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The voodoo lounge

George Bush complex opens doorway to explore historic symbolism

As a student taking an upper-level political science course, I have the opportunity to have class in the new George Bush academic building — located between West Campus and the Aggie Center.



JOHN BURTON
columnist

The facility is isolated from the mainstream and difficult problems of the real world — kind of like most publican voters. Tastefully modern design lines from every wall. Outside is a nice lagoon, with a "trickle-down" waterfall, which, if you view it from the "ultra-right" angle, a silhouette of Ronald Reagan appears. The classrooms inside are equally pleasing: they feature more "points of light" than the average lounge club. While the facilities are immaculate and new, some problems still need to be corrected. For instance, in the Oliver North computing center, the technical staff doesn't seem very knowledgeable, other than all they say is "I do not recall."

However, the main reason for the building is to hold educational programs, which is why the political science and "voodoo" economics programs are located there. In fact, several special programs are offered at the Bush school. One example is the study-abroad program with the Nicaraguan Sandinistas, which offers first-hand experience in high-level corruption. Another exciting activity is the Iran-Contra conspiracy re-enactment. As a Central Intelligence agent, it is your duty to transport drugs and weapons in and out of the country without get-

ting caught. This is really easier than it seems, because the government will run a huge public relations campaign called "the war on drugs" — nobody will believe what is really happening. Cultural aspects of the Bush center include artwork, diverse employees and facilities to accommodate the hearing-impaired. A Persian Gulf-era portrait of Bush with Norm Schwarzkopf and Colin Powell adorns one of the hallways.

I think it is an oil-based painting, actually. In accordance with conservative values, classrooms feature chalkboards rather than dry-erase boards. The diverse swarm of people who wear black sunglasses and seem to talk into their ties can be found roaming the building. And for the hearing-impaired, a George Bush "read my lips" tour is available to explain the facilities.

This facility has received some very "un-prudent" controversy because of its namesake. Well, I would like to correct the whining liberals who say that George Bush was a wealthy president who only benefitted the richest citizens.

They overlook the fact that, although Bush was born into a wealthy family, he was five years old before he got his first set of golf clubs.

Also, you have to appreciate why he lowered taxes for the rich — the idea being that if treated similarly, the poor and middle classes would spend their money foolishly: on food and rent, for example.

The historic symbolism of this facility is amazing, and we are fortunate to be a part of it. Of course, the education facility is only the beginning. In less than two months, the Bush Library/museum/CIA complex will open to the public. I can't Kuwait.

John Burton is a junior bioenvironmental science major.



Students have responsibility to serve public through notion of civic duty

"Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." Those immortal words convey the obligations we all have as citizens to contribute to the betterment of society through volunteerism and other public works.



GENERAL FRANKLIN
columnist

Former president George Bush also underscored the importance of civic duty to his development during the dedication of the Bush School of Government and Public Service. Aggies should aspire in greater numbers to serve the community and public at large who subsidize a significant portion of their education.

As college students, we perhaps have the greatest opportunity to serve through various student organizations like the United Way, Habitat for Humanity and Alpha Phi Omega to name a few. Because of the space of school schedules, most undergraduates have ample time to commit themselves to projects and activities to enhance the overall quality of life in the community.

In spite of the hundreds of Aggies involved in either formal or informal service groups, much more can be done and more participation should be expected.

Surely, a school of 43,000 students can muster civic involvement greater than the small percentage of students who now contribute their time and efforts to local community projects.

Unfortunately, many people are dis-

couraged by public service because they believe it is all consuming and because the task of helping others seems daunting.

Both of these notions are false. Many projects such as the Big Brothers Programs, or community outreach programs require only hours of week and therefore can be integrated in the active life of the typical college student.

Given the ample recreation students manage to squeeze from their schedules, is it unreasonable to expect students to make more of a commitment to serve people other than themselves?

The second perception is false because for every grandiose act of philanthropy there are thousands of dedicated individuals, whose small acts collectively have an invaluable impact on the people whom they serve.

Besides, true commitment is not a measure of wealth, but it involves the commitment of time and effort which is more sublime and personal than money. Although, it may not seem very significant, the power of compassion and personal interaction does more to inspire than any monetary contribution.

Many opportunities exist in the area, and should be explored by all students at least once during college. Volunteers are always welcome at schools, hospitals, community centers and churches, particularly to provide leadership to the young, guidance to the wayward, and comfort to the infirmed and lonely.

During his address to the inaugural class of the Bush School of Government, the former president emphasized how we must strive to serve in small and ordinary ways.

He recognizes that all cannot possibly serve through elected office as he did. So we must examine the more com-

monplace avenues for civic duty which are more meaningful to the community as a whole.

Students should especially feel inclined to serve their community because of the tremendous public investment that is made in their education. Without federal and state funding, most students could not afford to attend this school.

Furthermore, the enhanced public commitment to higher education has broadened opportunity to those who otherwise would have been denied higher education.

In light of this debt we owe to society, we should feel obligated to illustrate our gratitude by lending our talent and skills to the improvement of our community as a token of generosity to those whose sacrifices have made our own achievement possible.

Unfortunately, the greatest obstacle to service here is the set of priorities many students have. Some of our concerns are of a selfish nature as they do not extend past our own goals, desires, and interests.

Because our objectives are hyper-focused on our own reality, we tend to blind ourselves of those whose lives could be enriched by our generosity and compassion. It is very discouraging that students are more concerned about yell practice, parties, deceased Reveilles and football games than they are about their duty and obligation to serve the less fortunate.

