

It's my party...

Political parties would clear up campus confusion

Columnist



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Minnie Pearl would be subject to a fine and a "butt-whoopin'."

• **THE TOGA PARTY**

The Toga Party, led by SBP candidate Al K. Hall, would lobby the University to require a khaki shorts and ratty baseball cap dress code. Students would be expected to master the art of being shallow and plaster campus with posters advertising meaningless events. Admission into the University would hinge on knowledge of the Greek alphabet and one's ability to have it silk-screened on all items of clothing.

• **THE MEGABYTE PARTY**

Members of the computer-obsessed Megabyte Party would have Sully's statue replaced with a statue

of Bill Gates. Upon graduation, Aggies would be expected to have a basic understanding of old Monty Python gags and have memorized all *Star Trek* episodes. Once in power, Reveille dolls would be pulled off gift shop shelves and replaced with stuffed Dogberts. The annual Megabyte Party Convention would coincide with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome Awareness Week.

• **THE SLOB PARTY**

Slob-ocrats, identified by their sloppy dress and lack of manners, would ask Aggies to wear baseball caps in dining areas, chew with their mouths open and curse loudly in public. The belief that newspapers are made for classroom floors, not for reading, would be central to the party philosophy.

• **THE FRUITCAKE PARTY**

Dedicated to banning Bonfire and "celebrating diversity," Fruitcakes would pressure administration officials to recognize Joycelyn Elders' birthday as a school holiday (the administration would gladly oblige). Students would be required to communicate with squirrels, or as Fruitcakes put it, "harmonize with your non-person co-habitant." The Fruitcake Party also would seek to replace the nickname "Fightin' Texas Aggies" with the less-violent, less-Eurocentric "Tolerant Texas Snail Darters."

In an effort to preserve self-esteem, grades would be abolished and all students would receive a 4.0. James Earl Rudder's statue would be torn down and replaced with that of the new University president, head Fruitcake Garry Mauro.

Political parties are the best way to promote an agenda. Free-market economists make up a sizable part of the Libertarian Party, Christian patriots have founded the United States Taxpayers Party, environmentalists have the Green Party and those who like high taxes and low morals have the Democratic Party.

Under the new party system, each quirky group of A&M's student population would be guaranteed a voice. With candidates running on the clearly-defined platforms of their respective campus party, students would no longer have to guess which candidate for Student Government would do the best

job at being useless.



Student body elections have come and gone, leaving most students more confused than they were before.

Most candidates never stated a clear, coherent platform. Instead, they embraced different positions for more parking, better food and softer toilet paper.

The time has come for candidates to adopt platform stone platforms. Texas A&M needs student political parties — political parties that represent the community of cliques that make up A&M.

The current campaigning system doesn't effectively promote the legends of these campus groups. By allowing each campus clique to stand together, endorse their own candidates and adopt their own platform, students would know exactly what candidates stand for by looking at the ballot.

Possible parties and platforms best representing the University population could include:

• **THE REDNECK PARTY**
 Committed to running the University based on the teachings of Jeff Foxworthy, the Redneck Party would pressure MSC OPAS to feature a *Dukes of Hazzard* stage show.

Members would ask Food Services to serve butterbeans and mustard greens at every meal. In addition, the Redneck Party would lobby the athletic department to sponsor a NASCAR team.

Anyone defaming the memory of

Columnist



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hazing. There is no particular act of "hazing" that couldn't also be "assault and battery."

Logically, hazing should result in some sort of mental or physical harm. But the penal code already provides for cases of assault and battery, murder and other crimes. Punishments for murder or assault and battery would be far more effective than an accusation of hazing. The hazing laws will effectively punish criminal behavior of one or multiple offenders.

But the University and the state want to stop more than crime. They apparently want to stop personal liberty as well.

There are a few unique aspects to the hazing law.

It is the only law designed to punish the recipient of "hazing" acts, as well as the perpetrators — if knowledge of "hazing" activities are not reported, the punishment is a fine up to \$1,000 and jail confinement up to 180 days. This means that if a student was willing to participate and weeks later the administration suspects that student of being in one of these undefined criminal acts, the student could be punished.

The law is also designed to compromise students' freedom to assemble and freedom of speech. Even if a hazing act is consented to by both parties, both will still be charged and tried. The most likely result if a guilty verdict is handed down will be the dissolution of the organization.

The law will be enforced regardless of any personal

injury or property damage. Much like George Orwell's novel *1984*, there are administrators on this campus whose jobs revolve around seeking out the "dark forces of hazing."

There is no point in enforcing a law and wasting time and money pursuing a case if neither party involved suffer any damage. Just because the state and the University feel hazing is wrong, this doesn't justify intrusion into students' lives. Every rumor or mention of hazing will be fully investigated by the University, even if no one was hurt and there was consent. This means money is wasted on Administration salaries and time is wasted by students who have to sit and wait to be questioned by "all-knowing" members of the Administration.

Apparently, the Administration feels justice is merely a trifle to be dealt with at a later date. Students, in the case of the accused members of Fish Drill Team, began to be punished for hazing the instant they were accused. Perhaps the Administration should take the time to read the Constitution they claim to support as Americans.

The hazing law uses good intentions to try to protect students from harm or death, but as the old adage says, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." The hazing law is poorly defined, unspecific and results in a loss of liberty and choice by individuals. Administrators and legislators must allow students to live their own lives responsibly, and punish individuals without making decisions for them.

