

## CRs' publicity stunts abuse privileges

Members of the College Republicans must really be happy with the First Amendment.

They cited it in defense of their scoldingly scolding fliers two years ago. They held it in front of themselves like a two-hundred-year-old bulletproof vest in defense of their ridiculous fundraising letter last year.

But the organization's latest manifestation of its love for free speech is more mundane.

As a matter of fact, it happens every semester. The College Republicans is a bit too excessive with those darn fliers.

Most of the fliers have all but disappeared now, but last week the problem was at an all-time high.

Kiosk after kiosk was draped with alternating red and blue fliers promoting the group.

My impression was that nothing was going on during the entire week except for the College Republicans. I saw no fliers for other campus organizations. No concert promotions. Not even invitations to donate plasma for \$40 a week.

When the group's fliers announce a specific program, presentation or public service cause, their abundance is understandable.

The ones advertising the upcoming Dan Quayle speech were a little numerous, but forgivable because they were advertising a specific program.

But many of the fliers were simple, basic and

Columnist



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purposeless. "Pro Republican," they said. That was all.

Does the College Republicans think that by blanketing the campus with its name, it'll attract more people?

The group is the largest student organization at Texas A&M, with more than 2,000 members.

It's safe to say that few people on campus haven't heard of it. And any interested freshmen can learn about it at Open House —

why couldn't the College Republicans wait until then to attract new members?

The fliers are like McDonald's commercials. Everybody's heard of McDonald's. Everybody's been to McDonald's. A lot of college students eat Chicken McNuggets three meals a day, only varying their sauce selection. But McDonald's still blows millions on advertising despite the fact that its ads don't enlighten anyone of the "restaurant's" existence.

Similarly, the College Republicans could easily lay off and let other, lesser-known groups have the free publicity the kiosks and bulletin boards offer.

The strange, tiny groups with only a president, vice president and treasurer deserve the space just as much as the College Republicans.

Just because the Republicans have the money, numbers and resources to put up thousands of copies of a flier doesn't mean they should.

But we can hardly expect the College Republicans to limit its fliers voluntarily.

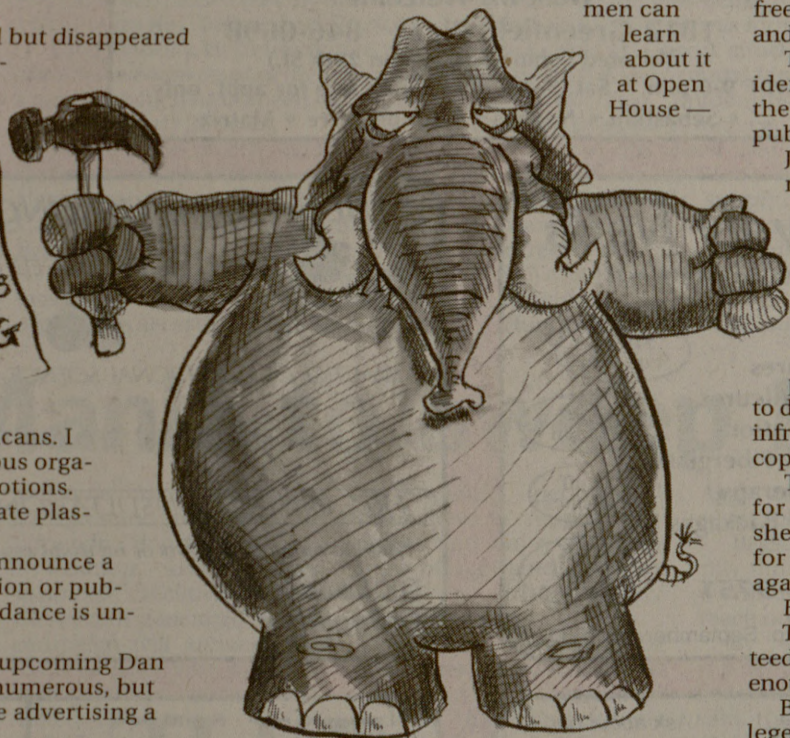
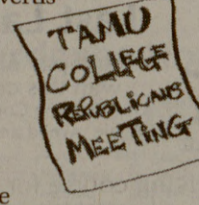
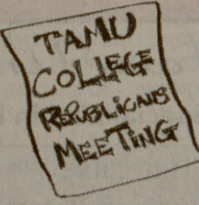
And as for a mandatory solution, the only other option is to cap the number of fliers each organization can put up. Unfortunately, if the University tried to do this, the College Republicans would cry infringement of free speech and distribute copies of "Common Sense."

