



MAIL CALL
Cater's apathetic view is pathetic

In response to Mandy Cater's September 16 column:

For months, I have read Cater's opinions, and I am once again depressed by her apathy. I know of several individuals who frown upon our traditions, but how could anybody want to see Aggie friendliness go?

Howdy is just a popular expression of unity and friendliness. Personally, I don't care if someone says hey, hi, hello, what's up, etc. All I want to see is a hint of kindness from every Aggie.

I encourage all students to visit Rice, t.u., Tech, TCU or any other college for that matter and examine how dismal and cold the personality of their student bodies are.

What we have in Aggieland is so special. It is a shame that some people want to see Aggie friendliness removed.

As for Howdy Ags, I praise you for making a concentrated effort to conserve the friendliness on our campus.

As for Cater, perhaps you will win the respect of fellow Aggies and myself if you take a stand for something, anything!

I'm growing tired of the constant scrutiny against those that at least have the courage to take a stand.

Steve Walkup
Class of '98
accompanied by 29 signatures

Nothing backwoods about 'Howdy' use

In response to Mandy Cater's September 16 column:

Cater writes, "Howdy is more like a shout out at some hillbilly square dance night." Does anybody else see some over generalizing here? Since when did being friendly to a stranger cause a person to "return to the backwoods, toothpicking, banjo strumming roots?"

I see nothing wrong with a stranger saying "howdy" to another stranger. I am perfectly

happy having somebody smile at me or greet me in passing. If a person does not wish to participate in a tradition, far be it from me to condemn them for doing so.

But, if a person does wish to participate in a tradition, far be it from me to condemn them for doing so if it is not harmful to those involved. It won't kill you to hear the word "howdy," and if you don't want to say it, then don't.

Cater is correct in saying that "howdy" is merely a word and not a university requirement, but if people like to promote the word, then don't denounce their efforts and ridicule them with absurd generalizations.

Jennifer Robinson
Class of '98

the rest of the day. I know there have been times when I was having a bad day and the sound of howdy "ringing out like sweet music" has lifted my spirits.

The reason someone took time out of their busy schedule to acknowledge my presence in their life. It didn't take much effort and they didn't even have to stress. Our society has gotten away from a sense of community and from the word of self-absorption.

I won't pretend that I say "Howdy" to everyone I meet. I trek across campus because that would be impossible to do. I do attempt to notice those that look down or upset and extend them a greeting that may help their attitude.

Sometimes a "Howdy" is necessary, a simple smile will let people know that someone else notices them and cares enough to let them know it. Come a red-ass if you want, I don't care, but I am always ready to extend a full-hearted "Howdy" to someone I meet.

I don't see it as a responsibility or something I have to do for me, it's a privilege. So to ALL Ags out there — HOWDY and Gig'em. Whoop!

Jodie Hollis
Class of '98

Aggie greeting is a privilege to say

In response to Mandy Cater's September 16 column:

"Howdy" is more than a tradition it is a courtesy. I believe the Howdy Council has the right idea, we need to "save the word." This situation is about more than just a word, it is about our society and the way we treat each other.

People today walk around in their own little world and many times have no concept of what is going on with others around them. Cater said, "Some traditions are old, some are tired and some are just stupid."

Well, I happen to believe the "Howdy" tradition may be the most important tradition at A&M because it encompasses everything about the "Aggie Spirit." As a psychology major, Cater should understand the power of a kind word.

We never know how much of an effect this one little word may have on someone's attitude for

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

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Miss America pageant carries superficiality

There she is, Miss America. And there's her naval.



MASON JACKSON
columnist

The 77th Annual Miss America pageant was held Saturday night in Atlantic City. It was a year of change for the pageant as it continues to struggle with an identity crisis. Is it an appearance based meat market or is it a scholarship competition for America's best and brightest 18 to 24 year-old single women?

This year, to confuse the issue further, they have implemented more scholarship categories while at the same time allowing contestants to wear bikinis in the swimsuit competition for the first time since 1947, which, if I'm not mistaken, was during the roaring twenties.

Also this year, the pageant moved from longtime broadcast partner NBC to Disney owned ABC. Disney has been responsible for such risqué programming as The Little Mermaid, in which a young "sea slut" named Ariel comes of age with nothing more than two seashells to protect her modesty. So the switch to bikinis is hardly surprising.

To see if we can shed light on the true nature of the pageant, perhaps we should look at the judging process. The preliminary scoring, which takes place before the live telecast, narrows the field down to 10 finalists.

The weighting of scores (after exercise and bulimia) is as follows: talent - 40 percent; interview - 30 percent; on-stage personality in evening wear - 15 percent; Physical fitness on swimsuit - 15 percent.

As it states, it isn't how the contestant looks in the evening wear, but rather the personality as illustrated through careful consideration of sequins and shoulder pads.

And it isn't how attractive a contestant looks in a swimsuit, but rather the opportunity to

prove they are in shape to handle the physical rigors that come with winning the crown (because standing on a float and waving for two hours is nearly as demanding as watching a marathon.)

During the telecast the field is narrowed from ten to five. The remaining five are interviewed and asked a question related to their platform. Their platform is generally a vague stand on a current issue supported with volunteer time at the appropriate non-profit organization.

Here is a completely fictional example of an interview question and answer — Question: Miss Vermont, your state is known for its cheddar cheese, how do you feel about crime?

Answer: Well Bob, I think it is bad. All people just need to love each other, as Americans one nation, under God.

And in an endearingly naive way (who, me condescending?), the contestants talk about the impact they want to make in their chosen area, as if our public policy makers are watching. Everyone knows that Washington, D.C. hookers give a 15 percent discount on Saturday nights.

It is obvious that the Miss America Pageant is a beauty contest, even though most of the finalists seem to have frighteningly large teeth and despite the fact that on any given day on this very campus you will see several women more attractive than the big-haired girls that always win (and the crowd roars at the blatant attempt to suck up to the female student population.)

And as a beauty pageant it is based on appearance, not substance. The big ones (pageants not, well, you know) are televised because sex does sell.

So if the Miss America Pageant wants to retain what viewers they still have, they should admit that it is, like most other aspects of our society, extremely superficial.

If people want to watch the MacNeil/Leher News Hour they will, unless Jim Leher decides he looks good in a bikini.

Mason Jackson is a senior marketing major.