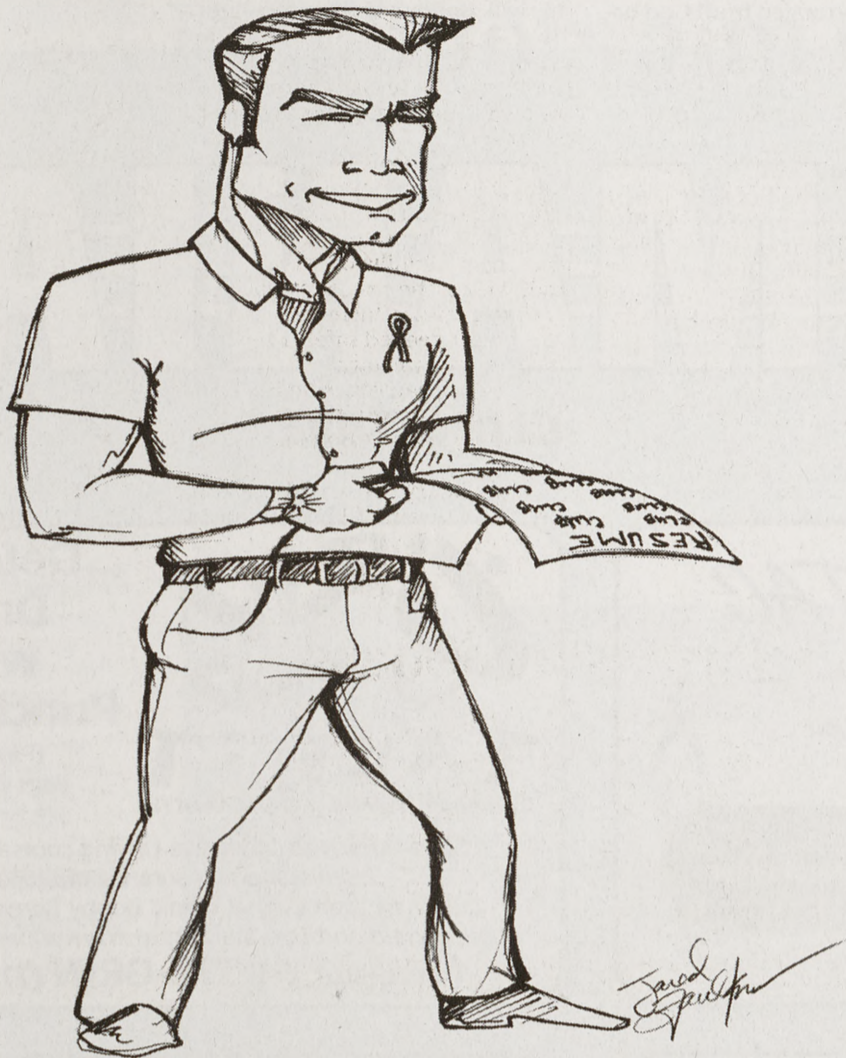


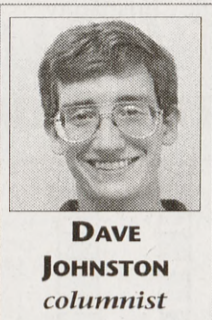
Tuesday • October 7, 1997

Leading the way to a better campus

Student organization leaders, members must show interest to keep clubs alive



Many students think a leader must be attractive, eloquent or at least intelligent. Actually, any motivated person can be a leader. Unfortunately, most organizations at Texas A&M have the same mistaken notion of a leader.



DAVE JOHNSTON
columnist

Very few campus organizations actually attempt to develop leaders. Most groups try to identify students who are already leaders, then harness their abilities. A&M needs more organizations that will train anyone to become a leader. Too many campus groups are far too exclusive to cultivate leaders. The Student Government Association has a large number of committees which could be prime breeding ground for leaders. Instead, most committees are exclusive, requiring a lengthy application and interview process to join. The new Howdy Committee, for example, chose 35 members from over 100 applications. It makes no sense for this type of organization to prevent more than 60 interested students from joining its ranks. They can always use more people to post fliers, distribute stickers and propagandize campus. Most SGA committees are organized similarly. This arrangement does not develop new leaders, but rather exploits students who already are leaders. It is more effective to open leadership circles to all motivated students. This benefits the organization in many ways. Members can become more involved and become more dedicated to the group. The club has more trained students who are ready to assume officer positions. When groups refuse to train new leaders, they

prevent both students and organizations from reaching their potential. Almost every campus organization has a problem with finding lasting leadership. Usually everything runs smoothly for a few years until the entire panel of officers graduate, leaving a huge void. An effective leader must dedicate a large portion of his or her time to expanding the leadership of his or her organization. Each officer should train at least a few students who can take that officer's responsibilities later. Even outstanding presidents do their clubs a disservice if they do not leave behind people who can continue to lead the club. Campus is strewn with the remains of clubs that had one or two great years before they sunk into oblivion when their founders earned a diploma and left town. When most groups select potential leaders, they examine outward traits like looks, speech or economic status. Since these are not the most important characteristics for a leader, campus organizations end up with a wide range of problems. A former member of the Communist Party in England, Douglas Hyde, was once approached by a simple, disheveled man with a terrible stutter who asked Hyde to turn him into a leader. Hyde accepted the challenge, and through confidence building and hard work, the man became an officer in his union and recruited dozens of new workers for the communist cause. Most A&M organizations would never have given a person like this a second look, and they would lose a resource. Anyone with motivation is an asset. They may need training and they may not be effective in certain areas of service, but they can be useful if someone recognizes their value.

