

# Breaking down the closet door

## Aggies, Americans must learn to tolerate people without focusing on sexuality

Government nor society owns people's souls. Yet Americans perpetually confuse the role of the government and social agendas. The role of the government is to protect liberty, not to enforce social opinion as law.



**MICHELLE Voss**  
columnist

Every generation in America selects a subgroup to stigmatize. Shameful moments in our nation's history include the extermination of the Native Americans, the conflict over the institution of slavery and the subsequent battles for civil rights. Today, the plight of the homosexual community is this generation's great civil war.

Aggies and Americans have an obligation to change their discriminatory and prejudiced attitudes toward homosexuals and to become more tolerant of homosexuality. Americans cannot allow society and the government to squander the rights of homosexuals. This is America, the land of the free.

Recall that the great moral teacher Jesus of Nazareth was persecuted and crucified by his government. And as what? A blasphemer. This man was a social outcast because of his "irreligious" opinions. Likewise, the innovative Grecian philosopher Socrates was put to death by his government for "corrupting the youth" and impiety.

Today, homosexuals are social outcasts because of what society deems to be "irreligious" behavior. Our society daily crucifies homosexuals.

Whether they be great thinkers such as Jesus and Socrates, or just you and I, everyone has the common bond of being human. Everyone can shed a tear, smile or sneeze. All of our bodies will decay and our time on earth is limited. In that time on earth, do not choose to hate and persecute — it just is not worth it.

If a person is leading his or her life without interfering in yours, then you should not interfere in theirs. If you are free to make the choice to marry whom you please, to worship the god you please or to express what you believe, it should then follow that another individual (who might happen to be homosexual) should have the exact same rights.

Homosexuals in our nation are unjustly facing persecution. Only those insecure in the power of their beliefs will spew venomous remarks towards those who are homosexuals. The choice to pursue their sexuality is the right of homosexuals. Neither you, nor I, nor the government should infringe upon this freedom.

People are not bound to seek the company of homosexuals if they do not wish to do so.

People choose the groups to which they belong. Within these groups, people may say what they please and do as they please. Outside of these groups, Americans must understand and tolerate the fact that other groups exist. People may believe in different systems of morality and conduct than our own. This is the nature of American democracy.

Yet, Americans have become slaves to socially accepted morality. No one is free to be a dissenting thinker for fear of persecution. The modern regime of public opinion is, in its ugliest moments, social tyranny.

Homosexuals are not at liberty to unite in marriage because our society is chained to the despotism of custom. Imagine if homosexuals were the majority of our society, and heterosexuals were not permitted to marry.

