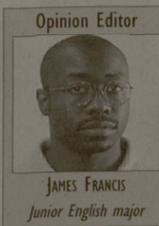


Beauty is in the eye of the bug holder

Insects get bum rap; overlooked in helping further historical discovery

They're creepy and they're spooky ... mysterious and other ooky ... no, it's not "The Adams Family," although the same song does match. I'm talking about insects and America's perception of them as irritating pond-feeders that only exist to bother humans. Mosquitoes bite us, ticks give us Lyme Disease, bees make us run cover and cockroaches and



JAMES FRANCIS
Junior English major

flies turn our stomachs. While some insects, such as the butterfly, enjoy being labeled as beautiful and a clear notation that spring is just around the corner, others must fight the stigma of being classified as bugs with no good uses. It's time for people to realize the importance of insects and open their eyes to the notion that they

outnumber us by more than we could ever imagine. We also must come to understand that not all insects appear terrific in color, nor do they all have the intention to destroy this earth and the people with it. In a Houston Associated Press report, it was reported that two archaeologists from Rice University "are hoping termites — yes, termites — will aid them in their mission to preserve an ancient African city they unearthed in 1977." The married couple, Rod and Susan McIntosh, hope that the mounds of dirt created by the termites will stop the erosion currently threatening Jenne-jeno, the ancient West African city in Mali that was abandoned in the 14th century.

In the report, Rod said that although most people view termites as harmful, these termites in particular deserve to be left alone in order for them to continue aiding the city's preservation.

"After years of trying to chase Houston termites out of our homes, we're chasing their African brothers for benefi-

cial purposes," Rod said. "Those mounds may succeed where nothing else has, preserving our dig sites from the effects of torrential rains."

Rod said he is almost certain that no other archaeologist has used termites in such a manner.

"I called archaeologists I knew in other parts of the world to ask what they were doing about erosion and none had any answers," he said.

As of now, it is reported that Mali is in the middle of its rainy season, but Rod said the termite mounds are extremely durable. "These mounds are so hard that driving a car into one would be like driving into a brick wall," he said.

Although this situation with the termites is unique, people must learn to appreciate the helpful things that certain insects provide in our environment. Spiders, for example, capture all the "irritating" flies and mosquitoes that we complain about. On the other hand, fly larva in the form of maggots prove to be useful tools in fishing for our nation's farmers and those individuals who simply want to catch a fish or two for dinner.

Susan said the people of Africa have learned, due to experiences in their environment, to accept and work with insects.

"In Africa, people understand that their environment would be piled meters high with dead vegetation and wood without termites," she said.

In America, however, Susan said there seems to be the perception that humans

are, and must be, in constant competition with insects and the environment.

"We [Americans] view ourselves in some sort of battle with nature; that battle goes on everywhere," she said.

In her situation, Susan said she wishes that the termites turn out to be a good natural phenomenon.

"We hope that the mounds will turn out to be a successful ... solution to erosion," she said.

With this occurrence in the field of archaeology, it can be assumed that insects are helping keep our environment more stable than most people think.

As each year goes by, crops become damaged by locusts, people die from allergic reactions to wasp stings and gnats form organized crime swarms that invade and plague the entrance to homes. But with all this in mind, there are more beneficial aspects to insects than people realize.

We must not forget that insects play a vital part in the food chain of all upper-level carnivores, such as ourselves, as it was once reported that the average American unknowingly consumed one full pound of bugs in a year. Along with the food chain, insects have provided an equilibrium in nature that has existed before written history.

Just remember that if the tables of nature ever became unbalanced, insects would easily overpower humans, and the world would be much different than we know it to be today.



MAIL CALL

Kinesiology provides health to all Aggies

In response to Carl Roth's July 21 Mail Call:

Every day it amazes me that there are people at Texas A&M University that have no clue of what they are talking about. When these individuals want to have their words published so that everyone else can witness their stupidity.

A&M has a totally self-sufficient athletic department, one of only 11 in the world, which takes absolutely no money from the school system to operate. This means that no matter how many kinesiology classes students are required to take or decide to take, the fees from these classes are in no way, shape, form or fashion dispersed among the coaches.

Therefore, I cannot see where Roth gets his information. I am sick and tired of students degrading the kinesiology profession. Just take a look at the shape that Americans are in today: overweight, obese and suffering from heart disease.