David Johnston is a senior mathematics major.

Solitaire proves laziness scapegoat

In the movie *Live and Let Die*, James Bond learned how dangerous it can be to play Solitaire, you see, was a tarot-reading mistress of seduction who was jealously guarded by a couple of pimpin' New Orleans crime bosses.



JEREMY VALDEZ
columnist

Now, Senators Chuck Hagel and Lauch Faircloth — who are just slightly less pimply — have introduced legislation that would make it illegal for government employees to play computer solitaire at work, and would require all federal offices to remove games from computers. The senators are overreacting to this newest, imaginary computer-related plague: solitaire addiction. But if congress passes this bill, it will be prescribing an ineffective medicine based upon a false diagnosis. People who claim to be solitaire-addicted actually suffer from a much broader, ancient disease called laziness. Laziness is just as common as the cold. It's a part of the human psychological ambient and it lurks in our systems waiting for an opportunity to become symptomatic. One acute form of laziness, for instance, can make the afflicted feel an undeniable urge to do six weeks worth of laundry the night before a big test when he or she ought to be studying. Since most office environments lack overflowing clothes hampers, lazy employees invent and avail themselves of literally hundreds of ways to avoid their responsibilities. Some make paperclip chains, others make giant spheres with rubber bands and some lazy employees will inevitably turn to computers. It is only our society's fascination with a relatively new information conduit that fools us into making an excuse for people who are both uninspired and digitally-inclined. Congress would never try to outlaw paperclip addiction, rubber band dependence or water cooler syndrome. Those afflictions would make for bad politi-

cal posturing. And they would make for even worse news reporting. NBC took the initiative to break this alarmist story on a *Nightside* report. They interviewed several people who had lost their jobs because of solitaire addiction, and in the any-quote-is-a-good-quote mentality that so pervades fluff journalism, they actually solicited a response from Microsoft, since it is the company that packages the offending game with the Windows Operating System. I didn't actually hear or read what the NBC reporter asked of the Microsoft representative, but it probably was something like "What can you do help the suffering people? Have you no power to stop this wave of mutilation that you so carelessly put in motion?" I did read the Microsoft written statement, which said essentially "We're really glad people like playing games with Windows. If you don't like it, stop. Now excuse us while we get busy making crazy, booty-butt-naked kinds of money." Business computers should be used for business, and games don't belong on machines in government offices, but if it takes a law to coerce managers into holding employees responsible to their jobs, a phantom epidemic is probably the least of our worries. The games may be trivial, but the law to stop them is not. In seriousness, if the federal government recognizes and validates "computer addiction" enough to pass a law about it, it is a very short and easily argued step to protect the computer-addicted under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The result would be a workplace further choked by ridiculous political concerns that make productivity next to impossible. What is it that powers today's computers? Nothing more than standard electrical current, although some people are determined to believe that the machines are more sinister, requiring human souls in order to boot up. But before we allow victims and lawmakers to blame computers for stealing their drive and motivation, we better make sure they had some to begin with.

Jeremy Valdez is a senior journalism major.

Christian musician sent powerful message

Oddly, sometimes it is the people we have never met that affect us the most. They are the people who change us through their work — their books, their poems or perhaps even their songs.



JOHN LEMONS
columnist

They are the ones whose insight reveals to us worlds that we otherwise would not have otherwise imagined. Rich Mullins was one of these people. Mullins, a Christian musician, died in an automobile accident two weeks ago. Unfortunately, most Aggies haven't heard of Mullins. Throughout his 10-year career, Mullins created and sang music about what he called the "reckless, raging, fury that is the love of God." Mullins' death is a significant loss to the contemporary Christian music, a genre that has received some criticism in recent years. Despite its shortcomings, Mullins and his music represented what is right within the genre. Although he was exceptionally talented, Mullins received little attention outside of the contemporary Christian music scene. His most famous song, "Awesome God," is extremely popular in churches across the country. The song will likely appear in hymnals through the next century. In an era where "MmmBop" and "Zig-zig-ah" pass as lyrical genius, Mullins filled