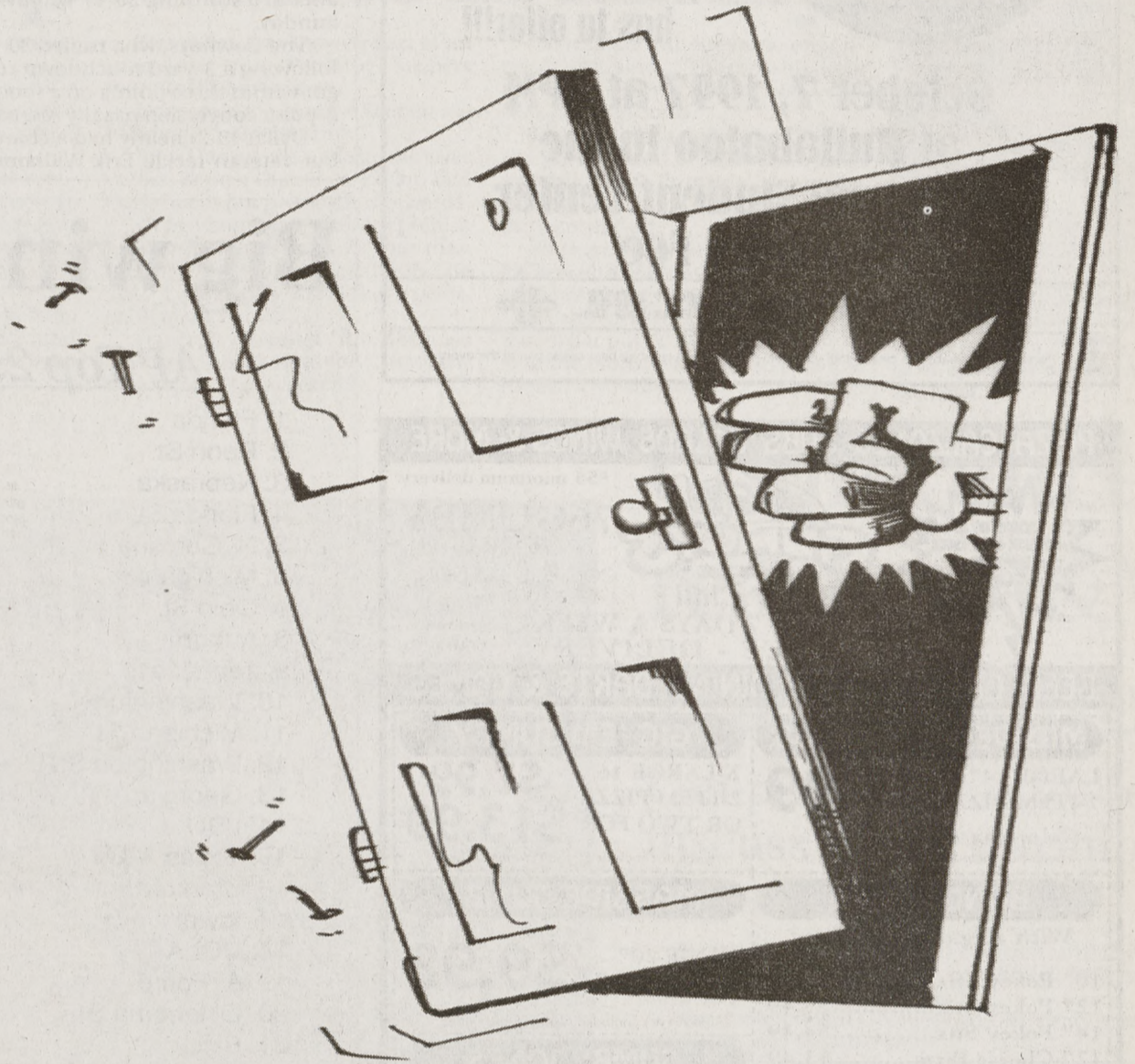
America cannot truly hope to provide liberty and justice for all citizens if citizens cannot even treat each other equally.

It is a sad day when society determines an individual's truth or reality. In America, individuals are at liberty to pursue happiness as long as their actions do not violate the rights of others. Therefore, it is a social evil for the collective to interfere in the private affairs of homosexuals.

Aggies can effect change through tolerance of homosexuals. First, by realizing that we are all human and should be treated equally. Second, by understanding that, as Americans, we all have the freedom to differ and make different choices. Third, by learning not to speak hateful words that only hurt and destroy.

No one is born a bigot. We learn to hate. You can choose to tolerate.

*Michelle Voss is a sophomore English major.*



## One person's story ...

### Christian damnation of homosexuals only leads to tragedy; harms all involved

"I can't ever let anyone find out I'm not straight. It would be so humiliating. My friends would hate me. They might even want to beat me up. And my family? I've overheard them. They've said they hate gays, and even God hates gays, too. Gays are bad, and God sends bad people to hell. It really scares me when they talk that way because now they are talking about me." — Bobby Griffith, diary, 1979



**MICHAEL SCHAU**  
staff writer

In a picture taken in 1980, Bobby Griffith stands with his mother, Mary, in front of her old blue Volkswagen. He is a good-looking kid at 17, muscular, with longish black hair and muscular arms.

Bobby Griffith was gay. His family vocally disapproved of his sexual orientation. He would wake up to find his mother praying over his body for his conversion, Bible verses taped to his bathroom mirror.

On Aug. 27, 1983, Bobby threw himself off a bridge and into the path of an oncoming truck. He was 20.