Maybe if more people like Roth would take these classes as enrichment to their lives, instead of looking at them as a "requirement," then the American public would not be dropping like flies to the fate of heart attacks and heart disease.

I pray, as a fellow Aggie, that not only Roth, but all Aggies take pride in their bodies and well-being, and involve themselves in not only academic studies, but physical aspects as well.

Quit thrashing kinesiology classes and coaches; they exist to make you healthier and keep you around longer, so you can use your academic qualities for many years to come.

Jay Ratcliff
Class of '97

PTTS controls possible mayhem

In response to James Wallace's July 21 Mail Call:

Don't take out your frustration on Wallace. He is just doing his job, and the ones with the "holier-than-thou" attitudes aren't PTTS officers, but those individuals who think that they shouldn't be penalized for not following the rules.

It doesn't matter if the University is here to serve the students; rules are rules, and they

should be followed. I am not employed by PTTS but I still will defend the people. PTTS will not ticket or tow a car if it is properly parked with a proper permit.

You think parking is bad now. What if we didn't have rules, and PTTS didn't monitor the lots? We'd have mayhem.

Anyone golfing on campus wouldn't be able to park at the golf course, and campus traffic would permanently be at a standstill because selfish, inconsiderate students think that they can park anywhere just because they pay tuition.

It is a privilege to attend any university, especially one such as Texas A&M.

In order to keep it a world class institution, there has to be regulations to keep order, otherwise, we'll just be another school. Respect authority.

Like the joke says, "What do you call an Aggie after graduation? Boss."

Well, when you get in that position of authority, you'll want the respect from those beneath you. In other words, respect the authority above you now.

Carino Casas
Class of '99

People should ride bicycles to school

In response to Brian Bolstad's July 22 Mail Call:

I want to say thank you to Bolstad for demonstrating the obnoxious, self-centered attitude that provokes rudeness from PTTS officers and disdain from many fellow students.

Texas A&M and other universities across the country were created to educate, but not necessarily coddle or provide a parking space for every single student.

The fact that the University has 27,000 parking spaces, but is unable to accommodate 42,000 students demonstrates to me that a majority of the students are too lazy to walk, ride the bus or ride a bicycle. They insist on driving their own car to school.

It is exactly this attitude that has congested our highways and city streets, polluted our air and wasted too much of our tax dollars on continually building and repairing superhighways.

Until we can recognize this and quit whining about parking tickets and the lack of parking, there never will be enough parking.

Buck up and ride the bus, or even better, ride a bicycle. I ride from Southwood Valley everyday and have never had to buy a parking permit.

It only takes me 20 minutes, which is quicker than taking the bus or driving, and it makes me exercise everyday.

I know I'm not alone because I see fellow cyclists everyday, and I'm sure that even Bolstad could do it.

Cody Wheeler
Graduate student

Callaway's column has one small flaw

In response to Len Callaway's July 22 column:

Callaway's opinion column on the establishment of a private high school in Dallas for gay and lesbian teens was a welcome insight on a troubling problem.

He makes one comment, however, indicating a basic lack of understanding on gay and lesbian issues.

In his column, Callaway referred to "voluntary lifestyles such as drug abuse, dependencies, behavior problems, teen pregnancy and homosexuality." Regardless of what many heterosexuals insist on believing, homosexuality is no more voluntary than heterosexuality. Choosing to engage in, or abstain from sex is voluntary.

But human personality is such that no one in this world "voluntarily" chooses to be something that would cause him or her to be hated, vilified or publicly humiliated.

Eric Trekell
Graduate student

UT students ridicule Reveille controversy

In response to a news story on July 21:

Poor Aggies. We recently read about the problem you face concerning the final resting place of Reveilles I through IV.

Although we usually don't concern ourselves with the happenings in less civilized societies, we took an immediate interest in your plight.

We have devised a solution better than any other proposed by engineers or architects to date: Get over it, it's just a damn dog! It's backwards thinking such as this that keeps Aggies from making real progress.

Likening the burial place of a war hero to that of a dog is completely ridiculous and an insult to anyone who has lost a family member in armed conflict.

Maybe if Aggies had used the football field for practice time instead of funerals for your pets, your football team might have fared better last November 29th.

