

New Year's resolutions go down drain

With the start of the new year less than a month away, many students already started to formulate resolutions for 1997. When making a resolution, it is important to aim for a goal that is only character-enhancing, also attainable.

Columnist



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Two of the most common resolutions focus on mental and physical fitness. The desire to hit the books and the gym with renewed vigor in the coming year is

mirable, but like so many faulty resolutions, the problem lies in the execution.

Many students promise themselves and those they love that January will be the start of a New Year of Studying. People volunteer to limit themselves to two, maybe three nights of fun per month. They stare with dreamy eyes, gently mouthing the words that will become their mantra in the New Year: "No thanks. Y'all have the Chicken. If you get red, you can catch up with me in the library."

Maybe we think studying will be easier in the spring because of the lack of distractions like foot-candy and Bonfire. Unfortunately, many Aggies refuse to take advantage of this. Instead, most of them come back from Christmas break and work diligently to build a sort of mental Bonfire to keep themselves from the books.

Another common resolution is to begin a new workout regimen. Center regulars know that the stairs are climbed and more miles are biked, run and rowed in the beginning of the year than at



any other time. January is a good month to get heart smart because it is immediately after the holiday cookie-and-candy spree and a scant couple of months before the spring break celebration of near-nudity. Weight room traffic bulges and doesn't drop until the first round of tests gives many of the new fitness buffs whopping heaps of mediocre grades.

And so the New Year's resolution people return one by one to their couches with easy consciences. This trend continues until after spring break, when most people are content to turn into soft, pudgy little potatoes. The Rec Center empties, leaving only the diehard muscle mongers who don't mind renting the Center's \$1 towels that have the look and feel of real sandpaper.

Having established that most people who promise to study or pump iron are setting themselves up for disappointment, our chal-

lenge is to find an honest, workable resolution that can benefit all of humanity.

It might be time to resolve to change our extravagant approach to personal hygiene. Most Americans are slaves to the notion of "another day, another shower." But in many cases, daily showers are not only unnecessary, but also wasteful.

Most people who engage in non-strenuous day-to-day activities could probably do well with just three or four showers a week.

This isn't a very popular view in America today, but with the new year approaching, it's an idea whose time has come.

Many of our important trading partners in Europe operate from this vantage point.

The French, for instance, are generally considered people of low character.

They drive slow, ugly cars that call attention to the snooty people inside. Americans who make

the mistake of trying to say howdy are usually greeted with, "Bonjour, j'aime de bon fromage dans la matin." This loosely translates as "Hi, I'm French. Please hold my hat while I woo your date."

But all this aside, they have the right idea about showering. Although it is an international joke that French people have a certain fragrance, this could be attributed to the French affinity for cheese.

Certainly, no resolution should be taken to extremes. If the hot central Texas weather necessitates one or even two showers a day, that's acceptable.

But it's perfectly noble to try to conserve water by foregoing the superfluous shower, the aim of which is not so much to clean as to refresh and to conform to an outdated societal norm.

After all, most people don't exercise enough to require that daily shower. At least not for the entire semester.

College lessons leave much to be learned

My days spent in lecture halls are dwindling, and the finish line is within sight.

But these remaining days won't be my last in a classroom. When finals are over and bags are packed, I'll be moving home to begin a semester of student teaching. Many discouraged the decision because of the low pay and lack of discipline in many schools. But despite the prospects of an ever-empty checking account, I know the job will be infinitely rewarding.

There's nothing like the look on a child's face after he has struggled with a concept and the light suddenly comes on. But there's more to teaching than managing a classroom and going on field trips.

Consider a program at Kemp Elementary School in Bryan. Under teacher supervision, students from the predominantly black neighborhood are allowed to play in the school's gymnasium on Friday and Saturday nights.

It's a great program that could use more volunteers, be they aspiring teachers or business majors, who are willing to play foosball, four-square, basketball and jump rope with the kids. (The little ones demand piggy-back rides.)