Journalist Leroy Aarons chronicles the life of Bobby and Mary Griffith in *Prayers for Bobby: A Mother's Coming to Terms with the Suicide of Her Gay Son*.

Bobby's case is not unusual. At least one study has shown that one out of every three gay or bisexual teen-agers has attempted suicide.

"I can feel God's eyes looking down on me with such pity. He can't help me though, because I've chosen sin over righteousness." — Bobby Griffith, diary, 1981.

This is not an obituary 14 years too late. Bobby Griffith is dead, but there are thousands of gay teen-agers going through the same thing he did.

The "Christian message" Bobby received all his life was this: God hates sin, and he was a sinner. Sure, he could earn God's love again, but only by renouncing his homosexuality, by turning his back on the very nature of who he was.

Even after he did the hardest thing in the world to do — come out to his family — he was met with hatred and intolerance in the name of religion. He was treated as if he were sick, dirty, sinful.

He was told he was unable to have a relationship with God.

Anyone looking for a reason for the alarmingly high suicide rate among gay youth should look no further.

Gay men and women everywhere are met with the same religious intolerance. Fundamentalists and haters have tried to rob homosexuals of the one thing that should be sacred: their religion and their spiritual well-being.

Christianity is not about hatred. The Bible does not preach intolerance. Only people do. And as the Bobby Griffith case demonstrated, the effects are very tragic and very real.

"Dear God: Are you there? I ask because I really don't know.... Sometimes I hurt so bad, and I'm scared and alone. I wonder why you or somebody doesn't help. I'm so mad and frustrated, I seem to be at the end of the road. Why do you remain silent?" — Bobby Griffith, diary, 1979.

Homophobia on this campus is pandemic. Two years ago, a coalition of campus Christian groups ran an advertisement in *The Battalion* stating homosexuality was a curable disease. Last semester, the A&M Christian Fel-

lowship brought preacher Tom Short, a notorious homophobe and anti-Semite, to the A&M campus.

Only the vocal minority of Christians are homophobes, but they have a way of spreading their message of hate under the guise of incontrovertible fact. They twist Biblical passages into statements of intolerance, and tell students that God hates them, God hates what they do, God hates the way he made them.

Homosexuals should be able to exist without harassment on any level. But Christian groups on this campus have gone well beyond contempt by converting the comforting, loving words of religion into hate propaganda that would make the Ku Klux Klan think twice.

"Sometimes I sense that life is very fragile and that at any given moment it could be snuffed out the way a candle is by a sudden draft. I just want someone to protect me." — Bobby Griffith, diary, 1982.

Mary Griffith's Christianity did not survive her son's suicide. She is now a gay rights activist, and still blames herself, and her church, for Bobby's death.

Many gays, of course, still find comfort in religion. The fanatics have not scared them off, and they are still able to accept The Bible for its true meaning of love.

If there is a lesson in Bobby Griffith's death, it is this: Hatred cannot be justified by any religion. Love is unqualified and unconditional.

Do not let what happened to Mary Griffith happen to you. The suicide of a loved one is a wound that never heals. You will spend your life in regret and in mourning, and no one will be able to give you comfort.

Not even God.

*Michael Schaub is a junior English major.*

## Political placement of gays defines America

No matter how you feel about homosexuals, you should recognize that gay issues are political plutonium.



**JEREMY VALDEZ**  
columnist

A few weeks ago CNN carried an unconfirmed report from a Stanford University official that Chelsea Clinton had requested another roommate because the one she was originally assigned was a lesbian.

Now, as a rule, rumors make horrible news. However, because of President Clinton's love-spit-love relationship with America's "gay community" (a ridiculous term, since there isn't only one) this Chelsea-related gossip provides for an interesting thought experiment.

If the story is true, it's irony at its finest: The President who has supposedly done more to bring homosexuals into the political mainstream can not or will not persuade his own daughter to share ramen and a wipey-board with an honest-to-goodness lesbian.

If false, it still raises a great question. How would the first family handle a gay roommate? The story would probably unfold pretty much like the CNN report.