The College Republicans is well-known for its ability to bury other groups by its sheer size. Democratic groups on campus, for instance, have never had a chance against the GOP juggernaut.

But they should still be allowed to try.

The right to speak freely should be guaranteed to everyone, even groups who aren't tacky enough to invoke it for every questionable cause.

By abusing the First Amendment, the College Republicans cancel its benefits for everyone else.



## Visitation hours insult students' intelligence

Nearly all students welcome college as a break from the rules they have been forced to obey at home.

In college, people decide which morals they will follow and make each decision independent of parental authority.

Freedom is certainly an advantage to living away from home. It is an important part of growing up.

For the most part, Texas A&M allows students the freedom to choose as they will, as long as they are prepared to take responsibility for their decisions. However, this is not the case for visitation hours, which must be abolished.

That is, unless it is three minutes after curfew and your R.A. happens to be in the hall of your

Columnist



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dorm when you are sneaking your girlfriend or boyfriend towards the exit. If that happens, you are guilty of the heinous crime of breaking visitation hours. The punishment? A parental-like lecture and the equivalent of a slap on the wrist.

The University might as well tell us not to eat cookies and spoil our dinner or tell us to get rid of those earrings and shave those hippie sideburns.

Almost every student living on campus is 18 and a legal adult. In fact, I know a few who are 21 or older.

Can you believe that it is against the rules for someone 21 years of age to have a member of the opposite sex spend the night in their room? A room that costs them the equivalent of an apartment but has one-fifth the space?

The reason given for having visitation hours is so one roommate will not be bothered when the other one has his or her better half in the room. But what is the difference if that is at one o'clock in the morning or two o'clock in the morning?

Roommates should work out between themselves the best arrangement. It should not be up to the University to decree what time is best to rid dorms of the opposite sex.

Most roommates are flexible and are willing to compromise in terms of dealing with visitors and guests.

Negotiating and compromising are two important responsibilities learned while becoming an adult. If the University let students decide the arrangements for visitation, we would be better off. Instead, students must constantly break the rules, resulting in headaches for every-

body involved.

Moreover, coed dorms have no visitation hours, provided the residents vote and agree to that rule.

Do these dorms consist of more mature and more responsible residents?

If some dorms are allowed to have unlimited visitation, then all dorms should be allowed to vote on it. Most students, regardless of sex, are in favor of being treated as adults who are capable of making competent decisions.

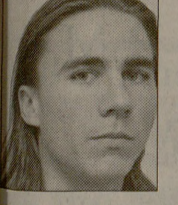
It is not solely a question of being able to have a member of the opposite sex in your room past a certain hour. It is a question of responsibility and individual freedom at a University which receives a large portion of our savings accounts each year.

For now, I'll have to keep sneaking people past my R.A. at two o'clock until someone at this University realizes students are mature individuals.

## Round up on-campus vendors into one location

Oh yeah. They want you. They pant from behind the posters. They are drooling on the newspapers. During the first two weeks of every semester, the direct marketers are out in full force.

Columnist



Mason Jackson  
Senior marketing major

And they are everywhere. These marketers cause more of a disruption to student life than is necessary and should be concentrated in one location.

Though the University regulates where vendors can set up their blockades and pop-tents, they seem to have been regulated into every major pedestrian thoroughfare on campus.

After all, who can make it from the Chemistry building to Harrington without signing for their third Citibank (we'll give credit to our pet rock) Visa card?

Truly, though, how many coupon books on one person use, especially when most of the coupons contain the phrase, "Ten percent off with the purchase of 17 at regular price?"

And how about the fun new tradition at MSC, running the MSC's red-ass gauntlet of people who stand in your way until you convince them you don't speak English?

Here's a possible solution that will make these salespeople less obtrusive but still conveniently available: Vendors desiring to peddle their wares on campus should be brought together into what we will call the "Corral O' Vendors."

That way, students will be unimpeded as they go to take care of all the minor details involved in starting a semester (guess who was in line at parking, Transit and Transportation Services when they decided 46,000 commuter permits might be too many for three parking spaces?)



Salespeople will still be available for those in need of their services and all at one convenient location.

I would suggest the large hole between Evans Library and the Commons.

For those of you who don't know, that is the soon-to-be-completed-for-your-grandchildren parking garage.

But I certainly can't blame the vendors for being overzealous.

There is abundant money up for grabs on campus, whether it's Daddy's money left over from frat dues or loan money you really didn't need.