Last Saturday night was my first time to go, and I had a great time. I only hope that the school where I will be student teaching has a similar program.

But before I leave for the chalkboards of Angleton ISD, I would like to offer a few final thoughts.

Travel to faraway places. The summer I spent in Alaska was incomparable. The rusted blue 1976 Chevy pickup made the 12,000-mile round trip without a hitch and took me through some



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beautiful country. I made it up the Alaska Highway, polar-beared the Yukon's Lake Klunane, saw Mt. McKinley, panned for gold, hiked across a glacier, had a close encounter with a bear and listened to the wolves howl. It was an amazing experience, and one I will never forget. I met some great people, and that summer in the canneries

taught me more about myself and life than can be learned in any university lecture hall.

And that's an important point: Our degrees really don't mean much in the big picture. Texas A&M is a great university, but it can't teach us everything. In other words, money, power and prestige are not to be envied; the world is meant to be seen — not conquered.

So don't get caught up running in the rat race. Sit on the front porch with a friend some night and have a big fat cigar. Then take the time to walk out into the yard and look up at all of the stars; it is truly beautiful. Unfortunately, most people forget the sky is up there.

If stars and cigars aren't your cup of tea, then take your dog for a walk in the park. And if you don't have a pet, the good people at the Brazos Animal Shelter can help you out.

Always remember to say "howdy" to Mildred at the MSC Bookstore. And stop to say "thank you" to Alvin and the gang at Aggeland Station; they have the mail in the boxes before most of us crawl out of bed in the morning.

Smile at the janitors because one of them will have to pick up this Battalion tonight after you throw it on the floor. And don't forget to look both ways before crossing the street on your way home. Thank you, A&M. It's been quite a party.



Child care brings quality to A&M

For approximately 20 years, faculty and staff, and, in recent years, students have requested that the University provide an on-campus child care center for use by campus constituents. Over the years the specifics of the request varied, but a desire that remained constant was that the center be located on or tangential to campus. Several studies were conducted and proposals generated providing data and recommendations that supported the requests.

To address the needs of the faculty, staff, and students with child care needs, it was decided that two centers will be established, one for full-time child care needs and one for part-time needs. These centers will be collected in one building located in the married student housing area. University funds were identified to support the facility acquisition and start-up costs for both the full and part-time centers. A stipulation of the administration is that the centers be operationally independent of any type of university subsidy. However, it should be noted that a request has been made for an allocation from student service fee money toward the part-time center, since the part-time center will cater predominantly to students.

The request for an on-campus child care center stemmed from needs expressed over time by facul-

ty, staff, and students. One need expressed was a desire for higher quality programming than is readily available in the local community. People were also looking for a more convenient location with more flexible hours than was affordable.

It is the intention of Texas A&M to offer to the children in its child care center (both full and part-time) the highest quality nurturing care and developmental experiences. However, as in most enterprises, there is a balance between quality and cost that is difficult to achieve. Because the University is unwilling to compromise the quality of care and programming, pursuit of the goal for the child care center to remain financially independent may be difficult to reach. To attain this goal, the cost of the center will be slightly above the community average. For this reason, external funding in the form of tuition scholarships is being sought to assist with the tuition costs for those parents who are unable to afford the center.

We are also seeking external financial support to help offset a portion of the capital costs associated with the center, things such as computers, playground equipment and furnishings.

Currently, it is the goal of the Child Care Center Advisory Committee to have a center that will be fully functioning for the fall semes-

ter 1997. The search for the director is occurring right now. The projected capacity of the full time center is 130 children. It is expected that the part-time center will be able to accommodate 50 children at any given time. But, because it is only a part-time center, the total number of children that can be served in a day greatly exceeds that number. Also, prior to admitting students to the centers, a fair and justifiable method will exist for the initial admissions as well as subsequent filling of vacancies.

