

OPINION

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RTF degree could be cultural boon

Something is missing from this summer's blockbuster movie lineup. Come to think of it, something is missing from movies. The problem isn't obvious, like forgetting to take the lens cap off. It's deeper than that. It's the lack of Aggie filmmakers.



STEPHEN LLANO
COLUMNIST

Come to think of it, Texas A&M has the largest undergraduate enrollment in the nation but does not offer a Radio-TV-Film degree. It would benefit a university to offer as many degrees as possible to attract students. By not offering this degree, Aggies miss out on a lot.

For example, you have to be luckier than O.J. Simpson to find a radio station around here that isn't a country format. Even the non-country stations such as KTSR and "The X" are lacking programming that keeps the listener occupied for more than 10 minutes (at least KTSR has a cool morning show). A student-run station would be beneficial for listeners and for students working there. The current campus station, KANM, is highly successful — when people listen. Without support to build a broadcast tower, the hope for broadcast student radio is hopeless.

As far as television goes, many think that a station would be too expensive for the University to build. However, KAMU has the cameras and the equipment to produce local broadcasting. Surely that's enough to help out in the beginning.

When the degree is offered, I plan to create a medical drama in the spirit of "E.R." It'll be called "A.P." and detail the trauma and tragedy of what happens daily at the A.P. Beutel Health Center. Here's a scene:

Patient: Doctor, Doctor! I've just been decapitated and I've lost all of my bodily fluids! Help me!
Doctor: Here, take some antibiotics and come back next week if you still feel bad. Sorry I can't give you a class excuse or anything. Bye.

Of course, this show will probably be canceled because each episode is three hours long, and most of it takes place in the waiting room.

As far as film goes, let's look at some of the blockbusters of the summer if an Aggie, trained at TAMU film school, helped produce them.

Twister — A couple of storm chasers



arrive at Aggeland after hearing about a massive twister arriving. To their dismay, they discover it's not a tornado, but one of those O.L./Fish Camp/T-Camp icebreaker games where everyone rolls around on a giant mat covered with dots.

The TCA Cable Guy — Basically not many changes, except that he's never around when you need him. Also, Matthew Broderick has to slip him \$60 instead of \$50. Not for free premium stuff, just for installation.

Independence Day — Everyone panics when large ships appear and settle themselves over all the major buildings on campus. President Bowen appeals to the masses to stay calm and welcome the visitors with Fightin' Texas Aggie spirit. Yell practice is held on top of Rudder Tower to welcome the aliens. Meanwhile, a computer jockey, surfing the Internet to find those nude pictures taken on campus last year, figures out the TAMU Internet is being used in a countdown against us.

He warns President Bowen, who flees to Easterwood Airport to escape, only to discover that the University plane has been "borrowed" by Ross Margraves to attend his upcoming trial. Sadly, everyone gets destroyed by the aliens. The carnage could have been avoided, since the aliens arrived to see Lollapalooza and got upset when they found out the show was canceled. The aliens are destroyed by the crew chiefs, yellowpots and redpots when they try to attack cut site.

Well, maybe not everyone would appreciate these particular movies. However, the University might appreciate the addition of many students who would not normally consider attending Texas A&M but may if such a degree were offered. If we really want to be a diverse institution of higher learning, we're going to have to offer diversity in fields of study as well.

Stephen Llano is a Class of '97 history major

Famous firsts show what we haven't accomplished

Well I'm proud to be an American, where at least I know I'm free ...

That's the way the song was written, but the real world is a bit different from simple song lyrics.

America — land of the free, home of the brave and a place where making history is not always something to celebrate without concern.

For many years, the United States of America has been in a state of growth. We are yet a young nation, struggling to overcome various conflicts, and still, the most ancient competition — rivalry of the sexes — is profoundly evident.

It is within this difference of physicalities that a serious problem arises. On July 12, a new film will be added to the summer-movie lineup — *Courage Under Fire*.

In January 1991, the Gulf War was raging on and a Medevac pilot by the name of Captain Karen Walden was performing her duty.

The movie, starring Meg Ryan and Denzel Washington, chronicles the life of the first woman nominated for the Congressional Medal of Honor for outstanding war efforts.

It goes without saying that Walden's achievement is a magnificent accomplishment, but it also makes you think.

Why should there have to be a first woman to receive the medal of honor for war?

I know, I know, the world isn't a perfect planet where people are recognized for what they have done instead of heralded for the type of person they are and how they "broke the barrier."

Sometimes, it just seems we tend to focus entirely too much on issues such as race, religion, gender and even political affiliation.

Let's not forget the past incident with The Citadel, also known as The Military College of South Carolina.

Founded in 1842, the state-controlled college offers courses in the arts, business administration, engineering and so forth, granting bachelor's and master's degrees.



JAMES FRANCIS
STAFF WRITER

One subject The Citadel forgot — or seemed to overlook — was women.

Shannon Faulkner, the first woman admitted into The Citadel, did not last through her first week, but she will forever be considered the girl who caused an uproar in gender-ruled institutions.

Although it was simply her goal to enter an environment she felt would benefit her growth, she was stigmatized for being a woman.

Recently, The Citadel announced it would soon consider opening its doors to men as well as women.

It would seem men are singled out as well, but not in the same way as women who achieve more than expected.

When Michael Jordan and the public first received word of the popular creation of Air Jordans by Nike, congratulations were in order and fans were excited.

