cut off. Maybe he's right and maybe he's not, but if a man believes he should be castrated, then someone better castrate the hell out of him.

Currently, however, Texas law prohibits the use of castration as one of the terms of his parole. The rationale is that castration is cruel and unusual punishment.

Instead, McQuay will be monitored in the lockup for as long as two years, when his parole expires. While in this "mandatory supervision," McQuay must abide by more than 25 rules designed to curb his pedophilic tendencies. They include restrictions on contact with anyone under 18 either by telephone or through written or electronic means and restrictions on purchasing or subscribing to "any literature, magazines, books and/or videotapes which include pictures of children." McQuay doesn't think these parameters on his existence are enough. He believes that only by some careful slicing and dicing around his genitalia will he have a chance at reform. In response to his request, a San Antonio doctor has volunteered to perform the surgery at no cost.

But the question should not be whether McQuay should be allowed to be castrated, but instead why it isn't legal to mandate castration in cases of extreme sexual perversion. And the state's rationale of cruel and unusual punishment doesn't cut the cake in my book.

I've seen a live castration before. My grandfather owns livestock and must make steers out of his young bulls every now and then. I can attest to the fact that the process might be a little unusual. But the argument should not be approached on those terms.

If a person is rated a black belt in the martial arts, his or her arms and feet are considered by law to be lethal weapons. Any excessive use of these weapons is against the law.

By the same token, if a man is a pedophilic sex offender, his libido is his weapon. And if the state has the means to take away that weapons so that it cannot be used again, then the state has the obligation to do so. Cutting off a man's testicles would be an easy way to partially eliminate sexual desire and should be seen as a pragmatic and effective punishment and deterrent to future offense.

If society considers the death penalty legal punishment, then a couple of testicles should seem paltry in comparison.

I am not so naive as to assert that castration could be completely effective in all cases or even that pedophilia can be corrected entirely by an operation. But if we as a society have an option to at least destroy the smoking gun, then why don't we?

Chris Miller is a sophomore English major

THE CORRUPT WORLD OF SPORTS



Sports fanatics love this time of year. The basketball season is reaching its exciting conclusion, the baseball season is just beginning, and the NFL draft is not far away. Sports fans are so busy cheering, betting and painting their favorite team's logo on their faces that they will probably forget one important fact about the activities they so love: Professional sports embody all that is bad about American society.

Before I begin to list the faults of professional sports, I would like to make it clear that I am not anti-sport, but rather I am against professional sports. Football, baseball and basketball are enjoyable, healthy activities in which to participate. When they are blown out of proportion, as they tend to be in our nation, they lose all endearing qualities.

To begin with, pro sports are sexist. The big money sports are almost entirely all-male sports:



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football, baseball, basketball, hockey. There are very few pro sports in which women can compete and earn comparable salaries to the men. Tennis immediately comes to mind. Of course, women tennis players are not valued according to their ability to play the game, but rather for their "entertainment" value.

Think about it. Martina Navratilova is undoubtedly the best female tennis player of the last 20 years, but Chris Evert is more popular, judging by advertising revenue. Why? Well, it has nothing to do with their athletic ability. Navratilova is an ugly lesbian (not very entertaining, is

she?), and Evert is a straight woman with a nice butt.

Women don't have the opportunity to participate in nearly as many sports as men, and when they do, they are generally objectified. When was the last time you saw two men wrestle in hot oil?

I guess that this sex bias in pro sports is just the natural extension of the belief that football and baseball are "boy" sports (you know, kind of like the way medicine and law used to be considered "boy" professions). Even if we manage to even the balance of gender in pro sports, they will still be a far cry from fair.

In addition to sex discrimination, pro sports tend to have a great deal of racial discrimination. Teams tend to do pretty well in hiring minority players, but when it comes to coaching positions, minorities are much less likely to be hired. Now, I don't know much about sports, but wouldn't the people most qualified to coach a sport be the same people who have the experience of playing that sport? If so, then why wouldn't the racial diversity of the coaching staffs be similar to the diversity of the players?

