

**Ol' Army days remain forever lost to history**

Over the past weekend, there was a suspicious increase in the number of maroon Cadillacs and men in maroon polyester blazers sighted on campus. This occurrence can mean only one thing — old Ags are back.

Parents' Weekend and Muster brought an influx of former students to campus. This mixing of Ol' Army with new army exposes the generation gap which exists between current Aggies and former students. Texas A&M University is not the school as it once was known. Ol' Army days are gone forever. They have been replaced by new army, the reality of A&M today.

Listening to propaganda pushed by numerous A&M publications and rabid Fish Camp counselors, one

reaches the conclusion that A&M is firmly grounded in tradition. However, the concept of unchanging traditions, passed down from generation to generation, is a myth — much like the Loch Ness Monster or a compassionate Board of Regents.

Many of A&M's most sacred traditions are recent creations. For example, class wildcats did not exist in so-called Ol' Army days. Throughout the crowd at Friday night's yell practice, former students tried to figure out why their sons and daughters were adding an irritating A-A-A or whoop to the end of yells. Other new traditions like Replant and Big Event are less than 10 years old.

The irony of A&M's traditions is that they change periodically to meet the wants of students and administration. In the early '90s, Elephant Walk degenerated into an opportunity to grope the senior class. Then when public opinion swayed against the mayhem, it moved closer to its somber origins. This year, yell practices were moved from Kyle Field's horseshoe to the first deck to keep the band off the grass on the field. Bonfire has mutated from a trash heap to the behemoth, grade-point ratio-destroying activity it is today.

Reese Neumann, member of the Traditions Council and a sophomore accounting major, said traditions change to meet the needs of students.

"I think change is a good thing and it's going to happen," Neumann said. "Our job on Traditions Council is to remind people how things were started and why we do the things we do."

However, changing traditions at students' whims violates the very definition of tradition.

The campus of Ol' Army days is incompatible with today's A&M. Many students would not like the A&M of old. Moreover, half of A&M's students would not be here if this were the A&M of old.

Jerry Harbert, a member of the Class of '66, said the campus was divided when women were first admitted to A&M.

"We all (the Corps of Cadets) campaigned against co-education," Harbert said. "Now, I have a daughter going here."

The decision to admit women started a series of events, the repercussions of which, signaled the death of Ol' Army days. Perhaps the most frightening result of women at A&M is the existence of the Aggie Dance Team, a concept so anti-Ol' Army, it probably makes Sul Ross roll over in his grave.

Hazing, the bane of student organizations today, was part of the Aggie experience in Ol' Army days. For example, consider the commonly used term, "redass," which eloquently describes spirited Aggies. The origin of this term in Ol' Army days has a lot more to do with axe handles and behinds than it does with Aggie Spirit.

Today, Ol' Army exists only in the memories of the alumni who periodically visit campus to have buildings named after themselves. A&M has evolved; it is no longer dominated by the male, agricultural, military students of the past.

It's time for students to accept their new identity. These are new army days where, based on the foundation A&M's past, students have modified A&M and its traditions to meet their current needs. Any other action will doom us all to a future of maroon Cadillacs and polyester blazers.

**Lady Liberty**

*Proud American image often spoiled by harsh realities*

The word "America" carries a widespread load of connotations. Some feel it represents "the freedom of the world," a place where people exist to speak their minds and live their lives in the manner they choose. Others feel it is a haven for individuals to escape dictatorships and military-ruled governments, a place where foreigners can go to break out into a new environment filled with hope of a new life and a rich soul. Today, I feel the word "America" is much more than the aforementioned definitions. America is more than apple pie, The Statue of Liberty, Washington Monument, or The Declaration of Independence. To me, America is a state of mind, a frame of being, in a world plagued by disorder and chaos, some of which can be found exclusively in The United States.

When I think of America, I do not think of the hundreds of battles and wars it has endured in the past. I think of the trials and tribulations it faces today, such as a national debt that will never see a recession, a country that will never be governed by a fully-capable president, a place where children are murdered in the streets for no reason, and a place where the homeless struggle to survive under cold bridges, starving for a simple slice of "apple pie." It is no one's fault that America has become this microcosm of crime and punishment, but everyone is at fault for letting these situations and this environment continue to exist. I'm not the type of person to place blame on anyone, but with so many people yelling "Take responsibility for your country," what else can I do but respond by asking, "What have you done today to better America?"