How many people out there know the story of Sheryl Swoopes?

Swoopes, a starter for the 1996 U.S. Olympic Women's Basketball Team, is the first woman to have a basketball shoe named after her — Air Swoopes.

Women's basketball experts and high officials agree Swoopes has earned her just due, even with the time it has taken for a woman to have an athletic shoe named after her.

This will bring women's basketball into the spotlight for future coverage and increase the nation's awareness of it.

One must never forget this country was founded on equality. But it is only because of recent efforts that equality for women has become a concern for many Americans.

And always remember, where there is struggle, change will eventually follow.

But it is in this transitional process that one realizes the why's of compromise: why it took so long for change to occur, why so much opposition came to be present and why emphasis was placed so heavily on the personal aspect of the event.

In a nation constantly recognized and identified by females being the first to overcome great obstacles and setbacks, is it not sometimes better just to be human?

James Francis is a Class of '99 accounting major

Secessionists only declare independence from reality

An older man handed me two flyers on the Fourth under the scorching Luckenbach sun. At the time, there were better things to worry about, like getting to the stage to see Robert Earl Keen, so I stuffed them into my wallet to look at later.



DAVID RECHT
COLUMNIST

The flyers were titled "The Republic of Texas — what is it and how will it affect you?" The organization also had a home page set up on the World Wide Web, explaining its history and goals.

An introduction to the Republic vouched for the intense pride its members take in Texas: "We get a special sense of self-esteem when we recall our history back to when our land was its own independent nation. ...

"A wistful dream comes on us that Texas could return to that status."

These aren't just history buffs who dress up in colonial costumes and give blacksmith demonstrations to little kids. The Republic not only appreciates Texas' history as an independent nation, but is in the process of taking legal action to restore its independence from the United States.

After appealing to an uninterested Texas Supreme Court, the Republic filed documents with the International Court of Justice in The Hague in January.

Why does the Republic feel that Texas needs to be independent? On the flyer, such contemptible federal practices such as the IRS, property and sales taxes and even traffic tickets are cited. However, the impression one gets from the home page is disapproval of the means of annexation by the United States.

Richard McLaren, a paralegal from Ft. Davis, Texas, discovered a loophole in the federal annexation process. In 1845, the Legislative Joint Resolution lacked the required number of votes for admission to the Union. The Republic says that because of shortage of votes, Texas was admitted to the

Union through "chicanery and deceit." This is the main pillar for the present-day liberation movement.

Upon perusal of the web site, one doesn't get the impression that specific government policy (other than overtaxation) is to blame for the desire for independence.

A similar freedom movement exists in Alaska. However, the Alaskan party platform states goals such as repatriation of public lands, prohibition of property taxes and other specific objectives. This is in direct contrast to Texas. While the organization has a platform, it seems that the banner of the movement is a desire for a virginal Texas.

Most Aggies probably agree with the Republic's intense pride in Texas. Whether it's Luckenbach, Corpus Christi, Marshall or even Houston, Texas is inherently rich in breathtaking beauty and fascinating people. And yes, Texas' onetime-nation status is also a source of pride. But the Republic is severely myopic in ignoring the benefits we enjoy as part of the United States — protection, economic stability and access to massive amounts of federal aid. Despite this, they still try to expand the argument for nationhood.

The Republic of Texas has undergone exhaustive efforts directed toward furthering its cause, notifying everyone from the United Nations to Texas sheriffs of its motives. Despite this, they claim the mainstream media is not giving sufficient coverage to the Republic. This is for good reason.

Sure, none of us enjoys paying high taxes, but the United States of America provides the best government in the world at a pretty reasonable price (our income tax is one of the lowest in the world among industrialized countries).

The United States is in no need of any revolutions, or even peaceful secessions, as the Republic advocates. It just seems so ironic that these flyers were distributed on a day when we celebrate our heritage as Americans, not Texans.

David Recht is a Class of '97 civil engineering major



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Careful inbreeding can produce healthy animals

I am writing in response to the article in last week's Battalion concerning the undesirability of the inbreeding inherent in purebred dogs. Author Tauma Wiggins' contention was that Reveille, a rough collie, has health problems caused by inbreeding, and that rough collies in general are unsound. My parents and grandparents have kept and bred rough collies for years. In general they are sturdy, in-

telligent animals. Inbreeding in a controlled manner, selecting only the very best in each generation, can be very beneficial in producing good working animals sound in mind and body. Guide Dogs for the Blind in California began as a training center for guide dogs to aid blinded WWII veterans. At first they had to rely on donated German shepherds, Labradors and golden retrievers. Initially the washout rate for dogs in training was close to 90 percent. But since the school started breeding its own successful trainees, the washout rate

has dropped to about 20 percent. The problems with purebred dogs like Reveille stem not from inbreeding, but from breeding unsound stock. I have seen mutts with hemophilia, rage syndrome and epilepsy. Sound puppies of popular breeds can be found by questioning the breeders closely and asking for references. An ethical breeder will have each breeding dog OFA (hip) certified and screened for genetic defects prevalent in the breed. Ethical breeders of collies and related breeds have the eyes of breeding animals certified yearly. Some breed clubs are now requiring DNA testing of breeding animals as a screening device. Dogs not of breeding quality can still be cherished companions but should not be bred. Breeding related animals can give a breeder a population of animals with uniform quality and desirable traits as long as only the best are bred.

Lisa McDonald
Class of '93