

# University relations

## Campus overrun with air of hostility toward gays and lesbians

For some students, Texas A&M University is the most dangerous place on Earth. Gay and lesbian students especially do not feel safe while attending the University because of its conservative character. It is the University's responsibility to insure safety for all students, but because of the fear many gay students endure, it must be more responsive and proactive in addressing their needs.

Right now, all students have a "support system" to turn to if they are har-

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rassed or violated. University Police, Student Counseling Service, Student Conflict Resolution Center and other departments have been established to help students if they feel threatened. However, many gay and lesbian students feel they cannot turn to these departments because the University's climate is so homophobic, no administrator would take their concerns seri-

ously. The University practices its own discrimination in handling, or not handling, homophobia — a fear that is the foundation of hate.

At Texas A&M, gay students feel unsafe. This school year alone, gay students have been targeted by the Ku Klux Klan and the yell leaders, as well as fellow students via telephone harassment and vandalism. Despite these incidents, the University refuses to be held responsible for insuring the safety of gay students.

The yell leader incident was particularly damaging to the safety of gays. At the yell practice in Austin last semester, three yell leaders referred to the U.T. football team as "fags" and "queers," turning a night of celebration into a night of gay-bashing. The University administration did nothing to reprimand the yell leaders. Neither University President Ray Bowen nor Vice-President of Student Affairs J. Malon Southernland made an official response to the incident. An apology was given by one yell leader to the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Aggies, but not to the student body at large. It is no wonder many gay students feel they are not allowed to be Aggies; the very leaders of the University are against them.

On the part of the University, silence is acceptance concern-

ing this type of hate. By not responding publicly to such incidents, the University sanctions the defamation of gays and lesbians. The University continues to allow student groups to show prejudice openly toward each other. This prejudice fosters an environment of hostility, jeopardizing the safety of all students on campus.

This environment of hostility amplifies the level of fear gay and lesbian students experience while attending Texas A&M. Although the University provides resources to help students who have been harassed or personally violated, many gay students do not utilize these services. This unwillingness to use available resources lies in the risk of having to admit one's homosexuality to a stranger in the process of filing a complaint. By reporting a crime, many gay students feel they are making themselves a target. They feel uneasy having their name on a sheet of paper as the subject of a gay-related hate crime.

The task of insuring the safety of gay and lesbian Aggies is a double-edged sword — the administration is fearful of a population it does not understand, while the gay population fears retribution from the University for being themselves. It is fear which breeds prejudice and hate. The response (or lack thereof) of the administration to gay and lesbian hate crimes is indicative of the homophobia saturating Texas A&M.

The University administration and the gay student population need to meet in the middle in an effort to cure homophobia on campus. However, the University must initiate this process if it is to convey its sincerity toward ensuring the safety of gay students. The reason gay students feel so isolated at Texas A&M is because they do not trust the University to take their concerns seriously. By reestablishing trust, the University administration could show its willingness to work with gay students, not around them.



Photo by Ryan Rogers, THE BATTALION

## Three's a crowd

### Surrogate relationship complicates life, ignores child

"Kevin" and "Todd" are gay men, committed to each other as partners. They've decided they want a child. Rather than pursue an adoption, Kevin and Todd have decided to father the child themselves. To do this, they need a woman to bear the child. Enter "Lisa." She has agreed to carry their child. However, Lisa is no mere surrogate. After she gives birth, she will continue to be the child's mother, helping Kevin and Todd to raise the kid.

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Lisa will be artificially inseminated. When a curious student asked which father would supply the sperm, Kevin explained Lisa would be impregnated with a mixture of semen from both fathers. So the question of which father will actually donate his genes will be answered by sperm counts, averages and blind luck.

Lisa is a heterosexual woman. One day, she might fall in love with a man who won't mind marrying into an "instant family" with a mother and two gay fathers.

The popular wisdom of our society dictates homosexuality is determined genetically. Gays and lesbians defend their lifestyles by insisting they are acting on God-given natures.

The underlying assumption is this: What is natural must be good, or at least acceptable.

So what's natural about a pregnancy involving two gay fathers, a straight mother, potential stepparents and some laboratory glassware? Nothing at all.

Parenting schemes like this are inherently ill-advised because they are devastatingly artificial. However, this is just one example of how many Americans — male and female, gay and straight — are rushing to bring more children into this world by substituting technology and legal proceedings for old-fashioned family structures. Too many people are following Murphy Brown's example.