I tried to track down the exact statistics (I know how crazy you sports fans are about stats), but apparently the NBA, NFL, Major League Baseball, CNN and ESPN don't know that information. Actually, they probably know it, they just don't want everyone else to know it because it will point out the huge minority deficits in the coaching staffs.

In addition to being sexist and racist, the pro sports establishment reflects a general inversion of the values of society. With merchandising and advertising revenues, pro sports earn billions of dollars each year. That money continues to perpetuate a system that has lost sight of the fact that it is based on a game. This sports mania has leaked into the education system and tipped salaries away from science and art teachers and toward coaches. Have we ever stopped to think that maybe it all isn't that important?

Isn't it just a game? Apparently not.

Jeff Nolen is a senior psychology major

Size does not always reflect quality

For that small number of you who are not faithful front page readers, you missed a real eye-opening article last Tuesday. The focus of the article was the recent announcement that Texas A&M University now has the largest full-time undergraduate enrollment in the United States.

That's right, we finally edged out Ohio State, topping the list with 31,439 full-time undergraduates.

In the article, Gary Engelgau, executive director of admissions, states that the large number reflects "A&M's commitment to undergraduate education." Something is wrong with this picture.

We are constantly defining ourselves as a "world class" university, yet the rest of the world doesn't seem to be noticing. Maybe we should consider the possibility that we might not be as world class as we think.

Certainly we should not let our new status as No. 1 in full-time undergraduate enrollment go to our heads. Although it is possible to be the biggest and the best, one is not necessarily related to the other.

The measures we use to define ourselves as world class are not measures of quality education at all. The massive undergraduate enrollment is just the most recent example.

This year the library has led the way in reform. Prohibiting food and drink will "restore an academic environment" to the Evans Library. Perhaps an academic environment would be enhanced further if "Subscription Canceled" and "No Holdings Found" weren't the most likely phrases to appear on a NOTIS screen.

Too many classes were taught this semester by faculty focused on their publications as opposed to the absorption of knowledge by their students. A&M is among the top five universities in the



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amount of money dedicated to research. A preferred ranking would be to top the list in amount of money dedicated to finding faculty who can publish articles and teach well at the same time.

True, if A&M were not worth the money, it would not have the enrollment that it does. Remember, however, that students (non-scholarship students) pay only one-third of their tuition. State taxpayers pay the rest.

If we all multiplied our fee statements by three, how many of us would still be Aggies? Essentially, A&M is insulated from the pressures of competition. Taxes pay for the bulk of our education regardless of whether an A&M education is worth what it costs or not.

Students should take a more active role in pressuring the administration into focusing more on true quality issues. Being "world class" is not just about how happy the students are with their environment, how fun the football games are, and how great it is to work out at the Rec Center. "World class" is also about how employable students are when they graduate.

When our future employers look at our résumés and see that we are Aggies, we want our degrees to induce thoughts of hard work and relevant coursework. We do not want them to see Texas A&M University and be reminded of our huge enrollment or our stellar agricultural engineering graduate program.

A&M is at a turning point in its history. Students and taxpayers share the responsibility with the higher-ups to ensure that A&M focuses its effort and its money on the quality of its education and not just the popularity of its education.

Elaine Mejia is a senior political science major



MAIL CALL

Confederate flag represents valor

James Harrington's column in the April 15th Batt reflects a common misconception of the Civil War held by some minorities and liberals. Contrary to his article, the basis of the Civil War was states fighting to preserve their rights.

Slavery was an issue, but it was not why the Confederacy was built. We just didn't want big government in Washington running our lives and telling us what to do (sound familiar?). Texas is a state that epitomizes independence.

As most will recall from Texas history, we were once an independent nation. Mexican Americans can note the fact that six flags flew over this great state, and the Mexican flag flies just as high as the Stars and Bars. To condemn slavery is only right, but to condemn the Confederate flag

is only wrong. They do not go hand in hand. The South is a proud, friendly place rich in culture, and we are bound together by the fact that we once fought side by side to preserve our way of life and our culture. I am proud to live in a state that recognizes the sacrifices others have made for our state and the significance of the flag.

Mitch Paradise
Class of '97

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:

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