Also, college students aren't known to be the most discriminating of consumers. As evidence, people need to look no further than

their officially licensed A&M futon couch.

The only foreseeable problem is the volatility of the "Corral."

There are going to be a lot of profit-hungry people sharing a confined space with a bulldozer. What if something happens?

For example, what if someone from TCA Cable TV accidentally knocks a column of complimentary cookies onto the table of the Greater Brazos Valley Area Carpet Dealers Association?

Things could get ugly; and if they do, my money is on the carpet people.

Of course, the "Corral O' Vendors" is just a temporary solution, since it will eventually be full of concrete. What do we do then? That's a problem for another generation.

## EDITORIAL

THE BATTALION

Established in 1893

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## HEALTHY THINKING

Required health insurance for international students provides bene-

When most Texas A&M students get sick or meet with an accident, they can just go to the doctor and not worry about paying the bill. But for the approximately 3,000 international students at A&M, this might not be an option.

Coming to the United States as an exchange student can bring a tangle of red tape and staggering medical costs if the student ever needs emergency care.

Beginning in Spring 1997, A&M will require all international students to have comprehensive medical insurance. If a student is not already covered, the University will offer its own plan, with coverage totaling up to \$67,500, for about \$476 per year.

Some shortsighted students may grumble about having even more money tacked onto their fee slips. But the requirement is for their benefit and is the right decision.

As non-U.S. citizens, they are not eligible for Medicaid or any other federal assistance.

If a student needs medical care,

then, this leaves no one to help foot the bill.

Obtaining insurance from the University lets students know exactly what kind of service they'll receive. With A&M's health plan, students are guaranteed good coverage and fair prices.

The administration — especially Vice President for Student Affairs J. Malon Southerland — should be commended for wanting to provide international students with this inexpensive insurance.

The University should also be appreciated for recognizing the diversity that these students bring to A&M. A similar version of this proposal has already been implemented at many top universities, and having the same requirement keeps A&M competitive in its efforts to attract quality students from around the world.

For a relatively small amount of money, they will have the comfort of knowing that no matter what happens to them, they'll be financially secure.



## MAIL CALL

### Cadets devoid of military bearing

I am writing in response to your front page article on Sept. 6, "Cadets deal with change."

Although I am not in the Corps of Cadets, I am a Midshipman from the class of 1995 at the United States Naval Academy. I cannot believe the lack of professionalism demonstrated by many members of the ROTC divisions which Aggies refer to as the Corps of Cadets.

Commandant Hopgood is to be commended for his recent policy alleviating the "chopping" or running requirement of freshman students through the quad when they are in fact en route to classes.

Education is Texas A&M's top priority and any action which has the potential to be a liability has no place.

It appears, however, that many members find it hard to adjust.

Although cadets claim there is no "official conflict," I have personally witnessed an attitude of dissension and lack of military bearing in the Corps that has extended beyond this one event.

It is an attitude of narcissism that regularly places tradition above the military genre and members of the Corps above other Aggies.

Make no mistake, tradition and pride are tremendous assets of all Aggies.

Unfortunately, however, tradition and pride are not the fortes of military forces.

I am not only a former Naval officer, but I am now also a civilian. I expect to be treated and greeted as such by every member of the Corps.

Remember, the top three members of the United States Armed Forces are civilians, not military brass. Perhaps as many of these attitudes of elitism diminish so will many of the negative opinions about the Corps.

General Hopgood, your policy is not only an attempt at improvement, but is also a lesson for all cadets — enforce it with a strict hand. Freshmen who still run should be doing so to benefit themselves, not to keep a tradition alive or to impress their upperclassmen.

As for the seniors who are running, you should remember that the main principle of the Corps is leadership by example. The only example you have set is one of dissension — how embarrassing.

Leance J. Miller, III  
Class of '96

### Lower standards hurt the University

There is a simple solution to many of the problems that plague A&M: Quit letting in underqualified students.

In its quest to become a "world-class" university, A&M is creating its own obstacles.

Not only is the university admitting people with poor SAT scores and low high school rank, it is going out of its way to do it.

Expanding the summer provisional program was a poor choice and a waste of money.

The admissions department claims it turns away qualified applicants, but I have yet to see any decline in class size or rise in the caliber of students.

The extraneous students admitted place a strain on an already overburdened system, contributing to housing and parking problems.

Before raising tuition and fees yet again, A&M should analyze how much money it is spending because of its practically open admissions policy.

I'm not asking A&M to become the next Rice, but a little selectivity wouldn't hurt.

Christina Weston  
Class of '97

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or fewer and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

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