While this topic may infuriate

some people, is it the most relevant and prevalent issue facing American citizens today. How can one call himself an American when the country is in such a state of dishevelment? Sometimes I fight the battle of whether to label myself as black, African-American or American, but I believe that first and foremost, I am human. The placement of the phrase American citizen is a heavy title to carry. As it once meant someone of character, a believer and dreamer, someone who wished to better the world and the environment around him, the term has lost all of its significance. Today, I no longer find it acceptable to be labeled as an American citizen.

Then I ask myself, "What have I done today to better America?" This answer, while simple, is also degrading — nothing. I find myself in the same position as other people who want to make this a better place to live and raise children. I do not know the first place to start, the first step to take onto the pathway of improvement. What I do know is that, while every

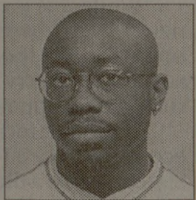
little step and every individual action helps, it will take a collective effort to bring America into the spotlight it deserves. With the disasters and troubles this country has survived, it is a wonder it has not been able to cure its current societal ills. There is too much apathy in the atmosphere today, too many people wondering what the country can do for them and not enough personal reflection and introspection as to what they can do for America. While this may be easy to say, but hard to accomplish, every worthwhile endeavor begins out of nowhere. Before there was a constitution, there was only a piece of parchment. Before there were founding fathers, there were only kids who wanted to run and play in the open fields of the day. America is a great place to live. Ask anyone — except the homeless, prostitutes, drug-addicted junkies, evicted homeowners, students paying college expenses, welfare recipients, hospitalized individuals or those families who lost a loved one to a drive-by shooting or some other random, murderous act. It doesn't have to be this way, and if more people begin to realize this, America can become that place of free-thinking individuals, a place of new hope and rich souls, a place where a new idea is not thwarted by government officials and a place where people are not defined by skin color or age or sexual preference. America can become "... one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Columnist



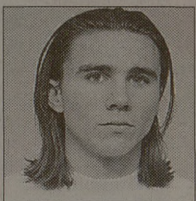
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Columnist



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**Age of invention ended with birth of Generation X**

What does a world of cutting edge innovation have in common with every major religion in the world? Everything interesting seems to have happened a long time ago.

Why? In the case of religion, it's much more difficult to disprove something if it happened several thousand years ago, before the invention of the camcorder, after the invention of circular logic.

And in the case of innovation, it has declined because we no longer know how to set goals.

Somewhere in between a small step for man and a giant leap for mankind, we seem to have gotten off track. As a nation and as individuals

we continue to set lower goals, place due dates further in the future and fail to meet them. JFK said we'd have a man on the moon by 1970 and we did.

But we never made it to Mars. And nobody seems to mind much. Now we're happy if we get five new cable channels by 1998. Coming soon, The Underachiever Channel, brought to you by the people responsible for repairing Ross Street.

So what the hell happened on the way to Valhalla? Admittedly, technology has been increasing at a rapid rate, but only in logical steps and only in directions that fail to surprise Juliette Lewis.

And technological achievements shouldn't be confused with cultural

achievements, which have been even less impressive. Where are the innovators?

Take the current state of music, for example. Bands are applauded for creatively sampling the work of others. Some people say that techno is original. They're right. The rumblings of my stomach also are original, but you don't see me trying to pass that off as music. And that goes for you too, U2.

The movie industry isn't exactly bursting at the seams with new ideas. I mean, really, every porno movie for the last 25 years has had virtually the same plot and exactly the same background music (boing-a-chinka-boing-boing), with the possible exclusion of Stanley Kubric's upcoming epic *2069 - A Sex Odyssey*.

So, am I just going to complain, or am I gonna do something about it? I spend every day looking for new

things to cook with a toaster, but that's not enough, I'm going to sleep more. That's right. What this world needs is more dreamers. Willy Wonka knew how to dream — a seven-course meal in a piece of gum, now that's innovation.