Until civic duty and public service are extolled just as honorably as the most noteworthy of traditions, the potential we have to meaningfully enrich our lives as well as society will remain unfulfilled.

General Franklin is a junior history major.

Bush School must adhere to Aggie protocol, traditions

The George Bush Presidential Library is a wonderful boost for Texas A&M and for Bryan/College Station. If any president from James Polk to



DAVE JOHNSTON
columnist

Abe Lincoln offered us their library, we would be foolish not to leap at the chance. Although we should warmly welcome the new library, we should accept it on our terms.

We must remember that the new Bush School is part A&M — A&M is not part of the Bush School.

The new Bush School and Presidential Library fits in well with at this campus. Millie the dog, George and Barbara's pet during the White House years, is buried near the plots where the former president and first lady will one day be interred. While this seems bizarre to many people, Aggies are used to holding dogs in such high esteem. Just ask any student about the Reveille graves.

Since the new school is practically in its own zip code, students will have to work harder to integrate the new program into the unique A&M experience.

After listening to the speakers who came to help dedicate the Bush School, it seems that Aggies are in danger of conforming to the addition, instead of making the addition part of Aggieland. The lecturers hosted by the Bush School seem unfamiliar with this University and the traits that make it special.

To make the integration a little easier, here are a few suggestions for anyone speaking at Texas A&M:

1. Begin every speech with a hearty "Howdy." It's friendly, it shows you know you are at a unique location, and if you've never spoken here before, you may be surprised by the response this greeting receives.

2. Never criticize the football team. This should not be a problem this year, since the Aggies are on their way to becoming conference champions, but speakers should know that the football team is sacred.

3. Other topics to avoid include the health of our mascot, the Fish Drill Team and on-campus parking. It's safe to discuss religion and politics.

4. Yankees should be aware that those wildflowers you know as "bluebells" are called "bluebonnets"

here in the great state of Texas.

5. Never tell the audience that you are going to be brief. It's amusing to hear a nationally famous speaker who has been anticipated for months begin by saying his speech will be short. As the speaker, you are the sole reason audience members donned a tie, walked across campus and arrived thirty-minutes early. They want to hear you talk. Don't let them down. Even in those instances where brevity is appreciated, don't waste the audience's time telling them you won't waste the audience's time.

6. The University president's last name is Bowen. The name bears little resemblance to an Illinois town called Bolin.

7. You may hear a few unusual noises from the audience. Don't be alarmed. The sound that resembles an owl is actually a "Whoop." It can be roughly translated as applause, and it means the audience agrees with you or appreciated the last joke. The noise that sounds like a tire going flat is a friendly way of expressing disagreement. Its technical name is a "hiss" or a "Horse Laugh." Be aware that these sentiments may not be directed at the speaker. When George Bush spoke at commencement several years ago he seemed hurt when the Aggies were actually "hissing" a heckler who was being escorted out.

Having explored the essential rules for campus speakers, the audience should realize they have a few responsibilities as well:

1. Don't be intimidated. Feel free to shout "Howdy," "Whoop" or "Hiss" as circumstances allow. This is Texas A&M. Show some Aggie spirit.

2. If questions are allowed, that means the audience is supposed to ask questions, and the speakers are supposed to provide answers. This is not an opportunity for audience members to launch into a diatribe, complain about the air-conditioning or say "hello" to mom. If you ask a question, you should listen to the speech first. Don't embarrass yourself by asking something that was already addressed. It is not unwise to write down your question before walking to the microphone.

3. Enjoy yourself. The Bush School is an exciting addition to A&M, and its opening is a unique opportunity for all students. Attend these programs, go listen to speakers. This is not just a chance to wear a tie, but a way to collect great stories to tell the grandchildren.

Dave Johnston is a senior mathematics major.



MAIL CALL

Perception differs from personal opinion

Response to Michael Sawilowsky's comments in the Monday, Sept. 22, Battalion:

I am not quite sure what offends me more: the comments Professor Lino Graglia made or the fact that Michael Sawilowsky believes Graglia's comments are truthful. On behalf of my Mexican

mother and my African-American father, who is Sawilowsky to say African-American and Mexican-American cultures do not encourage superior academic achievement in their children?

Has he ever spoken with an African-American or Mexican-American student and learned what "exactly" our families have done and are doing in order for us to be at this university and others?

My family constantly asks and encourages me to go that extra mile and praises me at every step. And it is my family that struggles to ensure that I have financial resources in order to stay at this university.

What may surprise you Sawilowsky, is that my family is not the exception but is following a strong tradition in our cultures that encourages children to

strive for success and superior achievement, whether it be academic, philanthropic or spiritual.

As for your comments on the "proof," let me pose these questions: Can you afford to attend Harvard, Yale or MIT?

Do you believe that A&M cannot produce the same quality students as the Ivy League schools?

And, even after *Hopwood*, do you honestly think that all those high school graduates who applied to A&M and other universities are sitting at home doing nothing? No.

Because of *Hopwood*, a significant number of talented African-American and Hispanic students have chosen to attend other universities in order to obtain the collegiate education.

Before you decide to support such a bold statement, I ask that you look beyond what

you "perceive" to be true and find out the truth. Because anything can be distorted when you look at it from the wrong angle.

*Margaret Denise Cunningham
Class of '98*

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