his songs with words that profoundly examined the nature of God and the frailty of man. He is one of the few Christian artists to use biblical scripture in the lyrics of nearly all of his songs. Mullins was well known throughout the Christian music industry for his writing ability. Jim Dunning, Mullins' manager, said, "In the industry, he was considered by many to be the greatest writer of our time. I believe that." Mullins had a knack in his music for asking the unconventional questions of faith that are so easy to miss in life. He fearlessly explored rarely considered subjects in songs like "Boy Like Me/Man Like You," which explores the question of whether Jesus had a regular childhood, and "The Howling," an examination of justice and its absence in the removal of Native Americans from their lands. Ironically, the song he will best remember by does not do justice to Mullins' writing talent. While "Awesome God" has inspired millions, Mullins did not consider it to be one of his better songs. In a 1996 interview with *The Lighthouse Magazine*, Mullins said, "The thing I like about 'Awesome God' is that it's one of the worst songs that I ever, ever wrote; it's just poorly crafted." While most people's exposure to Contemporary Christian Music comes from artists like Michael W. Smith and Amy Grant, Mullins danced to the beat of a different drum. His style wasn't the pop music that tempers much of contemporary Christian music. Instead, Mullins' music was more folksy

and eclectic. Mullins was an accomplished player of the hammered dulcimer, one of the few truly American instruments. His scripture-based songs and unconventional musical style defied the argument that contemporary Christian music only exists to make a quick buck off of Jesus. While some Christian music artists have been accused of trivializing God by singing trite songs that are little more than a dance tune, listening to a Rich Mullins album is an intellectual experience. Often, I found I would have to listen to a Rich Mullins album six or seven times to be able to think through Mullins' points. I found that I learned more from Mullins' music than from any sermon. That, however, is not a criticism of the preachers I have heard, but a testament to the quality of Mullins' work. Certainly, Mullins was no saint. Mullins' frank nature frustrated many of his fans. When Mullins held a concert at A&M in the spring of '96, some people who attended were offended by an insensitive comment he made about wife-beating. But Mullins never claimed to be perfect. He was always forthright in both his music and comments about his imperfections and frailties. Contemporary Christian music needs more musicians like Rich Mullins — artists who examine faith intelligently, earnestly and humbly. Mullins' sincerity and ingenuity will be greatly missed. Fortunately, we have his music and his faith to remember him by.

John Lemons is an electrical engineering graduate student.



MAIL CALL

Lady Ags deserve better treatment

Last weekend, I went home to Katy and watched television with my dad on Saturday afternoon. We were talking when he surprised me by saying, "I bet you're really proud of my response was 'huh?' Dad said, 'You've got to be kidding. The women's soccer team is ranked number 2 behind UNC.' We played University of North Carolina and we were unfortunately outscored. But, you have to keep in mind that UNC has the best record in history and has been unstoppable for the past 10 years. Now, what would happen if our football team were ranked number 2 in the nation? (Who knows —

maybe we will be. Whoop!) Anyway, we being the red-ass Ags that we are would let everyone know. I am really proud of the wrecking crew and everyone else that has made us the great team that we are. Believe me, I'm not shy when bragging about our football team (especially to t-sips), but I do think we should give more recognition to the Lady Aggies (more than one small column on the 7th page), especially since they are doing such a great job. Since the women's soccer team was formed a few years ago, they have always been ranked high and played great. I think they should receive the respect that they have worked so hard for. Way to go, Lady Ags!
Christine Reedy
Class of '99

Religious concepts skewed in column

In response to Michelle Voss' "Breaking down the closet door" Oct. 5 column:
As I read Voss' column, I was saddened by her misconceptions of Jesus Christ (who is the son of God, and is seated at His right hand) and his true followers. He was crucified (literally) be-

cause he was perfect, sinless and he was the ultimate sacrifice to atone for our sins, not because he was a "social outcast." Sincere Christians agree that homosexuals should not be bashed and hated. The Bible does not teach hatred of people, however, it does teach hatred of immoral and ungodly-like actions. These actions include things such as murder, drunkenness, lying, fornication, adultery, swearing and homosexuality. In the Old Testament, adulterers, murderers and homosexual offenders all were to be put to death. The fact is that homosexuality is not more wrong than fornication, adultery or other sexual sins, but it is morally wrong, and it is a choice. No one is born a bigot. No one is born a homosexual. God creates people with the ability to choose. They can repent and accept Jesus as their Lord and savior, or follow the world and its "prince," the devil, to Hell. So for all of you nominal Christians who are sleeping with your girlfriends, think twice before you bash a homosexual.
David Grotheim
Class of '00

Coming Out Week reveals personal sins

In response to Michael Schaub's "One person's story" Oct. 5 column:
Schaub was repeatedly inaccurate as he tried to reconcile Christianity and homosexuality. Perhaps a little study on his part would have revealed that in fact The Bible does preach intolerance of homosexuality. Schaub's quote of Bobby Griffith correctly assessed the problem. Bobby felt estranged from God because he had "chosen sin over righteousness." In his choice to pursue homosexuality, he chose to separate himself from God. Christianity is a religion of love. However, part of God's love for us includes his desire that we do his will. Bobby's mother was right to pray for the conversion of her son. As Christians, we should take the opportunity presented by Coming Out Week to pray for a spiritual awakening and conversion among homosexuals. Coming Out Week should not be about coming out of the closet, but coming out of sin.
Aaron Hendrick
Class of '99