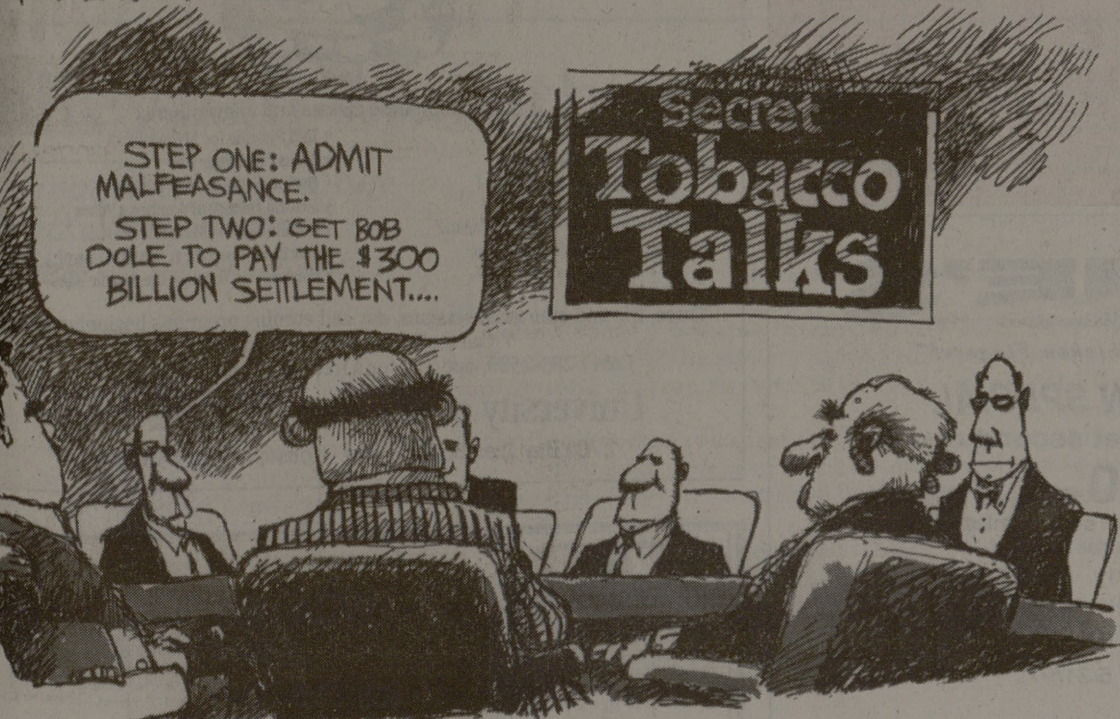
And I won't lower my standards. If I say I want to get out of here with a 3.0 GPA, then I won't use the time-tested method of rounding up.

Also, I'll be a better consumer and won't reward the mediocre and mundane — goodbye L.L. Cool J., hello Pink Floyd.

And if I ever have a substantial amount of money, I won't invest it and live off the interest because too often the size of someone's cojones is inversely proportional to the size of their wallet.

And that just doesn't work in a world where it's risky to dream.

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**MAIL CALL**

**Shuttle bus system frustrates student**

Students who live off campus have to rely on the bus system.

Unfortunately, the bus system is anything but reliable. If it is not late, it misses the stop altogether. Even if the bus is on time, students must contend with drivers who jump curves, slam brakes or start driving before they sit down.

Many times drivers are late reporting to work, causing a bus-load of people to wait, sometimes 30 minutes or more.

In the last two days, my bus has missed a run three times.

First, it made me late for an exam review, second it made me late for the

exam, and third, it didn't arrive from 6:30 until 8:00 for my ride home from the exam.

I waited for forty minutes to an hour each time.

No matter what the excuse is, something must be done.

As customers of this bus service, students deserve better than this.

Gary Felts  
Class of '00

**World-class status alludes Aggeland**

After reading Travis Chow's column regarding A&M's pursuit of "world-class" status, I came up with a few ideas to help A&M rise to that level:

- Whoopstock should be embraced with the same enthusiasm as Bonfire.
- The Singing Cadets should share Parents' Weekend with other vocal groups so that all vocalists can be the "voice of Aggeland," and dads should join the Aggie moms and form Aggie parent clubs.
- Aggies should realize positive support for our teams' pure athletic excellence is more socially responsible than "beating the hell outta" another team.

Carol Sullivan  
Class of '82, '86, '92

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