By the way, at those funerals, do Aggies wear black overalls or the traditional blue? Hook 'em.

Cris Angelini
Rob Dunn
University of Texas

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less 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:

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E-mail: Batt@tamvm1.tamu.edu

A hazy shade of A&M

Corps, fraternity problems cast evil shadow on the University

Sometimes, Texas A&M University has all the makings of a Greek tragedy.

Two weeks ago, Travis Alton, a former student and member of the Fish Drill Team, initiated the most recent chapter in A&M's tragic drama. Alton filed a \$25 million lawsuit against A&M, nine former Fish Drill Team advisers and three administrators alleging that they violated his civil rights by participating in or knowing about hazing incidents against him and other Drill Team members.

The suit, however, compounds a bad situation to make it worse. The Fish Drill Team hazing saga is a situation where everybody involved loses. The Drill Team's drama has harmed the University, students and student organizations.

First, if Alton and the other Drill Team members who said they endured hazing were exposed to hazing, then they suffered from actions which should never be part of the A&M experience. In his suit, Alton claims that on several different occasions, he was beaten, kicked and forced to cut himself with a knife. Once disclosed, the University addressed these disturbing allegations. A&M suspended eight cadets accused of hazing, and a ninth cadet was expelled.

Indeed, Alton does deserve some compensation for whatever bad experience he endured at A&M. He claims that he has suffered severe personal injuries, emotional distress and has incurred medical bills from his time on the Drill Team. Alton has withdrawn from the University, and it seems to me that his encounter with the Fish Drill Team con-

tributed to his leaving. Twenty-five million dollars, however, is an excessive amount of money for the abuse which Alton said occurred.

While the Fish Drill Team hazing allegations are heinous, no deaths resulted from whatever actions took place.

Apparently, Alton is attempting to do more than just recover damages from his time at A&M. His suit states "there is a long history of toleration and refusal to deal with the reality that hazing is a way of life in the Corps and specifically in the Fish Drill Team."

William Hommel, Alton's lawyer, said the suit is aimed at stopping hazing.

"He [Alton] doesn't want this to happen to anybody else," Hommel said. "He [Alton] wants this nonsense to stop. That is the ultimate goal — to stop hazing in the Corps."

Obviously, Alton is attempting to teach the University a \$25 million lesson. The job of stopping hazing, however, does not belong to Alton, but to A&M's student leaders and administration. A&M does not need to be taught a lesson; it needs to learn from its mistakes.

Although a \$25 million loss would be a significant hit to the University, a greater loss will come from the bad publicity that will be generated for years to come. The Fish Drill Team matter was one of two alleged hazing incidents at A&M which received state and nationwide attention. A&M is already synonymous with football and Aggie jokes. It would be terrible to add hazing to that list.

While this occurrence and the Kappa Alpha hazing allegations

from last fall were limited to those two groups, they damaged all student organizations at A&M. These situations have contributed to the widely held belief on campus that both Corps and the Greek system are centers of rampant hazing.

The Corps could not have bought itself worse publicity if it had printed up T-shirts reading, "The Corps — you can't beat us with a stick." Bad publicity for the Corps costs all of A&M, because the Corps of Cadets is a vital part of the University. When the Corps' image suffers, the whole University's image suffers.

Kim Novak, coordinator of Student Judicial Services, said that the assumption that hazing is exclusively a Corps and Greek problem is a mistake.

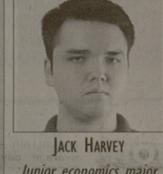
"Hazing is not Corps unique; hazing is not Greek unique," said Novak. "People assume that all frat hazing, but aren't we [students] more inclined to look there than in other places?"

This bad publicity focused on the Corps and the Greek system masks hazing that occurs in other student organizations. These organizations become scapegoats for a problem which encompass all student organizations.

When hazing does occur, it is a traumatic event for all Aggies. There is a bond among A&M's students that causes them to describe themselves as being Aggies before being athletes, cadets or fraternity members. Having one of their brethren abused is an affront to all Aggies.

A&M's hazing problem will not be solved by lawsuits, but by students who refuse to tolerate this abuse on campus. It is time for A&M to recover from the havoc wrought by this turmoil. Perhaps this time Aggies will learn from their past and avert a future tragedy.

Columnist



JACK HARVEY
Junior economics major