Hazing law suffers from ambiguity, lack of focus

As a senior at Texas A&M and a columnist for *The Battalion*, I hereby demand, through the power of my position and class rank, that everyone must take off their shoes before reading any further. Those who comply with the preceding paragraph are victims of hazing according to the hazing law of A&M, which went into effect August of 1987.

A&M students have recently become familiar with the law thanks to continual reminders from the Department of Residence Life and Housing, the Commandant's office and other administration departments.

This year, two Greek organizations were suspended by this law, and the Fish Drill Team is currently under investigation for hazing activities. It appears the law is being enforced and applied across the board.

But due to the generalized language of the law, it also represents a threat to the individual liberties of students.

One of the overlying problems with the law is the lack of a definition of what "hazing" actually is.

There must be some unique aspect to the hazing law. The legislation spells it out through at least five different explanations, but none are solid. Anything that involves a "misuse of class rank or position" could be



MAIL CALL

Non-regs fail to contribute to A&M

In response to Adam Greer's April letter.

I would like to caution non-regs not to be too quick to rest on their laurels.

While personal definitions of a "good Ag" may vary, I think most non-regs fall short in a reasonable evaluation of their conduct, whether it be not sticking around until the end of a game, or organizations (Greek or otherwise) holding functions during Silver Taps.

I think there is plenty of room for temperate criticism — even

outright rebuke — without resorting to the "Aggie Gestapoism" that Dave House complains of in his April 1 guest column.

Most non-regs are not pulling our weight, or at least not enough. Some may disagree with me, but our Aggie traditions are fun and something to be proud of. That fun and pride is diminished every time I get a surprised look when I say "Howdy!", or when the girl next to me in class wears a Colorado University sweatshirt. Sure, I resent it. Diversity is great, but it doesn't have to be at the expense of unity.

One more thing: Sure, 70,000 people show up to watch Bon-

fire burn, but who would want to miss that party?

How many of us though, are showing up to help build it.

Out of approximately 30,000 off-campus students, Off-Campus Aggies is lucky to even pull in 15 people for a cut. That is one half of one tenth of one percent. No matter how you add that up it still equals pathetic.

Mike Spillers
 Class of '98

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

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

The Battalion - Mail Call
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 Texas A&M University
 College Station, TX
 77843-3111

Campus Mail: 1111
 Fax: (409) 845-2647
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For more details on letter policy, please call 845-3313 and direct your question to the opinion editor.

King's promised land remains beyond horizon

Friday marked the 29th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Prior to his untimely death, King spoke of building a new America, which would be empty of racial malice and injustice — the promised land.

Nearly three decades later, the America King spoke of has become a distant memory. On campus and throughout the country, lack of communication among races, a lack of cultural interaction and cultural myths have separated Americans from reaching the promised land.

The first step toward the promised land is conquering cultural ignorance. However, both African-Americans and whites have difficulty talking about racial issues. Many whites feel remorse and fear when talking about race. The politically correct culture has taught white America that the mere use of certain words proves racial prejudice. This fear of saying the wrong word, or having certain statements misunderstood, causes many whites to avoid discussion of race with African-Americans.

From an African-American point of view, discussion of racial issues with whites often leads to either humor or anger. Some African-Americans find it humorous when whites talk about racism, because they've never experienced a day as an African-American and have no understanding what it means or feels like to be black. Other African-Americans become angered when whites "talk" about racial understanding and harmony.

For many African-Americans, talking about racial problems have become a way for whites to proclaim compassion while avoiding real racial issues.

Along with lack of communication, a general lack of cultural interaction has kept America from becoming a promised land.

This self-imposed segregation can be seen at Texas A&M and throughout the Bryan-College Station community. At A&M, race separates lunch tables, sporting events and extracurricular organizations. In the community, race separates neighborhoods, business districts and churches. A legacy of racial misunderstandings have caused race to seek peace by simply avoiding one another.

Further separating America from the dream of reaching a promised land are cultural myths.

Dr. Orlando Taylor, Dean of the Howard University Graduate school, recently spoke at A&M about the challenges of eliminating racial problems in America.

"The legacy of racism in America has produced a cultural myth of inferiority and superiority," Taylor said.

This myth is that the white male is a superior force in the American society. However, instead of criticizing white-male arrogance, Taylor chided the black community to accept this fallacy. Accepting these beliefs breathes new life into them.

Along with the societal outlook, A&M produces its own myths, such as: Every African-American student at the University is either an athlete or has been given a set-aside scholarship; all Corps members are racists, anxiously awaiting to form an Aggie KKK chapter; *Hopwood* will eliminate African-Americans from A&M; the Confederate flag is just another way of saying "pro-slavery."

Aggies and other Americans will enter the next century in the midst of a cultural clash. Blacks and white refuse to talk to one another, live in the same neighborhoods or worship in the same churches.

If America cannot settle its cultural clash in order to seek a promised land, the country will go the way of Yugoslavia, Ireland and the former Soviet Union. Each of these countries failed to solve cultural problems and erupted into divided lands plagued by civil wars.

King's assassination may have eliminated the chief messenger of racial unity, but the event should not have eliminated the hope of improving America. Creating an American promised land is as possible today as it was on April 4, 1968. It is time to put away the communication barriers separating whites from blacks. It is time to dismiss the mental myths infecting all Americans. It is time to join black and white together and renew the search for the promised land.

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