On campus, a flier for Gay Awareness Week proclaims "Love makes a family." This statement is true but incomplete.

Families, marriages and relationships in general require hard work, good timing and defined roles, just to name a few qualities.

Similarly, all children need love. However, beyond this fundamental need are things children deserve, like security, stability, a certain level of shelter and the comfort of innocence. This includes sexual innocence. Not just the innocence of not having had sex, but the innocence which comes from not knowing what defines sex. The diseases, heartaches and

predators of this world make it necessary to provide even young children with certain facts to protect them.

However, experts and laypeople alike believe sexual education for children should be age-appropriate. Most young kids just want to know "where they came from."

A child juggled by two gay fathers and a mother will be burdened, at a very tender age, with a huge chunk of the convoluted truth of human sexuality. Most kids find this dialogue daunting enough when they're told of just one orientation and two body parts.

The child will need to know why some kids don't understand his or her family situation, and why some kids tease while others whisper.

Unfortunately, it is the children's lives that are complicated when adults cleverly circumvent the consequences of their lifestyle choices. Too many people refuse to acknowledge it should take one devoted man and one devoted woman to create a child.

Granted, it is possible for a child to be raised in a radically unconventional household, and most likely he or she would be very loved in his or her home. But the arrangement wouldn't be natural at all.

Gay parents and single people are well within their rights to utilize sperm banks or contract surrogates.

But children are living, breathing people, and shouldn't be used as banners for a cause.

## God's sexual preference

### Christ loves everyone, including gays and lesbians

According to the Bible and the teachings of Jesus Christ, the act of homosexuality is wrong. This is readily accepted by the religious right.

True followers of Christ also are commanded to love God and to love everyone around them — despite differences in sexual preference, race or belief. Unfortunately, this is not embraced as easily.

Sadly, only a handful of gentle, compassionate and loving Christians truly "pick up their cross" and blindly follow Christ.

Following Christ basically means four things: glorifying God, learning his word, teaching his word and serving and loving his children.

Each of these acts is self-sacrificing. These objectives have no respect for sexual preference, desires of personal achievement or personal happiness.

These goals are designed perfectly to humble the creation and give glory to the creator.

These goals are a simplification of the Christian life, which was taught by Christ himself.

In short, Jesus taught compassion — not gay-bashing.

Religious leaders continue to single out three or four sins of society (including homosexuality) and preach burning condemnation, often mixed with hate.

Because of this hateful enterprise, gays and lesbians who may be searching for something to fill a void in their

lives (a void completely filled by Christ) are left out and forced to the conclusion that Christ didn't die for them.

The religious right is doing a bang-up job of keeping gays as far as possible from God's love.

Despite what Christ taught, despite that he "came not to condemn the world but to save it," (John 3:17) people who call themselves Christians still cling to the humanistic principle of hating everyone who is different.

Damnation and salvation are acts belonging only to God, and yet the religious right and those who fail to take the time to learn God's word feel free to damn anyone they see fit.

It is impossible to call yourself a Christian without knowing what Christ taught and what he did. This is why the homosexual act is a sin (because Christ spoke out against it), but this is also why condemnation is a sin as well.

Christ reminded his followers not to complain of the "speck in your brother's eye, without first removing the plank in your own." (Matt. 7:3-5.)

Christ was love and forgiveness. Christ never threw a stone, nor did he condemn. Christ is the savior.

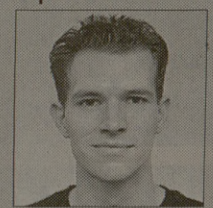
Christians should start acting like it.

Christians should stop perverting the word of God to fit their lifestyle, whether it be a gay lifestyle or a hateful, prejudiced one.

Ministers should stop telling people Jesus had trouble dealing with his own sexuality (because it is not true), and the religious community should stop telling people they are going to hell because they are gay. Ministers and all Christians should be dealing with the disease instead of the symptoms.

In short, they should be preaching the gospel, the story of a man who loved with his heart and died because of it.

**Opinion Editor**



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**(A Christian's) goal should be to spread the gospel instead of forcing every homosexual into the mold the religious community has created.**

Christians should embrace the gay community. Their goal should be to spread the gospel instead of forcing every homosexual into the mold the religious community has created.

"Every man has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23) and that sin cannot be forgiven by men. Sin is between God and the individual. It is not the Christian's responsibility to damn someone to hell, but to open their arms and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Just as one human cannot successfully convert another to Christianity, one cannot be damned by another.