In all the decisions that have been made and will be made to bring an operational child care center to this campus, a vision of excellence is being used to guide the way. It is the desire of all those individuals who have dedicated many hours of work on this project to see that the Texas A&M child care center exists to help faculty, staff, and students with their family needs by providing quality care and education for young children of university community families. This will be accomplished by building partnerships and maintaining shared responsibility with children, families, teachers, and the university community.

John Alvis is the president of the Graduate Student Council and a graduate student in nuclear engineering.



MAIL CALL

Student Senate truly wants to represent the students, maybe it should start listening to them." The only part the editorial missed is that maybe the Senate should start educating them.

Kendall Kelly
 Class of '99

Route to tenure proves very rigorous

Regarding Stephen Llano's Dec. 5 column, "Texas A&M's post-faculty tenure review should be re-evaluated":

Llano deserves credit for supporting tenure, a bulwark of academic freedom and a key ingredient in Texas A&M's rise to national prominence.

Unfortunately, Llano perpetuates some of the same myths about tenure that have led critics to call for its demise.

Tenure does not protect faculty from performance reviews. Most faculty undergo annual reviews to determine salary increases (when they are available, which hasn't been often). And they cannot be promoted to full professor without a review even more demanding than tenure review.

Every time professors submit papers, articles, book manuscripts, or grant applications, they are reviewed; every time they teach a class, they are evaluated. Far from hurting the quality of their work, such review actually improves it. Faculty welcome review and undergo it constantly because good criticism improves their research, publications, and teaching.

Nor does tenure guarantee a permanent position. Tenured faculty can and have been fired for incompetence or moral turpitude. Some are eased out into early retirement or positions elsewhere. All tenure guarantees is due process, meaning someone cannot be fired without a hearing and a sufficient reason.

Before acquiring tenure, faculty are on one-year contracts, and can be readily dismissed. Only about half of all Texas A&M faculty who are hired eventually earn tenure, which shows how rigorous the process is.

Dennis Berthold
 Professor of English

The Senate should educate students

Regarding the Dec. 4 editorial, "The Student Senate should listen to what students have said":

I am the senator who accused the student body of being "uninformed and uneducated" in the Rules and Regulations committee meeting on Nov. 24. The editorial said that the "... Senators elected last spring don't have too much faith in the student body opinion." The editorial is absolutely right and absolutely wrong.

There are many senators who do have faith in the student body opinion and faith in those 6,300 students that voted to have yell leader run-off elections. Senator Jesse Czelusta, an exceptional senator is one of those senators. Senator Kendall Kelly, however is not. We as senators are fooling ourselves if we think that 100 percent of the student body is always educated on issues at Texas A&M.

The editorial also mentioned that "If senators are going to cast doubt upon last semesters voting, perhaps they are better off simply not asking for the student body's opinion in the first place." The Student Senate tries to be as democratic as possible before we make a decision that will affect the entire student body. This is exactly why I believe that a democratic decision is not one that is based on ignorance. Not because I think that this is the fault of the students, but because I think this is the fault of the Senate.

My comment was aimed directly at the Student Senate, not at the student body. Perhaps The Battalion should get its information straight before it accuses others with misinformation, making not only organizations such as the senate look like fools but making The Battalion appear foolish as well.

The last thing I would like to leave The Battalion with is this: The editorial said that "If the

Yell leaders lack any understanding

Regarding H.L. Baxter's Dec. 5 column, "Yell leaders embarrass Texas A&M":

It embarrasses me to hear language like that from the yell leaders, who supposedly represent the best of Texas A&M.

One of the primary purposes of a college education is to prepare for life after college. Part of success in life depends on people's ability to work with a wide range of people, including gays and lesbians. Some students may go to work for progressive companies that values job performance above all else and simply don't care where their employees come from or what their lifestyle are.

The world is more diverse than the Texas A&M student body and all Aggies, including yell leaders, better get prepared for it. I am a proud former student and hope my children go to Texas A&M, but I can't honestly say Texas A&M is a world-class university until its students carry themselves with world-class attitudes.

Dan Hoffman
 Class of '80

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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