That's because homosexual issues are nothing more than political tools for Clinton, and he manipulates them with skill that most nuclear power plant workers would envy.

Because just like plutonium, when the gay-rights movement is properly cajoled and contained it can reach a sort of critical mass. In a chain reaction of social activity, homosexuals can produce an amazing amount of voting power. Used correctly, the power is enough to help elect a president.

There is some nasty waste left behind, though, because when you woo gays and lesbians with promises of equality under the law, they have the nerve to hold you to it.

Clinton rose to power with a lot of promises to a lot of people, and perhaps no group has been cheated worse than homosexuals. As liberals busied themselves by portraying conservatives as homo-

phobes and bigots, it was Clinton, not the often-blamed congress, who quietly screwed gay people by crafting a meaningless "don't ask don't tell" military policy and signing the bill that denies federal marriage benefits to gay couples.

So the political landscape for homosexuals in the United States continues to be surprisingly easy to map; conservatives disapprove of gays, while liberals simply use them.

The liberals' contract with gay America will always be breached precisely because of the false singularity of the term "gay community". There are actually a million kinds of gay people.

Not all of them are as cute and endearing as the poster gays that get paraded on TV. Not every homosexual is an attractive professional who desperately wants a marriage and a family.

Whether or not the community admits it, it contains transgendered guys who get a kick out of having both breasts and testicles, weirdo lesbians whose offensiveness rivals Jimmy Swaggert's, obnoxious punks wearing shirts that say "Bring back the lions." (the kind that eat Christians), and a number of pedophiles who belong to something called the North American Man-Boy Love Association.

And those are some tough puppies to sell.

Certainly every group has factions on the edge. The Klan, Earth First, and people who bomb abortion clinics come to mind. However most groups don't let the nuts do the talking for them.

Since gay America continues to embrace and be defined by its ever expanding lunatic fringe, it will continue to be suckered into powering a political machine that will turn around and bury it like spent nuclear fuel.

Chelsea has a right to choose who she does or doesn't live with; I once got rid of a roommate because he read out loud.

So the little CNN story, whether it is truth or fiction, isn't interesting because she made a choice. It's interesting because it brings to mind the phrase "not in my back yard."

That's where we want our nuclear waste, and that's where politicians, even the liberal ones, keep our homosexuals.

*Jeremy Valdez is a senior journalism major.*



### MAIL CALL

#### Beutel treatment befuddles student

Here's a little story for all the Aggies of Texas A&M. I was playing intramural basketball at Reed the other night when an unfortunate incident occurred. I was struck above my eye with an elbow and I suffered a pretty nasty cut.

The emergency guy cleaned up the gash pretty good and in-

formed me that I had better get a few stitches. Here is where all the fun started:

Being that all the players were guys (in their male perceptions), my teammates claimed that I should have no problem driving myself to the emergency room.

My male ego was going right along with them, assuring me that I was fine and able to take care of myself.

Beutel was right around the corner. As I pulled up to the infamous "Quack Shack," something struck me as strange. All the lights were out.

I walked up to the doors and to my surprise, they were locked. I stared in disbelief at the sign that read "OPEN 8 a.m. - 5 p.m." It was 10:30 p.m.

I walked around the back looking for an emergency entrance, but I only found two

janitors chatting by the dumpster. I explained my situation to them.

One of the janitors informed me that unless I called 9-1-1 to get picked up, the building would remain closed.

I contemplated driving about 20 feet down to the emergency phone, dialing 9-1-1, laying down on top of my truck and pretending to be dead.

Instead, I had to drive to the other side of town where I was finally taken care of at the Columbia Medical Center.

The point here is that I am completely clueless about where all the fees we as students pay are going.

Even though we pay for its jobs, the administration seems to tailor the University's services to its own convenience, not the students'.

All I can say to you fellow students is that if you get injured

one of these days, please make sure you do it between the working hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Otherwise, take some Tylenol for your pain, and please wait until the next morning.

*Gordan Vuckovic*  
Class of '97

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